



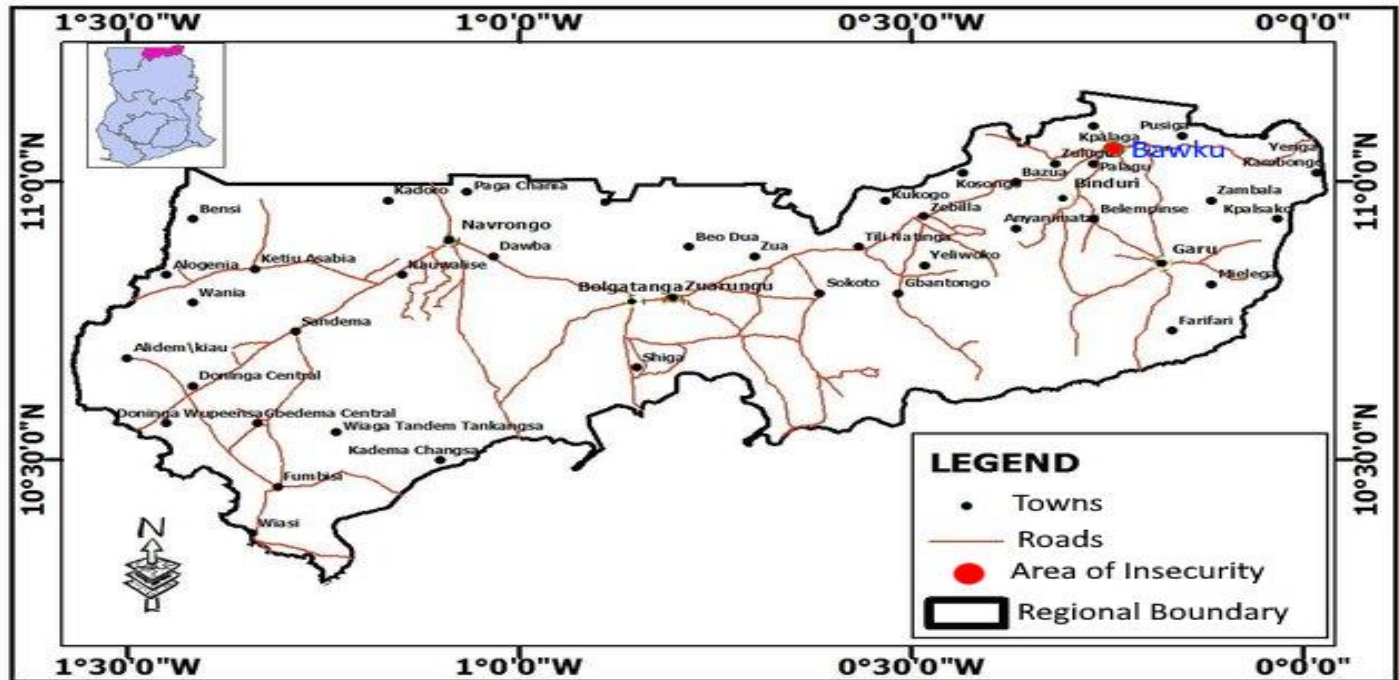
## NEWS SITUATION TRACKING

### Three Military Officers Injured, At Least Four Civilians Confirmed Dead in renewed Bawku Chieftaincy/Ethnic Conflict

**Location:** Bawku, Upper East Region

**Issue:** Renewed Ethnic/Chieftaincy Clashes in Bawku

**Date:** 13<sup>TH</sup> -18<sup>TH</sup> March 2022



Imaged sourced from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ebenezer-Owusu-Sekyere/publication/319109881/figure/fig1/AS:527327886491648@1502736173669/Map-of-Upper-East-Region-in-the-national-context\\_Q640.jpg](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ebenezer-Owusu-Sekyere/publication/319109881/figure/fig1/AS:527327886491648@1502736173669/Map-of-Upper-East-Region-in-the-national-context_Q640.jpg) and edited for the purposes of this bulletin.

#### COMMUNITY PROFILING

##### **Population:** **Basic Demography and Geography of Hotspots:**

The Municipality has a population of 119,458 persons, with the males being 58,029 (48.58 percent) and females 61,429 (51.42 percent).<sup>1</sup>

The Bawku municipal has a total land area of 247.23720 sq.km and it is located approximately between latitudes 11° 11" and 10° 40" North and longitude 0° 18" W and 0° 6" E in the north eastern corner of the region. It shares boundaries with Pusiga District to the North, Binduri District to the South, Garu-

#### CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

##### **Affected Persons:**

- Residents of the District

##### **Interested Actors:**

- The Ghana Police Service,
- The Ghana Armed Forces,
- National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO),
- Ghana Health service

#### INCIDENT PROFILING

At the heart of the Kusasi-Mamprusi conflict is an accumulation of issues about litigations over allodial rights and chieftaincy. Both the Kusasi and the Mamprusi claim allodial ownership of Bawku. Such claims are cloaked in their narrative histories of origin and derived from claims of autochthony.<sup>7</sup>

##### **Brief Background**

On Wednesday, November 24, 2021, the Ministry of the Interior imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew on the Bawku Municipality and its environs in the Upper East Region following a renewed chieftaincy disputes in the area. Besides the curfew were two bans, one on carrying of arms, ammunition, or any offensive weapons and the other on wearing of

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.citypopulation.de/en/ghana/admin/upper\\_east/0909\\_bawku\\_municipal/](https://www.citypopulation.de/en/ghana/admin/upper_east/0909_bawku_municipal/)

<sup>7</sup> See <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/558360> for more detailed information on the history and dynamics of the Kusasi-Mamprusi issue.

Tempene District to the East and Bawku West to the West.<sup>2</sup>

The municipality is underlain mainly by Birrimian and granite rock formation. The topography along the basins of the White Volta River and its tributaries is generally low and slightly undulating with heights of 120-150 metres above sea level. The rest of the municipality consists of a series of plateau surfaces.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Significance of the State:**

#### **Economy:**

Agriculture is the dominant occupation of the people of the municipality, accounting for about 47.0 percent of the total occupation (39,143) in the municipality. The major crops grown are millet, sorghum, maize, rice, groundnuts, leafy vegetables, pepper, watermelon, and onion. Livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys etc. are also kept in the district. Poultry especially guinea fowl production is quite significant.

#### **Politics:**

The Municipal Assembly which is the highest administrative, political and planning authority in the municipality is charged with the responsibility of formulating and implementing development plans, programmes and projects.<sup>4</sup>

Governance in the municipality is both modern and traditional. The former is represented by the Municipal Assembly created within the framework of the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462), while the latter is by traditional authority in the area.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Ethnicity:**

The predominant group is the Mole Dagbani with the major ethnic groups being Kussasis, Mamprusis, Bissas and Moshies. However, there are quite several migrants from other

- National and regional peace councils
- Interior Ministry
- Civil Society Organizations
- Ministry of Health

smock in the affected communities, were instituted and renewed subsequently.<sup>[8,9]</sup>

Subsequently, 4 persons were killed amid the renewed clashes on Sunday, January 23, 2022<sup>10</sup>, creating further insecurity in the district and the need for further bans and tightening of the curfew.

#### **Current Situation**

WANEP-Ghana's monitoring report received on March 12, 2022, indicated that the Mamprusis were planning to enskin a chief. The same report contained information or rumor that the Kusasis were planning to react with violence to any such enskinment.<sup>11</sup>

On Monday, March 14, 2022, an 81-year-old man Mohammed Aborli, who is a Fulbe (Fulani), was shot dead by some unidentified persons after some sporadic shootings were recorded in Bawku.<sup>12</sup> A joint team of police and military intervened and calm was restored.

It is alleged that on March 15, 2022, military personnel deployed to intervene in the earlier days' incident were engaged in a battle with civilians in a community after entering the Sabongari and Buabola communities in the Bawku municipality. Three military officers were reported injured during the confrontations with armed persons believed to be acting for the Kusasi faction of the dispute.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequently, the military men angered by the actions against 3 of its officers, were alleged to have torched several properties.<sup>14</sup> Reported civilian casualties confirm 3 persons dead, however other deaths and injuries may be reported subsequently.

#### **Responses:**

- The curfew is still in effect
- The ban on wearing of smock and carrying of offensive weapons still holds.
- Military and Police patrols deployed

<sup>2</sup> Ghana Statistical Service Information

<sup>3</sup> <https://mofa.gov.gh/site/directorates/district-directorates/upper-east-region/253-bawku-municipal>

<sup>4</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

<sup>5</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.myjoyonline.com/government-renews-curfew-in-bawku-after-shootings/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mint.gov.gh/imposition-of-curfew-on-bawku-municipality-and-its-environs-in-the-upper-east-region-5/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.myjoyonline.com/4-dead-in-renewed-bawku-chieftaincy-violence/>

<sup>11</sup> Information received from WANEP Ghana's monitors in the district.

<sup>12</sup> <https://3news.com/gunshots-in-bawku-again-as-police-worried-residents-reluctant-to-volunteer-info/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.myjoyonline.com/3-military-officers-shot-in-bawku/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.myjoyonline.com/3-military-officers-shot-in-bawku/>

parts of the country especially the south (most of whom are civil servants) and the 5 neighbouring countries like Togo and Burkina Faso. Ethnic heterogeneity has had implications for harmony in the municipality. It is expected however, that inter-marriages among the diverse ethnic groupings will provide the impetus for peaceful co-existence.<sup>6</sup>

- Eighteen persons have been arrested in connection with the violence. Screening and processing of suspects for court are the next steps.

## RISK ANALYSIS

The situation Bawku has indicated that the curfew and bans in the district is not enough to keep the conflict at bay although the impositions are in full force. Given the availability of weapons to individuals and the brazen attitude towards the security services in the area, there is a chance of multiplied fatalities and injuries as well as violations of human rights in the affected communities.

Again, Bawku's proximity to the border on the Togo and Burkina Faso sides makes it necessary for national interest, because of the border's porous nature. Bawku is located in the North Eastern corner of Ghana; it is a major town with heavy commercial activities due to its proximity to the two international borders; Togo to the east and Burkina Faso to the north. Niger and Benin are also not too distant. Bawku is a cosmopolitan town; its location and business opportunities makes it a habitat for diverse nationality of immigrants. This increases the threat to possible violent extremist potentials and gives the potential for small arms to be imported, and ethnic mobilizations from Togo and Burkina Faso, to be used in the conflict, and other cross-border criminal activities. Already, there has been close calls to violent extremist acts in the Bawku area on the other side of the border in Burkina Faso, and this conflict presents opportunities for infiltration by violent extremist.

The incidents in Bawku have affected the security of residents, some have fled their homes to unknown destinations for safety.

As it stands, trade and commercial activities would be slowed as the fear caused could lead to more persons fleeing the communities. Schools and hospitals would be closed as personnel would perceive the volatility in the situation as unpredictable and therefore not feel safe in the town. Education of children will thus be cut off, and this would be affecting the already ailing education regime in especially the very rural areas.

Northern Ghana experiences a single maxima rain fall between March to October which is also the season for agricultural activities. By march most farmers start tilling the field in readiness for planting of crops. Currently farmers in Bawku and its environs have stalled farm land preparatory activities due to the conflict. This could potentially affect food security and livelihoods in the affected communities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is the need for the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO) to strengthen collaboration with the Bawku Municipal Authorities, traditional authorities, faith-based organizations, local NGOs and other relevant agencies to conduct humanitarian needs assessment and provide the needed support to internally displaced persons.

---

<sup>6</sup> Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

*Situation Tracking is a periodic analytical report designed by WANEP through its National Early Warning System (NEWS) to monitor the changing trends of specific conflict threats as civil society support to peace and security in Ghana*

- There is the need to revamp the Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee and empower them to engage in dialogue with each other to find a lasting solution to this conflict. This process must be led by the Regional and National Peace Councils in close collaboration with the Interior Ministry as well as the Security Agencies.
- There is the need to strengthen coordination and collaboration among District Security Council (DISECC), Regional Security Council (REGSEC), traditional authorities to respond effectively to the conflicts through enforcement of law and order in the affected areas.



*Situation Tracking is a periodic analytical report designed by WANEP through its National Early Warning System (NEWS) to monitor the changing trends of specific conflict threats as civil society support to peace and security in Ghana*