



## GHANA CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

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# PRESS RELEASE

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### Border Communities Monitoring, Community Sensitization and Radio Program Report (August to September 2021)

#### Background

In August 2021, the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) deployed 85 trained local volunteers to 44 selected border districts across Ghana. They were to, among other things, monitor and report on issues related to border security and facilitate continuous engagements between residents of border communities and the various security agencies present in the area. The exercise forms part of the Center's "**Enhancing Citizen Participation in Border Security Management**" project, which aims at improving the security awareness of citizens along, and across border communities as a proactive step in contributing to enhancing Ghana's border security in the face of surging cross border crimes and external security threats in West Africa.

This maiden report on Border Community Monitoring, synthesizes findings filed by CDD-Ghana's trained local volunteers. The findings presented in this report cover community monitoring and observations by the local volunteers from August 15 to September 30, 2021. Within the reporting period, the 85 volunteers visited 266 communities across 11 out of the 16 administrative regions of Ghana.

#### Summary Findings

- There appears to be a seemingly cordial relationship between residents in the observed border communities and the security agencies.
- The security situation in the monitored border communities was generally calm, with few purported criminal cases in some border communities that have received the attention of security agencies present in the respective districts.
- Community-Based Organisations/ Non-Governmental Organisations, and other state institutions, have been proactive in organizing meetings with residents of border communities to discuss security, safety and terrorism awareness within the reporting period.

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- In about one in 4 communities monitored, there were no community engagement activities by any stakeholder to discuss security, safety and terrorism awareness within the reporting period.

## **Main Findings**

### **Security awareness and consciousness among citizens in border communities monitored**

Assessment by our trained community volunteers who are residents of the selected border districts indicates that the level of security awareness among residents of border communities is largely below average. More specifically, the level of security awareness was rated as 'good or very good' among 46% of residents of border communities and rated as either 'very poor', 'poor' or 'fair' among majority (54%) of residents engaged during the community monitoring.

The data also describes the current security situation in the communities monitored as either good (43%), very good (14%) or excellent (2%). One hundred and thirteen (113) communities representing 42% of the communities monitored were, however, rated as 'very poor', 'poor' or 'fair' on this indicator.

In about 87% of communities monitored during the reporting period, there were no observed signs of terrorism or violent extremist activities. However, in about 11% of the communities, the volunteers reported either observing or hearing about suspected criminal activities and cases of illegal cross-border activities, including the smuggling of goods. Some of the cases reported include the following;

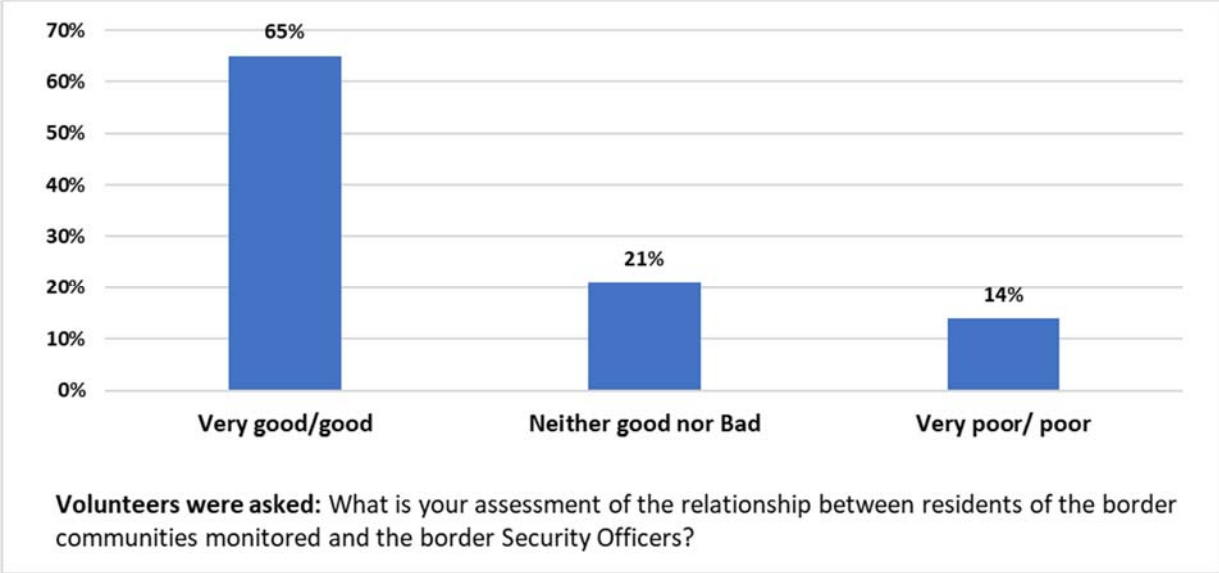
- A man was arrested for allegedly beheading his landlord in Kwasi Badu, a community near Amoashed at the Ghana-Cote D'Ivoire border, located in the Bia East district of the Western North region.
- Some young men and women were apprehended by personnel of the Ghana Army in Penyi Yorkoe, a community located in the Volta Region, while they were receiving military training. They have, however, been transferred to Accra for further investigations.
- Bunkpurugu District was also flagged as a place where a family's wealth is measured by the number of sophisticated rifles it possesses.
- Residents of some border communities have been involved in aiding the operations of illegal migrants by transporting goods in and out of the country. Some of the communities identified include Owuo Mpasoo (Western Region), where some personnel of the Ghana Immigration Service have been reported as being complicit in the act. In other communities, for instance, Dadiesee (Oti Region), resistance from security personnel to prevent illegal entry of foreigners nearly resulted in scuffles between the citizens and the security personnel stationed in the community.
- In Aiyinase (Western Region), rubber plants and cocoa farmers were reported for smuggling their produce, weedicides and fertilizers to the neighboring country.

### **Youth Radicalization**

The volunteers reported that in over eight in 10 communities monitored, there were no observed signs of youth radicalization. However, some volunteers reported instances where some youth were involved in substance abuse in some communities. Some of the communities listed include Leklebi Dafor, Leklebi Agbesia and Kame in the Volta Region, Ketukalonte and Dakpakodzi located in Oti Region, Baamoah in the Western North Region, Dimali and Nachamba Number Two in the Northern Region. In many instances, some of the youth involved in substance abuse were also identified among people who indulge in violent acts.

**Improving trust and confidence between community and security services**

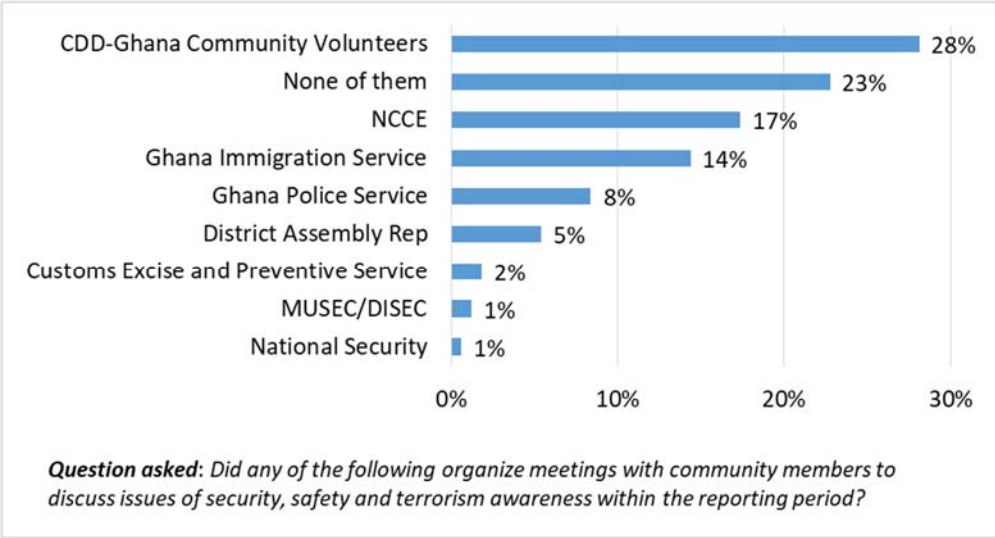
According to reports from the volunteers, the relationship between residents living in border communities monitored and the border security officers during this reporting period was generally 'good' or 'very good' (refer to the figure below for further details).



Furthermore, the volunteers also indicated that in 83% of the communities, they did not observe or hear of any form of disputes between members of the border communities and the security officers. In the few instances where there were disputes between the two groups, fines, arrests and preventing border crossing were the main reasons for the recorded disputes. These issues occurred mainly in the Northern, Volta, Oti, Western and Western North Regions.

**Community engagement and sensitization by stakeholders**

Reports gathered from the field indicate that CDD-Ghana’s community volunteers have been relatively more proactive in organizing meetings with community members to discuss security, safety and terrorism awareness within the reporting period. The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), has also been very supportive in this endeavour by helping to educate residents of border communities when our community volunteers approached their district offices. It is worth noting that in close to one in every 4 communities monitored, there was no community engagement by any stakeholder to discuss security, safety and terrorism awareness within the reporting period (see the chart below for further details).



**Human rights abuses**

There were very few reports of human rights abuses at the borders, with about eight in 10 communities monitored recording no such incidents. However, abuses in the form of child marriages and child labour were being practiced in a few communities such as Kpalinsa, Bandem, Chiok, Wabilinsa (Upper East region) and Owuo Mpasoo (Western Region).

**Community sensitization and education forum**

Of 85 out of the 86 volunteers who filed their reports, 86% successfully facilitated and organized community forums across the various districts deployed. To ensure project sustainability beyond its lifespan, volunteers were required to only facilitate the meetings and allow representatives of the security agencies to conduct the education and sensitization to, among other things, improve citizens' relationship with the security.

Our findings reveal that, in most of the communities, security agencies present have worked collaboratively with our volunteers and represented their institutions to educate residents in several border communities across the country. Assessing the level of collaboration among security agencies on the project, the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) ranked highest, with representation on about 22% of all the community forums and sensitization programs held in August and September 2021. They were closely followed by the Ghana Police Service with 20% representation on all the education-related activities and the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) with 16% representation on all the sensitization and education fora.

On average, 50 people were directly reached per community forum through community sensitization and education. We estimate that about 3,000 people were directly engaged during August.



**Chief Superintendent Abdulai Iddrisu of the Ghana Immigration Service (standing in front of the congregation) educating a section of the community about the role of Ghana Immigration Service and the citizenry in border security management at a Mosque in Bongo Community (Upper East Region) – CDD-Ghana, August 2021**



**Sgt. Awaitey Solomon (in Military uniform) educating a cross-section of the residents in Nachamba No2. (a border community located in the Northern Region) during a community forum facilitated by CDD-Ghana's Community Volunteer on issues of border security management, the role of citizens**

### Public education through radio programs

To increase the target beneficiaries of the educational message and increase citizens' level of awareness on issues pertaining to security, the volunteers were tasked to serve as liaisons and create a platform where representatives from the security agencies will have the opportunity to educate the populace.

A total of 49 radio stations or Community Information Centers were used to educate the residents. Representatives from the NCCE, Ghana Police Service and Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) were the State security institutions that served as resource persons for the radio programs. Individuals, including the project's volunteers, Assembly members and radio program hosts, also served as resource persons. As a result of preliminary planning challenges, these individuals were included due to the inability of

representatives from some of the security agencies to participate in the radio public education program.

### **Suggestions and recommendations**

While conducting their field activities, the volunteers also took note of issues that could impact their work and have offered the following suggestions:

- There is the need to rope in religious leaders such as Pastors and Imams to use their platforms (churches and mosques) in the various communities to educate citizens, especially those living in border communities, to increase the number of beneficiaries of the education programs being undertaken by CDD-Ghana, its partner institutions and the security services.
- There is also the need for all security agencies to welcome this laudable initiative by CSOs in establishing platforms for continuous engagement with citizens and citizen groups across the various border communities in the country. CDD-Ghana believes that this initiative, with the support of the security agencies, will deepen the existing relationship with members of the communities. We believe that frequent engagements between the security agencies and members of the border communities, through organised forums, will foster greater collaboration between citizens and security personnel for more efficient management of the country's borders.

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### **About CDD-Ghana**

With a mission to promote and deepen democratic consolidation, good governance, and inclusive growth and development, the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) works to support and promote a free, peaceful, and a well-governed democracy in Ghana and in other parts of Africa. The Center has over two decades of experience, expansive reach, and a robust network of partners at the national, continental and global levels. CDD-Ghana has cultivated an enduring reputation as a leader in the field of democracy and governance, which enables the adoption and implementation of targeted strategies aimed at addressing the fundamental issues hindering citizens from enjoying the full benefits democracy and good governance has to offer.

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