

The People Are the Bosses

Government of the People, For the People, By the People

*A Civic Education Research Paper on
Public Servant Accountability, Citizen Sovereignty,
and the Crisis of Governance in Ghana*

Nana Kwaku Amoako

Prepared in collaboration with SoroTech on The Citizen Brief — A Public Explainer Media Series

Leveragng AI for Education

June 2026

Target Audience: General Ghanaian Public • JHS/SHS Graduates • Community Leaders • Youth Advocates

Classification: Public Civic Education • Language Level: Plain English, accessible to post-JHS readers

“Onipa na ohyia onipa.”

— Twi (Akan)

“It is people who need people.”

A reminder that power, at its root, belongs to and flows from the community.

“Ngun duri ti’ sun n-nyeri tabbu.”

— Dagbani (Northern Ghana)

“He who climbs a good tree always gets a push.”

Those in high positions were lifted there by others; they owe those others their service.

“Ati deka me wo na ave o.”

— Ewe (Volta Region)

“A single tree does not make a forest.”

No leader governs alone; the people form the foundation of the forest.

Contents

1	Introduction	7
2	Literature Review	9
3	Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Constructs	11
3.1	Social Contract Theory	11
3.2	Principal-Agent Theory	11
3.3	Civic Education as Democratic Infrastructure	12
4	Methodology	13
5	The Legal Foundation: What the Constitution of Ghana Actually Says	15
6	Who Works for Whom? Understanding the Hierarchy of Power	17
7	The Education Irony: What We Learnt in School vs. What Leaders Are Doing	19
7.1	On Deforestation and Environmental Destruction	19
7.2	On Corruption and Institutional Laziness	20
7.3	On Article 71 Office Holders and Public Resources	20
8	For God and the People: Why the Phrase Betrays the Citizens It Claims to Serve	22
8.1	The Phrase We Have Never Questioned	22
8.2	What “Country” Is—and What It Is Not	22
8.3	The Shipping Agent Analogy	23
8.4	“Country” as a Tool of Moral Insulation	24
8.5	What the Constitution Actually Says	25
8.6	The Theological Dimension	25
8.7	Summary of the Argument	26

9 The Curriculum Confronted: GES Social Studies and the Governance Gap	27
10 Statistics, Data, and the Weight of Evidence	29
10.1 On Education	29
10.2 On Governance and Corruption	29
10.3 On Environmental Degradation	30
10.4 On MP Compensation vs. Citizen Income	30
11 When Servants Give Themselves Awards: The Accountability Vacuum and the Recognition Industry	32
11.1 The Structural Problem: No Citizen-Verified Performance Metrics	32
11.2 The Exception That Proves the Rule	33
11.3 What Genuine Performance Accountability Would Look Like	34
12 Floods as Governance Report Cards: What Recurring Disasters Reveal About Political Will	35
12.1 The 2025–2026 Flood Record	35
12.2 Not Meteorology: A Spatial Governance Crisis	35
12.3 The JHS Irony at Maximum Intensity	36
13 Operation Recover All Loot: Accountability Mechanism or Political Theatre?	38
13.1 What ORAL Found	38
13.2 The Counter-Narrative: Selective Justice	39
13.3 Why This Belongs in the Paper	39
14 The Ken Ofori-Atta Case as a Constitutional Teaching Moment	40
14.1 The Facts of the Case	40
14.2 The Constitutional Connection	41
14.3 What Citizens Made of It	41

15 Why Citizens Do Not Demand More—And Why They Should	42
15.1 The Culture of Deference	42
15.2 Patron-Client Politics	42
15.3 Institutional Fatigue	42
15.4 Information Asymmetry	43
15.5 Why Citizens Should Demand More	43
 16 Pay to Play: The Article 71 Compensation Structure and the Servant Who Became a Master	 44
16.1 What Article 71 Creates	44
16.2 The Compensation Gap	44
16.3 The KATH Doctors’ Strike: A June 2026 Case Study	45
16.4 The Principal-Agent Distortion	46
 17 Ghana’s Media as a Civic Accountability Tool—And Its Limits	 47
17.1 The Fourth Estate: Journalism That Changes Outcomes	47
17.2 The Anas Model: Accountability Through Exposure	48
17.3 Social Media as Civic Accountability Space	48
17.4 The Partisan Capture Problem	49
 18 What Good Governance Actually Looks Like: Cases and Comparisons	 50
18.1 Rwanda: A Generation’s Work	50
18.2 Botswana: Institutional Stability as a Resource	50
18.3 Ghana’s 2024 Elections: When Institutions Work	51
18.4 The Domelevo Case: What Happens When a Public Servant Does Their Job	51
18.5 Toward Ministerial Performance Scorecards for Ghana	52
 19 Discussion and Recommendations	 54
19.1 For Citizens	54

19.2 For Educators and the GES	54
19.3 For Civil Society and Media	55
19.4 For Parliament and the Executive	55
20 Conclusion	57

Abstract

This paper examines a foundational misunderstanding that persists across Ghanaian civic life: the belief that politicians, Members of Parliament, and public servants are figures of authority to whom ordinary citizens owe deference, submission, or even gratitude simply for existing in office. Through analysis of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, the Ghana Education Service Junior High School Social Studies syllabus, empirical governance data, and corruption indices, this paper argues the opposite—that the citizen is the sovereign, and the public servant is, by constitutional definition, the employee. It further exposes a profound irony: the very problems of governance that Ghanaian schoolchildren have been taught to identify since the 1990s—deforestation, laziness in public institutions, corruption, poor service delivery—continue to be practised, enabled, or ignored by the same class of educated politicians who sat in those same JHS classrooms and studied those same textbooks.

This expanded edition incorporates new chapters addressing the June 2026 ministerial awards controversy, recurring flood governance failures, the Operation Recover All Loot anti-corruption initiative, the constitutional significance of the Ken Ofori-Atta case, Article 71 compensation structures, the role of Ghana's media as a civic accountability tool, and case studies in good governance. A new theoretical section challenges the political phrase “for God and country,” arguing that it rhetorically displaces the actual beneficiary of governance—the citizen—with a territory that cannot speak back.

This paper is intended as an accessible but rigorously grounded civic education resource for a broad Ghanaian audience, particularly those whose formal education ended at the Junior High School level—and who, because of that, have already been taught everything they need to know to demand better.

Keywords: citizen sovereignty, civic education, Ghana, principal-agent theory, public accountability, social contract, Constitution of Ghana 1992, corruption, galamsey, Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL)

1. Introduction

There is a question that almost every Ghanaian has asked at some point in their life, often in frustration, often in private:

“But what can we do? We are not the government.”

This question reveals a deep civic misconception—one that is not unique to Ghana, but one that has uniquely devastating consequences in a country still building its democratic institutions. The belief that ordinary citizens are passive recipients of governance, rather than its active authors and ultimate authorities, has allowed a political class to operate with alarming impunity. It has allowed public servants to behave like rulers. It has allowed Members of Parliament to treat constituency funds as personal grants. It has allowed ministers to preside over the very problems—corruption, environmental destruction, institutional laziness—that the Ghana Education Service has been teaching primary and junior high school children about since the late 1980s.

This paper is written for the Ghanaian citizen who was told in JHS Social Studies class that “the government is for the people” but was never shown what that actually means in practice. It is written for the market woman in Kumasi, the fisherman in Winneba, the teacher in Tamale, and the university student in Accra who wonders why speaking up about bad roads, poor health facilities, or corrupt officials feels like a radical act rather than an ordinary democratic right.

The central argument of this paper is this: **You are the boss. Your MP works for you. The President works for you. Every civil servant, district assembly member, and government agency head works for you.** This is not an opinion. It is written into the supreme law of Ghana. And understanding it is not just an intellectual exercise—it is the first step toward demanding the country you deserve.

As the Ga proverb says: *“Kaa foo loflo”* — a crab does not beget a bird. The nature of what leadership produces is directly traceable to who the leader believes they serve. When

politicians believe they are rulers rather than servants, the outcomes we see—corruption, impunity, and environmental destruction—are exactly what we should expect.

This expanded edition of the paper incorporates developments from 2025 and 2026 that make the original argument more urgent than ever: a ministerial awards scandal in which public officials appear to have received recognition purchased with public money while the region they govern floods annually; an anti-corruption initiative that has identified \$21 billion in allegedly looted state assets; the detention abroad of a former Finance Minister on 78 criminal charges; and doctors withdrawing services at one of Ghana’s premier hospitals because of political interference—all unfolding in the same June 2026 news cycle in which this paper was completed.

2. Literature Review

The concept of popular sovereignty—the idea that political authority derives from the will of the people—is not a modern Western invention. Its roots can be traced to the English philosopher John Locke’s *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), in which Locke argued that government exists by the consent of the governed and may be dissolved when it fails to protect the natural rights of life, liberty, and property. This foundational idea was later enshrined by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *The Social Contract* (1762), which introduced the concept of the “general will”—the collective interest of the people that legitimate government must always pursue.

In the African context, these ideas were not imported wholesale from Europe; they found parallels in indigenous governance traditions across the continent. Pre-colonial Ghanaian societies—including the Asante Confederacy, the Dagomba Kingdom, the Ga state, and the Ewe communities—operated on systems of reciprocal accountability. A chief’s legitimacy in Akan society was not absolute; it was contingent on service to the community. The very institution of destoolment—the formal removal of a chief by the people—is one of the oldest forms of citizen accountability in recorded African governance history.

Scholarship on African governance and civic literacy has grown substantially over the past three decades. Gyimah-Boadi and Prempeh, in their analysis of Ghanaian democracy, note that while Ghana has achieved considerable success in building electoral institutions, “the deeper substance of democratic accountability—the capacity of citizens to meaningfully discipline elected officials between elections—remains underdeveloped.”¹ This gap between formal democracy and substantive accountability is central to the problematic this paper addresses.

Ninsin argues that the low civic literacy among ordinary Ghanaians—particularly those who exit education at the primary and junior secondary levels—creates a structural vul-

1. E. Gyimah-Boadi and H. K. Prempeh, “Oil, Politics, and Ghana’s Democracy,” Johns Hopkins University Press / Project MUSE: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/481398>, *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 3 (2012): 94–108.

nerability in which political elites are able to exploit informational asymmetries.² Citizens who do not know their rights cannot demand them. Citizens who do not understand the constitutional basis of public service cannot interrogate those who provide it.

Manuh and Asante document the growing disconnect between Ghana's stated commitments to good governance, transparency, and accountability, and the lived reality of citizens who interact with public institutions daily.³ They identify what they call "the deference habit"—a socially reinforced tendency, rooted partly in cultural respect for authority and partly in ignorance of legal rights, for citizens to accept poor governance as normal.

More recently, the work of the Centre for Democratic Development Ghana (CDD-Ghana) has consistently produced data showing that while Ghanaians rank highly in terms of democratic commitment in continental surveys, they rank comparatively low in their willingness to take collective action to demand better from elected officials. The Afrobarometer surveys for Ghana show that a majority of Ghanaians believe corruption is increasing, but only a minority report ever contacting their MP, attending a community durbar, or lodging a complaint with accountability bodies like CHRAJ.⁴

This literature collectively points to a crisis not of constitutional design—Ghana's constitution is admirably clear about citizen sovereignty—but of civic understanding and civic practice.

2. K. A. Ninsin, "Civic Education, Participation, and Democratic Governance," in *Ghana: One Decade of the Liberal State*, ed. Kwame Boafo-Arthur (London: Zed Books, 2006).

3. Takyiwaa Manuh and Richard Asante, eds., *Ghana: Governance in the Fourth Republic* (Legon, Accra: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, 2009).

4. Afrobarometer, *Survey Data on Democratic Attitudes and Citizen Engagement in Ghana: Rounds 8 and 9*, Afrobarometer, <https://www.afrobarometer.org/countries/ghana/>, 2023.

3. Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Constructs

This paper draws on three interlocking theoretical traditions.

3.1. Social Contract Theory

The social contract tradition—from Locke to Rousseau to Rawls—provides the philosophical backbone of constitutional democracy. Government is not a gift from rulers to subjects; it is an arrangement in which citizens delegate certain powers to representatives, conditional on those representatives serving the public interest. When those representatives fail, citizens have both the right and the moral obligation to seek remedy. Ghana’s 1992 Constitution is itself a social contract document.⁵

3.2. Principal-Agent Theory

In economics and political science, the principal-agent model describes relationships in which one party (the agent) acts on behalf of another (the principal). The citizen is the principal. The MP, minister, civil servant, and district assembly member are the agents. The agent’s legitimacy—and their salary—derives entirely from the principal. Agency problems arise when agents pursue their own interests rather than those of their principals. Much of what Ghana experiences as “corruption” or “poor governance” is, in technical terms, a principal-agent problem of catastrophic scale.

As the Sage International Encyclopedia of Political Science describes it, the risk in the political context is that “governments are the only agents in the world that tell their principals what to do”—a complete inversion of the proper constitutional relationship. Political economist Robert Higgs articulates the accountability problem with particular clarity: in market relationships, a principal can immediately fire or penalise an agent who underperforms, whereas “political agents are supposedly accountable at the next election”

5. Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*, Articles 1, 4, 35, 37, 41, 55, 97; Chapter 14 (Public Services); Chapter 24 (Code of Conduct for Public Officers). Available at: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ghana_1996 and <https://judicial.gov.gh/constitution>, 1992.

only—a mechanism that is further weakened when the agent’s stated beneficiary is an abstraction rather than a real constituency.

3.3. Civic Education as Democratic Infrastructure

This paper treats civic literacy not as a luxury or an elite concern, but as essential democratic infrastructure. Just as roads and electricity enable physical commerce, civic literacy enables democratic commerce—the ongoing negotiation between citizens and their representatives about the terms of public life. The GES Social Studies syllabus was, from its inception, intended to build this infrastructure.⁶ The central irony this paper explores is that it largely built knowledge without building practice.

6. Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), Ghana Education Service, *Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies: Junior High School (JHS 1–3)*, technical report, Available via <https://www.ges.gov.gh> and ResearchGate academic archives (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2007).

4. Methodology

This is a qualitative, document-based research paper drawing on:

- **Primary legal documents:** The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, including Articles 1, 35, 37, 41, 55, and 97, Chapter 14 on the Public Services, and Chapter 24 on the Code of Conduct for Public Officers.⁷
- **Curriculum documents:** The GES JHS Social Studies Teaching Syllabus⁸ and the NaCCA JHS Social Studies CCP Curriculum.⁹
- **Empirical data:** Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index 2020–2025,¹⁰ Afrobarometer Survey data 2021–2023,¹¹ World Bank Education Statistics for Ghana,¹² Global Forest Watch data,¹³ and GWCL environmental reports.¹⁴
- **Current events reporting:** News coverage from June 2025 through June 2026 on ministerial awards, flooding, Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL), and related accountability events.
- **Academic literature:** Peer-reviewed articles on Ghanaian governance, civic education, and political accountability.

7. Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*.

8. Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), Ghana Education Service, *Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies: Junior High School (JHS 1–3)*.

9. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), *GES/NaCCA JHS Social Studies CCP Curriculum B7–B10 (Basic 7 to Basic 10)*, technical report, Available at <https://nacca.gov.gh/curriculum-downloads/>. Direct PDF: <https://nacca.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Social-Studies-B7-9-CCP-FINAL.pdf> (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2020).

10. Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: Ghana Country Report*, Transparency International, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024/index/gha>, 2024.

11. Afrobarometer, *Survey Data on Democratic Attitudes and Citizen Engagement in Ghana: Rounds 8 and 9*.

12. World Bank, *World Bank Education Statistics: Ghana Country Profile*, World Bank Open Data, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/ghana>, 2023.

13. Global Forest Watch, *Ghana Forest Cover Loss Data: Annual Deforestation Statistics*, Global Forest Watch, <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/GHA/>, 2023.

14. WaterAid Ghana / Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL), *Reports on Water Quality and Galamsey Impact on Ghanaian Rivers*, WaterAid Ghana, Turbidity data and production figures. <https://www.wateraid.org/gh>; <https://www.gwcl.com.gh>, 2024.

- **Institutional reports:** Ghana Integrity Initiative statements, Auditor-General reports,¹⁵ and CDD-Ghana publications.

The approach is descriptive, analytical, and advocacy-oriented. This paper aims not only to document a problem but to communicate its contours clearly enough to motivate civic action. While the paper is grounded in academic sources and data, it is deliberately written in plain, accessible English so that its arguments can be understood and used by the broadest possible audience—the sovereign public it is written for.

15. Auditor-General of Ghana, *Annual Reports on Public Accounts*, technical report, Reports for 2019–2024 available at <https://audit.gov.gh/reports/> (Office of the Auditor-General of Ghana, 2024).

5. The Legal Foundation: What the Constitution of Ghana Actually Says

Before anything else, let us go to the source. Let us open the book that every politician swears an oath to, every judge interprets, and that most ordinary Ghanaians have never been shown in plain language.

The **1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana** opens with a Preamble that should be memorised by every citizen:¹⁶

“We the People of Ghana ... in solemn declaration and affirmation of our commitment to: Freedom, Justice, Probity and Accountability; The Principle that all powers of Government spring from the Sovereign Will of the People ... DO HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.”

Read that again. **We the People.** Not “We the Politicians.” Not “We the Party.” The Constitution was not given to Ghanaians by their leaders. Ghanaians gave it to themselves.

Article 1(1) is even more explicit:

“The Sovereignty of Ghana resides in the people of Ghana in whose name and for whose welfare the powers of government are to be exercised in the manner and within the limits laid down in this Constitution.”

This single sentence dismantles every argument that citizens should be passive in their relationship to government. Sovereignty—the ultimate, final, irreducible authority—*resides in the people*. Government derives its powers from the people. Government exists *for the welfare of the people*. It has no other constitutional purpose.

Article 35(1) reinforces this: “Ghana shall be a democratic state dedicated to the realization of freedom and justice; and accordingly, sovereignty resides in the people of Ghana from whom Government derives all its powers and authority through this Constitution.”

16. Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*.

Article 35(2) continues: “The State shall . . . seek the well-being of all her citizens.” Not some citizens. Not citizens of the ruling party. *All* citizens.

Chapter 14 of the Constitution, on the Public Services, defines who public servants are and what they owe the public. The Civil Service, the Judicial Service, the Health Service, the Education Service—all are defined as organs of the state that exist to serve the public. Chapter 24, the **Code of Conduct for Public Officers**, establishes explicit ethical obligations: public officers must not engage in corrupt conduct, must not abuse their office, and must not use public resources for private benefit.

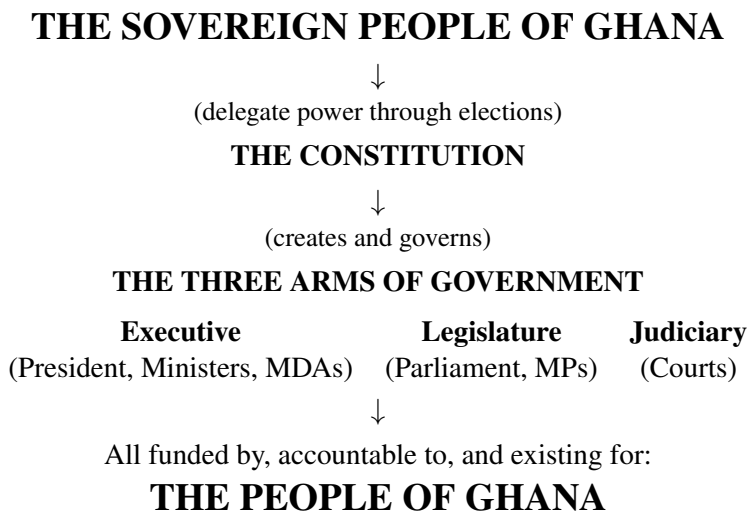
CHRAJ—the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice—exists specifically so that citizens have a body to which they can report the failure of public servants. Its very creation in the Constitution is an acknowledgment that power can be abused, and that citizens need a mechanism to fight back. CHRAJ is free, constitutionally mandated, and reachable at toll-free number 0800-800-900.¹⁷

The legal architecture, in other words, is clear. The citizen is not a subject asking for favours. The citizen is the constitutional principal, and every public servant—from the President down to the district officer—is the agent. The question is why so few Ghanaians live as though this is true.

17. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), *CHRAJ — Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice: Official Website and Citizen Services*, Government of Ghana, Constitutional basis: Articles 216–230 of the 1992 Constitution. Toll-free: 0800-800-900. <https://www.chrajghana.com>, 2024.

6. Who Works for Whom? Understanding the Hierarchy of Power

To understand why demanding accountability from your MP is not arrogance but citizenship, it helps to understand the hierarchy of power as the Constitution establishes it.



This is not a suggestion. It is the constitutional structure. The President is powerful, yes—but the President was elected by citizens. The President’s salary is paid from the public purse—from taxes collected from citizens. The President can be impeached by Parliament, which itself is elected by citizens. The entire executive apparatus exists because the citizens established it, fund it, and—through the Constitution—set its limits.

Similarly, your Member of Parliament does not represent the party that flew them to Accra. They represent the constituency—the people—who voted for them. Their primary legal obligation, under Article 97 and related provisions, is to their constituents. They are paid by the state, from public funds, to do the work of the public.

As of 2025, MPs in Ghana earn a base monthly salary of approximately **GHS 28,000**, with allowances, sitting fees, constituency funds, vehicle grants, housing support, and end-of-term ex-gratia payments that can collectively push total annual compensation well above GHS 500,000 for a single four-year term.¹⁸ All of this money comes from one source: **the**

18. Campus Cybercafe, *Ghana Member of Parliament (MP) Salary Structure and Allowances 2025*, Campus

Ghanaian taxpayer. Every nurse who earns less than GHS 3,000 a month, every teacher supplementing their income with extra tutoring, every market woman paying VAT on her goods—they are all contributing to the salary of the people who are supposed to serve them.

Understanding this is not about resentment. It is about accountability. You do not feel embarrassed demanding good service from a plumber you hired and paid. You should not feel embarrassed demanding good service from a public official you elected and whose salary you fund.

7. The Education Irony: What We Learnt in School vs. What Leaders Are Doing

Here is a question that should disturb every thoughtful Ghanaian.

The problems currently devastating Ghana—illegal mining destroying rivers and forests, corruption in public institutions, laziness and poor service delivery in government agencies, destruction of the environment, mismanagement of public funds—are **the exact same problems that have been listed in the GES Social Studies syllabus since the 1990s.**

Every Ghanaian who attended JHS studied these issues. They wrote about them in exams. They named them: “*Problems of government institutions include: inefficiency, absenteeism, corruption, political interference, poor public accountability.*” They named deforestation as a major environmental problem. They studied the causes and effects of land degradation. They discussed why public institutions fail to serve citizens.

Then something extraordinary happened. Many of those JHS students grew up, went to university, entered politics, and proceeded to do **exactly the things they had identified as problems.**

7.1. On Deforestation and Environmental Destruction

Ghana’s forest cover loss linked to illegal small-scale mining (galamsey) now exceeds **135,000 hectares annually.**¹⁹ In the past decade, Ghana has lost approximately **1.6 million hectares of forest cover**, more than half attributed to galamsey. Galamsey has infiltrated **34 out of Ghana’s 288 forest reserves**, destroying over **4,726 hectares** of protected land. The Ghana Water Company Limited has reported turbidity levels in rivers like the Pra, Ankobra, and Offin exceeding **14,000 NTU**—nearly three times the acceptable treatment threshold of 5,000 NTU—making clean water treatment functionally impossible in many communities.²⁰

Between 2017 and 2024, the Ghanaian government declared multiple official “wars

19. Global Forest Watch, *Ghana Forest Cover Loss Data: Annual Deforestation Statistics*.

20. WaterAid Ghana / Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL), *Reports on Water Quality and Galamsey Impact on Ghanaian Rivers*.

on galamsey.” Academic research published in peer-reviewed journals in 2025 describes this war as having “failed spectacularly” and explains why: **politicians and government officials were complicit in the very illegal mining practices they publicly opposed.**²¹ The schoolbook said: “*Deforestation is a major environmental problem in Ghana.*” The government said: “*We are fighting it.*” The rivers said otherwise.

7.2. On Corruption and Institutional Laziness

Ghana’s score on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index in 2024 was **42 out of 100**—marking its first decline in five years and placing Ghana at **80th out of 180 countries** globally.²² Since 2015, Ghana has dropped five points on the index. The Ghana Integrity Initiative noted that “a 10-year trend shows persistent challenges in tackling corruption despite several policy interventions and institutional reforms.”²³

The Auditor-General’s reports have consistently flagged billions of cedis in unaccounted public expenditure. COVID-19 funds showed that **only 3.5 percent of government spending went through GIFMIS**, Ghana’s official government accounting system—meaning the vast majority of pandemic expenditure bypassed the very system designed to ensure accountability.²⁴

7.3. On Article 71 Office Holders and Public Resources

MPs and ministers receive housing support, vehicle grants, driver allowances, utilities support, constituency allowances, sitting allowances, and—at the end of each term—ex-gratia payments that have been widely criticised as excessive.²⁵ These are funded from the

21. G. Botchwey et al., “Small-scale Mining, Environmental Destruction and Democracy Capture: The Government of Ghana’s Failed War on Galamsey,” Taylor & Francis / Tandfonline. Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com>, *Journal of Political Ecology*, May 2025,

22. Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: Ghana Country Report*.

23. The Fourth Estate / CDD-Ghana, *Ghana Records Worst CPI Score and Ranking in Five Years*, The Fourth Estate, <https://thefourthstategh.com>, February 2025.

24. Auditor-General of Ghana, *Annual Reports on Public Accounts*.

25. Presidential Committee on Emoluments for Article 71 Office Holders, *Report of the Presidential Committee on Emoluments for Article 71 Office Holders (Ntiamoah-Baidu Report)*, technical report, Publicly released and archived at <https://mofep.gov.gh> (Government of Ghana / Ministry of Finance, 2020).

public purse. Yet health workers, teachers, and other frontline public servants—who interact directly with citizens every day—earn a fraction of these amounts and frequently go on strike over unpaid salaries and poor conditions of service.

The schoolbook said: “*Public servants should serve the public.*” The Constitution said it louder. But the pay structure, the culture of entitlement, and the absence of meaningful accountability have created a political class that governs by appearance rather than by service.

8. For God and the People: Why the Phrase Betrays the Citizens It Claims to Serve

8.1. The Phrase We Have Never Questioned

Ask any Ghanaian schoolchild what the purpose of government is, and they will likely cite some version of the same answer: to serve the people. Ask a politician why they sought office, and the answer you will most frequently hear is some variation of: “for God and country.”

The phrase is so familiar that it passes without scrutiny. It appears in swearing-in ceremonies. It frames political campaign messaging. It fills the space between a politician’s arrival at an airport and their first press conference. It sounds, on its surface, noble—even sacred.

This section argues that it is neither. In the context of a constitutional democracy where the people are the sovereign principal and the public official is the hired agent, the phrase “for God and country” is not a declaration of service. It is, whether intentionally or not, a declaration of misdirection. It replaces the actual beneficiary of public service—the living, breathing, taxpaying citizen—with an abstraction that has no face, no hunger, no hospital bill, and no child waiting to be enrolled in school.

The correct framework, this paper argues, is not “for God and country.” It is “for God and the people.” That one-word substitution—*country* for *people*—is not a matter of semantics. It is a matter of accountability.

8.2. What “Country” Is—and What It Is Not

Let us be precise. “Country” is a geographic and administrative concept. It refers to a defined territory—borders, airspace, territorial sea, and the institutions nested within them. Article 4(1) of Ghana’s 1992 Constitution confirms this when it defines the sovereign state of Ghana as “a unitary republic consisting of those territories comprised in the regions which immediately before the coming into force of this Constitution, existed in Ghana, including

the territorial sea and the air space.”²⁶

The land, in other words, is not the beneficiary. The land does not suffer. The land does not queue at Korle-Bu. The land does not sit in a classroom with a broken ceiling and no textbooks. The land does not drive through a pothole-ridden road in the Brong-Ahafo region and arrive late to a job interview. The land does not lose a mother because an ambulance did not arrive in time.

The people do.

When Article 35(2) of the Constitution charges the state to “seek the well-being of all her citizens,” it does not say “seek the well-being of the territory.” It says *citizens*—meaning persons, meaning human beings who wake up in the morning with real needs, real vulnerabilities, and real expectations of a government that was constitutionally constructed in their name.

The distinction matters enormously. A country, as a concept, cannot hold a government accountable. A country cannot vote. A country cannot file a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice. A country cannot go on strike, petition Parliament, or show up at a constituency town hall meeting to ask an uncomfortable question. *People* can. *Citizens* can. The principal is always a person, never a place.

8.3. The Shipping Agent Analogy

Consider a practical illustration. A person imports a vehicle from Europe. They engage a shipping agent to handle customs clearance, coordinate with the harbour authority, and deliver the car once it arrives at the port. The agent has been hired, paid, and mandated with a singular purpose: to act on behalf of the importer.

Now suppose the agent begins to describe their purpose not as “acting on behalf of the importer” but as “acting on behalf of the shipment.” The moment the agent’s stated obligation shifts from the importer to the object, the legal and moral chain of accountability

26. Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*.

breaks. The car can be transferred, sold, re-invoiced, or “lost” in transit, and the agent can truthfully say they were “acting in the best interests of the vehicle.” The actual owner—the person who funded the entire enterprise—becomes secondary.

This is precisely what happens when a politician says they govern “for country.” The country—the object, the territory, the national abstraction—becomes the stated principal. The people—the actual owners, the ones who funded the enterprise and who need the outcomes—become secondary. And on the days when the agent chooses not to deliver, the abstraction of “country” offers no resistance. It raises no objection. It has no face to turn toward the agent and say: you failed me.

That is precisely the point. A beneficiary who cannot speak is a beneficiary who cannot hold you accountable.

8.4. “Country” as a Tool of Moral Insulation

There is a documented pattern in how political language functions as a buffer between elected officials and the populations they govern. Politicians are skilled at adjusting abstraction levels to fit their objectives—using sweeping language to claim moral authority while evading the specificity of accountability. At high levels of abstraction, it becomes difficult to locate failure.

When the minister awards contracts to friends and family at inflated rates, the stated justification is “national development.” When the president spends millions on State House renovations while nurses go on strike over unpaid salaries, the framing is always, always, patriotic. The country—abstract, inarticulate, geographically fixed—absorbs all of it. The people—concrete, vocal, constitutionally sovereign—are left to make do.

A 2021 analysis of Ghana’s governance culture observed that the country’s persistent corruption problem is not simply a matter of bad actors but of structural impunity: “political parties in power often shielded their corrupt members to protect party reputation and boost electability. This resulted in impunity.” The abstraction of national service—“we are

doing this for Ghana”—provides exactly the ideological cover under which that impunity is maintained.

8.5. What the Constitution Actually Says

Ghana’s Constitution does not, at any point, establish the country as the beneficiary of governance. It establishes the people.²⁷

- **Article 1(1):** “The Sovereignty of Ghana resides in the *people of Ghana* in whose name and *for whose welfare* the powers of government are to be exercised.”
- **Article 35(1):** “sovereignty resides in the *people of Ghana* from whom Government derives all its powers and authority.”
- **Article 35(2):** “The State shall seek the well-being of *all her citizens*.”
- **Article 41(b):** Citizens have the duty “to uphold and defend this Constitution and the law, and to foster the spirit of loyal and dedicated service to *the people of Ghana*.”

The word “people” appears more than forty times in the first two chapters of the Constitution. Neither chapter, at any point, identifies “the country” as the unit of governance whose welfare must be served. The framers of the 1992 Constitution were explicit in grounding sovereignty in persons—living, present, rights-bearing human beings—not in territory.

8.6. The Theological Dimension

Ghana’s 1992 Constitution opens: “In the Name of the Almighty God, We the People of Ghana. . .” The invocation of God is not absent from constitutional thought in Ghana—it is foundational. But it is paired, immediately, with “We the People.” The constitutional text does not say “We the Territory of Ghana.” It says *we the people*.

27. Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*.

If one genuinely governs for God, then the logic of serving God—across every major religious tradition represented in Ghana, Christian, Muslim, or indigenous—leads directly to serving persons. The Akan proverb cited in this paper’s opening captures it plainly: “Onipa na ohyia onipa”—it is people who need people. Service rendered to an abstraction, in the name of the divine, is not service at all. It is theatre.

8.7. Summary of the Argument

Framework	Stated Beneficiary	Can Hold Govern- ment Accountable?	Constitutional Basis
For God and Country	The nation-state (ter- ritory)	No—abstract, inar- ticate, cannot vote or complain	None—Constitution names people, not territory, as the principal
For God and the People	Living citizens	Yes—can vote, peti- tion, report, organise, demand	Direct: Articles 1(1), 35(1), 35(2), 41(b)

The swap from “country” to “people” does not change the poetry of service. It enforces the accountability of service. It names a principal who can speak. It names a beneficiary who can knock on the door of CHRAJ. It names someone who, when they are failed, can look a public officer in the eye and say: you work for me. I am not a metaphor. I am a person. Govern accordingly.

9. The Curriculum Confronted: GES Social Studies and the Governance Gap

The Ghana Education Service’s Social Studies syllabus for the Junior High School level is organised into three thematic sections that have remained consistent in their emphases since the 1987 education reforms and the subsequent curriculum revisions of 2007 and 2020.²⁸

1. **Governance, Politics, and Stability**—covering the structure of government, the role of citizens, constitutional rights and responsibilities, and the functions of democratic institutions.
2. **The Environment**—covering natural resources, deforestation, water and land management, pollution, and sustainable development.
3. **Socio-Economic Development**—covering economic activities, poverty, public institutions, and social challenges.

The NaCCA 2020 CCP Curriculum for JHS Social Studies explicitly lists **civic literacy**, **critical thinking**, **patriotism**, and **civic duties** as core competencies. It requires students to “demonstrate understanding of citizenship” and to discuss the functions of democratic governance.²⁹ The GES Government Curriculum for Secondary Education (2023) reinforces this, requiring students to “role play various functions of government while highlighting civic values of hard work, loyalty and patriotism.”³⁰

These are not new ideas. They have been in Ghanaian classrooms for over three decades.

And yet—there is a structural problem that goes beyond curriculum design. **The syllabus teaches what the problems are. It does not teach citizens that they are empowered to**

28. Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), Ghana Education Service, *Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies: Junior High School (JHS 1–3)*; National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), *GES/NaCCA JHS Social Studies CCP Curriculum B7–B10 (Basic 7 to Basic 10)*.

29. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), *GES/NaCCA JHS Social Studies CCP Curriculum B7–B10 (Basic 7 to Basic 10)*.

30. GES/NaCCA, *Government Curriculum for Secondary Education (SHS 1–3)*, technical report, Available at <https://nacca.gov.gh/curriculum-downloads/> (Ministry of Education, Ghana, September 2023).

solve them. Social Studies classes describe corruption as a problem. They rarely include explicit civic modules on how to report corruption to CHRAJ, how to petition Parliament, how to file a complaint with the Office of the Auditor-General, or how to organise a community to demand accountability from a District Assembly member.

The curriculum builds civic knowledge. It does not consistently build civic agency. Knowledge without agency is frustration. It produces people who can accurately name every problem in their country and feel completely powerless to change any of it.

This is the gap this paper—and the explainer series it supports—seeks to close. Understanding what the problems are is necessary. Understanding that you—as a constitutional sovereign—have the right, the tools, and the duty to address them is what transforms civic knowledge into civic power.

10. Statistics, Data, and the Weight of Evidence

To ground this paper in empirical reality, the following statistics are drawn from credible and documented sources.

10.1. On Education

- Approximately **69.8 percent of Ghanaians aged six years and older** are literate.³¹
- As of 2022, only **20.39 percent of eligible Ghanaians** are enrolled in tertiary education.³²
- Only **16.6 percent of urban Ghanaians** aged 18 and over have attained tertiary education as their highest level.³³
- The gross enrolment rate for secondary education was **77.82 percent** in 2022.³⁴

The Critical Implication: The JHS Social Studies syllabus is not just foundational education for some Ghanaians. For most Ghanaians, it is the *totality* of their formal civic education. If civic literacy stops at JHS, and JHS teaches about problems without building the habit of civic action, the consequences are structural—not personal. Citizens are not failing to demand accountability because they lack intelligence or courage. They are failing, in many cases, because no institution has clearly told them that demanding accountability is not only allowed, but constitutionally mandated.

10.2. On Governance and Corruption

- Ghana's CPI score has stagnated between 42 and 43 for five consecutive years (2020–2024).³⁵

31. Ghana Statistical Service, *2021 Population and Housing Census: Education Data*, technical report, <https://statsghana.gov.gh/census2021.php> (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021).

32. World Bank, *World Bank Education Statistics: Ghana Country Profile*.

33. Asetenapa.com, *35+ Ghana Education Statistics and Facts*, Asetenapa.com, <https://asetenapa.com/ghana-education-statistics/>, 2024.

34. World Bank, *World Bank Education Statistics: Ghana Country Profile*.

35. Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: Ghana Country Report*.

- Ghana ranked **80th out of 180 countries** in 2024—its worst ranking in five years.³⁶
- Ghana’s best CPI score in the past decade was **48 in 2014**—meaning the country has moved backward since.
- Transparency International attributes Ghana’s stagnation specifically to “deteriorating justice systems, which is reducing the accountability of public officials and therefore allowing corruption to thrive.”³⁷

10.3. On Environmental Degradation

- Ghana has lost approximately **1.6 million hectares of forest** in the past decade.³⁸
- Forest cover loss linked to galamsey exceeds **135,000 hectares annually**.³⁹
- **34 of Ghana’s 288 forest reserves** have been affected by illegal mining.⁴⁰
- Over **100,000 acres of farmland** have been destroyed by galamsey, contributing to a **5 percent drop in cocoa production** in 2023.⁴¹
- The government **loses approximately \$2 billion annually** in tax revenues from unreported gold exports.⁴²

10.4. On MP Compensation vs. Citizen Income

- MPs earn a gross monthly salary of approximately **GHS 25,000–30,000**, with total annual compensation including allowances potentially reaching several hundred thousand cedis.⁴³

36. The Fourth Estate / CDD-Ghana, *Ghana Records Worst CPI Score and Ranking in Five Years*.

37. Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: Ghana Country Report*.

38. Global Forest Watch, *Ghana Forest Cover Loss Data: Annual Deforestation Statistics*.

39. Global Forest Watch.

40. ENACT Africa, *Illegal Mining Digs Up Multiple Problems in Ghana*, ENACT Africa Organised Crime Monitoring Project, <https://enactafrica.org/research/trend-reports/illegal-mining-digs-up-multiple-problems-in-ghana>, October 2024.

41. National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) Ghana, *The Hidden Costs of Galamsey: Infrastructure and Environmental Degradation*, NCCE Ghana, <https://ncce.gov.gh>, 2024.

42. National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) Ghana.

43. Campus Cybercafe, *Ghana Member of Parliament (MP) Salary Structure and Allowances 2025*; MyNewsGH, *Member of Parliament Salary in Ghana*, MyNewsGH, <https://mynewsgh.com>, June 2024.

- Ghana's minimum wage as of 2024 stands at approximately **GHS 18.15 per day**.
- Many frontline public servants—teachers, nurses, community health workers—earn between **GHS 2,000 and GHS 5,000 monthly**.
- This means a single MP earns, in base salary alone, what many frontline workers earn in six months—while those frontline workers often go on strike over delayed salaries and poor conditions of service.

The weight of this data tells a single story: the gap between what the Constitution promises and what citizens experience is not accidental. It is the product of a system in which accountability flows weakly from agents back to principals, and where those principals—the citizens—have been inadequately equipped to enforce their own sovereign authority.

11. When Servants Give Themselves Awards: The Accountability Vacuum and the Recognition Industry

On the evening of 6 June 2026, at Labadi Beach Hotel in Accra, the 6th Ghana Ministers of State Excellence Awards ceremony was held. The event was organised by Big Events Ghana, a private company run by Prince Mackay (also known as Dr. Prince Emmanuel Markey). Greater Accra Regional Minister Linda Ocloo was named “Best Regional Minister” at the ceremony.⁴⁴

Within hours, the award generated widespread public backlash on X (formerly Twitter). Citizens pointed to the obvious: Accra, the region she leads, continues to flood catastrophically every rainy season. Streets in major neighbourhoods remain unlit. Drainage infrastructure is visibly and documentably failing. On the very next day, 7 June 2026, the government announced emergency drainage expansion and “strict law enforcement” to tackle the flooding.⁴⁵ The juxtaposition—an award for regional minister on Friday, emergency flood interventions for the same region announced on Saturday—became a compressed civic lesson no Social Studies textbook could have planned.

11.1. The Structural Problem: No Citizen-Verified Performance Metrics

The awards controversy is not simply a Twitter moment. It is a case study in a broader structural failure: **the absence of genuine, citizen-verified, transparent performance metrics for public officials.**

When there are no published ministerial performance targets, no independently verified report cards, and no regular public accounting of what was promised versus what was delivered, a vacuum is created. Into that vacuum steps what this paper terms the “award

44. Pulse Ghana, ‘Best Regional Minister in Which Accra?’ — Social Media Reacts to Linda Ocloo’s Award, Pulse Ghana, <https://www.pulse.com.gh/story/best-regional-minister-in-which-accra-social-media-reacts-to-linda-ocloos-award-2026060708050727619>, June 2026.

45. Pulse Ghana, *Government Announces Drainage Expansion, Strict Law Enforcement and Crackdown on Illegal Structures to Tackle Flooding*, Pulse Ghana, <https://www.pulse.com.gh/story/govt-announces-drainage-expansion-strict-law-enforcement-and-crackdown-on-illegal-structures-to-tackle-flooding-2026060716050258532>, June 2026.

economy”—private event companies that monetise recognition by selling it to the very institutions whose officials they are honouring.⁴⁶

NDC MP Edem Agbana (Ketu North) identified the core structural problem with clarity: State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) were being solicited for sponsorships, and officials from those same institutions were then being nominated for and receiving awards. This creates a perception of “cash-for-awards.” A public sector CEO privately told Agbana they had withdrawn from the event after financial demands were made by the organisers. Professor Michael Kpessa-Whyte, head of the State Interests and Governance Authority (SIGA), publicly alleged that the organisers demanded payment over a nomination.⁴⁷

11.2. The Exception That Proves the Rule

What makes MP Agbana’s response so significant for this paper is not just what he said but *who* said it. Agbana is a member of the governing NDC—the same party whose appointees were receiving the awards. His public statement—“*May we not become what we criticised*”—represents precisely the kind of non-partisan, intra-party accountability demand that genuine democratic function requires.⁴⁸

In his statement published by Asaase Radio, Agbana was equally direct: “We hold public office in trust for the people of Ghana. . . . The people of Ghana did not give us this mandate to go about collecting accolades or to be awarded by ourselves.”⁴⁹ This is, word for word, the principal-agent argument this paper makes. A governing-party legislator

46. NewsGhana, *Another ‘Fake Award’? From RTP to Ministers of State Awards — A New Low for Credibility*, NewsGhana, <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/another-fake-award-from-rtp-to-ministers-of-state-awards-a-new-low-for-credibility/>, June 2026.

47. NewsGhana, *Government MP Questions Ethics of Sponsored Ministerial Awards*, NewsGhana, MP Edem Agbana’s statement; Prof. Kpessa-Whyte allegation; Deputy Chief of Staff response. <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/government-mp-questions-ethics-of-sponsored-ministerial-awards/>, June 2026; NewsGhana, *MP Calls Out SOE Spending on Public Official Awards*, NewsGhana, <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/mp-calls-out-soe-spending-on-public-official-awards/>, June 2026.

48. MyNewsGH, *May We Not Become What We Criticised — Agbana Warns NDC Appointees*, MyNewsGH, <https://www.mynewsgh.com/may-we-not-become-what-we-criticized-agbana-warns-ndc-appointees/>, June 2026.

49. Asaase Radio, *Cash-for-Awards: Agbana Slams Mahama Ministers, Warns Against Erosion of Public Trust*, Asaase Radio, <https://asaaseradio.com/cash-for-awards-agbana-slams-mahama-ministers-warns-against-erosion-of-public-trust/>, June 2026.

publicly applying it to his own party's appointees is the exception to the rule of partisan impunity—and it is worth noting precisely because it is an exception.

11.3. What Genuine Performance Accountability Would Look Like

The awards controversy reveals, by negative space, what is missing: a citizen-driven, independently verified, publicly accessible performance evaluation system for ministers and public officials. Such a system would publish ministerial targets at the start of each year, report quarterly on delivery against those targets, and allow citizens—not private event companies—to decide whether a minister deserves recognition. Until such a system exists, the award economy will continue to fill the vacuum with commercially generated validations that serve the agent, not the principal.

12. Floods as Governance Report Cards: What Recurring Disasters Reveal About Political Will

Accra floods every year. This is not news. It has been news since the catastrophic June 3, 2015 floods and fire at Kwame Nkrumah Circle that killed over 150 people. In the decade since, nothing structurally has changed.

12.1. The 2025–2026 Flood Record

The recent data is unambiguous:⁵⁰

- **May 2025:** Heavy rains killed 4 people and displaced over 3,000 across Greater Accra, affecting Weija, Kaneshie, Adabraka, Adentan, Oyarifa, and parts of Tema.
- **March 29, 2026:** Major flooding in Nima, Weija, Kasoa, Dansoman, Kaneshie, and Mallam Junction—the *same communities* that flood every year.
- The Ghana Meteorological Agency issued advance warnings **weeks** before the March 2026 floods. Those warnings reached political analysts on social media before they reached vulnerable communities—a profound failure of last-mile communication that is itself a governance failure, not a technical one.
- **June 7, 2026:** The government announced emergency drainage measures, “strict law enforcement,” and a “crackdown on illegal structures” to tackle flooding.⁵¹ This language has been used after every major flood season for at least a decade.

12.2. Not Meteorology: A Spatial Governance Crisis

The expert consensus is direct. A NewsGhana analysis in April 2026 stated plainly: “This is not a meteorological crisis. It is a spatial governance crisis.”⁵² Accra’s drainage

50. MyJoyOnline, *Annual Disaster: Resolving Accra’s Flooding Crisis*, MyJoyOnline, <https://www.myjoyonline.com/annual-disaster-resolving-accras-flooding-crisis/>, June 2026.

51. Pulse Ghana, *Government Announces Drainage Expansion, Strict Law Enforcement and Crackdown on Illegal Structures to Tackle Flooding*.

52. NewsGhana, *Ghana’s Floods Are a Geography and Governance Failure*, NewsGhana, <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/ghanas-floods-are-a-geography-and-governance-failure/>, April 2026.

infrastructure was designed during the colonial era for a fraction of the current population. The Odaw River drainage system, despite a World Bank-supported \$200 million investment in the Greater Accra Resilient and Integrated Development (GARID) project, remains structurally inadequate because development planning has consistently failed to match drainage capacity to actual population growth.⁵³

Development planner Dr. Albert A. Arhin of KNUST was precise: “Accra’s flooding is not an act of God or merely a result of climate change. It is a failure of urban governance and political will. The primary variable is not rainfall intensity—it is the city’s inability to handle the water, traceable to infrastructure neglect, illegal structures on floodplains, and enforcement failure.”⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the government’s consistent framing of flooding as a problem of “human activities” and “indiscipline by residents” deflects structural governance failure onto the very citizens the government is constitutionally obligated to serve.⁵⁵

12.3. The JHS Irony at Maximum Intensity

The Ghana Education Service’s Social Studies syllabus has, for decades, taught students about urban planning failures, indiscriminate dumping, inadequate drainage, and flooding as governance problems. These exact terms appear in JHS examination responses written by students who are now politicians, district assembly members, and ministers.

The 24-hour sequence of 6–7 June 2026 captures the irony at its most concentrated: on Friday evening, a minister won an award for leading the region. On Saturday morning, the government announced emergency measures to address the floods devastating that same region. The schoolbook had diagnosed the problem. The examination had been passed. The diploma had been awarded. And yet the city—the real examination—continued to fail its

53. Albert A. Arhin, *Accra’s Floods Are Not Just About Climate Change — They Are About Power, Planning, and Political Privilege*, ModernGhana, Author: Dr. Albert A. Arhin, KNUST. <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1407318/accras-floods-are-not-just-about-climate-changet.html>, June 2025.

54. Arhin.

55. Pulse Ghana, *Government Announces Drainage Expansion, Strict Law Enforcement and Crackdown on Illegal Structures to Tackle Flooding*.

citizens, year after year, flood after flood.

13. Operation Recover All Loot: Accountability Mechanism or Political Theatre?

Among the most consequential governance developments of 2025 was the launch and operation of the Mahama administration's Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) initiative—simultaneously one of the most significant post-election accountability attempts in Ghana's Fourth Republic and one of the most contested.

13.1. What ORAL Found

ORAL was launched in January 2025 as a campaign promise made good. By February 2025, when the Committee presented its report to President Mahama, the scale of what had been documented was staggering:

- **2,417 public complaints** received—demonstrating that when a mechanism exists and is publicised, citizens will use it.⁵⁶
- **\$21.19 billion** identified as potentially recoverable looted state assets across 36 high-profile cases, according to ORAL Committee Chairman Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa.⁵⁷
- Cases include the National Cathedral payments, the PDS contract, the SML-GRA contract, GNPC Saltpond decommissioning, the ambulance procurement scandal, and National Service ghost names.
- President Mahama, upon receiving the ORAL report, stated: “Ghana’s resources belong to the people.”⁵⁸ This is a direct echo of Article 1(1) of the Constitution.

56. GBC Ghana Online, *ORAL Committee Presents Report to Mahama*, GBC Ghana Online, <https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/news/politics/oral-mahama/2025/>, February 2025.

57. The Africa Report, *Ghana: President Mahama Targets \$21bn in Looted State Asset Recoveries*, The Africa Report, <https://www.theafricareport.com/376576/ghana-president-mahama-targets-21bn-in-looted-state-asset-recoveries/>, February 2025.

58. GBC Ghana Online, *ORAL Committee Presents Report to Mahama*.

13.2. The Counter-Narrative: Selective Justice

ORAL's record also raises questions that this paper must address honestly, because a paper arguing for non-partisan accountability cannot ignore partisan accountability failures wherever they occur.

Political scientist Zechariah Langnel of the University of Education, Winneba, warned that selective application of ORAL threatens to turn it from accountability into political warfare: "This selective justice approach fuels public scepticism. A government that promises to recover looted assets cannot be the same government clearing cases involving financial mismanagement by its own side."⁵⁹ The withdrawal of several high-profile court cases after ORAL's launch, cases that critics note involved NDC-aligned figures, further undermined public confidence. The nickname "Clear All Looters"—suggesting the initiative targeted only opposition-aligned figures—entered public discourse as a pointed critique.

13.3. Why This Belongs in the Paper

ORAL is the most dramatic recent example of citizens using formal mechanisms to assert their sovereign claim to public resources. The 2,417 complaints lodged by ordinary Ghanaians are evidence, in raw numerical form, that when the constitutional architecture is activated and citizens are told the mechanism exists and is real, they engage.

But the ORAL story also illustrates this paper's central warning: **accountability mechanisms have teeth only when political will exists to use them consistently, and only when citizens demand that they apply equally—to this government as to the last.** The OSP, CHRAJ, the Auditor-General—all exist in the Constitution. All have powers. But none can function without a citizenry that demands their activation and a political class that does not sabotage them when convenient.

This is not a counsel of despair. It is a call to the kind of non-partisan civic vigilance that this paper argues is both the right and the constitutional duty of every Ghanaian.

59. The Africa Report, *Ghana: President Mahama Targets \$21bn in Looted State Asset Recoveries*.

14. The Ken Ofori-Atta Case as a Constitutional Teaching Moment

A former Finance Minister. Seven years in office. 78 criminal charges. Declared a fugitive from justice. Arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents in Washington, D.C. Living in a luxury apartment building where units sell for up to \$4.2 million—approximately GHS 45.2 million.⁶⁰

This is not background noise. This is the paper's argument made flesh.

14.1. The Facts of the Case

Kenneth Nana Yaw Ofori-Atta served as Ghana's Finance Minister from 2017 to 2024 under President Nana Akufo-Addo. A graduate of Achimota School, the University of Ghana, and Columbia University's Graduate School of Business, Ofori-Atta was considered one of the most credentialled financial technocrats to hold the office.⁶¹

In February 2025, the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) declared him a fugitive after a series of non-appearances before the court despite duly served summonses.⁶² The charges across five categories totalled **78 counts of corruption and related offences**.⁶³ An INTERPOL Red Notice was issued.

On **7 January 2026**, Ofori-Atta was detained by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents at his luxury apartment building in Washington, D.C. He had been living in the United States on an expired visa. The OSP formally applied for extradition. Proceedings were ongoing as of the time of writing, with the legal question of “dual criminality” under review by US authorities.⁶⁴

60. JURIST Features, *From 'Ghana Beyond Aid' to US Detention: The Rise and Fall of Ken Ofori-Atta*, JURIST, <https://www.jurist.org/features/2026/01/29/from-ghana-beyond-aid-to-us-detention-the-rise-and-fall-of-ken-ofori-atta/>, January 2026.

61. JURIST Features.

62. Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP), *OSP Press Release: Declaration of Kenneth Ofori-Atta as Fugitive from Justice*, Office of the Special Prosecutor, https://osp.gov.gh/media_center/press_details/osp-declares-kenneth-ofori-atta-fugitive, February 2025.

63. Citinewsroom, *OSP Declares Ken Ofori-Atta Wanted in Multiple Corruption Cases*, Citinewsroom, <https://citinewsroom.com/2025/02/osp-declares-ofori-atta-wanted-in-multiple-corruption-cases/>, February 2025.

64. JURIST Legal News, *Ghana Dispatch: Former Finance Minister Detained by US Immigration Authorities*

14.2. The Constitutional Connection

The OSP's case against Ofori-Atta is, at its legal core, an application of Chapter 24 of the 1992 Constitution—the Code of Conduct for Public Officers—which prohibits the use of public office for private gain.⁶⁵ The charges allege that a public servant treated the resources of the sovereign people as his own.

This is not a partisan story. This is a constitutional story. A man educated at one of Ghana's finest secondary schools, at the University of Ghana, and at one of the world's leading business schools was—by the constitutional definition this paper argues—the agent of the Ghanaian people. The people's accumulated resources were, by constitutional mandate, held in trust for them. The charges allege that trust was violated.

14.3. What Citizens Made of It

The 2,417 citizens who filed complaints with ORAL, many of whom flagged the Ofori-Atta case among the issues they wanted investigated, represent exactly the kind of civic engagement this paper calls for. They did not wait for party leaders to tell them to act. They used the mechanism that was made available, filled out complaints, and submitted them to a formal accountability body.

The accountability mechanisms in Ghana's Constitution have teeth. Activating those teeth requires a citizenry that knows they exist and demands their use—persistently, non-selectively, across party lines. The Ofori-Atta case is the clearest recent demonstration that when citizens and the constitutional machinery align, the consequences for public servants who betray their principals can be real, documented, and international.

Pending Extradition Review, JURIST, <https://www.jurist.org/news/2026/01/ghana-dispatch-former-finance-minister-detained-by-us-immigration-authorities-pending-extradition-review/>, January 2026.

65. Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*.

15. Why Citizens Do Not Demand More—And Why They Should

There are real, structural reasons why Ghanaians do not always demand more from their leaders, and it is important to name them honestly before we call for action.

15.1. The Culture of Deference

Ghanaian culture, across multiple ethnic groups, places high value on respect for elders, authority, and hierarchical relationships. This is not a flaw—it is a richness. But it becomes a vulnerability when applied uncritically to elected officials. An MP is not an elder in the traditional sense; they are an agent hired by the people. The cultural respect appropriate for a family patriarch is different from the constitutional relationship between a citizen and their representative.

15.2. Patron-Client Politics

Decades of “stomach politics”—the practice of politicians distributing cash, bags of rice, and other goods during election campaigns—have cultivated a transactional relationship between citizens and politicians. When the politician is perceived as a benefactor rather than an employee, the power relationship is inverted. Citizens feel grateful rather than authoritative. They are less likely to demand policy performance when they feel they owe their vote to personal generosity.

15.3. Institutional Fatigue

Many Ghanaians have complained—loudly, repeatedly—and seen nothing change. Institutional fatigue is real. When the same parties alternate in power, when the same scandals emerge and are forgotten, when corruption cases are investigated and go nowhere, citizens rationally conclude that the system is not responsive. This is a crisis of institutional credibility, not of citizen commitment.

15.4. Information Asymmetry

Most citizens do not know that CHRAJ exists. Most do not know the details of their MP's constituency fund allocation or how to access audited expenditure reports. Most have not read Articles 1, 35, or Chapter 14 of the Constitution.⁶⁶ This is not because citizens are unintelligent—it is because this information has not been consistently and accessibly communicated to them. Civic knowledge has been treated as a luxury for the educated rather than a necessity for the sovereign.

15.5. Why Citizens Should Demand More

Because Article 41(f) of the Constitution makes it a **duty** of every Ghanaian citizen to “protect and preserve public property and expose and combat misuse and waste of public funds and property.”⁶⁷ Demanding accountability is not just a right. It is a constitutional obligation.

Because CHRAJ has the power to summon witnesses, require access to information, investigate human rights violations, and investigate corruption by any public officer—and it is reachable, free, at 0800-800-900.⁶⁸

Because the Afrobarometer data consistently shows that when citizens *do* organise and demand change—through demonstrations, legal action, civil society pressure—they achieve results.⁶⁹ The pressure on galamsey, the debate on ex-gratia, the campaign for Free SHS—all were driven, at least in part, by organised citizen demand.

Because, as the Ewe proverb says: “A wise person does not fall down on the same hill twice.” Every generation of Ghanaians that accepts the status quo makes it harder for the next generation to climb.

66. Ninsin, “Civic Education, Participation, and Democratic Governance.”

67. Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*.

68. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), *CHRAJ — Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice: Official Website and Citizen Services*.

69. Afrobarometer, *Survey Data on Democratic Attitudes and Citizen Engagement in Ghana: Rounds 8 and 9*.

16. Pay to Play: The Article 71 Compensation Structure and the Servant Who Became a Master

“*Obra ye asem.*” — Twi

“Life is a matter of consequences.”

What we allow, we will continue to experience.

16.1. What Article 71 Creates

Ghana’s Constitution created a special category of office holders—“Article 71 office holders”—who include the President, Vice President, ministers, MPs, and judges, whose compensation is determined not by the standard civil service pay scales but by a separate committee convened for the purpose. This arrangement, intended to attract qualified people into public service, has in practice created a structural and moral distortion in the relationship between the citizen as principal and the public official as agent.

The most recent substantive review of Article 71 compensation was conducted by the Presidential Committee on Emoluments for Article 71 Office Holders, chaired by Professor Yaa Ntiemoah-Baidu, which reported in 2020.⁷⁰ The committee’s work was widely discussed in public media but its recommendations were not fully implemented in the transparent manner that would allow citizens to evaluate whether the compensation is commensurate with service delivery.

16.2. The Compensation Gap

The structural problem is this: the compensation of Article 71 office holders—base salary, housing support, vehicle grant, driver allowance, utilities support, constituency fund administration allowance, sitting fees, and end-of-term ex-gratia—is calibrated by a committee that sits in closed session. The resulting package is substantially more generous than the compensation of the frontline public servants who deliver services to citizens daily.

70. Presidential Committee on Emoluments for Article 71 Office Holders, *Report of the Presidential Committee on Emoluments for Article 71 Office Holders (Ntiemoah-Baidu Report)*.

MPs earn a base monthly salary of approximately GHS 28,000, with total annual compensation potentially exceeding GHS 500,000 across a four-year term.⁷¹ Teachers, nurses, and community health officers—the persons through whom government actually touches the lives of citizens—earn between GHS 2,000 and GHS 5,000 monthly. This is not an abstract inequality. It is a structural incentive that rewards those with the least citizen contact most generously, and provides the smallest financial reward for those with the most.

The end-of-term ex-gratia payments—lump-sum payments made to Article 71 office holders at the conclusion of each term, in addition to pension entitlements—have been consistently criticised as excessive by civil society, fiscal analysts, and ordinary citizens. These payments are made from the public purse, often in periods when essential services are underfunded or frontline workers are owed arrears.

16.3. The KATH Doctors' Strike: A June 2026 Case Study

The June 2026 news cycle produced a significant development in the health sector. Doctors at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH), one of Ghana's two premier public teaching hospitals, withdrew services following the two-week suspension of the hospital's Chief Executive Officer by the Minister of Health, amid reported tensions between the minister and hospital leadership.⁷²

The juxtaposition requires no embellishment. In the same 48-hour period: a minister received a trophy at a beach hotel for service to her region; the government announced emergency flood interventions for that same region; and frontline medical officers at a major national hospital withdrew services because of a political decision that disrupted institutional leadership. All while ordinary Ghanaians—the actual principals in the constitutional arrangement—waited for care.

71. Campus Cybercafe, *Ghana Member of Parliament (MP) Salary Structure and Allowances 2025*.

72. Pulse Ghana, *Government Announces Drainage Expansion, Strict Law Enforcement and Crackdown on Illegal Structures to Tackle Flooding*.

16.4. The Principal-Agent Distortion

In a properly functioning principal-agent relationship, the agent's reward is linked to outcomes that matter to the principal. When the principal is the Ghanaian citizen, the outcomes that matter include roads that do not flood, hospitals with functioning leadership and adequately compensated doctors, schools with sufficient teachers, and communities with clean water.

When the compensation structure for those at the top is determined by a closed committee and insulated from citizen evaluation, the link between compensation and principal satisfaction is severed. The result is what economists call “moral hazard”—the agent takes less care because the consequences of poor performance are not borne by them. The consequences are borne, instead, by the people waiting in the hospital queue, standing knee-deep in floodwater, or sitting in a classroom where the ceiling has been leaking since 2019.

17. Ghana's Media as a Civic Accountability Tool—And Its Limits

Ghana has a free, vibrant, and constitutionally protected press. Article 162 of the 1992 Constitution guarantees freedom and independence of the media and explicitly prohibits the establishment of a body with the power to control or govern the content of communications.⁷³ Ghana consistently ranks among the top three African countries on the World Press Freedom Index. In the landscape of African media freedom, Ghana is a genuine success story.

And yet investigative journalism that produces accountability outcomes remains limited, underfunded, and frequently ignored by the political class. This section examines both the promise and the limits of media as a civic accountability mechanism.

17.1. The Fourth Estate: Journalism That Changes Outcomes

The most compelling recent example of Ghanaian investigative journalism producing direct accountability outcomes is the work of The Fourth Estate, the investigative unit of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA). In 2025 and 2026, The Fourth Estate published an investigation that exposed thousands of ghost names on the payroll of Ghana's National Service Scheme—workers who existed on government records but not in reality, drawing salaries from the public purse without rendering any service.

The consequences were direct and documented. The Auditor-General publicly credited The Fourth Estate with providing the evidence dossier that triggered formal indictments by the Office of the Special Prosecutor.⁷⁴ This is not a hypothetical claim about what journalism *can* do. It is a documented instance of what journalism *did*—it activated constitutional accountability machinery that would otherwise have remained dormant.

73. Republic of Ghana, *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*.

74. AllAfrica / Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) — The Fourth Estate, *West Africa: Exposé by Investigative Journalism Project Triggers Reform in Ghana's National Service Scheme*, AllAfrica / MFWA, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202506240040.html>; also <https://thefourthstategh.com>, June 2026.

17.2. The Anas Model: Accountability Through Exposure

Ghana's most internationally recognised investigative journalist, Anas Aremeyaw Anas of Tiger Eye PI, has produced undercover investigations that exposed corruption in Ghana's football administration (*Number 12*, 2018) and earlier in the Ghanaian judiciary (2015), resulting in the dismissal of multiple judges and the suspension of several football officials. These investigations demonstrate that when accountability mechanisms are activated—even by non-state actors—they can produce results.

The Anas model also illustrates a limit: investigations that expose the powerful frequently generate counter-attacks on the investigator. Anas has faced assassination attempts, legal threats, and political pressure. This pattern—where accountability journalism is met not with institutional reform but with retribution against the journalist—represents a systemic threat to the media's accountability function that citizens, civil society, and the legal architecture must actively resist.

17.3. Social Media as Civic Accountability Space

The June 2026 ministerial awards controversy is a clean case study in the emerging role of social media—specifically X (formerly Twitter)—as a civic accountability space. Within hours of the awards ceremony, citizen commentary on X had connected the award to Greater Accra's flood record, raised questions about award criteria, and created sufficient public pressure that a governing-party MP issued a formal public statement.⁷⁵ This sequence—citizen outrage on social media, sustained by documented evidence, producing formal political response—is a compressed version of the accountability cycle this paper argues for.

Social media's accountability function has limits, of course. It is susceptible to misinformation, partisan amplification, and "outrage cycles"—brief explosions of public attention that dissipate without structural change. Whether the June 2026 awards controversy produces structural reform—including independently verified ministerial performance metrics—or

75. MyNewsGH, *May We Not Become What We Criticised — Agbana Warns NDC Appointees*.

fades into the next news cycle, depends on whether citizens maintain sustained, organised pressure beyond the social media moment.

17.4. The Partisan Capture Problem

Ghana's media landscape, vibrant as it is, is substantially partisanised. The majority of radio stations and online platforms that reach significant audiences are aligned, either formally or informally, with NPP or NDC political interests. This alignment distorts coverage and produces a situation in which accountability journalism about the governing party is more likely to appear in opposition-aligned outlets—and therefore to be dismissed by governing-party supporters as partisan attack rather than civic service.

The media's accountability function is most powerful when it is genuinely non-partisan—when it holds all governments to the same standard, regardless of which party is in power. This is the standard that distinguishes accountability journalism from political communication, and it is the standard that organisations like The Fourth Estate and journalists like Anas Aremeyaw Anas aim to maintain.

18. What Good Governance Actually Looks Like: Cases and Comparisons

This paper has documented failure at length. But to motivate citizens rather than simply discourage them, it must also show what good governance looks like—both within Ghana and comparably in the world—and argue that it is achievable, because the evidence is that it is.

18.1. Rwanda: A Generation's Work

Rwanda in 1994 was a country that had just experienced one of the worst genocides in modern history, with an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 people killed in 100 days. Thirty years later, Rwanda consistently scores in the top quarter of African countries on governance and anti-corruption indicators, with a Corruption Perceptions Index score that places it above many middle-income countries globally.

Rwanda's governance improvements are contested and complex—the country's political record includes legitimate human rights concerns—but the governance infrastructure itself is relevant to this paper's argument. Rwanda has implemented systematic performance contracts (*imihigo*) at every level of government, from the President down to local officials, with publicly stated targets and publicly reported outcomes. Citizens can, and in various formats do, participate in evaluating whether targets were met. The Rwandan experience demonstrates that within a single generation, governance culture can be restructured around accountability to citizens.

18.2. Botswana: Institutional Stability as a Resource

Botswana, Ghana's closest peer in terms of Anglophone African democratic tradition, has consistently maintained one of the highest governance ratings on the continent. Unlike Rwanda, Botswana's governance is built on relatively conventional Westminster-derived institutions rather than a programmatic performance system. Its success lies in what institu-

tional economists call “credible commitment”—the ability of institutions to make and keep promises over time, independent of which political party holds office at any given moment.

18.3. Ghana’s 2024 Elections: When Institutions Work

Ghana’s own institutional record is not without genuine achievement. The Electoral Commission managed the 2024 elections in a manner that was broadly credible, peaceful, and resulted in a democratic transfer of power—a significant achievement by any comparative measure.

This is relevant: the same country whose Finance Minister faces 78 corruption charges and whose regional capital floods every year also ran a competitive national election that international observers rated as credible. Ghana’s institutions can function at a high level when properly resourced and insulated from political capture. The question is how to extend that standard beyond elections to the daily delivery of governance.

18.4. The Domelevo Case: What Happens When a Public Servant Does Their Job

Ghana’s own recent history provides one of the most instructive—and most troubling—examples of what happens when an accountability mechanism is used as intended. Daniel Yaw Domelevo served as Auditor-General of Ghana from 2016 to 2021. During his tenure, he used the constitutional powers of his office aggressively: he issued disallowances and surcharges against public officers for financial irregularities, published detailed audit findings that named individuals and institutions, and refused to clear accounts that he believed had not been properly accounted for.⁷⁶

The results were significant. Billions of cedis in irregular expenditure were identified and publicised. Public pressure, generated by media coverage of Domelevo’s findings, produced some recoveries and deterred some future irregularities.

And then Domelevo was placed on mandatory leave by the President—based on a

76. Auditor-General of Ghana, *Annual Reports on Public Accounts*.

disputed interpretation of his retirement date—effectively marginalising him for the final year of his term. The circumstances of his removal were widely criticised by civil society, legal experts, and international observers as politically motivated interference with an independent constitutional officer.

The Domelevo case is the principal-agent theory made concrete and painful: when an agent (a public servant) faithfully and powerfully serves the principal (the citizens), the other agents (the political class) who benefit from weaker oversight have both the motive and, if citizens are not vigilant, the means to neutralise him. The lesson is not that accountability is impossible. The lesson is that accountability requires both strong institutions and a citizenry that actively defends those institutions when they come under political attack.

18.5. Toward Ministerial Performance Scorecards for Ghana

This paper recommends, as a concrete accountability reform, the implementation of independently verified, publicly accessible ministerial performance scorecards for Ghana. Such a system would include:

- Public declaration of ministerial targets at the start of each year, co-developed with relevant civil society and professional bodies.
- Quarterly public reporting on key indicators—not just ministerial self-reports but independently verified data.
- An annual citizen-feedback mechanism, accessible online, on radio, and in local languages, in which citizens rate service delivery in their district and sector.
- Publication of scorecard results in national media, with follow-up obligations for ministers who score below a minimum threshold.

This is not a radical idea. It is what Rwanda’s *imihigo* system approximates. It is what a country that takes its own constitutional declaration seriously—“sovereignty resides in

the people”—would implement as a matter of course. And it is what makes the difference between a ministerial award chosen by a private event company and a performance evaluation chosen by the people.

19. Discussion and Recommendations

The evidence presented in this paper converges on several actionable recommendations for different stakeholders.

19.1. For Citizens

- Know that you are the constitutional boss. Read Article 1 of the 1992 Constitution. Share it with someone who has not read it.
- Attend constituency town hall meetings and ask your MP direct questions about constituency development fund expenditure.
- Report corruption, abuse of office, or violations of rights to CHRAJ (toll-free: 0800-800-900). It is free, constitutionally mandated, and exists precisely for you.⁷⁷
- When your MP or district assembly member fails to deliver, document it and share it publicly through legitimate platforms.
- Demand that accountability mechanisms—ORAL, the OSP, the Auditor-General—apply equally across party lines. Partisan accountability is not accountability.

19.2. For Educators and the GES

- The civic education curriculum needs an explicit module not just on *what* democracy means, but on *how* citizens exercise democratic power between elections.
- Schools should simulate civic processes—petitions, community grievance hearings, constituency meetings—so that students develop the habit of civic agency alongside the knowledge of civic rights.

77. Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), *CHRAJ — Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice: Official Website and Citizen Services*.

- Social Studies teachers should explicitly connect abstract topics (governance, corruption, environmental destruction) to the constitutional mechanisms available to citizens who want to respond.⁷⁸
- The irony identified in this paper—that JHS students can name every governance problem but are not equipped to address them—should be treated as a curriculum emergency, not a minor gap.

19.3. For Civil Society and Media

- Accessible civic literacy tools—explainer videos, community radio content, infographics in local languages—must be scaled significantly.
- Investigative journalism that connects constitutional provisions to visible governance failures provides citizens with the information they need to act. This work must be financially supported and legally defended.
- Social media accountability campaigns are most effective when paired with formal mechanism engagement—not just outrage on X, but complaints to CHRAJ, petitions to Parliament, and organised follow-through.

19.4. For Parliament and the Executive

- The constitutional review process must meaningfully address accountability gaps, including strengthening Parliament’s oversight authority, ensuring ex-gratia reforms, and eliminating structural conflicts of interest in Article 71 compensation structures.
- Proactive publication of constituency fund expenditure, ministerial contracts, and public sector financial reports in formats accessible to ordinary citizens should be mandatory, not discretionary.

78. Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), Ghana Education Service, *Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies: Junior High School (JHS 1–3)*; National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), *GES/NaCCA JHS Social Studies CCP Curriculum B7–B10 (Basic 7 to Basic 10)*.

- The implementation of independently verified ministerial performance scorecards—as recommended in Section 18—would align Ghana’s stated constitutional commitment to citizen sovereignty with its governance practice in a concrete, measurable way.
- ORAL’s mandate should be extended, insulated from partisan capture, and applied consistently across all political periods and party affiliations. Selective accountability is the enemy of the public trust that democratic governance requires to function.

20. Conclusion

The confusion at the heart of Ghanaian civic life is not complicated. It is simply this: most people have been taught—by culture, by history, by the behaviour of politicians—that the government is above the citizen. The Constitution says the exact opposite.

Ghana's 1992 Constitution is not a perfect document. Its critics have correctly pointed out that it concentrates enormous power in the executive, that its accountability provisions have not always been enforced, and that the gap between its promises and lived reality is wide. But even with these flaws, it is a document that begins—unmistakably—with the words “We the People.” It is a document that places sovereignty in the people, derives all governmental authority from the people, and charges all governmental institutions with serving the people.

The Social Studies teacher who stood in a JHS classroom in Kumasi or Tamale or Cape Coast in 1998 and said “deforestation is a problem,” or “corruption is a problem in government,” or “citizens have rights”—that teacher was right. The textbooks were right. What was missing was not knowledge. What was missing was the bridge between knowing and doing. That bridge is civic agency.

The June 2026 news cycle documented in this paper—an awards ceremony for a minister while her region floods, emergency announcements the morning after, a former Finance Minister detained abroad on 78 charges, doctors withdrawing services while ministers collect trophies, and a governing-party MP warning his own colleagues “may we not become what we criticised”—is not exceptional. It is illustrative. It is what governance without effective citizen accountability produces, routinely, in any country that allows it.

The solution is equally not complicated: citizens who know their constitutional power, who use the accountability mechanisms available to them, who demand consistency across party lines, and who sustain that demand between elections as well as during them. The Constitution has already done its part. It wrote the sovereign into the very first article. The rest is up to the sovereign to claim.

Civic agency begins with the simple, radical, constitutionally grounded truth: **You are not a subject. You are a sovereign. You did not receive this government as a gift. You gave it to yourself. And you have every right—indeed, every duty—to demand that it works for you.**

As the Twi proverb says: “*Onipa na ohyia onipa.*” It is people who need people. Government needs citizens not just to vote, but to watch, to question, to demand, and to hold accountable. That is what democracy, at its fullest, looks like. Ghana deserves nothing less.

This research paper was prepared as an educational resource for broad public distribution.

*It supports a civic explainer video series aimed at increasing governance literacy
among Ghanaian citizens at all educational levels.*

Reproduction and distribution for non-commercial educational purposes is encouraged.

References

- Afrobarometer. *Survey Data on Democratic Attitudes and Citizen Engagement in Ghana: Rounds 8 and 9*. Afrobarometer. <https://www.afrobarometer.org/countries/ghana/>, 2023.
- AllAfrica / Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) — The Fourth Estate. *West Africa: Exposé by Investigative Journalism Project Triggers Reform in Ghana's National Service Scheme*. AllAfrica / MFWA. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202506240040.html>; also <https://thefourthestategh.com>, June 2026.
- Arhin, Albert A. *Accra's Floods Are Not Just About Climate Change — They Are About Power, Planning, and Political Privilege*. ModernGhana. Author: Dr. Albert A. Arhin, KNUST. <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1407318/accras-floods-are-not-just-about-climate-changet.html>, June 2025.
- Asaase Radio. *Cash-for-Awards: Agbana Slams Mahama Ministers, Warns Against Erosion of Public Trust*. Asaase Radio. <https://asaaseradio.com/cash-for-awards-agbana-slams-mahama-ministers-warns-against-erosion-of-public-trust/>, June 2026.
- Asetenapa.com. *35+ Ghana Education Statistics and Facts*. Asetenapa.com. <https://asetenapa.com/ghana-education-statistics/>, 2024.
- Auditor-General of Ghana. *Annual Reports on Public Accounts*. Technical report. Reports for 2019–2024 available at <https://audit.gov.gh/reports/>. Office of the Auditor-General of Ghana, 2024.
- Botchwey, G., et al. “Small-scale Mining, Environmental Destruction and Democracy Capture: The Government of Ghana's Failed War on Galamsey.” Taylor & Francis / Tandfonline. Available at <https://www.tandfonline.com>, *Journal of Political Ecology*, May 2025.
- Campus Cybercafe. *Ghana Member of Parliament (MP) Salary Structure and Allowances 2025*. Campus Cybercafe. <https://campuscybercafe.com/ghana-mp-salary/>, 2025.
- Citinewsroom. *OSP Declares Ken Ofori-Atta Wanted in Multiple Corruption Cases*. Citinewsroom. <https://citinewsroom.com/2025/02/osp-declares-ofori-atta-wanted-in-multiple-corruption-cases/>, February 2025.
- Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). *CHRAJ — Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice: Official Website and Citizen Services*. Government of Ghana. Constitutional basis: Articles 216–230 of the 1992 Constitution. Toll-free: 0800-800-900. <https://www.chrajghana.com>, 2024.

- Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), Ghana Education Service. *Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies: Junior High School (JHS 1–3)*. Technical report. Available via <https://www.ges.gov.gh> and ResearchGate academic archives. Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2007.
- ENACT Africa. *Illegal Mining Digs Up Multiple Problems in Ghana*. ENACT Africa Organised Crime Monitoring Project. <https://enactafrica.org/research/trend-reports/illegal-mining-digs-up-multiple-problems-in-ghana>, October 2024.
- GBC Ghana Online. *ORAL Committee Presents Report to Mahama*. GBC Ghana Online. <https://www.gbcghanaonline.com/news/politics/oral-mahama/2025/>, February 2025.
- GES/NaCCA. *Government Curriculum for Secondary Education (SHS 1–3)*. Technical report. Available at <https://nacca.gov.gh/curriculum-downloads/>. Ministry of Education, Ghana, September 2023.
- Ghana Statistical Service. *2021 Population and Housing Census: Education Data*. Technical report. <https://statsghana.gov.gh/census2021.php>. Ghana Statistical Service, 2021.
- Global Forest Watch. *Ghana Forest Cover Loss Data: Annual Deforestation Statistics*. Global Forest Watch. <https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/GHA/>, 2023.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E., and H. K. Prempeh. “Oil, Politics, and Ghana’s Democracy.” Johns Hopkins University Press / Project MUSE: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/481398>, *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 3 (2012): 94–108.
- JURIST Features. *From ‘Ghana Beyond Aid’ to US Detention: The Rise and Fall of Ken Ofori-Atta*. JURIST. <https://www.jurist.org/features/2026/01/29/from-ghana-beyond-aid-to-us-detention-the-rise-and-fall-of-ken-ofori-atta/>, January 2026.
- JURIST Legal News. *Ghana Dispatch: Former Finance Minister Detained by US Immigration Authorities Pending Extradition Review*. JURIST. <https://www.jurist.org/news/2026/01/ghana-dispatch-former-finance-minister-detained-by-us-immigration-authorities-pending-extradition-review/>, January 2026.
- Manuh, Takyiwaa, and Richard Asante, eds. *Ghana: Governance in the Fourth Republic*. Legon, Accra: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, 2009.
- MyJoyOnline. *Annual Disaster: Resolving Accra’s Flooding Crisis*. MyJoyOnline. <https://www.myjoyonline.com/annual-disaster-resolving-accras-flooding-crisis/>, June 2026.
- MyNewsGH. *May We Not Become What We Criticised — Agbana Warns NDC Appointees*. MyNewsGH. <https://www.mynewsgh.com/may-we-not-become-what-we-criticized-agbana-warns-ndc-appointees/>, June 2026.

- MyNewsGH. *Member of Parliament Salary in Ghana*. MyNewsGH. <https://mynewsgh.com>, June 2024.
- National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) Ghana. *The Hidden Costs of Galamsey: Infrastructure and Environmental Degradation*. NCCE Ghana. <https://ncce.gov.gh>, 2024.
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA). *GES/NaCCA JHS Social Studies CCP Curriculum B7–B10 (Basic 7 to Basic 10)*. Technical report. Available at <https://nacca.gov.gh/curriculum-downloads/>. Direct PDF: <https://nacca.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Social-Studies-B7-9-CCP-FINAL.pdf>. Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2020.
- NewsGhana. *Another ‘Fake Award’? From RTP to Ministers of State Awards — A New Low for Credibility*. NewsGhana. <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/another-fake-award-from-rtp-to-ministers-of-state-awards-a-new-low-for-credibility/>, June 2026.
- . *Ghana’s Floods Are a Geography and Governance Failure*. NewsGhana. <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/ghanas-floods-are-a-geography-and-governance-failure/>, April 2026.
- . *Government MP Questions Ethics of Sponsored Ministerial Awards*. NewsGhana. MP Edem Agbana’s statement; Prof. Kpessa-Whyte allegation; Deputy Chief of Staff response. <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/government-mp-questions-ethics-of-sponsored-ministerial-awards/>, June 2026.
- . *MP Calls Out SOE Spending on Public Official Awards*. NewsGhana. <https://www.newsghana.com.gh/mp-calls-out-soe-spending-on-public-official-awards/>, June 2026.
- Ninsin, K. A. “Civic Education, Participation, and Democratic Governance.” In *Ghana: One Decade of the Liberal State*, edited by Kwame Boafo-Arthur. London: Zed Books, 2006.
- Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP). *OSP Press Release: Declaration of Kenneth Ofori-Atta as Fugitive from Justice*. Office of the Special Prosecutor. https://osp.gov.gh/media_center/press_details/osp-declares-kenneth-ofori-atta-fugitive, February 2025.
- Presidential Committee on Emoluments for Article 71 Office Holders. *Report of the Presidential Committee on Emoluments for Article 71 Office Holders (Ntiamoah-Baidu Report)*. Technical report. Publicly released and archived at <https://mofep.gov.gh>. Government of Ghana / Ministry of Finance, 2020.

Pulse Ghana. 'Best Regional Minister in Which Accra?' — Social Media Reacts to Linda Ocloo's Award. Pulse Ghana. <https://www.pulse.com.gh/story/best-regional-minister-in-which-accra-social-media-reacts-to-linda-ocloos-award-2026060708050727619>, June 2026.

———. *Government Announces Drainage Expansion, Strict Law Enforcement and Crackdown on Illegal Structures to Tackle Flooding*. Pulse Ghana. <https://www.pulse.com.gh/story/govt-announces-drainage-expansion-strict-law-enforcement-and-crackdown-on-illegal-structures-to-tackle-flooding-2026060716050258532>, June 2026.

Republic of Ghana. *Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992 (as amended 1996)*. Articles 1, 4, 35, 37, 41, 55, 97; Chapter 14 (Public Services); Chapter 24 (Code of Conduct for Public Officers). Available at: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ghana_1996 and <https://judicial.gov.gh/constitution>, 1992.

The Africa Report. *Ghana: President Mahama Targets \$21bn in Looted State Asset Recoveries*. The Africa Report. <https://www.theafricareport.com/376576/ghana-president-mahama-targets-21bn-in-looted-state-asset-recoveries/>, February 2025.

The Fourth Estate / CDD-Ghana. *Ghana Records Worst CPI Score and Ranking in Five Years*. The Fourth Estate. <https://thefourthestategh.com>, February 2025.

Transparency International. *Corruption Perceptions Index 2024: Ghana Country Report*. Transparency International. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2024/index/gha>, 2024.

WaterAid Ghana / Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL). *Reports on Water Quality and Galamsey Impact on Ghanaian Rivers*. WaterAid Ghana. Turbidity data and production figures. <https://www.wateraid.org/gh>; <https://www.gwcl.com.gh>, 2024.

World Bank. *World Bank Education Statistics: Ghana Country Profile*. World Bank Open Data. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/ghana>, 2023.