

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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The United Nations criticises draft legislation on the Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values, an anti-LGBTQ+ bill, citing violation of international human rights conventions to which Ghana is a party. The Bank of Ghana (BoG) (central bank) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) holds the main interest rate at 13.5% and cautions a tightening of global financial conditions. The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) confirms consumer price inflation to be 9% in July, driven by food price inflation. The BoG launches a pilot digital currency programme in partnership with Germany-based bank note printer Giesecke+Devrient. Australia-based Resolute Mining Ltd announces the sale of its interest in the Bibiani mine to Canada-based Asante Gold Corp for \$90m. A parliamentary joint committee approves borrowing of \$1.45 billion to support the acquisition of oil assets by the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC). Increasing rates of new cases of Covid-19 prompt President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (2017-present) to announce stricter measures to control spread of the virus. The Ghana Health Service (GHS) unveils a new online portal for Covid-19 information. Veterinary director Patrick Abakeh confirms an outbreak of H5N1 (avian flu) in the Greater Accra, Central and Volta regions.

UN human rights experts condemn bill criminalising the LGBTQ+ community...

United Nations (UN) human rights experts have branded a bill seeking to criminalise LGBTQ+ individuals and communities in **Ghana** as “a system of state-sponsored discrimination and violence” and encouraged members of parliament to reject the proposed law.¹ Parliament conducted the first reading of the **Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill** on 2 August.² The bill was resubmitted to the review committee and will undergo a second reading in October, following parliamentary recess that began on 7 August.³

The bill proposes up to five years’ imprisonment for allies of the LGBTQ+ community and ten years’ imprisonment for advocating their rights. Media outlets publishing support for gay rights or challenging binary male/female identities may also be subject to punishment. The draft bill also includes flexible sentences for accused persons who submit to ‘treatment’ (conversion therapies).⁴ The bill targets individuals who

*“hold out as a lesbian, a gay, a transsexual, a queer, a pansexual, an ally, a non-binary or any other sexual identity that is contrary to the binary categories of male and female”.*⁵

UN independent expert on sexual orientation and gender identity **Victor Madrigal-Borloz** delivered a letter on 9 August to the Ghanaian mission in **Geneva (Switzerland)** highlighting the bill’s violation of international human rights agreements to which Ghana is a party.⁶ LGBTQ+ group **Rightify Ghana** executive director **Danny Bediako** highlighted the reputational risk for Ghanaian political leadership, should the law pass in October:

¹ Reuters, 12 Aug 2021

² Reuters, 4 Aug 2021

³ Reuters, 12 Aug 2021

⁴ Reuters, 12 Aug 2021

⁵ Ghana Web, 6 Aug 2021

⁶ Gay Times, 12 Aug 2021

“The international community is concerned about Ghana’s democratic credentials being wiped out by this anti-LGBTQ bill [...] Within parliament, I don’t think it would make much difference amongst MPs who support the bill. However, it could encourage other MPs to speak against it.”⁷

Several members of parliament allegedly champion the bill, including **Ningo-Prampram** representative **Sam George; Kpando**, representative **Della Sowah; Ho West** representative **Emmanuel Bedzrah; Assin South** representative **John Ntim Forjour; Tamale North** representative **Alhassan Suhuyini; La Dadekotopon** representative **Rita Sowah; Krachi West** representative **Helen Ntoso**; and **South Dayi** representative **Rockson-Nelson Dafeamekpor**.⁸

Ghana’s international standing and reputation are not the only possible casualties if the anti-LGBTQ+ bill passes in October. The **Joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)** criticised the bill stating that further criminalisation of LGBTQ+ relations would harm national progress in HIV/AIDS and other sexual health programmes, including a national hepatitis screening programme.⁹ 60% of Ghana’s HIV positive community receive anti-retroviral treatment; however, this figure drops to 3.7% for HIV positive gay or bisexual men.¹⁰ Ghana’s existing legislation makes gay sex an offence punishable by up to three years in jail. **UNAIDS** programme in **West and Central Africa** head **Patrick Brenny** stated:

“If passed, this legislation will have the certain effect of driving people further away from HIV prevention, care and treatment services and endanger the advances made.”¹¹

A court in **Ho (Volta district)** dropped charges against 21 LGBTQ+ activists on 5 August, citing a lack of evidence to suggest unlawful assembly.¹² The suspects were initially remanded into police custody on 21 May and granted bail on 11 June.

Central bank holds interest rate steady amid plans for digital currency pilot

The **Bank of Ghana (BoG)** (central bank) **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** held the main interest rate at 13.5% at its meeting on 26 July.¹³ The MPC noted that a tightening of global financial conditions and rising global inflation trends have led to a rise in borrowing costs from advanced economies, which is likely to affect the Ghanaian economy.¹⁴

Ghana’s inflation rate nevertheless remains within the 6-10% threshold established by the BoG.¹⁵ The MPC regards inflation to be on a downward trajectory, driven by a tight monetary policy stance and base drift. The MPC recorded a decline in headline inflation from 10.3% in March 2021 to 7.5% in May 2021, before rising again to 7.8% in June 2021. Food price inflation has risen and fallen, whereas non-food inflation has declined consistently, falling from 10% in March 2021 to 8.2% in June.¹⁶ The **Ghana Statistical Service (GSS)** reported on 11 August that consumer price inflation had risen from 7.8% in June to 9% in July, driven by an increase in food price inflation. GSS head **Samuel Kobina Annim** noted:

“We’re beginning to see a return to food inflation contributing to half of the overall inflation.”¹⁷

The GSS reported GDP growth of 3.1% in Q1 2021, which remains significantly lower than the 7% recorded in Q1 2020, prior to the impact of the **Covid-19** pandemic.¹⁸

⁷ Reuters, 12 Aug 2021

⁸ Ghana Web, 6 Aug 2021

⁹ Reuters, 4 Aug 2021

¹⁰ Reuters, 4 Aug 2021

¹¹ Reuters, 4 Aug 2021

¹² Ghana Web, 6 Aug 2021

¹³ Bank of Ghana, 26 Jul 2021

¹⁴ Bank of Ghana, 26 Jul 2021

¹⁵ The Ghana Report, 12 Aug 2021

¹⁶ Bank of Ghana, 26 Jul 2021

¹⁷ Market Screener, 11 Aug 2021

¹⁸ Bank of Ghana, 26 Jul 2021

The BoG announced on 11 August the launch of a digital currency pilot programme in partnership with **Germany**-based banknote printer **Giesecke+Devrient**.¹⁹ The pilot programme is a precursor to the first issuance of a digital currency, the ‘e-Cedi’, which the bank hopes to make an alternative to hard currency. The pilot programme includes trial phases with banks, payment service providers and consumers. Central bank governor **Ernest Addison** noted the concept of digital currency has a significant role to play in the future of global financial service delivery:

*“This project is a significant step towards positioning Ghana to take full advantage of this emerging concept.”*²⁰

Ashanti Gold Corp to acquire Bibiani mine...

Australia-based **Resolute Mining Ltd** announced on 5 August the sale of its interest in the **Bibiani** gold mine to **Canada**-based **Asante Gold Corp** for total cash consideration of \$90m.²¹ The transaction offers a boost to Ghana’s gold mining sector, which has struggled to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and economic disruption, despite a global rise in the price of gold (see *ARC Briefing Ghana July 2021*). The proceeds of the sale will be used to pay down \$30m of company debt.²² The sale is not expected to result in any immediate changes to employment or contract relationships.²³

Resolute Mining’s shares rose 4.5% following the announcement of the sale. Resolute acquired the mine in 2014 and attempted to sell the asset to **China**-based **Chifeng Jilong Gold Mining Co Ltd (CJGM)** in December 2021.²⁴ CJGM pulled out of the sale, citing a letter from the **Ghanaian Minerals Commission** received in March 2021 advising that Ghana’s minister for lands and natural resources had terminated the mining lease for the Bibiani gold mine.²⁵ Resolute Mining clarified in April that the lease had been restored; however, CJGM insisted on the return of a \$5m deposit and accrued interest.²⁶

Asante, “*strictly a gold exploration and development company*”, is listed on the **Canadian Securities Exchange** and has announced plans to co-list its shares on the **Ghana Stock Exchange**.²⁷ Asante president and CEO **Douglas MacQuarrie** said the Bibiani mine has “*not been taken care of properly*” since **Ashanti Goldfields** dropped the project in 2006.²⁸ The company is also exploring its **Keyhole**, **Fahiakoba** and **Betenase** projects for new discoveries, all adjoining or along strike of major gold mines near the centre of Ghana’s “**Golden Triangle**”.²⁹ Ghana is **Africa**’s largest gold producer, producing approximately 5 million ounces of gold in 2020.³⁰ Gold contributes over 90% of Ghana’s total mineral exports and makes up 49% of total export value.³¹

Asante competitor, **South Africa**-based **AngloGold Ashanti** (cross listed on the **New York**, **Johannesburg**, **Accra**, **London**, and Australian stock exchanges), revised its annual production target from 2.7-2.9 million ounces to 2.4-2.6 million ounces on 6 August.³² The announcement caused share prices to slide by more than 10%. AngloGold has lost more than half of its market value since July 2020 and in July appointed **Colombian** national **Alberto Calderon** as its CEO after an 11-month search for a new candidate (see *ARC Briefing Ghana July 2021*).³³ AngloGold’s lowered 2021 production estimate was accompanied by a 10% fall in headline earnings in H1 2021 due to Covid-19

¹⁹ [Reuters](#), 11 Aug 2021

²⁰ [Reuters](#), 11 Aug 2021

²¹ [Reuters](#), 5 Aug 2021

²² [Reuters](#), 5 Aug 2021

²³ FT Markets, 5 Aug 2021

²⁴ [Global Mining Review](#), 21 Apr 2021

²⁵ [Global Mining Review](#), 21 Apr 2021

²⁶ [Global Mining Review](#), 21 Apr 2021

²⁷ FT Markets, 5 Aug 2021

²⁸ [Mining Feeds](#), 6 Aug 2021

²⁹ FT Markets, 5 Aug 2021

³⁰ [Newcore Gold](#), accessed 16 Aug 2021

³¹ [Newcore Gold](#), accessed 16 Aug 2021

³² [Reuters](#), 6 Aug 2021

³³ [Bloomberg](#), 6 Jul 2021

restrictions and increased mining costs.³⁴ AngloGold's operations at the **Obuasi Mine** were severely limited following a fatal accident in May, leading to the fall in production (see *ARC Briefing Ghana May 2021*).³⁵

Parliament approves \$1.45 billion for Ghana National Petroleum Company expansion...

A joint parliamentary committee on 5 August approved borrowing of \$1.45 billion to support the acquisition of oil assets by the **Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC)**.³⁶ The ease with which the GNPC secured borrowing from a coalition parliament is notable considering the **World Bank's** caution against unfettered borrowing in July (see *ARC Briefing Ghana July 2021*).³⁷ Ghana's finance and energy ministries requested parliament to approve \$1.65 billion in borrowing to support the acquisition of a 37% stake in the **Deepwater Tano Cape Three Points** block and 70% in the **South Deep Water Tano** oilfield.^{38,39} Speaker **Alban Bagbin** informed parliament on 2 August of GNPC's plan to acquire oil assets from **Norway-based Aker Energy AS** and Ghana-based **AGM Petroleum Ghana**, through its upstream subsidiary, **GNPC Explorco**.⁴⁰

In applying for cabinet approval, GNPC argued that the national oil companies must explore and develop assets while international investor interest remains suppressed by the energy transition.⁴¹ A joint committee on finance and energy met on 3 August and determined that the GNPC's spending ceiling should be reduced from \$1.3 billion to \$1.1 billion before granting permission to borrow \$1.45 billion on 5 August.⁴²

United States (US)-based Harvard University fellow and social entrepreneur **Bright Simons** publicly criticised the loan.⁴³ Simons urged the GNPC to address the "*poor governance and broken management of the petroleum sector*" instead of chasing operator opportunities. Simons claims that Norwegian billionaire **Kjell Inge Rokke**, ultimate beneficial owner of Aker Energy and AGM Petroleum,

"... has successfully plotted a windfall of as much as \$1 billion after patently cultivating the Ghanaian political elite for more than a decade".⁴⁴

Ghanaian newspaper **Modern Ghana** alleges that Aker Energy AS is jointly owned by Norwegian oil firm **Aker** and family asset holding company **TRG**. TRG is controlled by Rokke and his wife, who also hold two-thirds control of Aker through TRG.⁴⁵ TRG is also a 100% shareholder of AGM Petroleum, through **Petrica Holdings**.⁴⁶ The shareholding structure reveals Kjell Rokke to be the ultimate beneficiary from the sale of Aker Energy and AGM Petroleum's assets. The allegations of political collusion are especially troublesome in light of similar accusations made by opposition **National Democratic Congress** party in 2008 that Aker had received preferential treatment from the ruling **New Patriotic Party (NPP)**.⁴⁷ Aker's local subsidiary was incorporated five days after the oil lease agreement was signed on 24 October 2008.

Simons' call is timely, given the recent turbulence for other international operators in the **Sankofa** offshore field including **Italy-based oil company ENI**, which is committing 30% of revenues from the

³⁴ [Reuters](#), 6 Aug 2021

³⁵ [Bloomberg](#), 6 Jul 2021

³⁶ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

³⁷ [GhanaWeb](#), 5 Jul 2021

³⁸ [Reuters](#), 2 Aug 2021

³⁹ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴⁰ [Reuters](#), 2 Aug 2021

⁴¹ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴² [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴³ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴⁴ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴⁵ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴⁶ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

⁴⁷ [Modern Ghana](#), 9 Aug 2021

field into an escrow account at the request of Ghana-based **Springfield Group** (see *ARC Briefing Ghana July 2021*).

Third wave of Covid-19 infections hits Ghana ...

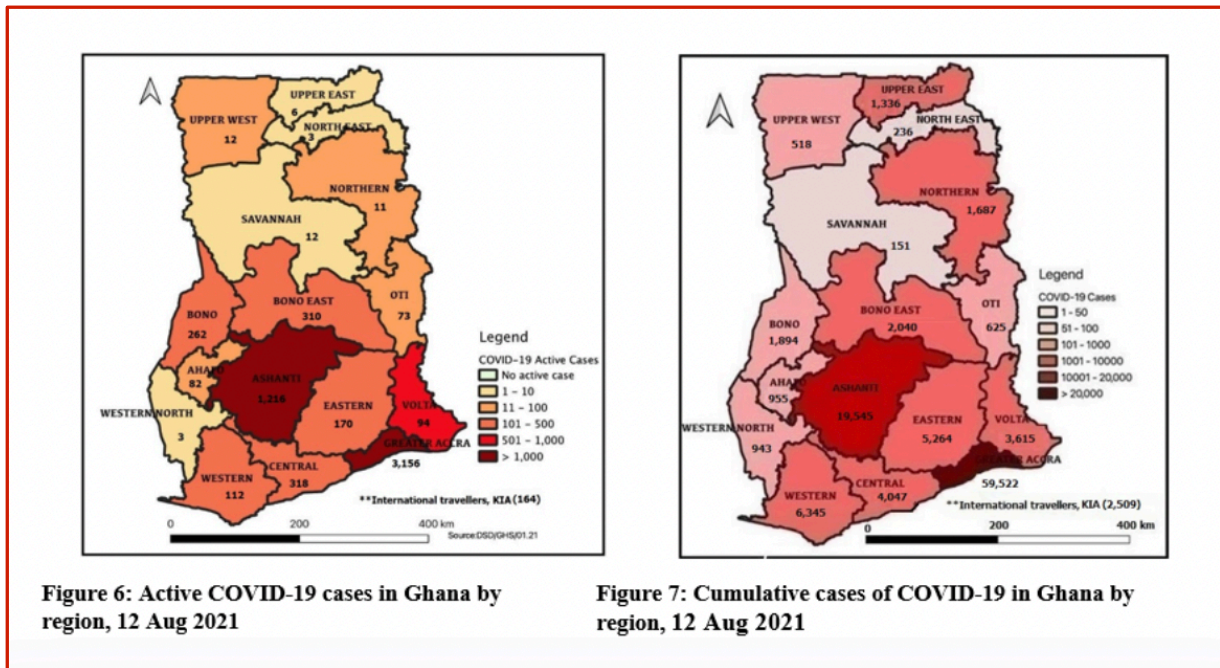
During the 26th national Covid-19 address on 25 July, President **Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo** (2017-present) confirmed a third wave of Covid-19 infections in Ghana.⁴⁸ Akufo-Addo said the Delta-variant of the Covid-19 virus is driving the new wave of infections.⁴⁹ Greater Accra and the **Greater Kumasi** metropolitan areas have the highest levels of confirmed cases.⁵⁰ As of 14 August, Ghana had registered a total of 110,000 cases of Covid-19 in its population of 31.7 million, with 912 Covid-19-related deaths.⁵¹ The US-based **Johns Hopkins University** Covid-19 dashboard on 15 August reported 11,871 new cases of Covid-19 within the past 28 days in Ghana.⁵²

In a national address on 2 August, Akufo-Addo reinstated stricter anti-Covid-19 protocols in a bid to contain the outbreak:

“We cannot afford to return to the days of partial lockdowns [...] we have tried and tested response protocols which we have implemented since March 2020 [...] we have no choice but to return to the strict implementation of some of them.”⁵³

Funerals must now be held in open-air spaces and are limited to a two-hour period; masks and social distancing are mandatory and post-funeral receptions are banned.⁵⁴

The **Ghana Health Service (GHS)** unveiled a new online portal for Covid-19 information on 2 August.⁵⁵ The portal provides a geographic situation update on Covid-19 infections by region, vaccination updates and health declaration forms for travellers to Ghana.⁵⁶



Ghana Health Service, accessed 15 Aug 2021⁵⁷

⁴⁸ [PeaceFM](#), 25 Jul 2021
⁴⁹ [Modern Ghana](#), 25 Jul 2021
⁵⁰ [Modern Ghana](#), 25 Jul 2021
⁵¹ [Worldometers](#), accessed 14 Aug 2021
⁵² [Johns Hopkins University](#), Accessed: 15 Aug 2021
⁵³ [Modern Ghana](#), 25 Jul 2021
⁵⁴ [Modern Ghana](#), 25 Jul 2021
⁵⁵ [Twitter](#), 2 Aug 2021
⁵⁶ [Ghana Health Service](#), accessed 15 Jul 2021
⁵⁷ [Ghana Health Service](#), accessed 15 Jul 2021

The GHS vaccine tracker reports 1,271,393 doses of Covid-19 vaccine administered as of 14 August.⁵⁸ The GHS reports that 865,422 individuals had received a first dose of Covid-19 vaccine, and 405,971 have been fully vaccinated.⁵⁹ Ghana expected to receive one million US-manufactured **Pfizer** vaccines, through the **World Health Organisation (WHO) COVAX** facility, 229,670 additional Pfizer vaccines from the **African Union (AU)** vaccine access scheme, and 249,000 **AstraZeneca** vaccines from the **United Kingdom (UK)**. Ghana is also seeking to acquire 17 million single dose **Johnson & Johnson Janssen** vaccines through the **African Medicine Supply Platform** in Q3. The government has also established the **National Vaccine Institute (NVI)** with \$25m in seed funding.⁶⁰ The NVI is tasked with:

- Establishing vaccine manufacturing plants in Ghana;
- Improving national research and development (R&D) for vaccines;
- Upgrading the national regulator, the **Food and Drugs Authority (FDA)**;
- Strengthening and creating bilateral and multilateral partnerships for vaccine manufacture;
- Building a human resource base for vaccine development and manufacture;
- Establishing a national secretariat to coordinate vaccine development and manufacture.⁶¹

... amid avian flu outbreak

Veterinary director **Patrick Abakeh** has confirmed the destruction of 4,500 chickens originating from the Greater Accra, **Central** and **Volta** regions following the discovery of an **H5N1** (avian flu) outbreak.⁶² Similar outbreaks in 2007, 2015, 2016 and 2018 dealt Ghana's poultry farmers a severe financial blow.⁶³

The disease was first detected on 6 July and confirmed by a laboratory on 8 July. Ghana suspended the movement of poultry within the country after 6,000 birds died and tested positive for avian flu. Imports from **Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mauritania** and **Senegal** are also temporarily suspended as a precautionary measure.⁶⁴ The food and agriculture ministry issued a statement declaring

*"... the Zoonotic nature of the disease calls for public alert and vigilance to mitigate the possible impact on the poultry industry and public-health in general [...] the outbreak follows similar cases in neighbouring countries since January 2021."*⁶⁵

⁵⁸ [Ghana Health Service](#), accessed 15 Jul 2021

⁵⁹ [Ghana Health Service](#), accessed 15 Jul 2021

⁶⁰ [PrimeNewsGhana](#), 26 Jul 2021

⁶¹ [PrimeNewsGhana](#), 26 Jul 2021

⁶² [Reuters](#), 17 Jul 2021

⁶³ [Ghana News Agency](#), 17 Jul 2021

⁶⁴ [Reuters](#), 17 Jul 2021

⁶⁵ [Ghana News Agency](#), 17 Jul 2021

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

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;

9 Aug 2021 **(Africa)** *GlobalData*. **United Kingdom**-based data analytics company **GlobalData** forecasts **Africa**’s economy to grow at 3.8% in 2021, with the fastest-growing economies in the region being **Morocco, Kenya, Ghana, Egypt** and **South Africa**, which are all forecast to register above 4% real GDP growth in 2021;

7 Aug 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** *Ghana MMA*. Parliament begins recess, scheduled to reconvene on 19 October;

5 Aug 2021 **Ho (Ghana)** *Ghana Web*. Justice **Felix Datsomor** dismisses a case against 21 individuals charged with gathering unlawfully and alleged to be **LGBTQI+** advocates, citing lack of evidence of unlawful assembly;

5 Aug 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** *Global mining review*. **Australia**-based **Resolute Mining Ltd** announces the sale of the **Bibiani** mine to **Canada**-based **Asante Gold Corp** for \$90m;

2 Aug 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** *Reuters*. Speaker for parliament **Alban Bagbin** informs parliament of a request for a \$1.65 billion loan by the **Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC)** to acquire oil assets from **Norway**-based **Aker Energy** and **AGM Petroleum** in the **Deepwater Tano Cape Three Points** block and the **South Deep Water Tano** oilfield;

2 Aug 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** *Reuters*. Parliament convenes for the first reading of the **Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values** bill;

25 Jul 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** *Pulse Ghana*. President **Nana Akufo-Addo** announces new restrictions to curb the spread of **Covid-19** and says he hopes to receive over 18 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines before October, as the country is experiencing a third wave of coronavirus;

17 Jul 2021 **Accra (Ghana)** *Ghana News Agency*. The food and agriculture ministry confirms an outbreak of H5N1 (avian flu) and destruction of 6,000 birds to prevent spread of the disease as imports of poultry products are temporarily halted from **Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mauritania** and **Senegal** and movement of poultry from **Greater Accra, Central** and **Volta** regions has been halted;

9 Jul 2021 **West Africa** *Reuters*. Finance ministers from **Ghana, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** and **Côte d’Ivoire** address an open letter to the **Group of 20 (G20)** nations requesting that \$30 billion of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** investment programme in **Africa** be allocated toward mitigating the effects of **Covid-19** and climate change;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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