

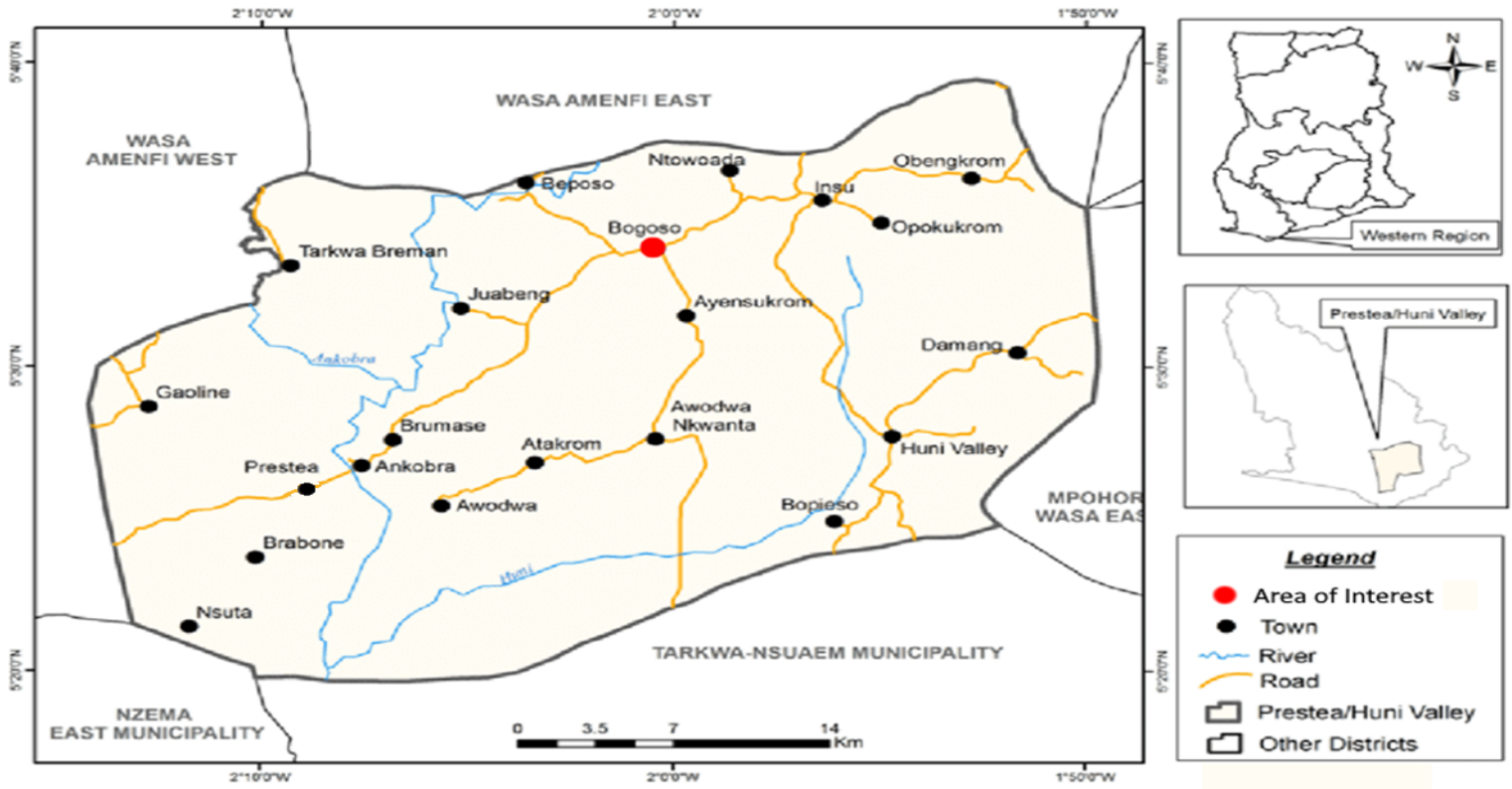
EXPLOSION AT APEATSE, PRESTEA-HUNI VALLEY DISTRICT

17 PEOPLE DEAD, 59 INJURED, OVER 500 HOMES DESTROYED AND HUNDREDS DISPLACED

**Location:** Apeatse in the Prestea-Huni Valley District of the Western Region

**Issue:** Explosion in the community with over 159 persons displaced

**Date:** Thursday, January 20, 2022



Map of the Prestea Huni-Valley District showing affected area,  
Source: Cartography Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. 2015

COMMUNITY PROFILING

**Population:**

The population of the Prestea Huni-Valley District (PHD) is 159,304 representing 6.7 percent of the region’s total population. Males constitute 50.5 percent and females represent 49.5 percent of the total population in the District. Also, 63 percent of the population is the rural areas. The total age dependency ratio for the District is 78.8, the age dependency ratio for females is higher (79.2) than that of males (78.4) <sup>1</sup>

CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

**Direct Actors:**

- The Ghana Police Service
- Ghana Health Service
- Ghana Ambulance Service
- NADMO
- Ghana Fire Service

**Affected Persons:**

INCIDENT PROFILING

A vehicle carrying explosives used in mining exploded at Apeatse, along the Bogoso-Bawdie road in the Western Region on January 20, 2022. This resulted in deaths, injuries and destruction of properties in the community.

According to reports, the vehicle carrying the explosives was involved in an accident with a motorcycle, and a third vehicle located very

<sup>1</sup> [https://www2.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/2010\\_District\\_Report/Western/Prestea%20Huni-Valley.pdf](https://www2.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/2010_District_Report/Western/Prestea%20Huni-Valley.pdf)

### Basic Demography and Geography of Hotspots:

Bogoso is the main mining town and the capital of Prestea-Huni Valley District, in the Western Region of Ghana. The municipality has a land area of approximately 1,376 square km, which constitutes about six percent (6%) of the land area of the region. It shares boundaries with Wassa Amenfi East and Wassa Amenfi Central districts in the North. Wassa Amenfi West District to the West, Elembele District to the South West, Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipality to the South, Mpohor and Wassa East Districts to the East and to the North East by Twifo- Ati Mokwa District in the Central Region. The municipality lies within Latitude 5.599585 and Longitude -2.060108

### Ethnicity:

The major ethnic group in the Municipal is Akan consisting mainly of Wassa, Fantes, Ashantis and Nzemas. The Ewes, Kusasis and Dargartis constitute the minority. The major languages spoken in the district are Wassa, Fante and Twi. The Municipality is part of the Wassa Fiase Traditional Area.<sup>2</sup>

### Economy:

The economy of the District is mainly agrarian and it engages almost half of the population (45.2%). This shows that agriculture continues to be the backbone of the District's economy.

There are other economic activities outside the agricultural sector, especially mining. Major companies in the District are Aboso Goldfields, Golden Star Resources, Bogoso/ Prestea Ltd, Prestea Sankonfa Gold Ltd, New Century Mines (Prestea), Tarkwa Goldfields and Anglogold Ashanti Ltd.

### Occupation:

Of the employed population, about 44.0 percent are engaged as skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers, 21 percent in Plant and machine operators and assemblers, 15.2 percent in service and sales, 9.8 percent in craft and related trade with only 4.4 percent engaged as managers, professionals and technicians

### Politics:

Prestea Huni-Valley District (PHD) is a one-constituency District made up of 32 electoral areas, an urban council and 6 area councils with 32 unit committees. The seven urban/area councils are Prestea, Huni-Valley, Beppoh, Awudua, Bogoso, Bondaye and Aboso area councils.

There are 47 Assembly members made up of 32 elected and 14 government appointees including the District Chief Executive (DCE) & the Member of Parliament MP who is an Ex-officio member.

- Community Members of Apeatse Community

### Interested Actors:

- The Ghana Police Service Command
- The Interior Ministry
- The Ghana National Fire Service
- The Ghana Ambulance Service
- National Disaster Management Organization
- Ghana Health Service
- Media Houses
- The Traditional Authorities in Bogoso
- The Regional Minister
- The Municipal Chief Executive
- Youth Leaders
- Non Governmental Organization
- Women and youth groups
- Religious Bodies

close to an electricity transformer leading to the explosion.

A total of 17 people have been confirmed dead, and fifty-nine (59) injured persons have been rescued. Over 500 hundred houses and structures in sections of the community have been destroyed resulting in over 179 residents being displaced.<sup>3</sup> A disaster response team is reported to be mobilizing resources for intervention.

All injured victims are receiving treatment at various hospitals in the district..

### Response

- The security personnel including the Police and the army have been dispatched to provide support to populations in the affected areas. Also, the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), Ghana Ambulance Service team, Red Cross of Ghana have dispatched personnel to provide humanitarian support to the victims and the affected population in the area. An alternative route has been created to facilitate the movement of stranded vehicles plying that route.
- Evacuation plan has been activated to move those in critical condition to medical facilities in Accra so they can get the needed medical assistance.
- A joint team of police and military explosion experts has been deployed to examine the situation and put in place the requisite measures.
- The displaced residents have been relocated to a makeshift camp at the Bogoso St. Michael Parish Hall.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ghanadistricts.com/Home/LinkDataDistrict/3399>

<sup>3</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/01/20/africa/ghana-explosion-emergency-intl/index.html>

## RISK ANALYSIS

Gas explosions in some parts of Ghana have claimed many lives and properties in recent times. Between 2014-2019, Ghana has recorded eight (8) incidence of major explosions that led to the death of more than 200 people. Out of this number of explosion occurrences, 6 incidents of explosions were recorded in Accra only. These explosions were largely caused by fuel leaking from transporting vehicles, fuel stations and carelessness of human activities proximate to fuel station and explosive chemicals.

The Apeatse explosion which is attributed to a collision between a truck conveying mining explosive and a motor tricycle have destroyed an entire community leading to the loss of lives and property with a number survivors being displaced. The tragedy has raised questions about the efficacy of safety measures on explosives transportation and handling, the effectiveness and implementation of the regulatory frameworks to ensure safety in environments where explosives are use and who neglected his or her responsibility leading to this tragedy.

Another cause for concern is the ripple effect of the incident on the socio-economic livelihoods of populations in the affected communities in the district. Notably, destruction of schools in the community has adverse impact on the education of children, teachers and non-teaching staff in the area. Also, the health security of populations in the communities is at risk of outbreak diseases given the unhygienic conditions created by the explosion.

Additionally, economic activities especially agriculture and mining, the mainstay of the economy, have stalled due to the the explosion and associated measures instituted to ensure effective humanitarian delivery to support the affected populations. In light of this, food security is likely to be adversely affected. Aside from this, trading activities along the corridors of the affected communities have also been adversely affected. This has potential consequences on the livelihoods of traders and other commercial activities that have already been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) should strengthen collaboration with the Bogoso Municipal Authorities, traditional authorities, faith-based organisations, local NGOs and other relevant agencies to conduct humanitarian needs assessment and provide the needed humanitarian support to vulnerable and affected populations in the area.
- The Ministry of Health should strengthen the capacity of the District Health Authorities and ensure robust collaboration with regional hospitals to provide health support to the affected populations.
- It is imperative for Local Government Authorities to strengthen collaboration with the District Security Council (REGSEC) and Regional Security Council (REGSEC) to provide adequate security to support populations in the affected communities.
- The Government in collaboration with the Minerals Commission and other relevant agencies should commence investigations to identify the causes of the explosion and provide recommendations to prevent future occurrence.

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