

GHANA

DECEMBER 2008 ELECTIONS IN GHANA: STAKES, CHALLENGES & PERSPECTIVES

In recognition of the role and achievements of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in Africa, particularly in West Africa, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations at its substantive session of 2006 granted WANEP Special Consultative Status to the UN. WANEP is therefore mandated to designate official representatives to the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna to further its advocacy and outreach strategies for peace and human security.

1. INTRODUCTION

In ten days Ghanaians would be going to the polls to choose members of parliament and a new President. The campaign euphoria and enthusiasm is heightening as the political and media landscape is rife with slogans, posters and voter enticing messages. Notwithstanding, the heated socio-political atmosphere has also been characterised by sporadic outbreaks of violence resulting in loss of lives and destruction of property. Given the fact that Ghana's election is so critical not only for the country's drive towards unperturbed democratic consolidation but also serves as the hope for Africa's democracy that has backpedalled in hitherto progressive countries, the importance of Ghana's election cannot be overstated.

Irrespective of the history of its stormy past with memories of military regimes between 1966 to 1969, 1972 to 1979, and 1981 to 1992, Ghana has conducted four regularly scheduled multi-party elections (1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004) - and now heading towards its fifth one in December 2008¹. Notwithstanding the country's four consistent electoral track records, the

general anticipation is that, past glory should set the stage for widening present and future democratic platforms that must ensure that the new polls should be better than the previous. Nothing should be taken for granted. It is in the light of this great expectation and hope that WANEP envisaged this briefing.

This policy brief examines and analyzes:

- I. The critical stakes: the issues at stake (political context): this is briefly examined through a flash back into history since independence and the various political leanings that emerged and though truncated by the years of military coups, the ideologies did not die. Politics today is still very much influenced and haunted by this past. Our analyses are that this past must be overcome through genuine reconciliation so that Ghana can continue to lead in its strides towards a sustainable democratic culture. We also examine the implications for Africa.
- II. Threats of and/or accelerators of violence: This section examines the various incidents and indicators perceived to constitute a threat to peaceful elections. Some of the issues are imbedded on cultural and socio-

economic issues that may potentially or likely be exploited for electoral purposes.

- III. Strengths (reasons for hope) of the Ghanaian system: Despite the challenges, systems have evolved some shock absorbers and institutional structures capable of arresting the fears and threats to peaceful elections. This section highlights those strengths as we look up to the December 7, 2008 polls in the context of the socio-political landscape in Ghana;
- IV. Envisaged scenarios: We would attempt painting envisaged scenarios (good and bad cases) emanating from the analysis and realities on ground;
- V. Options for response: This would be in the form of recommendations to major stakeholders. All in all, WANEP posits that nothing should be taken for granted even as we strongly admonish that Ghana cannot afford to disappoint Africa. A successful election in Ghana would redeem an African image that has just been recently soiled in Kenya and Zimbabwe, giving the false impression that democracy is retrograding or cannot work in Africa.

¹ E.Gyimah-Boadi, Afrobarometre Briefing Paper No. 51. June 2008: (Popular Attitudes To Democracy in Ghana, 2008).

West Africa Early Warning & EARLY RESPONSE Network (WARN)

The West Africa Early Warning Network (WARN) is an integral part of the West Africa Preventive Peacebuilding Program co-ordinated by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP). Through its WARN Program, WANEP is setting the stage for a civil society-based early warning and response network in Africa with emphasis on human security.

WARN covers the entire Economic

Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region including Cameroon and Chad. Our focus was initially the Mano River Basin countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire. We have since expanded to cover the entire West Africa sub-region.

Since 2002, WANEP entered into an agreement with ECOWAS through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in

the framework of capacity building in Conflict Prevention. One of the goals of this agreement is to interface WARN with the ECOWAS Early Warning Systems to optimize early warning and conflict prevention in West Africa. In view of this development, WANEP has been operating a liaison office located at the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, Nigeria since April 2003.

2. THE CRITICAL STAKES OF THE DECEMBER 2008 GHANA ELECTIONS

This section attempts to identify what it is that makes this election different from past elections, delving into issues that serve as motivating factors driving the electorate and the to be elected.

2.1. Political History and the Ideological Divide

Ghana enjoys the patriotic pride for being the first black African Nation to gain independence, as well as an inspirational role model to other African states for pioneering the hopes and aspirations of the Pan-African ideology injected in African scholars and political activists during the independence struggle.² This well meaning political philosophy born from the Gold Coast instilled a spirit of self-determination, which then subsequently paved the way for many African nations to move toward self-rule. In spite of its enviable contribution to independence and post-independence political history of the continent, the country's military-civilian democracy and civilian-civilian democratic transition cannot be narrated without citing challenges and pitfalls.

The history of participatory democratic governance and the contextual factors that determine or influence politically motivated violence in Ghana is expressive within the three most influential political traditions and their intense competitions for political space. These are: the Nkrumahists (CPP), the Danquah-Busiaists (NPP), and the Rawlingsists traditions (NDC). Implicitly, each tradition is a characteristic of each leader and the political philosophy they fanatically believed.³ Today, the canonization of the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the founder of (CPP), and his national legacy in a way has softened the political rivalry between the new generation of Nkrumahists (CPP) and the Danquah-Busiaists (NPP) than their predecessors – unlike the competition between the newly emerged Rawlingsists (NDC) and the contemporary Danquah-Busiaists (NPP).

There is no denial that the old political grudge of the twentieth century between the Nkrumahists (CPP) and the Danquah-Busiaists (NPP) are not resurfacing and spilling over to the 21st Century democratic

discourse. Nonetheless, the lower prospect for the new generation of Nkrumahists to compete at the same political platform with the Danquah-Busiaists traditions today has weakened the hitherto competitive tensions between them. Interestingly, the contemporary bitter political rivalry between the Rawlingsists (NDC) and Danquah-Busiaists (NPP) is a reminiscence of the earlier post-independent days between the predecessors of the Nkrumahists and Danquah-Busiaists traditions. Since the transformation from the military to democratic dispensation of John Jerry Rawlings from Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) to a National Democratic Congress (NDC) in 1993, the NDC has continually been troubled for the perceived past human rights records of the former president and its founder, a factor used by rival parties for political advantage against the NDC party. In the lead up to the December 2008 elections, pro NPP newspapers continue to refer to human rights abuses of the PNDC era. The NDC response has been to remind the electorate of the current serving members of the Government who are members of the NPP who served in the PNDC revolutionary government. Likewise, pro-NDC newspapers also refer to incidences of human rights abuses under the Presidency of John Kuffour of the NPP Government. Ghana's past political history is haunting its present. Even after attempts at national reconciliation through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) initiated by the Government of the NPP in which leading Religious figures played active roles, a cursory political observation can highlight the contradictions of a reconciliation effort that has not reconciled Ghanaians because contending political parties are incapable of moving away from the challenges of Ghana political evolution and history.

Despite the challenges confronting Ghana's democratic transition and the complexities involved, the country is preparing once again to move toward a unique period that would usher in a new head of state. The bitter rivalry between the new generation of the Danquah-Busiaists-NPP and Rawlingsists-NDC is still there, no doubt. The presidential aspirants in the presidential debate held on the 29 October 2008 and a second on November 14 set the tone. This year, the campaigns have been tainted to some extent with inflammatory

comments by grassroots party loyalists with outbreaks of violence as the election draws closer. The intense mutual suspicion and antipathy existing between the key political parties requires a concerted effort by all actors to ensure violence free polls.

2.2. Consolidation versus Change

The central competing issue would be pitched on consolidating democratic gains by ensuring 'continuity' of eight years of John Kufour's legacy for the ruling NPP candidate, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Adda and advocates of 'change' led by the John Atta Mills of the NDC (main opposition) and Paa Kwesi Nduom of the CPP and Edward Mahama of the PNC. While the consolidationists always have an edge due to the power of incumbency, there is always a tendency that their actions and inactions in the transiting period may also play against them. On the other hand, the proponents of the change message also stand a high chance of winning the minds and hearts of electorate if their message comes at an appropriate time depending also on the socio-economic context. In the context of Ghana, these two broad categories are central to the ongoing campaign irrespective of the fact that the parties have all presented manifestoes outlining their programmes and luring promises.

2.3. Petro-Politics

The recent announcement of the discovery of oil deposits in commercial quantities that have put Ghana in the world petroleum map has strong connotations in the electoral ball game. The huge petrodollars that accrue from the black gold, is undoubtedly influencing the political dreams of the Presidential aspirants. The importance of this factor was highlighted during the presidential debates during which the candidates were asked to show how they would make Ghanaian petroleum a blessing rather than a curse as has been the case with most countries in Africa. The falling world market price for crude oil has not in any way diminished this very strategic issue that may drive the aspirants to make the battle a do-or-die matter.

2.4. Successful Election in Ghana, Victory for Africa

Successful polls in Ghana would be a major asset for democracy in Ghana and Africa as a whole. Afro-pessimism was galvanised following the mayhem that resulted from

² Valji, Nahla (2006). Ghana National Reconciliation Commission: Comparative Assessment; International Centre for Transitional Justice (internet version).

³ The CIA World Factbook pointed out that the Nkrumahists are generally regarded as "leftist" and "progressive," the Danquah-Busiaists more "rightist" and more "conservative," while the Rawlingsists are "populist" and "progressive." Ghana website: The Transition from Military Rule to Democratic Government.

the Kenya elections that resulted in the loss of a more than a thousand lives and millions of dollars worth of property destroyed. Therefore, the Ghana election goes beyond a Ghanaian or (West) African issue. It is a world issue and its critical importance has been more amplified following Barack Obama's victory. The US elections and the much talked of African connection, has brought to light another dimension and stake. The African connection is a challenge for African democracy and Ghana cannot afford to disappoint Africa. By having it right, Ghana would not only have saved Africa from the embarrassment of failure and tag of a continent where nothing works (and buttresses Obama's audacity of hope) but would also send a message that Africa too can make it.

3.0. KEY THREATS & ACCELERATORS OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

There are both endogenous and exogenous factors that may work to undermine the smooth conduct of the December polls. By endogenous, we mean factors within the national polity and exogenous referring to external factors.

3.1. Violent Incidents

There have been reports of sporadic violence in many parts of Ghana, beyond what was hitherto considered as flashpoints of violence. In fact, the ECOWARN Early Warning System⁴ shows a significant upsurge in violence in Ghana since the 2008 elections campaign started. This may be an indication that if adequate response mechanisms are not put in place, there is risk of a major disruption as a result of elections related violence.

3.2. Bellicose and Inflammatory Language

The use of bellicose and inflammatory language has been some of the key triggers of violence in all contentious electoral settings. Name-calling and the use of derogatory adjectives as well as invectives in rally grounds and through media channels is monitored almost on a daily basis in Ghana. Politicians and their supporters and sympathisers are ready to say anything to undermine their opponents. If unrestrained, this may

constitute a major liability to the electoral process.

3.3. Youth and Political Thuggery

The habit of recruiting idle youths as party thugs has been a destabilising factor used by desperate politicians to win elections at all cost. The cases of electoral violence already recorded and potential ones have handprints of youths' disadvantaged situation as a result of unemployment/underemployment thereby making them vulnerable foot soldiers ready to be recruited at the call of any bidder. Most of the youths hired as political thugs have nothing to lose, and feel so excluded from the political systems in place (not only in Ghana but all over Africa). A lot has been said about the fact of 'idle minds being the devil's workshop', yet little is done to assuage the daunting youth dilemma that is rendering hopeless their promise of 'future leaders.'

3.4. Bad examples from Kenya and Zimbabwe

The experience of Kenya and Zimbabwe where the sanctity of the vote was violated, unleashing a wave of violence remain a bad example not worth contemplating. The media in Ghana already talked much about the unbecoming element of African democracy which now hinges on power sharing. This may lead to a situation where contestants go to the polls and build a mindset or psyche of power sharing, come what may. As distant and unconnected as this may seem, information technology has made it possible for issues happening thousands of miles away to have repercussions all over the global village.

3.5. Mistrust and Dwindling Confidence in Security

The growing mistrust is evident in the way almost every act is given a polarised political interpretation and reaction. When mistrust and loss or lack of confidence sets in among parties to a dispute or contest, it becomes difficult to agree or arrive at consensus as everything is misinterpreted. In fact, parties agree to disagree on all fronts. The police service in Ghana for instance is being perceived to be biased as a result of isolated incidents in some parts of the country. What must be understood is the fact that it is not the police service but

some individuals and above all the perceptions that are heating up the polity. The December 2008 elections should provide opportunity for political reconciliation that makes it possible to move away from the use of the narrative of the past to gain political advantage.

During the July 2008 symposium organized by WANEP, it also emerged from the plenary discussion of the symposium that security officers were not answerable to some of the crimes they commit against civilians. Also, there were accusations that bribery and corruption are endemic within the security sector, particularly within the police service, in addition to the negative perception that security-related appointments are allocated on the basis of ethnic affiliation, rather than competence (this has also been articulated in earlier studies conducted by Dr. Kwesi Aning).⁵ Hon Nana Obiri Boahen, the Minister of State, at the Ministry of Interior, in his contribution in the symposium assured Ghanaians that all necessary security measures will be established to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections.⁶ However, whether adequate measures have been put in place to tackle the growing threats and security gaps remains a major concern.

3.6. Managing Victory Celebrations

A delicate moment that is sometimes ignored is how to manage victory, not just defeat. It has been observed that post-election jubilations are great moments for victors to celebrate. However, the celebrations are often coated with 'provocations' that may not go well with the losers. Winners have been seen marching to houses of losers to remind them of their failures and this may result in violent clashes. How the security officials and party leaders ensure that those who win do so in magnanimity and mutual respect is crucial to preventing post electoral violence.

4.0. RESTRAINING FACTORS: STRENGTHS OF GHANAIAN DEMOCRACY

There is something in Ghana's democratic culture that must be recognized when compared to other African countries. However, regardless of the strengths of the shock absorbers, there is always need to

⁴ See Annex document on ECOWARN elections related Incidents. WANEP collaborates with ECOWAS in data collection in the framework of Early Warning and Response in West Africa.

⁵ Kwesi Aning, Emmanuel, (2001) "Ghana Election 2000: Implication and Significance for the future" African Security Review, Vol. 10. 2. (2004) A Comparative Analysis of Security Sector Governance in West Africa: The Ghana Case" Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 'African Wide Security Governance Project'.

⁶ Hon Nana Obiri Boahen: Minister of State, at the Ministry of Interior, made a thematic contribution on the theme "consolidating the peace in Ghana through transparent, peaceful, free and fair elections"

watch out for surprises.

4.1. Ghana Electoral Commission (EC)

The track history of successful elections in Ghana that resulted in major power shifts and even incumbent parties losing elections is an encouraging indicator and asset to the democratic culture. The Ghana Electoral Commission has enjoyed the support of political parties and does not witness constant changes at whims and caprices of powers that be as is the case in most African countries. This has resulted in accumulated experience from lessons learned, (past mistakes and good practices); institutional memory and inbuilt institutional credibility amongst Ghanaians of various if not all political leanings.

The peculiarity of the Ghana EC lies in the fact that it has powers to carve up electoral constituencies according to the electoral laws and organise and supervise elections from voter registration right up to the proclamation of results. The litmus test for the effectiveness of the work of the EC is seen in the feedback of various election observation missions that have witnessed Ghana's past elections. Far from being perfect, the Ghana EC has remained a great pillar and source of hope. It is expected that this strength would be enhanced during this elections by taking into consideration suggestions made by various national and international elections observation missions.

4.2. The Presidential Debates

The Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) organised presidential debates have been a great inspiration. This involved candidates of parties represented in the Parliament (National Assembly). If anything, the debates helped to orient the election to be issue based as the Ghanaian electorate was offered opportunity to appreciate the programmes of the different candidates. It was the first time key contenders responded in the affirmative to the invitations for the debates as previous initiatives were boycotted by the incumbent candidates. Problems such as poverty, illiteracy, small arm proliferation, drug abuse, ethnic malice, youth unemployment, nepotism, patron-client

relationships, rural neglect and the conspicuous lack of civic cautiousness that are collectively rooted in the socio-political fabric of the society were thrown back to the candidates to tell Ghanaians how they intend to deal with them if voted to office. There is a sense in Ghana that the main political parties campaigned fairly and that they had a fair hearing.

Notwithstanding, there have been scathing criticisms by other 'smaller' parties of the fact that they were left out of the highly publicised debates broadcast live in the key media (radio and television) outfits in Ghana. The criterion to limit the debates to parties with representatives in parliament is popular and acceptable to the general public as a way of efficiently managing the debates.

4.3. Role of Civil Society

The role of civil society in Ghana's progressive march towards democracy has been phenomenal. Ghana stands as one of the few countries in Africa with a vibrant and ever alert civil society. Most civil society organisations (CSOs) in Ghana have in one way or the other been involved in a series of initiatives or consultations to discuss how best to ensure a successful and violence free December 2008 presidential and legislative elections. WANEP for instance organised a symposium on 4th July 2008 on the theme "Consolidating Peace in Ghana through 2008 Elections."⁷ Follow up initiatives resulted in a partnership with the Foundation for Security and Development in Africa (FOSDA) and the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) in which a campaign process emerged and has gained considerable momentum. Series of trainings, capacity enhancement and sensitisation sessions have been organized. The campaign slogan captioned: "Ballots Not Bullets" was flagged in September, 2008 in the Northern Regional Capital of Tamale. Capacity building workshops on conflict resolution and peace journalism have been organised for over 120 beneficiaries in Tamale and the Bawku Municipality in October and November respectively. WANEP is also part of a Civil Society Initiative led by the Institute for Democratic Governance dubbed the Civic

Forum Initiative (CFI). It is a collective effort in which several ongoing initiatives are monitoring the electoral process before, during and after the general elections.

The larger civil society, have been keeping the watch especially on the political parties and their leaders and followers, media utterances, the security sector and guarantor of peace and security, as well as an introspection on themselves. Issues related to the proliferation of small arms and the tendency to use them to intimidate the electorate and how the candidates are genuinely and convincingly garnering votes have all come to the fore. Fairness, level play ground, transparency and objectivity are the measuring instruments and indicators at the hands of the civil society actors.

4.4. Role of Media

Freedom of speech is one of the fundamental building blocks to participatory democracy and good governance.⁸ The media is expected to create the healthy space to achieve this by promoting dialogue and conversation on the related participatory national development and democratic agenda.⁹ They are expected to implement these values with strong spirit of fairness, equity and integrity. It is for this reason that experts contend that the media influence is paramount to produce the changes necessary for a society's reconciliation, peace and stability that create a favourable atmosphere for participatory democracy to succeed.¹⁰ Indeed, it can be a powerful instrument to prevent conflict as well as a potential cause to violence if regulatory rules and ethical standards are not respected.

In compliance with these democratic ideals and principles, Article 21 of the Ghanaian Constitution guarantees all persons the right to freedom of speech and expression, which includes freedom of the press and other media outlets, whilst (Chapter 12) stresses the freedom and independence of the media.¹¹ Similarly, the Constitution further stipulates that state owned media should provide fair opportunities to other interest groups to express constructive

⁷ The symposium was moderated by Mr. Emmanuel Akwetey, the Executive Director of Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG), and the panelists includes: Mr. Emmanuel Bombande, the Executive Director of WANEP; Hon Nana Obiri Boahen: the Minister of state at the Ministry of Interior; Mr. David Kanga: The Deputy Electoral Commissioner; and Mr. Kweku Baa Owusu: A Director of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE).

⁸ Freedom House "Freedom of Press 2008" Country Draft Country Report; Embargoed for April 29, 2008. www.freedomhouse.org

⁹ Bollinger, Lee (1988) "The Tolerant Society", Oxford University Press, Oxford

¹⁰ Ross Howard, Francis Rolt, Hans Van Veen and Juliet Verhoeven (eds) (2002) *The Power of the Media; A hand Book for Peacebuilders*; A publication of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention in Cooperation with the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS)

¹¹ Karlekar K.D (2003) *Freedom of the Press: A Global Survey of Media Independence*; Rowan and Littlefield Publishers Ink. Quoted from A Review of Eight NEPAD Countries by: Fatoumatta M'boge and Sam Gbaydee Doe: Human Security Initiatives

criticism of government policy (Article 163).¹² In as much as liberal discussions in electoral competition are essential for voters to make informed decisions,¹³ the media has been the major arena for the achievement of these goals by providing equal opportunity to all political segments of the society. But the question is to what extent does the media adhere to the stated constitutional requirements in meeting the standards of democratic norms and values with respect to free and fair elections?

Cases of sensational reporting, accusations and counter accusations with evidence of provocative social and political comments made by key political activists are evident to suggest that self-regulatory media measures need to be established defining how partisan commentaries are reported to prevent polarisation of potential socio-political problems – mainly triggered by inflammatory remarks that could easily breed insult and hatred. Also take into account that "misinformation and disinformation are both aimed at giving wrong information and deceiving people into thinking and acting differently from what they would have done if they had the right information".¹⁴ Past experiences have shown that people may act in such a way that would undermine the electoral process because they might have been misled by the misinformation and disinformation presented by the media.¹⁵ This is typically Ghanaian. All countries go through this heat during elections.

4.5. Role of the Church and Religious bodies

As the principal moral and spiritual compass of the people, the Church and other religious bodies are expected to play a critical role in a country like Ghana where worship is a central part of most of the populace. Most of the candidates are worshippers in the many prayer congregations, mosques and prayer grounds all over Ghana. Special prayers and even peace concerts have been organized to ensure a hitch free election. The Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference issued a pastoral letter read in all Catholic Churches in Ghana emphasis that justice as a pre-requisite to peace. This role of the Church is no less a factor for restraint.

4.6. Ghana's International Reputation and Agenda

Aspiring political leaders know that Ghana's international reputation is at stake. As one of the most progressive countries in Africa in terms of democratic credentials, all the key political actors are aware that the international community expects nothing less than credible and fair elections. The winner in the December 2008 polls would first and foremost be Ghana as a country. This alone is a restraining factor that calls for caution. Whether most supporters understand this, is another dimension.

5. POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

These hypothetical scenarios are envisaged in the one month period (two week before and two weeks after the December 7, 2008 elections).

5.1. Best Case Scenario (Very plausible)

Last minute electoral campaign witnesses a drastic reduction in political tension and standoffs between supporters of the contesting parties. Elections are conducted in an atmosphere of calm, mutual respect and tranquillity thanks to the formidable role of major stakeholders: political parties and leaders, the militants and followers, the security services, members of the Electoral Commission, the media, civil society, and the rest of the electorate. The counting process is conducted and despite the anxiety and tension, the results are proclaimed and the losers congratulate the winners and the winners embrace the losers.

5.2. Worst Case Scenario (less plausible)

Despite efforts by main actors and stakeholders, the tension prior to the December elections is exacerbated by rumours and accusations of rigging attempts. Sporadic pockets of violence in the last week to the elections results in massive arrests of culprits and further violent demands for the release of detained militants and thugs ensues. Efforts by media and civil society end up polarising the political landscape the more. Notwithstanding, elections go on as planned and disgruntled and aggrieved parties call for cancellation of polls and threaten mass action to reject the final verdict. Confidence and mutual trust is completely lost and 2008 elections become

a controversy and cast a shadow on the credibility of the entire process with some parts of the civil society and international community calling for a re-run of the polls.

6. POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR RESPONSE OR ACTION TO AVERT CHAOS

This section proposes possible options for response actions to avert a worst case scenario and work towards realizing the best case. We would not be prescriptive. Instead, we would highlight key areas of concern that need to be monitored, revisited and continually improved to ensure that violence is minimised and elections are conducted in a way that the final verdict would be acceptable to all (losers, winners and observers).

A. Politicians, Political Parties, Authorities/Decision Makers

- *Appropriate measures to address threats to peace and security of lives and property* especially in parts of the country where inflammatory and ethnic sentiments and even chieftaincy have the potential to re-ignite the existing conflicts that elections provide the awaited trigger.
- *End to the use of bellicose Language:* Language used to address political parties, opponents is sometimes frightening. The impression given is that anything can be done to win elections, mindless of other's dignity.
- *Respect of the Political Parties Code of Conduct:* Political parties should adhere to the mutually agreed rules of the political game embodied in the 2008 code of conduct. Party supporters should be educated on and encouraged to use the code of conduct in an effort to promote peace and fair play as they exercise their franchise.
- *More citizen and voter education* to instil in them with the ability to analyse, discuss, scrutinise the offers by candidates and vote on issues rather than other considerations. Education removes ignorance, prejudices and intolerance among citizens; it also strengthens citizens' capacity to accept the ethical values and challenges of human relationships within a society.¹⁶
- *Inter-party Consultation:* Regular inter-

¹² Ibid

¹³ Bollinger, Lee (1988) "The Tolerant Society", Oxford University Press, Oxford

¹⁴ Comment made by Mr. Kweku Baa Owusu: A Director at the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in the symposium organised by WANEP 4th June 2008, at Alisa Hotel.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Mr. Kweku Baa Owusu

party forums to iron out differences and reduce tensions that Ghana has maintained over the years needs to be consolidated and energised.

- **Pledge of Non-violence:** The Presidential candidates of the main political parties have committed themselves and made a peace pledge during the second Presidential debates. There should be a collective public effort led by Civil Society organisations to hold political leaders accountable to their own peace pledges.
- **Respect of verdict:** Political contestants should be able to abide by the verdict of the elections because they are organised to meet international standards of free and fairness. Beyond accepting the results, the contestants should also be ready to send mutual congratulatory messages to the winners and losers.
- **Fast-Track Litigations:** Electoral contestations and litigations that last for more than six months defeats the whole purpose of elections. It is gratifying to note the commitment of the Chief Justice to ensure that electoral litigations shall be pursued speedily in specialised election courts. This should be supported at all levels.

B. International Community:

- The international community must understand the polarising nature of

Ghana's political history and in their partnership, support bridge building amongst the political parties while undertaking not to show open support to any political party or candidate as this undermines the sovereignty of the Ghanaian voter.

- The Western media should be circumspect in their reportage of the election coverage as they have done in some countries.

Civil Society Organizations and the Media

- The National Media Commission need to be on the alert to ensure more effective and efficient monitoring of the media especially at this critical time period before, during and after the elections.
- There is also a need to support the development of better operational relations between the National Media Commission and other principal actors so that there is better synergy to promote peace and security.

CONCLUSION

The Ghana Centre for Democratic Development's Afro-Barometer Research revealed that "Ghana's experience so far makes the country one of the rare cases of stable and reasonably functioning multi-party democracies in Africa among new

democracies globally".¹⁷ This is tenable and WANEP believes Ghana can and would always make Africa proud. Irrespective of the challenges, the most anticipated challenge confronting the Ghana's December 7 elections is how people can exercise their democratic obligations through the ballot box without intimidation. The missing link is trust and confidence of the process and institutions governing the elections. It is a collective responsibility of all stakeholders: local and regional; governmental and non-governmental; sub-regional and international. Recent electoral experiences in Africa serve as constant reminder that nothing should be left to chance. Ghana cannot afford to disappoint Africa.

Project conducted by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and Michigan State University (MSU). Implemented through a network of national research partners, Afrobarometer surveys measure the social, economic and political atmosphere in societies in transition in West, East and Southern Africa.

¹⁷ E. Gyimah-Boadi, Afrobarometre Briefing Paper No. 51. June 2008. (Popular Attitudes To Democracy in Ghana, 2008) The Afrobarometer is an independent, non-partisan survey research

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APPENDIX:

SUMMARY OF ELECTIONS RELATED INCIDENT REPORTS MONITORED THROUGH ECOWARN

Type of incident	Locality	Date	Perpetrators	Summary of Incident
Civil unrest	Yendi, Northern Ghana	18 Nov 08	Supporters of the incumbent MP Alhaji Malik	Alleged clash between supporters of the incumbent MP Alhaji Malik and the independent parliamentary candidate who defected from the NPP (New Patriotic Party) after he lost to Malik in the primaries. About five people were injured with one referred to Tamale hospital for treatment. Police army patrol had to give warning shots as well as beat other recalcitrant stone throwers in the clash to calm people down.
Assault -simple	Navrongo, Upper East	01 Nov 08	The MP Hon. Joseph Kofi Adda and aide to the Vice President	Adams, the vice president Alhaji Aliu Mahama's aide allegedly assaulted the honourable Joseph Kofi Adda, MP of Navrongo central at a rally organised for the New Patriotic Party vice presidential candidate, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia. After the altercation, the two men threw punches at each other on the official dais on which the vice president sat, along with several other party leaders and in front of teeming party supporters.
Riot	Sankore, in the Asunafo south district of the Brong Ahafo region	01 Nov.08	Alleged supporters of NPP and NDC	On Saturday night, a middle-aged man, Yaw Amponsah, a supporter of the NPP was shot dead in Sankore (Brong Ahafo region) following a clash between rival groups alleged to be supporters of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Six others persons, including a four-year- old boy, who sustained various degrees of injury, were sent to the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) in Kumasi for treatment while the body of Amponsah was deposited at the Goaso government Hospital.
Detention	Kwabre West, Kumasi, Ashanti region	31 Oct. 08	Circuit court of Offinso	NDC parliamentary candidate jailed for engaging in double registration. NDC parliamentary candidate for Kwabre West in the Ashanti Region, Mr. Pius Opoku Boateng, was given a 12 months jail with hard labour. Mr Boateng pleaded guilty with explanation to the charge when he appeared before the circuit court at Offinso. He told the court that he lost his voter's identity card and therefore, decided to register again at his new residency in the Kwabre West Constituency where he was also contesting the parliamentary seat on the ticket of the NDC.
Fraud	Tarkwa-Aboso, Western, Ghana	19 Sept.08	Mr Patrick Atule, temporary replacement officer, Tarkwa EC office	It was reported on Tuesday 23th September that Mr Patrick Atule, a temporary replacement officer at the Tarkwa office of the Electoral Commission (EC) arrested over the case of 48 voter identity (ID) cards, eight voter identification slips and five passport-size photographs found in his possession last Friday, September 19th. The voter Id cards, belonging to some people in Esaase and Adomase villages in the Prestea-Huni Valley constituency of the western region were allegedly given to Atule for distribution to the owners.
Arrest	Gushiegu-Chereponi,	08 Sept. 08	Northern REGSEG, the	The six people arrested in connection with the Gushegu disturbances have been flown to Accra for prosecution. The Northern Regional Minister, Alhaji Mustapha Ali Idris, who is the

	Northern, Ghana		regional police command and the interior Ministry	chairman of REGSEC gave the names of the suspects as Abukari Alidu 26, Alhassan Mohammed 30, Mohammed Alidu 25, Alidu Abdulai 42, Mohamed Imoro, 41 and Sulemana Alidu, 30. Dr. Addo Kufuor, the Interior Minister, during an assessment tour of the Gushegu and Tamale ordered the transfer of the suspects to Accra for prosecution. Last week's clash at Kpatinga near Gushiegu between the NDC and NPP during a flag raising ceremony spilled over to the Gushegu town leading to the loss of three lives and destruction of property worth several million of Ghana Cedis.
Assault-simple	Cape coast, Central , Ghana	06 Sept. 08	President John Agyekum Kufuor's bodyguards	On Saturday 06 September 2008, Mr Angola, a second in command of security guards of Professor John Evans Atta Mills' the National Democratic Congress (NDC) 2008 flag bearer, was beaten up by President John Agyekum Kufuor's bodyguards to a state of coma. An elderly woman who complained about the molestation of Mills' bodyguard by the soldiers was also not spared some beating, while a local photographer who captured the scene live was assaulted and had his camera destroyed. Incident occurred when President Kufuor's security prevented 'Angola' from following the NDC flag bearer when he was exchanging pleasantries with Kufuor, but that problem was quickly resolved.
Riot	Gushiegu-Chereponi, Northern, Ghana	03 Sept.08	Political parties supporters	At least six people have been killed in northern Ghana at Gushiegu in pre-election violence. According to our sources, 19 houses, three of them belonging to opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC), six cars, and an NDC office were torched. Among the injured people were Alhaji Jaboni, the NDC chairman in Gushiegu and his five (5) children who are receiving treatment at the Nalerigu hospital. Trouble started on Sunday when shots were fired during a campaign tour of the region by the ruling NPP's vice presidential candidate, Mahamudu Bawumia, who hails from the area. Police have imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the town, about 900km north of the capital Accra.
Shooting	Tamale, Northern , Ghana	31 Aug.08	NPP and NDC Supporters	From Sunday 31 st to Monday 1 st September 08 sporadic guns shoots and stone throwing were reported in Tamale. The incident started when the NPP running mate, Dr Mahamadu Bawumya, was addressing teaming supporters at the Tamale jubilee Park. There have been allegations and counter allegations from the supporters of both NDC and NPP supporters related to the authors of the shooting. Reports say three people were injured and hospitalized and three motorbikes were burnt to ashes (two and one belonging to NDC and NPP supporters respectively).
Arrest	Krachi West, Volta region	11 Aug 08	Krachi West Police	There have been reports of bussing minors to registration centre and registering them. One person has been arrested by the Krachi West Police for alleged double registration. Vida Nimola, 21, was identified to have first registered as Vida Bufin in 2006. Two others Jeremiah Mabe, 32, who was first registered as Ngeebe Mabe, 32 and, Patricia Porkutin, 32, also said to have registered as Abena Gmatam, 20, are on the run.

Arrest	Tamale, Northern region	10 Jun 08	The police at Tamale	On Tuesday, 10th June 2008, following the resurgence in the morning of the disturbances that ensued between two youth groups at a night club in Tamale last Saturday, 07th June 2008 , about 50 people were rounded up by the security agencies. It was said that the suspects would be screened and those found culpable prosecuted.
Riot	Tamale, Northern region	07 Jun	Two alleged groups of NPP and NDC	A misunderstanding that originally ensued between two youth groups at a night club around Old Cemetery road in Tamale on Saturday, June, 07th, 2008, turned finally to political issues between NDC and NPP youths. The matter, later, took a political dimension when Jamal, who is said to be a New Patriotic Party (NPP) activist, identified his assailants as members of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Consequently, some youths believed to be NPP sympathisers later attacked and destroyed an NDC pavilion in the suburb and NDC youths allegedly retaliated leading to the destruction of property.
Traffic accident	Between Sampa and Drobo, Brong –Ahafo	01 Apr 08	Drivers of the convoy vehicles of Nana Akuffo Addo	Two members of the convoy of Nana Akuffo Addo were involved accident between Sampa and Drobo in the Brong Ahafo Region. The convoy was trying to join Akuffo Addo at Gauso when the accident happened. This comes in the wake of the flag bearer's clash with the flag bearer of the largest opposition party National Democratic Congress (NDC) at the Chief Imam's house on Friday when the two of them went there to visit the Imam. For the timely intervention of the police the supporters of the two flag bearers could have caused mayhem.
Traffic accident	At Lamashorgu, Tamale Metropolis, Northern region	31 May 08	A Kia Truck driver with jubilant NDC supporters onboard	In their way to welcome Mr John Dramani Mahama, some supporters were involved in a motto accident at Lamashorgu in the Tamale metropolis. The accident result to the death of one person on the spot and at least thirty persons injured. Sources said 61 persons sustained serious injuries. Among the victims was a young girl who might have one of her legs amputated. The accident occurred when supporters of the party were jubilating following Mr John Dramani Mahama's visit to the regions as part of his campaign tour of the three northern regions. The vehicle of the jubilant NDC supporters reportedly veered off the road in an attempt to avoid a head on collision with an articulator truck.
Arrest	Gushegu Northern region	13 Apr 08	District Police	Tension mounts at Gushegu The attempted arrest of Fuseini Haruna, an Assemblyman for Gushegu by the police resulted in clash between the security men and residence of the area. Fuseina Haruna was accused of assaulting Nazo, a sympathizer of the NPP over a development project. One person identified only as Shaibu was hit by a gun shot fired by the police. It is unclear what prompted the clash but is believed that the suspect together with some members of the community resisted arrest prompting the police to fire a warning shot. Nazo, the New Patriotic Party Activist had defected from the NDC but it is not known whether the clash had anything to do with the defection.