



**NATIONAL PEACE
COUNCIL**



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

ROADMAP AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE ERADICATION OF POLITICAL VIGILANTISM IN GHANA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Political violence, perpetrated by party activists, now popularly referred to as ‘vigilantes’ in Ghana’s politics, has been a feature of Ghana’s elections over the years. After an incidence of politically related violence at the by-election conducted at the Ayawaso West Wuogon Electoral Area in the Greater Accra Region on January 31st, 2019, the President of the Republic, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, directed the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to find ways to efface political vigilantism in Ghana. The National Peace Council (NPC) was accepted by both the NDC and the NPP as a credible institution to facilitate the dialogue. Several meetings have been hosted by the NPC for the NDC and the NPP and other stakeholders as part of the dialogue process. At these meetings, the NDC and NPP consistently pledged to: (1) disband vigilante groups operating for political purposes; (2) prohibit the ownership, hiring, or utilisation of such groups by the political parties or members thereof; and (3) cooperate with state agencies and stakeholders in the total eradication of such groups or incidents of vigilantism in the country.

Pursuant to these commitments, the NPC, with input from the parties, has designed a strategic plan for the elimination of vigilantism, titled, *the Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana*. The Roadmap acknowledges the multidimensional nature of the problem of vigilantism as well as its erasure, and consequently, makes specific recommendations not only to political parties, but also to various national institutions on what can or should be done to excise the menace. The roadmap has clear phases, timelines, benchmarks and enforcement mechanisms which aim at progressively ending political vigilantism. Additionally, the NPC has designed a code of conduct for the political parties; the code is part of the strategic plan for the eradication of vigilantism and represents a set of general guidelines and standards of behaviour against political vigilantism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, declare that we have read and understood the content of this document, that is, *the Roadmap and Code of Conduct for the Eradication of Political Vigilantism in Ghana*, and therefore, by these signatures, and on behalf of our political parties named below, agree to the terms and conditions set forth in this document, and we further accept the responsibilities indicated therein and undertake to comply with them.

.....
Signature (On behalf of the
National Democratic Congress)

.....
Signature (On behalf of the
New Patriotic Party)

.....
Name

.....
Name

.....
Designation

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Designation

.....
Signature (On behalf of the National Peace Council)

.....
Name

.....
Designation

1.0. Introduction

This Strategic Plan, titled, *the Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana*, sets out the norms and principles adopted to guide the elimination of politically related violence or vigilantism and to contribute to securing sustainable peace in Ghana. Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999). s. 11, and s. 1(1)(a)-(h) define vigilantism as:

an act or threat of violence or intimidation undertaken by a person or a group of persons to further the interest of that person or any other person affiliated or associated with or connected or related to: (a) a political party, (b) a political office holder, (c) an official or member of a political party, (d) a landowner or purchaser of landed property (e) a real estate developer, (f) a public office holder or any person who holds an office of a public nature, or (g) mining activities, or (h) a person who engages in any act of vigilantism.¹

Though vigilantism in Ghana transcends electoral violence, it would seem that it is the use of vigilantes in the name of partisan politics that is of utmost concern to Ghanaians at the moment,² hence the focus of the current dialogue and this roadmap. The purpose of this roadmap is to present a comprehensive outline of the goals, overall objectives and deliverables of all relevant stakeholders, especially the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), in the elimination of political vigilantism. It also reflects the strategic thinking of stakeholders concerning how to achieve the set goals. It must be noted that, the Political Parties Code of Conduct on the eradication of vigilantism, designed by the National Peace Council (NPC), is one of the deliverables in the roadmap.

This roadmap acknowledges the multidimensional nature of the problem of vigilantism as well as its eradication, and consequently, makes recommendations not only to political parties, but also to various national institutions on what can be done to efface vigilantism. It is important to emphasize that this roadmap explains why these recommendations must be carried out and the sequence in which they must be carried out, but even more importantly, it should be stressed that this roadmap is not an implementation plan, and accordingly, does not describe how the proposed recommendations must be executed by the various institutions. Nevertheless, the NPC shall advise the organisations in question to develop action plans to implement

¹ Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999). s. 11, and s. 1(1)(a)-(h).

² The African Union Commission and the Government of the Republic of Ghana, “Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy,” (February 2018), para 46.

the recommendations made. Additionally, the NPC is committed to working with the organisations to develop and execute their action plans.

1.1 Background to the dialogue

The phenomenon of political vigilantism has continued to be a growing threat to peace and security in Ghana. In view of the escalating rate of politically related violence, and in light of the most recent incidence of violence at the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election in January 31, 2019,³ the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, in his State of the Nation address to Parliament (2019), appealed to the two main political parties, to take steps to eliminate political vigilantism. In the address, he stated that, “I want to use the platform of this Message to make a sincere, passionate appeal to the leaders of the two main political parties in our country, NPP and NDC, to come together, as soon as possible....to agree on appropriate measures to bring an end to this worrying and unacceptable phenomenon of vigilantism in our body politic.”⁴ The President indicated further that, “[w]e must not take our peace and security for granted - not for a moment. Our children and grandchildren will not forgive us if we were to compromise our peace and stability....Our forebears paid too high a price, with their blood and toil, to bequeath to us this beautiful nation; the lives of our citizens are too precious to waste.”⁵ The call by the President resulted in an invitation by the NDC and NPP to the NPC to facilitate a proposed dialogue aimed at eradicating political vigilantism.

1.1.1 Defining the scope of the dialogue.

The initial meeting between the parties was held on the 9th of April 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to (a) define the scope of the proposed dialogue; (b) finalise the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the engagement, which had been drafted by the NPC; and (c) establish ground rules for the dialogue. At the meeting, there was a major difference between the two parties in respect of their approaches to the proposed dialogue: while the NDC suggested that the dialogue should focus on “political vigilantism in all its ramifications,” thereby rooting for a national dialogue, the NPP recommended “political party vigilantism in all its ramifications,” thus, limiting the discussion to the two political parties.

³ By-elections in the following constituencies: Wulensi (2003), Asawase (2005), Odododiodoo (2005), Atiwa (2010), Akwatia (2008), Chereponi (2009), Talensi (2015), Amenfi West (2015) have recorded high levels of politically related violence. *See also*, Ayawaso West Wuogon Commission of Inquiry, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Events,” (2019), para. 3.8.

⁴ Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, “Message on the state of the Nation,” on the occasion of the state opening of Parliament, on Thursday, 21st February 2019, Accra, p.28.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Significantly though, both parties agreed to engage in deliberations aimed at: (1) disbanding vigilante groups operating for political purposes; (2) prohibiting the ownership, hiring, or utilisation of such groups by the political parties or members thereof; (3) cooperating with state agencies and stakeholders in the total eradication of such groups or incidents of vigilantism in the country. The parties pledged their commitment to exploring other processes in relation to the elimination of vigilantism. This was contained in a communiqué which was signed by the parties and released by the NPC on the 9th of April 2019.

Since the first meeting, the National Peace Council has hosted three other meetings of the parties. At the meeting held on the 29th of April 2019, the parties agreed to broaden participation to include other relevant stakeholders and experts. This was also contained in a communiqué dated 29th April 2019 and signed by the parties. It was further agreed that these stakeholders should include representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Security Agencies and Religious Bodies. Accordingly, the meetings held on the 27th and 28th of May 2019 included participants from CSOs.⁶

At the end of the two-day meeting, the parties agreed, pursuant to the two earlier communiqués, that the NPC, with the support of technical experts, and with input from the two political parties, would present a working document on a roadmap for the consideration of the parties, taking into account the reports submitted by the various stakeholders at the meeting. This was to be done within a period of four (4) weeks. It was also agreed that the draft Code of Conduct designed by the National Peace Council would be considered one of the key deliverables of the dialogue process.

The next meeting was held on the 25th of June 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft roadmap, the design of which was facilitated by the NPC, based on the presentations of the stakeholders. The NDC raised a number of issues for consideration, among which was their position that, the roadmap lacked an in-depth conceptualization of the phenomenon of vigilantism, resulting in an unsatisfactory analysis of the problem; that it did not indicate the specific drivers of vigilantism in Ghana and it also failed to state the challenges to the eradication of vigilantism raised by the various stakeholders at the last meeting. The NPP on the other hand, had issues with the sequencing of the recommendations in the roadmap. The party was also of the opinion that some of the recommendations in the roadmap had not been

⁶ A detailed list of the CSOs invited can be found in Appendix 1.

directed to the appropriate organisations. Consequently, the meeting agreed that the two parties would study the draft roadmap and submit their comments to the NPC in two weeks. It was further agreed that the parties would study the draft Code of Conduct, which represents a set of general guidelines and standards of behaviour against political vigilantism, and submit their comments to the NPC, also in two weeks. The comments submitted by the parties contributed to fine-tuning this roadmap.

1.2. Brief history and analysis of the problem of vigilantism in Ghana

It will be recalled that public elections, especially by-elections, have been characterized by violence, perpetrated by organised groups described as vigilante groups associated, connected or affiliated with political parties in the country. Undeniably, this problem undermines Ghana's fledgling democracy, the rule of law, social cohesion and economic development. The Emile Short Commission report that was released subsequent to the dialogue indicates that, vigilante groups “are a threat to the very stability of Ghana’s constitutional democracy as their acts amount to a challenge [of] the authority of the State.”⁷

Politically related violence is not a new phenomenon. It dates to the period preceding the declaration of independence.⁸ However, politically related violence perpetrated by party affiliated vigilante groups has reached disturbing proportions in the fourth republic, and for which reason this brief analysis will be limited to this period. Even though under the fourth republic, Ghana has conducted all its elections successfully, the electoral and political scene has not been devoid of violence by vigilante groups affiliated, especially, with the NDC and NPP. Political parties – whether in government or in opposition – are known to form and use vigilante groups who act on their behalf. This has been highlighted in various reports, such as the Emile Short Commission report. The Commission report confirmed the reality of vigilante groups as a feature of Ghana’s politics and also disclosed that, “these groups are either actively supported and/or funded by the parties themselves, or by prominent individuals within the parties. At a minimum, their existence is condoned by the two

⁷ Ayawaso West Wuogon Commission of Inquiry, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Events,” (2019), para 4.4.2. *See also*, the memorandum to the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999).

⁸ Paalo, S. A. (2017). “Political Party Youth Wings and Political Violence in sub-Sahara Africa: A Case of Ghana.” 8(1) *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*, 1-14; Allman, J. M. (1993). *The quills of the porcupine: Asante nationalism in an emergent Ghana*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press; Gyampo, R. E., Graham, E., & Asare, B. E. (2017). Political Vigilantism and Democratic Governance in Ghana’s Fourth Republic. 44(2) *African Review*, 112-135.

leading political parties of the NDC and NPP for whom they perform ‘vigilante’ services from time to time.”⁹

The activities of the vigilante groups largely revolve around the electoral cycle: pre-election, the day (s) of the election and post-election. These vigilante groups are often violent, target opposition groups and public officials, and seize property or assets. The unlawful acts committed principally by vigilante groups include ballot box theft and other forms of electoral fraud; molestation, physical assault, or violent intimidation; seizure or occupancy of public property; protests or taking part in public disorder and the vandalization or destruction of party property.¹⁰ These activities are aimed at a variety of actors, including election candidates, party activists, poll workers, election observers, journalists, voters and state security officials.¹¹ It must be noted that, politically related violence sometimes manifests itself in the form of ad hoc invasion of government offices, courts of law and political party offices by marauding hooligans to perpetrate illegal acts. Sometimes these activities, which may result in deaths, pose a great threat to the peace and security of the country, and have been described as “a brand of party activism that violates the norms of liberal democracy.”¹²

1.2.1. Drivers of vigilantism in Ghana

The drivers of political party violence are many and fundamentally interrelated. These include mistrust of Security Agencies and the Electoral Commission; mutual mistrust between the major political parties, the NDC and the NPP; political patronage and the culture of rent-seeking; and Ghana’s youth bulge and unemployment, and the ‘winner-takes-it all’ politics among other factors. In discussing these factors, this paper, which does not attempt an exhaustive discussion

⁹ Ayawaso West Wuogon Commission of Inquiry, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Events,” (2019), para 4.4.1. The Government accepts this finding. See Government of Ghana, “White Paper on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Event,” (13th September, 2019) para. 5.4.

It should be noted that the Emile Short Commission report refers to vigilante groups as *militia groups*. The Government white paper, however, rejects the word “militia” adopted by the Commission in its Report. According to the white paper, “[t]he Government disagrees with its [militia] use in the Report as the word was not defined and discussed thoroughly as being applicable in this context.” See Government of Ghana, “White Paper on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Event,” (13th September, 2019) para 5.4.

¹⁰ Bob-Milliar, G. M. (2014). “Party Youth Activists and Low-Intensity Electoral Violence in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of Party Foot Soldiers’ Activism.” 15(1) *African Studies Quarterly*, 125-152; The African Union Commission and the Government of the Republic of Ghana, “Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy,” February 2018, para.47.

¹¹ Birch, S. & Muchlinski, D. (2018) “Electoral violence prevention: what works?” 25(2) *Democratization*, 385-403.

¹² Bob-Milliar, G. M. (2014). “Party Youth Activists and Low-Intensity Electoral Violence in Ghana: A Qualitative Study of Party Foot Soldiers’ Activism.” 15(1) *African Studies Quarterly*, 125-152.

of the drivers of vigilantism, relies, among others, on the presentations made by stakeholders at the Peduase meetings.¹³

First, the papers reveal that the widespread mistrust of law enforcement, mostly the Ghana Police Service, is one of the main drivers of vigilantism in Ghana. The papers suggest that there is a perception of political interference in the command structures and operations of Ghana's security agencies, and for which reason the police are suspected to work almost solely in the interest of the governing party.¹⁴ This is presumed to affect their professionalism, especially with respect to protecting the political rights and interests of the parties in opposition, such as failing to provide adequate security for the leadership of these parties - a situation which seems to compel the foot soldiers of these parties, to take charge of the security needs of these functionaries, and predictably, often leads to the wrongful assumption of a mandate for election security and consequent acts of lawlessness. This claim is corroborated, in part, by the Emile Short Commission report. It states that, "the police seem to have ceded grounds to these groups and these have [*sic*] bolstered their sense of legitimacy in assuming the law enforcement role reserved for the police."¹⁵ Thus, among other measures, grassroots efforts by law enforcement agencies are needed to build trust in the communities they serve.

The second main cause of vigilantism according to the papers is the perceived bias of the Electoral Commission against parties in opposition despite the transparent processes of the commission. Similarly, top-level appointees of the EC are believed to work to the advantage of the ruling government or the party that appointed them into office. This is deemed to necessitate the formation of vigilante groups to monitor and protect electoral interests during elections. Admittedly, elections are inherently competitive, but the level of competitiveness and the desperation to safeguard electoral gains are considered to be further heightened by the 'winner-takes-all' political system¹⁶ - a system which in Ghana is presumed to undermine participatory democracy and the rule of law as well as foster economic, political and social exclusion. In addition to its efforts at strengthening its technical capacity, the

¹³ The meetings were held on the 27th and 28th of May at the Peduase Valley Resort. For a list of the presentations, refer to the reference section. Also refer to the reference section for a list of the secondary sources used.

¹⁴ This is substantiated by the Emile Short Commission report, which states that, "the police should review their recruitment procedures and install merit-based criteria to ensure that the most qualified, and not the most well connected, persons are enlisted." Ayawaso West Wuogon Commission of Inquiry, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Events," (2019), para. 5.3.

¹⁵ Ayawaso West Wuogon Commission of Inquiry, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Events" (2019), para 4.4.2.

¹⁶ This expression, as used in Ghana, describes a situation where the political party that wins a presidential election takes almost absolute control of the state machinery and resources.

Electoral Commission should work hard to erase the public perception of bias, achieve public support and build trust for the Commission.

Thirdly, there is considerable suspicion and mutual mistrust between the major political parties in Ghana, the NPP and the NDC. The fear of one party manipulating the electoral processes, especially in their respective electoral strongholds, often results in the utilization of the services of vigilante groups to protect interests. In view of this, political parties must prohibit the ownership, hiring, or utilization of such groups or their services by their members to help secure a level playing field for all parties.

The fourth known driver of vigilantism is political patronage and culture of rent-seeking. It would seem that individuals and groups invest heavily in political parties with the aim of reaping bountiful dividends through state contracts, appointments into lucrative offices and boards of state organizations when their parties win power. To achieve this, the political elite are suspected to enlist the help of party foot soldiers and vigilante groups to capture political power, and in return, promise to provide members of these groups with jobs, contracts and other state resources as rewards for their efforts. This fact is established by the Emile Short Commission report which states: “[t]he Commission finds, rather disturbingly, that the national security establishment is a means by which party faithfuls of succeeding governments are resettled and this has created a creeping politicization and de-professionalization of the establishment.”¹⁷ This finding is however, rejected by the Government in its white paper as unsubstantiated.¹⁸ It would seem that these vigilante groups stop at nothing, including violence, to change their fortunes and also to ensure that the promises made to them are fulfilled.

Lastly, and directly related to the preceding driver of vigilantism, is the problem of Ghana’s youth bulge¹⁹ and unemployment.²⁰ Ghana has a rapidly growing youth population, without accompanying job opportunities for them, and this situation is undeniably, a key driver of political and economic instability. The evidence suggests that the youth are easily manipulated by elite politicians into providing various questionable services (including vigilantism) to the parties for an income. Vigilantism is thus a source of livelihood. To solve this problem, the government (as

¹⁷ Ayawaso West Wuogon Commission of Inquiry, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Events,” (2019), para 4.3.2.

¹⁸ *See*, Government of Ghana, “White Paper on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Event,” (13th September 2019) para 5.3 (b).

¹⁹ This occurs when young people make up a disproportionately large percentage of the population.

²⁰ The African Union Commission and the Government of the Republic of Ghana, “Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy,” February 2018, para 58.

well as civil society) should immediately embark on strategies to reduce youth unemployment.

It is quite clear from the foregoing that the drivers of vigilantism are related to a pervasive culture of impunity, which continues to gain significant momentum, as well as an unwillingness to enforce the mechanism of accountability in order to stop the raging menace. Meanwhile, fighting impunity is crucial to the preservation and restoration of the rule of law, and an indispensable element for peaceful coexistence. It is in this regard that this roadmap makes recommendations to various institutions, especially those in the justice delivery sector, to discharge their duties with utmost diligence, and professionalism, to ensure that law enforcement and criminal justice responses to politically related violence are swift, proportionate and certain. This will contribute to safeguarding the rule of law and ending impunity.

1.2.2. Executive measures to manage political vigilantism

The incidence of electoral violence at the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election on January 31st 2019, led the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, to establish the Emile Short Commission of Inquiry on 8th February 2019 pursuant to powers vested in him under Article 278 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to:

- a. Make a full, faithful and impartial inquiry into the circumstances of, and establish the facts leading to the events and associated violence that occurred during the Ayawaso West Wuogon by-election held on the 31st of January 2019;
- b. Identify any person responsible for, or who has been involved in the events, associated violence or injuries;
- c. Inquire into any matter which commission considers incidental or reasonably related to the cause of the events and the associated violence and injuries; and,
- d. Submit within one month of its inauguration its report to the president giving reasons for its findings and recommendations, including appropriate sanctions if any.²¹

The Emile Short Commission found, essentially, that there “are important gaps and deficiencies in the security system in general, and in [the] electoral security

²¹Ayawaso West Wuogon Commission of Inquiry, “Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Events,” (2019), para 1.2.

management system in particular,”²² and accordingly, has made recommendations to address its findings. However, the Government has issued a white paper on the report of the Commission of Inquiry, in which it states that the Commission failed “to make a full, faithful and impartial inquiry into the circumstances of, and establish the facts leading to the events and associated violence that occurred during the Ayawaso West Wuogon bye-election on the 31st day of January, 2019.”²³ For this reason, the Government has rejected some of the findings made by the Commission.²⁴

While the Commission was in the process of doing its work, the process for the passage of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) was initiated. The Act was unanimously approved by Parliament in July 2019. The Act, essentially, provides for the mandatory prohibition of vigilantism in all its forms. Among other provisions, it provides for the formal disbandment of vigilante groups and penalties for noncompliance.²⁵ Significantly, the Act prohibits vigilantism in political party activities. It bans political parties from directly or indirectly forming, organising, operating, engaging or facilitating the formation, organization, operation or the activities of a vigilante group.²⁶ A political party found guilty of the foregoing is liable to a fine.²⁷

1.3. The Role of the National Peace Council

The National Peace Council (NPC), mandated to facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention; conflict management and resolution; and to build sustainable peace in this country, has facilitated a number of stakeholder dialogues aimed at developing a definitive framework for eliminating political vigilantism in Ghana, and securing the commitment of the parties to a number of goals. Primarily, the NDC and NPP agree that vigilantism is inimical to Ghana’s democratic system and must be eradicated. In this regard, they have undertaken to: (1) disband vigilante groups operating within or for political purposes; (2) prohibit the ownership, hiring, or utilisation of such groups by the political parties or members thereof; and (3) cooperate with State agencies and stakeholders in the total eradication of such groups

²² Foreword by the Chair of the Commission, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Events, 2019, p 5.

²³ Government of Ghana, “White Paper on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Ayawaso West Wuogon Event,” (13th September 2019) para 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999) See ss. 2 - 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.* s. 6(1).

²⁷ *Ibid.* s. 6(2).

or incidents of vigilantism in the country. These commitments are reflected in the two communiqués issued by the National Peace Council (NPC) on the 9th and 29th of April 2019 respectively.

It must be noted that the National Peace Council in its deliberations with the two main political parties was cognizant of the developments towards the promulgation of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999). The Council and the parties, however, shared the view that these developments and the dialogue were not mutually exclusive since the proscription of vigilantism by statute can only be enhanced by voluntary action by the parties. Also, the Council sought to use the dialogue as a platform to further enhance in Ghanaians a moral responsibility to make our constitutionally guaranteed freedoms meaningful by dismantling all barriers to peace and justice. Additionally, political vigilantism in general transcends the actions of vigilante groups associated or affiliated with political parties.²⁸ As a result, the NPC also regards the dialogue as an opportunity to engage in broad-based discussions with various stakeholders to develop an informed set of recommendations aimed at dealing with the drivers of vigilantism. Hence, the Council has made in this roadmap, recommendations to a number of organizations whose roles in eradicating vigilantism are not addressed directly by law. Lastly, and in accordance with its mandate, the NPC regards the dialogue as an opportunity to “increase awareness on the use of non-violent strategies to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and build sustainable peace in the country.”²⁹

1.4. Methodology

This roadmap is the outcome of a dialogue held at the Peduase Valley Resort on the 27th and 28th of May 2019, the third in a series of dialogues involving the NDC and the NPP. At these meetings, it was agreed that the NPC, with the support of technical experts, and with input from the two political parties, would present a working document on a roadmap for the consideration of the parties, taking into account the reports submitted by the various stakeholders who were invited to participate in the dialogue. Accordingly, the NPC expanded its group of technical experts³⁰ who, after

²⁸ It must be noted that there are various types of vigilantism. Vigilantism may be classified as: 1. Private, Spontaneous Vigilantism; 2. Private, Organized Vigilantism; 3. Official, Spontaneous Vigilantism and; 4. Official Organized Vigilantism. There is also state sponsored or official vigilantism, mostly orchestrated by state security agencies as part of their strategy to deal with “hard-core” vigilante groups and suspected criminals and gangs. P. C. Sederberg (1978). “Phenomenology of Vigilantism in Contemporary America,” 1(3-4) Journal of Terrorism. <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/publications.aspx?ID=70595>. (Accessed 24th August 2019).

²⁹ Section 3(c) National Peace Council Act, 2011 (Act 818).

³⁰ The list of technical experts can be found in the Appendix.

many brainstorming sessions and consultations, and in accordance with their mandate, extracted the salient recommendations from the papers (and speeches) presented by the political parties and stakeholders, and incorporated them into this roadmap. This roadmap is based not only on the agreement that vigilantism is inimical to Ghana's democratic system, but also on the fact that the creation of a conducive and secure environment is crucial for credible elections and good governance in Ghana. Finally, it relies on the principles of accountability, transparency, integrity, compromise, mutual respect, and respect for human rights.

1.5. Timelines and obligations

The roadmap establishes timelines as a guide for implementation. However, as a performance-based plan, progress will require and depend upon the good faith of the parties as well as genuine efforts to comply with each of the obligations outlined below. Should the parties perform their obligations in a timely manner, progress within and through the phases may come sooner than indicated in the roadmap. It must be stressed that non-compliance with obligations will impede progress. Furthermore, the roadmap identifies specific actions and consequential tasks, some requiring advocacy, some administrative remedies and others in the form of legislative reform, and recommends these to various stakeholders, including political parties, the Government, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), and the Electoral Commission. The tasks are aimed specifically at eliminating the underlying drivers of political vigilantism. Stakeholders are expected to perform their obligations simultaneously, unless otherwise indicated. The NPC will monitor performance with the support of the civil society stakeholders and may meet the leadership of the NDC and NPP as and when necessary to review observations made on progress of implementation. The parties agree to work within the structures proposed in the Code of Conduct, and through other lawful means, to ensure the eradication of political vigilantism in Ghana.

1.5.1. Phases

The roadmap is organised into three phases. Phase One describes those activities that can be executed immediately. This phase is further divided into two sections (A) and (B): the first section (A) describes those activities or recommendations that the NDC and NPP have the authority to implement immediately. The second section (B) also outlines obligations that can and should be implemented immediately by relevant stakeholders. The second and third phases comprise activities that are within the jurisdiction and competence of key stakeholders other than the NDC and NPP with those achievable in the medium term classified as phase two and the relatively long

term tasks being phase three. The phases are not entirely sequential; some of the activities in the different phases may overlap or run concurrently. It should be emphasized that this roadmap is performance-based and goal-driven, with clear phases, timelines and benchmarks which aim at progressively dealing with the problem of political vigilantism once and for all. The destination is a final and comprehensive eradication of political vigilantism in all its ramifications in Ghana.

PHASE I: IMMEDIATE ACTION

In Phase One (I) (A), the NDC and the NPP affirm their unconditional commitment to non-violence in political activities, and undertake to execute immediately the tasks set out below;

PHASE (1) (A)

At the outset of Phase One (I), the parties shall reject all forms of violence as a mode of political expression. In this regard, the leadership of the NDC and NPP should:

1. Take the necessary steps to ensure that their members refrain from vigilante activities.
2. Undertake to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, especially by refraining from protecting their members who violate the laws governing vigilantism.
3. Affirm their commitment to the code of conduct on political vigilantism, and sign the code during a public function organized by NPC, with the media in attendance.
4. Continuously sensitize and educate their members on the dangers of vigilantism.

PHASE (1) (B)

This section outlines recommendations to the organizations listed below.

Law Enforcement Agencies

5. Government, through its agencies, should enhance the professional capacity of the law enforcement agencies, through among other means, regular professional development training, especially in professional ethics.

The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)

6. The National Commission for Civic Education should educate the general public on the perils of vigilantism, and the importance of national cohesion, among other concepts, in order to instill in Ghanaians a sense of patriotism. The NCCE should also endeavor to focus its sensitization activities on school children.

Civil Society Organizations

7. Civil Society organizations should focus on influencing consciousness aimed at building in Ghanaians, a spirit and sense of patriotism, especially with a view to curbing politically related violence.

Electoral Commission

8. The EC should increase public engagements and deepen its accountability mechanisms, including working more closely with the Inter Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) to enhance public confidence in the activities of the commission.

The Media Houses and Owners

9. The National Media Commission and the Ghana Journalist Association should appeal to media houses and owners to take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media and encourage them to engage in reportage devoid of partisanship and sensationalism.

The National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCSALW)

10. The NCSALW should educate and sensitize the public and provide information on the dangers of small arms and light weapons in order to discourage their production, trade and use.
11. The NCSALW should undertake an in-depth study of arms control and management in the country to provide relevant data on small arms and light weapons to the government.
12. The NCSALW should facilitate the process of amending all relevant laws to accommodate current national needs.

The Government

13. The government should make a deliberate effort to ensure that the NCCE is very well resourced to enable it to (a) formulate, implement and oversee programmes intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations especially with respect to politically related violence; (b) to facilitate public dialogues and create spaces and opportunities where people can engage and share perspectives on the eradication of politically related violence.

PHASE II: MEDIUM TERM

The second phase is considered medium term as it focuses on establishing structures that will ensure that:

Government

14. The appointment of police chiefs should go with security of tenure.
15. The Police Intelligence and Professional Standard Bureau (PIPS) should be strengthened to deal with complaints of unprofessional conduct by the police.
16. The Government should continue to provide the Electoral Commission with its budgetary allocations, and all required resources, and on time, so as to leave the Commission ample time to plan and organize its mandated electoral activities.
17. The Government should institute the needed measures to ensure that the police are independent, well-resourced/equipped, properly trained and psyched, and insulated from partisan politics.

Civil Society and Religious Organizations

18. Work towards an inclusive society by advocating and creating meaningful social activities for the youth who are vulnerable and thus, often see their involvement in political vigilantism as defining and giving meaning to their lives by way of power, prestige, esteem and a sense of belonging.
19. Endeavour to contribute to the creation of alternative economic activities for the unemployed, especially the youth who engage in political vigilantism as a source of income.

PHASE III: LONG TERM

Phase Three comprises recommendations to stakeholders that can be achieved over a relatively long period of time, and are expected to continue into the future.

The Government

20. The Government should work towards creating more employment opportunities for the youth to improve their wellbeing and reduce their vulnerability to politicians who manipulate them with gifts and promises to further the parochial interest of the politicians.
21. The Government is urged to increase its investments in the development of skills, especially technical and vocational education and training, in order to mitigate economic disadvantage.

Private sector organisations

22. Private sector organisations should work (and in collaboration with the government) towards creating more employment opportunities for the youth to improve their economic wellbeing and reduce their vulnerability to politicians.

NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL (NPC)
ROADMAP FOR THE ERADICATION OF VIGILANTE GROUPS IN GHANA

Phase	Activities	Timelines								Responsibility
		2019		2020				2021		
		N ov	Dec	Jan- Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul- Sept	Oct- Dec	Jan- Mar	Apr- Jun	
<i>Phase IA</i>										
	Take the necessary steps to ensure that their members refrain from vigilante activities									NDC and NPP
	Undertake to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, especially by refraining from protecting their members who violate the laws governing vigilantism.									NDC and NPP
	Affirm their commitment to the political party code of conduct on political vigilantism, and sign the Code during a public function organized by NPC, with the media in attendance.									NDC and NPP

	Continuously sensitize and educate their members on the dangers of vigilantism.									
<i>Phase IB</i>										
	Enhance the professional capacity of the law enforcement agencies, particularly the police, through among other means, regular professional development training, especially in professional ethics.									Law Enforcement Agencies (AG and the Police)
	Educate the general public on the perils of vigilantism, and the importance of national cohesion, among other concepts, in order to instill in Ghanaians a sense of patriotism. The NCCE should also endeavor to focus its sensitization activities on school children.									The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)
	Work on influencing consciousness aimed at building in Ghanaians, a spirit and sense of patriotism, especially with a view to curbing politically related violence.									Civil Society Organisations
	Work with the Inter Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) to enhance public confidence in the activities of the commission									Electoral Commission
	Appeal to media houses and owners to take all appropriate measures to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the highest journalistic standards in the mass media and									Media Houses and Owners National Media Commission,

	encourage them to engage in reportage devoid of partisanship and sensationalism.								Ghana Journalist Association
	The NCSALW should educate and sensitize the public and provide information on the dangers of small arms and light weapons in order to discourage their production, trade and use.								The National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons (NCSALW)
	The NCSALW should undertake an in-depth study of arms control and management in the country to provide relevant data on small arms and light weapons to the government.								NCSALW
	The NCSALW should facilitate the process of amending all relevant laws to accommodate current national demands.								NCSALW
	Ensure that the NCCE is very well resourced to enable it to (a) formulate, implement and oversee programmes intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations especially with respect to politically related violence; (b) to facilitate public dialogues and create spaces and opportunities in which people can engage and share perspectives on the eradication of politically related violence.								Government

	Undertake an in-depth study of the issue of arms control and management in the country and amended all relevant laws to accommodate current national needs.									The Government
PHASE II: MEDIUM TERM										
	The appointment of police chiefs should go with security of tenure.									Government
	The Police Intelligence and Professional Standard Bureau (PIPS) should be strengthened to deal with complaints of unprofessional conduct by the police.									Government
	Provide the Electoral Commission with its budgetary allocations, and all required resources, and on time, so as to leave the Commission ample time to plan and organise its mandated election management activities.									Government
	Ensure that the police are independent, well-resourced/equipped, properly trained and psyched, and insulated from partisan politics.									Government
	Work towards an inclusive society by advocating and creating meaningful social activities for the youth who are vulnerable and thus, often see their involvement in political vigilantism as defining and giving meaning to									Civil society and religious organisations

	their lives by way of power, prestige, esteem and a sense of belonging.									
	Endeavour to contribute to the creation of alternative economic activities for the unemployed, especially the youth who engage in political vigilantism as a source of income.									Civil society and religious organizations
PHASE III: LONG TERM										
	Urged to work towards creating more employment opportunities for the youth to improve their wellbeing and reduce their vulnerability to politicians who manipulate them with gifts and promises to further the parochial interest of the politicians.									Government
	Urged to increase investments in the development of skills, especially technical and vocational education and training, in order to mitigate economic disadvantage.									Government
	Work (and in collaboration with the government) towards creating more employment opportunities for the youth to improve their economic wellbeing and reduce their vulnerability to politicians.									Private sector organisations. government

2.0 Code of Conduct

2.1 Introduction

This Code of Conduct, designed by the National Peace Council (NPC), is one of the key deliverables of the dialogue between the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP), and other stakeholders, aimed at eradicating political vigilantism in Ghana. This Code, which represents a consensus between the two parties that vigilantism is inimical to Ghana's democratic system and must be eradicated, should be read as part of the strategic plan for the eradication of vigilantism, titled, *the Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana*.

Pursuant to two earlier communiqués issued by the National Peace Council (NPC) on the 9th and 29th of April 2019 respectively, and signed by the NDC and NPP, the NDC and NPP undertook to: (1) disband vigilante groups operating within or for political purposes; (2) prohibit the ownership, hiring, or utilization of such groups by the political parties or members thereof; and (3) cooperate with state agencies and stakeholders in the total eradication of such groups or incidents of vigilantism in the country.

In furtherance of the above objectives, the NDC and NPP agree to a set of general guidelines and standards of behaviour against political vigilantism. They agree that:

1. Parties will publicly denounce any acts of vigilantism, especially where the perpetrators are affiliated or associated with or connected or related to their party.
2. Following the passage of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999), the parties will engage the leadership of known vigilante groups operating within their parties or for political purposes, and encourage them to disband such groups;
3. No party, party member, or candidate for an election will form, operate, support or fund any vigilante group or their activities;
4. Parties will discourage the ownership, hiring, or utilization of such groups, or their services by their political parties or members thereof;

5. The parties will provide timely, accurate and objective information regarding acts of vigilantism to the police, especially when such information is requested by the police;
6. Parties will not take any initiative in contravention of the law, for the release of any person who is caught armed, or any person who offends the law on elections, electoral campaigns, or commits a governance related offence and is arrested by the police;
7. In furtherance of the provisions of the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, 2019 (Act 999), parties will include in their respective codes of conduct, a firm statement prohibiting the formation of vigilante groups, and clearly indicate the sanctions that will be applied to any member who forms, funds, supports or utilizes the services of vigilante groups;
8. Parties will act in good faith, as well as maintain honesty and integrity in their dealings with stakeholders and security agencies, towards the total eradication of vigilantism;
9. The Code of Conduct will be reviewed periodically, at least, once every four years of its implementation, or upon identification by the parties of any major defects during implementation;
10. Parties will educate their members on the requirements of the “Roadmap to Eradicating Political Vigilantism in Ghana,” as well as this Code of Conduct.

2.2 Enforcement of Code of Conduct

The parties agree to commit resources, personnel, and time to the enforcement of the Code of Conduct. The parties agree to work within the structures proposed below, and through other lawful means to ensure enforcement of this Code of Conduct.

1. At the national level, the NPC, in collaboration with civil society stakeholders, will receive and address complaints of breaches of the Code and may meet the leadership of the NDC and NPP as and when necessary in furtherance of this mandate.
2. At the regional and district levels, the Inter-Party Dialogue Committees will work with the NPC to receive and address complaints of breaches of the Code;
3. The parties shall be responsible for the enforcement of the Code of Conduct;

4. Violations of the Code of Conduct shall first be reported to the proposed committees for redress;
5. The proposed Committees shall also monitor compliance with the Code of Conduct by the parties;
6. Notwithstanding the above suggestions (1 to 5), all criminal offences must be reported to the Ghana Police Service.

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3. The Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana): Findings from the CODEO research on political party vigilantism (2017.) Presentation by Nana Kwabena Aborampah Mensah.
4. Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference: Political vigilantism in Ghana. Presentation by Very Rev. Father Lazurus Anonde, General Secretary.
5. Office of the National Chief Imam: Reflections on the search for a sustainable solution to the menace of vigilantism. Presentation by Sheikh Aremeyaw Shaibu.
6. KAIPTC: The sears of vigilantism: a legal or political question. Presentation by Dr. Kwesi Aning, Head of Academic Affairs and Research.
7. NCCE, Presentation by Ms. Josephine Nkrumah, Chairperson.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of CSOs

1. The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference;
2. The Christian Council of Ghana;
3. The office of the National Chief Imam;
4. The office of the Inspector General of Police;
5. The Centre for Democratic Development (CDD);
6. The Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG);
7. The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA);
8. The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE);
9. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
10. The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP - Ghana);
11. The Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic council (GPCC);
12. National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches (NACCC).

Appendix 2: List of Technical Experts engaged by the National Peace Council

Primary Technical Team

1. Dr. Patrick Osei-Kufuor;
2. Mr. Nana Kwabena Aborampah Mensah;
3. Dr. Ama Hammond.

Technical Support Team

1. Sheikh Armiyawo Shaibu – The Office of the Chief Imam;
2. Father Lazarus Anondee - The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference;
3. Mr. Albert Yelyang - The West Africa Network for Peace building, Ghana (WANEP-Ghana);
4. Ms. Josephine Nkrumah - The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE);
5. Dr. Bossman Asare – The Electoral Commission (EC);
6. Mr. Jones Aplerh - The National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons;
7. Mr. Isaac Lartey Annan - The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ);
8. Dr. Fayorsey - The Christian Council of Ghana;
9. Dr. Kwasi Aning - The Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC);
10. Dr. Emmanuel Akwetey - The Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG).

Appendix 3: Communiqués