

## **Ghana: The Dangers of the Various Flash-Points**

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The Flash-points are getting too many in the country. In an election year, they cannot be harbinger of good news. The riots at Hohoe, where ethno-religious clashes yesterday led to the burning down of the Palace of the Paramount Chief of the Hohoe Traditional area, Togbega Gabusu has become one footnote in various ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts in many parts of the country.

We have hardly finished digesting the circumstances leading to the abduction and execution of Nana Kojo Eguasia, Abusuapanyin of the Asona Clan of Ekumfi Narkwa, in President Mills' newly created home town of Ekumfi district, which resulted in the burning of houses belonging to the Ewe Community in the town, and the death of two more members of the community, when the Hohoe riots hit everybody in the face.

Quite recently, an attempt on the life of the Paramount Chief of Wa, Naa Fuseini Pelpuo, resulted in the death of one person. In nearby Upper East Region, four people were butchered to death in an ethnic conflict, between the Tindongo and Namolog in the Talensi Nabdam District.

In the Northern Region, the Chief of Nankpaduri, Naaba David Kansuk told The Chronicle that several hundreds of women and children had fled the towns and villages in the area, and were living in the bush following clashes between the Kokombas and Bimobas. Four persons were reportedly killed and nearly 170 houses razed to the ground.

The Yendi Chieftaincy dispute is still raging on with the Abudus beating war drums about what they perceive to be government complicity in events leading to the failure of the Andanis to respect the road-map for peace.

It is necessary to remind ourselves that the Bawku conflict is still raging, in spite of the scaling down of that conflict in security terms. This nation sits on a time bomb. With stories of small arms finding their way from conflict zones in Cote d'Ivoire, and from other nearby nations finding their way into this country, we have a very tense situation on hand.

That is why officialdom should be seen to be leading from the front to diffuse the tension. With barely six months to the 2012 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, the grounds are shaky.

With all these conflicts unresolved, The Chronicle is apprehensive about the future. We pride ourselves with being a peaceful people. But the raging conflicts around us suggest that we may not be very different from people in Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone or Liberia.

With all these conflicts raging already, the material for seriously undermining the cohesive society we are building for ourselves and future generations, is already at hand. All it requires is for an overzealous leader to make one unfortunate statement for the conflicts to escalate and to take on the whole nation.

That is why The Chronicle is urging the security services to be more alert than they have been of late to douse all the raging flames before they gather venom and consume all of us.

The rapid response units of the security services must be put on the overdrive to smother the heat before it becomes a burning inferno. We do not sit pretty at all. With the experience of Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone as a guide, we should all be on the look out.

The notion that this is Ghana and that we are immune from conflicts should be discarded. When the Kokomba-Nanumba and Kokomba-Dagomba Wars began, it was an argument over the price of a guinea fowl.

It took a dispute over the price of a guinea fowl for the whole of the Northern Region to be in flames. By the time the conflict ended, nearly 3,000 lives had been lost, with several hundreds of thousand injuries recorded. The mass exodus of people fleeing the conflict was what resulted in the slum dwelling of Sodom and Gomorrah.

With the experience of the Northern conflict as a guide, The Chronicle urges the authorities to work hard on the various conflicts raging in Ghana, and stop them from igniting into a national crisis.

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