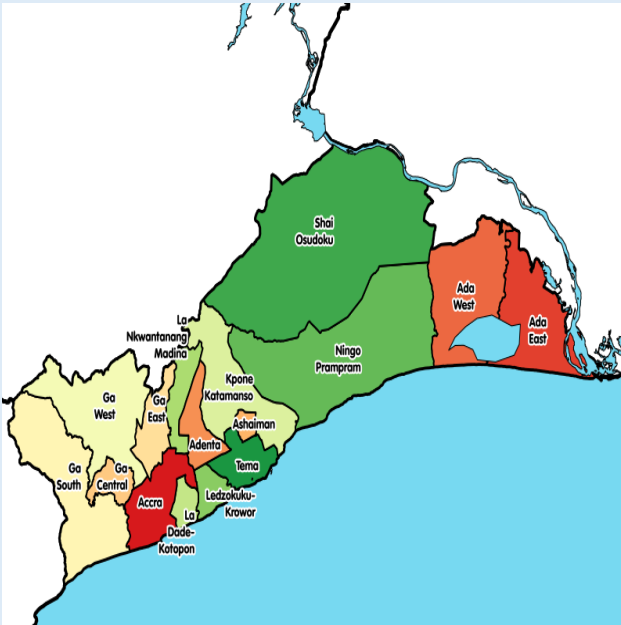


Flooding in the Greater Accra Region claims 12 lives on April 15, 2019

BACKGROUND/ DEMOGRAPHY

Map of the Greater Accra Region



Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Accra_Region#/media/File:Districts_of_the_Greater_Accra_Region_\(2012\).svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_Accra_Region#/media/File:Districts_of_the_Greater_Accra_Region_(2012).svg)

- ✓ The Greater Accra Region is the administrative capital of Ghana, occupying a total land area of **3,245** square kilometres.
- ✓ In terms of population, it is the second most populous region after the Ashanti Region, with a population of **4,010,054** according to the **2010** population census. This accounts for **15.4** per cent of Ghana's total population.
- ✓ Politically, administration of the region is organized through the Local Government system. Under this administration system, the region is divided into five districts namely Accra Metropolitan Area, Tema Municipal Area, Ga East District, Ga West District, Dangme West District and Dangme East District.
- ✓ The Accra Metropolitan Area is administered by a Chief Executive, representing the Central Government but deriving authority from an Assembly headed by a Presiding Member elected from the members of the Assembly.
- ✓ In the last few years, severe floods hit the capital city, Accra. For instance, on June 3rd 2015, heavy rains caused flooding that impacted many parts of the Greater Accra Region. Over 200 people lost their lives, many were displaced and a number of properties destroyed.
- ✓ In addition to this, are the costs of disrupted livelihoods and economic activities coupled with health risks brought about by the floods.

INCIDENT PROFILE

Following the recent rains that hit some parts of the country, 12 lives have been lost in the Greater Accra Region. Five persons reportedly perished on Monday April 8, 2019, in a downpour which lasted for about two hours and destroyed properties. The second rain which lasted about 3 hours, occurred on Sunday, April 14th, 2019, with 7 people reported dead according to the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO). Four bodies including two military personnel and two civilians of which one was having a baby, were found at Adjei Kojo near Ashaiman while one was also found at Odawna. NADMO is still searching for the bodies of a six-year-old boy and an adult male who were swept away by flood waters at Sakaman and Ablekuma, respectively. The bodies of man, who was pushed into the Odaw River around the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange, and that of the 11-month old baby is also being searched for.



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RISKS ANALYSIS :

Increasing urbanization and its related activities such as construction of residential buildings and paved roads have impacted negatively on the drainage systems in the Greater Accra Region. Also, disregard for building regulations has led many settlements in the region to be built in the green belt zones, causing depletion of vegetation and making these areas more prone to erosion and flooding. Furthermore, some buildings in certain towns in Accra are positioned close to rivers and drains, whilst others are built only a few meters away from the stream channel or even across natural watercourse which increase the risk of these settlements to flooding.¹

Improper waste management practices in another trigger of flooding in Accra. This is because the volume of solid waste in the form of silt or rubbish, particularly plastics, cannot be collected by existing systems. Furthermore, unprecedented urbanization in Accra has culminated into a lot of pressure on public facilities. Solid waste management has become a challenge for the city authorities to effectively manage largely due to inadequate capacity to effectively manage sanitation in the capacity city.² Additionally, some settlements in areas in Accra are used to dumping solid waste directly into watercourses, drains, culverts, and other drainage structures which often results in reduced flow capacity. The capacity of most rivers have also been greatly reduced by the deposition of silt, garbage, and weed-growth in and along water courses.

Currently, drains like the Korle Lagoon are often clogged with refuse and silt which results in reduced capacity of the river channels. Major rivers and their tributaries in Accra have become depot of waste water including faecal matter, and solid waste which poses a serious threat to public health since most of these rivers act as open sewers. The Odaw drain near the Kwame Nkrumah Circle is identified as the main receptacle for all the flood waters within the Region, and the need to keep it desilted at all times since rainfall patterns have become unpredictable. Accra as the capital of Ghana has been facing this challenge and until the Korle Lagoon is de-silted to allow the Odaw River to flow into it, Accra will continue to flood when it rains³.

Notably, the landscape of Accra is generally low-lying which also makes the city prone to severe perennial flooding. Inadequately sized culverts and blockage of the major drains due to accumulation of silt caused as a result of years of neglect and lack of maintenance.⁴ A flood report on Accra revealed that, 'absence of drainage facilities in some areas and inadequate capacities of the existing drainage facilities also contribute to the problem of flooding. Inspections and hydraulic calculations indicate that some drains and culverts in the Mataheko, Kaneshie and other catchments areas are of inadequate capacity.⁵

Where the roads are untarred in Accra, gullies and erosion are evident on such surfaces. For this reason, floodwater is stopped from entering roadside drains provided. Again, problems associated with reduced capacity arises as erosion results in a high delivery of washed away sediments from land into drains, choking it consequently and ultimately leading to floods.⁶

MECANISMS FOR INTERVENTIONS :

- ✓ The Greater Accra NADMO office has utilised its standby operations unit to respond to the situation. NADMO, in collaboration with a joint team of Police, Military and Fire Service Personnel have intervened to retrieve the bodies of four persons, including married couple who were with the Military, after the torrential rains which flooded a stretch of Accra-Tema Motorway at Ashaiman.
- ✓ The Government of Ghana has allocated GHC197m to desilt 22 choked drains, and complete other

¹ Jr, D. (2015). Flooding in Accra Research report. Modern Ghana. Retrieved 16 April 2019, from <<http://www.modernghana.com/news/223780/1/flooding-in-accra-research-report.html>>.

² See 'Appraisal of Solid Waste Management In The Greater Accra Region Of Ghana', Thesis by Godwill Nunya Agordoh. UGBS.

³ Sam Jr, P. A. (2002). Are the municipal solid waste management practices causing flooding during the rainy season in Accra, Ghana, West Africa?. African Journal of Environmental Assessment and Management, 4(2), 56-62.

⁴ Refer to Asumadu-Sarkodie *et al* (2015). Impact analysis of flood in Accra, Ghana. Advances in Applied Science Research. 6. 53-78. 10.6084/M9.FIGSHARE.3381460. page 5.

⁵ See flooding research report, <<http://www.modernghana.com/news/223780/1/flooding-in-accra-research-report.html>>.

⁶ Peter A. S. 2002. Are the Municipal Solid Waste Management Practices Causing Flooding During the Rainy Season in Accra Ghana West Africa? Available at: <http://www.africanenviro.org/SWMVisi.htm>. Accessed on: 16th April, 2019.



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drainage systems in the region. The Sanitation Ministry and the Greater Accra Metropolitan Water and Sanitation Projects said the contract for the works have already been awarded by the Ministry of Works and Housing.

- ✓ The Ghana Meteorological Agency has issued early warning information to the general public to expect heavy rains in the month of April 2019. The Agency has further urged disaster management institutions to embark on public education and other outreach measures to prevent or mitigate the threats in disaster prone communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ NADMO and civil society partners including youth groups should intensify public education in disaster prevention and management. As the threat and frequency of flood risk increases, the use of temporary flood defences to augment the permanent ones, could be implemented before the rains intensify.
- ✓ The Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, NADMO and community stakeholders should embark on mass sensitization on sanitation in general, and proper waste disposal in particular to discourage disposal of solid waste in water bodies which contributes immensely to drainage systems overflowing their banks.
- ✓ Community Rescue Teams should be strengthened to serve as first responders to disaster situations. The irregular nature of settlements and difficulty in getting directions makes it difficult for personnel from the Fire Service, Police, NADMO and Paramedics to get to incident locations. Regularly trained and financially supported in-house teams within communities can help save lives when disaster strikes.
- ✓ The Meteorological Service Department should be strengthened with a robust Early Warning System that would disseminate timely information to the other relevant agencies and general public to prepare for flood situations ahead of the rainy season.
- ✓ Wetlands and surrounding cover-cropped areas should be protected since these areas act as sponges which soak and retain water, consequently reducing the chances of floods.

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