



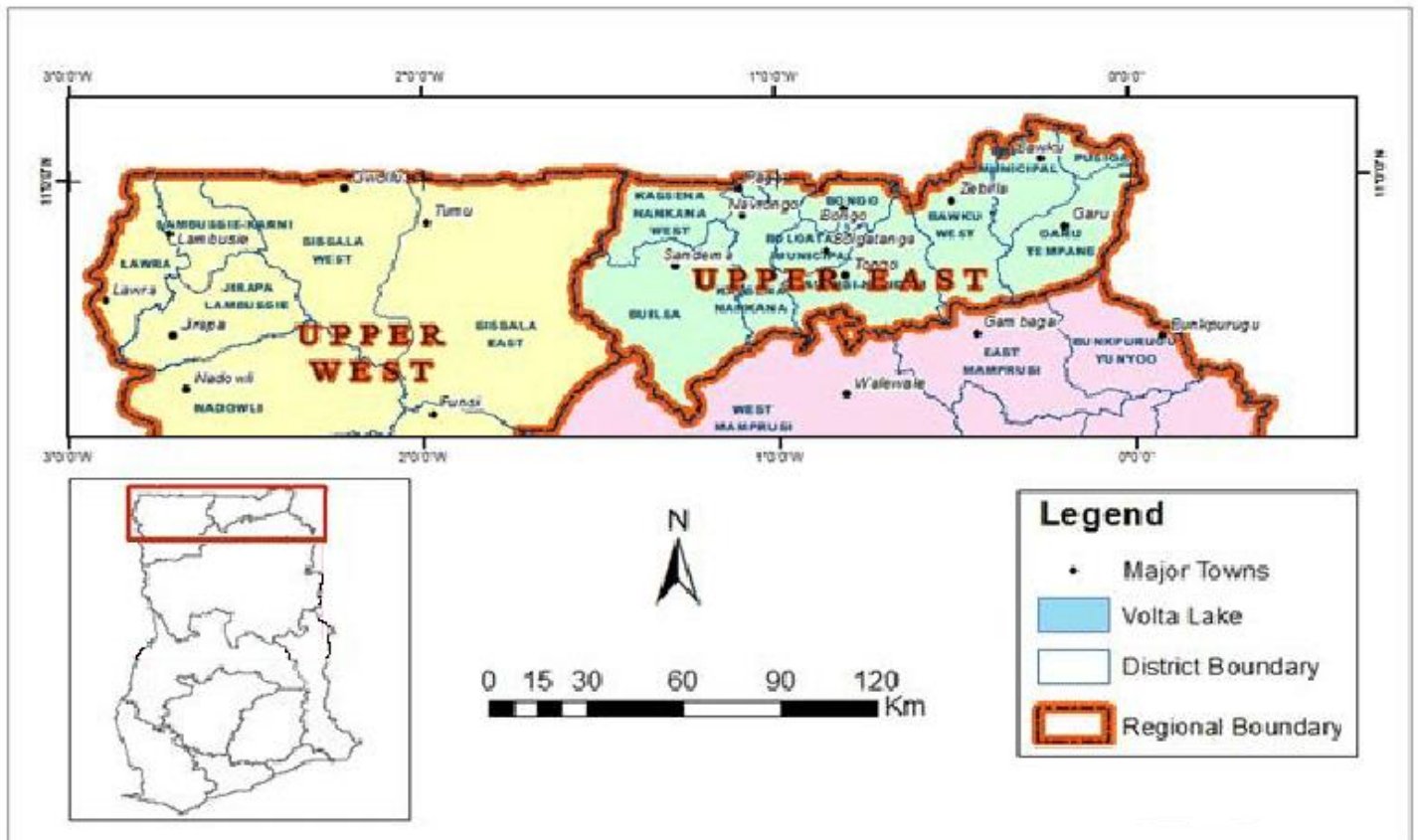
## NEWS SITUATION TRACKING

**More than 4000 Migrants from Burkina Faso Face Starvation, Lack of Shelter, and Water, Due to Violent Extremist Attacks Displacing them into Parts of Northern Ghana.**

**Location:** Northeastern Border Areas of Ghana

**Issue:** Suspected Terrorist Attacks in Burkina Faso Forces Scores of Migrants into Ghana's Northern Border Areas.

**Date:** January 31, 2023



Map Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Godfred-https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269991172\\_Developing\\_a\\_Community-Based\\_Resilience\\_Assessment\\_Model\\_with\\_reference\\_to\\_Northern\\_Ghana/citation/download](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Godfred-https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269991172_Developing_a_Community-Based_Resilience_Assessment_Model_with_reference_to_Northern_Ghana/citation/download) (Edited for the purpose of this brief)

## COMMUNITY PROFILING

### Basic Demography and Geography:

The Upper East is located in the north-eastern corner of the Republic of Ghana. It shares borders with the Republic of Burkina Faso to the north, the Republic of Togo to the east, the North East Region to the south, and the Upper West Region to the west.<sup>1</sup> The region occupies a land mass of 8,842 square kilometers (2.7% the total landmass of Ghana). The land is relatively flat with a few hills to the East and Southeast. Most of the eastern and western parts of the region lie within the basins of the River Volta and its tributaries. The region lies within the Sahel belt, stretching from Senegal in the West to Ethiopia in the East)

<sup>1</sup> <https://ghs.gov.gh/profile-upper-east-region/>

of Africa.<sup>2</sup> The Upper East Region is the least urbanized region in Ghana, with a rural population of over 79.0 per cent and many living in scattered settlements. The projected population of the region for 2021 is 1,318,523.

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

#### **Economy:**

The main occupations in the region in order of magnitude are, agriculture and related work (65.9%), production and transport equipment work (14.5%), sales work (9.5%) service work (3.9%), and professional, technical and related work 3.8 per cent. The five together make up 97.6 percent of all occupations. The occupational structure of the region is thus not very diverse.<sup>3</sup> The three major industrial activities at the national level are agriculture, including hunting and forestry (49.1%) wholesale and retail trade (15.2%) and manufacturing (10.9%). Significantly, these remain the three major activities for both sexes in the region.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Politics:**

The political administration of the region is through the local government system. Under this administrative system, the region is divided into 15 MMDA's (made up of 0 Metropolitan, 4 Municipal and 11 Ordinary Assemblies).<sup>5</sup> Each District, Municipal or Metropolitan Assembly, is administered by a Chief Executive, representing the central government but deriving authority from an Assembly headed by a presiding member elected from among the members themselves.

#### **Ethnicity:**

The major ethnic groups in Upper East fall under the broad categories of Mole Dagbon (74.5%), Grusi (8.5%), Mande-Busanga (6.2%) and Gurma (3.2%). Among the Mole Dagbon, the major sub-groupings are the Namnam (30.5%), Kusasi (22.6%), Nankani- Gurense (9.2%) and Builsa (7.6%). The Kassena (6.5%) of the Grusi, Busanga (5.9%) of the Mande-Busanga and Bimoba (2.8%) of the Gurma are the other significant ethnic subgroups. The major languages of the region are Gurense (Frafra), Kasina, Nankani, Buile, Kusal, Mampruli and Bisa.

In addition to the 7 major groups, there are several minor ethnic groups in the region. For example, the Bimoba comprise 2.8 per cent of the population in the region but have no concentration in any one district. The Busanga who form 5.9 per cent in the region have major concentrations in only Bawku West (7.8%) and Bawku East (15.4%). The Kusasi make up about one in five of the region's population whereas the Mamprusis make up less than two percent. However, the Mamprusis are highly concentrated in adjacent West Mamprusi and East Mamprusi of the Northern Region.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Religion:**

Three main religious grouping are found in the Upper East Region, namely: Christianity, Islam and the Traditional. Traditional religion is the most common form of worship in the region (46.4%), followed by Christianity (28.3%) and Islam (22.6%). About two per cent (1.9%) profess no religious affiliation, and less than one per cent (0.8 percent) belong to other religious groupings. Catholics form the majority of Christians (57.7%) followed by Pentecostal/Charismatic groups (21.7%) and Protestants (12.3%).<sup>7</sup>

### **CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS**

#### **Affected Persons:**

- Northern Border Communities
- Displaced persons from Burkina Faso

#### **Interested Actors:**

- The Ghana Police Service,
- The Ghana Armed Forces,
- The Ghana Immigration Service

<sup>2</sup> <https://ghs.gov.gh/profile-upper-east-region/>

<sup>3</sup> See [https://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/regions/uppereast.asp?menu\\_id=6#:~:text=The%20major%20ethnic%20groups%20in,%25%20and%20Builsa%20\(7.6%25\).](https://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/regions/uppereast.asp?menu_id=6#:~:text=The%20major%20ethnic%20groups%20in,%25%20and%20Builsa%20(7.6%25).)

<sup>4</sup> See [https://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/regions/uppereast.asp?menu\\_id=6#:~:text=The%20major%20ethnic%20groups%20in,%25%20and%20Builsa%20\(7.6%25\).](https://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/regions/uppereast.asp?menu_id=6#:~:text=The%20major%20ethnic%20groups%20in,%25%20and%20Builsa%20(7.6%25).)

<sup>5</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20130118104107/http://www.ghanadistricts.com/region/?r=8>, Accessed February 2, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> See [https://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/regions/uppereast.asp?menu\\_id=6#:~:text=The%20major%20ethnic%20groups%20in,%25%20and%20Builsa%20\(7.6%25\).](https://www.modernghana.com/GhanaHome/regions/uppereast.asp?menu_id=6#:~:text=The%20major%20ethnic%20groups%20in,%25%20and%20Builsa%20(7.6%25).)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

- The Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority
- Interior Ministry
- Civil Society Organizations
- Traditional Leaders
- The Criminal Investigative Department of the Ghana Police Service
- The National Investigative Bureau
- The Youths
- National Security

### INCIDENT PROFILING

On December 5, 2022, reports monitored by WANEP-Ghana indicated that about 1000 individuals were migrating from nearby villages in Burkina Faso to Hapa village near Hamille in the Upper West region due to an alleged terrorist incursion in Kolinka, a village near the Burkina Faso-Ghana border, about 5 km from Hamille in Ghana.

Subsequent reports have indicated the movement of Burkinabes from communities in Burkina Faso such as Bugri, Zouga and Asongo, into communities along the north-eastern side of the Upper East region in the Bawku West District. The displaced Burkinabes are currently camped across the border at Adasiga, Soogo, Agoogo, Kperigu and Kperigzousi in the Soogo electoral area, while others are residing in areas such as Natinga, Googo, Weari, Kanlesi and Fulbes in the Widnaba electoral area. Officials have confirmed a total of about 4000<sup>8</sup> new arrivals over the past two weeks.<sup>9</sup> Victims of the terrorist and extremist attacks in Burkina Faso include mainly women and children, especially week-old babies. Reports further reveal that there is lack of basic survival needs of the displaced persons, as they face food and water shortages, as well as accommodation challenges.

### Responses

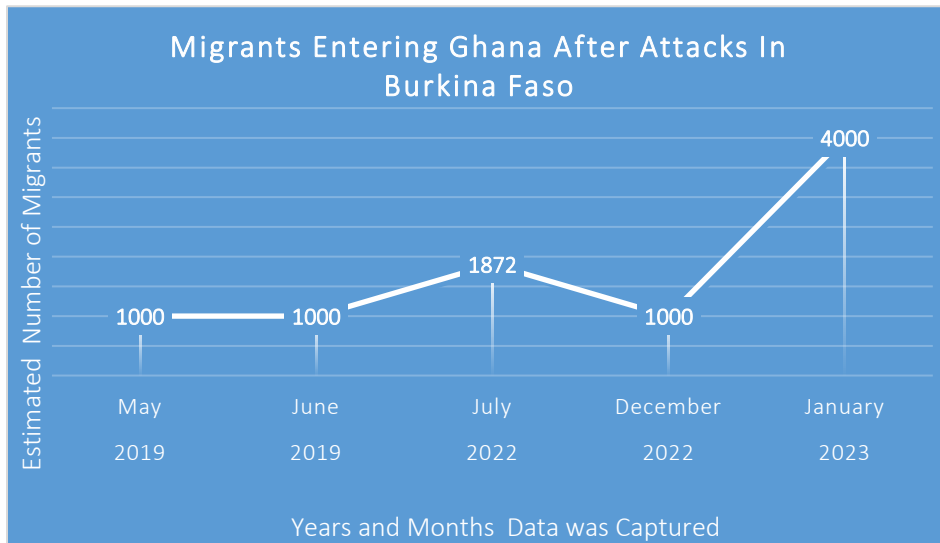
- Ghana's Security and Defense Forces have reportedly taken up positions along the border with Burkina Faso following the attacks in Burkina Faso.
- The Upper East Regional Security Council has also held an emergency meeting with top security commanders of the National Special Forces to reassess the situation along the border.
- Security Patrols along the border has reportedly been intensified to include the approval of air patrol support if the situation demands it.
- The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) through its grant support to the Navrongo-Bolga Catholic Diocese Development Organization (NABOCADO) of the Catholic Church, has presented GH¢1.3 million worth of food and non-food items to the refugees.
- Additionally, the Bawku Naba, Zugraan Asigri Abugrago Azoka II, has donated bags of rice, maize and second-hand clothing to the Burkinabe asylum seekers.
- The Ghana Refuge Board and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) are putting in place measures to accommodate several refugees trooping into the country from Burkina Faso.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/more-than-4-000-burkinabes-flee-to-ghana-over-terrorist-attacks.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.myjoyonline.com/scores-of-burkinabes-flee-to-ghana-following-attacks-by-suspected-terrorists/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://citinewsroom.com/2023/02/refugee-board-unhcr-providing-assistance-to-burkina-faso-refugees-tetteh-padi/>

## RISK ANALYSIS



Since 2019, attacks in Burkina Faso have forced several migrants to move into neighboring countries, of which Ghana is included. Per data captured from multiple sources<sup>11</sup>, the graph beside indicates the growing trend in the number of migrants into northern border territories of Ghana. About a thousand persons were displaced initially into northern Ghana in May 2019<sup>12</sup> and again in June same year the situation was repeated.

Subsequent to these occurrences, other attacks drove an estimated 1872 persons into Northern Ghana in July

2022<sup>13</sup> and about 1000 in December 2022. This year, reports suggest that over 4000 persons have again been displaced into Bawku West especially, in the Upper East region.<sup>14</sup>

Even though the attacks are occurring in Burkina Faso, the impact is felt in Ghana. The influx of the Burkinabe's into the border towns increases the risk of violent extremist and terrorist attacks in northern border communities, which could serve as incubating grounds for potential attacks. There has also been increased competition between migrants and indigenes over limited resources including water and food.

There is also economic pressure on families along the border who have been compelled to accommodate their kinsmen and other strangers fleeing the attacks. Reports indicate the lack of accommodation for the displaced persons which put the lives of children especially week-old babies, at a health risk. The risk of an outbreak of epidemics given the poor and unhygienic conditions the migrants may be in, is possible. The evolving COVID-19 situation coupled with weaknesses in healthcare access further poses risks for the affected communities.

Again, the recurrent ethno-chieftaincy conflict between the Kusasis and Mamprusis in the proximal enclaves of Bawku is a catalyst for influx of dissidents, radicalization, and recruitment of youths along those areas into extremist groups. The influx of migrants in border communities also creates opportunity for inflow of small arms and light weapons, and other contraband materials, which could trigger violence in the affected areas. While ethnic identity along the Ghana-Burkina Faso border provides opportunity for ethnic kinsmen to provide shelter and other humanitarian support to migrants, it also serves as an avenue for ethnic mobilization for conflicts in communities in the northern parts of Ghana. Extremist and terrorist could also leverage the opportunity to launch attacks.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Ghana Immigration Service needs to strengthen collaboration with the security agencies to increase measures to facilitate identification and registration and monitoring of migrants. The Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority also needs to augment the efforts of the Ghana Immigration Service to assess the materials that are being brought in by the displaced persons.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Burkinabe-nationals-fleeing-to-Ghana-through-Sissala-enclave-747480>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Burkinabe-nationals-fleeing-to-Ghana-through-Sissala-enclave-747480>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/over-1-800-flee-terrorist-attacks-in-burkina-to-ghana.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/more-than-4-000-burkinabes-flee-to-ghana-over-terrorist-attacks.html>

*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 for the Ghana Refugee Council/or agency responsible to strengthen collaboration with local and district authorities, security agencies, Ghana Health Service, International humanitarian organizations, local NGOs, CSO and the relevant development partners to increase humanitarian support including food, shelter, and drugs to migrants, especially protection of women and children.
- The Government of Ghana should also strengthen collaboration with the Burkinabe Government in line with the objectives of the Accra Initiative to increase intelligence and other security cooperation to monitor extremist and terrorist activities in their border communities.