



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
of Philadelphia

Ghana

Republic of Ghana



Key Facts



World Freedom Press Global Index Ranking (Overall) Ranked 27 (20.81)

Head of State / Head of Government: President Nana Addo Dankwa AKUFO-ADDO (since 7 January 2017)

Capital city: Accra

Population: 28,102,471 (July 2018 est.)

Official Language(s): English

Ethnic Groups: Akan 47.5%, Mole-Dagbon 16.6%, Ewe 13.9%, Ga-Dangme 7.4%, Gurma 5.7%, Guan 3.7%, Grusi 2.5%, Mande 1.1%, other 1.4% (2010 est.)

Currency: Ghanaian cedi

Gross domestic product (PPP): 47.33 billion USD (2017)

Internet penetration: 34.7% (July 2016 est.)

Most trusted medium of information: N/A

Legal System: mixed system of English common law and customary law

Government System: presidential republic

Journalists Killed/Imprisoned: 1

Media Environment: state-owned TV station, 2 state-owned radio networks; several privately-owned TV stations and a large number of privately-owned radio stations; transmissions of multiple international broadcasters are accessible; several cable and satellite TV subscription services are obtainable. While the constitution protects the state-run Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) from government interference, political parties attempt to influence coverage. Private media face editorial pressure from their owners, particularly those with political connections. In 2016, a number of journalist's experiences attacks, intimidation, or interference while working. Some of the seven attacks and four threats the MFWA recorded during the year were carried out by security agents. In July, local media reported that police in the Gomoa Ojobi District of Ghana's Central Region had beaten and temporarily detained a reporter they believed had recorded footage of them. The MWFA also recorded three arbitrary arrests of journalists during the year.

Media Issues: Freedom of the press is legally guaranteed in Ghana, and the country has a diverse media landscape. However, Ghana's reputation as one of the freest media environments in sub-Saharan Africa was tarnished in 2016 by a series of physical attacks against journalists. These included a January 2016 mob attack on a radio station in the Brong Ahafo Region, and an incident in April 2016 in which a radio presenter at Kumasi-based Fox FM and a panelist were attacked during a live broadcast by supporters of an opposition political party. Among the most visible instances of violence against journalists in 2016 was a January raid on the Brong Ahafo Region radio station Jerryson FM, which was attacked by clients of a failed microfinance company controlled by the same person who owned the station. The attackers threatened to kill members of the station's staff if their demands for money were not met, and one attacker kidnapped the child of one of the station's journalists; the child was later rescued by police. In April 2016, security forces stationed at Saaman, a mining community in Ghana's Eastern Region, harassed three Danish journalists who were working on a documentary about mining and the environment, and seized their filming equipment. The events took place even though the journalists had complied with the restrictive provisions contained in the 2015 ISD guidelines on foreign journalists' operations. Radio journalist George Abanga was shot and killed in 2015. A man was taken into custody after confessing to the killing, but some observers have expressed concern about the suspect's mental condition and raised questions as to whether he was truly involved. Ghana has lost its status as Africa's best-ranked country in the World Press Freedom Index. A group of investigative journalists had to spend part of 2018 in hiding after producing a documentary about Ghanaian soccer corruption. A ruling party parliamentarian who had been named in the documentary publicly threatened one of the journalists without ever being sanctioned. The journalist was shot dead in the street a few months later. Journalists are rarely arrested but several were attacked with impunity in 2018, in some cases by police officers. Although Ghana continues to be seen as one of the most democratic countries in Africa and Chapter 12 of its 1992 constitution guarantees media pluralism and independence, a third of the media are owned by the state or by businessmen linked to the government.

Popular Forms of Media Consumption

Print: Dozens of newspapers, including 2 state-owned and 3 private newspapers, publish regularly.

Digital Media: Use of the internet is growing, with about 35 percent of people accessing it in 2016. Blogging and social networking have increased in urban centers. While the internet is unrestricted, a senior police official in May 2016 raised the possibility of blocking access to social media during the year's general elections, in an effort to maintain security and prevent the spread of misinformation. The remarks

drew heavy criticism from the political opposition, rights advocates, and a domestic anticensorship campaign, and then President John Mahama in August explicitly rejected the proposal. The distribution of print media remains challenging outside of urban areas. The high cost of newspapers also inhibits accessibility.

Television: In 2016 there were 58 authorized television operators in Ghana and 481 FM radio stations, of which 31 were state-owned, 345 were private, 79 were community-owned, and 21 were operated by universities.