



OPERATION VANGUARD PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING

INCREASING AWARENESS OF VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES
ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
IN THE GHANA PUBLIC SECURITY SECTOR



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The Fund for Peace
1101 14th Street NW
Suite 1020
Washington, D.C. 20005

T: +1 202 223 7940

www.fundforpeace.org



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BACKGROUND

OPERATION VANGUARD PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING:
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ON SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE GHANA PUBLIC
SECURITY SECTOR

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BUNDASE TRAINING CAMP, GREATER ACCRA

Small scale mining in Ghana employs an estimated 1.1 million people, of which two thirds is comprised of artisanal and small-scale gold miners. Locally referred to as ‘*galamsey*’ (illegal small-scale gold mining), most of the small-scale sector is informal, and has become a politically-charged topic in recent years due to its association with environmental degradation, criminality and illicit trade, with wide ranging impacts on local communities.

In July 2017, the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources announced the rollout of a new Multi-Sectoral Mining Integrated Project (MMIP) designed to disband small scale illegal mining. The MMIP’s

implementation has so far focused only on the immediate security concerns – establishing a permanent joint task force (JTF) of military and police personnel under the banner of Operation Vanguard in Eastern, Ashanti and Western regions. As part of Operation Vanguard, the JTF have enforced a blanket ban on all small-scale mining for the past nine months and are guarding water bodies and land that have been degraded by the mining activities.

During discussions in the Ghana Voluntary Principles Working Group, it was recommended that Operation Vanguard receive specific training on the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) to better equip officers for engagement in civilian areas and reduce risks of human rights abuses. Global Affairs Canada and the Canadian High Commission in Accra agreed to sponsor the development and delivery of a training module tailored to the Operation Vanguard context. This training module will act as a pilot for a larger curriculum to be developed for all public security institutions in Ghana, as part of the Ghana Government VPSHR National Action Plan.

TRAINING AT BUDASE CAMP: PROGRAM SUMMARY

Representing an exciting partnership between the Ghana Armed Forces, Ghana Police Service, Ghana Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Canadian Government, the Fund For Peace (FFP) and the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding – Ghana (WANEP-Ghana), the VPSHR module was developed for Operation Vanguard in February 2018. The module was designed to be integrated into the existing pre-deployment training program given to JTF personnel every quarter.

On February 22nd, 425 military and police personnel from *Operation Vanguard* were trained on security and human rights, ahead of their deployment to the regions in late February. The training module was delivered by the Fund For Peace (Hannah Blyth, Programs Manager), WANEP-Ghana (Albert Yelyang, National Network Coordinator) and the Ghana Armed Forces (Col. Amoah-Boakye, Director Army Legal Affairs). Lasting four hours, the module focused on outlining the VPSHR Guidelines, key international standards and human rights norms, grievance mechanisms and accountability in Ghana, and the conflict cycle.



The training team was comprised of (from left) Albert Yelyang, WANEP-Ghana, Hannah Blyth, FFP and Col. Amoah-Boakye, Ghana Armed Forces.
Image: FFP

One of the most successful elements of the training was the case study exercise, which involved breakout groups reviewing a scenario and reporting back to the plenary on the actions they would take. The themes for the case studies included gender-based violence, use of force, corruption and community protest. Working together to dissect the examples generated rich discussion that helped to bring the security and human rights theory into practice. For many of the officers deployed as part of the JTF, they may face opposition from communities and small-scale miners (licensed and unlicensed) who perceive *Operation Vanguard* as depriving them of their livelihoods. In many areas, there may also be armed miners who pose a threat of violence to the JTF officers themselves. The training module sought to underscore proportionate use of force in these situations, with an emphasis on avoiding conflict escalation and potential for human rights abuses, while also reinforcing their right to self-defence.



Operation Vanguard officers participating in the training.

Image: FFP

NEXT STEPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Following the VPs training module, the officers continued their routine pre-deployment training before commencing a three-month rotation to the regional *Operation Vanguard* stations at the end of February 2018. The security and human rights training will become an ongoing module for all future pre-deployments of Operation Vanguard, to be delivered by the Ghana Armed Forces and Ghana Police Service.

A summary of the pilot training and module will be presented to the Ghana Voluntary Principles Working Group during the next meeting scheduled for March 30, 2018. This module will act as a starting point to build momentum towards the broader Ghana Government VPSHR NAP objectives. One of the key NAP activities focuses on developing a training curriculum over the next two years which can be delivered for all Ghana public security forces at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC).

This training pilot underscores the progress the Ghana Government continues to make in implementing the VPSHR into its activities and serves as a key role model for other governments in the region who are facing similar challenges with respect to security and human rights in the small-scale mining sector.

SUCCESS STORY: WORKSHOPPING CASE STUDIES TO PUT HUMAN RIGHTS THEORY INTO PRACTICE



Image: FFP

One of the highlights of the training module were the tailored case studies, which illustrated key issues and challenges that the JTF officers were likely to face during their deployment. This included themes related to conduct of officers off-duty and gender-based violence, issues of bribery and influence by senior community figures, avoiding escalation of violence and conflict in the wake of community protests, and the use of force and firearms in civilian policing roles. Participants broke out into groups to discuss the scenarios, then presented and discussed their findings all together.



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