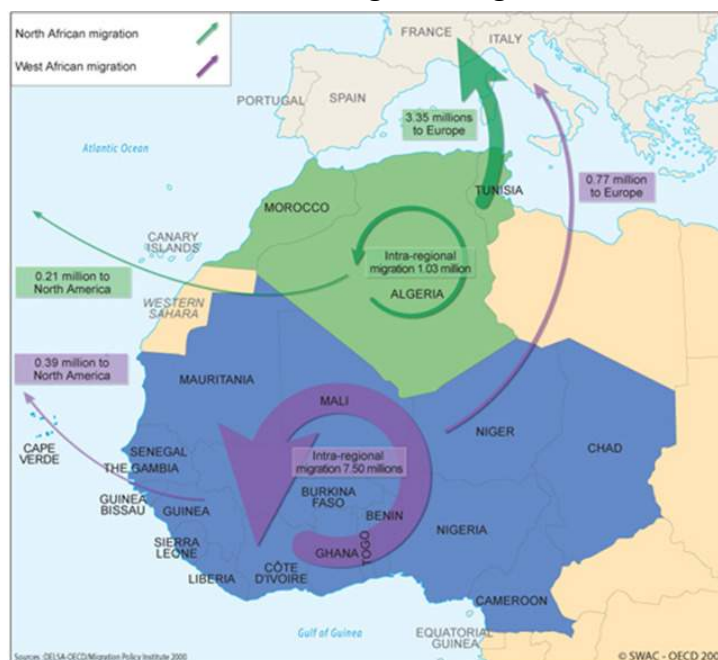


Zone of Intra-Regional Migration



Cross-border Human Trafficking Into, Through and From Ghana

The occurrence of human trafficking in Ghana first gained international attention in 2002, with the release of a research study that highlighted the forced labour of children in the fishing industry. Since this time, the Government of Ghana (GoG) has taken measures to counter such acts, including the adoption of an Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2005) and the establishment of an Anti-Human Trafficking Unit within the Police Force. Likewise, international organizations and local non-governmental organizations have made a concerted effort to prevent and protect children from trafficking, and further rehabilitate children forced to work under dangerous and deplorable conditions.

According to the US Department of State's *Trafficking in Persons Report 2013*, Ghana is a country of "origin, transit and destination for men, women and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking". Although, internal trafficking of men, women and children for work in various industries and domestic service is more prevalent than transnational human trafficking, there is an increasing trend of regional and extra-regional migrants trafficked into agricultural and domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation. Another concerning trend is the rise of fraudulent recruitment agencies in Ghana, targeting women for false promises of work in the Gulf States region.

To shed further light on this phenomenon, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Ghana conducted research to provide an initial assessment of the extent and nature of cross-border trafficking in Ghana, through the compilation of information from extensive interviews on cases involving the cross-border trafficking of Ghanaians and foreigners into, within or through Ghana. Examining cross-border trafficking in the context of mixed migration sheds light on the reality and complexity trafficking, and how vulnerable migrants can fall victim to trafficking.

Key Findings

- West Africa has traditionally been a place of significant mobility and a high level of migration, particularly within the sub-region.
- West African criminal networks have become more widespread and complicated, taking advantage of free movement instruments. In Ghana, local human trafficking networks connect with sub-regional networks.
- Documented or anecdotal cases of human trafficking in Ghana have been found within the following sectors: fishing, gold mining, cocoa, commercial sex industry, domestic work and street begging or hawking.
- The Elubo Central Command Border Post is the main

border crossing along western border of Ghana with Cote d'Ivoire, however, there are a number of unapproved routes along the border that people use to cross illegally, including a river.

- The main border post along Ghana's eastern border is at Aflao, which is located directly across the border from Togo. There are a number of unapproved border crossings north of Aflao used by human traffickers to cross over to Togo.
- Volta Region, Lenta community and Zabzugu-Tatale District have been identified as source areas for trafficked children and adults.
- Bawku is the most popular northern border crossing for irregular migrants who are looking to cross into or out of Ghana. Further, Manyoro or Sirigu are unapproved routes that are also used as an alternative to crossing at Paga, the main border post in the north of Ghana.
- Burkinabe children have been trafficked across the border to live with *mallams* in Ghana who sexually exploit children in exchange for food.
- The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Ghana Police Service (GPS) was created in 2008 and has since established units at the regional GPS Command Headquarters in nine of Ghana's ten regions.
- The Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) established the Anti-Human Trafficking Desk in Accra in 2010, and recently established desks at three major border crossings – Aflao, Paga and Elubo.
- Human trafficking prevention in Ghana includes public awareness and community prevention; child protection teams; Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty; and the IOM/UNICEF child protection project.
- Protection initiatives in Ghana focus on identification of human trafficking cases; victim assistance; and child protection.
- Prosecution of traffickers is mandated by Ghanaian law and relies on investigation; prosecution; and understanding the role of parents.



Trucks parked at Paga town waiting to cross the border into Burkina Faso.
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Recommendations

Capacity Building

- ⇒ Police, border guards and security officials require additional training on victim protection and human trafficking prosecutions.

Resources

- ⇒ Emergency funds should be available at each border post to support victims of trafficking.

Data Collection

- ⇒ GPS, GIS, DSW, EOCO and non-governmental organizations should work together to develop an integrated data management system.
- ⇒ Promote a regional data collection and information sharing approach to human trafficking.

Prevention

- ⇒ Public awareness is needed to ensure trafficking in persons is seen as intimately related to exploitation, child labour, smuggling, illegal migration, sexual exploitation, gender based violence and domestic violence.

Protection

- ⇒ Government agencies including law enforcement need to ensure victim protection, services, and the provision of safe shelters.

Prosecution

- ⇒ Training of law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges is needed specific to anti-human trafficking legislation and the new anti-smuggling law.

Partnerships

- ⇒ Coordination and communication among service providers and government agencies should be encouraged to ensure effective protection and assistance to victims of trafficking.
- ⇒ The GoG should initiate bi-lateral agreements with countries in the region.

Encourage Victim Reporting

- ⇒ Efforts should be made to provide safety and convenience to victims in coming forward to report traffickers.

Additional Research

- ⇒ A regional research project to identify cross-border human trafficking flows to establish a comprehensive regional anti-trafficking database and a regional response to the issue of human trafficking.

Note: This report is forthcoming.