



JUST ATONEMENT INC.

justice  
hope peace unity equal opportunity  
golden age  
progress sustainability democracy freedom  
human rights harmony civilization

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Just Atonement Inc. (JAI) is a legal non-profit that connects and trains advocates to address threats to human rights, a livable planet, and the international rule of law.

JAI was founded in the United States of America in 2017.

JAI invites and organizes legal professionals globally into a single order and aligns a vision of a peaceful, sustainable world, governed by the democratic rule of law; litigates in courts all over the world on cutting edge human rights cases to build peace and sustainability, and to defend democracy; and advocates for a vision of a true Golden Age for humanity: a world where countries settle their disputes peacefully, manage social and economic systems that are in harmony with the planet, and govern themselves through the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

JAI submits this written submission with respect to the Universal Periodic Review of Ghana.

### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- 1. Climate change poses a significant threat to health, livelihoods, and infrastructure in Ghana.** Ghana has made significant efforts to adapt and mitigate its effects, including the development of several policies and initiatives in collaboration with international bodies. However, these initiatives are constrained by a lack of resources and enforcement ability. Ghana should continue these efforts and strive to be a regional leader in combating climate change through sustainable development.
- 2. Climate change impacts in Ghana have key implications for human rights.** Marginalized and vulnerable groups, like women, children, and people facing poverty, disproportionately face environmental stressors and have fewer resources to quickly adapt.
- 3. Ghana has policies to protect many of the human rights of its citizens, but has had difficulty in enforcement.** Despite policies and important work by the government and NGOs, vulnerable groups remain subject to human rights violations such as child labor and early marriage. LGBTQ+ individuals are particularly threatened by discrimination, including in Ghana's legislation.



## CLIMATE CHANGE

### *Impacts of Climate Change*

#### Agriculture

4. **Changing weather patterns can negatively affect agriculture in Ghana.** Agriculture is crucial to Ghana's economy and people as it supports a stable food system, key exports like cocoa, and employment for at least 30% of the population (2019).<sup>1</sup> High temperatures and rainfall variability can impact arable land availability, particularly by creating droughts in some areas and flooding in others. Land closer to the coast, which is suitable for cocoa production, will face coastal erosion, rising temperatures, and soil salinization.<sup>2</sup>
5. **Rural communities and smallholder farms are particularly vulnerable to these impacts.** Most farming in Ghana is done by small-scale farmers with primarily rainfed plots, making these farms and the livelihood of the farmers particularly climate sensitive.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, small rural farmers have fewer resources to employ adaptation measures. Due to wage differences and economic disadvantages, women farmers are especially vulnerable.<sup>4</sup>
6. **Higher temperatures are projected to be felt the most in the rural northern savannah regions in Ghana, where agriculture is the dominant employer and poverty rates are highest.**<sup>5</sup>
7. **Impacts on agricultural production would contribute to food insecurity and malnutrition.** The highest climate impacts are projected for maize, which has the highest net consumption in the country.<sup>6</sup> Reduced yields of staple crops such as maize would limit the food available in Ghana and increase malnutrition, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children.
8. **Indigenous knowledge and traditional techniques may be increasingly unreliable, but remain important adaptation methods.** Increasing erratic weather patterns and temperatures may make it more difficult for farmers to rely on indigenous knowledge as

<sup>1</sup> The World Bank, "Employment in Agriculture (% of Total Employment) (Modeled ILO Estimate) – Ghana, (January 2021). Available at : <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS?locations=GH>.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank Group, "Climate Risk Country Profile – Ghana," *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Abel Chemura, *et al.*, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> William Adzawla, Shaibu Baanni Azumah, Paul Yao Anani, and Samuel A. Donkoh, "Gender Perspectives of Climate Change Adaptation in Two Selected Districts of Ghana," *Heliyon* 5(11) (November 2019). Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2405844019365132>.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank Group, "Climate Risk Country Profile – Ghana," *supra*.

<sup>6</sup> Abel Chemura, *et al.*, *supra*.



they make decisions.<sup>7</sup> However, farmers are also combining indigenous and modern knowledge to create adaptive strategies.<sup>8</sup>

### Fishing Industry

9. **Climate change poses a threat to Ghana's crucial fishing industry.** Fish provides 60% of the animal protein consumed in Ghana, and the fishing industry, both marine and inland, supports the livelihoods of 2.4 million Ghanaians. The industry faces problems with over-exploitation of fish stocks. Rising water temperatures can also exacerbate pressures on fish stocks, impacting reproduction, migratory patterns, and fish populations.<sup>9</sup>
10. **The impacts on the fishing industry from climate change will affect the livelihoods of coastal communities.** These communities are also vulnerable to coastal erosion, flooding, and increased rainfall.<sup>10</sup> Combined, these impacts may thus impact the food security and social and economic stability of Ghana's coastal communities and could lead to impacts and hardships associated with economic and social rights.

### Energy

11. **Ghana's energy supply can be negatively impacted by reduced precipitation and variable rainfall patterns.** Ghana primarily relies on hydroelectric energy sources (the Akosombo, Kpong, and Bui dams). The Akosombo Dam, Ghana's largest hydroelectric dam, has experienced energy crises because of low precipitation and high evaporation due to rising temperatures in recent years.<sup>11</sup> Rising temperatures are also likely to increase demand for electricity.

### Water, Sanitation, and Health

12. **Higher temperatures and variable rainfall can increase water insecurity and conflict.** Much of the water in Ghana originates from three international rivers. Reduced water due to variable rainfall, drought, and evaporation because of high temperatures could cause conflict with other countries and increase water insecurity for many

<sup>7</sup> Philip Antwi-Agyei, Andrew J. Dougill, Lindsay C. Stringer, and Samuel Nii Ardey Codjoe, "Adaptation Opportunities and Maladaptive Outcomes in Climate Vulnerability Hotspots of Northern Ghana," *Climate Risk Management*, Vol. 19, 83-93 (Elsevier 27 November 2017). Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212096317300712>.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence Guodaar, Douglas K. Bardsley, and Jungho Suh, "Indigenous Adaptation to Climate Change Risks in Northern Ghana," *Climatic Change* 166,:24 (2021). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-021-03128-7>.

<sup>9</sup> Doku, Bortey Nketia Alabi, et al. "Fisheries resources of Ghana: present status and future direction." *Fisheries* 3.4 (2018).

<sup>10</sup> Johnson Ankrah, "Climate Change Impacts and Coastal Livelihoods; an Analysis of Fishers of Coastal Winneba, Ghana," *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 161(1): 141-146 (Elsevier 10 May 2018). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2018.04.029>.

<sup>11</sup> Stephan F. Miescher, "Ghana's Akosombo Dam, Volta Lake Fisheries & Climate Change," *Daedalus* 150(4): 124-142 (1 October 2021). Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1162/daed\\_a\\_01876](https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01876). P. Gyau-Boakye, "Environmental Impacts of the Akosombo Dam and Effects of Climate Change on the Lake Levels," *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 3, 17-29 (March 2001). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1011402116047>.



Ghanaians, 20% of whom do not have reliable access to improved water sources<sup>12</sup>. Impoverished and marginalized groups, particularly in the northern regions, are particularly vulnerable. Rising sea levels could also contaminate water infrastructure and salinize fresh water sources, with broad implications on the right to water, the right to food, and the right to life.

13. **Increased rainfall can exacerbate flooding and health consequences.** In 2015, Accra experienced a flash flood event that killed 152 people and had devastating economic and health impacts. People living in flood-prone areas are vulnerable to more of this flooding, which not only causes destruction of infrastructure and displacement but also creates a higher risk of transmission of disease such as cholera, malaria, and hepatitis E. Informal and impoverished communities are particularly at risk because flood-prone areas are often more affordable and there is a lack of floodwater protection and sanitation infrastructure.<sup>13</sup>

### Migration

14. **Changing environments can exacerbate the current internal migration trends within Ghana.** Migration and mobility have a long tradition in Ghana.<sup>14</sup> Environmental stressors and resource scarcity, including those arising from climate change, can exacerbate these trends. For example, there are trends of North-South migration due to environmental stressors and scarcity in the agrarian North.<sup>15</sup> This results in competition for employment opportunities in Southern urban centers. There are also other rural-rural migration patterns that could be impacted.<sup>16</sup> Refugees from other countries could also increase, possibly placing more strain on urban centers.

### *Climate Change Policies*

15. **We commend Ghana for increasing its Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement.** In 2021, Ghana submitted its updated NDCs, adopting a more ambitious goal of absolute greenhouse gas emission reductions of 64 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030 by using 47 different climate actions. 38% of these reductions are considered

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<sup>12</sup>USAID, “Ghana – Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene,” (last updated 22 June 2022). Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/ghana/water#:~:text=With%20improved%20water%20sources%20available,access%20to%20improved%20sanitation%20facilities>.

<sup>13</sup> Henry Mensah, Divine Kwaku Ahadzie, “Causes, Impacts and Coping Strategies of Floods in Ghana: A Systematic Review,” SN App. Sci. 2, 792 (2020). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42452-020-2548-z>.

<sup>14</sup>Victoria van der Land, Clemens Romankiwicz, and Kees van der Geest, “Environmental Change and Migration: A Review of West African Case Studies,” In: R. McLeman & F. Gemenne (eds.), *Handbook of Environmental Displacement and Migration*, Routledge, 163-177 (2018). Available at : [http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6480/Vanderland\\_etal\\_2018\\_MIG\\_ENV\\_WAFRICA\\_PREPRINT\\_META.pdf](http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:6480/Vanderland_etal_2018_MIG_ENV_WAFRICA_PREPRINT_META.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Kees van der Geest, “North-South Migration in Ghana: What Role for the Environment?” *International Migration*. 49(s1): e69-e94. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2010.00645.x>.

<sup>16</sup> Francis Xavier Jarawura and Lothar Smith, “Finding the Right Path: Climate Change and Migration in Northern Ghana,” In: F. Hillmann, M., *et al.* (eds.), *Environmental Change, Adaptation and Migration* (Palgrave Macmillan, London 2015). Available at: [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137538918\\_13](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137538918_13).



unconditional, while 61% will require outside investment in the country<sup>17</sup>. Ghana has also consistently tracked its greenhouse gas emissions and submitted inventories to the UNFCCC<sup>18</sup>.

16. **Ghana has adopted several climate policies, with an emphasis on sustainable development.** Ghana created its National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) in 2013 and a National Climate Change Master Plan (NCCMP) focused on 10 programme areas for the period 2015-2020. The NCCP focuses on several key areas: agriculture and food security, disaster preparedness and response, natural resource management, equitable social development, and energy, industrial, and infrastructural development. There is also a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy created through UNEP/UNDP.
17. **While Ghana’s climate policies have clear objectives, they are inhibited by financial and technical resource constraints at the implementing agencies.**<sup>19</sup>

## DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

18. **Since the last UPR cycle, Ghana’s Global Freedom Score by Freedom House decreased by three points from 83/100 in 2017 to 80/100 in 2022.** The political rights score decreased by 2 points and the civil liberties score decreased by 1.<sup>20</sup> Overall, however, Ghana is considered “Free” and scores higher than most other countries in the region.

### *Political Rights*

19. **Ghana’s Political Pluralism and Participation score decreased by 2 points.** Groups have expressed concern about increased partisan vigilantism and politically motivated violence. To address these concerns, Ghana passed the Vigilantism and Related Offenses Act in 2019, though these problems persist.

### *Civil Liberties*

20. **Ghana’s Associational and Organizational Rights score decreased by 1 point.** Protests over economic and social concerns were organized under the slogan #FixtheCountry in 2021. A court granted an injunction over one of the protests that was

<sup>17</sup>United Nations, “NDC Registry” United Nations Climate Change. ([https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Ghana%20First/Ghana's%20Updated%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%20to%20the%20UNFCCC\\_2021.pdf](https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Ghana%20First/Ghana's%20Updated%20Nationally%20Determined%20Contribution%20to%20the%20UNFCCC_2021.pdf)) (last visited 1 July 2022).

<sup>18</sup>National Greenhouse Gas Inventory to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Ghana’s Fourth National Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report* (February 2019). Available at: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/gh\\_nir4-1.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/gh_nir4-1.pdf).

<sup>19</sup>Patrick Brandful Cobbina, Michael Osei Asibey, Marcia Opoku-Gyamfi, and Charles Peprah, “Urban Planning and Climate Change in Ghana,” *Journal of Urban Management*, 8(2): 261-271 (August 2019). Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2226585618301857>.

<sup>20</sup>Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2002 – Ghana.” Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ghana/freedom-world/2022> (last visited 1 July 2022); Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2017 – The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties,” (2017). Available at: [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Freedom\\_in\\_the\\_World\\_2017\\_complete\\_book.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Freedom_in_the_World_2017_complete_book.pdf).



later overturned by the Supreme Court. In June, 11 protesters were arrested. Police and military officers also used live ammunition during protests, killing two people and causing injuries.

- 21. Ghana's Rule of Law score decreased by 1 point.** Discrimination against LGBTQ+ people has increased. Communal and ethnic conflicts also have persisted and caused internal displacement of different groups within Ghana.

## HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

### *LGBTQ+ and Gender Violence and Discrimination*

- 22. Ghana has failed to protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination.** Ghana's first LGBTQ+ community center opened in January 2021, but it was raided by police and forced to close just weeks later. In May 2021, 21 advocates were arrested for attending a human rights training, which was said to be unlawful despite guarantees of freedom of assembly.<sup>21</sup> Same-sex conduct is criminalized in Ghana, and the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill proposed in 2021 would further criminalize LGBTQ+ individuals and supporters, and encourages conversion therapy. Hearings have continued through Spring 2022.<sup>22</sup>
- 23. Gender-based violence remains a problem in Ghana.** Whilst we commend Ghana for taking action by creating the Orange Support Centre and the Boame Mobile application to provide support for gender and domestic violence victims, women still face harmful impacts from illegal traditional practices. Though illegal, female genital mutilation persists in northern Ghana due to historical and societal pressures.<sup>23</sup> Trokosi, the practice of sexual slavery of virgin girls to amend for their family's wrongs, persists in some regions.<sup>24</sup> "Witch" camps, where primarily older women suspected of being witches are sometimes sent, have also remained open in some areas, and early and forced marriage remains a problem for young women, particularly in the northern regions.<sup>25</sup> These practices implicate core human rights principles including the right to liberty and security, the right to be free from slavery, the right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, and the right to be free from gendered violence, among others.

<sup>21</sup>NBC News, "Ghana Poised to Vote on 'Worst Anti-LGBTQ Bill Ever,' Advocates Warn," NBC (29 July 2021). Available at : <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/ghana-poised-vote-worst-anti-lgbtq-bill-ever-advocates-warn-rcna1545>.

<sup>22</sup>GBC, "[LIVE]: Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2021," livestream recorded 10 March 2022. Available at : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAZN4qTsl6Y>.

<sup>23</sup>Evelyn Sakeah, Cornelius Debpuur, Raymond Akawire Aborigo, Abraham Rexford Oduro, James Kotuah Sakeah, and Cheryl A. Moyer, "Persistent Female Genital Mutilation Despite Its Illegality: Narratives from Women and Men in Northern Ghana," PLOS ONE (22 April 2019). Available at : <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0214923>.

<sup>24</sup>G. Benson, "Inquiry into the Continued Practice of Trokosi (Indentured Servitude) in Ghana: An Outlawed Culturo-Religious Practice," *American Journal of International Relations*, 6(1): 17-45. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.47672/ajir.721>.

<sup>25</sup>U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, "2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Ghana," (30 March 2021). Available at: [https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/ghana\\_trashed/](https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/ghana_trashed/)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

24. **Continue leading and collaborating regionally to combat climate change and promote sustainable development.** ECOWAS countries have been working on developing an ambitious regional climate strategy at COP26 in November 2021.<sup>26</sup> We applaud this collaboration and urge further concerted efforts in the region. Ghana's leadership globally is also evidenced by its leadership of the Climate Vulnerable Forum beginning in May 2022.
25. **Work with regional bodies such as ECOWAS and/or the African Union to understand and coordinate around the cross-border impacts of climate change.** These conversations should include implications for conflict and the need to build robust climate security on a regional basis.
26. **Update its climate change policies.** Ghana's NCCP was created in 2013 and the NCCMP was created to apply to the years 2015-2020. While these policies are important steps, they are due to be updated to plan for future years of climate action, considering more recent data and technology.
27. **Continue to work with other UNFCCC parties to obtain financing and implement the Paris Agreement.** We recommend that Ghana work with other parties to obtain the financing that it may need to implement adaptation measures and encourage implementation of the Paris Agreement goals by all countries, including historic emitter and current high-emitter nations. Ghana could also continue to pursue remedies on a climate-induced loss and damage basis.
28. **Implement climate-smart agricultural solutions.** We commend Ghana for participating in several climate-smart agriculture initiatives such as the creation of a Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan in collaboration between the World Bank and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the participation in ECOWAS' West African Initiative for Climate-Smart Agriculture.<sup>27</sup> In order to support the agriculture sector and farmers' livelihoods in Ghana, while protecting natural resources, innovative agricultural solutions should be prioritized while continuing to center farmers' perspectives and indigenous knowledge and farming practices.
29. **Work towards the protection of LGBTQ+ individuals, beginning with refraining from passing the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill.**

<sup>26</sup>GCCA, "ECOWAS Develops a Long-Term Regional Climate Strategy to Strengthen Coordination of Climate Action in West Africa," (12 July 2021). Available at: <https://intraacpgccaplus.org/story/ecowas-develops-a-long-term-regional-climate-strategy-to-strengthen-coordination-of-climate-action-in-west-africa/>.

<sup>27</sup>Ghana, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, "Climate-Smart Agriculture Investment Plan for Ghana," World Bank. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/300161592374973849/pdf/Climate-Smart-Agriculture-Investment-Plan-for-Ghana.pdf>.



30. **Continue to combat gendered violence.** We commend Ghana's efforts to combat gendered violence and encourage Ghana to continue these efforts.

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