

Quick Update of Mpaha Land Dispute (1 dead 4 injured, several houses torched) Sunday May 23, 2021

BACKGROUND/ DEMORGRAPHY

Map of the Central Gonja District



Source: Central Gonja District Data from the 2010 Population and Housing Census

- ✓ Mpaha is located within the Central Gonja District in the Savannah Region.
- ✓ The town has an estimated population of 2971 (1532 males and 1432 females) according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census data.
- ✓ Farming activities dominate the economic engagements of the people in Mpaha. Crops such as yam, millet, sorghum, maize and groundnuts are mostly cultivated. The major tree species are Sheanut, dawadawa, baobab, acacia, neem and some ebony. These trees are scattered except in most valleys where isolated wood land or gallery forest are found. Most trees are deciduous, shedding their leaves during the dry season.
- ✓ The Guinea Savannah vegetation and forest cover in major communities in Mpaha has been destroyed by human activities.
- ✓ Bush fires, charcoal burning and fetching of firewood is common. These activities serve as another dimension of economic engagement in the town.
- ✓ Mpaha and surrounding towns have several tourism attractions though these are largely undeveloped. The attractions range from natural features such as the Mpaha hills, the confluence of the White and Black Volta at Sheri, and the clean beaches, to historical such as the Jakpa Grave site and Regalia at Old Buipe and Nyanwuripe respectively.

INCIDENT PROFILE

Members of two clans (Lesumpe and Kijasa) in Mpaha, in the Savannah region, have reportedly engaged in a land dispute, resulting in the death of one person and injuries to four others. Several houses have also been set on fire. According to field informants, the incident started on Sunday May 23, 2021, about 7:30am during a meeting which was supposed to resolve a long-standing dispute between the Lesumpe and Kijasa factions over the ownership of gravel pits on a stretch of land. The leaders of both clans are said to have claimed legitimacy to the GHS15 royalties generated per truck load of gravel excavated from the pits.



NEWS Quick Updates

Website: www.wanep.org / www.wanepghana.org ||

Email: info@wanepghana.org / news@wanepghana.org || Phone: +233 (0)0372098747

RISKS ANALYSIS:

The risk of violence escalating remains high. This is because, there is yet to be any concrete determination of either party's legitimacy to the landed site. Both parties continue to lay claim over the site. With the death and injuries to persons from both factions, engaging in another dialogue at this stage may be difficult if calm does not return. The violence has also increased mistrust and further heightened the tensions between the two factions who have accordingly called for 'justice' to be served by the law enforcement agencies.

In view of the forgoing, the risk of reprisal attacks is likely if stringent security measures are not put in place immediately to curb threats to peace.

MECHANISMS FOR INTERVENTIONS:

- A team of military and police personnel from Buipe have been dispatched to Mpaha to support the Mpaha Police to maintain law and order.
- Some of the participants in the conflict who sustained injuries have been taken to the Mpaha Health Center and Family Life Clinic in Kigbirpe for treatment.
- The police have also visited the Mpaha Health Center and Family Life Clinic at Kigbirpe to meet the victims as part of their investigations into the violence.
- Efforts are being made to convey the body of the deceased to the Tamale Teaching Hospital Mortuary for preservation and autopsy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There is the need for the Regional Security Council to increase collaboration with the Regional Police Command to strengthen security and restore law and order in the affected communities.
- There is the need for Savannah Regional Peace Council to collaborate with traditional authorities to initiate dialogue to engage key stakeholders regional House of Chiefs, ethnic/tribal leaders, youth and women groups, security agencies, faith-based organisations and security agencies and local NGOs in the area to resolve the conflict.

References:

- <https://www.myjoyonline.com/1-shot-dead-3-in-critical-condition-after-clash-between-kijasa-and-lansupe-in-central-gonja/>
- <https://dailyguidenetwork.com/one-killed-three-injured-over-land-dispute-at-mpaha/>
- <https://3news.com/gun-battle-in-gonja-leaves-one-feared-dead/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Gonja_District
- <http://centralgonja.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/>
- Firsthand information from the Savannah Regional Peace Council and Field Monitors

For further information, kindly contact Albert Yelyang, National Network Coordinator through ayelyang@wanepghana.org