

Ghana - Human Rights Scorecard ¹

Known as the most peaceful country in West Africa and one of the most democratic countries in the continent, Ghana is a country with a fast-growing economy and strong presidency. Thanks to the absence of conflicts since the beginning of the 21st century and its fair and democratic electoral processes, Ghana is often considered as an example of safety and security.² Nonetheless, there are some shortcomings when it comes to human rights that leaves a door open for improvement in the country's future.

Official language: English

Ethnic groups: 47.5% Akans, 16.6% Dagbani, 13.9% Ewe, 7.4% Ga-Adangbe, 5.7% Gurma, 5.0% Fulani, 3.7% Guan/Gonja, 2.5% Gurunsi, 1.2% Kusasi, 1.1% Bissa/Mande, 1.6% Others.

Government: Unitary constitutional democracy

Head of state and of government: Nana Akufo-Addo

Death penalty: Abolitionist in practice

Population: 28.83 millions

Life expectancy: 62.74 years

Under-5 mortality: 49.3 per 1000

Adult literacy: 76.6 percent



Section 1: Overall Development

The overall development of a country – considering education, health, income, and other factors – is a strong indicator of whether average citizens have a reasonable chance to enjoy social and economic well-being and mobility.

Human Development (UNDP Human Development Index (HDI)) ³



0.592 – Medium Human Development ⁴

According to the UNDP, Ghanaians enjoyed a gross national income per capita of \$4,096, could expect to have on average 7.1 years of schooling. Compared to other countries with comparable gross national income per capita, this is a rather high HDI.

Section 2: Respect for the Integrity of the Person

Respect for the integrity of the individual is the most fundamental of human rights groupings. It guarantees protection of the person to ensure the right to life, and freedom from torture. It also prevents arbitrary detention, and disappearances, and ensures the right to a free and fair trial when accused.

Freedom from arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life



Partially respected ⁵

Despite the government making progress in documenting and condemning police brutality, there are still reportings of police killing Ghanaian suspects.

Freedom from disappearance



Respected ⁶

There are no reports of disappearances in Ghana.

Freedom from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment



Largely disrespected ⁷

Ghana has been singled out for the use of extreme force by police officers, including torture, rape and harassment of LGBTI people. International human rights organization's reports also condemn overly crowded prisons with cruel prisoner conditions.

Freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention



Partially respected ⁸

As the military continues to have the power to arrest people, some arbitrary arrests have been reported. Complaints against unlawful arrests and detentions have been registered, even if the constitution protects Ghanaians from arbitrary arrests and detentions.

Freedom from denial of fair public trial



Partially respected⁹

Corruption and bribing are rampant and creates an unfair judiciary system. Lack of legal public representation often leads to postponed cases and unfavourable rulings. However, a recent investigation of the Supreme Court led to the dismissal of a number of judges.

Freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence



Respected¹⁰

The constitution protects Ghanaians from such interferences. No violations have been reported.

Section 3: Respect for Civil Liberties

Civil liberties are a basic category of internationally recognized human rights. They include the freedoms of expression, assembly, association, education, and religion. These are inalienable rights which should not be breached by government, and should ensure the rights of all, including women and minority groups.

Freedom of speech and press (*Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index*)¹¹



Score: 18,41, Rank: 23 / 180 – Mostly free, diverse and independent¹²

During the 2016 elections, there was no interference with the freedom of the press guaranteed by the constitution. However, since third of the media is owned by the state of individuals close to the regime, only a small amount of the media can provide a complete and independent coverage.

Freedom from academic censorship



Respected¹³

No government restrictions on academic activities have been reported.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association



Respected¹⁴

There are no reports of government interference with freedom of assembly and association. These rights are guaranteed by the constitution are mostly respected.

Freedom of religion



Partially respected¹⁵

The constitution guarantees the freedom of religion and prohibits religious discrimination. However, some cases of discriminations in public schools were registered against female students being required to remove their hijabs or to wear a hijab.

Freedom of movement



Respected¹⁶

The constitution guarantees the rights of free internal movement, foreign travel, emigration and repatriation and the government often respects these rights.

Protection of refugees and stateless persons



Partially respected¹⁷

The government cooperates with the UNHCR to provide help to the refugees. However, there are reports of gender-based violence in refugee camps, and refugees tend to be confined to work in the informal sector.

Overall protection of civil liberties (*FreedomHouse Civil Liberties Index*)^{18 19}



2 / 7 – Free²⁰

NGO's can generally operate freely, and the majority of the civil rights are guaranteed by the constitution.

Section 4: Respect for Political Rights

Political rights ensure all members of society are able to influence the political process. The assessment of political rights includes an examination of the electoral process and the selection of representatives, the political empowerment of the general public, the tolerance of dissent, the accountability of government, etc.

Overall protection of political rights (*FreedomHouse Political Rights Index*)²¹



1 / 7 – Free²²

The 2016 elections were democratic, peaceful and free. The right to form a political party is protected by the constitution and is generally respected.

Section 5: Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The civil, political, economic and social rights exercised within a country are often modulated by the degree of transparency and freedom from corruption. Various international metrics assess transparency and corruption, including the OECD anti-bribery convention, the Bribe Payers Index, and the Open Budget Index.

Transparency and freedom from corruption (*Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index*)²³



Score: 40%, Rank: 81 / 180 – Some corruption²⁴

Corruption is present in all branches of the government, even if the law prohibits it. Some investigations have led to the dismissal of judges.

Section 6: Governmental Response to Criticism

This section deals specifically with the response heads of state have to civil society or international human rights reports.

Governmental attitudes vis-à-vis independent investigations of alleged human rights violations



Partially respected²⁵

Human rights groups generally operate and publish reports without any interference from the government. However, since the agency responsible for investigating human rights abuses is a government agency, its transparency and objectivity is not guaranteed.

Section 7: Discrimination and Societal Abuses

Legal and social discriminatory practices related to sex, race, creed or sexual orientation, are violations of human rights. Countries with strong civil liberty traditions should have a fair legal system that ensures the rule of law, allows free economic activity, and ensures equality of opportunity for all.

Endangered Minorities (*Peoples Under Threat – Minority Rights Group International*)²⁶



No threat listed – Limited dangers to minorities²⁷

No minority seems to be under threat in Ghana.

Rights of women (*World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index*)²⁸



Score: 68,8%, Rank: 89 / 149 – Somewhat unequal rights²⁹

Ghana has regressed during the past years regarding gender parity in earned incomes and employment opportunities.

Rights of Children (*KidsRights Index Overall Score*)³⁰



Score: 60.6%, Rank: 127 / 182 – Somewhat protected³¹

Child marriage still persist in some regions of Ghana, but the government has developed an education strategy to reinforce the laws already in place.

Rights of persons with disabilities



Largely disrespected³²

Although the law prohibits discriminations against persons with disabilities, it is not reinforced or completely applied by the authorities. Schools and public buildings remain inaccessible for most Ghanaians with disabilities while abuse and intolerance, including shackling, remain a problem.

Rights of national/racial/ethnic minorities (e.g. discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism etc.)



Respected³³

No reports of anti-Semitism or institutionalised discrimination against minorities have been issued.

Freedom from abuse and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity



Largely disrespected^{34 35}

Even if the constitution prohibits discrimination, Ghana has a tendency to apply a discriminatory policy toward LGBTI people. Intimidation, harassment and prosecutions (but no convictions reported) remain a problem.

Section 7: Workers' Rights

Workers' rights are a group of legal rights relating to labour relations between workers and their employers. At their core are things like the ability to negotiate pay, benefits, terms of employment, and safe working conditions. These rights often devolve from the right to unionize and access to collective bargaining.

Rights to freedom of association and to collective bargaining



Partially respected³⁶

Although the law allows for a range of independent union organization, the rights of unions remain partially restricted. Trade union registration and certificates are exorbitant, which sometimes makes them impossible to obtain.

Freedom from forced or compulsory labour



Partially respected³⁷

The law prohibits forced and compulsory labour. However, the resources that the government invests are not enough for sufficient and effective surveillance and enforcement of the law. Cases of human trafficking continue to be reported.

Freedom from forced labour for children, and a minimum age of employment



Partially respected^{38 39}

The minimum age of employment in Ghana is 15, or 13 for light work. Child labour, generally in illegal mines and refineries, remains the principal issue. Child labourers are often subject to abuse, such as physical punishment.

Right to acceptable conditions of work



Partially respected^{40 41}

There is a minimum wage in Ghana and a set workweek. The State also recently ratified the UN Minamata Convention on Mercury, which helped to protect minors' working conditions. However, a lack of safety and health regulations in addition to a lack of inspectors affect working conditions.

Right to employment



5.4% - Reasonable unemployment⁴²

While migrants could be better integrated into the labour force, the unemployment rate in Ghana has remained stable during the last few years.

¹ A hybrid human rights and freedoms model, leveraging both legal principles and intuitive classifications, has been used for this human rights assessment. The CJPME Foundation has sought to integrate as many independent sources and metrics into its summary analysis as possible. In many cases, for qualitative material pertaining to the respect for a particular right in a country, the CJPME Foundation has drawn on material from Human Rights Watch and the US State Department country reports. Human Rights Watch (HRW) publishes a World Report which assesses the respect for human rights in each country. HRW uses a methodology of local reporting and interviewing, combined with research and analysis to assess the level of respect of human rights. The U.S State Department keeps an updated publication on the state of human rights internationally. Their system of research and accountability draws from the research of official US State Department officials, as well as local civil-society and international human rights organizations.

² *Global Peace Index 2018*. Institute for Economics and Peace. Accessed January 17 2019. <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2018/06/Global-Peace-Index-2018-2.pdf>

³ The UN Development Program HDI was created to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The HDI can also be used to question national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of GNI per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. These contrasts can stimulate debate about government policy priorities. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

⁴ "Table 1: Human Development Index and its components, Ghana" UNDP, based on 2014 or the most recent year available. Accessed Jan. 14, 2019. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>.

⁵ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Ghana." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277249.pdf>

⁶ Ibid. U.S Department of State. For purposes of the present analysis, a "disappearance" is different than simple arbitrary detention because a "disappearance" is considered permanent.

⁷ "Ghana." 2017/2018 Report. Accessed January 14, 2019. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/ghana/report-ghana/>

⁸ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Ghana." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277249.pdf>

⁹ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹⁰ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹¹ The Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders ranks the level of freedom of information in 180 countries. This is determined through the polling of local NGOs and freedom of expression civil society organizations across the globe. This index is also determined by local correspondents and follow-up work done on reports of infringement to press freedom where ever it takes place. Their methodology looks at six different indicators: 1) Media pluralism, 2) Media independence, 3) Media atmosphere and self-censorship, 4) the Law around media, 5) Media transparency, and 6) Media infrastructure. The score from these six indicators is combined with a rating for the violence against journalists in the country to create an overall score. The CJPME Foundation classifies the Press Freedom Index as follows: 0 – 14.99 (16 countries), Largely free, diverse and independent; 15 – 24.99 (37 countries), Mostly free, diverse and independent; 25 – 29.99 (31 countries), Partially free, diverse and independent; 30 – 39.99 (39 countries), Partially controlled, limited or intimidated; 40 & higher (57 countries), Highly controlled, limited or intimidated.

¹² "World Press Freedom Index." Reporters Without Borders: For Freedom of Information. January 1, 2018. Accessed January 17, 2019. <https://rsf.org/en/ranking#>

¹³ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Ghana." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277249.pdf>

¹⁴ Ibid. U.S Department of State

¹⁵ "Ghana." International Religious Freedom Report for 2017. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>

¹⁶ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Ghana." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277249.pdf>

¹⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

¹⁸ Freedom House is an internationally recognized NGO based in the U.S which documents and rates the quality of democratic practice in a given country. Freedom House splits its grading system between the two areas of civil and political rights in a country. On each scale, the Freedom House rating is 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free).

¹⁹ Freedom House's Civil Liberties index measures things such as a) freedom of expression and belief, b) associational and organizational rights, c) the rule of law, and d) personal autonomy and individual rights. Freedom House rates countries as 1-2.5 (free), 3-5.5 (partly free) and 6-7 (not free). Accessed Dec. 9, 2014

<https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

²⁰ "Ghana." Freedom in the World 2018: Ghana. January 1, 2018. Accessed January 17, 2019. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/ghana>

²¹ See footnote about the Freedom House organization above. The Freedom House Political Rights assessment looks at a) the electoral process, b) political pluralism and participation, and c) the functioning of government. Accessed Dec. 9, 2014 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2014/methodology#.VldwWzHF98F>

²² "Ghana." Freedom in the World 2018: Ghana. January 1, 2018. Accessed January 17, 2019. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/ghana>

²³ Transparency International (TI) publishes a "Corruption Perceptions Index" annually, which is based on independent research and polling. The main categories of corruption are broken down within the index to provide particulars on issues including things such as perceptions of corruption, control of corruption, and financial secrecy. A country receives a score on 100; the higher the score, the less corrupt the society. The CJPME foundation has classified them into categories as follows: 80-100 (11 countries): Very limited corruption; 60-79 (27 countries): Limited corruption; 40-59 (41 countries): Some corruption; 20-39 (80 countries): Highly corrupt; 0-19 (15 countries): Extremely corrupt

²⁴ "Ghana." Corruption by Country. January 1, 2018. Accessed January 17, 2019. <https://www.transparency.org/country/GHA#>

²⁵ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Ghana." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277249.pdf>

²⁶ The Peoples under Threat assessment by Minority Rights Group International highlights countries most at risk of genocide and mass killing. The ranking is created by compiling data on the known antecedents to genocide or mass political killing. Accessed Jan. 8, 2017 <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

²⁷ "Ghana." Peoples under Threat, Minority Rights Group International. 2018. Accessed January 17, 2019. <http://peoplesunderthreat.org/>.

²⁸ This metric is based on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. 0.00 denotes inequality between the sexes, and 1.00 denotes fully equality between the sexes. This index looks at four subdomains: economic participation and opportunity; educational attainment; health and survival; and political empowerment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. The CJPME Foundation classed the percentages as follows: 80-100% (5 countries): Almost equal rights; 70-79% (60 countries): Somewhat unequal rights; 0-69% (77 countries): Very unequal rights

²⁹ "Ghana." World Economic Forum. January 1, 2018. Accessed January 17, 2019. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

³⁰ This metric is based on the KidsRights Index Overall Score. This index has five subdomains: life expectancy and maternal mortality; health; education; protection; and child rights environment. Each country is given a percentage score; the higher the percentage, the better the protections. KidsRights classes the countries according to these percentages, and the CJPME Foundation has given each class a term as follows: 70-100% (77 countries): Protected; 60-70% (29 countries): Somewhat protected; 45-50% (33 countries): Slightly vulnerable; 30-45% (12 countries): Highly vulnerable; Lower than 30% (11 countries): Extremely vulnerable

³¹ "The KidsRights Index: Overall Ranking." The KidsRights Index. Accessed January 17, 2019. <http://www.kidsrightsindex.org/>

³² "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Ghana." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277249.pdf>

³³ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁴ "State-Sponsored Homophobia." International Lesbian Gay and Intersex Association. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

http://old.ilga.org/Statehomophobia/ILGA_WorldMap_2018_ENG.pdf. See also Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁵ ILGA, the International, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, was founded in 1978 on the principle of highlighting state sponsored homophobia where it exists around the world. ILGA annually publishes a map with an accompanying report on sexual and gender based harassment, which focuses on both the legal and non-legal acts of state sponsored discrimination.

³⁶ "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2017 Ghana." U.S Department of State. January 1, 2017. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277249.pdf>

³⁷ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁸ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

³⁹ "Child Labor and Corporate Responsibility in Ghana's Artisanal Gold Mines." Human Rights Watch. Accessed January 17, 2019.

<https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/06/10/precious-metal-cheap-labor/child-labor-and-corporate-responsibility-ghanas#>

⁴⁰ Ibid. U.S Department of State.

⁴¹ "Ghana." 2017/2018 Report. Accessed January 14, 2019. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/ghana/report-ghana/>

⁴² "Global Employment Trends." International Labour Organization. January 1, 2018. Accessed January 17, 2019. http://ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/2014/WCMS_233936/lang-en/index.htm