

# Ghana - OVERVIEW

Updated: June 17, 2014



**Country Name Long Form:** Kingdom of Ghana

**Government Type:** Constitutional Republic

**Languages Spoken:** Asante, Ewe, Fante, Boron, Dagomba, Dangme, Dagarte, Akyem, Akuapem, English

**National Flag**



**Ghana is a Tier III Country. Significant security measures are necessary.**

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Ghana					
Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical					

## POLITICAL CONDITIONS

**Political Violence is rated at LOW in Ghana**

Ghana is a stable democracy that has had six elections since 1992 and two peaceful transitions of power between political parties. While there was sporadic election-related violence, particularly between grassroots supporters of the two major parties, Ghanaian politics takes place in a generally peaceful context.

In the past few years, there has been little serious or widespread civil unrest.

## TERRORISM

**Terrorism is assessed as LOW**

There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including places visited by expatriates and foreign travelers.

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## RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Ghana a score of 46, indicating that the country has medium levels of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in the public sector, with the least corrupt countries receiving a maximum score of 100.

## CRIME

### Crime is assessed as MEDIUM

Street crime is a serious problem, especially acute in Accra and other larger cities. Pickpockets and thieves often carry out crimes of opportunity, such as “snatch & grab” attacks, on city streets, in crowded areas and from vehicles idling in traffic. Pickpocketing, purse-snatching and various types of scams are the most common forms of crime confronting visitors. U.S. travelers have reported these types of thefts are crowded markets, beaches, parks and tourist attractions.

Incidences of violent crime, such as armed robbery, are on the rise, including reports of armed robberies in expatriate residential areas. Victims who resist attackers run a high risk of serious physical injury. There have been burglary attempts against expatriate residences, but perpetrators generally lack the sophistication required to overcome home alarm systems and static security guards.

Perpetrators of business fraud often target foreigners, including Americans. Such fraud schemes are now prevalent throughout West Africa, including Ghana.

## KIDNAPPING

Kidnappings are rare in Ghana. Foreign travelers or expatriates face minimal threat of kidnapping while in Ghana.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual Assault cases are rare in Ghana.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

The coastal and central regions experience higher levels of rainfall from May to July and during October and November. The north experiences its heaviest rainfall in May and June. Heavy rain and localized flooding may occur during these periods.

## STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.

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- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking or driving in Ghana.
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arranged through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and do not make any sudden movements.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

### **Important Contact Details:**

**International Dialing Code:** +233

**International Dialing Prefix:** 00

### **Victims of crime in Ghana should contact the following phone numbers for assistance:**

**POLICE:** The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in Ghana is 191

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** 192

**AMBULANCE:** 193

**Note:** Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

## TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- The standard infrastructure in Ghana is generally satisfactory, although it may be limited in rural areas.
- Major roads are paved but most secondary roads are unpaved and poorly maintained.

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- The country relies on hydroelectricity generated at the Akosombo Dam and generally supply is good throughout the country.
- Many rural areas have only limited supplies of clean water.
- Fuel is readily available across the country.
- Telecommunications are at a fair level and limited internet access is available in most major cities.

### RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No traveling alone after dark.
- No wearing of military apparel or camouflage clothing.

### HEALTH

Medical facilities in Ghana are largely limited to Accra. State-owned medical facilities are generally understaffed, poorly sanitized and lacking basic medical supplies. There are a number of private clinics in Accra that offer a higher standard of care, but these are relatively expensive. English-speaking services are available in the country.

- Tap water in Ghana is generally not safe to drink. Travelers are advised to consume only sterilized or bottled water. This applies to water used for brushing teeth, making ice or washing foods.
- Unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative.
- Food from street vendors should be avoided as this carries a high risk of causing infection.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if travelling to Ghana:

- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Meningococcal Meningitis (recommended)
- Typhoid (recommended)
- Polio (recommended)
- Yellow Fever (required)

It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for diseases including influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

### Significant Diseases –

- **Malaria** - A life-threatening parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes. Malaria is endemic throughout Ghana with infections reported year round.

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- **Meningococcal Meningitis** – An extremely dangerous infection of the fluid and tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord. The country is considered to be at risk for the disease during the dry season (November to June).
- **Yellow Fever** – A mosquito-borne disease prevalent in the country's Central, Eastern and Ashanti regions. The primary transmission period is during the rainy season (July to October).
- **Dengue Fever** – An infectious disease carried by mosquitoes. The disease is prevalent throughout the country, particularly during the rainy season.
- **Cholera** – An acute intestinal infection caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water. Cholera outbreaks are reported frequently throughout Ghana.
- **Schistosomiasis** – A disease caused by parasitic worms. The disease is considered to be prevalent in fresh water deposits, including rivers, dams, ponds and reservoirs, particularly in the Western region of the country.
- **Anthrax** – A potentially fatal toxin-producing disease caused by a spore-forming. Outbreaks of the disease are most frequently reported in the country's Volta, Northern, Eastern, and Central regions.
- **River Blindness** – An infection spread by the bite of an infected black fly. Outbreaks of the disease have been reported throughout the country.
- **African sleeping sickness** – A parasitic disease transmitted to humans by the bite of the tsetse fly. Outbreaks of the disease have been reported in rural areas.
- **Diarrhea** – A common infection amongst travelers and can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites. One of the most common causes is a bacterium known as E. coli, which is transmitted by ingesting contaminated food and liquids.

### HOSPITALS – Ghana

Lister Hospital  
P.O. Box CT966  
Cantonments  
Accra, Ghana  
Tel: +233 303 409 030  
Fax: +233 302 812 397  
Email: [info@listerhospital.com.gh](mailto:info@listerhospital.com.gh)

### US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

#### **The US Embassy Ghana**

24 Fourth Circular Road  
Cantonments  
Accra  
Tel: +233 (0)21 741 150  
Fax: +233 (0)21 741 692

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Email: [pressaccra@state.gov](mailto:pressaccra@state.gov)

### USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

\* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.