UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

CENTRE FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

GHANAIAN MEDIA REPORTAGE ON LIBERIAN REFUGEES

BY

DOROTHEA NAA ADJELEY DELA-DEM
(10108891)

A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS IN MIGRATION STUDIES DEGREE

JULY, 2018
DECLARATION
I, Dorothea Naa Adjeley Dela-Dem, hereby declare that except for references to other people’s work, which have been duly acknowledged this long essay is the outcome of my independent research conducted at the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana, Legon under the supervision of Dr. Leander Kandilige. I, therefore declare that this Long Essay has neither in part nor in whole been presented to any other institution for academic award.

DOROTHEA NAA ADJELEY DELA-DEM                       DATE
(STUDENT)

DR. LEANDER KANDILIGE                                   DATE
(SUPERVISOR)
DEDICATION

I dedicate my work to the Most High God for his grace and favour throughout my studies. Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent God, thank you for your endless love towards me and for how far you have brought me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I offer gratitude to my lecturers for their dedication in imparting their knowledge to me relentlessly.

A special appreciation goes to my supervisor Dr. Leander Kandilige for your supervision, direction and the enormous input you contributed to make my work turn out beautifully.

Appreciation and gratitude goes to my companion and husband Sebastian Kweku Dela-Dem for your support and encouragement.

In addition, I am grateful to my parents, Mr. Victor Tettey Ashong and Mrs. Mary Tandoh Ashong, my siblings Ebenezer and Eugene Ashong for their financial support, inspiration and prayers. God bless you abundantly family.

Not forgetting, Samuel Aduomi, Elenora Kumahia, Raymond Owusu Boateng and Walter Edem Dogbey Quarshie for your academic information and input into this work. I will forever be grateful to you all.

Finally, I want to acknowledge Pastor Daniel Kwame Nyarko, Pastor Kwame Manukure, Madame Joyce Ankrah, Gloria Ofori-Atta, Clara Boateng-Bediako, Dorothy Gyamfì, Matlida Esi Nyarkoa Quaicoe, Sophia Agbossey, Georgette Asante Mfodwo and for all those who supported me in countless and diverse ways.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL IMMENSELY.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION .</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION .</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENT .</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 INTRODUCTION .</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 GLOBAL MEDIA REPORTAGE ON REFUGEES</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 NORTH AMERICAN REFUGEES</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 UNITED KINGDOM</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 FRAMING OF ARAB REFUGEES IN WESTERN MEDIA</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 GHANAIAIN MEDIA REPORTAGE ON REFUGEES</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 LIBERIAN REFUGEES IN GHANA</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 BUDUMBURAM LIBERIA REFUGEE CAMP</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 INTRODUCTION:</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 TYPES OF RESEARCH</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 RESEARCH SCOPE</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND DATA COLLECTION</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 SOURCE OF DATA</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 RESEARCH CHALLENGES</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS .</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 GHANAIAIN MEDIA COVERAGE OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 LIBERIAN RESPONSE TO THE GHANAIAN PRESS .......................................................... 32

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS: .................................................................. 34
5.1 INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................... 34
5.3 THE GROUPS’ IDENTITY .......................................................................................... 38
5.4 POSSIBLE DANGERS INTENDED FOR THE REMAINING INHABITANTS ............ 40

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................ 46
6.1 SUMMARY .............................................................................................................. 46
6.2 DISCUSSION .......................................................................................................... 46
6.3 IMPLICATIONS ....................................................................................................... 49
REFERENCE: .............................................................................................................. 51
APPENDIX ....................................................................................................................... 58
ACRONYMS

ECOWAS- Economic Community of West African States

NGO- Non Governmental Organisation

UN-United Nations

UNHCR-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
KEY MIGRATION TERMS

Asylum Seeker - A person who seeks safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than his or her own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments. In case of a negative decision, the person must leave the country and may be expelled, as may any non-national in an irregular or unlawful situation, unless permission to stay is provided on humanitarian or other related grounds.

Border - A line separating land territory or maritime zones of two States or subparts of States. It can also refer to a region that is found at the margin of settled and developed territory.

Immigration - A process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement.

Influx - A sudden arrival of non-nationals in a country, in large numbers.

Integration - Is the process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups. It generally refers to a two-way process of adaptation by migrants and host societies, while the particular requirements for acceptance by a host society vary from country to country.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) - Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

Refugee - A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the
country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

**Repatriation** - The personal right of a refugee, prisoner of war or a civil detainee to return to his or her country of nationality under specific conditions laid down in various international instruments (Geneva Conventions, 1949 and Protocols, 1977, the Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, Annexed to the Fourth Hague Convention, 1907, human rights instruments as well as customary international law).
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

In 1980, Samuel Doe seized control of the government of Liberia. Doe was the first non Americo-Liberian President in the country’s history. Americo-Liberians are the descendants of freed African-Americans who founded and became the ruling class in Liberia. During his presidency, Doe gave virtually all positions of power to people from his own Krahn ethnic group and maltreated most other ethnic groups (Adebajo 2002).

In 1989, Charles Taylor, an Americo-Liberian, formerly in Doe’s government, overthrew Doe from a base in Côte d'Ivoire, using mostly ethnic Gio and Mano forces. Taylor’s regime targeted Krahn and Mandingo who were viewed as Doe-supporters. Liberia erupted in civil war, which lasted until 1996 when there was temporary peace which allowed for the 1997 elections (Adebajo 2002). The elections resulted in Taylor’s victory, but fighting continued until 2003. More than 200,000 people were killed in Liberia’s on and off civil war from 1989 to 2003, and up to 750,000 are believed to have fled, most to nearby West African countries (Dick 2002). A peace agreement, Taylor’s resignation and exile to Nigeria in 2003 led to the United Nations declaring Liberia safe in 2004 and the onset of repatriation initiatives. By March 2007, approximately 94,000 Liberians had been repatriated, but many are still abroad because they believe their country remains unsafe (Saul 2007; UN News Service 2007). There have been ethnic and geographic patterns to resettlement. Most refugees returning to Liberia from October 2004 to April 2007 went to Lofa county and Nimba county, home areas for Mandingo,
Mano and Gio; fewer returned to Grand Gedeh county a sparsely-populated, predominantly Krahn area (Cephas 2007). The slow return of the Krahn suggests that Liberia remains unsafe for them and that their gains in social status during the Doe regime enhanced their ability to settle outside of West Africa.

The cause of forced migrants is not only attributed to violent arm conflicts. poverty, social strife, political, economic and cultural upheavals and environmental hazards are some of the major issues that underpin refugee flow and insecurities in urban and rural refugee settlements specifically in developing countries (Harrell-Bond, 1998; Jacobsen, 2001; Fabos & Kibreab, 2003; UNHCR, 2008, 2010). Most developing countries that host refugees in organized camps and settlements, environmental threats associated with the inadequate disposal of municipal solid waste are critical to security of the environment that need to be solved.

The refugee crisis is significant because displacement and encampment of refugees has significant environmental implications for the host country (Morel, 2009). During the mass influx of refugees, camps are quickly built to temporarily host refugees as host governments and UNHCR seek a durable solution (Stein, 1986; Michel, 2002; Schmidt, 2003; Low, 2005).

Most refugee camps become permanent settlements with little or no humanitarian assistance from UNHCR, international organizations and the host country due to several reasons, which include the restoration of political stability in the country of origin, budget cuts and government policies that hinder the local integration of the refugee population (Michel, 2002; Dick, 2002a; Agier, 2010; USG, 2011b). Cuny (1977) argued that due to the urgency with which camps are built, they often do not meet the recommended planning and layout structures and facilities recommended by UNHCR to contain large refugee population over a longer period of time.
The temporary refugee camps often become the permanent settlements that compromise the integrity of the local environment and undermine the safety of both the refugee population and local host communities (J. Crisp and Jacobsen, 1998). Environmental threats such as scarcity of land, to water and forest resources, the disposal and management of solid waste as well as environmental degradation could potentially lead to conflicts and hostile relationships between the refugee population and local host communities (Karen Jacobsen, 2002; Addo, 2008).

Since 1990, Liberian refugees have since lived in Ghana with humanitarian aid from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Dick, 2002a). Between October 1990 and December 2003, a number of Liberian refugees at the Buduburam settlement was estimated to have reached 45,000. The settlement also hosted smaller refugee populations from Togo, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone. This research examines the extent of Ghanaian media coverage of the Liberian refugee, their social integration, host nations policy and post conflict life.

Among the 8.4 million refugees, Liberian refugees are among those. The scope of this research is limited to Liberian refugees who fled persecution in their country to seek safety in Ghana, Buduburam, securing international law protection (UNHCR 2006). Displaced group or individuals who have been displaced by war, famine or persecution and reside within the borders of their country are covered under the international law (UNHCR 2006).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The very complicated issue of migration and refugees continues to hug news headlines because of the surprising cold attitude of the inhabitants of some host nations.
Across Europe and Africa, there are thousands of documentations that point to the hostile reception meted out to migrants and sometime hapless refugees.

While this challenge has been blamed on a myriad of factors, it has emerged that the media is often at the forefront of inciting negative perception of refugees through the kind of reportage they put out for public consumption.

This study attempts to answer the question of: how did the Ghanaian media contribute the negative framing of Liberian refugees during the height of the Liberian civil war?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to investigate the role played by the Ghanaian media in framing negative perception of Liberian refugees by the Ghanaian society.

The central objective of the study will attempt to cover the following as well:

- To examine the kind of approach used by the Ghanaian media when reporting on Liberian refugees.
- To determine if the style of reporting by the media was responsible for inciting the public against Liberian refugees
- To analyze the relationship between the Ghanaian media and the Liberian refugee community.
- To discover possible solutions to effectively end biased media reportage capably causing disaffection for refugees who may take refuge in Ghana in future.
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The world is now a global village where no one is an island. In the world today, every nation’s misfortune must concern others; as turning a blind eye to a neighbour’s predicament could effectively cause a spill over that the whole world may struggle to contain.

It is for this reason that issues of migration, though very controversial, must be handled with a great deal of circumspection; especially by the media.

The crucial role played by the modern media means it is important to put in place scrutiny mechanisms to ensure the media doesn’t act irresponsibly when reporting on refugees.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, Ghana has had to play host to thousands of war refugees fleeing violence. Liberia, Togo, Sierra Leone and most recently, Ivory Coast have all endured the chaos of war; necessitating mass movement of displaced persons outside the borders of these nations.

As a pivotal member of both ECOWAS and the AU, Ghana has and continues to receive encomiums on the stellar role she played not only in restoring lasting peace to these warring nations but also for opening her doors to thousands of displaced persons who thronged to Ghana for safety.

The media’s role in all aspects of society has been crucial since time in memorial hence these review to analyse the role the media has played in refugee movement reportage.

2.2 GLOBAL MEDIA REPORTAGE ON REFUGEES

The dehumanizing plight that many a refugee is subjected to is partly due to the negative role that the media plays. This mooted by Esses, Medianu, and Lawson (2013, p. 518) who investigated the role media played in promoting dehumanization of immigrants and refugees in societies where the sense of insecurity is rife.

The despicable depictions of refugees and immigrants as phony, veiled terrorists, or carriers of contagious diseases, set the stage for society to view refugees with suspicion and contempt. This is a sad commentary that must be reversed to prevent a people already pained and traumatised from enduring even more torment.

6
Rather than heaping more frustration on refugees by damaging their chance of acceptance and integration, movies themed on refugee situations must chronicle refugee’s travails and seek to climax such with triumph to both encourage the world refugee population and help the larger society to better understand the circumstances of refugees. This is a thought expressed by Wright (2002, p.64), who analysed the photographic representation of refugees in different forms of media, such as film, where he found the media images of refugees as affected by traditions of Christian iconography, in reference to the forced migration (p.53).

Negative portrayals of Syrian refugees in social media were summarized by Gajjala and Rettberg (2016), in a short essay about the stereotypical image of men from Middle East that generally constructs danger. The portrayals of social media that emphasized danger depicted Middle Eastern male refugees as potential rapists, terrorists, cowards, or even as non-masculine (pp.179-180).

The online portrayal of Syrian refugee women in global and mainstream media was studied by Alhayek (2014), who examined a case study of social media, in application to one feminist campaign on Facebook, called ”Refugees Not Captives”. The study discussed how the discourses of the online campaign promoted orientalist depictions of Syrian women, and overlooked the voices of women refugees in an act of double marginalization (p.696). This marginalizing discourse came in accordance with the Western media and its dominant representations of women in Arab culture (p.700). In contrast to these negative and misrepresentative portrayals of Syrian refugees in social media, Salhab (2015, pp.1-2) compared some excerpts from both of the mainstream media and the social media coverage of the same issues in refugee crisis, recommending that social media is more capable of presenting the truth out of the crisis. This is due to a set of factors that could represent the
advantages of social media, such as its being independent and able to work for public interest, rather than being profit-oriented or owned by media tycoons. The Palestinian refugee issue was investigated by Khatib (2009), who focused on the editorials and reports published in The Guardian and The Times, regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948 (p.4). The study found a little coverage of the refugee issue that underwent various shifts and increased over time. This coverage suggested resolutions for Palestinian refugees outside Israel, such as the resettlement in Arab countries, framing internal solutions as infeasible. It took the Guardian sixteen years to firstly demand the right of return (p.29).

### 2.3 NORTH AMERICAN REFUGEES

The representation of Cuban refugees in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s was questioned by Current (2008, p.42), who pinpointed how positive portrayals of incoming refugees from Cuba were present in the popular American media as a result of a public relations campaign launched by the government of the United States to pave the way for their arrival. These portrayals promoted Cuban refugees as possessing quality economic, social, and racial characteristics, as well as adopting anti-communist ideological perspectives that was framed as valuable.

The current refugee crisis was examined by Berry, Garcia-Blanco, and Moore (2015), as covered by the press of five European countries, namely, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Sweden, in 2014 and 2015. The content analysis reflected the cross-national disparities between the five countries in reporting about the issue, where the most positive portrayals of refugees and migrants were found in Sweden. While Sweden, Spain, and Italy reflected a
homogenous coverage of the issue, internal variations in reporting within the national press systems were found in Germany and the United Kingdom that reflected a trend of polarization (p.10). Few news reports tackled the preferable impacts that asylum seekers may have on the countries of resettlement, or addressed the resolution of the issues that drive the influx of refugees out of their home countries (p.12).

Another comparative analysis of press in the United Kingdom, France, and Italy was conducted by Caviedes (2015), who examined the framing of immigration. The least negative portrayal of asylum was found in Italy, as the Italian press balanced its coverage between humanitarian and monolithic depictions of refugees. In France, asylum was framed in the far right discourse that associates immigration with problems, while in the United Kingdom asylum seekers were framed in the press as economic burdens (p.910).

In Finland, Järvinen (2015) investigated the articles and photographs published in one Finnish newspaper in 2013 and 2014 to determine depictions of refugees and migrants crossing the Central Mediterranean. Results showed that mixed migrants were more commonly framed in securitized contexts (p.58), rather than humanitarian frames. This was achieved through non-identification, using metaphors, and reporting of deaths in numbers rather than human faces. In addition, asylum and migration were depicted negatively in Finnish print (p.59).

In Spain, the five most read daily newspapers were analysed by Durán (2013), with reference to their discourse regarding Lampedusa crisis, or the incoming flow of people from North Africa following the Arab Spring in 2011. The comparative analysis showed that displaced incomers to Europe during Lampedusa crisis were framed as intruder immigrants,
rather than being framed as asylum-seekers and refugees who are victims. This frame was dominant in the analysis regardless of the newspaper and the time period.

In Serbia, Volarević (2013) examined daily newspapers between 1996 and 2012 to quantitatively analyse the articles published about the issues of refugees and internally displaced persons, during 11 different intervals of time (p.33). It was found that the issues of refugees and the return of internally displaced persons were not tackled on a regular basis during different intervals, but the frequency was unbalanced, where the average rate of appearance of these articles is less than one article per issue (p.94).

2.4 UNITED KINGDOM

In the United Kingdom, Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) explored articles published in the British press between 1996 and 2005 through a corpus-based approach, in order to investigate the portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers. In general, the results pinpointed negative portrayals of these groups, as well as the inconsistency of their definitions in the media, in addition to the existence and promotion of terms that does not make sense, for instance, illegal refugee (p.5).

In a similar manner, Kaye (1998) examined the language of three broadsheet newspapers in the United Kingdom, namely, the Times, the Guardian, and the Independent, in order to determine how the press framed the refugee issues between 1990 and 1995. This analysis was concerned with how the press described the status of refugees, and whether they were framed as economically driven refugees (pp.168-169). Results indicated that the expression of economic migrants was used in about one third of the articles. Although referring to refugees by harmful expressions, such as bogus, were found in more than half of the study sample, 35% of the cases this language was used in the context criticising this usage (pp.171-172).
With regard to a particular event, the portrayal of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in the British press was explored by Khosravinik (2009) at the time of two different occasions: the 2005 British general election and the 1999 Balkan conflict (p.477).

Depiction of asylum seekers as a threat in the United Kingdom was examined by Innes (2010) in application to the British media narratives. The results of the study pinpointed three main aspects emphasized by the mass media and public discourse in the United Kingdom in depicting refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants. These three aspects or tiers include the portrayal of asylum seekers as a physical threat as a result of depicting them as criminals (p.464), the economic threat or the fear that they could prevent British citizens from welfare (p.467), and the threat to identity they pose as they live inside the British borders.

2.5 FRAMING OF ARAB REFUGEES IN WESTERN MEDIA

Research focus on the framing of Arabs in the international media space has gain huge documentation long before the emergence of ISIS and the infamous 9/11 attack on the United States. Having said this, it is also worthy of note that previous studies on the framing of Arabs by the global media was not holistic as the media disposition of the western media was often conspicuously neglected.

Western distortion of Arabs was discussed by Ridouani (2011, p.1), who contended that stereotyping Arabs is not a recent trend, but rather an old tradition that could be traced back to the earliest interactions between Arabs and Westerners; when Arabs entered Europe, or since Crusade Wars.
In the field of media, and according to Hamada (2001, p.32), the Western journalists were found to have negative stereotypes, which helped in the formation of false, biased, and distorted images of Arabs and Muslims (p.32).

This pre-existing disposition towards Arab’s is an obvious testament to the perception challenge faced by many Arab refugees who were forced by the violence that followed the Arab spring. Many Arab refugees suffer rejection and sometimes fail to achieve any form of integration in migrant settlements in Europe especially because the media have laid a negative perception foundation on which the western society builds their perception of Arabs.

For instance, when two Palestinian refugees were arrested in terror-related crimes in the United States (Shoichet & Berlinger, 2016), the reporters employed a thematic frame, rather than an episodic frame that would tackle the case as individual episode that must not be generalised on all of Arab refugees. The employed thematic frame posited the question of whether the United States should keep accepting refugees with Syrian ties.

On the contrary, episodic frames were used in the news reports to frame peaceful Arab refugees who fled the war. For example, when one of the guests of the State of the Union who will be seated with Michelle Obama was a Syrian refugee named Refaai Hamo, the frame used was an episodic frame (Malloy & Acosta, 2016).

Regarding the humanity security frames used for reporting on Arab refugees and asylum seekers, the majority of the articles were found to frame them in security terms, rather than in humanitarian terms. Whether the news story was about the security measures taken in order to deal with the huge numbers of arrivals (Shubert, 2016), or a suggested bill that made its way to the Senate in order to limit the entry of Iraqi and Syrian refugees (Barrett, 2016a), the
frames were mostly discussing the refugee crisis in security terms. Furthermore, the countries that welcomed Arab refugees, such as Turkey, were blamed for causing domestic instability that could extend to the rest of Europe (Watson, 2016).

2.6 GHANAIAN MEDIA REPORTAGE ON REFUGEES

True to their much-touted hospitality, Ghanaians welcomed Liberian refugees when civil war threatened the very existence of the African country. It was commonplace to see families, and concerned individuals offering food, clothing, transportation, rented rooms, or leased properties for reduced fees to assist refugees (Dick 2002).

Daily Graphic, which is a microcosm of the vibrant Ghanaian media, echoed the government and people of Ghana’s determination to ensure a peaceful resolution to the Liberian conflict (Xinhua General Overseas News Service 1990).

At the height of the civil war „The Mirror Newspaper“ described the situation in Liberia as one that constituted a threat to the stability of the entire West African sub-region (Xinhua General Overseas News Service 1991).

By 1993, media coverage of Buduburam, the primary settlement of Liberian refugees focused on official corruption within the settlement, and its rising death toll from cholera, diarrhoea and malaria (Dick 2002). Additional concerns were raised by the press about refugees when a second major wave of 1,559 Liberian refugees arrived in Ghana aboard the ship the „Bulk Challenge-Lagos“ in May 1996, following renewed fighting in Monrovia (Dick 2002; Zinnah 2005).
Figure 1: Shows the district where Budumburam Liberia Refugee Camp is located

The new round of refugees necessitated the creation of a second, smaller settlement at Sanzule-Krisan near the border with Côte d'Ivoire in Ghana’s southwest.
The relatively small Krisan settlement supported 4,000 Liberian refugees along with refugees from Rwanda, Sudan, Togo and Côte d’Ivoire (Owusu 2000; UNHCR 2006a). With the recent arrival of additional refugees and donor participation waning, anxiety within the government and the general public over the expense of supporting these new groups increased. Although, the press did not single out the activities of Liberians, security concerns and the financial strain of refugees on Ghana were highlighted (King 2007).

The Liberian’s relative success in Ghana began to attract Liberian refugees from neighbouring Côte d’Ivoire, especially after the 1999 coup there. Liberian refugees from Côte d’Ivoire included less-educated and more vulnerable groups like women, children, young teens, the elderly and the disabled. Ghana’s press, which at the time consisted of government papers, including dailies with relatively wide distribution, and private papers published weekly or bi-weekly, raised concerns that recent arrivals, especially unemployed youths, would be vulnerable to recruitment by mercenaries (Kwansah-Aidoo 2003). Mention of Liberians as rebels, armed robbers and prostitutes filled the pages of Ghana’s government-owned and largest circulating paper, Daily Graphic and, to a lesser extent, the „most important” privately owned paper, The Chronicle (Gocking 2005:208; King 2007). Interviews indicate the resonance of these descriptions with Ghanaians, who described popular images of Liberians being „problems ... people who don’t respect our laws” (Agbale 2007) and who engage in „robberies” and „prostitution” (Agbale 2007; Amedahe 2007).

The gradual withdrawal of external support for Liberian refugees coupled with the restoration of temporal peace in Liberia in 1997 caused the Ghanaian society to begin to question the logic behind the continued settlement of Liberian refugees in Ghana, especially as some of them were
thought to living better than the average Ghanaian (Dick 2002). Ghanaian radio stations voiced anti-refugee and anti-Liberian rhetoric, adding to an ever-widening range of concerns expressed about Liberians in the print media (King 2007).

Incidents of Liberian refugees vandalised a UNHCR office, which houses the police station in Budumburam. During the mayhem, angry youth of Kasoa and Budumburam infuriated by the acts of the refugees, massed up against the refugees, who had blocked the road to Winneba from the camp. The angry youth were prevented from attacking the refugees as they all sought safety in their rooms. (Charles B.O, 2001). Banner in figure

Charles Benoni O. 2001, Refugees on Rampage; *Daily Graphic March, 26*; Issue No. 148174

![Figure 1: Daily Graphic, March 26, 2001](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh)
Consequently, some Liberian refugees found themselves as the targets of violence by Ghanaians, and seemingly ignored when they complained of such violence to police, or imprisoned for years without apparent cause (Carvin 2005; King 2006; King 2007). Reporters from Ghana’s “The Chronicle Newspaper” called on Liberian refugees to “reject criminality”, noting that in the first four months of 2002, according to police statistics, more than 100 crimes had been committed at Buduburam, including 49 cases of assault, 32 cases of theft, 12 armed robberies and 11 cases of fraud (Garblah and White 2002).

When refugee support from UNHCR and other development partners diminished, the Government of Ghana introduced a framework to re-examine who could claim refugee status. The Ghana Refugee Board, which had been established in 1993 as the local counterpart to the UNHCR, started to interview the approximately 22,000 Liberians at Buduburam. Only 4,000 were found eligible to register as refugees, while the remaining 18,000 stayed at Buduburam with uncertain legal status (Dick 2002; Garblah and White 2002).

Subsequently, the Daily Graphic and the Chronicle portrayed those remaining 18,000 refugees as not being true refugees, but instead using the settlement as a base from which to run goods to Monrovia for profit. This caused Ghanaians to accuse Liberians of taking advantage of Ghanaian hospitality.

An article in the Chronicle described the settlement as full of “dubious characters”, of whom 4,000 were suspected combatants, many with assault weapons, and that because “of the skills, weapons, the yearning for action and the spoils of war that a sizeable section of the Budumbram (sic.) community has, the camp has become fertile ground for the recruiting of mercenaries for
the battles in the sub-region of West Africa (Ohene 2003). The same article raised concerns over Buduburam residents being a source of drugs, disease and potential coups.

Although Ghana’s print media continued to present an exaggerated image of Liberians as criminals and HIV carriers, the problems faced by refugees remained under-reported (Bernard 2007).

**Liberian Social Integration not helped by Negative Coverage in Ghanaian Print Media:**

Print media in Ghana, rather than aiding the social integration of Liberian refugees, tended to thwart it through its predominantly negative coverage of the group. Negative press coverage of Liberians helped reinforce unfavourable impressions Ghanaians might have formed of Liberians from personal interactions. The Chronicle noted the “swagger and arrogance of the typical Liberian refugee”, and Ghanaians interacting with Liberians noted that Ghanaians’ complaints about Liberians were dismissed as due to jealousy (Dick 2002).

Press coverage emphasized Liberians, social and cultural difference from Ghanaians, and that Liberians had a penchant for making fun of Ghanaian culture. Liberians negatively regarded Ghanaian food, social system, the way businesses are named after Bible verses, and the odd logos or slogans, which typically appear on buses (Dick 2002; Cooper 2005).

**2.7 LIBERIAN REFUGEES IN GHANA**

Liberians began entering Ghana in greater numbers as refugees in mid- to late-1990, shortly after the outbreak of civil war at home. Refugees chose Ghana for its general stability, reasonable economy and the widespread use of English (King 2007). Liberians were initially brought by air and sea to Ghana. Navy ships and merchant vessels cooperated with the military branch of the
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to bring refugees en masse (Dick 2002a). The majority of refugees represented the average Liberian, but a substantial number of the initial arrivals were younger, well-educated, urban-based professionals from Liberia’s capital of Monrovia or surrounding communities. They were brought to abandoned church premises at Gomoa Buduburam west of Ghana’s capital of Accra. By September 1990, there were 7,000 Liberians at Buduburam and more than 2,000 had left the facility and self-settled in Accra or communities nearby (Dolvo and Sondah 2001; Dick 2002a). The social composition of Ghana’s Liberian refugee population differed notably from the hundreds of thousands of poorer, rural, often illiterate Liberians who fled by roads and on foot to neighbouring Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Côte d’Ivoire (Owusu 2000).

The initial response of Ghanaians to the plight of the relatively well-educated Liberians was quite warm and welcoming. Ghanaian churches, families, and concerned individuals offered food, clothing, transportation, rented rooms or leased properties for reduced fees to assist refugees (Dick 2002). Ghana’s government newspaper, Daily Graphic, reported that the country would do whatever possible to ensure a peaceful resolution to the Liberian conflict (Xinhua General Overseas News Service 1990). The Liberians were the first large-scale arrival of refugees in Ghana since the 1983 forced repatriation of more than one million Ghanaians from Nigeria; their return had been associated with a rise in robberies and homicides by youths with poor employment prospects (Gocking 2005). Refugees at the Buduburam, with the help of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), quickly created a more permanent and stable atmosphere within the settlement. They built a primary school and a junior high school by 1991 (Dick 2002). But the settlement was overcrowded, lacked proper sanitation and basic social services, especially in the first year when Ghana had no official laws regarding refugees and no United
Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) support (Owusu 2000; Dolvo and Sondah 2001; Agbale 2007). The ongoing unrest in Liberia was described by Ghana’s The Mirror as threatening the stability of the entire West African sub-region (Xinhua General Overseas News Service 1991).

2.8 BUDUMBURAM LIBERIA REFUGEE CAMP

The settlement was established by UNHCR with the help from the Government of Ghana on October 1990 to host Liberian refugees fleeing the civil war in their country. The settlement is in the Gomoa-East District of Central Region in Ghana (Shown in figure 1) and it is 32 kilometers from national capital of Ghana, Accra. The land on which the settlement is belongs to Gomoa Buduburam, part of the Gomoa-East District. The traditional council is Gomoa Akyempim Traditional Council, they are the custodians of the land (GNA, 2011).

The land was used as a mental facility for those suffering from acute mental illness. The facility was shut down at the time of arrival of the refugees. The influx of the refugees caused the Government of Ghana and UNHCR to lease the land for 17 years from the Gomoa Akyempim. The Contract was extended in 2007, though the elders of the council complained of not receiving the lease payment (GNA, 2011).

The camp is situated at Gomoa East District, surrounded by Kasoa, Fetteh and Awutu community. Those refugees who arrived later when the camp were all fully occupied settled at this surrounding communities. This people are able to access resources from Ghana.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

This section explores the methods and activities adopted in the study. The researcher attempts to review Ghanaian media coverage of the Liberian refugees in Ghana “Budumburam”.

This chapter covers research design, research scope, ethical considerations and limitations and delimitations.

3.2 TYPES OF RESEARCH

Research design can be defined as the blueprint that dictates the line of action to be taken in relation to the research. They serve as the guideline which help in data collection and its subsequently analysis and conclusion. The choice of research design is determined by the research topic, the directions and its nature (Yussif, 2011). In this study, the researcher adopts descriptive research method. Descriptive research attempt to depict a vivid profile of event or situation (Robson, 2002). It is key to have a detailed idea on the situation on which data is being gathered to have an elaborate idea on the situation. The topic seeks to review the role played by the Ghanaian media in framing negative perception of Liberian refugees by the Ghanaian society. As Osuala (2001) said, multiple data sources ascertain the validity and quality of the study.

3.3 RESEARCH SCOPE

The scope of this paper is limited to refugee situation in general perspective and narrows down to Liberian refugees in Ghana who have fled the civil war in their country and sought asylum in Ghana (UNHCR 2006).
3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Research strategies and data collection deals with the tactics or approached adopted. The strategy could be exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research (Yin, 2003). It could be quantitative or qualitative. It should be noted that no research method or strategy is superior or inferior to the other. What matters is, it enables the researcher to meet all the research objectives and questions (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003).

Data collection helps systematic analysis of various data sources. This study draws data from both secondary and primary data on refugee situations across Africa and more focus on refugee situations in Ghana.

This study is based on literature and documents reviewed as secondary method data collection and analysis of previous works or studies conducted by other researcher. These sources include articles, research material, online articles, news, and academic books on the subject. Data used stem from first hand articles from Graphic Group, Times Corporation and The Chronicle. This include reportage dating back to early 1990s. This helped in reviewing the literature on the refugee situation in Ghana and Buduburam.

3.5 SOURCE OF DATA

This study is based on secondary data which is mainly qualitative materials obtained from research journals, articles, books, newspapers articles in Ghana, reports, online articles and thesis related to this research. First hand data was obtained from Daily Graphic, Ghanaian Times, The Chronicle, The Balm Library, University of Ghana and The Padmore Research Library.
Search was done online for data from organizations and educational institutions on research done in the field of Refugees in Ghana, all these data helped in supplementing the information gathered locally.

3.6 RESEARCH CHALLENGES

Most institutions and department were reluctant to share the data and at some departments, data was not readily available for analysis. Most Government agencies classified their document and staffs are unwilling to share them and also worth noting, some departments have their documents unorganized and this pose challenges during analysis. At some media houses, the staffs requested payment for assistance.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Finnis (1983), ethics is a branch of philosophy, said to have been initiated by Aristotle, which takes human action as its subject matter (Seale et al, 2004:116).

Ethical consideration deals with the relevance and appropriateness of the researcher during the research in accordance to human right most especially the refugees (Saunders et al, 2009). Narrowing it further, research ethics relates to questions asked, how the researcher formulates and clarify the research topic, collect data, analyse data and write up the research findings in moral and responsible manner (Cooper and Schindler 2008)
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 GHANAIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES

By 1993, media coverage of Buduburam focused on official corruption within the settlement, and its rising death toll from cholera, diarrhea and malaria (Dick 2002). Additional concerns were raised by the press about refugees when a second major wave of 1,559 Liberian refugees arrived in Ghana aboard the ship the “Bulk Challenge-Lagos” in May 1996, following renewed fighting in Monrovia (Dick 2002; Zinnah 2005). The new round of refugees necessitated the creation of a second, smaller settlement at Sanzule-Krisan near the border with Côte d’Ivoire in Ghana’s southwest.

The relatively small Krisan settlement supported 4,000 Liberian refugees along with refugees from Rwanda, Sudan, Togo and Côte d’Ivoire (Owusu 2000; UNHCR 2006a). With the recent arrival of additional refugees and donor participation waning, anxiety within the government and the general public over the expense of supporting these new groups increased. Although, the activities of Liberians were not singled out by the press, security concerns and the financial strain of refugees on Ghana were highlighted (King 2007). By the mid- to late-1990s, sanitation and other social services within the refugee camps and settlements drastically improved.

Residential areas for the refugees began to resemble thriving neighbourhoods with new churches, shops, soccer clubs and markets. The press picked up on the frustration of Ghanaians who were struggling financially, but not eligible for the external aid received by refugees.

The Liberian’s relative success in Ghana began to attract Liberian refugees from neighbouring Côte d’Ivoire, especially after the 1999 coup there. Liberian refugees from Côte d’Ivoire included less-educated and more vulnerable groups like women, children, young teens, the elderly and the disabled. Ghana’s press, which at the time consisted of government papers,
including dailies with relatively wide distribution, and private papers published weekly or bi-weekly, raised concerns that recent arrivals, especially unemployed youths, would be vulnerable to recruitment by mercenaries (Kwansah-Aidoo 2003). Mention of Liberians as rebels, armed robbers and prostitutes filled the pages of Ghana”s government-owned and largest circulating paper, Daily Graphic and, to a lesser extent, the „most important” privately-owned paper, the Chronicle (Gocking 2005:208; King 2007). Interviews indicate the resonance of these descriptions with Ghanaians, who described popular images of Liberians being „problems ... people who don”t respect our laws” (Agbale 2007) and who engage in „robberies“ and „prostitution” (Agbale 2007; Amedahe 2007).

Increasingly, conflicts erupted between Liberians and Ghanaians as Liberians squatted on land outside the overcrowded Buduburam settlement. Conflicts also erupted within Buduburam when religious leaders were accused of impropriety with external aid and forming churches for personal benefit (Dolvo and Sondah 2001).

Diminished External Support Fuels Ghanaian Media Criticism of Liberian Refugees. Temporary peace was restored in Liberia in July 1997. Around this time, the UNHCR began phasing out support for Liberian refugees to encourage self-sufficiency. With elections in Liberia, Ghanaians increasingly began to question why Liberians needed to remain in Ghana, especially when some Liberians were doing better than the average Ghanaian (Dick 2002). Ghanaian radio stations voiced anti-refugee and anti-Liberian rhetoric, adding to an ever-widening range of concerns expressed about Liberians in the print media (King 2007).

By mid-2000, the UNHCR withdrew its assistance to Liberian refugees throughout West Africa in the hope that this would encourage refugees to repatriate. Yet, many at Buduburam, not yet self-sufficient, relied heavily on remittances from relatives and friends in Ghana or the United
States, and, in the absence of remittances, some resorted to prostitution and other socially unacceptable acts, which led to more negative press (Dick 2002; King 2007). Some Liberian refugees found themselves the targets of violence by Ghanaians, and seemingly ignored when they complained of such violence to police, or imprisoned for years without apparent cause (Carvin 2005; King 2006; King 2007). Reporters from Ghana’s The Chronicle called on Liberian refugees to „reject criminality”, noting that in the first four months of 2002, according to police statistics, more than 100 crimes had been committed at Buduburam, including 49 cases of assault, 32 cases of theft, 12 armed robberies and 11 cases of fraud (Garblah and White 2002).

When the UNHCR and many NGOs withdrew their support, the Government of Ghana re-examined who could claim refugee status. The Ghana Refugee Board, which had been established in 1993 as the local counterpart to the UNHCR, started to interview the approximately 22,000 Liberians at Buduburam. Only 4,000 were found eligible to register as refugees, while the remaining 18,000 stayed at Buduburam with uncertain legal status (Dick 2002; Garblah and White 2002). Subsequently, Daily Graphic and the Chronicle portrayed those remaining 18,000 refugees as not being true refugees, but instead using the settlement as a base from which to run goods to Monrovia for profit.

Ghanaians accused Liberians of taking advantage of Ghanaian hospitality and of repeatedly entering Liberia, demonstrating that the Taylor Frontani, Silvestri and Brown: Media Image and Social Integration regime was not a real threat. An article in the Chronicle described the settlement as full of „dubious characters”, of whom 4,000 were suspected combatants, many with assault weapons, and that because „of the skills, weapons, the yearning for action and the spoils of war that a sizeable section of the Budumberam (sic.) community has, the camp has become fertile ground for the recruiting of mercenaries for the battles in the sub-region of West Africa”
(Ohene 2003). The same article raised concerns over Buduburam residents being a source of drugs, disease and potential coups.

Liberians who did not receive remittances, UNHCR support or living wages through informal sector work became more desperate as health services closed for lack of funds. In the absence of UNHCR-supported community health programmes, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS rates rose. Subsidized educational and health services were now full cost, leaving „restless youths” to form gangs which added to Buduburam’s negative image (Dick 2002:21).

In March 2001, riots broke out at Buduburam after Ghanaian police released the prime suspect in a series of knifings who had been captured by settlement residents (UNIRIN 2001). Subsequently, 22 Liberians were deemed national security threats and imprisoned (Dick 2002). Although Ghana’s print media continued to present an exaggerated image of Liberians as criminals and HIV carriers, the problems faced by refugees remained under-reported (Bernard 2007).

---

**Liberian Social Integration not helped by Negative Coverage in Ghanaian Print Media:**

Print media in Ghana, rather than aiding the social integration of Liberian refugees, tended to thwart it through its predominantly negative coverage of the group. Negative press coverage of Liberians helped reinforce unfavorable impressions Ghanaians might have formed of Liberians from personal interactions. The Chronicle noted the „swagger and arrogance of the typical Liberian refugee”, and Ghanaians interacting with Liberians noted that Ghanaians“ complaints about Liberians were dismissed as due to jealousy (Dick 2002).
Press coverage emphasized Liberians, social and cultural difference from Ghanaians, and that Liberians had a penchant for making fun of Ghanaian culture. Liberians negatively regarded Ghanaian food, social system, the way businesses are named after Bible verses, and the odd logos or slogans which typically appear on buses (Dick 2002; Cooper 2005).

Poor social integration had its price. Liberians reported not being allowed to sell produce in Ghanaian markets when others heard their accents (Dick 2002). Instead of being offered discounted housing rates like early arrivals, recently arrived Liberian refugees reported of being charged more than average prices because Ghanaians believed Liberians had access to US dollars through remittances (Dick 2002; Jaman 2007).

Ghanaian media coverage of Buduburam improved slightly after measures were taken to reduce crime in the settlement. Nonetheless, infrequent neutral or positive press was insufficient to create a more favourable impression of Liberians among the Ghanaian public. Overall, in most news articles, Liberian refugees continued to be framed as criminals, disease carriers and security risks. This held true even when journalists simultaneously noted improved security or self-help initiatives in the settlements (Dencik 2003).

The Ghanaian press not only portrayed Liberians as socially and culturally different, but also as people to be feared and avoided. The coverage of Buduburam in The Chronicle in 2004 included stories on the need for increased HIV/AIDS awareness training for settlement youth, security issues in the settlement, and a plea to Liberians to refrain from interfering with Ghana’s elections. The Ghana Review International (2004) offered thanks to donors who assisted
Liberians to go to school because „without education some of the youth could become mercenaries, armed robbers and drug addicts, and even contract the deadly HIV/AIDS disease“. Articles with less inflammatory language appeared in the privately owned, issues oriented, weekly Public Agenda and The Accra Mail (Gocking 2005); they highlighted the considerable aid to Liberians at Buduburam, for sanitary facilities, technical training and scholarships. Such stories emphasized the financial burden Liberians placed on Ghanaians and did not support the social integration of refugees.

4.1 TOGOLESE REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS IN GHANA

Togolese has a long relationship with Ghana to the extent that it is difficult to distinguish an immigrant and refugee; which cannot be said of the relationship between Ghana and Liberia community (Agbale 2007; Amedale 2007). These ties are mostly associated with Volta region, which shares a border with Togo whilst the people are mostly Ewes and Guans. They are the third largest ethnic group in Ghana, representing about 13% of the total population (Gocking 2005). Almost half of the Ewe sought reunification with Togoland rather than integrating with Ghana during Trans Togo-Ghana referendum (Nugent 2000).

Based on their common ancestry and customs, Ghana’s Ewe view Togo’s Ewe, the country’s largest ethnic group, as kin rather than foreigners (Akyea 1998). The Ewe share many cultural practices: chieftaincies and queen mothers, shared festivals, proverbs and places of worship, including Catholic or evangelical Protestant churches (Akyea 1998; Nugent 2000; Nugent 2002). Togolese generally live in villages separate from, but in close proximity to, Ghanaian Ewe villages (Gavua 2000). In the Volta region, a „traditional area“ generally consists of several
villages and hamlets. Some of these settlements are considered Togolese, based on their first language (Nugent 2002; Amedahe 2007).

Togolese refugees who arrived in Ghana in late January to early February 1993 consisted largely of women and children. Men generally stayed behind to watch over the family’s property, as did the elderly who would find the journey difficult. By mid-February 1993, after the collapse of peace talks in France between Togo’s warring factions, additional waves of Togolese refugees arrived in Ghana, including many able-bodied men and youths assisting disabled and elderly friends and relatives (BBC 1993d). The large numbers of Togolese refugees initially were welcomed to United Nations-sponsored refugee centres at Aflao (Aflaho) and Denu (Ghana-Togo border towns) as well as Klikor near Aflao (BBC News 1994), though their arrival briefly raised concerns about congestion and the potential for cholera outbreaks (BBC 1993a).

Unlike most Liberian refugee settlements, most Togolese centres were relatively small and somewhat integrated within existing villages (BBC News 1994). At Aflao, the UNHCR funded the conversion of an abandoned school compound into Togolese refugee housing. Only one month after the refugees’ arrival, officials from Ghana’s Ministry of Health reported not being able to effectively distinguish Togolese refugees from the local population and that Togolese refugees were often going to local health centres and paying for services rather than making use of free camp services (BBC 1993a). The UNHCR reported some concern over lack of shelter and proper sanitation for refugees at Klikor which housed up to 10,000 refugees but noted that most refugees were in good condition and „many were living with families of the same tribe”, being hosted by humble fishing and farming families and in the palaces of paramount chiefs (Associated Press 1993). By and large, approximately 100,000 refugees had effectively „disappeared” into the Volta region (BBC 1993b; BBC News 1994).
Unlike Liberian refugees, Togolese refugees were entering a country whose President, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, shared their Ewe ethnic background (Gocking 2005). The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation’s radio coverage of Togolese refugees focused on their shared history with Ghanaians, called for the government of Togo to cease terrorising its citizenry, and asked that the United Nations establish more welcome centres to help Ghanaians effectively host refugees in border towns with rising food prices (BBC 1993c). Many international NGOs and UN agencies offered financial assistance and several Members of Parliament offered to use personal allowances to aid the refugees (IPS 1993). Overall, Togolese refugees appear to have been well integrated since their arrival in 1993 and only left Ghana in the mid-1990s when the situation at home improved.

The next larger wave of Togolese arrived in Ghana in 2005. The Ghanaian press compared these masses of rapidly arriving Togolese to Liberians, expressed security concerns, and requested that Togolese be law abiding and considerate of their hosts (Public Agenda 2005). Particularly, Togolese refugees in Ghana without Volta region ties who sought refuge at the UNHCR-supported Krisan settlement received negative press. These settlement-based refugees, together with Liberians, led a November 9, 2005 protest at Krisan that led to Ghanaians questioning their presence (Ghana Review International 2005; USCRI 2006; King 2007). But negative press of Togolese refugees was short-lived because the majority of Togolese refugees in Ghana were quickly absorbed into approximately 114 villages and towns scattered across Ghana’s Volta region (UNHCR 2006a).
4.3 LIBERIAN RESPONSE TO THE GHANAIAN PRESS

Given the overall failure of the Ghanaian press to promote positive public dialogue about Liberians in Ghana in 2004, Liberian journalists Semantics King Jr. and Jos Garneo Cephas founded the Vision, a newspaper specifically aimed at overcoming the negative press the Buduburam settlement still received in Ghanaian newspapers. The newspaper sought to demystify the negative Buduburam image as an „AIDS-infested and crime-ridden blot and a training ground for mercenaries“ (DeSaybel 2006:33).

Articles in the Vision highlighted that much of the refugee population of approximately 30,000 at Buduburam consisted of dependent single parent women, children, elderly or disabled who suffered depression and post-traumatic stress (Kreitzer 2002; UNHCR 2006a; Cephas 2007a). These extremely vulnerable groups were also victims of mismanagement of funds by settlement staff, lack of staff encouragement to take more initiative, and poor English language skills (Kreitzer 2002; BRYCS 2004; Phelps 2007). The vulnerability of refugees did not become the focus of articles in the Ghanaian press. Instead, Ghanaians read about Liberians’ considerable remittances and improved conditions in Liberia. Few stories mentioned the true reality facing many refugees. Some Liberians had settled into a new found life in Ghana as some had made efforts to continue their studies which had been disrupted by the civil war back home in Liberia. For some, returning home was not an option at all – the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups faced political opposition by those who opposed Doe’s regime (Dick 2002; Romann 2006).

The Vision was an outlet for some Liberians to express their perspectives, but due to financial constraints the newspaper had intermittent and extremely limited circulation. It reached few Ghanaians beyond government officials and those who had contact with Buduburam for professional reasons. Liberians in Ghana and elsewhere expressed concern over how well they
would be tolerated by their host countries after the June 30, 2007 deadline for voluntary repatriation by Liberian refugees throughout West African refugee camps and settlements (UN News Service 2007). One Liberian in Ghana reported that his parents’ killers were now serving in the Johnson-Sirleaf government (King 2005). His sentiments are echoed by others (Carvin 2005).
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS:

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted to explore how the Ghanaian mass media contributed to the negative framing of Liberian refugees during the height of the Liberian civil war. With this in mind, the researcher stated four aims which were investigated in the research using online sources, United Nations official papers, government and independent Ghanaian newspapers.

Increased movement through international boundaries, although merely temporarily, escalates complications of civil and societal fitting for those who are not thorough legitimate associates of their country of refuge or impermanent residence. Which groups and sub-groups find greater acceptance and social integration, or marginalization and a failure to integrate socially, has much to do with numerous factors. Some of the factors significant in promoting acceptance and integration include the following:

(i) The degree of freedom of the press in the refugees’ country of resettlement.

(ii) The groups’ self-definition and how they are defined by the dominant group or host culture, including its media.

(iii) Whether the refugees are placed in large externally organized settlements or self-settle

(iv) The degree to which the refugees share a common ancestry or ethnicity with members of the host culture.
It has been established that the media is regularly on top of aggravating negative view of refugees through the kind of coverage they put out for community consumption (Frontani, Silvestri & Brown, 2009).

Some of the reasons noteworthy in determining whether the media is accountable for the negative perception of Liberian refugees are critically examined below.

Ghana’s newspaper content altered over time because of augmented liberties, but government limitations on the media left little room for reproach. Confirmation of the restrictions to press freedom in Ghana in 1990 comprised that “there were extra sports and lotto papers being circulated in the country than those that spread political and economic subjects” (Gocking 2005:201). Even though privately held media were permitted in Ghana later in 1993, reporters who published news items in opposition to the government regularly got sent to prison or prosecuted under its Criminal Libel laws which were not revoked up until 2001 (Kwansah-Aidoo 2003). Self-regulating radio stations and media multiplied in the mid- to late-1990s, but budget emergencies frequently led to diminutive life spans. For several remaining autonomous newspapers, concern over how extended democratic political structures and press freedoms would endure, led to broadcasting that was fundamentally unable to be differentiated from that of the government (Alhassan 2005; Nyamnjoh 2005; Duodu 2006).

Subsequently, press reportage of Liberian refugees did not vary considerably in Ghana’s most important government-sponsored (Daily Graphic) against its autonomous (the Chronicle, Public Agenda and others) papers. Such “self-editing” is not limited to the African setting, but fits fine per Herman and Chomsky’s (2002) breakdown of press treatment of politically-sensitive problems in the United States and the United Kingdom. Herman and Chomsky indicated that an
association amongst a country”s government and the governments of other countries influences what is considered „deserving” of reporting by the media. Unpleasant actions of groups pleasant to a government mostly are given sympathetic reportage which carries indignation at the group”s exploitation and a call for impartiality. Unkind conducts towards groups in opposition to a government normally fail to be recognised or is presented in impartially worded press reportage. Ghana”s Rawlings government buttressed Liberia”s anti-Krahn Taylor administration. The pro-Doe system Krahn were the major ethnic group in the Buduburam settlement (BRYCS 2004; King 2007)

Liberian refugees remained targets of what Herman and Chomsky would categorize as propaganda, which had a hand in their comparatively unfortunate treatment by the Ghanaian community. According to Dardis (2007), communication and social movement theory specify that explaining a subject as a difficulty, accusing a source, signifying resolutions and raising a decent plea are the utmost significant purposes determining people”s explanations of sociopolitical subjects. Apportioning culpability is the utmost significant belief determining element (Dardis 2007).

The Ghanaian press framed the Liberian refugee matter as a difficulty and posited that the Liberian presence was liable for Ghana”s political and economic uncertainty. Liberians were perceived as treacherous lawbreakers, private armies, infectious patients, HIV-carriers, drug addicts, who took advantage of Ghanaians kindness by draining the tax base to sustain their horde of communal events. Such representations assisted in generating bad descriptions of Liberians amongst Ghanaians who had not had interaction with the refugees; they furthermore strengthened or intensified desirable impersonations of Liberian refugees which could have
been gotten through incomplete communal relations with them, thus damaging Liberians
capability to successfully fit in into the Ghanaian public (Frontani, Silvestri & Brown, 2009).

5.2 LIBERIAN PRINT MEDIA’S INABILITY TO COUNTER NEGATIVE PRESS
REPORTAGE

Refugees had inadequate capacity to reduce undesirable reportage. Liberians have not had real
counters to bad media descriptions. They produced optimistic press about their societies in the
Vision, but the newspaper was not circulated regularly, its circulation was rigorously inadequate,
and assistance organisation employees and Ghanaian executives had enhanced contact to the
publication than the Ghanaian community (Henry 2007; King 2007). Liberian refugee societies
were substantially detached from Ghanaian societies, which assisted to upsurge communal
detachment and decline the probability of significant cross-cultural interaction, joint
somatization or communal incorporation (Frontani, Silvestri & Brown, 2009).

Many Togolese refugees self-settled and lived in poverty with other peasant farmers, fishers, and
small-scale traders, but they did not represent an economic burden on the state in the long term.
In contrast, Liberians” attempts to secure land outside of the settlements were met with resistance
and many Liberian refugees in organized settlements required external assistance for extended
periods, often years. With the removal of external aid, the financial burden of supporting
Liberians in settlements increasingly shifted to Ghana”s governmental and non-governmental
organizations which contributed to the media framing of Liberians as threats to Ghana”s
economic security.
Self-settled Togolese refugees generally were well integrated into the Ghanaian Ewe society. Refugee communities took on activities and behaviour patterns similar to those of their hosts; their presence did not result in social conflict greater than what existed within their host communities before their arrival. Togolese with more education remained in the same communities as less educated Togolese and contributed to their acceptance (Nugent 2000). Schildkrout (1978) noted the importance of a broader ethnic identity and networks of solidarity among successful migrant groups to Ghana, such as the Mossi from Burkina Faso. Like the Mossi, Togolese migrants maintained identities separate from those of their Ghanaian neighbours through various festivals and associations, but made efforts to fit in terms of broader cultural norms with their hosts, often sharing political party affiliations, schools and places of worship (Gavua2000; Nugent 2002). Even in the United States, the successful integration of West African migrants, like the Mossi and Togolese in Ghana, has been based on taking on aspects of local culture and having networks of solidarity (Salzbrunn 2004).

Negative media images of Liberians were not restricted to Ghana, but were concentrated in periods and locations in which Liberians lived in large organized settlements. Many refugees prefer to self-settle if given the choice and organized settlements make „forced” repatriation easier, but are no better than self-settlement when refugees want to repatriate (Kuhlman 1994).

5.3 THE GROUPS’ IDENTITY - DESCRIPTION AND HOW THEY ARE DEMARCATED BY THE GOVERNING GROUP OR HOST PHILOSOPHY, AS WELL AS ITS MEDIA
Speaking of safety trepidations, African governments have sturdily chosen organized- against self-settlement by refugees, since planned settlements are further detectable and possibly further possible to get exterior assistance. Nonetheless, the thought benefits of planned- over self-settlement regularly do not hold accurately, as seen in the Ghanaian situation. Large United Nations planned settlements, even commonly well-running ones, as Buduburam was deliberated by the UNHCR, can fail to sustain refugee communal and financial incorporation. Such huge settlements can turn out to be the target of a bad press and lead to the discrimination of settlement occupants and persons connected to them through the politics of segregation. Liberians’ efforts to secure a property separate from the settlements were met with conflict and several Liberian refugees in planned settlements needed exterior support for protracted days, every so often years. With the exclusion of outside assistance, the monetary problem of assisting Liberians in settlements progressively moved to Ghana’s constitutional and non-governmental system which added to the media framing of Liberians as coercions to Ghana’s financial safety (Frontani, Silvestri & Brown, 2009).

Bad press descriptions of Liberians were not limited to Ghana, but remained intense in times and places in which Liberians existed in huge planned settlements. Several refugees desire to self-settle if given the choice and planned settlements make „forced” deportation stress-free, but are no superior than self-settlement once refugees want to go back home (Kuhlman 1994). An absence of forbearance for Liberians might correspondingly have come from Ghana’s media not making clear the grounds for Liberians’ interior discord and their dissimilarity by indigenous and political relations. By the time the media completed some dissimilarities between Liberian refugees in the initial to mid-2000s with respect to sexual category, defenselessness and age,
many Ghanaians basically required Liberians to go back home, but then again several Doe-supporting Krahn Liberians might not securely go home (Frontani, Silvestri & Brown, 2009).

5.4 POSSIBLE DANGERS INTENDED FOR THE REMAINING INHABITANTS

Omata (2012) found from the interviews he conducted with Liberian refugees that, it is not truthful to assume that all of the residual 11,000 refugees would pick out deportation even in the face of the impending termination section and below deportation pressure from non-refugee interested parties. Now, the speed of registering for deportation appears to be slow (Omata, 2012). According to new information by means of the Ghanaian media, at the beginning of March 2012, just 450 out of 11,000 Liberian refugees in Ghana have listed with UNHCR for deportation to Liberia. Conversely, this news bulletin basis correspondingly mentions a statement from a UNHCR staff associate: „above 2,500 Liberian refugees have previously communicated awareness in incorporating in Ghanaian society” (Ghana News Agency 2012).

For these refugees who decided to stay in exile, nevertheless, there have not been any actual systems intended for them as of March 2012, as far as I have been able to find out. There will be more or less severe dangers that these remaining refugees possibly will provoke if they are uncontrolled in Ghana devoid of a little consecutive plan.
Initially, while the thorough data on refugees’ sustenance this year has not been collected, as explanations of refugees specify, the general socio-economic circumstances of the Buduburam refugee community appear to be only waning. Specifically, folks who are involved in minor trading dealing with colleague refugees, which are the majority of the residual refugees, are extremely distraught by the diminishing sales and incomes instigated by the reduced sum of refugees (Omata, 2012).

Also, the size of foreign money transfers, the financial sustenance for the Buduburam refugee society, will very probably see a fall this year. Comparable to the parting of numerous money transfer beneficiaries throughout the former deportation program between 2008 and 2009, this year, richer refugees who have been profiting from remittance sustenance are departing Ghana. This means the loss of spill-over influences of remittances for persons who are operating trades
within the settlement and who have been receiving subordinate remunerations of the received money, which is a significant revenue source for less privileged refugees. Distressingly, the absence of monetary prospects could compel the remaining refugees to resort to deleterious subsistence survival schemes such as prostitution in addition to crime in the area (Slaughter & Crisp 2009).

An additional possible danger is the growing tension with native Ghanaian inhabitants. The discussions by Omata, (2012) with host societies between 2008 and 2009 established that native inhabitants universally self-proclaimed the developmental profits gotten through the presence of refugees, such as educational institutions, treated drinking water and a health center that were set up by UNHCR. Nonetheless, with support dismissed, it will be problematic to see any further and noticeable profits of accommodating refugees and this sensation possibly will hasten their host exhaustion or even convert it into resentment towards refugees. Furthermore, if, as is described by the native media, the host regime closes down the Buduburam settlement and forces all refugees out of the place, most of the refugees will then be destitute. Presently, a significant amount of refugees are living in rent-free neighbourhoods within the Buduburam settlement. The charges around the settlement zone would be at minimum 20-30 USD per month and refugees are generally mandated to fee twelve months rent up front (Omata, 2012).

According to the discussion above, with the threatened financial capability of the remaining refugees, most of them will not be able to find the money for these monetary expenditures. In the course of the cellular phone interviews by Adepoju et al. (2007) and Long (2009) with refugees, they questioned the sixteen family units which are scheduling to live in Ghana whether they are getting ready to find in the least some substitute housing in case of the settlement termination. Just one of them had a back-up plan to relocate to a Liberian refugee colleague who had at
present relocated to Accra from Buduburam. In the past few years, as a last alternative, the likelihood of ECOWAS-based sub-regional incorporation has been deliberated for Liberian refugees who are unenthusiastic to take a decision of deportation (Adepoju et al. 2007; Long 2009).

The essence of this fresh methodology is centered on the 1979 Protocol on Free Movement accepted by ECOWAS, which deliberates on community inhabitants the right to enter, live in and create economic actions in the terrain of any affiliate states. UNHCR has been thinking that this different structure would assist the movement of remaining Liberians to areas in supplementary sub-regional states where they can find further employment prospects. However, we cannot overlook the veracities that most of the ECOWAS affiliate countries are among the least-developed countries suffering from stagnant economy and high redundancy. As constantly highlighted through this paper, likewise, most of remaining Liberians do not have any sought-after livelihood expertise and monetary resources to embark on fresh initiatives (Omata, 2012).

Consequently, guaranteeing freedom of movement alone might not create any alterations in their post-refugee life in Ghana. Therefore, it entails additional analysis whether this sub-regional structure can establish a „solution” for Liberians who remain refugees.

The Role NGO’s played in the lives of Liberian refugees at Buduburam

The camp is assisted by Liberian, Ghanaians and worldwide NGO groups as well as willing institutions and persons. Buduburam was established in 1990 to house the entry of Liberian refugees who escaped to Ghana at the time Charles Taylor gained command in Liberia. At first, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) facilitated the settlement’s inhabitants with separate support and relief to the unfortunate Refugees. Almost immediately after the 1997 elections, the radical circumstances in Liberia exacerbated, and new influxes of
Liberian refugees to Ghana led the UNHCR to return to Buduburam. While the UNHCR confines its short-term support, efforts in the settlement to solitary juveniles, injured and the aged, and the incapacitated, the association does sponsor infrastructure work inside the society, financing plans such as building and education. The Camp now shelters more than 42,000 refugees, most of whom are Liberians, Somalis, Sudanese and others. The settlement still gets fresh refugees on a consistent basis.

Provision of Hope initially started supporting refugees in the Buduburam Refugee Camp in 2003. This one was initiated by aiding a Liberian descendant, Felecia Davies, who was far along brought to Canada. At the time she was met, she was encountering dire challenges. She has a great story to narrate about the way God liberated her from the depth of poverty and saved her life by means of the warfare. Provision of Hope deals with more than 100 single mums and their kids. They have initiated a **Single Mothers Empowerment Program** where they enable these ladies to run minor trades so as to afford the rudimentary necessities for their youngsters. It is remarkable how this has provided them with a sense of value of self and self-confidence. They continued to support the folks to relocate back to Liberia. They have furthermore facilitated numerous people and their relations move back. It has remained very efficacious in finding family members after a long time of split-up. They all have one story after another. It was a delight to watch them together!

In Accra, Giancarlo Izzo, Italian Ambassador to Ghana, cut the sod for work to commence on a structure of six classrooms with lavatory and public library amenities intended for the resident primary school valued at 72,000 dollars at the Buduburam Refugee Camp in the Central Region to deliver superior education for the public. Mr. Thomas Albrecht, Country Representative of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), indicated that the Italian Embassy
facilitated 62,885 dollars and Ricerca E. Cooperazione, an Italian non-governmental organization delivered 9,115 dollars. He postulated that in collaboration with benefactors, the recipient societies and the Government, prominence would be placed on a broad-based incorporated community improvement tactic to make certain that both the refugee youngsters and Ghanaian families got improved education. He praised the Italian Embassy for their economic input towards the venture and the Catholic Church that delivered the land. The project was a substantial percentage of an all-inclusive program by the UNHCR and its associates to offer the persons in the community decent education. He indicated that education was an essential value in itself adding that the actual value laid in the chance for Liberian youngsters of the host groups of people in and nearby Buduburam to have the gates to the future thrown opened.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY

The print media does not only produces, but also reflects culture and power relations. Thus, even with balanced press coverage, Liberians” opportunities for meaningful social integration in Ghana was impeded. A lack of tolerance for Liberians could also have come from Ghana’s media not making clear the causes for Liberians” internal dissent and their difference by ethnic and political background. By the time the media made some distinctions among Liberian refugees in the early to mid-2000s with regard to gender, vulnerability and age, many Ghanaians simply wanted Liberians to repatriate, but numerous Doe-supporting Krahn Liberians could not safely go home.

The media can help or thwart the introduction and implementation of more effective and humane policies with regard to refugees and other migrants by manipulating how they frame issues and the relative frequency of particular frames (Roggeband and Vliegenthart 2007) and the Liberian refugees armed the media with news that hampered that hampered their integration into the Ghana society.

6.2 DISCUSSION

This study provides meaningful information relating to the negative perceptions of refugees in the media and its consequential effects on perceiving negative bias in news content. It illustrates that perceptions of bias exists irrespective if the actual news was bias or not, and more significantly when the content was not inherently biased. The research demonstrated that by exposing individuals to the majority of media house”s reportage, it cued the readers, viewers and listeners to perceive a negative bias in the news story. Hence, the outlet label acts as an negative
heuristic, which sends negative signals to the reader, viewer and listener who thereby formulates their opinions regarding negative bias in the news content.

While my research presents evidence that perceptions of media bias are real, it certainly does not solve the media bias debate. The uncertainty of whether the news media is actually negative biased still remains open. Past research has suggested that individuals hold similar beliefs regarding a media house’s negative slant. While some scholars are stuck on forming a consensus on whether the media is negative biased or not polarized news audiences certainly impels the general public to view the media as negative biased.

Some of the major findings in my experimental analysis provide an alternative explanation for the question pertaining to the uncertainty of whether the media is biased. Individual’s predispositions about the media being negative biased cause them to perceive news content as negative biased despite the content being impartial and substantive. However, I certainly do not posit that ideologues and news consumers take full ownership of why the public believes the media as biased. I do however, believe that my research suggests that there are important elements regarding the media bias debate that are often neglected by the popular discussion of media bias effects on behavior, consequences, etc. For the most part, my research showed alternative cause and effect relationships, point to the fact that perhaps the changes in the realities of the modern media environment have other implications for the media bias debate. Because regardless if the media tries to “unbias” their news reporting, and report objective news content, my experiment results indicated that individuals still perceived bias in the news content, even though it was absent of “refugee” slant. The problem here is that individuals find bias when
they look for it, and if they find the media as a whole to be biased, they are likely to find certain outlets to be biased.

If the primary purpose of the media is to inform the public then how can the news media be effective when individual”s perceptions of bias influence their way of thinking regarding news content?

To summarize, I add to past research and understandings on the relationship of media bias and perceptions of bias in the following ways.

First, independent of the actual news content, news outlets and the reputations they carry influence perceptions of bias. Specifically, negative bias was found as a result of media influence. Thus, irrespective if the media is actually biased, perceptions of negative bias will still be found when individuals look for it.

Secondly, my research shows that perceptions of bias are being caused by the news outlet”s reputation. And where it comes into conflict with the media bias debate is the fact that perceptions of negative bias in the news outlet are transferred to individuals perceptions of negative bias in the news content. With respect to one of the major arguments of the debate is that media bias causes the media to tell its audience what to think about and thus, the consumer thinks it. My research questions that possibility. If it is the intent of the news outlet to persuade a reader”s attitude with information then it faces a serious obstacle if that reader believes the outlet is negative biased. Because when individuals hold perceptions of bias in the news media, and self-select into news outlets based on their views, the relationship then almost becomes reversed, and I have to ask – Are views of news audiences now the ones telling journalists how to think and what to think about it?
6.3 IMPLICATIONS

“What Difference Does it Make!”

Although my results and research provided insight into some of the conditions under which individuals perceive biased news, independent of any negative bias in the news, the question of whether this makes a difference is questionable given the current conditions of our modern media environment. The development of cable news, and the internet has led to a proliferation of news choices and a 24-hour news supply for consumers. Technological advances have provided a new information where consumers can access news from newspapers, radio, television, websites from all over the world.

With respect to this notion of self-selection, where consumers can select into their preferred news choices, seems like a positive development. After all, individuals, unlike before, have the ability to consume news products suited to their preferences and tastes.

So if conservatives can consume conservative news while liberals can consumer liberal news – What difference does it make?

To understand the implications of perceptions of biased news in the era of selective exposure, I first looked at the very notion of self-selection. The likelihood that selective news audiences and the current fragmented media environment started was due to the technological advancements of the late 20th and early 21st century which led to the influx of news information (Scott, 2005; Bennett and Iynegar, 2008). Bennet and Iynegar (2008) points out that fifty years ago people depended primarily on evening network broadcasts for information regarding public affairs. “The norms of journalism meant that no matter which network people tuned in to, they encountered the same set of news reports, according to balanced attention to issues or points of view. In the era of „old media,” accordingly, it made little difference where people got their news” (Bennett
and Iyengar: 2008, p. 11). Today however, the modern media environment has changed tremendously, with instantaneous, unlimited supply of available information on every topic under the sun, it is small wonder why news consumers demand for selective exposure to information (Ibid.).
REFERENCE:


Africa Media Review, Volume 17, Numbers 1&2, 2009


Amedahe, F., 2007, „Ewe Ghanaian Professor”, University of Cape Coast, personal communication, April 6, 2007.


APPENDIX

Figure A
Refugees urged to be law-abiding

By James A. Owusu

The Minister of the Interior, Mr. Ahmed Kudus Owusu, has urged refugees to be law-abiding in order to ensure peace and tranquility.

According to him, it was contrary to the law for refugees to engage in activities that could disrupt the peace and security of the country.

The Minister noted that the law-abiding refugees were an asset to the country and should be treated as such.

He urged the refugees to cooperate with the authorities in order to ensure the safety and security of the country.

The Minister also appealed to the international community to provide necessary support to the refugees.

The Minister said that the government would continue to work towards ensuring the safety and security of the refugees.
Equatorial Guinea

The President, Mr. J. J. Rawlings, accompanied by Nana Agyeman Rawlings, has paid a five-day working visit to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Other members of the entourage were Mr. Kwamena Akwada, Minister for Planning and Regional Integration; Dr. John Adu, Minister of Mines and Energy; Mr. Dan Amadu, Minister of Trade and Industry; Mr. Mike Osinubi, Minister of Tourism; Mrs. Rebecca Adobey, Deputy Minister for Tourism; and Mr. Daniel Agyekum, Minister of Works and Housing.

The delegation held discussions with the President of the Republic, who assured them of his government's commitment to the development of the country.

During the visit, the two Heads of State shared experiences on the management of their countries and exchanged views on a number of issues of mutual interest.

Buduburam schools face imminent closure

The Ghana Education Service has announced that the Buduburam Basic School in the Central Region will be closed down due to financial problems.

The closure of the school is effective from the next academic year and affects all the students currently enrolled.

The school has been struggling to meet the operational costs, leading to a decision by the Ghana Education Service to close it down.

The affected students are expected to be absorbed into other nearby schools.

Figure C
Austria donates to Budumburam Camp

AS PART of its efforts to address health situations in the Budumburam Camp, the Austrian Consulate donated medicines and cash worth of $5,000,000 to the St. Gregory's Catholic Church. The donation, which included 1000 jerry cans, 2000 jerry cans, 5000 jerry cans, and 10 refrigerators, was presented by the Mission. The consensus of the Austrian Consulate, Mrs. Ingeborg Smith, a former member of the government of Austria, and her colleagues, who were impressed by the work of the church, said the donation was made to support the church's efforts to provide medical care to the people in the camp.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Church, Mr. Peter Kofi Mensah, thanked the Austrian Consulate for its support, and promised to use the money to purchase essential medical equipment and to improve the living conditions of the people in the camp. He also thanked the government for its support and promised to use the funds to improve the living conditions of the people in the camp.

Mrs. Smith, who is a former member of the government of Austria, said the donation was made to support the church's efforts to provide medical care to the people in the camp. She also thanked the government for its support and promised to use the funds to improve the living conditions of the people in the camp.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Church, Mr. Peter Kofi Mensah, thanked the Austrian Consulate for its support, and promised to use the money to purchase essential medical equipment and to improve the living conditions of the people in the camp. He also thanked the government for its support and promised to use the funds to improve the living conditions of the people in the camp.
Refugee settlement situation improving, says chairman of Refugee Board

By Michelle E. Syfert

Contrary to the perception that refugees in Ghana are enjoying immense financial support from the government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Chairman of the Ghana Refugee Board, Nii Aliu Amuah, says the per income for a refugee in the country is $38 per annum.

This current income in the form of material assistance and cash, travel needs.

Speaking, he said the need is to build the roads in a recent tour of theAshanti region conducted by a joint team of UNHCR and the Diaspora Select Committee, Foreign Affairs in Accra. Mr. Amuah said the situation at the settlement has improved drastically following the government’s appeals to donors for assistance.

The visit was part of the UNHCR’s effort to quantify the refugee situation, particularly in the Ashanti region, which has had negative media publicity or recently.

UNHCR returned its community-based assistance for Liberian refugees in Ashanti in June 2002 after more than two years suspension.

The Ashanti region has 41,533 refugees, mostly Liberian.

However, the UNHCR Representative in Ghana, Thomas Aluobah, said the effort was to enable the refugee community to assess what the situation is like and the help the UNHCR has been doing.

He told the journalists that since the return of the UNHCR to the settlement it has made a significant impact on the lives of refugees and the community.

He said UNHCR has put in place measures to improve health, water and educational facilities in the settlement, in at least three meaningful ways.

Mr. Aluobah said that this is to ensure that refugees feel part of the society in which they live.

Hohoe, Oti region...
Liberian refugees receive US grants

The United Nations (UNHCR) and the United States government have announced a new assistance program for Liberian refugees. The program is designed to support the repatriation and reintegration of Liberian refugees currently living in camps in neighboring countries. The funds will be used to provide basic needs such as housing, food, and medical care. The program is estimated to benefit over 100,000 refugees over the next five years. (Source: UNHCR)

Ghana loses $24m yearly

From back page

Ghana has lost over $24 million annually due to the illegal activities of its citizens. According to the Minister of Finance, the country has been losing significant revenue due to the activities of its citizens. The minister revealed that the government has been working to curb these activities, but they continue unabated. (Source: Ghanaian Times)

Majority, Minority shocked at abrupt adjournment

From back page

The Majority and Minority of Parliament were shocked when the Speaker adjourned the House without notice. The adjournment came as a surprise to both parties, and it led to heated discussions on the floor. The Speaker explained that he had received a urgent call from the President, who was on an official trip, and he could not continue with the proceedings. (Source: Ghana News Agency)

Policeman at GBC beats up journalist

From back page

A policeman at the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) has been arrested for beating up a journalist. The incident took place during a live broadcast, and a video of the incident went viral on social media. The police have launched an investigation into the matter. (Source: Daily Graphic)
**Refugee camp breeds war combatants**

The recent influx of refugees into a camp in the town of Tongo in the Northen Region has raised concerns among local residents. The camp, which was established to accommodate refugees from the surrounding areas, has become a breeding ground for young men who are drawn to the conflict in the region.

**Another fine mess**

The situation is further complicated by the presence of armed groups who are using the camp as a base for their operations. Local authorities are struggling to maintain order and provide essential services to the refugees.

**Attempt to stop Awudua conflict fails**

A recent attempt to resolve the conflict in the town of Awudua has failed, with armed groups continuing to carry out attacks on the town.

**Trial of stadium disaster culprits halted**

The trial of those involved in the stadium disaster in Accra has been halted due to technical difficulties.

**Child-selling couple go in for two years**

A couple have been sentenced to two years in prison for child-selling.

**From front page**

A report describes the situation at the camp, highlighting the challenges faced by the refugees and the local authorities. The report also highlights the need for international assistance to address the crisis.
Figure H
Budumburam refugees are ungrateful

The AIDs drugs war in South Africa, whose interest?

Figure I
‘Show concern for refugees’
By Graphic Reporter

GHANA’S Solicitor-General, Mr Emmanuel Akwei Addo, has said governments the world over, have a responsibility to stop human rights violations that force people to abandon their homes and communities to become refugees elsewhere.

Quoting the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, he said, that the refugee issue must be put to all governments and peoples as a test of their commitment to human rights.

Mr Addo, who was also the Head of Ghana’s delegation to the 48th session of the Africa Asia Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC) in Accra which ended yesterday, appealed to the delegates to address the refugee issue because majority of today’s refugees are from Africa and Asia.

He said when a human rights tragedy is unfolding, the international community has a responsibility to protect refugees who flee from human rights tragedies.

Mr Addo said “even though states have agreed to international treaties, yet too often, these treaties are ignored for the sake of political or economic expediency.”

He said the international community is also obliged to ensure that the cost of refugee protection is properly shared regardless of where refugees have fled from.

Mr Addo therefore called for a show of commitment from member countries by ratifying conventions such as the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and its protocol, the OAU Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in Africa, and the UN Convention on Migrant Workers.

He advocated that these conventions be incorporated into national laws to ensure that citizens of member countries who may find themselves in other countries as refugees will be protected.

Mr Addo said the International Criminal Court (ICC) statute is still open for signatures for its ratification and stated that it will come into effect after 60 states have ratified it.

He said the court when established will have the power to try people accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes where national courts are unable or unwilling to do so.

* Mr Addo (Middle) flanked by Mr Martin Amidt, Deputy Minister of Justice and Mrs Betty Mould-Iddrisu, former Copyright Administrator.

Figure K
Liberian defrauds businessman

By Paul Awortwi-Mensah

A LIBERIAN refugee residing in Ghana who styled himself as a businessman and succeeded in defrauding a Cyprus businessman of $58,000 under the pretext of providing him with plots of land for real estate development, yesterday appeared before an Accra Circuit Tribunal.

Edmond Pean, 24, is alleged to have shown the victim, documents covering a tract of land near the Labadi Beach Hotel and later took him to the Teshie Military Shooting Range and told him the range was part of the parcel of land he was acquiring for the complainant to put up estate houses for sale and rentals.

Pean pleaded not guilty to the charge and was granted bail in the sum of $50 million with two sureties to be justified by the tribunal chaired by Mr Charles Quist to re-appear on April 19.

The tribunal also ordered that all monies found on Pean at the time of his arrest, should be handed over to the complainant.

He is also to deposit both his Liberian and Ghanaian passports with the registry of the tribunal. The court further directed the police to investigate the genuineness of his Ghanaian passport.

A bench warrant was issued for the arrest of Leroy Keen Dennis, a cousin of Pean, an accomplice in the case who is at large.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Elizabeth Allandu told the tribunal that the Cypriot, Mr Georgiou Georgios, first met Pean in a hotel in Modavia, near Romenia in Russia in March

*Continued on Page 3*
AFTER RECENT developments concerning the situation in Liberia, with new promises of peace, refugees in Buduburam camp, in the central region, are staying put in an environment they have turned into a community. Mr. John Thompson, the camp manager, says that the majority of its 45,000 occupants are going to "wait and see" what happens in Liberia and feel comfortable in the camp. The aim of the camp has changed from one of resettlement to one of long-term settlement for refugees.

Buduburam camp, which is located about 35 kilometers outside Accra, is unique in its nature as a refugee camp; it has managed to establish a self-sustainable community projects with a functional infrastructure and a buzzing business environment. Throughout the camp, streets are lined with enterprises and small businesses that have been set up by refugees themselves with very little, if any, external funding.

On one of the corners stands Sophie fixing the hair of a client in her hair salon. Sophie came to the camp as a refugee in 1996, and three years ago she decided to open a hair salon with her best friend. Business is not booming, but she manages to make ends meet and live a comfortable life in the camp. She is one of many who have become self-sustainable refugees within Buduburam camp.

In a different zone (the camp is divided into 12 zones) stands Ms. William Swallow Jones who has been at the camp for ten years. She is a mother of two school children, one in the camp and the other in a school in the city.

Figure M
Census of Budumburam Refugee Centre next month

From Timothy Gobah, Budumburam

THE government will, as from next month, conduct a census of all residents in the Budumburam Refugee Camp in the Central Region.

The exercise is to help the government to collate a meaningful data to monitor the activities of the refugees in the camp.

The Director of the Ghana Immigration Service, Nana Owusu-Nsiah, announced this when he paid a familiarisation tour of the camp on Wednesday.

He said the government has decided on the census because of reported cases of criminal activities by some of the residents in the camp.

“We have planned to undertake the census to know those who came into the country as refugees to enable us to flush out the bad elements among you”, he said.

He warned that those who will thwart the exercise and refuse to be counted will be regarded as illegal residents and appropriate actions taken against them.

Nana Owusu-Nsiah said although the number of refugees in the camp is, currently estimated at 20,000, only 4,000 have duly been registered, adding that “this is a serious threat to national security.”

“As an institution, we should know the number of immigrants in the country,” he said.

He said as the government opens its doors to refugees, it expects the refugees to reciprocate the government’s gesture by being law abiding.

The director expressed concern about the involvement of refugees in crimes such as assault, rape, armed robbery and defilement and said, “we will expel such refugees if their conduct are not conducive to public good.”

The Officer in Charge of Programmes of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Mr Peter Trotter, called on the refugees to co-operate with the authorities to ensure peace and stability in the country.

Mr John Thompson, Camp Manager, said the camp recorded more than 100 crimes, including rape, fraud, armed robbery and defilement last year.

He said the alarming rate of vices among the residents threatens the cordial relations between Ghana and Liberia.
Influx of refugees is alarming

By Nehemia Owusu Achiaw

President J. A. Kufuor has said the influx of refugees into the country is assuming an alarming proportion and asked for the intervention of the international community to provide the needed assistance to take care of the displaced people.

He said the number of refugees at Budumburam in the Central Region has increased from 4,000 to 30,000 and there is even the possibility of the number going up.

Swearing in the seven member Board of Refugees at the Castle, Osu in Accra on Wednesday, President Kufuor said the irony of the refugee situation in the country is that very little assistance is being provided by the international community.

The members are Mr A.O. Akiwumi (Chairman), Mr K.O. Gyeabour, Brigadier Joe Odei (rtd), Mr P.K. Forkuoh, Mr M.A. Bawumia, Mrs Ama Bamful and Ms Cecilia Erzuah.

President Kufuor said apart from the financial implications of taking care of large numbers of refugees, maintaining law and order at the refugee camp could become very critical.

President Kufuor charged the board to use the social welfare approach in managing the refugee situation in the country and expressed the hope that the board members will perform effectively to justify the confidence reposed in them.

The chairman, Mr Akiwumi, expressed the commitment of the board members to perform their duties creditably and to the expectation of the government.

He appealed to the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to use its international contacts to secure assistance for Ghana to lessen the burden of catering for the needs of the refugees.

At a similar ceremony, the President swore in Professor Agyeman Badu Akosa, Director-General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), as a member of the Prisons Service Council.

President Kufuor said the government is committed to the implementation of reforms in the prisons and expressed the hope that Prof. Akosa will bring his rich experience as a public servant to bear on efforts to improve conditions in the prisons.

The President also swore in Ms Anna Bossman as the Deputy Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ).

President Kufuor said Ms Bossman who has an impressive curriculum vitae is assuming office at the time that CHRAJ is to be performing an additional role as an Ombudsman.

Mr Andrews Wylie, Managing Director of Taylor Woodrow Construction Limited also led a three-member delegation to pay a courtesy call on President Kufuor.

Speaking at the ceremony, President Kufuor commended Taylor Woodrow for operating in Ghana for almost 50 years and urged the management to invest more resources in the Ghanaian economy.

Mr Wylie said the company has decided to invest more than $20 million in the economy in the next two years.

Figure O

72
UN Refugees Commissioner at Buduburam

THE United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Rudd Lubbers, who is on a two-day working visit to Ghana, has paid a visit to the Liberian Camp at Gomoa Buduburam in the Central Region.

The High Commissioner, who was accompanied by the Minister of Interior, Mr. Hackman Owusu Agyeman, announced UNHCR’s commitment to work with the government to improve the status of refugees in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

They were conducted round the camp’s schools where 60 pupils were in a class, the camp’s clinic and a women’s centre, where batik dresses made by the women were presented to the minister and High Commissioner.

Mr. Lubbers urged the refugees to be appreciative of the hospitality given to them for the government to help them to return safely to their homes.

The camp is at the moment home to about 40,000 Liberian refugees.

Figure P
Liberian refugees vandalize police post

From Joseph Jones
Koranteng, Kasa
A large mob on Saturday
morning attacked the Po-
lice Post at Gomoa Badubuwum
near Kasa and completely
vandalized it.

The mob, made up of Liberian
refugees living in the area, stormed
and looted the police living
quarters close to the police post.

The Accra-Kumasi Highway
was completely blocked by the
rampaging refugees, resulting in a
heavy traffic jam. Drivers who de-
manded to know why the highway
was blocked, were either
beaten or had their windscreen
smashed or got themselves
wounded.

The mob action arose after they
demanded the release of a Ghana-
ian (whose name was not immedi-
ately known) who was allegedly
stabbed by Liberians. He was
expected to be released to his
friends.

The alleged murderer had been
detained by the police after the
Liberians brought him in.

But after the refugees heard that
their stabbed countryman had died,
they rushed back to the post and
demanded the alleged murderer's release

A police refused to release the
suspect and the mob erupted into
excrising riot. All the people
involved in the incident were
sent to the Asanta Besa Police
Station, which has jurisdiction
over the refugee camp.

The police explained that the
mob, which occupied the post,
was chanting, "We don't need AK
rifles."

In the ensuing confusion, the
few policemen there abandoned the
post and rushed to Kasa to seek
reinforcements.

A reinforcement team later ar-
ived at the scene to restore calm,
but the damage had already been
done.

According to the police, even
as they tried to restore calm, some
Liberian refugees openly pulled out pistols and fired at them.

"As a result, a woman's hand
was hit by a stray bullet," a police
source told the "Times."

The chief assistant of the
National Mobilization Programme
(NMP) at the camp, Mr. Philip
Pramph, said this paper that the
situation in the town is volatile due
to a spat of robbers, insecurity,
suspicion and mistrust between
the refugees and native of the
town.

An official of the Liberian
Community, James Kofie, accused
the Liberian government of trying
to destabilize the refugee camp to have them repatriated.

He alleged that their home gov-
ernment was not interested in the
Resettlement Programme and had therefore sent a few of its men to
the camp to cause confusion.

At the time of filing this report,
reinforcements had been sent from Accra to beef up the police personnel to control the situation.

Meanwhile, the man who was
stabbed at the waist was receiving treatment at home and the sus-
pected assault could not be
reached for his version of the story.
Another fine mess

The government's lack of voluntary discriminatory

WAY OUT

Our security sources warn, however, that the Kufuor administration will cease to make a tough choice between taking violence or insulation and using suffering into Buchumburam. "Government will have to protect the small group who genuinely feel threatened by Charles Taylor," says one security official.

In fact, political analysts consider

The Buchumburam Camp

Figure R
The Refugee Influx and National Security

Ghana is one country in the west coast that is considered free, habitable and peaceful; and Ghanaians by virtue of their culture, are peace-loving, accommodating, generous and very sociable as far as personal relationship is concerned. In fact, this kind of culture has unconsciously overshadowed our security consciousness and suspicion toward people, but how is it when our national identity is being taken for granted by certain foreigners, as our weakness.

I am saying this on the basis of the fact that there are about 42,000 refugees who are in Ghana, in addition to about 14,000 foreigners as a result of the four-month-old civil war, currently going on in that country. This number is bound to shoot up as the political unrest in that country is still raging unabated. As it is now, these refugees are not being taken care of by the UN.

They are people running away for their dear lives to seek refuge here in Ghana. Those people would have to survive by doing anything possible to keep body and soul together, and this is where I personally suspect eventual social disturbances that call for security consciousness.

In fact, the refugee influx into the country, lately, is not my problem, because Ghana is virtually viewed as a place of refuge for most neighbouring countries in the sub-region.

I have no problem whatsoever with regard to the refugees and other aliens living with us; however, my problem is that in the previous years, we have had a series of problems with some of the refugees with regard to some atrocities, and havoc they committed. In fact, some of these refugees whom we have taken as brothers are stabbing the citizens in the back.

There was an incident where eight armed robbers were arrested at Koforidua, a suburb of Accra, and six out of the eight were foreigners from neighbouring countries. Some of these refugees are involved neck-deep in criminal acts ranging from broad daylight robbery, highway robbery, residential robbery, drug-trafficking and a host of other crimes against humanity.

In fact, there has never been an armed conflict without some of these refugees spear-heading or playing a major role in the syndicate. Some of these refugees are nothing but a threat to the national peace, tranquility and security. I am, on this note, appealing to all security mechanisms and networks through the intensification of their efforts and modification of internal strategy. This means that the police and other security personnel must lay their nets right behind the carpet so that whoever crosses the carpet can easily fall into the net.

I am being a bit sentimental on this issue because we have had enough with some of these aliens already in previous years, and I think enough is enough this time round, because once bitten, twice shy.

Consequently, I have also seen that some Ghanaians are creating the enabling environment for some of these criminals, who currently are taking refuge in Ghana. I am saying this, based on the fact that there can be no crime committed by any foreign national without direct or indirect internal collaboration by some equally criminal citizens. The issue of internal collaboration is a reality that cannot be under-estimated and I want every Ghanaian to desist from this kind of shameful act of condoning and conniving crime.

Pastor Evans Odonkor, (A Patriotic Theologian), Accra

Letters and e-mails to the Editor must include writer’s full name, postal and contact address and other identification materials (phone numbers, etc. if any). Letters should be brief, concise, and typed, since handwritten letters are often illegible.

Figure S
Budumburum refugees are ungrateful

DEAR Sir. The tragic tale of how the people of South Africa were colonised and later pariahised on their own God-given soil many years ago is a story well known. Nelson Mandela's over two decades of imprisonment and the untold hardship suffered through which South Africans went.

It brought to its wake total political and social dominance, perpetuated and orchestrated by a handful of white settlers to whom the indigenous South Africans had offered a warm handshake of welcome.

It culminated in South Africans being left as it were, with their own shadows. This has cost South Africa and the black race an irreparable damage whose memories only reflect condemnation, and sadness.

The drama in which refugees from war-torn Liberia, who, in the apogee of the wanton political chaos in their country only 10 years ago, were granted asylum here in Budumburam, turned round to take the law into their own hands is terribly bad enough. The fact that they vandalised the Police installation, whose duty it is to maintain peace, law and order is to say the least, preposterous in extremes, highly provocative and totally unacceptable.

It deserves absolute condemnation by all well-meaning Ghanaians. It is a clear case of justice having gone berserk, and once this happens, the necessary sanctions must be forcefully and instantly applied.

Ghana should not under any circumstance sit on the fence in the name of "proverbial hospitality" while a handful of ungrateful and indisciplined refugees flex their muscles to "liberalise" any part of this country.

By their uncouth act, these refugees in Budumburam have clearly advertised that if they are not well checked — in fact expelled — there would suddenly come a time when they would violently demand voting rights! They would demand to be voted to the presidency. They would imagine that a refugee could feel so comfortable as to marry from the country that granted him refugee status?!

They beget offspring and then feel so well integrated into the society that they have the guts to display such an unworthy arrogance to the state.

I am sure if it were Ghanaians (may God forbid) who were to attempt this anywhere, immediate doom would have befallen that camp within minutes. They would have been beaten, ransacked, raped and vandalised. They would have been Godlessly massacred.

The Budumburam episode is sheer ingratitude and impudence.

Relative peace has returned to Charles Taylor's bullet-ridden Liberia. Consequently, the continued stay of these settlers in Budumburam is quite indefensibly ambiguous. At least, that piece of land on which they are settled could be used for many other income-generating activities for Ghanaians. Let us not forget, there are Ghanaians who are destitute and homeless who could benefit from the site of Budumburam. Ghana has painfully gone HIPC, and while all resources are being marshalled to redeem the state of that state, ungrateful Liberians must not be allowed to initiate any unnecessary tension and absurdity that could bring "Liberianism" to us. For them to have vandalised the police installation there is an open threat to our national security. Any sordid and irresponsible act like this must be condemned. Liberia, out of diplomacy, owes Ghanaians an unqualified apology. However, the Liberians must leave now! They have nut-
Liberian refugees receive US grants

The first project, ‘Adolescent Mothers’ Care and Prevention’, the Ambassador said will address teenage pregnancy in the Liberian refugee settlement camp and its social, economic and educational impact.

She explained that the project strives to equip young girls with skills that will allow them to become better parents as well as productive earners.

“The girls will be enrolled in childcare and home economies courses, as well as health education, literacy and skills training workshops,” Ambassador Yates said.

The first project is estimated to cost $19,889.24. While the second project, ‘Proposal for Funds for Unaccompanied Minors and other Children at risk’ will cost $3,372.41.

This project seeks to assist those most vulnerable to neglect or abuse, identified through clinic health care workers and social outreach, through the creation of a child welfare fund.

Mr. Thomas Albrecht, UNHCR Representative to Ghana said the programmes outlined above are further examples of efforts to empower and promote the protection of refugees— in particular, refugee women and children.

Thomas said in spite of some of the apparent difficulties that beset the residents of the camp over many years as a result of a life in exile, the Buduburam Refugee Settlement should be celebrated as a place where the human spirit has triumphed over adversity.

The visit of the US Ambassador to the camp is her second in a year and makes her perhaps the only diplomat with the most frequent visitors record.

During the Ambassador’s first visit, she gave textbooks and other educational materials to the over 40 schools on the settlement.

Majority, Minorit

From back page

not worried about the absence of the Majority members, but about the motion by a member who was aware that the House had often commenced business without the required quorum and yet he decided to move the motion.

He said members should be cautious of the way they act on the floor of the house so as not to create the impression that the Speaker is authoritative, adding that when the
Austria donates to Budumburam Camp

By George Kyeyi Frimpong

AS PART of its efforts to facilitate health situations in the Budumburam Camp, the Austrian Consulate has donated medicines and cash worth €15,000,000 to the St. Gregory Catholic Clinic.

The medicines, which include Lexaquin, Dettol, Walkadine, Ciprokan, and Erythro, are to assist in reducing the cost of medical expenses charged by the clinic.

Presenting the items, the Austrian Consulate, Mrs. Ingeborg Smith, appealed to non-governmental agencies and philanthropists to contribute towards donations to the Budumburam community in their small ways to minimize the unnecessary awful pain, which prevail in the community.

The Chief Executive Officer of Powapak Limited, Mr. Ray Smith, also advised Africans to desist from fighting against themselves since development lies in peacemaking.

Receiving the items, the Medical Officer in charge of the Clinic, Dr. Ismael Popoww Mc Gill, lamented on the manner in which the camp of about 20,000 in population, in the 90s has expanded to a population of about 42,000 people, depending on only one clinic with the staff strength of 18 medical officers.

He blamed the population explosion on the rapid migration of people from the neighbouring countries who have taken advantage of the peaceful nature of the country to reside permanently in the camp.

He stated that, “Our drug consumption rate cannot be controlled because always, there are a lot of people migrating to the community because of the opportunities in Ghana.”

Dr. McGill noted that an average number of about 400 to 600 patients who suffer from malaria, typhoid, STD’s and AIDS are admitted in the hospital every month. “Most of the resistance strain malaria cannot be treated because most of the patients cannot afford it because it’s an own employed community,” he added.

He disclosed that the clinic has embarked on an expansion project to accommodate 32 patients a day.

He said the expansion project which would be completed March, next year, would start diagnosing laboratory cases so that an end could be put on referring people to far communities for treatment.

He called on the government to assist the hospital to offer counseling and nutritional support to the community.

Dr. McGill also appealed to philanthropists to provide transport for the carriage of garbage to a proper place of refuse, as the camp has been surrounded by communities, making people throw rubbish into indiscriminately.

Figure W
Refugee settlement situation improving, says chairman of Refugee Board

By Othello H. Gbathiah

Contrary to the perception that refugees in Ghana are enjoying immense financial support from the government and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the Chairman of the Ghana Refugee Board, Ninii Akwumi says the per income for a refugee in the country is $38 per annum.

This amount comes in the form of material assistance and other basic needs.

Speaking at a news conference to brief the media on a recent tour of the Buduburam settlement by a joint team of UNHCR and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Foreign Affairs in Accra, Mr. Akwumi said the situation at the settlement has improved drastically following the government’s appeals to donors for assistance.

The visit was part of the UNHCR’s effort to demystify the refugee situation, particularly in the Buduburam settlement, which has had negative media publicity in recent years.

UNHCR resumed its community-based assistance for Liberian refugees at Buduburam in June 2002 after more than two years’ suspension.

The Buduburam settlement hosts 41,853 refugees, mostly Liberian nationals who fled the civil unrest in Liberia from the early 1990s.

It is located 35 kilometers west of Accra, but figures from a recent registration conducted jointly by the UNHCR and the Government of Ghana indicate that there are 47,095 refugees and asylum seekers throughout the country. They include Sierra Leonean and Ivorian nationals.

These are mainly domiciled in the Buduburam settlement, the Krua settlement and the Essong reception centre in the Western Region, the Bole reception centre in the Northern Region and in Accra.

However, the UNHCR Representative to Ghana, Thomas Albrecht, said the visit was to enable the parliamentarians see at first hand what the situation is like at the settlement and what the UNHCR has been doing.

He told the journalists that since the return of the UNHCR to the settlement it has made a significant impact on the lives of members of the community.

He said UNHCR has put in place measures to improve health, water and educational facilities in the settlement, to at least meet minimum requirements.

Mr. Albrecht said this is to ensure that not only refugees but also people in the nearby villages have at least decent living standards, aside education, security and respect for human rights.

The UNHCR boss urged Ghanaians to promote respect and tolerance for refugees and to see not only the vulnerability of the refugee community but also the positive lasting contributions they have made individually to the country as well as the benefits the local community has derived from projects initiated primarily for refugees.

"It is not refugees who create problems," he said "they already have problems."

The Chairman of the Parliamentary To page 3
Refugees urged to be law-abiding

By George Kyere Frimpong

THE MINISTER of the Interior, Hon. Hackman Owusu Agyeman, has said that the government of Ghana has set up a consultative team to settle the volatile situation in Liberia in order to bring peace and tranquility.

According to him, if peace prevails in Liberia the refugees in the country will go back to their country since it is not their intention to live in Ghana for the past 13 years.

Speaking at the Buduburam camp in the Central region, an abode for refugees in the country, he appealed to them not to do anything that will destabilize Ghana, since it has always kept the faith in the people who have suffered in wars.

The minister advised that the refugees respect the hospitality given to them by Ghanaians.

He also cautioned that Ghana should not be an extension of the conflict in Liberia and if they are law abiding they will be given the necessary protection.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, disclosed that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ghana, provides assistance to refugees in Buduburam on a community-wide basis, as it does not provide financial or material aid to them. But they do assist them in the form of projects, which tend to benefit its settlement and population as a whole.

Continuing, he said the UNHCR and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) are collaborating to bring them a reliable source of water and toilet facilities.

By the support of the UN, he said the government of Ghana has donated school supplies including furniture worth $110,000 to the camp.

According to him, the community is helping itself to protect human rights, which allows the residents to realize self-sufficiency.

Historically, UNHCR which branch was established in the Republic of Ghana in 1976 has about 42,000 refugees at the community.

The camp has a neighbourhood watch team to patrol from midnight until five in the morning to ensure settlement security.

HIV/AIDS counselors are available to create awareness of the menace.

The camp has a Refugee Settlement Central Education Board which serves as a liaison between the settlements of UNHCR on all matters related to education.

Buduburam is looking forward to the opening of a day care centre so as to help the women pursue business opportunities when their children are in safe hands.

The skills training center offers women weekly classes in the income generating arts of sewing, tie and dye, pastry making, inter alia.