# CAGI

Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues

*Center for Economic, Governance and Political Affairs*

**Policy & Administration | Transparency & Accountability**

**Anti-corruption | Peace, Security & Stability**

**Human Rights & Justice | International Relations**

IMANI
Center for Policy & Education

May 18-24, 2025

# In this issue


1 The Political Twists to Ghana's National Security (NIB) Operations; the Manner of Execution and Fear Mongering Reportage.

2 Empty Streets; how not to Decongest Ghana's Capital and Major cities.

3 Poor and Inefficient Hydro-drainage System is Major Cause of Floods in Accra.

4 How Ghana's Opposition Parties Can Safeguard its Envious Democracy.




# What is the Criticality Analysis ?

The output of good governance is socioeconomic development that has greater impact on the citizens. Government takes the wheels of affairs of the state on the back of the many promises made to the electorates. Yet, it is no easy task when it comes to the processes and mechanisms required for true public services delivery. It must follow policy guidelines religiously, maintain the social contract, avoid excesses and wastages, and be an accountable steward of that which it has been entrusted.

IMANI Centre for Policy and Education in a bid to monitor the processes and mechanisms for public services delivery has devised the Criticality Analysis to evaluate the key actions of the government in this pursuit. The Criticality Analysis follows the major news reports on the key governance issues categorised under the following six (6) themes:

1. Policy and administration.
2. Transparency and accountability.
3. Anti-corruption.
4. Peace, security and stability.
5. Human rights and justice.
6. International relations and development

The Criticality Analysis assesses the key governance issues by employing rigorous narrative analysis. First, we collect the key governance issues from reliable and credible news sources. A preliminary screening is conducted to filter out low-impact and non-governance related issues. The issues are then categorised under the 6 main themes. The criticality analysis is not a performance assessment of government actions.

During the assessment, critical attention is paid to the factual accuracy of the reports, relevance and timeliness, and impact and significance. In view of this, the reports are corroborated by analysing same from multiple sources and monitoring the trends and development. In addition, expert opinions on the key issues are analysed to inform the final output of the Criticality Analysis which includes our recommendations for policy and practice to enhance public service delivery and accountable stewardship




# 1. The Political Twists to Ghana's National Security (NIB) Operations; the Manner of Execution and Fear Mongering Reportage.

Recent security operations conducted by Ghana's National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) and other state security agencies sparks concerns regarding their mode of execution, how the media covers them, and their political implications. While the operations are ostensibly legal, concerns have arisen over the forceful manner in which they are carried out, the sensationalism in media reportage, and the partisan interpretations that threaten the credibility of Ghana's law enforcement institutions.

The deployment of security operatives in high-profile operations raises questions about tactics and procedural fairness. The recent raid on Chairman Wontumi's residence, along with earlier searches conducted at the homes of former Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta and ex-Bank of Ghana Governor Dr. Ernest Addison, reflect a concerning trend. While legal justification for such actions exists, the militarized approach—including armed presence, restricted movement, and intimidation—often leaves an impression of political persecution rather than lawful enforcement. This execution style fosters public unease, raising fears that state institutions might be manipulated for political gain rather than genuine law enforcement.

Ghana's media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, but its framing of security operations has exacerbated tensions.

Terms like "raid", "storming", and "siege" dominate headlines, triggering public anxieties about political victimization rather than structured legal procedures. When compared to similar security actions in Western democracies, such as FBI searches of Donald Trump, Joe Biden, and Barack Obama's residences, Ghana's reportage leans toward sensationalism rather than legal interpretation. This form of reporting risks polarizing the discourse, painting investigations as political attacks rather than part of normal legal accountability mechanisms. A more neutral approach in Ghanaian journalism—prioritizing terms like "search" or "investigation" over "raid"—would ensure more balanced public discourse while reducing unnecessary political tension.

The timing and selectivity of security operations naturally invite political speculation. With multiple raids targeting former officials of the NPP government, members of the main opposition, NPP, argue that these actions are strategically aligned with the interests of the current administration, raising concerns about selective justice. While authorities emphasize legal enforcement, public figures and analysts—including Prof. Kwasi Aning—warn that perceived bias in security operations can damage state credibility and public trust. The security apparatus must ensure equal application of the law, avoiding actions that could be interpreted as politically motivated vendettas.




One major way to address these concerns is through institutional transparency—ensuring due process, consistent enforcement, and clear communication from security agencies to minimize partisan speculation. Ghana's recent security operations bring critical governance questions to the forefront. While legal authority justifies these actions, their execution style, media portrayal, and political interpretations demand scrutiny. A more measured approach—grounded in legal due process, responsible media coverage, and nonpartisan enforcement—is necessary to sustain public confidence in Ghana's institutions. Failure to do so risks deepening political polarization and undermining democratic accountability.

**Follow the trend and development of the story here:**

- Armed Security operatives storm Chairman Wontumi's house in Kumasi – Ghanatodayonline.com
- NIB withdraws officers from Wontumi's residence following tensions over botched arrest - Graphic Online
- You don't catch a wild dog unarmed - Deputy minister defends attempted raid on Wontumi
- How does President Mahama expect me to eat? - 'Poor' Chairman Wontumi cries out | Pulse Ghana
- Wontumi alleges intimidation and threats amid raid at his residence - MyJoyOnline



# 2. Empty Streets; how not to Decongest Ghana's Capital and Major cities.

Urban decongestion is often framed as a necessity for order, mobility, and modernization, but when executed without foresight, it can stifle economic activity, particularly in cities where informal trade is a lifeline. Accra's recent decongestion efforts raise critical questions: Are we creating functional urban spaces, or are we inadvertently draining economic vibrancy from our streets? A bustling street is more than just a crowded space—it's an economic ecosystem. Traders, transport operators, food vendors, and artisans all contribute to the informal economy, which sustains millions of livelihoods. When decongestion efforts forcibly remove these actors without alternative trading spaces, the result is economic displacement, leading to loss of income for informal traders, reduced consumer convenience and a decline in local commerce. Accra's Central Business District (CBD), once a hub of economic activity, risks becoming a sterile urban space if authorities fail to integrate informal trade into city planning.

New York City has embraced street vending as part of its urban fabric. Instead of banning vendors outright, the city has designated vending zones, issued permits, and created seasonal markets that allow informal traders to operate legally while maintaining urban order. Similarly, London's approach to urban planning integrates commerce, pedestrian movement, and city beautification.

Areas like Covent Garden and Borough Market thrive because they blend formal retail with informal trade, ensuring economic vibrancy without congestion. Furthermore, Marrakesh's souks are a testament to how cities can preserve informal trade while maintaining order. Instead of erasing street commerce, authorities have structured market spaces, allowing vendors to operate within designated areas without disrupting urban flow.

Ghana's urban authorities must redefine decongestion beyond mere evictions. A more sustainable approach would include designated vending zones with proper infrastructure, time-based trading regulations to balance commerce and mobility, and public-private partnerships to integrate informal trade into urban planning. Rather than emptying streets, Ghana must reimagine them—creating spaces that are functional, inclusive, and economically vibrant.

Urban decongestion should not come at the cost of economic vitality. Accra and other Ghanaian cities must learn from global models that balance order with commerce, ensuring that decongestion enhances rather than erases economic activity. A thriving city is not just organized—it is economically alive



**Follow the trend and development of the story here:**

- AMA, KoKMA begin decongestion exercise in Accra - Graphic Online
- Accra Metropolitan Assembly launches major decongestion drive in CBD to restore order and sanitation
- Accra's traders return to the streets days after AMA's decongestion exercise
- Photos: AMA cracks down on return of traders on Day 3 of decongestion exercise - MyJoyOnline

# 3. Poor and Inefficient Hydro-drainage System is Major Cause of Floods in Accra.

Accra, Ghana's vibrant capital, is no stranger to the devastating impacts of flooding. Although climatic factors like heavy rains contribute, a closer look reveals that the underlying challenge is not necessarily the amount of rainfall but rather a grossly inadequate and poorly maintained hydro-drainage system. The recent episodes where modest rainfall led to severe flooding and loss of life underscore that the Capital's built environment is largely out of sync with the demands of modern urban management.

Accra's drainage system remains a patchwork of open gutters and shallow drains that were never designed to cope with today's urban demands. Unlike cities with robust underground sewage networks that effectively divert water away during rains, Accra relies largely on surface drainage. The result is that even moderate downpours can overwhelm these antiquated systems, leading to widespread waterlogging and inundation. his insufficiency is symptomatic of a broader infrastructural neglect, where the pace of urban growth far outstrips the development of basic services.

A critical multiplier of Accra's drainage woes is the rampant blockage of drains. Plastic waste, refuse, and other debris frequently clog the few drainage channels available. Despite repeated calls for better waste management practices, municipal efforts to clear these blockages have been sporadic and ineffective.

This issue is compounded by public behavior where informal dumping is commonplace, turning potentially functional drainage pipes into water traps during rainy episodes.

Another significant factor is the rampant, often illegal, construction along natural waterways. As urban sprawl continues unabated, buildings encroach on areas that naturally serve as flood plains. This not only reduces the available space for water to disperse but also forces runoff directly into already inadequate drainage systems. The failure to enforce zoning laws, together with inconsistent urban planning regulations, has left Accra more vulnerable each rainy season.

The consequences of poor drainage management extend far beyond temporary inconvenience. Every heavy downpour translates into a cascade of socio-economic hardships. With recent incidents claiming lives—such as the reported deaths in areas like Ga East and Adenta—each flood event becomes a stark reminder of the system's failure to protect its citizens. Floodwaters routinely damage roads, bridges, and public utilities, leading to costly repairs that strain government budgets and disrupt daily life. Many small and medium-sized enterprises suffer losses when floodwaters damage inventories or halt operations altogether. The informal sector, which plays a crucial role in Accra's economy, is particularly hard hit, thereby exacerbating poverty and unemployment in communities already on the margins.



Stagnant water resulting from ineffective drainage becomes a breeding ground for waterborne diseases. Cholera outbreaks, malaria, and other illnesses often spike after floods due to the proliferation of mosquitoes and the contamination of water supplies. Furthermore, the accumulation of waste within clogged drains poses long-term environmental hazards that compromise the city's ecological health.

Many global cities have made significant strides in mitigating flood risks by investing in state-of-the-art drainage systems and rigorous enforcement of building regulations. For instance, New York City and recently Tokyo have integrated underground sewage tunnels and advanced water management systems that quickly channel excess water away from urban centers. London in particular has developed a network of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and permeable pavements that reduce runoff while enhancing green spaces. Meanwhile, Melbourne and other major cities in Australia have implemented community-based warning systems and robust maintenance schedules for clearing drains. These cities illustrate that the challenges are not insurmountable. By prioritizing preventive infrastructure investments and enforcing strict urban planning measures, they ensure both economic activity and public safety are maintained even during heavy rainfall.

Accra's repeated flood disasters serve as a stark counterpoint—a failure not of nature, but a failure of governance and foresight.

Building a resilient Accra requires a paradigm shift. A primary strategy involves revamping the existing drainage network. This includes establishing a comprehensive underground sewage and stormwater system designed to cope with the intensity of modern climatic patterns. Upgrading these systems requires a substantial capital investment, but the long-term payoffs—in reduced disaster recovery costs and enhanced public safety—would be significant. Secondly, instituting an integrated waste management system that emphasizes efficient and regular clearing of drains is essential. Public education campaigns aimed at reducing indiscriminate dumping, coupled with stricter enforcement of waste disposal regulations, can help ensure that storm drains remain unobstructed. Cities that have successfully integrated such systems see dramatically lower incidences of urban flooding. Additionally, Accra must enforce zoning regulations that prohibit construction on natural waterways and flood-prone areas. Leveraging technology—such as satellite imagery and geospatial mapping—can assist in identifying and mitigating risk factors before they become disasters.



A coordinated approach involving local governments, urban planners, and community stakeholders is vital to ensure that future growth does not repeat past mistakes.

The recurring flooding in Accra is a clarion call revealing the city's chronic infrastructural neglect. Although climate change may herald more volatile weather patterns, the primary culprit remains a poor and inefficient drainage system compounded by waste mismanagement and unplanned urban growth. The urgency for modernizing infrastructure, improving waste management, and enforcing sound urban planning cannot be overstated. Accra's future—its economic vitality and the well-being of its citizens—depends on resolving these systemic issues before each heavy rain transforms vibrant streets into treacherous waterways. Ultimately, the transformation of Accra's urban landscape hinges on proactive governance and strategic investment. By learning from global best practices and committing to long-term solutions, Ghana's capital can evolve into a resilient, thriving metropolis capable of withstanding the challenges of climate change and rapid urbanization.

**Follow the trend and development of the story here:**

- NADMO confirms 5 deaths in Accra floods, blames poor drainage, urban planning failures - MyJoyOnline
- Perennial Flooding in Accra: A Threat to Socio-Economic Stability
- Poor drainage system blamed for Accra floods – NADMO - Ghanamma.com
- Ghana has no flooding problem; it suffers poor planning, lack of enforcement - Amanda Clinton - MyJoyOnline

# 4. How Ghana's Opposition Parties Can Safeguard its Envious Democracy.

Ghana's democracy—long hailed as one of Africa's most enviable systems of governance—is built on a foundation of free elections, peaceful transitions, and the active participation of its citizens. However, as pressures mount from institutional challenges, waning public trust, and a political landscape increasingly dominated by a duopoly of power, the role of opposition parties becomes ever more crucial. These parties are not merely political competitors; they are the watchdogs and voices of accountability who articulate dissent and offer alternative policies, essential for revitalizing and safeguarding the nation's democratic gains.

Opposition parties, by holding governing institutions to account, are integral to the health of any democracy.

Opposition parties perform a critical "police patrol" function. They scrutinize governmental decisions, expose corruption, and ensure that public policies serve the interests of the nation rather than a select few. By regularly challenging governmental policies in Parliament, organizing press conferences, and engaging in public debates, they provide an essential counterbalance to executive power.

A vibrant opposition is expected to present credible policies that offer clear alternatives to the ruling government. In Ghana, the criticism following the unprecedented electoral defeat of the main opposition in 2024 underscores the current shortfall in offering fresh, innovative policy solutions.

Even in the aftermath of such setbacks, opposition parties must work to rebuild their credibility by crafting proposals that directly address the socio-economic and governance challenges facing Ghanaians.

In any pluralistic society, dissent and diversity of opinion are inevitable—and invigorating. Opposition parties channel the grievances, aspirations, and diverse views of the citizenry. By engaging with civil society, grassroots organizations, and everyday Ghanaians, these parties act as amplifiers of public sentiment, ensuring that government policies remain responsive to the people's needs. This role is vital in a society where modern communication and social media have heightened public awareness and expectations for transparency.

The massive defeat of the main opposition, NPP, in the 2024 elections has left many questioning its ability to serve as an effective alternative. Some critics argue that this defeat—while not terminal—is a setback that undermines the opposition's authority to hold the government accountable. To regain public trust, the NPP must now reframe its platform, distancing itself from electoral self-interest and recommitting to a genuine public service mandate.

Operating in a political system traditionally dominated by two major parties—the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP)—smaller opposition groups face the daunting task of carving out a significant public role.




Even within this duopoly, party members often wrestle with reconciling inconsistent rhetoric when transitioning from opposition to government, thereby complicating their credibility. Overcoming these constraints requires both internal reform and strategic collaboration among opposition factions.

In recent years, there has been a growing sentiment of disenchantment with established political parties in Ghana. Surveys have highlighted a declining trust in political institutions, which feeds into a broader narrative of political paralysis. Opposition parties must find innovative ways to break this cycle by restoring a sense of hope, transparency, and genuine accountability among the electorate.

For opposition parties to effectively safeguard Ghana's democracy, several strategic pathways must be considered. Developing strong ties with local communities is essential. By returning to the basics and understanding the ground-level challenges that Ghanaians face, opposition parties can tailor their policy proposals to be both practical and transformative. Grassroots engagement also involves robust public outreach—mainly through establishment of ward (polling station) branches with elected executives, town hall meetings, social media dialogues, and collaborative initiatives with civil society—that rebuilds trust and opens channels for genuine dialogue.

In the context of a political landscape dominated by two major parties, unity among smaller opposition forces can enhance their collective bargaining power. Forming coalitions—or even strategic partnerships with like-minded members from the major opposition—can create a more cohesive and influential voice. This unity strengthens the opposition's capacity to challenge abuses of power and constructively critique government policies.

Beyond mere criticism, opposition parties must focus on proposing actionable solutions that respond to Ghana's pressing challenges. Whether addressing economic inequality, corruption, or poor public service delivery, detailed policy frameworks can provide voters with tangible alternatives that demonstrate competence and foresight. Effective policy alternatives are not only ideological blueprints—they are roadmaps for national transformation.

Rapid changes in media consumption call for a modern approach to political communication. Opposition parties must harness the power of digital media to disseminate their ideas widely, counter government narratives, and engage with a younger, more dynamic electorate. This digital transformation is necessary to counteract negative portrayals and build a positive public image.




Lastly, opposition parties need to embrace internal reforms and establish systems that are democratic, transparent and merit-based. Strengthening internal democracy not only improves party governance but also enhances credibility by reflecting the very values they advocate for in national politics.

Ghana's democracy—envied across the continent for its resilience and vibrant electoral culture—rests on the bedrock of accountability, transparency, and public engagement. Opposition parties are central in preserving these democratic qualities. Despite recent setbacks and the erosion of trust, opposition forces still hold the potential to serve as an effective counterweight, provided they recalibrate their approach, embrace unity, and directly address the public's grievances.

By rebuilding credibility through grassroots initiatives, forming strong coalitions, offering detailed policy alternatives, leveraging modern media, and committing to internal reforms, Ghana's opposition parties can not only safeguard the nation's democracy but also propel it towards an era of renewed hope and inclusive governance. Ensuring that the democratic space remains open and vibrant is not just the responsibility of the ruling party—it is a shared mandate that demands the active participation of every opposition voice dedicated to the collective good.

# Recommendations



1. Authorities and media outlets in Ghana must work in tandem to ensure that security operations are carried out with transparency and impartiality, while the media adopts a measured, neutral tone when reporting these events. An independent oversight body should be established to review the conduct of security forces and hold them accountable for any deviations from due process. Simultaneously, media regulators must encourage objective reportage that informs the public without inflaming partisan tensions, thereby helping to restore trust in both state institutions and the press.

2. Accra's decongestion policy should be restructured to balance urban order with economic vitality by implementing designated trading zones and improved relocation strategies for street vendors. Urban planners and local government authorities need to involve community stakeholders in decision-making and invest in infrastructural upgrades that support both pedestrian mobility and vibrant economic activity. Complementary measures such as improved waste management and regulatory enforcement can transform the CBD into a space that is organized, economically dynamic, and conducive to sustainable growth.

3. To mitigate the devastating impacts of flooding in Accra, the government should embark on a comprehensive overhaul of the city's outdated drainage infrastructure. This includes expanding and modernizing both storm drainage and underground sewage systems, coupled with a rigorous maintenance and waste management program to prevent blockages. Integrated urban planning is essential to restrict construction on natural waterways and flood plains, while community education on waste disposal and environmental stewardship can play a critical role in creating a resilient metropolitan environment.

4. Ghana's opposition parties must focus on rebuilding credibility and fostering a renewed commitment to accountability by engaging deeply at the grassroots level and forming strategic coalitions. This involves developing clear, actionable policy alternatives that directly address citizens' grievances while maintaining transparent internal governance. By leveraging modern communication channels to reach a broader audience and consistently challenging executive excesses through parliamentary oversight, the opposition can evolve into a robust force that not only critiques but also contributes constructively to the country's democratic process.

IMANI
Center for Policy & Education

IMANI Center for Policy & Education is a Think Tank of considerable local and international repute based in Ghana. Founded on the 9th of March 2004, IMANI has carved a niche in Ghana's policy environment for putting out objective, independent analysis and critique on many issues, using tried and tested techniques that apply across different disciplines.

Office Loc: No. KD14 Darko Street KOANS Estate-Kutunse

P.O.Box Box 443, Achimota, Accra-Ghana

Tel: +233 554 309 966 | 0302 972 939

Email: info@imanighana.org

**Support IMANI'**s course of freedom as we continue to blend accessible research within high-powered advocacy.

Please contact our **Accounts & Finance Officer, Caroline** cackomdufie@imanighana.org on **donating** to support our work at IMANI.