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Ghana Summary 20 September 2021

Local government and regional reorganisation minister Dan Botwe receives a list of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executive (MMDCE) nominees from President Nana Akufo-Addo (2017-present). Police arrest youth leaders of a protest in Accra opposing the nomination of Elizabeth Kwatsoo Sackey as mayor of Accra. #FixTheCountry protest movement plans action in Sekondi-Takoradi on 21 September. The Bank of Ghana (BoG) (central bank) injects \$75m into a forward-rate auction to prevent further slide of the cedi. Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) announces a further rise in year-on-year consumer price inflation. Energy minister Matthew Opoku Prempeh addresses the Offshore Technology Conference in Houston (Texas) (United States), promising further development of Ghana's petroleum resources. Italy-based oil major ENI files a suit with the United Kingdom (UK)-based London International Court of Arbitration challenging the Ghana government's decision to unitise the Sankofa and Afina fields. US-based supply chain management company One Network Enterprises announces a partnership with the government of Ghana to create a digital platform to manage Covid-19 preparedness and response, the Ghana Integrated Logistics Management Information System (GhiLMIS). Ghana receives a further 1.2 million doses of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine from the US government through the World Health Organization (WHO) COVAX and Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) schemes amid a downward trend in Covid-19 cases.

Akufo-Addo finalises MMDCE list ...

President **Nana Akufo-Addo** (2017-present) finalised a list of nominated **Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs)** on 16 September and submitted the list to local government and regional reorganisation minister **Dan Botwe**.¹ The announcement of the MMDCE nominees follows significant criticism amid claims that delays in appointing them has hampered local government development.² MMDCEs are responsible for governance and policy implementation within Ghana's 260 **Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)**.³

The ruling **New Patriotic Party (NPP)**, which holds 137 seats in a hung parliament and a coalition majority through an alliance with independent member for parliament **Andrew Asiamah Amoako**, has urged citizens and lawmakers to accept the presidential appointees.⁴ **Gabby Othcere Darko**, a senior partner of law firm **Africa Legal Associates** and leading NPP member, tweeted:

"The only list which matters will be put out Sunday. This is not a do or die affair. The president appoints and he does not do so to deliberately disappoint anyone but to get his work done. It is that simple. Let's live with it and make progress."⁵

Eugene Arhin, director for communications at the presidency, rejected the criticism that delays in nominating the MMDCEs has hampered local government development, noting that those appointed in Akufo-Addo's first term have remained in office:

¹ [Modern Ghana](#), 16 Sep 2021

² [Citi Newsroom](#), 16 Sep 2021

³ [Ghana Open Data Initiative](#), accessed 19 Sep

⁴ [Modern Ghana](#), 18 Sep 2021

⁵ [Twitter](#), 18 Sep 2021

“Work is still ongoing at the various MMDA levels... there is no vacuum at the various districts, metropolitan areas and municipalities because the old MMDCEs are still in office on a day-to-day basis going about their respective duties.”⁶

Haruna Iddrisu, leader of the opposition **National Democratic Congress (NDC)**, which holds as many parliamentary seats as the NPP, labelled the delay unconstitutional and in conflict with Ghana’s drive for decentralisation.⁷ President Akufo-Addo promised in his 2016 presidential campaign to include political parties in local elections through the implementation of competitive elections at the MMDA level.⁸ However, on 1 December 2019, he cancelled a constitutional referendum scheduled for 17 December 2019; one of the proposed amendments to the constitution was the inclusion of political parties in local level elections.⁹

Ghana-based civil society organisation **Platform for Good Governance** criticised the president’s appointees, highlighting a lack of diversity amongst the MMDCE representatives and said that *“at least 30% of MMDCEs in every region should be female”*.¹⁰ Only 14.6% of presidential nominees on the list released by Botwe on 19 September are women, with no female nominees listed for the **Ahafo** region and **Western North** region.¹¹

The nominated regional ministers are expected to contact the **Electoral Commission (EC)**, which will govern the assembly election for each MMDA.¹² Article 234(1) of the Ghana constitution states:

“There shall be a district chief executive for every district who shall be appointed by the president with the prior approval of not less than two-thirds majority of members of the Assembly present and voting.”¹³

The MMDCE list provoked a protest in the capital, **Accra**, on 18 September. Ghana-based newspapers reported that the bi-partisan protest opposed the rumoured nomination of former **Greater Accra** deputy minister **Elizabeth Kwatsoo Sackey** as Metropolitan Chief Executive for the area.¹⁴ Protestors, reportedly youths from **Odododiodio** constituency, blocked the **Atta Mills** high street in central Accra, demonstrating against the appointment, burning tyres and chanting.¹⁵ Police arrested four individuals alleged to be the ringleaders of the *“unlawful protest”* on 18 September in **Jamestown** (Accra).¹⁶ In response to the protest, Accra mayor **Mohammed Nii Adjei Sowah** denounced the protest and *“any form of disturbances in my name”*.¹⁷

The protests coincide with a series of presidential public engagements and vocal commitment to democratic process. Akufo-Addo delivered a speech at the **2021 Ghana Bar Conference** on 13 September in the **Bolgatanga** (upper east region) noting the benefits of democracy for Ghana and the continent:

“We know, however, that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance and vigilant we shall be here in Ghana. [...] We shall not let our guard down and allow the clammy embrace of the people by anti-democrats, who are disdainful and incapable of effective popular mobilisation through accepted channels, but who want shortcuts to power without the express support of the people.”¹⁸

⁶ [Citi Newsroom](#), 16 Sep 2021

⁷ [JoyOnline](#), 16 Sep 2021

⁸ [Ghana Web](#), 24 Nov 2019

⁹ [Citi Newsroom](#), 27 May 2021

¹⁰ [JoyOnline](#), 16 Sep 2021

¹¹ [Citi Newsroom](#), 19 Sep 2021

¹² [Citi Newsroom](#), 19 Sep 2021

¹³ [Ghana Web](#), 24 Nov 2019

¹⁴ [Modern Ghana](#), 19 Sep 2021

¹⁵ [Modern Ghana](#), 19 Sep 2021

¹⁶ [Modern Ghana](#), 19 Sep 2021

¹⁷ [Modern Ghana](#), 19 Sep 2021

¹⁸ [GhanaWeb](#), 15 Sep 2021

Akufo-Addo's statement refers to the quotation by **Guinea's** military junta, the **National Rally and Development Committee**, which quoted Ghana's late former president **Jerry Rawlings** (1981-2001) in a televised address in Guinea after deposing and arresting former president **Alpha Condé** (2010-2021) on 5 September (see *ARC Briefing Guinea September 2021*). President Akufo-Addo landed in **Conakry** (Guinea) on 17 September to lead an **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** delegation as chairman of the **West African** regional economic union in partnership with **Cote d'Ivoire's** President **Alassane Ouattara** (2010-present).¹⁹

President Akufo-Addo may encounter further protest, with constitutional reform movement **#FixTheCountry** calling for action in **Sekondi-Takoradi** on 21 September.²⁰ The FixTheCountry movement describes itself as a non-partisan, non-political civic movement and launched a petition for a vote of no confidence in Ghana's 1992 constitution on 21 August.²¹ The petition has garnered 2,184 signatures to date. Interior minister **Ambrose Dery** on 16 September declared 21 September to be a national holiday in memorial of Ghana's first president **Kwame Nkrumah** (1960-1966).²²

Cedi slides as inflation rate nears upper threshold...

The **Bank of Ghana (BoG)** (central bank) intervened on 24 August to stem a slide in the cedi that began in May.²³ The BoG tripled the number of **United States (US)** dollars offered in a forward-rate auction to \$75m, the highest amount since sales began in 2019.²⁴ A surge in demand for dollars caused the cedi to slide 1.6% on 25 August, dropping to GH6.03:\$1 and lower still to GH6.06:\$1 on 5 September.²⁵

An increase in consumer activity contributed to a narrowing of the trade surplus in first half of 2021, declining from 1.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in H1 2020, to 1.2% of GDP in H1 2021. Ghana-based **GCB Bank Ltd** currency trader **Gabriel Engmann** noted that a rebound in business activity is driving demand for dollars from the commerce and manufacturing sector.²⁶

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) head **Samuel Kobina Annim** announced on 8 September a rise in year-on-year consumer price inflation to 9.7% in August, up from 9% recorded in July.²⁷ August marks the fourth month of consecutive increase in consumer price inflation, driven primarily by food inflation, housing inflation and transport inflation. Annim noted:

*"Food contributes more than half to overall inflation, and combined with housing more than two-thirds, and further including transport, more than four-fifths."*²⁸

Ghana's overall consumer inflation rate remains within the boundaries established by the BoG – 8% plus or minus 2 percentage points (6%-10%) – but continues to creep toward the upper threshold.²⁹ The central bank published an inflation outlook and analysis report for July on 24 August, stating that headline inflation is expected to return to target over the medium term.³⁰ The BoG lists several factors that may lead to a further rise in inflation, including a further increase in global inflation driven by elevated crude oil prices and supply-demand pressures driven by changing consumer spending patterns.³¹ At its **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** meeting in July, the BoG anticipated that inflation would remain within the threshold established by the bank for the next 18-24 months.³²

¹⁹ [Ghana Web](#), 17 Sep 2021

²⁰ [FixTheCountry](#), accessed 20 Sep 2021

²¹ [FixTheCountry](#), 21 Aug 2021

²² [HappyGhana](#), 16 Sep 2021

²³ [Bank of Ghana](#), 24 Aug 2021

²⁴ [Bloomberg](#), 25 Aug 2021

²⁵ [Naira Metrics](#), 26 Aug 2021

²⁶ [Bloomberg](#), 25 Aug 2021

²⁷ [Ghana Statistical Service](#), 8 Sep 2021

²⁸ [Reuters](#), 8 Sep 2021

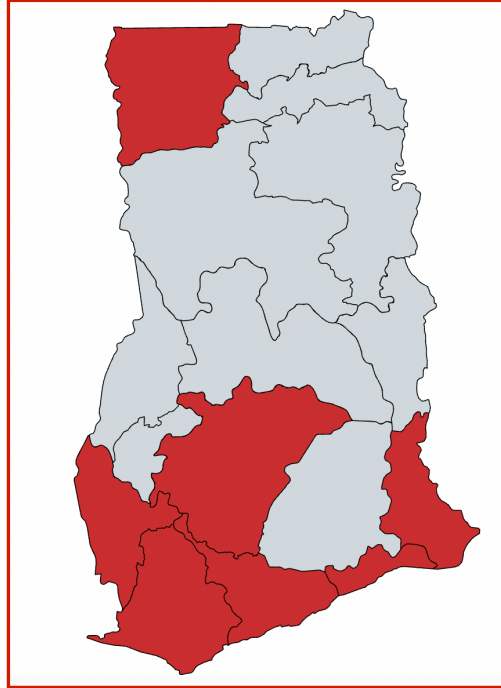
²⁹ [Bank of Ghana](#), accessed 16 Sep 2021

³⁰ [Bank of Ghana](#), 28 Aug 2021

³¹ [Bank of Ghana](#), 28 Aug 2021

³² [Bloomberg](#), 8 Sep 2021

Ghana's domestic food prices, which may cause a further surge in inflation, are under pressure due to an outbreak of **H5N1** (avian flu) (see *ARC Briefing Ghana August 2021*), which has restricted the movement of poultry and driven poultry prices up.³³ **Sissala East** municipality veterinary officer **Eric Tergu** confirmed on 3 September the presence of the H5N1 virus in **Tumu** (Sissala East).³⁴ The 2021 outbreak has now affected the **Volta, Greater Accra, Central, Ashanti, Western, Western North and Upper West** regions (see below).³⁵



Ghana H5N1 (Avian flu) map³⁶

Food and agriculture minister **Owusu Afriyie** announced at a press conference on 28 August that the ministry plans to provide compensation to affected poultry farmers, following a request from the **Poultry Farmer Association**.³⁷ So far, no reports of compensation have been published.

Ghana's budget deficit exceeded its target in the first five months of 2021, due to revenue underperformance. The BoG report notes that this is a risk to the inflation outlook:

*"Expenditure has to be aligned to revenue performance to support the fiscal consolidation efforts. The recent level of public debt raises debt sustainability concerns, hence the importance and urgency of fiscal consolidation efforts."*³⁸

Ghana doubles down on development of oil & gas reserves...

Energy minister **Matthew Opoku Prempeh** confirmed Ghana's oil and gas development policy in an address to the **Offshore Technology Conference** in **Houston, Texas** (US) on 16 August.³⁹ Alongside **Brazil, Guyana** and **Suriname**, Ghana plans to use oil and gas discoveries and transport products to market before demand for, and prices, of crude oil and natural gas begin to fall.⁴⁰ Prempeh noted:

"We have millions of people without electricity in Africa [...] Energy transition does not mean we'll see our resources unexploited."

³³ Bank of Ghana, 28 Aug 2021

³⁴ Modern Ghana, 8 Sep 2021

³⁵ Modern Ghana, 8 Sep 2021

³⁶ MapChart.net, accessed 17 Sep 2021

³⁷ Modern Ghana, 30 Aug 2021

³⁸ Bank of Ghana, 28 Aug 2021

³⁹ Reuters, 19 Aug 2021

⁴⁰ Reuters, 19 Aug 2021

Whilst these developing economy agendas clash with developed economy promises to meet net-zero targets and accelerate the energy transition, Prempeh's assertion that Ghana will continue to develop its offshore assets is not unexpected. In August, a joint parliamentary committee approved borrowing of \$1.45 billion to support the acquisition of oil assets through the state-owned **Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC)**.⁴¹ The newly approved borrowing will be used to increase government ownership of the **Deepwater Tano Cape Three Points** block and the **South Deep Water Tano** oilfield by purchasing stakes from Norway-based **Aker Energy AS** and Ghana-based **AGM Petroleum Ghana** (see *ARC Briefing Ghana August 2021*).^{42, 43}

Energy think tank **Institute for Energy Policies and Research (INSTEPR)** criticised the GNPC strategy to acquire a 37% stake in the Deep Water Tano Cape Three Points block in a press release dated 31 August, asserting that the government is likely to be the default owner of the block within the next four months.⁴⁴ Ghana's Petroleum Agreement (PA) with International Oil Companies (IOCs) states that oil blocks revert to government ownership, should the IOCs fail to develop the block within an agreed timeframe.⁴⁵ Aker Energy's agreement with government in the **Pecan** oil field is due to expire at the end of 2021. Aker suspended its final investment decision (FID) and postponed development of the field in March 2020 due to the global **Covid-19** pandemic and historically low oil prices.⁴⁶ To date, Aker has yet to submit a revised plan of development (PoD) for the Pecan field.⁴⁷

Despite the government's position, the private sector continues to indicate an exit from Ghana, with US-based **ExxonMobil** announcing an exit from the Ghanaian upstream oil and gas sector in May 2021. Ghana-based not-for-profit organisation the **Institute for Energy Security (IES)** cautioned that the exit of IOCs and declining investment from abroad may result in the 'stranding' of Ghana's hydrocarbon resources and negatively impact revenues. The GNPC's proactive engagement may offer an opportunity for Aker to opt out of Ghana's petroleum sector without incurring heavy losses, however, the government reaction to Aker's Pecan PoD, due before the end of 2021, remains to be seen and will likely inform Aker's exit strategy and that of other IOCs.

... as ENI and Springfield remain at an impasse

President Akufo-Addo pledged on 7 September to resolve an on-going impasse between Italy-based petroleum major **ENI** and Ghana-based **Springfield Exploration & Production (SEP)** (see *ARC Briefing Ghana July 2021*).⁴⁸ In response to a request by paramount chief of the **Eastern Nzema Traditional Council** and president of the **Nzemamanle Council, Awulae Amihere Kpanyinli III**, Akufo-Addo said it was unfortunate that the matter had become the subject of arbitration.⁴⁹

The government in April 2020 ordered **Eni Ghana Exploration and Production Limited** and Springfield to unitise the **Sankofa** and **Afina** oil fields following discovery that the WCTP-2 Springfield asset was also the **Offshore Cape Three Points (OCTP)** Sankofa contract area.⁵⁰ Springfield later requested that revenues from the Sankofa field be preserved until a deal was reached to combine the projects, and petitioned the **High Court** on the matter.⁵¹ On 25 June, the high court ruled that ENI must place 30% of revenues from the Sankofa offshore field into an escrow account.⁵² ENI filed a suit with the **United Kingdom (UK)**-based **London International Court of Arbitration** on 16 August, challenging the government decision to unitise the Sankofa and Afina fields, stating:

⁴¹ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴² [Reuters](#), 2 Aug 2021

⁴³ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴⁴ [Norvan Reports](#), 31 Aug 2021

⁴⁵ [Norvan Reports](#), 31 Aug 2021

⁴⁶ [Aker Energy](#), 5 Jun 2020

⁴⁷ [Norvan Reports](#), 31 Aug 2021

⁴⁸ [Modern Ghana](#), 7 Sep 2021

⁴⁹ [Modern Ghana](#), 7 Sep 2021

⁵⁰ [BFT Online](#), 17 May 2021

⁵¹ [Reuters](#), 25 Jun 2021

⁵² [Reuters](#), 25 Jun 2021

*“The Sankofa field is part of the OCTP project, a \$10.6 billion project supported by the **World Bank** (of which \$6.05 billion has been invested to date) [...] by contrast the Afina discovery currently amounts to a single exploration well which has not be appraised, far less developed. There is not even any evidence that the Afina discovery is capable of producing hydrocarbons at a commercial flow rate.”⁵³*

The notice of arbitration (ref: **421/11220/31039314**) was submitted by **Craig Tevendale, Andrew Cannon** and **Charlie Morgan** of international law firm **Herbert Smith Freehills LLP**.⁵⁴ The suit claims a breach of a petroleum agreement by Ghana relating to the OCTP basin agreed on 2 March 2006.⁵⁵ ENI seeks a tribunal to revoke the unitisation order on the Sankofa and Afina fields, payment of losses arising from the unitisation order and breach of the petroleum agreement, and costs for all arbitration including fees of council, witnesses and experts.⁵⁶

The government’s response to the arbitration filing fell due on 16 September, however, Ghanaian media have yet to report details of the response.

US help Ghana to digitise Covid-19 response systems...

Cases of Covid-19 in Ghana are once again in decline after a third wave of infections peaked in early August.⁵⁷ As of 17 September, Ghana had registered 124,000 cases of Covid-19 in its population of 31.7 million, with 1,098 Covid-19-related deaths.⁵⁸ The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** vaccine tracker reports that as of 23 August, a total of 1.2 million Covid-19 vaccine doses have been administered, with 865,422 individuals in receipt of a single dose and 405,971 individuals fully vaccinated.⁵⁹

US-based supply chain management company **One Network Enterprises** on 31 August announced its partnership with the government of Ghana to create the **Ghana Integrated Logistics Management Information System (GhiLMIS)**, a digital system to meet and address supply chain challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.⁶⁰ The GhiLMIS system replaces a manual reporting system and leverages nationwide-data to reduce wait times and enable better readiness for medical response.⁶¹ The system is sponsored by **Switzerland**-based financing entity **The Global Fund** and managed by US-based consultancy company **Systems for Development (S4D)**.⁶²

Ghana received a further 1.2 million doses of the **Moderna** Covid-19 vaccine from the US government through the WHO **COVAX** and **Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI)** schemes on 4 September.⁶³ US ambassador to Ghana **Stephanie Sullivan**, deputy minister of health **Mahama Asei Seini** and deputy minister for foreign affairs and regional integration **Kwaku Ampratwum-Sarpong** received the doses at the **Kotoka International Airport (KIA)** in Accra.⁶⁴ The vaccines were delivered days before Sullivan announced at a joint press conference with Ghana’s health ministry and **Ghana Health Service (GHS)** the donation of four oxygen plants from the **US Agency for International Development (USAID)**.⁶⁵ The donation includes four oxygen generation plants with the capacity to produce 250 litres of oxygen per minute. The new oxygen plants will be installed at the **Ghana Infectious Disease Centre (Accra), Cape Coast Municipal Hospital (central region),**

⁵³ [PrimeNews Ghana](#), 2 Sep 2021

⁵⁴ [PrimeNews Ghana](#), 2 Sep 2021

⁵⁵ [PrimeNews Ghana](#), 2 Sep 2021

⁵⁶ [The Ghana Report](#), 7 Sep 2021

⁵⁷ [Worldometers](#), accessed 17 Sep 2021

⁵⁸ [Worldometers](#), accessed 17 Sep 2021

⁵⁹ [World Health Organisation](#), accessed 17 Sep 2021

⁶⁰ [PRNewswire](#), 31 Aug 2021

⁶¹ [PRNewswire](#), 31 Aug 2021

⁶² [PRNewswire](#), 31 Aug 2021

⁶³ [United States Embassy in Ghana](#), 4 Sep 2021

⁶⁴ [United States Embassy in Ghana](#), 4 Sep 2021

⁶⁵ [Africa News](#), 9 Sep 2021

Kumasi South Hospital (Ashanti region) and **Tamale West Hospital** (northern region).⁶⁶ The USAID donation includes a further 28 high-flow high-pressure oxygen concentrators, which will be distributed across the 16 regions of Ghana and a negative-pressure isolation system, to be installed at the **Ridge Hospital** (Accra).⁶⁷

Despite working closely to improve Ghana's preparedness for and resilience to Covid-19 infections, the US **Centres for Disease Control (CDC)** revised its travel advisory for Ghana on 7 September, from 'Level 2: Moderate to 'Level 3: High'.⁶⁸ The CDC's Covid-19 travel advisory has four levels, '1: Low' to '4: Very High'.⁶⁹ **South Africa** remains the only nation on the list of "travellers prohibited from entry to the United States".⁷⁰

Planner

22-24 Sep 2021 **Accra (Ghana) Bank of Ghana (BoG)** (central bank) **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** meets;

19 Oct 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** Parliament due to reconvene after recess;

Chronology

16 Sep 2021 **Accra (Ghana) Modern Ghana**. Presidency director of communications **Eugene Arhin** announces the submission of a final list of nominated **Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs)** to work under President **Nana Akufo-Addo** in his second term;

9 Sep 2021 **Yaounde (Cameroon) Investir au Cameroun**. The water and energy ministry says **Ghanaian-Chinese** consortium **Sunon Asogli Power Limited/China Energy Engineering Corporation Limited** is in pole position to win the tender for the construction of the 350 MW **Limbé** gas-fired power plant;

9 Sep 2021 **Conakry (Guinea) Reuters**. Regional political and economic union **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** president **Jean-Claude Kassi Brou** and **Ghana's** foreign affairs minister, **Shirley Ayorkor Botchway**, will lead a bloc delegation to meet with the military junta of **Guinea** on 10 September;

8 Sep 2021 **Accra (Ghana) Reuters**. **Ghana Statistical Services (GSS)** head **Samuel Kobina Annim** announces a rise in consumer price inflation rate from 9% year-on-year in July to 9.7% in August;

7 Sep 2021 **Accra (Ghana) Reuters**. The **United States (US) Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** revise its travel advisory for Ghana to 'Level 3: High' urging unvaccinated US citizens to avoid travel to Ghana;

4 Sep 2021 **Accra (Ghana) Bloomberg**. #FixTheCountry demonstrators peacefully protest rising unemployment and high-cost of living due to inflation in **Accra**;

2 Sep 2021 **Accra (Ghana) Reuters**. The **United States (US)** government dispatches 1.2 million doses of the US-manufactured **Moderna** Covid-19 vaccine to Ghana delivered through the **World Health Organisation (WHO) COVAX** scheme and the **Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)**;

25 Aug 2021 **Accra (Ghana) Global Arbitration Review**. A **London Court of International Arbitration** tribunal dismisses a \$480m arbitration against **Bank of Ghana** (central bank) over a cancelled payments system project after the claimant failed to post security for costs;

⁶⁶ [Africa News](#), 9 Sep 2021

⁶⁷ [United States Embassy in Ghana](#), 9 Sep 2021

⁶⁸ [US Centre for Disease Control](#), 13 Sep 2021

⁶⁹ [US Centre for Disease Control](#), 13 Sep 2021

⁷⁰ [US Centre for Disease Control](#), 13 Sep 2021

19 Aug 2021 **Houston (United States)** Reuters. Energy minister **Matthew Opoku Prempeh** minister addresses the **Offshore Technology Conference** in **Houston (Texas)** pledging to continue development of Ghana's carbon-based fuel resources, "*Energy transition does not mean we'll see our resources unexploited*";

12 Aug 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** Reuters. **United Nations** human rights experts say **Ghanaian** bill criminalising LGBT people will establish "*a system of state-sponsored discrimination and violence*" against sexual minorities;

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