



NEWS SITUATION TRACKING

10 Targeted Killings of men and Arrest of one Suspect in WA

Location: Wa, Upper West Region

Issue: Targeted abduction, killings and burying of private security personnel

Date: September 16, 2022

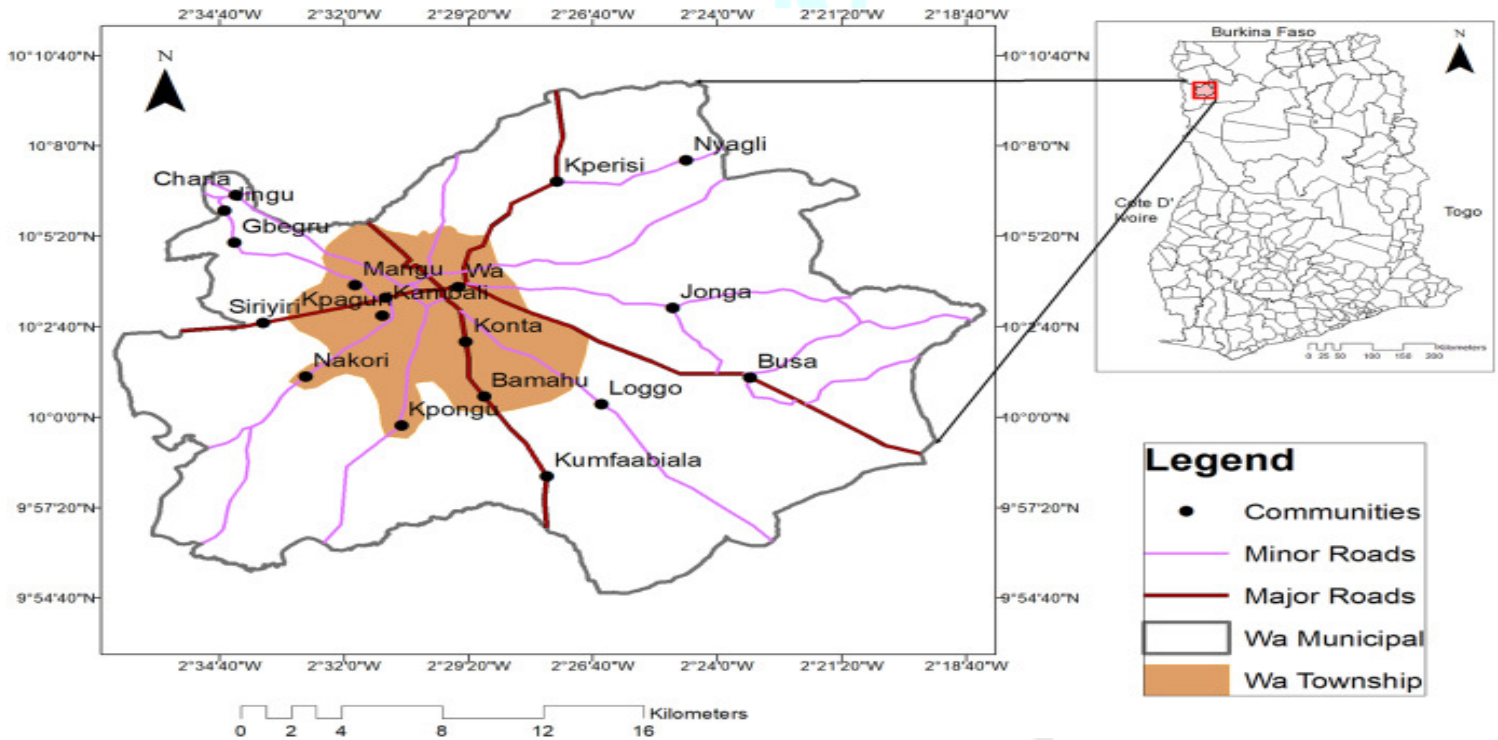


Image Source: <https://ars.els-cdn.com/content/image/1-s2.0-S0264275119309813-gr1.jpg>

COMMUNITY PROFILING

Basic Demography and Geography:

The Upper West Region is geographically located at the North-Western part of the country. It is bordered to the south by the Northern Region, to the east by the Upper East and Northern Regions, and to the north and west by the Republic of Burkina Faso. It lies between longitudes $1^{\circ} 25'W$ and $2^{\circ} 50'W$, and between latitudes $9^{\circ}35'N$ and $11^{\circ} N$. The region covers a geographical area of 18,476 sq. km, constituting 12.7% of the total land area of Ghana.¹

Significance of the State:

Economy:

The region is primarily agrarian with about 80% of the economically active population engaged in agriculture directly and/or indirectly (production and processing). Other economic activities are commerce, weaving and manufacture of traditional textiles, basket weaving, some amount of fishing, and, lately mining, which is fast catching up with other activities.²

Politics:

¹ <https://mofa.gov.gh/site/directorates/regional-directorates/upper-west-region>

² <https://mofa.gov.gh/site/directorates/regional-directorates/upper-west-region>

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.³ 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.⁴

Ethnicity:

The Region is ethnically heterogeneous. The different ethnic groups that are found in the region form part of the over 100 groups that are found in Ghana. These are distinguishable by language and cultural differences. Most of the ethnic groups in this region speak languages of the Gur family or the voltaic branch of the Niger-Congo language family (Goody 1954). They belong to the Mole-Dagbani group, which is a result of links and intermarriages between many groups.

The main ethnic groups include the Dagaaba, Sissala, Wala, Chakali and Lobi. There are other smaller ethnic groups like the Hausa, Fulani, and Moshie who are settlers from neighbouring countries. The major ethnic groups in the region are predominantly patrilineal. Christianity, Islam, and Traditional beliefs are the predominant religions. Traditional life and beliefs are more prominent in the rural areas.⁵

CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

Affected Persons:

- Private Security Personnel

Interested Actors:

- The Ghana Police Service,
- The Ghana Armed Forces,
- Ghana Health Service
- Interior Ministry
- Civil Society Organizations
- Ministry of Health
- Traditional Leaders
- The Criminal Investigative Department of the Ghana Police Service
- The National Investigative Bureau
- The Youths

INCIDENT PROFILING

There have been a number of unexplained killings of private security men in Wa, Upper West region. Most of the alleged situations are night-shift security men. The first incident was reported on April 17, 2022, where a 60-year-old security person of an international school was allegedly killed and buried by some unknown persons.⁶ The incident occurred in an uncompleted building at Napogibakole, a suburb of the Wa Municipality.⁷

On July 31, 2022, another dead body was discovered buried with some body parts missing around the Wa TI Ahmadiyya Junior High School, on the Bamahu stretch.⁸ Another security man guarding a two-storey building was discovered lifeless with parts of the body missing, including the heart. Another 68 years old security man called Yahaya Alhassan was also declared missing along the Nakore Road by the Wa police on August 23, 2022.

On September 9, 2022, a 69-year-old security man at the Child Support Ghana Orphanage Home was allegedly attacked by some unknown gunmen but survived because a witness to the situation shouted for help, which led to some community people come to the rescue of the victim. Four days later, on September 13, 2022, another

³ Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

⁴ Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

⁵ <https://mofa.gov.gh/site/directorates/regional-directorates/upper-west-region>

⁶ <https://www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh/police-chase-suspected-murderers-of-security-guard-in-wa/>

⁷ <https://www.adomonline.com/60-year-old-security-man-allegedly-killed-buried-in-uncompleted-building/>

⁸ <https://crewblog.net/wa-youth-vandalise-nigerian-shops-suspect-foreign-nationals-are-behind-kidnappings/general-news/>

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suspected case of murder of a night private security person⁹ in Wa was recorded, sending the total number of persons who have suffered similar situations, to six in five months.

On September 16, 2022, from Kpongu, another private security man was allegedly kidnapped at a marketplace close to the Wa Technical Institute in the early hours of the day. Two days later, on September 18, 2022, a dead body was found in a shallow grave suspected to be one of the missing bodies. This has angered the youth of Wa who have taken to the street to demonstrate and register their displeasure against the unexplained killings. They marched to the Wa Chief's Palace to demand his intervention. The youth also demanded immediate interventions from the Regional Security Council to apprehend the perpetrators of the killings. On 19th September, 2022, the suspect, Kankani Adongo, was arrested at Bamahu, a suburb of Wa, after extensive collaboration between the Police and community search parties after observing suspicious behaviour of the suspect in the neighborhood. Adongo also allegedly had clothes of some of the missing persons in his procession. The suspect is currently in Police' custody for further investigation¹⁰. In another development, on 20th September, 2022, Dr -Bonaa, a security analyst, has indicated that the prime suspect in the recent killings in Wa suffers from a cannibalistic tendency. Dr -Bonaa said he has gathered intelligence to the effect that the suspect ate the body parts of his victim. According to the safety and security analyst, a demonstration of this behaviour may result from mental health issues.¹¹

Responses

The regional security council at a meeting agreed on the following measures to help curb the situation

- While investigations on the incidents are ongoing, the Upper West Regional Security Council has authorized increased cooperation and collaboration among the intelligence agencies.
- Unregistered motorcycles within the Wa Municipality shall be arrested and prosecuted by the Ghana police service
- The Regional Security Council encourages the formation of Community Neighborhood Watchdog Committees with the aid of the Assembly Members within their respective jurisdiction and under the supervision of the Ghana Police Service. The members of these watchdog committees shall be profiled, trained and licensed by the Ghana Police Service to avoid abuse of the system.
- Landlords within the municipality have been advised to inspect resident permits of tenants not of Ghanaian origin¹²
- The paramount chief has also called for a meeting with his sub chiefs to explore ways of supporting the security agencies to solve the murder issues.
- The Parents Teacher Association of the IT Ahmadiyyah Senior Secondary School has raised concern about the security light situation of the school environment where three of the killings took place. They have donated a number of security bulbs but have tasked VRA to intervene and fix the security light in the area.
- The Ghana Police Service has also dispatched a special purpose investigation and intelligence and crime combat teams to the area under the leadership of the Director General of police.
- A reward of GHS 100.000 has been set aside by the Ghana Police Service for any one with credible information that will lead to the arrest of the persons responsible for the killings in Wa.

RISK ANALYSIS

⁹ Field Reports from Monitors in the field

¹⁰ <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Police-arrest-prime-suspect-in-recent-serial-killings-in-Wa-1626425>

¹¹ <https://www.bing.com/search?q=lead+suspect+in+wa+killings+ate+body+parts+of+his+victims+-+dr+bonaa&qs=HS&sc=9-0&cvid=6B05C32285BD>

¹² <https://www.adomonline.com/upper-west-regsec-outlines-strategies-to-end-murder-cases-disappearance-of-people/>

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Some innocent foreigners in the Wa township could be targeted by youths as potential suspects to the crimes. Already some two shops belonging to Nigerian businessmen have been vandalized by the youth during the protest.¹³ This threatens the lives and properties of other foreign nationals in the town if security forces do not intervene effectively.

It is unclear why men have been attacked consistently for the period. However, the modus operandi in the murder cases, where their body parts are taken implies that everyone suggest ritual murder. This has also led to suspicion of a link with international organ harvesting syndicates to trade abroad.

It is also clear from the stories that the mode of attack on most of the victims of the Wa incidents, is using a weapon to the victim on the head to disarm them before inflicting other injuries. This raises series of questions such as, why are victims are not able to resist especially those victims who were security men, the perpetrators could be experts in Homicide. Are our security men trained to understand safety and security measures to demonstrate professionalism on duty? Are our community members aware and understand safety and security standards? The mode of operation could also be a test of Ghana Security System to enable them operational their activities effectively.

Citizens in Wa are currently living in fear. Night and Dawn economic activities are being affected as citizens are unable to tell when and where the next killing will take place and who will be the target. A number of these killings took place in schools or close to academic institutions where the victims were providing security services. The killing of security men in these institutions raises security concerns about the safety of school children. The situation could affect some school children Psychologically resulting in absenteeism and poor performance. The affected schools may also find it difficult to find people who will be willing to work for them as security men in place of those murdered.

This is the rainy season and a peak for agricultural activities in the Upper West Region and in northern Ghana. Major farming activities are practised once in a year. The mysteries around the killings and especially targeting men will impact negatively on agricultural activities. Men with farm lands far away from their communities will find it difficult to travel alone to their farms and work. The reduction in labour on farms has a will equally impact negatively on food production and livelihoods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Criminal Investigation Department as well as the Homicide Unit of the Ghana Police Services should expedite forensic analysis and investigations of the individual cases to identify the patterns and nature of the killings to trace the perpetrators and prosecution of the arrested suspect.
- The Regional Security Council (REGSEC) and District Security Council (DISEC) should strengthen partnership and collaboration with traditional authorities, faith-based organisations, women and youth groups, local non-governmental organizations and other relevant agencies to increase security presence within the Wa township to protect lives, properties and ensure law and order in the affected communities.
- There is the need for security agencies to strengthen partnership with CSOs and community interlocutors to increase community awareness and strengthen early warning waning and information sharing among populations in reporting suspicious behaviour and incidence for early intervention. This should further

¹³ <https://crewblog.net/wa-youth-vandalise-nigerian-shops-suspect-foreign-nationals-are-behind-kidnappings/general-news/>
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informed the establishment or strengthening existing community policing or watchdog committees to strengthen security in vulnerable communities.



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