

West Africa

CHRI's policing work in West Africa is coordinated by its office in Accra, Ghana, which has been running a dedicated police accountability programme for the last three years. The project is building a foundation of work on policing issues in Ghana, and will expand into the remainder of Commonwealth West Africa in the future.

In 2007, Ghana celebrates 50 years of independence. Over those 50 years, Ghana's journey towards modern, stable democracy has not always been smooth, with periods of military rule and illegitimate political interference into the security and justice sector. Years of colonial style policing prior to independence left a legacy of regime policing in Ghana; violent, heavy handed and politicised policing that was in place to protect the ruling regime's interests, rather than to serve the Ghanaian community. Today's police service is a direct descendant of the colonial police service, and continues to exhibit many of the same traits. Despite a series of government sponsored commissions and committees - that began in 1951 and have continued to sit since - the police have not been pulled into line with the modern democracy that Ghana is today; at different times reform has been undermined by political turmoil or discarded because of a lack of political will for change.

Policing in Ghana is typified by instances of corruption, illegal arrest and detention, excessive use of force and failures to act on complaints. These are all hallmarks of a regime-style police force that is not held accountable for its actions.

Aim

The aim of CHRI's work in West Africa is to assist in the development of a responsive and accountable police service.

Activities

In 2005, CHRI held a meeting in Ghana to discuss police accountability issues across Africa, focusing particularly on models of police oversight (for more information and material from the conference, [click here](#)). In 2006, CHRI successfully lobbied for the reappointment of the Police Council, a Constitutional police buffer body, and held a number of police-public forums. These police-public forums brought together police, civil society, members of the community and victims of police misconduct to discuss policing issues in the community. In 2007, CHRI released a series of reports on legal literacy, with a criminal justice focus, for use in communities and held a public-police consultation in the Kofuridia region. In November 2007, CHRI made a submission in response to a call for papers on the Africa-EU partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the EU-Africa strategy. Please click [here](#) for the submission that highlights the importance of support for democratic police reform in the joint strategy.

Publications

In December 2007 CHRI released a report on police accountability in Ghana, *The police, the people, the politics: Police accountability in Ghana*

. The report looks at the development of the police force in Ghana, examines the issues facing the police and considers the legislative, political and accountability frameworks that the police organisation operates within. It also looks at the reforms that need to take place and sets out a roadmap for reform in Ghana.

Click [here](#) to access an electronic version of the Ghana report.

The Ghana report is the latest addition to CHRI's reports on police accountability in Africa. Also available in the series are [Kenya](#) , [Tanzania](#) and [Uganda](#) .

- 101 things you wanted to know about the police but were too afraid to ask [[English - Ghana](#)]
(2013), written by Maja Daruwala and Navaz Kotwal, CHRI.

Current events

The police, the people, the politics: Police accountability in Ghana was released electronically in December 2007. Click [here](#) to access an electronic version or [here](#) to order a hardcopy of the report, which will be available in 2008.

Media statements and Updates

This section of the page is under construction.

Laws and standards

Click [here](#) for a list of regional standards that apply in West Africa. National laws are available [here](#).

At its 40th session, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted a resolution on police reform accountability and civilian police oversight in Africa. The 40th session communiqué is available [here](#). The resolution adopted is available [here](#).

Contact

For more information on CHRI's policing work in West Africa, contact [Tennille Duffy](#).