



Migration Profile

GHANA

A. Executive Summary

Following the independence of Ghana in 1957, the number of people migrating to Ghana far surpassed the number who left. However, by the 1980s, Ghana had become a country of emigration, which it still is today. Around 970,600 Ghanaians emigrated in 2019 (IOM, 2019c) to Nigeria (222,377), the United States (161,082), the United Kingdom (124,093) and Côte d'Ivoire (107,490). The driving force for emigration is the high unemployment in Ghana, which in turn means that many who are leaving are skilled professionals.

From 2000 to 2010, about 44.5% of the urban population were migrants, and continued urbanization and rural-urban migration have contributed to increasing rates in internal migration. There is a large southward migration, as the south is largely urbanised whereas the north is more rural. About 46.6% of migrants are women; they are said to be more mobile than male migrants in all regions, apart from Western and Brong-Ahafo. Approximately 22.9% of international migrants are children. About 1.5% of the total Ghanaian population are international migrants, an estimated 466,800 people in 2019.

Compared to other African Countries, Ghana has a very low refugee population, with around 13,309 refugees and asylum seekers. The country is often praised for its treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, with many of them being able to live, work and own businesses and properties like all Ghanaian nationals. Most of the refugees come from Côte d'Ivoire, followed by Togo, and with smaller numbers arriving from Liberia, Sudan and Cameroon. There is some strain between Ghanaians and Liberian refugees as many Liberians have become targets of violence from Ghanaians who accuse them of taking advantage of Ghanaian hospitality. Apart from refugees, Ghana is a source, transit and destination country for trafficking women and children for the purpose of sexual exploitation and domestic and commercial labour. In 2019, CTDC (the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative) recognized that women accounted for 41.9% of trafficking victims in Ghana, and 43.5% women amongst trafficked victims with Ghanaian citizenship. Furthermore, 88.3% of victims with Ghanaian citizenship were children, and 93.1% of trafficking victims found in Ghana were children. A major challenge is internal trafficking of children from their home villages towards the fisheries of Lake Volta, where more than half of the children working in and around the lake are victims of forced labour.

Prior to 2016 and in absence of a national migration policy, there were three main pieces of legislation in place that relate to legal and regulatory aspects of migration: the Immigration Act (573) of 2000, the Immigration Amendment Act (848) of 2012, and the Immigration Regulations (L.I 1691) of 2001. In 2009, the Ghana Migration Unit was established to evaluate the effectiveness of the country's migration policies and, more importantly, to facilitate the development of a framework for national policies, and ultimately to publish a comprehensive national migration policy. Additionally, in 1993 a Refugee Board was established to deal with refugee policy after an influx of refugees. The Human Trafficking Act was enacted in 2015, containing three anti-trafficking components: 1) the prevention of human trafficking, 2) the protection of trafficked persons, and 3) the prosecution of traffickers. The Ghana Migration Unit also serves to evaluate and develop national migration policies.

Further, both UNHCR and IOM have a long history of aiding in the protection of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, as well as informing policies and legislation, with NGOs and faith-based organisations often stepping in to help when government and international organisations fail to act or are too slow to respond. Ghana has a large Christian community and faith-based organisations are often sought out for the provision of more personalized care. These are the organizations that were also instrumental in aiding Liberian refugees in camps, with many acting initially as first responders and then continuing to be a vital lifeline for refugees after the official sources of aid had been reduced.

B. Country Profile

I. Basic Information

Neighbouring Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo, Ghana is located along the Gulf of Guinea in the West Africa subregion. Ghana has a total population of 30,418,000. Apart from some 4 million people who are located in the capital of Accra, the population is mostly in the southern half of the country, with the highest concentrations on or near the Atlantic coast. The population comprises the following ethnic groups: 47.5% Akan, 16.6%, Mole-Dagbon, 13.9% Ewe, 7.4% Ga-Dangme, 5.7% Gurma, 3.7% Guan, 2.5% Grusi, 1.1% Mande and other, 1.4%.

The current critical climate/environmental issues include recurring drought, deforestation, overgrazing, water pollution, soil erosion and inadequate supplies of potable water. Other transnational and social issues include a dispute about the maritime border between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire; human trafficking (Ghana is a source, transit and destination country); illicit drugs production (cannabis) and distribution (hub for heroin and to lesser extent cocaine) and significant domestic cocaine and cannabis use; and health concerns including malaria and HIV/AIDS.

II. International and Internal Migrants

In the 2010 census, Ghana Statistical Service reported more than one third (35%) of Ghanaians as living outside their place of birth. Another 3,694,478 individuals (15% of the population) were

born elsewhere in the region of enumeration, and 4,615,329 people (about 18.7%) were enumerated in regions other than their region of birth, and another 323,189 people (about 1.3%) were counted as others. Most people move inter-regionally rather than intra-regionally, and mostly from rural towards urban areas. In 1970, it was estimated that 28.9% of the population lived in cities, by 2000 this had increased to 43.9%, and by 2010, more than half the country's population (50.9%) was urban.

According to UNDESA, there were 217,556 female international migrants in Ghana in 2019, just under half (46.6%) the total number of migrants. In 2015, the total was smaller, 193,718, but the percentage almost the same (46.7%). This suggests the number of female international migrants has been balanced and has remained virtually the same in the last 5 years. Internally, females are relatively more mobile than males in all regions, except in Western and Brong Ahafo.

Rural-to-urban migration and population growth are considered the main contributors to this urbanisation. The main reasons behind this migratory pattern can be explained by economic, social, and cultural forces: wage differences and welfare gaps, social and cultural amenities in urban areas, parental control in rural areas, job availability, family reunification. International migrants are more likely to be better educated (managers and professionals) than non-migrants, suggesting that it is mostly relatively skilled and educated people who migrate. Additionally, internal migration is characterised by southward migration, as the north is mainly rural and the south is largely urbanised.

Since independence in 1957, Ghana has been a major destination for international migrants. Major pull factors following independence included better economic conditions, political affinity, and colonial ties. More recently, pull factors for international migration have included socio-economic conditions, a peaceful political environment, and the production of oil that began in 2010. According to UNDESA's 2019 estimates, the total number of international migrants in Ghana is 466,800. In 2015 it was 414,744. In 2019, international migrants comprised 1.5% of Ghana's total population. According to 2015 estimates, the main countries of origin for migrants to Ghana as a destination country are Togo (90,343), Nigeria (70,214) and Côte d'Ivoire (64,621). The net migration rate is -0.4, meaning that more people leave the country than enter it (also a 2015 estimate). Between 2000 and 2005, the migration rate became positive: 0.1. Internal migrants in Ghana include children under 18 years old. Children often migrate with their parents, but in recent years more and more children are migrating independently, mostly from the northern regions to the south. A major reason for migrating is to find employment. Another is fostering, whereby a relative in another region arranges to care for the child.

Many young migrant women from the north get involved in headload carrying, which can increase their vulnerability to poverty and health risks. Furthermore, they can be exposed to sexual exploitation, which can lead to STDs and HIV/AIDS. When it comes to employment, foreign-born female workers face another disadvantage. According to an OECD report from 2018, employment rates are lower for women than for men, and the employment rate of female foreign-born workers is lower than the rate for Ghanaian-born women. Additionally, foreign-born women are paid consistently less than Ghanaian-born women.

Media in Ghana in recent years have focused on the dangers of unauthorized migration to Europe. In Ghana, the first source of information on migration has typically been news through radio and television, as well as newspapers. Awareness campaigns about the dangers of unauthorised migration, some of which included educational films, was another source of information. These campaigns were led by NGOs, migration management bureaus and by the government to spread information on the consequences and risks of irregular migration out of Ghana. The third main channel within Ghanaian society is word of mouth, as information is also spread through personal contact, relaying the risks, experience, and hardship of migration.

III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

In 2019, the estimated total number of international emigrants from Ghana is 970,600, an increase from 2015 when it was estimated at 905,852, meaning the annual rate of Ghanaians leaving the country continues to rise. In 2015, the main countries of destination for Ghanaian emigrants were Nigeria (222,377), the United States (161,082), the United Kingdom (124,093) and Côte d'Ivoire (107,490). According to UN's magazine *Africa Renewal*, youth unemployment is a major reason for emigration out of Ghana. Furthermore, youth unemployment is a threat to peace and stability, as young unemployed people are also vulnerable to exploitation.

Since Ghana has become a country of emigration, many skilled professionals have left. In fact, Ghana has one of the highest emigration rates for highly skilled workers in Western Africa (46%), and the average skill level of emigrants from Ghana is relatively high. The concern is that mass emigration has diminished the country's human capital, which is a vital component of all developing countries. Estimates show that more than half the doctors (56%) trained in Ghana, and a quarter (24%) of all the nurses trained in Ghana are now working abroad. The reasons for such a high departure level include low salaries, poor long-term career prospects and bleak prospects of saving enough money for retirement. The healthcare sector especially is experiencing severe brain drain, to the extent that the government has implemented various incentives for healthcare professionals to remain and work in Ghana. Despite these efforts, the departures continue.

Since the mid-1990s, there is some evidence, however, of return migration to Ghana. This has been attributed in part to the improvement in the Ghanaian economy vis-à-vis the economies of the neighbouring countries that once attracted Ghanaians. Also, new restrictions on Ghanaians travelling abroad (for instance, those travelling to the EU countries) and the repatriation of those without valid documents have also had an impact. According to IOM, 307 Ghanaians returned to Ghana in 2018, and 2 were returned from Ghana to their countries of origin (though both only account for voluntary returns aided by IOM, and not forced or unaided returns).

IV. Forced Migration (internally displaced, asylum seekers and refugees)

The numbers of refugees and asylum seekers vary depending on their source.

- A 2019 estimate says 13,500 refugees and asylum seekers were in Ghana that year, representing 2.9% of total international immigration. In 2015, this number had been approximately 19,300, or 4.6% of total international immigration, making the annual rate of change between 2015 and 2019 a negative figure: -6%.
- UNICEF states that in 2018 there were 12,000 refugees and 1,000 asylum seekers in Ghana, of whom 36% were under the age of 18.
- According to UNHCR, at the end of 2016 there were 11,865 refugees and 1,371 asylum seekers. A year later there were 12,156 refugees and 1,313 asylum seekers and by the end of 2018 there were 11,899 refugees and 1,317 asylum seekers in Ghana. UNHCR also states as of 2020, there are 12,050 refugees and 1,259 asylum seekers in Ghana, suggesting that there were no large inflows of forced migrants in the last few years.

Most of the refugees are from Côte d'Ivoire, because of the Second Ivoirian Civil War. Refugees also arrive from Togo, Liberia, Sudan, and the Syrian Arab Republic, and additionally there has been a fairly recent increase in the number of Cameroonian persons of concern (333 persons) due to the current situation in South West Cameroon. There are no exact figures on the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ghana, though IDMC reports a rough estimate of 16,000 new displacements from disasters and 23,000 from conflict and violence. Climate change is a significant driver for internal displacement in Ghana. In 2016 for example, flooding resulted in 7,918 people being displaced. Each year on average, some 20,081 people are at risk for earthquake and flood related displacement in Ghana.

Refugees in Ghana are housed in one of five refugee camps: Krisan, Ampain, Greater Accra, Egyeikrom, and Fetentaa. In comparison with other African nations, the refugee "crisis" in Ghana, though small, is still serious enough to test the country's social and economic integration. Media outlets highlight the positive integration of refugees in Ghana, praising the equal rights that refugees enjoy as they are able to live, work and own businesses and properties like all Ghanaian nationals. At the same time, other narratives focus on the strain and stress that the second wave of Liberian refugees put on Ghana in the mid-1990s. Following the restoration of temporary peace in Libya in 1997, and when international organisations such as UNHCR retracted aid, Ghanaians began to voice anti-refugee and anti-Liberian rhetoric. Liberians especially became targets of violence by Ghanaians who accused them of taking advantage of Ghanaian hospitality. Without remittances from the UNHCR or living wages through the informal sector or community health programs, the rates of teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS rose. Print media continued to exaggerate images of Liberians as criminals and carriers of HIV/AIDS, and emphasized cultural and social differences. All of this hindered the social integration of Liberian refugees.

The 1980s were especially difficult years, a time when most Ghanaian refugees fled the country because of politically motivated executions, disappearances, imprisonment without trial, confiscation of property, and even public floggings. Between 1982 and 1991, the UNHCR registered 97,5636 asylum applications from Ghana. Currently, according to UNHCR, a total of 18,000 refugees and 12,500 asylum seekers from Ghana are living abroad, but there is no reliable

information about how many leave each year. The number of Ghanaian asylum seekers and refugees has declined from 15,879 in 2003 to 6,717 in 2007, meaning that currently this is not a serious issue in Ghana. In 2009, most Ghanaian refugees were residing in Togo. Two years earlier, however, most Ghanaian asylum applications were made in Israel, South Africa, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. UNICEF states that 63% of refugees were under the age of 18, suggesting that a relatively large number of children are fleeing Ghana.

V. Victims of Human Trafficking

Ghana is considered a Tier 2 country, meaning that the government of Ghana does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, though it is making significant efforts to do so. Ghana is a source, transit and destination country for trafficking women and children for the purposes of sexual exploitation and domestic and commercial labour. According to the UNODC global report on trafficking (2018), forced labour was the most detected form of exploitation in Sub-Saharan Africa (63%). In 2019, CTDC recognized 41.9% of trafficking victims in Ghana were women; and 43.5% of trafficked victims had Ghanaian citizenship. Furthermore, 88.3% of victims with a Ghanaian citizenship were children, and 93.1% of trafficking victims found in Ghana were children. Children are therefore by far the biggest group to be trafficked from and into Ghana and also internally. A major challenge is internal trafficking of children from their home villages towards the fisheries of Lake Volta, where more than half the children working in and around the lake are thought to be victims of forced labour. These victims are not allowed to attend school, are given inadequate housing and clothing, are controlled by their employers through violence and intimidation, and have only limited access to food. Boys as young as five years old are forced to work in dangerous conditions. Girls work on shore and are thus more vulnerable to sexual abuse and forced marriage.

Children work mainly in the informal sector, even if the majority are unemployed. They suffer from exploitation by adults, and the specific environment in which they operate is often overrun by drug abuse. Migrant children are often forced to pay money for such things as using a toilet or for permission to sleep in front of shops. Their need for money compels many migrant children in Ghana to work illegally as well as legally. Children living in northern regions who are sent to the southern regions by their parents for work are vulnerable to forced labour, and when they move to urban centres they are also at risk of sex trafficking and forced labour.

The government has implemented (and in recent years increased) its support for shelter services and for the screening, identification, protection and referral of trafficking victims. These measures were developed by the government in collaboration with international organisations. A large NGO and faith-based organization presence remains committed to provide protection and support for victims. Funding from government for the NGO and faith-based organisations shelters has not been sufficient, however, and many NGOs do not have the capacity to provide care for victims, be they adults or children. In addition, there is a lack of shelter for adult victims, who may receive counselling care and protection in guesthouses or hotels. Recent

efforts by the government in reducing trafficking in Ghana include media campaigns to raise awareness about the issue of trafficking. These measures include developing and implementing media tools in print, broadcast, social media and film formats to increase the awareness of child and adult trafficking. The media focus is on high-risk communities for raising awareness and how best to respond to trafficking.

VI. National Legal Framework

Ghana is party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol and to the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969. Ghana is also party to the Palermo Protocol, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Ghana has three main pieces of relevant legislation that address the legal and regulatory aspects of migration: The Immigration Act (573) of 2000, the Immigration Amendment Act (848) of 2012, and the Immigration Regulations (L.I 1691) of 2001. Other legislation regulates and monitors labour emigration and which prohibits the recruitment of employees outside of Ghana without proper documentation. This is achieved through the Labour Act 2003 and Labour Regulation 2007. In 2009, the Ghana Migration Unit was established to evaluate the effectiveness of migration policies and, more importantly, to facilitate the development of a framework for national policies. Prior to setting up the Ghana Migration Unit, the country did not have a comprehensive national migration policy. With help from the Ministry of Interior, the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee was set up to draft the National Migration Policy; published in 2016, it now serves as the country's official migration strategy document.

In 1993, when Ghana was receiving the first large influx of refugees, the country had 150,000 refugees. It was in response to this incoming wave that the government passed legislation creating a Refugee Board to deal with refugee policy. In practice, UNHCR and private citizen groups provide material support to refugee groups. According to UNHCR, Ghana has notably progressive legislation concerning refugees and asylum seekers. It allows privileges to all citizens in terms of access to services, and this includes asylum seekers and refugees. Refugees have a choice of where to live, freedom of movement, establishing a livelihood, and the acquisition of travel documents.

Ghana's Human Trafficking Act, enacted in 2005, contains three components: 1) the prevention of human trafficking, 2) the protection of trafficked persons, and 3) the prosecution of traffickers. Attorneys Sertich and Heemskerk (2011) researched the implementation of this act and state that the government has been successful in implementing its preventive strategies and has demonstrated the ability to prosecute both domestic and international human trafficking cases. They also say that the Ghanaian government has not yet addressed the protective duties also mandated by the Act, particularly in relation to the provision of shelter for trafficked persons.

The main government administrators responsible for legislative development with respect to migrants are the Ministry of the Interior and the Ghana Refugee Board. Additionally, other relevant government departments and ministries include Ghana Education Service, Ghana Health Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, and Ghana Police Service.

VII. Main Actors

The State

From 2014 to 2017, the Ghana Integrated Migration Management Approach (GIMMA) project was established to assess the effectiveness of migration policies that were in place during the duration of the project. A national migration data framework and database were established to complement the migration policies. The participants in the project included the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), the Ghana Statistical Services (GSS), the Migration Unit (MU), Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Migration (IMSCM), Centre for Migration Studies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, civil society organizations and the IOM.

The government of Ghana and other ECOWAS states, in cooperation with the IOM, are involved in the promotion of dialogue and cooperation on international migration at the regional level through the Migration Dialogue in West Africa (MIDWA) and the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue (MTM).

The Catholic Church

Caritas Ghana, operating under the National Catholic Secretariat, the implementing Arm of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, works in the following areas: social development, livelihood promotion, social services, promotion of social and environmental justice, public policy advocacy, promotion of pro-poor policies and action research. The Secretariat is a UNHCR partner and contains the Migrants and Refugees Position/portfolio within the Department of Human Development, the Migrants and Refugees Commission and the National Migrants Commission. In collaboration with various partners, these components of the Secretariat support and assist refugees, persons of concern and migrants.

The Catholic Church works with internal migrants, predominantly with young, female vulnerable migrants (especially those who are minors) migrating from rural to urban areas, generally from north to south. This important work of the Church is carried out through a network that includes various congregations and catholic organizations, specifically the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB), the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) and Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul. The Street Children Project (SCP) in Kumasi city includes a very large number of internal migrants. Additionally, during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the number of homeless who were in need increased considerably.

The Church also assists external migrants including many who have migrated across the desert in search of international destinations beyond Ghana. The diocese of Techiman has many activities in place for returnee external migrants who have been repatriated to the Bono East Region. Their program addresses social behaviours and how to change them, as well as communication and awareness campaigns, alternative livelihood campaigns, ad hoc interventions for repatriation and providing various services to local communities. Irregular migration is common in the Bono East Region and is a contributing factor to an increasing need for assistance and support.

In Donkorkrom, where recruitment for human trafficking is prevalent, the Church (in particular the Catholic Justice and Peace Directorate) works to rescue victims of trafficking in order to bring the issue to justice and to change attitudes with the community. In this work, the Church has relevant partnerships with International Justice Mission and Caritas Lebanon, for cross-border coordination in dealing with cases of human trafficking. The advocacy work that was carried out by the Catholic Justice and Peace Directorate has been reduced in recent years and needs to be supported, perhaps even replaced in some respects by other organisations.

There is an exchange of priests between dioceses to minister to people, including migrants. International migrants from ECOWAS are moving into Ghana, some for school and others who are economic migrants searching for employment. There are also Nigerian missionaries working in Ghana, ministering to migrants and celebrating Masses in their languages. Migrant students fall under the university chaplaincies that take care of their spiritual needs. Bishops from different Dioceses also send priests to Rome to study in SIMI (the Scalabrini International Migration Institute) for a specific preparation for the pastoral care of migrants. They also send priests abroad to minister to Ghanaian migrants in both Europe and the US.

With its holistic approach, Catholic Relief Services in Ghana plays an important role in assisting Ghanaian people, especially by focusing on populations at risk in the three regions most in need: Northern, Upper West, and Upper East. CRS derives its strength through its various partnerships with the Catholic Church internationally. It has served the poorest and most vulnerable in Ghana since 1958, developing projects in health, water, sanitation, hygiene, and agriculture. Farming is indeed one of the major means of employment, although climate change puts increasing pressure on productivity and consequently on the local and regional economy.

To seve the increasing number of migrants leaving for Europe, CRS has developed a comprehensive, cross-border protection-based approach to ensure safe migration in Ghana as well as Senegal, Gambia, Niger and Mali. The program, called CRS' Action for the Protection and Integration of Migrants in (West) Africa (APIMA), targets community members of these countries and youth, including returned migrants and migrants in transit. Hoping to provide alternatives and ensure safe dignified migration, APIMA aims to provide economic opportunities, increase protection and reduce risks of exploitation and abuse of migrants returning home and in transit, and reduce stigmatization in communities of origin, helping them to better understand why people choose to migrate.

International Organisations

The main international organization active in national migration policies as well as working on the GIMMA project is the IOM, which has been in Ghana since 1987. It has aided the government of Ghana in its efforts to manage migration through a variety of projects and programs in every region in Ghana. The activities address migrant resettlement, family reunification, migration policy development, labour migration, combatting human trafficking, assisted voluntary returns, border management, information campaigns and emergency response. In addition to IOM, the UNHCR (in Ghana since 1994 when the country was experiencing its first major influx of refugees since its return to democratic government) helps coordinate the protection and provision of humanitarian assistance to refugees in Ghana. It works closely with the Ghana Refugee Board. The UNFPA, UNDP, ILO, the European Commission and the World Bank provide support for capacity building through equipment, training, and sharing of information.

The UNHCR works with partners in government, civil society, and the larger UN to effectively assist and support persons of concern. At the government level, these partners include: the Ministry of the Interior, the Ghana Refugee Board (GRB), and other relevant government departments and ministries such as Ghana Education Service, Ghana Health Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, and Ghana Police Service. Other civil society partners include: Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), National Catholic Secretariat (NCS) and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). It also works with the following UN Agencies: UNFPA, IOM, UNAIDS and UNICEF.

Other Organisations

The Research and Counselling Foundation for African Migrants (RECFAM) was established in 2004 in Ghana and conducts quantitative and qualitative research on various topics, including the motivating factors that underpin development, the empowerment of women and children, irregular migration, human trafficking and child abuse. It also develops pragmatic sustainable approaches to counter other challenges that are identified through research.

Since the mid- to late- 1990s NGOs have been active in aiding Liberian refugees in Ghana and were vital in creating a more permanent and stable atmosphere for refugees overall. Since then, NGOs have been working in conjunction with the government in implementing migration policies and aiding refugees, migrants, and victims of trafficking.

In addition, faith-based organisations (FBOs) have been a vital component of civil society in Ghana. As the population of Ghana is predominantly Christian (60%), faith-based organisations are certainly the largest, most widely distributed, and also the most socially rooted in their membership. During the Liberian refugee crisis, Evangelical Christian, and Pentecostal churches run by Ghanaians and refugees were often the first responders and were especially crucial whenever official aid was reduced. Given this wide reach, the implementing partners of NGOs collaborating with UNHCR in refugee camps are often FBOs.

VIII. Other Important Issues

Some people from West Africa use smuggling networks to travel to North Africa, often via Libya or Algeria, with the goal of settling there or moving on to Europe. Ghanaians are among them and an estimated minimum of 500 migrants die each year in the Sahara Desert, but the true number is likely much higher. According to the 1979 Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, ECOWAS nationals, which includes Ghanaians, should be able to move freely within the region with a valid travel document and an international health certificate. Whenever documents are missing, smugglers readily offer assistance with crossing borders.

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