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Criticality Analysis of Governance & Economic Issues

Center for Economic, Governance and Political Affairs

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Center for Policy & Education

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Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues

September 22–27, 2025





What is the Criticality Analysis of Governance Issues?

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.

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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

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 accountable stewardship



UNGA80 Voices: Reform, Responsibility, & the Price of Global Leadership

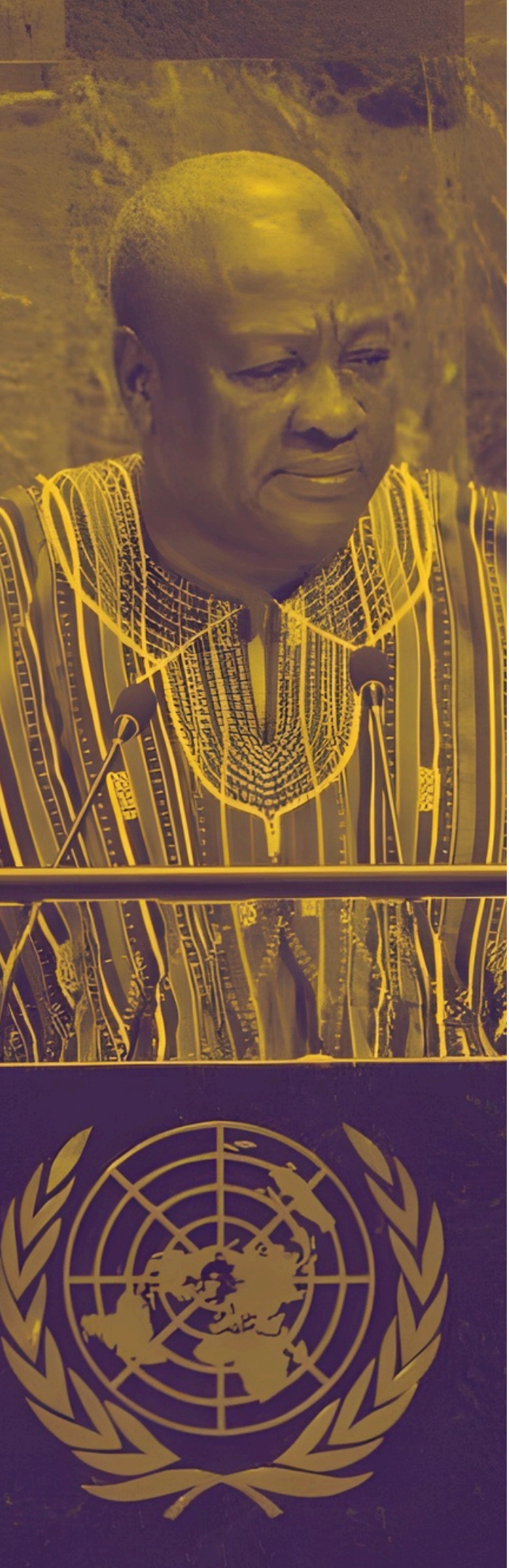
The 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA80) convened at a moment of profound global uncertainty. From the wars in Ukraine, Sudan, and Gaza to the accelerating climate crisis, leaders from across the world used their podium time to call for reform, justice, and renewed multilateralism. Among the most compelling interventions were those of President William Ruto of Kenya, President John Mahama of Ghana, and President Alexander Stubb of Finland. Their speeches, though shaped by different national contexts, converged on common themes: the urgent need for UN reform, the inequities of the global financial architecture, and the moral imperative of peace and climate action.

Yet beneath the rhetoric of reform lies a quieter but equally critical measure of commitment: the financial contributions of member states. The UN's ability to function depends not only on lofty declarations but also on the timely fulfilment of assessed contributions. Here, the record is uneven—and telling.

The Voices of Reform: Kenya, Ghana, and Finland

President Ruto's address was pragmatic and solution-oriented. He pressed for Africa's rightful place on the Security Council, citing Kenya's leadership in Haiti as proof of the continent's peacekeeping capacity. He also positioned Africa as a climate solutions hub, pointing to Kenya's 93% renewable energy base and the Nairobi Declaration as evidence that the continent is not merely a victim of climate change but a leader in green innovation.

President Mahama's speech was more historical and justice-driven. He declared that "the future is African," but warned that this future would be stunted without structural reform. He demanded reparations for slavery and colonization, condemned atrocities in Gaza, and called for a "reset agenda" for both the UN and global financial institutions. His framing was unapologetically bold: Africa must not only be included but must be recognized as central to the global order.



President Stubb of Finland, meanwhile, spoke from the vantage point of a small but principled state. He emphasized values, law, and diplomacy, condemning wars as "failures of humanity." He supported Security Council expansion, including permanent African seats, and urged the UN to adapt or risk irrelevance. It was a call for balance: reform, yes, but anchored in universal principles.

Together, these speeches painted a picture of a world in transition—where Africa demands recognition, Europe calls for principled reform, and the Global South insists on justice in finance and climate.

The Honour Roll: Who Pays, Who Delays

The UN's Honour Roll—the list of countries that have paid their regular budget assessments in full—offers a sobering counterpoint to the speeches. In 2024, only 142 member states managed to honour their full assessments at some point during the year. By August 2025, the number stood at 127 member states who had paid in full. This means that nearly one-third of the UN's membership had not met their obligations, underscoring the fragility of the institution's financial base.

The Honour Roll is more than an accounting exercise. It is a measure of credibility. Calls for reform ring hollow when not backed by financial responsibility. The UN cannot function on rhetoric alone; it requires the steady flow of contributions to fund peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, and development programmes.

Africa's Top Contributors in 2024 and 2025

Despite economic constraints, several African states have consistently honoured their obligations and emerged as leading contributors on the continent:

- **South Africa:** $7.7 million in 2024; $8.5 million in 2025
- **Nigeria:** $5.7 million in 2024 (though not yet on the 2025 Honour Roll as of August)
- **Egypt:** $4.4 million in 2024; $6.1 million in 2025
- **Algeria:** $3.4 million in 2024; $2.96 million in 2025
- **Morocco:** $1.7 million in 2024; $2.0 million in 2025
- **Kenya:** $945,000 in 2024; $1.26 million in 2025

These figures demonstrate both continuity and growth. South Africa and Egypt, in particular, have increased their contributions, reflecting their aspirations for continental leadership. Kenya's rise above the $1 million mark in 2025 is also symbolically significant, aligning with President Ruto's reformist voice at UNGA80.

Ghana's Silence on the Honour Roll

In contrast, Ghana's absence from the Honour Roll since 2022, when it last paid $689,441, is striking. At a time when President Mahama is calling for a global reset and demanding Africa's rightful place in the Security Council, Ghana's failure to meet its own assessed contributions undermines its moral authority.

The gap between rhetoric and responsibility is not unique to Ghana, but it is particularly glaring given the boldness of its UNGA80 address.

This is not merely a matter of bookkeeping. Non-payment weakens a country's influence in negotiations, risks the loss of voting rights under Article 19 of the UN Charter, and erodes credibility in calls for reform. For a nation that positions itself as a voice of Africa and the Global South, financial discipline is as important as diplomatic eloquence.

The Price of Global Leadership

The UNGA80 speeches remind us that the world is at a crossroads. Reform of the Security Council, restructuring of global finance, and urgent climate action are all necessary. But these ambitions require resources. The Honour Roll is a reminder that leadership is measured not only by words but by deeds—and in the UN system, deeds are often denominated in dollars.

For Africa, the lesson is clear. To demand a greater voice, the continent must also demonstrate greater consistency in meeting its obligations. South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria, Morocco, and Kenya are showing the way. Ghana, despite its eloquence, must catch up.

As the UN marks its 80th anniversary, the credibility of its reform agenda will depend not only on speeches in New York but also on the quiet, essential act of paying one's dues. In the end, the price of global leadership is both political and financial—and those who aspire to shape the future must be willing to shoulder both.



Between Sovereignty and Accountability: The Sahel's Break with the ICC and the Imperative of Reform

On September 22, 2025, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger jointly announced their withdrawal from the International Criminal Court (ICC), a move framed as a sovereign assertion against what they described as "selective justice" and "neocolonial interference." The decision, however, has been widely interpreted as a shield against scrutiny of their own militaries, which stand accused of grave human rights violations. Reports by United Nations experts earlier this year documented summary executions and enforced disappearances in Mali, allegedly carried out by state forces in collaboration with foreign paramilitary groups. Against this backdrop, the promise of establishing a regional human rights court under the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) appears less a bold innovation than an illusory gesture—an institution designed more to deflect international oversight than to deliver justice.

Having withdrawn from the ECOWAS, the credibility of such a court rests on the standards it would adopt.

If the AES rejects the Rome Statute and distances itself from the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, what normative framework would guide its judgments? Without alignment to universal principles, the risk is that accountability becomes selective, serving political expediency rather than the protection of citizens. This tension is captured poignantly in the Akan proverb: "If a naked man promises you a cloth, listen to his name." The juntas' pledge to safeguard rights through a court of their own design is undermined by their track record of repression and impunity. Justice, in such a context, is unlikely to emanate from the people; it is more likely to be curated by military leaders seeking legitimacy.

The broader implications extend beyond the Sahel. The withdrawal of these states from the ICC reflects a growing contestation of global governance norms, where sovereignty is invoked to resist external accountability. Yet sovereignty without responsibility risks degenerating into authoritarianism.

This is why the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) remain the last institutional bulwarks for citizens caught under repressive, unconstitutional governments. As world leaders debate reforms at the 80th United Nations General Assembly, the same urgency must be directed at the AU. The credibility of both institutions depends on their ability to adapt to new geopolitical realities while safeguarding the rights of ordinary people.

For the AU, reform is not optional. Its Peace and Security Council has too often been paralyzed by political compromise, while its enforcement of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance has been inconsistent. To remain relevant, the AU must strengthen its judicial organs, empower the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and ensure that member states comply with its rulings. Equally important is the inclusion of civil society and grassroots voices in continental decision-making, so that the AU speaks not only for governments but for the people they govern. Without such reforms, the AU risks becoming the proverbial naked man—promising cloth it does not possess.

The UN faces parallel challenges. Calls for Security Council reform reflect a recognition that global governance structures remain skewed toward the interests of a few powerful states. Yet reform must go beyond institutional rearrangement to reaffirm the UN's role as a guarantor of human rights and international law. In regions like the Sahel, where national institutions are compromised, the UN's monitoring, reporting, and accountability mechanisms are indispensable.

The credibility of the international system depends on its willingness to confront abuses, even when committed by governments that invoke sovereignty as a shield.

Ultimately, the question is whether justice in Africa will be defined by the people or by the regimes that govern them. The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from the ICC is a reminder that institutions can be hollowed out when they are stripped of legitimacy and accountability. For both the AU and the UN, the task ahead is to ensure that reform is not cosmetic but transformative—anchored in the principle that sovereignty derives from the people, and that justice must serve them first. Anything less risks leaving citizens unprotected, while leaders weave garments of impunity from the language of independence.

Criticality Analysis of Key Economic Issues

September 22–27, 2025





Introduction

The objective of this report is to provide a clear and concise evaluation of the most important economic news stories in the preceding week, focusing on their factual accuracy, relevance and timeliness, and impact and significance.

Methodology

Selected publications are grouped under five central economic themes. These include:

- Economic Stability.
- Growth and Job Creation.
- Taxation and Revenue Mobilization.
- Trade and Investment.
- Infrastructure Digital Economy.

Evaluation

The analysis criteria are applied at this stage. News stories are evaluated based on the following:

Factual accuracy: can the facts in the news be verified; is the news published by other outlets; are there links and references to original sources.

Relevance and timeliness: is the news a developing story or does it provide updates on existing stories?

Impact and significance: does the news have a potential impact on society, policy and the economy; is it of high interest to the public?

World Bank's 2025 Policy Notes – Anchoring Ghana's Recent Gains



Ghana's economy has begun to show signs of recovery. Debt-to-GDP has fallen faster than anticipated, inflation is gradually easing, and the cedi has found some stability after years of turbulence. These improvements have restored a measure of confidence, but they are not yet a guarantee of durable progress. Without deeper reforms, the gains of today could quickly fade tomorrow.

The World Bank's Policy Notes 2025: Transforming Ghana in a Generation spoke directly to this concern. At its launch, the Bank reminded us that while the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia–Ukraine war aggravated Ghana's economic stress, they were not the root causes of the crisis. Rather, they exposed long-standing weaknesses, heavy reliance on costly domestic borrowing, weak revenue mobilization, inefficiencies in sectors such as energy and cocoa, and governance lapses that have eroded accountability.

To address these vulnerabilities, the Bank outlines four strategic foundations for Ghana's long-term transformation. The first is restoring macroeconomic and financial stability. For Ghana, this means not just consolidating fiscally but doing so in a way that is sustainable and transparent. It requires broadening the tax base, reducing leakages, and tackling the mountain of arrears that continues to undermine confidence in the public purse. Crucially, it also demands reforms in energy and cocoa, two sectors that have become persistent drains. ECG's inefficiencies and Cocobod's recurring financial struggles weigh heavily on the budget. Injecting private sector participation in ECG's operations and governance reforms in Cocobod are not just technical fixes; they are political tests of whether Ghana is willing to address problems at their root.

The second foundation is raising productivity and competitiveness. Here, the challenge is to diversify beyond extractives and create an environment where the private sector can thrive in manufacturing, agribusiness, and services. This means reducing regulatory bottlenecks, encouraging technology adoption, and strengthening education and skills so that the labour force can meet the demands of a changing economy. It also requires a social contract that protects the vulnerable, not as an afterthought, but as an integral part of growth. A competitive economy is not just about firms; it is about people, and ensuring that growth does not widen inequality but broadens opportunity.

The third foundation is sustainable management of natural resources and resilient infrastructure. Ghana's growth has long been tied to its natural wealth, but unsustainable exploitation has eroded value over time. Climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forestry, and more accountable resource management are not just environmental concerns; they are economic imperatives. Boosting agricultural productivity and building stronger agribusiness value chains could transform rural livelihoods while reducing reliance on volatile commodity exports. At the same time, bridging the infrastructure gap, from transport and water to digital connectivity, will require more efficient public spending and innovative financing through public-private partnerships. Without reliable infrastructure, productivity gains will remain limited. The fourth foundation is strengthening governance and public institutions.

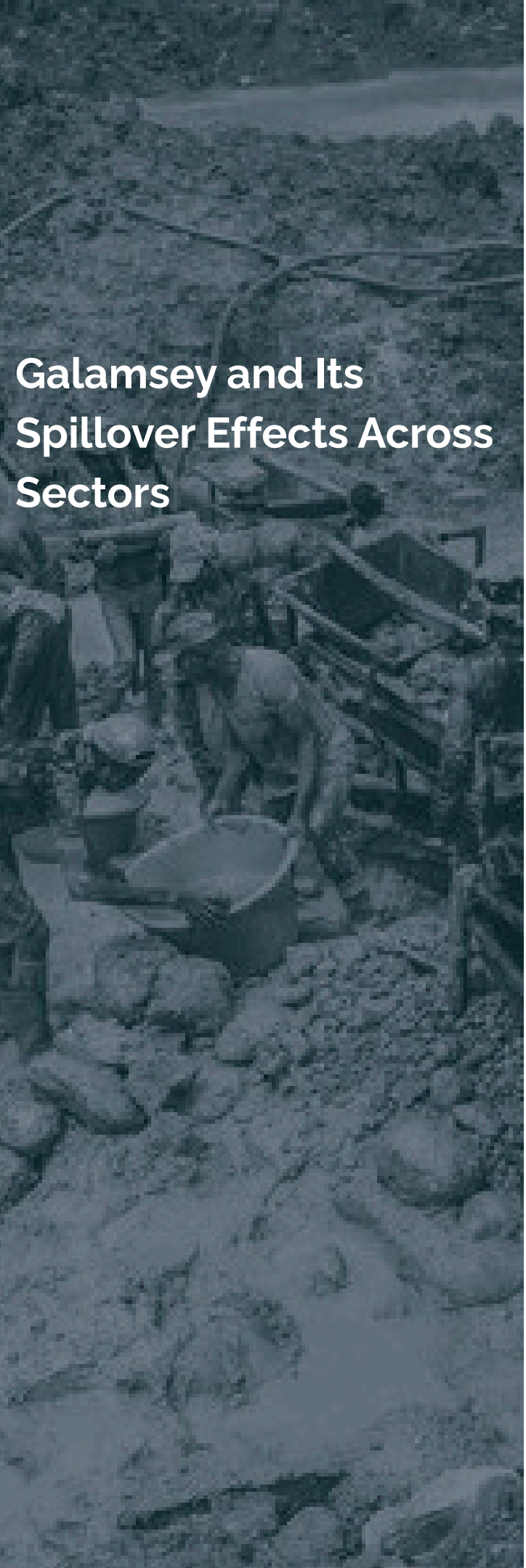
This is perhaps the most difficult, yet the most essential. Ghana's institutional weaknesses, from political interference in the civil service to corruption and weak accountability, have long undermined policy implementation. Reducing political capture of state institutions, empowering local government with capacity and resources, and reforming state-owned enterprises are all central to building a governance framework that can deliver results. Governance is the thread that ties all the other foundations together; without it, fiscal reforms, productivity measures, and resource management will fail to gain traction.

The thrust of the policy notes is clear: Ghana has an opportunity to build on the stability it has achieved, but doing so requires more than quick wins. It requires discipline in financing, consistency in reform, and a willingness to confront politically sensitive issues in energy, cocoa, and taxation.

Ghana has never lacked well-written policy frameworks; what it has often lacked is the sustainability of those policies and the institutional will to see them through. Too often, political expediency and mismanagement have reversed progress and brought the country back to square one. Moving forward, the task is not simply to celebrate short-term improvements but to guard against complacency. The unwillingness to act decisively and consistently is what keeps Ghana from breaking the cycle. If this moment of relative stability is used wisely, the country can truly transform in a generation.

News Report

- *Boosting productivity, infrastructure and skills key to Ghana's sustained growth – World Bank*
- *Ghana must break away from cyclical IMF programmes – World Bank*
- *Prioritize concessional loans over domestic borrowing – World Bank to Ghana*
- *2025 Policy Notes: Transforming Ghana in a Generation.*



Galamsey and Its Spillover Effects Across Sectors

Illegal mining, or galamsey, has evolved from being dismissed as an environmental nuisance into one of the most pressing economic and governance crises facing Ghana today. Its tentacles now reach across nearly every sector, undermining agriculture, energy, water, health, and even national security. The problem is no longer sectoral; it is systemic.

The agricultural sector remains most visibly exposed. The Minister for Food and Agriculture has described the harmful chemicals used in galamsey as the single greatest threat to food production. Cocoa production is declining as fertile lands are destroyed, and rubber producers warn that their industry faces a looming existential risk. Beyond cash crops, the contamination of soils and water raises alarms over food security, with toxic chemicals increasingly being detected in staples meant for local consumption.

The energy and infrastructure sectors are also under siege. Ghana Gas has warned that illegal mining encroaches dangerously close to gas pipelines, risking catastrophic damage. GRIDCo has told Parliament that transmission towers are being undermined by miners digging beneath them, with staff even coming under fire in some areas. The implications are serious: a power sector already battling structural inefficiencies must now confront sabotage from lawless activity.

The water sector bears another heavy cost. The Ghana Water Company Limited has been forced to shut down plants such as the Kwanyako Headworks due to galamsey pollution. Across the board, water treatment costs have surged as facilities spend more resources distilling polluted water, costs that eventually translate into higher tariffs.

Ironically, while consumers are asked to conserve water and pay more, polluters continue unchecked.

The health sector will likely carry the longest burden. Mercury and cyanide residues in rivers and food chains are silent killers that may not show immediate effects but will drive chronic illnesses for decades. Rising waterborne diseases in mining communities are an early signal of what could become a nationwide public health crisis.

It is against this backdrop that there have been intensified calls for the government to declare a state of emergency. Their case is that galamsey now meets the constitutional threshold: it endangers life, water, and livelihoods on such a scale that extraordinary measures are justified.

IMANI's Criticality Analysis offers a pragmatic middle path[1]. A narrowly targeted, time-bound emergency could secure the most devastated hotspots, dismantle entrenched criminal syndicates, and give enforcement agencies the breathing room needed to apply the new regulatory measures effectively. But this must be matched with transparency, judicial oversight, clear performance indicators, and a transition plan that embeds community compensation, environmental restoration, and alternative livelihoods. Otherwise, Ghana risks militarizing a problem without solving its root causes.

The galamsey debate, therefore, reveals a fundamental governance dilemma: Ghana must act with urgency, but not recklessness. The ecological, economic, and human costs of delay are mounting by the day, yet the risks of unchecked emergency powers are equally real. What is clear, however, is that incremental enforcement has failed. To save its rivers, restore its farms, secure its energy infrastructure, and protect its people's health, Ghana must treat galamsey as a national emergency, not necessarily in the legal sense of Article 31, but in the practical sense of political will, policy priority, and resource allocation. Anything less would be a dangerous gamble with the country's future.



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

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