



GHANA CENTER FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

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Press Release

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CDD-GHANA CONDEMNS ABUSE OF DUE PROCESS IN THE ARREST AND DETENTION OF PROTESTERS BY THE POLICE

The Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) strongly condemns the unlawful tactics employed by the Ghana Police in the recent arrest and detention of some 40 citizens exercising their constitutional right to protest over the weekend. These individuals were demonstrating against critical national issues, including the rising incidence of state capture, widespread corruption, and the unchecked illegal small-scale mining (galamsey) that is devastating the country's water bodies. Alarming, the police also arrested ordinary bystanders who were merely going about their daily activities.

CDD-Ghana is particularly concerned about the Ghana Police Service's repeated use of excessive and illegal control tactics, especially when dealing with young protesters. These actions undermine both the letter and the spirit of Article 14 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Specifically, the Center condemns the following actions:

1. The unnecessary manhandling and brutality of citizens exercising their civic and political rights to protest.
2. The refusal by the police to release the complete list of arrested individuals.
3. The ongoing denial of access to legal counsel for detainees, in direct violation of Article 14(2) of the 1992 Constitution, underscores the situation's urgency.
4. The failure to notify lawyers of the detained individuals before their arraignment before the Circuit Court.
5. The unlawful transfer of detainees from police cells to prison without court approval.
6. The prolonged detention of protesters beyond 48 hours without being brought before a competent court violates Article 14(3) of the 1992 Constitution.
7. The continued denial of access for family members to meet with their detained relatives.

These actions violate the detainees' fundamental human rights and undermine the rule of law in Ghana's constitutional democracy. Such misconduct erodes public trust in our legal system and public institutions.

In this regard, CDD-Ghana calls for the immediate observance of fair and due process for all detainees and strict adherence to the rule of law.

Furthermore, we remind the government and relevant authorities that Ghana is a signatory to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which upholds the right to peaceful assembly under Article 21. This right is echoed in Article 21(1)(d) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, which states: "All persons shall have the right to freedom of assembly, including freedom to take part in processions and demonstrations." The freedom to assemble is not just a fundamental right but is also indispensable for civic development, political awareness, and citizen participation in public affairs.

Finally, we call on the Ghana Police Service to fulfill their duty to protect, not oppress, the citizens of this country. Their responsibility to maintain public order must be carried out in accordance with the letter and spirit of the 1992 Constitution. CDD-Ghana urges the government and all relevant authorities to uphold the constitutional rights of all Ghanaians, including the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and protection from unlawful detention.

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About CDD-Ghana

Established in 1998, the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) is an independent not-for-profit think-and-do-tank that works through research, policy engagement, thought leadership, and civic dialogue and partnerships to promote and strengthen democracy, good governance, and inclusive development in Ghana and the rest of Africa. A founding Core Partner (and Ghana National Partner) of Afrobarometer, CDD-Ghana is also the convenor and secretariat for the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO), West Africa Election Observers Network (WAEON), and West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network (WADEMOS).

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