

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTRIBUTION
OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TOWARDS THE
PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GHANA**

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of an original research undertaken by me under the supervision of Dr. Afua Boatemaa Yakohene and that no part of it has been submitted elsewhere for any other purpose. Further, references to the work of other persons or bodies have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

To the Lord Almighty, whose grace and mercy has brought me thus far.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My endless gratitude goes to the Almighty God for his providence throughout this stage of my academic life. My profound appreciation to my mother and heroine, Naa Adjeley Quaye whose sweat and toils has seen me through my university education; to Reverend Emmanuel Kofi Yeboah for his prayers; and constant support and to Bridget Antor. I am equally indebted to Dr. Afua Boatemaa Yakohene for her supervision and guidance in shaping this work.

I would also like to thank Dr. Kwadwo Appiagyei-Atua of the University of Ghana Law School, Ms. Bernice Naah, former Campaigns Coordinator of Amnesty International, Ms. Juliet S.A Kaingbanja, the administrative officer of Amnesty International Ghana, and finally Mr. Frank Doyi, Growth and Mobilization Manager of Amnesty International Ghana, Alhassan Ibn Abdallah, the secretary of the Slum Union of Ghana and Mr. Yaw Asante, the Project Director of Self-help Initiative Support Services for their support and cooperation.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	-	Amnesty International
ACDHRS	-	African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
ACHPR	-	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
ACJPS	-	African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies.
AHRE	-	African Human Rights Education
CDD	-	Centre for Democratic Development
CPP	-	Convention People's Party
CHRAJ	-	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
COHRE	-	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
DIHR	-	Danish Institute for Human Rights
DOVVSU	-	The Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
HRAC	-	The Human Rights Advocacy Centre
HRW	-	Human Rights Watch
ICCPR	-	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	-	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IRS	-	Internal Revenue Service
ISD	-	Information Services Department
LECIAD	-	Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy

LRC	-	The Legal Resource Centre
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI	-	National Human Rights Institutions
OHCHR	-	Office of the High Commission on Human Rights
OPCAT	-	Optional Protocol Convention Against Torture
PfG	-	Partnership for Growth
PNDCL	-	Provisional National Defence Council Law
POLI.DH	-	Police et Droits Humains
RTI	-	The Coalition on the Right to Information-Ghana
SISS	-	Self – Initiative Support Services
UDHR	-	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN AGFE	-	United Nations - Advisory Group on Forced Evictions
UNCHR	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme.
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHRA	-	United Nations Human Rights Award
UNHRC	-	United Nations Human Rights Convention
UNODC	-	United Nations Office on Drug and Crime
UPR	-	Universal Periodic Review

WiLDAF - Women in Law & Development in Africa

WSEEP - Women in Slums Economic Empowerment Project

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ABSTRACT

Human Rights and its laws are fundamental pillars that have been conventionalised to safeguard the life of every individual globally. It has, therefore, become a global concern that has attracted both local and international organisations, spearheading objectives and activities to see people from all race, religion, culture, language, sex, nationality, colour and ethnic groups propagate a common goal for interdependency and universality. As a result, governments across the world and international organisations are collaborating in diverse ways to promote these rights that are fundamental to every individual's life. Among these bodies is Amnesty International, which has been in existence across continents since the 1960s. Through certain laws, conventions, rules and regulations, which are laid down with statutory endorsements, Amnesty International has worked over the decades to promote human rights wherever need be. The scope of their work span across different approaches such as consultations, advocacy, education, interventions among others, with the aim of seeking human rights at the core of its objectives. It is based on this mandate, that the organisation established the Ghana section in the 1970s. Amnesty International's mandate attracts many influences such as cultural, economic, social, political and religious which one-way or the other births a challenge or success within any location of their operation. Ghana in this perspective is not an exception. Since its operations began in Ghana, like any other country, there has been pitfalls and challenges in their line of duty to project the concept of human rights to all. The study used a qualitative research approach infused with both semi-structured interviews and the review of books and journal articles in order to assess its role as to whether it is duly contributing to the promotion of human rights in Ghana or otherwise. With all the challenging factors that affect the objectives of the organisation, their contribution to the improvement of human rights in the Ghanaian community is worth knowing. Policy changes and promotions, death penalty abolition, a national housing policy, increased human rights, awareness and sensitization among others, are tangible successes the organisation has recorded and these areas are recommended for assessment and further studies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction to the Research Problem

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Laws are the mode of expressing and guaranteeing universal human rights. This is in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law. International human rights law lays down obligations of governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

Human rights have the following facets. To begin with, human rights are universal and inalienable. The principle of universality of human rights is the cornerstone of international human rights law. This principle was “emphasized in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948 and reiterated in numerous international human rights conventions, declarations, and resolutions. The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights,”¹ for example, noted the following: it is the duty of States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems. “All states have ratified at least one, and eighty per cent of states have ratified four or more, of the core human rights treaties, reflecting the consent of states, which creates legal obligations for them, and giving concrete expression to universality. Some fundamental human rights norms enjoy universal protection by customary international law across all boundaries and civilizations. Human rights are inalienable, hence not taken away except in specific situations

and according to due process. For example, the right to liberty may be restricted if a person is found guilty of a crime by a court of law.”²

All “human rights are indivisible, whether they are civil and political rights, such as the right to life, equality before the law and freedom of expression, economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to work, social security and education, or collective rights, such as the rights to development and self-determination, are indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. The improvement of one right facilitates advancement of the others. Likewise, the deprivation of one right adversely affects the others.”³

Non-discrimination is also a feature of human rights. “It is a cross-cutting principle in international human rights law. The principle is present in all the major human rights treaties and provides the central theme of some of international human rights conventions such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women”.⁴

The principle applies to every individual in relation to all human rights and freedoms. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of a list of non-exhaustive categories such as sex, race, colour among others. The principle of equality complements the principle of non-discrimination, as stated in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”⁵

Human rights entail both rights and obligations. “States assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfil human rights. The obligation to respect means that states must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect requires states to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfil means that states must take positive action to facilitate

the enjoyment of basic human rights.”⁶ Inasmuch as individuals are entitled to their human rights, they are also expected to respect other people’s rights.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has a framework that promotes human rights. It supports human rights for development in more than 100 countries in order to expand choices and protect rights and freedoms. This achievement is through the strengthening of the work of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRI) and accountability mechanisms. Thus, the UNDP has supported over a hundred National Human Rights Institutions, Ombudsman institutions, equality and gender bodies and other independent oversight institutions in order to develop their capacities and enhance the role of human rights institutions as cornerstones in national human rights systems.⁷ It also has a supporting engagement with international human rights machinery, such as the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review process (UPR), with supporting member states to collaborate with the human rights machinery as a key partner supporting governments to participate in and follow-through with the Human Rights Council’s UPR. The UNDP collaborates extensively with partners to promote human rights in both peacebuilding and development contexts. Notably, in 2011, there was the formation of a strategic partnership with both the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to support inter alia participation of National Human Rights Institutions in the global discourse on development.⁸

The UNDP is equally, promoting the application of a human rights-based approach to development and crisis-related programming including national development planning and recovery processes [by] further ensure the mainstreaming of a human rights-based approach in its programming.⁹ In this regard, UNDP launched the Social and Environmental Standards in January 2015. These standards explicitly include the human rights-based approach as an

overarching, global principle for UNDP programming. The human rights-based approach is an engagement principle in UNDP's current Strategic Plan (2014-2017)¹⁰

In Africa, "there are a number of organisations that concentrate on protecting and promoting human rights. Notable among such organisations is the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) is an independent non-governmental pan-African organisation, established in The Gambia since 1989. It plays a central role in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy in Africa by providing a discussion platform for over two hundred organizations working on democracy and human rights issues on the continent.¹¹ Another human rights organisation on the continent is the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies. (ACJPS) It is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation working to monitor and promote respect for human rights and legal reform in Sudan. The organisation, however, has registered office in Kampala, London and New York. ¹² In 1988, the African section of Human Rights Watch was created. Human Rights Watch is a non-profit, non-governmental human rights organisation. Its staff consists of human rights professionals including country experts, lawyers, journalists, and academics of diverse backgrounds and nationalities.¹³

In 2014, in the West African sub-region, the West African platform on human rights and policing (POLI.DH) was established with the support of the Danish Institute for Human Rights. The platform was set up after police services representatives of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger gave a recommendation that a West African platform on human rights and policing should be established. POLI.DH is open to other West African police services. It is represented at the sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) to influence policies regarding human rights and policing as one of the implementations of the Guidelines for Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-trial Detention in Africa. ¹⁴

In 2008, the West Africa Regional Office of the Office of the High Commission on Human Rights was founded and made mandatory to help connect the gap in the implementation of human rights at the national and regional level. It was inter –alia, tasked with increasing the capacity of the human rights components of peace missions and establishing cooperative relations with countries where OHCHR has no presence such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria.¹⁵

In terms of human rights organisations, Amnesty International is one of the organizations that has gained prominence in carrying out its objectives. It is an international non-governmental organisation, headquartered in Britain with the aim of ensuring that people, the world over, “enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. Since its establishment, the organisation has made global impacts such as being given access to consultative status by the United Nations in 1964, Council of Europe in 1965, UNESCO in 1969, winning a Nobel Peace prize in 1977, a UN Human Rights Award in 1978 and a campaign in 1999, which drew attention to three hundred thousand child soldiers around the world. In 2005, it became the world’s largest independent human rights organisation and through its advocacy, caused one hundred and thirty-three countries to abolish the death penalty by 2007.¹⁶

In Africa, Amnesty International has some accomplishments to its credit. Recently, the organisation helped in the release of two South Sudanese pastors, Reverend Yat Michael and Reverend Peter Yen, after they were sentenced in Khartoum, Sudan. Information gathered indicate that the two pastors were arrested and charged because of their religious convictions. In Kenya, the organisation is pushing for adequate housing rights for people living in highly impoverished neighbourhoods, informal settlements, or slums who often face abuse by law enforcement, sexual violence, and random evictions. These are violations of basic human rights and safety. Amnesty International already has programmes running that seek to restore

dignity and security to these residents while empowering them with education and tools to change their situations.¹⁷ In the sub-region, in January 2015, after years of pressure from Amnesty International and its supporters, Shell's Nigerian subsidiary announced a fifty-five million pounds subsidiary to fifteen thousand six hundred farmers and fishermen in Bodo, Nigeria, whose lives were devastated by two oil spills in 2008 and 2009. In Nigeria, on May 28 the same year, a Nigerian death-row inmate, by name Moses Akatugba, was pardoned after nearly 10 years in jail. He had been tortured to confess to a crime he says he never committed. Over eight hundred thousand activists had sent letters demanding justice. More so, In March 2015, through its advocacy, torture became a crime in Togo. The fantastic announcement came twenty-six years after the West African country first signed up to the UN Convention against Torture.¹⁸

The activities of Amnesty International in Ghana are affecting many people positively. Even before a chapter of the organisation was established in Ghana, Amnesty International sent their first mission to Ghana in 1961, which saw 152 political prisoners released because of the pressure it put on the government.¹⁹ The organisation continues to be against the detention of political prisoners and pushing for their release as well as advocating for the abolition of the death penalty. Amnesty International projects their concerns that public tribunals should be established to try political criminals, suspected government opponents should not be detained without trial, the imprisonment after an unfair trial of such people, reports of arbitrary killings by armed forces personnel, and the beating and ill-treatment of political opponents and criminals by armed forces personnel.²⁰ It has also been working to reduce violence against women to the barest minimum. In an interview with Bernice Naah, the former Campaign Coordinator of Amnesty International on 18th July 2017, she reveals that in Ghana, Amnesty International works with state agencies such as the Commission on Human Rights, Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and" the Ghana Prisons Service. It also collaborates with

non-governmental organisations such as a People's Dialogue on Housing rights, Women in Slums Economic Empowerment Project (WSEEP), Self-Initiative Support Services (SISS) and Slum Union of Ghana.²¹

1.1.Statement of the Research Problem

In 1973, Amnesty International established the Ghana branch with the primary aim of promoting political and civil rights. The primary focus of Amnesty International was to help end arbitrary arrests, killings and unfair trials of political opponents, criminals and armed forces personnel. The organisation was also advocating for freedom of speech and freedom of the press as well as the abolition of the death penalty.²² This is because the political temperature during the period was such that it allowed for arbitrary arrests, killings of political opponents and restrictions on speech and the press. In 1992, when Ghana moved on to constitutional rule, even though Amnesty International continued to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty, it began to concentrate on socio-economic rights. Socio-economic rights include the rights to adequate housing, to education, to health, to water and sanitation and to work.²³

With the mindset of ensuring that government adheres to these rights, it employs the mechanism of mobilizing people to put forward their demands on government, organises workshops to sensitise the public on these rights, while using various means of advocacy as a tool to get the government to heed to its call.

As an international human rights organisation that has existed in Ghana for decades, this research assessed the role it has played in terms of human rights promotion in the past and the role that the organisation plays now. This is because, in recent years, the organisation has changed its focus and seems to have moved from the protection and promotion of political rights to the promotion and protection of social, economic and cultural rights in Ghana because

of the switch from military rule to democracy. Thus, this study seeks to assess the contribution of Amnesty International towards the promotion of human rights in Ghana.

1.2. Research Questions

The research seeks to answer the following questions.

- a. What were the areas of interest of Amnesty International in Ghana during the military era and how were these interests pursued?
- b. What are the areas of interest of Amnesty International in Ghana in its democratic dispensation and how are these interests being pursued?
- c. How has Amnesty International successfully been promoting and protecting human rights in Ghana?
- d. What factors contend with the work of Amnesty International in Ghana and what is the way forward?

1.3. Objectives of the Research

- a. To identify the areas of interest of Amnesty International in Ghana during the military era and how these interests were being pursued.
- b. To examine the areas of interest of Amnesty International in Ghana in this democratic dispensation and how these interests are being pursued.
- c. To evaluate the role Amnesty International plays in promoting and protecting human rights in Ghana.
- d. To examine the factors that contend with the work of Amnesty International in Ghana and the way forward.

1.4.The Scope of the Research

This research sought to assess Amnesty International's role in promoting human rights in Ghana from 1960 to date. The reason being that this period captures Ghana both under military rule and later under democratic governance.

1.5.The Rationale of the Research

This research analysed and assessed the role of Amnesty International as an international non-governmental organisation in Ghana. This research is relevant because Amnesty International is one of the leading international human rights organizations in Ghana. Information on this topic is scanty and therefore this research contributes to knowledge on human rights promotion. The study possesses many contributions in diverse areas because “through human rights education you can empower yourself and others to develop the skills and attitudes that promote equality, dignity and respect in your community, society and worldwide.”²⁴ Through this study, a step in another direction could be taking or observed when it comes to policy recommendations in Ghana by Amnesty International. This will go a long way to motivate the organization's contribution in addition to the existing policies to such as the abolishing of the death penalty in Ghana. The study as it assesses and analyses the contribution of Amnesty International will help further works in this area when for example discussion such an important topic in relation to other international organizations. It has therefore opened a gateway as a monitor of the works of Amnesty International in Ghana so that other scholars can also use it as a manual to probe into the works of the organization in other directions.

1.6.Hypothesis

Amnesty International has contributed to the promotion of human rights in Ghana.

1.7.Theoretical Framework

Neoliberal institutionalism is the theory that is adopted for the purpose of this research. The importance of institutions to state behaviour is to define the exact constitution of the institution. Robert Keohane suggests that they are a “persistent and connected set of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain activity and shape expectations”²⁵

Neoliberal institutionalism expresses that “international institutions prescribe rules that are effective in making states change their behaviour. Keohane notes that the core belief is that institutions exert a significant impact on the behaviour of governments.”²⁶

Neoliberal institutionalists say international institutions often affect the behaviour of states. This is because they help to facilitate their gains through maximisation. Neoliberal institutionalism is deeply rooted in international relations. Neoliberal institutionalists do not argue for a global community with hierarchical governance or state looking out for each other’s best interests. Keohane explains that they do not believe in “international agreements are easy to make or to keep”²⁷ indeed, the contrary is assumed.

Obstacles “between different sovereign states that make cooperation difficult will continue, yet neoliberal institutionalists claim, that the ability of states to communicate and cooperate depends on human-constructed institutions”.²⁸ It is not that implementing international institutions is easy, but when done properly it is effective. Therefore, institutions are an

effective way of managing state behaviour, even though it is accepted as an anarchic international system.”²⁹

In contrast, Neorealism is the most common school of international relations that rejects and criticizes the importance of international institutions’ effect on state behaviour. Some of its proponents include Kenneth Waltz (1942) and E.H Carr (2013). The theory supports five assumptions about the international system: its anarchic nature, that states inherently possess some offensive military capability, the lack of certainty about other states’ intentions, the basic motive is for states to survive, and that states think strategically about how to survive. The combination of these five assumptions as Mearsheimer suggests ‘creates incentives for states to think and sometimes behave aggressively.’³⁰

A Neorealist believes that due to the absence of a hierarchical structure in international politics to force states to temper their aggression, there is a probability that states may use their offensive capabilities. The reason is that they are not sure whether other states do not have intentions to act aggressively towards them, and potentially destroy them. It is believed that states can never be sure of the future intentions of other states, hence it causes them to be concerned with relative and absolute gains. Joseph Grieco suggests that a state will decline to join, will leave, or will sharply limit its commitment to a cooperative arrangement if it believes that partners are achieving, or are likely to achieve relatively greater gains. Moreover, a state concerned about relative gains may decline to cooperate even if it is confident that partners will keep their commitments and joint arrangements.³¹

Unfortunately, the concept of Realism does not support Neoliberal institutionalism. According to Realism, the Realist tradition is amoral and simply practical in accepting the realities of power politics. It makes a democratic argument that a state must retain its autonomy when it

comes to decision-making matters. Realists argue that nations should be allowed to make rules on their own; people from different cultures should be allowed to govern themselves as it fits the state. This will bring about autonomy, which will foster competition among states to practice better governance.³² With respect to culture and economics, Realists feel it is the sole role of the state to represent the interests of its citizens and culture and that if the state defers to a global good while other states with more power pursue their own interests then the states with less power, lose.³³ This argument against the theory of Neoliberal institutionalism unearths that; there will always be power disparity among states. This is because the interests of powerful states determine international outcomes. The competitive nature of autonomy as perceived by Realists can lead to a stable balance in power for policy innovation than multilateral cooperation like Amnesty International are unlikely to.³⁴

In spite of the above argument, Neoliberal institutionalism is the most relevant theory that defines the scope of this research, based on the interests pursued by Amnesty International; the theory has helped bring to light the significant influence that it has had on the behaviour of Ghana as seen in policy change and births.

1.8.Literature Review

In the book entitled *Like water on stone: the story of amnesty international* (2001), Jonathan Power narrates, in the introductory chapter, the story of Amnesty International, which at the time of his writing of the book, had been in existence for forty years. The then bizarre idea was to gather data on people incarcerated in prison solely for their political views use an army of volunteer activists to bombard the offending governments with a massive number of letters, postcards and telegrams to call for victims' immediate and unconditional release. These early efforts were denounced as 'subversive, an agent of Satan' and dubbed 'one of the largest

lunacies of our time.³⁵ In spite of the opposition from governments, and the world, more often than not, there was release for such prisoners.

1.8.1. International Organisations

International organisations are described as ‘inclusive intergovernmental organisations’ and these are “organisations that are created by agreement among states rather than by private individuals. Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and the General Motors Corporation all operate across national boundaries.”³⁶ International organisations “cover a huge range of issue-areas. Some deal with issues of peace and security, others with human rights or international economic or environmental issues, and yet others with the coordination of international aviation or broadcast standards. In fact, there are few areas of contemporary life in which there are no IOs creating rules, monitoring behaviour, or promoting cooperation.”³⁷ The genesis of intergovernmental cooperation through International Organisations in the nineteenth century was as a result of the claims by dictators that they ruled in the interest of the people instead of their personal gains. Even though neighbouring countries went to war to increase their territories, they also practised a system of cooperation as neighbouring countries to be able to maximize the welfare of their citizens.³⁸

Through the operations of International Organisations, countries across the globe have experienced a limited ability to their independent decisions in terms of the policies that govern the country. Hence, countries now act as multilateral instead of unilateral which gives the opportunity to create and act.³⁹ It also helps countries to form policies that connect with the rules of the international economic forces.⁴⁰ The work of International Organisations is very important. This is because of the diverse kinds of relations among countries and states through the creation of global civil societies and hence identified as a partial replacement for states.⁴¹

Through International Organisations, states and countries are recognized as international societies hence the states are bound to make collective rules instead of making individual decisions. The work of International Organisations affects the democratic governance of states.⁴²

Interestingly, the state exercises its power relating to International Organisations through the creation of institutional bureaucracies and procedures. On a general outlook, the major function found about International Organisation can be termed as direct implementation.⁴³ Globally, the majority of International Organisations “particularly those that deal with development and humanitarian issues, have employees on the ground in member countries, either assisting governments or undertaking activities that governments might normally undertake.”⁴⁴ A familiar example is Amnesty International, which is the focus of this study.

1.8.2. The Emergence of Amnesty International

It is indicated that “by the beginning of the 1990s, the question shifted from whether or not Amnesty International will survive to whether it will adapt to a changing world. The Cold War was over and throughout Latin America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, dictators and their regimes had crumbled. Hence, it further states, Amnesty International embarked on one of its most self-searching examinations. The result was a major assessment of global trends, an increase in chaos and complexity were seen to the characteristics of the international political system as the role of the all-powerful nation-state declined. The new democracies that were emerging were judged as vulnerable to the ravages of political corruption, economic hardship and extremist movements.”⁴⁵

On the economic front, growing disparities of income, the severe impoverishment of a number of countries and the danger of economic collapse in some of these new states of Central and Eastern Europe held that explosive potential for widespread political instability. Armed conflict in Europe and Africa were seen to be spinning out of control increasing tensions in surrounding countries and creating vast refugee populations, while international peacekeeping efforts were on occasion proving impotent.⁴⁶ This book is relevant to the study because it points out how Amnesty International has widened its scope from the initial focus on civil and political rights to other forms of rights. The book, however, does not talk about Amnesty International's contribution to human rights protection in Ghana, the organisation's success and failures, and this is what my research seeks to discover.

1.8.3. Expectations of Human Rights Organisations

In the introductory chapters of the book *NGOs and Human rights: Promise and performance*, (2001) Claude Welch Jr. sets his writing in motion by explaining what human rights international non-governmental organisations are supposed to do, that is, “working with or against governments in developing an agenda for action. This includes a standard setting, which is the establishment of international norms for state behaviour set forth in legally binding treaties that have been negotiated and ratified. They prepare and provide information on abuses based on research, in lobbying officials and media and provide direct assistance to victims of human rights.”⁴⁷ In this regard, he affirms that Amnesty International's focus on prisoners of conscience was complemented by a fund to assist victims.

Annie Clark, a contributor to this book, highlights Amnesty International's role in helping bring torture, disappearances and extrajudicial execution to global attention. She also highlights that, as a pioneering organisation, Amnesty International took a role in drafting legally binding

treaties. It developed many techniques now widely employed by human rights NGOs such as utilizing direct letter-writing campaigns. From its outset, Clark emphasized that Amnesty International stressed principles, political impartiality and attention to facts. ‘Principled norms’ emerge because of pressure from human rights NGOs on governments. Thus, non-governmental organisations “now participate in an area, which states have long held as centrally important to their sovereign nature, namely, the establishment of binding agreements.”⁴⁸ The significance of this book to the research is seen in the fact that the book places Amnesty International in the context of international non-governmental organisations and indicates the means by which it operates as a non-state actor in the international system. Conversely, the book does not place the organisation’s role as a non-state actor in an African context. My research is, therefore, going to take the role that the organisation plays as a non-state actor and place it in an Africa context. My research also deals with the effectiveness of the organisation as a non-state actor and its impact in Ghana.

In his book, *Keepers of the flame: Understanding Amnesty International* (2006), Stephen Hopgood contrasts Amnesty International’s ethos inspired protection of moral authority with the reformers’ search for more political authority. He explains that, although the former has been dominant since its inception, the latter is increasingly resurgent with the emphasis on a more political approach to the doctrine of human rights. Here, he means the right to speak as a legitimate representative of interest or identity (whether organized as a community or not) and the competitive process of establishing that right.⁴⁹

He states that there are reformers who see the need for Amnesty International to take on the thematic human rights issue such as economic and social rights, and women’s rights and to campaign in new ways (more direct political action) and in new areas focusing more on Western societies. He also mentions that changes that occur because of generational gaps are a struggle within well-established organisations. He further argues with the point raised by a

senior campaigner about what Amnesty International was forty years ago and isn't anymore and can never be.⁵⁰

This book is important to the research as it helps to question the supposed decline in Amnesty International's performance over the years. On the contrary, what may have come across, as a decline may be a shift of focus of the organisation from civil and political rights to economic and social rights. The parameters used to measure decline or otherwise may change in this instance. My research thus brings to the fore the relevance of this shift to the promotion of human rights in Ghana.

1.8.4. Forced Evictions

Afia Afena elaborates on the issue of forced evictions in her research on how neoliberal urban policies affect human rights. Amnesty International has a goal to ensure that people live in dignity, hence the organisation is doing a lot of work on forced evictions. Forced evictions often displace entire communities, and target poor residents who live in informal settlements and slums. They have a multiplicity of often interrelated causes across the globe, including international sporting events, infrastructure and development projects, such as the Olympic Games, political conflicts and demographic control among others. Nonetheless, the practice is continuously used as a tool to rid strategically located sites of low-income groups and free valuable land to attract global capital. According to COHRE and UN AGFE, not less than sixty governments used forced evictions as a development tool between 2003 and 2006, and many have adopted international human rights covenants that protect the right to housing.⁵¹

Most forced evictions breach a large number of human rights such as the right to adequate housing. This has been seen among many human rights institutions such as; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 2005); the International Covenant on Economic, the Social and Cultural Rights, (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Racial Discrimination; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These covenants facilitate the protection of persons from forced evictions. There is an important distinction between lawful and unlawful forced evictions.⁵²

There are exceptional circumstances that make forced evictions lawful to be applied and international human right standards such as the exploration of alternatives to eviction, community consultation prior to the eviction and the preparation of a resettlement plan, are respected to allow for the protection of the right to adequate housing. Forced evictions are unlawful where exceptional circumstances do not exist and international human rights standards are not adhered to. (UNCHR 2005).⁵³ International treaties are legally binding, yet the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) still lacks effective international complaints procedure. Law enforcement is left to national authorities. Unfortunate, many governments have signed the ICESCR without adopting housing rights legislation in their municipal law, which leaves citizens with little domestic legal remedies to contest evictions.⁵⁴

There is substantive evidence that many sub-Saharan African nations are using forced evictions as an urban development tool. According to the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions COHRE (2006), 19 African countries conducted forced evictions between 2003 and 2006 and Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe all forcefully evicted residents in the name of urban regeneration, albeit having ratified the ICESCR.⁵⁵

Despite the constitutional protection of human rights and the ratification of international housing rights agreements, the government of Ghana has not stopped the large-scale illegal forced evictions in the name of public benefit (COHRE 2006). From 2003 to 2006, 7000 people

have been forcibly evicted from Lake Volta in Digya National Park, which is located in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana. This exercise was to free up the area for the implementation of alternative land use plans. 800 persons were also forcibly moved from Legon Village at East Legon, Accra close to the Ghana Armed Forces, This made 2000 traders lose their livelihoods through such unlawful forced eviction from Accra's 'Kantamanto Market'.⁵⁶ This article is relevant to this research because it helps to appreciate the issue of forced evictions in Ghana. Even though the article mentions international non-governmental organisations that are helping to deal with the issue, it does not discuss into detail the role played by Amnesty International in curbing forced evictions, and this is what my research will be centred on.

1.9.Sources of Data

The data for the research was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources provided information from the respondents. In this research, the primary source of data was gathered from interviews conducted with the former Campaigns Coordinator of Amnesty International, the Administrative Assistant of Amnesty International and finally, the Growth and Mobilization Manager of Amnesty International and the secretary of the Slum Union of Ghana. However, secondary sources of data are also cheaper as the data has already been collected and is readily available for usage.⁵⁷ Secondary sources that were analysed and utilised in this research include relevant official documents from Amnesty International, related documents from the official website of Amnesty International, books, journal articles, reports and policy documents as well as e-resources.

1.10. Research Methodology

1.10.1. Research Design

Research Design is ‘a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place’. A research design will typically include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analysing data collected.⁵⁸ In this regard, the qualitative methodology was used to conduct this study. “Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help us understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places.”⁵⁹

1.10.2. Sample Population

Sample population refers to the group of individuals who actually participate in a study. In reality, these are the individuals who are interviewed in a qualitative study.⁶⁰ The sample population that was employed in this research include some past and present staff members of Amnesty International Ghana, the Slum Union of Ghana and Self-help Initiative Support Service. These group of people were selected for the study based on their working knowledge of the topic of the research, and their expertise which is related to the themes of the study.

1.10.3. Sample Size

The sample size of a statistical sample is the number of observations that constitute it.⁶¹ Since my target population was readily available, five (5) people in total from Amnesty International, the Slum Union of Ghana and Self-help Initiative Support Service with the requisite knowledge

in my field of study were interviewed. The rationale behind the number of respondents was based on their position, job description and knowledge base about the topic under study prompted the choice of selection.

In view of the above understanding, the questions for the interviews were carefully selected so as not to waste time and resources on collecting huge data that might not be finally relevant for analysis. Based on the questions selected, the respondents were specifically picked from Amnesty International and Slum Union of Ghana by taking into consideration, their expertise in the topic or research area, their relationship with the two institutions and the knowledge base they pose that could provide answers to the questions of the research.

1.10.4. Sampling Method

This refers to the means of selecting the sample of participants that represent the population to be studied.⁶² This study made use of purposive and snowballing sampling method through interviews. Purposive sampling is a sampling ‘technique in which the researcher relies on his or judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study.’ ‘It is useful in situations where a targeted sample needs to be reached quickly, and where sampling for proportionality is not the main concern.’ In this method of sampling, after observing the initial subject, the researcher required assistance from the first respondent to help identify other people with similar qualities of interest. These sampling methods are ideal as they led me to the relevant people who have the appropriate information to aid my research. This method of analysis is the collection and structuring of data in order for a researcher to come to a conclusion. It allows one to answer questions, solve problems, and derive important information.⁶³

1.10.5. Collection of Data

Qualitative research is typically focused on the micro level of social interaction that composes everyday life. Methods of qualitative research include observation and immersion, interviews, open-ended surveys, focus groups, content analysis of visual and textual materials, and oral history.⁶⁴ In other words, qualitative research analyses a problem through information collected from several sources including primary and secondary materials. Using a semi-structured interview guide, interviews were conducted with the following staff of Amnesty International Ghana: the former campaigns coordinator, the administrative assistant and the Growth and Mobilization Manager, the secretary of the Slum Union of Ghana and the project director of Self-help Initiative Support Services.

1.10.6. Data Analysis

In this research, the interviews conducted were face-to-face and semi-structured questions. As a qualitative interview, there is a possibility of generating a larger than expected data.⁶⁵ There is also the challenge that an interview that takes place in an hour could take over five hours to transcribe and a huge number of pages in writing.⁶⁶ Hence is it appropriate to code the data, by generating data units through classification and order, to help reduce the data that is collected.⁶⁷ The research procedure, questions and the kind of method that the researcher applies to need a good description for a proper analysis.⁶⁸ The data analysis tool that was used in this research is thematic. Thematic Analysis is a type of qualitative analysis. It is used to analyse classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the data. It illustrates the data in great detail and deals with diverse subjects via interpretations.⁶⁹

1.10.7. Validity and Reliability

Research “validity is the extent to which requirements of the scientific research method is followed during the process of generating research findings.”⁷⁰

Reliability “refers to the extent to which the same answers can be obtained using the same instruments more than one time. Using the thematic method, the data were examined and questioned to assess Amnesty International’s contribution to the promotion of human rights in” Ghana. The following are the themes that were used to analyse the data:

- The research design and methods
- Decision making process
- The nature and context of the decision making
- Decision making activities

1.10.8. Ethical Considerations

“Ethics are the norms or standards for conduct that distinguish between right and wrong. They help to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable”⁷¹ behaviours. Ethical standards prevent the fabrication or falsifying of data and therefore, promote the pursuit of knowledge and truth, which is the primary goal of research. Ethical behaviour is also critical for collaborative work because it encourages an environment of trust, accountability, and mutual respect among researchers. This is especially important when considering issues related to data sharing, co-authorship, copyright guidelines, confidentiality, and many other issues. Researchers must also adhere to ethical standards in order for the public to support and believe in the research.⁷²

Based on the above ethical issues the researcher went through the following steps to reach the respondents for the data collection process. The first step was to ensure the rights of the respondents were not violated. The researcher went in person to introduce herself and the research project to some staff members of the Amnesty International office at Kokomlemle, Accra and the Slum Union of Ghana. There was also an introduction of the generated semi-structured interview questions to the potential respondents and also to convince the respondents to understand the background of the research. The potential respondents then had sufficient information to make knowledgeable decisions to participate or redraw from participating in the data collection process.

1.11. Limitations

In every research work, there are various elements that limit the work due to diverse reasons. In this research specifically, one major limitation was the lack of literature to review in order to assess the study. This is as a result of the topic under discussion, hence there was not enough scholarly work to access to address the problem. Another limitation the research faced with this study is the lack of relevant research data. Due to the topic of the research, there were not enough relevant targets the research could contact for the most important data for the study.

1.12. Organisation of Chapters

There are four chapters in this study. The first chapter deals with the introduction to the research problem, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the objectives, the rationale, the scope of the study, the theoretical framework, literature review, sources of data and research methodology.

The second chapter takes into account the retrospective activities of Amnesty International in general and its current activities towards the promotion and protection of human rights in Ghana.

The third chapter assesses the successes, challenges and the way forward for Amnesty International's work in Ghana.

The fourth chapter focuses on the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN PERSPECTIVE

2.0.Introduction

This chapter will discuss the various working areas of Amnesty International in general, a history of its establishment in Ghana and will then focus on the areas of interest of Amnesty International in Ghana during the military era and how these interests were pursued. It further assesses Amnesty International's role in promoting human rights in Ghana from 1960 to date.

Amnesty International is an international non-governmental organisation, which campaigns for a world where everyone will enjoy human rights. The organisation was established in 1961, by a British lawyer, Peter Benenson, who was outraged when two Portuguese students were jailed just for raising a toast to freedom at a dinner table. A remark they had passed was critical of the then dictatorship led by Antonio de Oliveira Salazar. This remark allegedly gave the impression that they were going to overthrow the government. The students were then arrested and imprisoned for treason against the Portuguese government.⁷³

Presently, Amnesty International is an international non-governmental organisation of more than seven million people in over one hundred and fifty countries and territories who campaign to end abuses of human rights. It is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and funded mainly by its membership and public donations.⁷⁴

This chapter will look at the working areas of Amnesty International, the interest of Amnesty International in Ghana during the military era and how they pursued the interests.

2.1. International Working Areas of Amnesty International

2.1.1. Armed Conflict

Armed conflict is one of the areas that are of interest to the organisation's work. Issues including identity, ethnicity, religion or competition for resources causes armed conflicts. Amnesty International does not take sides in conflicts but rather documents and campaigns against human rights abuses and violations of international law perpetrated against civilians and others. No matter who commits them, or where it is committed, Amnesty International supports the survivors to demand justice. The problem is that, in conflicts across the globe, governments and armed groups routinely attack civilians.⁷⁵ Powerful nations have shown a sinister willingness to manipulate international institutions or apply double standards. States [sometimes] supply arms to forces known to commit mass abuses and then shield those responsible when abuses are committed. Continuing violence feeds on unresolved grievances arising from years of destructive conflict and the failure to hold those responsible accountable.⁷⁶

Amnesty International wants to ensure that there is an end to impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The organisation also wants to bring to the understanding of state forces and armed groups that, targeting civilians can never be justified. It also calls for an end to the recruitment and use of child soldiers; their demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration into the society, which has been made possible by the groundbreaking international Arms Trade Treaty.⁷⁷

2.1.2 Weapons

Every day, thousands of people are killed, injured or forced to flee their homes because of violence and armed conflict. The majority of casualties in armed conflict are civilians. Weapons such as missiles destroy hospitals, homes, markets and transport systems, pushing survivors into poverty [and] people's lives are destroyed. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, is that more than five million people died indirectly because of armed conflict since 1998. For every person who is killed in armed conflict and armed violence, many more are injured, tortured, abused, or kidnapped at [gunpoint].⁷⁸ This goes contrary to Article 2 subsection 2 of the "Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment which states that no exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture."⁷⁹

Weapons are not just on the battlefields; we find them on the streets, stimulating violence in many places. Armed violence take place in non-conflict situations and result in three-quarters of deaths. In Central America for example, domestic violence and killing of women are frequently committed with small arms bought at the black market. Weapons are also a tool that represses the state. Security forces use firearms against unarmed, peaceful protestors to commit other human rights abuses in many countries around the world. In this regard, the organisation is working to ensure that states ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, create or amend national laws to reflect the rules of the treaty [and] implement those laws effectively.⁸⁰

2.1.3. Corporate Accountability

Globalization has changed the world. It presents new and complex challenges for the protection of human rights. Economic players, especially multinational companies that operate across

national borders, have gained unprecedented power and influence across the world. Companies have an enormous impact on people's lives and the communities in which they operate. Sometimes the impact is positive. It brings about the creation of jobs and new technology improves lives. Investment in the community also translates into real benefits for those who live there.⁸¹

However, Amnesty International has exposed countless instances when corporations exploit weak and poorly enforced domestic regulation with devastating effect on people and communities. There are few effective mechanisms at a national or international level to prevent corporate human rights abuses or to hold companies to account. Amnesty International is working to change this. States are failing to protect the human rights of its citizenry and this is another focus area. The organisation is calling for corporate accountability. It is required of all companies by law to take steps to identify, prevent and address human rights abuses they have committed. They are to be accountable for these abuses as well. People whose rights have undergone some sort of violation by the action of companies must be able to access justice and effective remedy. This is because when the poor cannot secure justice, companies learn that they can exploit poverty without consequences. Laws should, therefore, be implemented to make sure that companies that operate across borders protect people's rights as well.⁸² This course pursued by Amnesty International is in line with Article 7(b) of the International Convention on Economic and Social Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to safe and healthy working conditions.

2.1.4. Death Penalty

Amnesty International advances the point that the death penalty is a serious violation of human rights. Every day, people are executed by the state as punishment for a variety of crimes –

sometimes for acts that should not be criminalised. In some countries, it can be for [whom] you sleep with, in others; it is reserved for acts of terror and murder. Some countries execute people who were under 18 years old when the crime was committed; others use the death penalty against people who suffer mental problems. Before people die, they are often imprisoned for years on [death row]. Not knowing when their time is up, or whether they will see their families one last time. The death penalty is cruel, inhuman and degrading.⁸³ Amnesty International opposes the death penalty at all times – no matter the method of execution and regardless of whether or not the accused is guilty.⁸⁴

It breaches two essential human rights: the right to life and the right to live free from torture. Both rights are protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN in 1948. The following international laws explicitly ban [the] use of the death penalty, except during times of war:

The Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

- Protocol No. 6 to the European Convention on Human Rights
- The Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights to Abolish the Death Penalty.⁸⁵

The European Convention on Human Rights (Protocol No. 13) bans using the death penalty at all times, even during the war. Although [the] international law says that, the death penalty can be used for the most serious crimes, like murder. Amnesty International believes that the death penalty is never the answer and has adopted strategic campaigns for the expunging of the clause from the constitution of countries that allow offenders to be executed.⁸⁶

2.1.5. Detention and Imprisonment

The organisation also deals with the problem of detention and imprisonment. It is easy sometimes to think that, the rights of prisoners have little to do with us – that they have somehow exchanged their rights for a life of crime. This is wrong on two counts. First, everyone has the same rights and they can never be taken away, no matter where you are, or what you may have done. Second, just because [a person is] in prison, does not mean [the person] is guilty of a crime. Since Amnesty began in 1961, its activists have been ready to spring into action for people facing imminent danger in detention; from sending faxes and tweets to making phone calls or taking to the streets. While there have been thousands of [success stories], systemic change is harder to come by, and far too many people are still languishing in isolation, incommunicado, and in fear.⁸⁷

There is also the problem of prisoners of conscience. This situation refers “to someone who has not used or advocated violence but has been imprisoned because of who they are (sexual orientation, ethnic, national or social origin, language, birth, colour, sex or economic status) or what they believe (religious, political or other conscientiously held beliefs)”⁸⁸

This, however, goes contrary to Article 26 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, stating, all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or another opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or another status.⁸⁹

Some people are also detained arbitrarily for no legitimate reason or without legal process, detained in a secret location, taken through unfair trials without ensuring minimum legal process. Torture and other forms of ill-treatment are also meted out to them while in detention.

This is a departure from Article 9 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. It states that no one shall be subjected to prison conditions; such as overcrowding and prolonged solitary confinement. As a result, Amnesty International is advocating for governments to end secret detentions, stop torture and other forms of ill-treatment and ensure that detainees have rapid and regular access to lawyers, doctors and relatives. Governments should also provide effective legal process so that people can challenge their detention and treatment. This is in pursuit of Article 9 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. It maintains that anyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention and order his release if the detention is not lawful.⁹⁰

Amnesty International also insists on “prompt and independent investigations when someone dies in detention, independent monitoring bodies that pay regular visits to places of detention, fair trials within a reasonable time and the release of prisoners of conscience without conditions.”⁹¹

2.1.6. Living in Dignity

One of the many aims of Amnesty International is for people to live in dignity. In the midst of plenty, many people still go hungry; live in poor housing without basic services such as water and toilets and grow-up without education. This is not just because of a lack of resources, but also because of negligence and discrimination. Governments are simply unwilling to do something about it. This is not an unfortunate reality of life; it is a shocking human rights scandal.⁹²

Amnesty International is working with communities across the world, equipping residents with the knowledge and tools to engage with government officials to claim their rights and improve their lives.⁹³ This is in order to fulfil Article 23 subsection 1 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights which points out that everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

People living in poverty are often trapped because they are excluded from the rest of society, denied a say, and threatened with violence and insecurity. Rights are the key for people to break out of the poverty trap. Simply put, respect for human rights demands inclusion, demands that everyone gets a say, demands that those in power protect people from threats to their security. Again, we all have the right to housing, yet over ten per cent of people worldwide live in a slum or informal settlement. Living conditions are often dire with overcrowding, little or no access to clean water, toilets or health care. Many people living in slums or informal settlements are not protected from harassment such as forced evictions because their right to live is not legally recognised.⁹⁴

Amnesty International is calling on governments to stop evicting people from their homes without proper advance notice, compensation or consultation. Such evictions are illegal and violate the right to housing. These evictions are often violent, destroy livelihoods and make people homeless. Article 11 sub-section 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights emphasizes this truth by urging the states parties to the covenant to recognise the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family. This includes adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. Again, the organisation's efforts are geared towards making sure economic development projects (such as infrastructure or mining), help the most disadvantaged and do not lead to human rights abuses.⁹⁵

2.1.7. Disappearances

Enforced disappearance is frequently used as a strategy to spread terror within society and this is a concern for Amnesty International. The feeling of insecurity and fear it generates is not limited to the close relatives of the disappeared but also affects communities and society as a whole. It has become a global problem. Once largely used by military dictatorships, disappearances now happen in many internal conflicts, particularly when trying to repress political opponents⁹⁶. Human rights defenders, relatives of victims, witnesses and lawyers seem to be particular targets, but vulnerable people are also at risk, such as children and people with disabilities. Every disappearance violates a range of human rights including right to security and dignity of person, right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, right to humane conditions of detention, right to a legal personality, right to a fair trial, and right to a family life.⁹⁷

Amnesty International is, therefore, calling on governments to find out where people who disappear are kept, that is if it genuinely does not know their whereabouts, release them, and provide details of where they died. This is to ensure that Articles 1 and 2 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance are followed to the letter. Both Articles state that:

no one shall be subjected to enforced disappearance, no exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification for enforced disappearance and that for the purposes of this Convention, enforced disappearance is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.⁹⁸

States must also investigate and prosecute those responsible in a fair trial, legislate to make the International Convention national law, implement the International Convention and accept the

competency of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances. In addition, the committee must live up to their obligations under international law, by making sure survivors and people who have lost their loved ones receive reparation; which includes compensation, rehabilitation, restitution and a guarantee that it won't happen again.⁹⁹

2.1.8. Discrimination

Amnesty International is also working to eradicate discrimination. Discrimination strikes at the very heart of being human. It is treating someone differently simply because of who they are or what they believe. We all have the right to be treated equally, regardless of our race, ethnicity, nationality, class, caste, religion, belief, sex, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, health or another status. Yet all too often we hear heart-breaking stories of people who suffer cruelty simply for belonging to a 'different' group from those in power. Amnesty International's work is rooted in the principle of non-discrimination; working with disadvantaged communities across the world to work to change discriminatory laws and protect people,¹⁰⁰ as outlined in Article 2 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discriminations which admonishes states to condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races. To this end, (a) Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to ensure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation.¹⁰¹ This means governments getting rid of discriminatory laws and the release of anyone who is in prison because of them, protecting everyone, whoever they are, from violence, drawing new

laws and building institutions that tackle the root causes of discrimination. This also involves leading from the front and never using people's discriminatory beliefs for political ends.¹⁰²

2.1.9. Freedom of Expression

Concerning freedom of expression, since Amnesty International began, it has supported and protected people who speak out for themselves and for others. The organisation works with journalists, community workers and teachers, trade unionists, people promoting reproductive rights and indigenous people standing up for their land rights.¹⁰³ Even though free speech is found in almost every constitution around the world, in fact, people are not free to express themselves and as a result, Amnesty International "has campaigned all around the world for thousands of prisoners of conscience. Individuals have the right to seek, receive and share information and ideas, without fear or unlawful interference, as this is crucial for their education and development. This is in line with Article 19 subsection 2 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which states that,

everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice. The organisation is seeking to ensure that all laws that criminalize people who speak out or protest peacefully, be struck off the law books, laws against hate speech or other incitements to violence should not be used to repress valid dissent and people should have access to information.¹⁰⁴

2.1.10. The Right of Indigenous People

As part of Amnesty International's goals of protecting the rights of people, it is working to ensure that the rights of indigenous people are respected. Around the world, there are more than 5,000 different Indigenous Peoples, speaking more than 4,000 languages. They have

different customs and cultures, but they do share some unpleasant realities: removal of their lands, denial of their culture, physical attacks and being treated as second-class citizens. Amnesty International works with Indigenous Peoples to develop urgently needed laws to protect their lands, cultures and livelihoods. At the international level, Indigenous Peoples have made their voices heard and effectively lobbied governments.

Indigenous Peoples are often marginalized and face discrimination in countries' legal systems and this goes against Article 27 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights which indicates that in those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.¹⁰⁵

This leaves them at further risk of violence and abuse. Indigenous human rights defenders who speak out face intimidation and violence, often supported by the state. Peaceful efforts of Indigenous Peoples to maintain their own cultural identity or exercise control over their traditional lands and resources can be branded treason or terrorism.¹⁰⁶ Over the years, Amnesty International has supported Indigenous Peoples, for example, on the development of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 which entails ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have a say in decisions that affect them, maintaining their distinct cultural identities, living free from discrimination and the threat of genocide and having secure access to the lands and resources essential to their well-being and ways of life.¹⁰⁷

2.1.11. International Justice

International justice is also on the agenda of Amnesty International. It has helped in establishing a system of international justice through the creation of the International Criminal Court. In spite of this, there still exist crimes of genocide, torture, and other grotesque human rights abuses. This is mostly because of a lack of political will to investigate and prosecute people suspected of committing crimes, and weak criminal justice systems.¹⁰⁸ Promoting international justice also means promoting universal jurisdiction; if someone is accused of a crime, they can be tried anywhere they are found no matter where the offence was committed. The most famous example is the arrest of Augusto Pinochet, ex Chilean dictator, in London in 1998. The organisation is also calling for ad hoc international courts such as in Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste.¹⁰⁹

2.1.12. Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants

The rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are a concern for Amnesty International. A refugee refers to a “person who has fled their own country because they are at risk of serious human rights violations there. Because their own government cannot or will not protect them, they are forced to seek international protection. There are currently over 21 million refugees in the world. Eighty- six per cent of them live in developing regions. An asylum-seeker is someone who is seeking international protection abroad but has not yet been recognised as a refugee.”¹¹⁰ A migrant refers to a person who moves from one country to another, often to find work. There may also be other reasons such as wanting to join relatives or to escape natural disasters. Some move because they want to, while others feel forced to leave because of poverty or other serious problems. People can migrate ‘regularly’, which means they have official

permission to stay in a country, or ‘irregularly’, which means they do not yet have this permission.¹¹¹

Amnesty International is working to make sure governments honour their responsibility to protect their rights, condemning any policies and practices that undermine them. One example is making sure countries do not outsource their border controls. That is, essentially paying another country to stop people from reaching their borders. The organisation is also calling for governments to properly process people’s asylum claims and not leave them in limbo. This is to make sure that migrants are protected from being exploited and abused by their employers or by traffickers as such people even end up in detention for years.¹¹²

AI is of the view that irrespective of their status; all migrants are entitled to have their human rights protected¹¹³. This is in accordance with Article 7 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which states that,

States Parties undertake, in accordance with the international instruments concerning human rights, to respect and to ensure to all migrant workers and members of their families within their territory or subject to their jurisdiction the rights provided for in the present Convention without distinction of any kind such as to sex, race, colour, language, religion or conviction, political or another opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic position, property, marital status, birth or another status.¹¹⁴

2.1.13. Sexual and Reproductive Rights

As an international human rights group, it is working in the area of sexual and reproductive rights. There are many barriers to sexual and reproductive rights, including obstacles to access to health services, information and education.¹¹⁵ Underlying these problems is discrimination and this goes against Article 7 of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights which

points out the fact that all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law.

Women and girls and people from marginalized groups, such as gay men, lesbian women and trans-people or people from so-called ‘lower’ castes, people living in poverty, or minorities, risk a huge amount when they try to exercise choice. These barriers are often more extreme if you are from more than one of these groups. Unfortunately, instead of curbing it, governments often reinforce it. They force people to conform to what they consider to be ‘normal’ when it comes to sexuality, reproduction and parenthood. These harmful stereotypes are often justified on grounds of culture, tradition or religion.¹¹⁶

Control over sexual and reproductive choices often ends up in the hands of husbands, in-laws, family members or religious groups. The consequences are devastating. In this regard, Amnesty International is calling for governments to stop using criminal law to control people’s sexuality and reproduction. People should be empowered to make their own decisions about their bodies and live without interference from others. Sexual and reproductive health services, education and information should be made easily available and accessible as they prohibit all forms of violence and discrimination.¹¹⁷

2.1.14. Torture

Torture is a serious human rights violation. It is often used by someone in authority intentionally to cause severe pain or suffering for a specific purpose; such as to get information or a confession out of you, to punish, intimidate or threaten you. It can be physical, such as beating, forcing into a painful position or sexual, such as rape. It can be psychological, such as sleep deprivation or public humiliation. Torture is however illegal and outlawed internationally

since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. One hundred and fifty-six countries have signed the UN Convention against Torture. All forms of cruelty and humiliation are outlawed as well. Yet some governments openly continue to torture despite their commitments.¹¹⁸

Others betray their people by carrying out torture in secret. There are however many reasons why torturers often do not fear arrest, prosecution or punishment. These include a lack of political will, especially if the government is behind the torture and when investigations are carried out by the torturer's colleagues and particularly because human rights are not high on the political agenda. Amnesty International is advocating for more energy to be put into ending torture. There must always be a proper and fair process for investigating and prosecuting those responsible. Governments must be committed to enforcing the law by having the political will to do so.¹¹⁹

2.1.15. United Nations

AI works with the United Nations. Since 1964, Amnesty has had special consultative status at the UN, which has allowed it to shape crucial developments in human rights. These include the adoption of key UN Conventions against torture and Disappearances and curbing the arms trade. Another such crucial development is the creation of optional protocols to human rights treaties for the abolition of the death penalty and to keep children out of armed forces. Closely related to this, are the adoption of resolutions such as the almost unanimous halt to the death penalty and the protection of civilians in crisis situations. There has also been the formation of Special Procedure mandates on issues such as human rights defenders, the elimination of discrimination against women, counter-terrorism and human rights and business and human rights among many others.¹²⁰

Despite these, much more could still be achieved. Amnesty International is pushing for the universal ratification and implementation of human rights treaties and standards and the adoption of treaties to address new challenges. These include business and human rights or our right to privacy, institutional reform to achieve a stronger and more effective United Nations for the promotion and protection of human rights and increased responsiveness to human rights and humanitarian crisis by the United Nations.¹²¹

2.1.16. Modes of Operation

The three major avenues Amnesty International uses in achieving its aim are through “accurate, cross-checked research into human rights violation by governments and others worldwide; advocacy in the form of analysis which influences and presses governments, companies and decision-makers to do the right thing; and finally through campaigns and actions in the form of petitions, letters and protest, campaigners press for action from the people and institutions who can make change happen.¹²²

2.2. International Conventions on Human Rights

There are nine core international human rights instruments as outlined by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. They are expert committees that monitor the implementation of the treaties provided by the party states. These international conventions give Amnesty International the impetus to operate as they take their guiding principles from these conventions. They include the following:

1. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination adopted and opened for signature and ratification by General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of December 21, 1965, and entered into force on January 4, 1969.¹²³

2. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966, and entered into force March 23, 1976.¹²⁴
3. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966, and entered into force January 3, 1976.¹²⁵
4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979. It entered into force as an international treaty on September 3, 1981.¹²⁶
5. The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 39/46 of December 10, 1984, and entry into force June 26, 1987.¹²⁷
6. The Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of November 20, 1989 entry into force September 2, 1990.¹²⁸
7. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/158 of December 18, 1990.¹²⁹
8. International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 47/133 of 18 December 1992.¹³⁰
9. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹³¹

2.3. Achievements of Amnesty International Worldwide

2.3.1. Achievements of Amnesty International in Africa

2.3.1a Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, at the height of the Ebola, many emergency measures were put in place as a strategy to reduce infection rates and get the spread of Ebola under control was the closure of schools between June 2014 and April 2015. This particularly affected girls of school going age, as they became the target for sexual violence including abusive and exploitative relationships. A report by UNDP indicates that several focus group participants raised the fact that, women were more conscious of the Ebola prevention rules on avoiding bodily contact and that is why men were targeting young girls who did not understand the content of the message and who had limited power. In April 2015, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology stated that they had conducted a nationwide survey and found that 600 teenage girls were pregnant. In June 2015, a further statement indicated that at least 3,000 girls were pregnant since the start of the Ebola outbreak. The discriminatory policy of banning visibly pregnant girls from school settings puts all girls at risk of abuses, as school staff and others in positions of authority feel empowered and required to take measures to ascertain girls' pregnancy status. Amnesty International described methods that included physically touching girls' breasts, stomachs or other means to help prevent any subsequent violations of girls' human rights.¹³²

Civil society groups and human rights organisations in Sierra Leone including Amnesty International called on the government to review the policy. They insisted that the policy suggests that education is a privilege that can be taken away at any moment, as a punishment of some sort rather than as a right of all children. Then, in May 2015, following much local and international pressure, the President of Sierra Leone said during a stakeholder meeting with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), that there needed to be more

mobilisation and sensitization of people to understand and accept the issue of pregnant girls being allowed to return to school. A temporary measure was therefore established as an alternative educational system for the pregnant girls. This took the form of school-based interventions (outside of schooling hours – afternoon school), community learning centres, NGO learning centres.¹³³

2.3.1b Egypt

In Egypt, on 14 June, 2016, Maheinour, a lawyer and former prisoner of conscience and Moataseem, a labour rights activist and activists Asmaa Naeem, Walee el-Amry and Ziad Abu el-Fadl participated in a protest in Alexandria against the Egyptian government’s decision to hand over control of two islands, Tiran and Sanafir, to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On 18 November 2017, the Montazah Misdemeanor Court in Alexandria ordered the detention of Mahienour El-Masry and Moataseem Medhat until the verdict in December 2017. On 30 December 2017, the same court sentenced Mahienour and Moataseem to two years in prison for ‘participating in an unauthorized protest’ and ‘show of force.’ The court also sentenced the three other activists to three years in prison, in absentia. Through the advocacy of Amnesty International, on 13 January 2018, the Montazah Misdemeanor Court of Appeals acquitted Mahienour and Moataseem of all charges.¹³⁴

Amnesty International was interested in the case and advocated for their release as their detention was in contradiction to Article 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These “articles state that everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference and that the right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized.¹³⁵ No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety,

public order, the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. Najia Bounaim, Amnesty International's Deputy Director of Campaigns for North Africa said: "This is fantastic news for Mahienour who walks free today. She should never have spent a day in prison. Her release will come as a huge relief for her family and all those who mobilized tirelessly on her behalf moment behind bars, as she was detained only because of her peaceful activism in Egypt".¹³⁶

2.3.1c Angola

In Angola, the NGO Presidential Decree was enacted in March 2015. This decree was a piece of legislation that sought to monitor the registration and financial support of non-governmental organizations. The decree empowered the Public Prosecutor's Office to suspend the activities of national and international non-governmental organisations on suspicion of money laundering, or illegal or harmful acts against Angola's sovereignty and integrity. There were widespread fears that these offences would be interpreted over-broadly in practice, resulting in a crackdown on civil society¹³⁷.

However, after much deliberation, the decree was declared unconstitutional in a court judgement dated July 11 but made public on July 14, 2015. The court stated that the procedure for its approval should have been done through the National Assembly. In response to this court judgement, Deprose Muchena, Amnesty International's Director for Southern Africa stated that the judgement is a positive step forward that gives Angolan authorities a second chance to go back and work together with local NGOs to build a safe and enabling environment for civil society. He further indicated that from the beginning, Amnesty International and other organisations have stated plainly that this legislation was designed to stifle the vital work of human rights defenders and civil society organisations in Angola.¹³⁸

2.3.2. Achievements of Amnesty International in Europe

2.3.2a Russia

Being motivated by Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Amnesty International supporters intensely campaigned for the release of Bolotnaya Square protestors, Mikhail Kosenko. He was released from a closed psychiatric unit, two years after being jailed for his role in largely peaceful anti-government protests in Moscow, Russia¹³⁹.

2.3.2b Belarus

As part of the organisation's campaign for freedom of expression, Ales Bialiatski, a Belarusian human rights activist featured in Amnesty International's 2013 Write for Rights campaign, was released in June after almost three years in prison. Ales said the support of Amnesty campaigners led to his release¹⁴⁰.

2.3.3. Achievements of Amnesty International in Asia

2.3.3a Japan

In Japan, Hakamada Iwao, 78, was released from prison following intense campaigning by Amnesty International and other organizations. He had spent most of his life waiting to be executed after being convicted of murder in 1968. In March 2013, the court revoked his death sentence and ordered a retrial, suggesting that evidence against Iwao had been falsified¹⁴¹.

2.3.3b 2.Myanmar

In Myanmar, Amnesty International's Work led to the release of community leader Dr Tun Aung. He was jailed for 17 years after trying to calm a crowd during riots in Myanmar in 2012. This good news followed more than two years of pressure from Amnesty International supporters, including during Write for Rights 2013. Myanmar's National Human Rights Commission said: Amnesty International's letters prompted them to look further into Dr Tun Aung's case.¹⁴²

2.3.4. Achievements of Amnesty International in South America

2.3.4a El Salvador

The hard work of dedicated activists under Amnesty International's My Body My Rights campaign led to the release of Guadalupe in El Salvador who was jailed for a miscarriage. Carmen Guadalupe Vasquez was finally pardoned and walked free from prison in February 2015. She was just 18 when she suffered a miscarriage. Suspected of having an abortion, which is banned in all cases in El Salvador, she was jailed for 30 years in 2007 on trumped-up murder charges.¹⁴³

2.3.4b Paraguay

Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights spells out that in those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.¹⁴⁴ This is pursued under Amnesty International's campaign for the rights of indigenous people. In view of this, AI helped indigenous communities get justice in Paraguay

when Paraguay's President Cartes signed into law a bill that returned more than 14,000 hectares of traditional land to the Sawhoyamaya indigenous community. It marked a huge victory for families who have been fighting for their rights for more than 20 years.¹⁴⁵

2.3.5. Achievements of Amnesty International in the Middle East

2.3.5a Israel

In 2015, Amnesty International focused on making Israel, Hamas and Palestinian armed groups accountable for any violations of international law. The organisation also called on the UN to immediately impose an arms embargo on these armed groups in Gaza. This is because many of the weapons fuelling the violence and destruction were from foreign suppliers and as a result, people in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories suffered terribly during the 50-day conflict in Gaza¹⁴⁶.

2.3.5b Syria

In March 2014, the organisation was able to organise thousands of activists in more than 40 countries to mark the third anniversary of the conflict. It is important to state that Amnesty International recognises the mobilisation of people for a particular cause, an achievement in itself. It demanded aid for all Syrians in need. In April, Amnesty International presented UN Security Council members with over 140,000 petition signatures calling for an immediate end to the suffering of besieged people in Syria¹⁴⁷.

2.4. History of Amnesty International in Ghana

In an interview with Ms Juliet S.A Kaingbanja, the administrative officer of Amnesty International Ghana on 21st December 2017, she narrates that Amnesty International in Ghana began in 1971 when Mr Geshon Gu-Kunu; a former Togolese regional liaison officer of the international organisation introduced Amnesty International to Dr I.F. Epton, a human rights defender. Dr Epton contacted a Catholic Priest in Accra who mobilized some lawyers, media men, and church members to start the processes of forming Amnesty International in Ghana. Some of the founding members were Nana Osafo Buabeng, Mr William Bannerman, Mr Osei Nyame, and Mr Alex Asante Tannor. However, between the period from 1972-1978, there was a cessation of the activities of the organisation due to a military takeover, which did not make it conducive for human right activism at the time.¹⁴⁸

She stated that in 1978, Mr Geshon Gu-Kunu visited Ghana again from the United Kingdom to give impetus to the reactivation of Amnesty International in Ghana. He contacted two human rights activists, Mr Jean Claude, a French national and Mr Evans Amugi. They worked tirelessly in order to establish a strong basis on which Amnesty International Ghana will be founded. Mr Emmanuel Gbeho, Prof. Naana Aft (Mrs.) and Mr Nyarko, who were also human rights activists were contacted to aid them. Subsequent meetings were held at Mr Claude's residence where Mr Amugi was urged to encourage people in Koforidua to form a human rights group of five to ten (5-10) members. This human rights group was formed to be a unified force for human rights activism in order to gain recognition from the Amnesty International office in London. The first group was formed in Koforidua in the Eastern Region, followed by the second in Ho (Volta Region), the third in Tema (Greater Accra) and the fourth in Tafo (Eastern Region).¹⁴⁹

Ms Kaingbanja further narrates that from 1978 to 1985; the activities of Amnesty International in Ghana attracted the attention of the International Secretariat in London and was hence recognised. Within this period, Amnesty International in Ghana, appointed its first officer, Lawyer Emmanuel Lokko and chairperson as Prof. Mrs. Naana Aft, with Mr. Emmanuel Gbeho being the secretary. In 1986, the first Annual General Meeting was held at the Tema SOS Village chaired by Lawyer Osafo Buabeng. At this meeting, AI Ghana drafted its constitution and the general membership discussed it. In 1987, at an Annual General Meeting in Ho, the constitution was approved and used for the first election of board members. Mr Alex Asante Tannor was elected as the chairperson, Mr Gladstone Agbenu-Mensah; the vice chairperson, Mr. R. K Pongo; secretary and Ms. Juliana Apau Sekyere as treasurer. The first batch of staff members engaged was the administrative secretary and the Group Development Officer.¹⁵⁰

Ms. Kaingbanja reveals that in 1986, the national office was fully established in Koforidua. Amnesty International, in 1996, moved its office to Accra to gain easy access to the media, various partners and to facilitate the recruitment of relevant staff among others. Subsequently, the organisation's first workshop on Female Genital Mutilation was held in Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region. The organisation used to convene a general meeting annually but in 1999, it held its first biennial General Meeting in Tamale in 1999. This was in order for the organisation to conform to the international organisation's calendar of events especially concerning the holding of the International Council Meeting (ICM), which was organised on a biennial basis.¹⁵¹

Ms. Kaingbanja also mentioned that in 2003 however, due to administrative challenges, the section was faced with at the time; it runs into a crisis and the international body saw it as not living up to its task. As a result, the Global Assembly and the Global Secretariat took a decision and took over the administration of the Ghana section of Amnesty International. The Secretary-General of Amnesty International hence run the Ghana section directly from London, as the

Ghanaian section no longer had a board. Afterwards, it went under Partnership for Growth (PfG); a section administered by the International Secretariat.¹⁵²

She reiterates that later in 2007, the first-ever director for Amnesty International Ghana was engaged and in 2010, the organisation reverted to organising annual general meetings. It also increased its staff strength from three to six in the same year. Amnesty International regained section status from the International Secretariat in 2011 and relocated to a more spacious office in 2015. It is important to note that, Amnesty International Ghana is an integral part of Amnesty International, with active participation in all core activities of the international organisation. Amnesty International Ghana has over the years contributed immensely in formulating some key decisions through the involvement of its members at the international level. An example is the successive election and elevation of two of its members, Samuel Akologo-Zan and Dr. Vincent Adzahlie-Mensah onto the highest decision-making board; referred to as the International Board, based on merit in the year 2003 and 2012 respectively.¹⁵³ Amnesty International Ghana has cordial work relations with the bigger sections of Amnesty International, notably the German, Norwegian, Netherlands and UK Sections. As work relationship demands, these bigger sections sponsor the activities of the Ghana section.¹⁵⁴

The organisation equally has a close relationship with the Africa sections. Again, the Acting Director of Amnesty International has over the years actively participated in global discussions and contributed to the development of modules that have been adopted by the organisation. The modules refer to the core standards of Amnesty International. They include the youth module, activism module among others. These modules are the strategies and policies that guide Amnesty International in its work. Amnesty International Ghana has always been a focal point where training for newly engaged staff of other sections is involved. The doors of Amnesty International Ghana are always open to facilitate these processes due to the high standard of work and the level of appreciation of the organisation's work in the sub-region.¹⁵⁵

2.4.1. Ghana's Political History and How it Influenced Amnesty International's Work

Ghana gained independence from British rule on March 6, 1957, and went on to gain republic status in 1960.¹⁵⁶ AI's first contact with Ghana was in 1962, this was during the time when the organisation had only been recently established in Britain and was operating from there.¹⁵⁷ The Growth and Mobilization Manager of Amnesty International Ghana on 8th May 2017, he narrates that the political condition could be described as a mixed bag. On the positive side, Ghana had just gained independence and was enjoying self-governance. There were many political activities in response to the freedom that Ghana was beginning to experience after decades of colonial rule. The political atmosphere was that of a maiden participatory democracy with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as the president. At the same time, there were many human right violations targeted at political opponents. This was because of the introduction of some laws that did not promote equal political participation for all, most especially the Preventive Detention Act promulgated by Dr Kwame Nkrumah. This Act caused the political space to shrink as some political opponents were arrested and detained, including Dr J.B Danquah.¹⁵⁸ There were also some citizens whose rights were abused because of their opposition to Dr Kwame Nkrumah.¹⁵⁹

At a point, Dr Nkrumah proclaimed his political party, the Convention People's Party(CPP), the only political party in Ghana and by so doing, declared Ghana a one-party state. Consequently, people no longer had the freedom to assemble and engage in any open political activity. Freedom of speech was curtailed to the point that people could no longer speak their minds and express their opinion publicly without the fear of being heard by any of Dr Kwame Nkrumah's informants and subsequently arrested.¹⁶⁰ Under the Criminal Code of 1960, treason, murder and attempted murder in certain circumstances are punishable by death, with murder

carrying a mandatory death penalty. Such offences may be tried by the High Court, where the defendant has full rights of defence and a right to appeal to the Supreme Court. The Head of State has the power to commute death sentences. Under the Armed Forces Act, No.105 of 1962, military personnel may impose the death penalty for treason and mutiny in time of war. Amnesty International finally established a section in Ghana in 1973. During this period, Ghana was under military rule. The Supreme Military Council headed by General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong had overthrown Busia's Progress Party government, creating a volatile temperature. He further narrated that, in April 1984, the Special Military Tribunal (Amendment) Law, PNDC Law 77 of 1984 empowered special military courts set up in 1982 to impose the death penalty for offences against the security of the state. In the same month, nine former army officers were convicted of treason in absentia by a Special Military Tribunal and sentenced to death. At least 12 people were executed in 1985: five for embezzlement, one for murder and three for attempting to sabotage the economy¹⁶¹.

The rights of citizens were limited in terms of freedom of expression and the freedom to assemble and engage in political activity. This political climate made it relevant for Amnesty International to begin to look at ways of promoting the protection of the rights of the citizens in general and not just political actors. This is because Amnesty International started as a non-political organisation, so it was not so much concerned with political engagement but with the fact that people did not have space, the right and the freedom to organise themselves into political groups. People could not also campaign and express their views and to present an agenda that will promote democracy in Ghana at the time. Freedoms of association, freedom of expression, freedom of speech were all affected during this period.¹⁶²

In 1985, even though Ghana was still under military rule, there were some decrees that were made that had some semblance of basic human right values. This is attributed, among other things, to Amnesty International's campaigns on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the stress Amnesty International placed on Article 5, which talked about the fact that no human being should be treated in an inhumane, degrading and cruel manner. An example of such a decree is the Intestate Succession Law also known as PNDC Law 111. Before this decree, when a man died without leaving a will, the widows and their children were thrown out of their homes by the man's relatives. These relatives also took over all other property owned by the deceased man, leaving the women with little or nothing at all to fend for themselves and their children. However, under the rules of PNDCL 111, in the absence of a will, the entire estate of the deceased devolves to the next of kin. The compulsory beneficiaries are the children, spouse and parents of the deceased. The fraction of the estate distributed to each heir varies according to the numbers and categories of heirs involved in the distribution.¹⁶³ This brought an end to the socio-cultural practice of wives being thrown out of their homes upon the death of their husbands.¹⁶⁴

It is important to note that, although the political situation during this era was difficult, those who were actively involved in political activity, particularly within the military and other political groups, felt the effect. However, those in civil society and developmental agencies were given the space to do their work. Consequently, in 1985, Amnesty International presented its first petition for the abolition of the death penalty. From this time onwards, Amnesty International began highlighting its campaign on the abolition of the death penalty.¹⁶⁵

2.4.2. Ghana's Economic History and How It Affected Amnesty International's Work

The economic situation when Amnesty International created a section in Ghana was a difficult one. There was the scarcity of goods and essential commodities.¹⁶⁶ Jobs were not readily available to people who qualified and were actively in search of jobs. From this period all the way to 1979, Ghana had gone through a very turbulent period politically and this had an effect on the economic situation. The deficient employment situation affected people's ability to work and save. In addition, the propensity to invest was very low. The condition of jobs was equally poor. It was a vicious cycle of poverty at the time. This made it difficult for people to realise their right to work and as it was difficult for people to be gainfully employed, meaning could not be given to the right to life. For people to have the right to life, they must have the right to work, as human rights are indivisible.¹⁶⁷

Amnesty International Ghana, therefore, took advantage of this situation to vigorously campaign for the economic, social and cultural rights of the people. This was a change in Amnesty International's mandate because when the organisation started in 1961, it was mainly campaigning for political rights. That is, the right to vote and to be voted for, essentially, civil and political rights, which include the right to life, the right to personal liberty and security of persons.¹⁶⁸

From 1973 onwards, there was an expansion of the scope and mandate of Amnesty International's work as it began to focus on economic, social, and cultural rights. The organisation became very relevant at the time campaigning for the right to food, water, shelter and adequate housing while working with other civil society organisations under a very difficult political atmosphere. Due to the organisation's global outlook, Amnesty International Ghana's work did not suffer any direct attack by the government. The organisation was given

the space to do its work. At this point, it is important to state that, as at that time, the organisation existed in Ghana on a small scale.¹⁶⁹

The organisation then started working through educational institutions. This was because if people knew their rights, and were able to glean and demand them, then there was the need for AI to be proactive in terms of human rights education. The organisation's human rights education from 1973 to 1985, focused on three key areas. First, educating people to know their rights, bringing to their knowledge human right documents that existed and, which provide for the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms, informing people about their responsibilities and educating people to understand that rights and responsibilities are reciprocal.¹⁷⁰ Second, Amnesty International took skills training as a proactive measure. Instead of working for people, the organisation worked with people called right-holders. Right-holders are those whose fundamental human rights have been affected. These include victims and the vulnerable.¹⁷¹

On the other hand, there are duty-bearers. These include the policy makers and people in government, who have the responsibility to make sure that the human rights of people are not just protected and promoted but are also fulfilled. This move was to help the people identify with the role, function and mandate of Amnesty International in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights. Equipping right-holders with the necessary skills became relevant for the organisation's work so as to enable them to defend and protect their rights and the rights of others. These skills comprise advocacy, which equipped people with the ability to table their own issues, bring up their own agenda for discussion, engaging with policymakers, negotiating skills, in order to get what is due them as well as campaigning for their rights and the rights of others.¹⁷²

The third and final component deals with attitudes. When people's rights are affected or when people are marginalised, they tend to be indifferent. However, for Amnesty International Ghana, people needed to develop positive and desirable attitudes of cooperation. This component was geared towards imbibing the spirit of unity and togetherness, tolerance and accommodating the views of others. This was also to bring to the knowledge of people that as they demanded their rights, others had the responsibility of fulfilling these rights; essentially, giving meaning to the expression that rights and responsibilities are reciprocal.¹⁷³

2.4.3. Ghana's Cultural History and how it affected Amnesty International's work

As at the time Amnesty International set up a section in Ghana, the cultural situation during that period was difficult and rife with gender-based discrimination and socio-cultural practices that affected the rights of women. For example, female genital mutilation (this "refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons"¹⁷⁴), the Trokosi system ("Trokosi is a traditional system where virgin girls, some as young as six years old, are sent into Troxovi shrines (shrines for gods) as slaves to make amends for wrongs committed by a member of the virgin girl's family"¹⁷⁵), widowhood rites, (This is a "set of expectations regarding the actions and behaviours of for example, a widow"¹⁷⁶), forced or early child marriages (This "is a human rights violation and a harmful practice that disproportionately affects women and girls globally, preventing them from living their lives free from all forms of violence."¹⁷⁷) among others. There were also cultural stereotypes that made it easy for the rights of women to be violated. In some instances, women were not allowed to own land and needed their husband's

authorisation before going in for a loan. These cultural stereotypes included labelling assertive women as witches.¹⁷⁸

Ghana's culture was that of mixed reactions with regards to accepting an international human rights organisation. People were ready to accept civil and political rights. One of the key campaigns that Amnesty International ran back then that gained a lot of support was the campaign against Prisoners of Conscience.¹⁷⁹ Generally, about 85 per cent of Amnesty International's work was accepted by the people as the organisation focused on civil and political rights, economic rights and developmental issues. The issues that were not readily accepted are those that dealt with non-discrimination, and this problem still exists to date. A typical example of such an issue is women empowerment among others. Amnesty International has made the point that where culture and human rights collide, human rights must take precedence. This is because culture is supposed to be dynamic, it must respond to changing needs and contemporary trends.¹⁸⁰

2.4.4. Human Right Abuses Then and Now

There have been many positive changes in terms of the human rights abuses during the initial stages of Amnesty International's contact with Ghana. The current human rights abuses have also changed. Nevertheless, some of these abuses have metamorphosed into other modern forms of abuse. Whereas there have been gains in certain areas, Ghana is still dealing with very serious covert forms of human rights abuses. Many of the open violations have gone underground. Some of the human rights abuses Amnesty International encountered during its early stages in Ghana include arbitrary arrests and detention, torture, the death penalty, the Trokosi System, female genital mutilation and widowhood rights.¹⁸¹ The focus now is on violations of economic and social rights and the fight to make these rights justifiable by law. This is because these rights are interlinked. They include the right to food, water, health,

sanitation, education and adequate housing under which forced evictions to fall. The organisation is equally working to ensure that the death penalty is abolished in Ghana as well as fighting for non-discrimination of women and minority groups. There are also human right abuses in terms of police brutalities and this falls under the organisation's criminal justice system and involves the courts and law agencies. Finally, there are human right abuses faced by people who live in mining communities.¹⁸²

2.5. Organisations that work with Amnesty International

2.5.1. The Slum Union of Ghana

The Slum Union of Ghana was established in September 2012 to unite all slums in Ghana in order to have one voice and to champion a common course. This cause entails collectively fighting for the recognition of the right to shelter of slum dwellers and security of tenure. It also includes fighting for the provision of social amenities namely; clean water, health facilities, sanitation and education in slums. According to Mr. Alhassan Ibn Abdallah who is the secretary of Slum Union of Ghana, Amnesty International initiated the idea of Slum Union of Ghana in 2012, where residents of slum communities were put into groups to come up with an idea that will benefit them. This was how the Slum Union of Ghana was formed. These slum communities include; Tulaku in Ashaiman, Tiptoe Lane at Circle, Aboabo in Kumasi, Old Fadama at Agbogbloshie to mention a few.¹⁸³ The Slum Union of Ghana has undertaken a number of projects with Amnesty international comprising:

- Demand Dignity Project.

This was a one-year project that runs from 2012-2013 and aimed at opening up the slums to stakeholders to bring to their realization that people who live in slums needed to be respected.

It was also to change the narrative that slums are meant for criminals. Though the project was mainly undertaken at Old Fadama, it was also run at Tulaku in Ashaiman and Avenor in Circle.¹⁸⁴

- Slum Radio Project

As part of the project, radio stations set up their studios in slum communities and broadcasting from there characterized the project. An example of such a community is Old Fadama. The Super Morning Show ON Joy FM hosted by Fiifi Koomson and the morning show on Uniq FM of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation were aired from Old Fadama from 5:50 am to 12:30 pm. Issues discussed on these shows included sanitation among others. Success stories of individuals who lived in slums but have made it in life were also aired. This program was run for six months, from the latter part of 2012 to early 2013.¹⁸⁵

- Human Rights Advocacy Training

Amnesty International organized a five-day workshop in Accra in 2013 for spokespersons and representatives of slums on how to advocate for their human rights. The theme of this training was “Human Rights Advocacy Training for Key Stakeholders”. Mr. Frank Doyi, the Growth and Mobilization Manager of Amnesty International and Ms. Bernice Naah, the Former Campaigns Coordinator of Amnesty International were the instructors at this training program. This training led to the creation of the Rapid Response Team for Forced Evictions. This team notified Amnesty International and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly once there was a hint of demolition.¹⁸⁶

However, Slum Union of Ghana is at the forefront of Forced Evictions, which is one of the main focus areas of Amnesty International in Ghana. This is an on-going project. Anytime slum residents are about to be evicted, Slum Union of Ghana informs Amnesty International so that the necessary action is taken in order to avoid its occurrence.¹⁸⁷

Amnesty International initiated the Demand Dignity Project and the Slum Radio Projects from 2012 to 2013 while Slum Union of Ghana initiated the Human Rights and Advocacy Training in 2013. The beneficiaries of these projects were the slums dweller of Old Fadama where the demolition of their homes was postponed until 2015. These projects have changed the perceptions of slums in Ghana. Slum dwellers in communities such as Tulaku in Ashaiman, Old Fadama in Agbogbloshie, Tiptoe lane at Circle and Aboabo in Kumasi, can now stand up against forced evictions. This is because the Human Rights and Advocacy Training taught them how to mobilize each other in the event of an impending eviction, something they could not do before the advocacy training. It also brought to their knowledge the fact that they could go to court and place an injunction on an eviction. These were actions they could not take before the advocacy training because they were not aware of these avenues.¹⁸⁸

All these projects, Demand Dignity Project, Slum Radio Project, Human Rights Advocacy Training, and the on-going Forced Eviction Campaign were sponsored by Amnesty International. Mr. Alhassan Ibn Abdallah is a living beneficiary of the projects by Slum Union of Ghana and Amnesty International as he is now able to confidently represent slum dwellers and advocate for their rights. He also became the spokesperson of the rapid response team and participated in radio discussions on how to lawfully evict people. These projects particularly the human rights Advocacy Training and the Slum Radio Program have given him international exposure. The international exposure is the reason for his current position as the Country Director of the Village Bicycle Project in Ghana.¹⁸⁹

2.5.2. Self-help Initiative Support Services

Self-help Initiative Support Services (SISS) was established in 1998 as a grassroots mobilizing organization that provides services to promote and support existing self-help groups or serve

as a catalyst to establish them in communities where they do not exist, assist such groups to undertake development initiatives, build their capacities through training, transfer of skills and organizational development to be self-supportive. SISS favours building long-term relationships and growing one project at a time. In the long-term SISS sees itself as an established support and advocacy facility protecting civil rights and promoting social welfare and small enterprise development to tackle poverty and social exclusion in Ghana.¹⁹⁰

According to Mr. Yaw Asante, the Project Director of SISS, the collaborative works the organization has done with Amnesty International between 2017 and 2018 include:¹⁹¹

- Respecting the Dignity of Slum Dwellers

Sensitizing the public on the fact that slum dwellers form part of the society and therefore they should be respected as such.¹⁹²

- Rights Of Slum Dwellers

The activities that characterized this project were educating the slum dwellers on their rights as citizens as spelt out in the constitution. These rights include their right to education, potable water, sanitation among others. They were therefore empowered to stand up for their rights.¹⁹³

- Housing Rights

Every citizen has a right to housing. They were sensitized on the housing policy and the fact that it was inappropriate for the police, Accra Metropolitan Assembly to forcefully evicted them at dawn. This empowered them on how to resist forced evictions within the confines of the law.¹⁹⁴

Amnesty International was the initiator of the following projects: Respecting the Dignity of Slum Dwellers' Rights of Slum Dwellers and Housing Rights. The beneficiaries of these

projects were mostly made up of residents in the Agbogbloshie slum and its environs who were engaged in a three-month skills training programme. The women were trained in pastry making while the men were given Information Technology skills. These projects run between 2017-2018. Since the organization provides skilled training, it occasionally invites a representative from Amnesty International to talk on women's rights, the rights of slum dwellers, among other several areas. AI also invites SISS when they embark on outreach programs. These outreach programs involve public education on eyesight, reproductive health rights, just to mention a few. In 2018, SISS upon invitation took part in a demonstration on the Death Penalty organized by Amnesty International at the West Hills Mall in Accra. Respecting the Dignity of Slum Dwellers, the Rights of Slum Dwellers and Housing rights were sponsored by Amnesty International.¹⁹⁵

The staff of SISS are living beneficiaries of these projects as they have been equipped with issues concerning the rights of slum dwellers, women's rights, housing rights. The organization is therefore enabled to impart such knowledge to our trainees.¹⁹⁶

2.6. Other Human Rights Organisations in Ghana and State Agencies and Their Contribution towards Human Rights Promotion.

There are human rights organisations and state agencies in Ghana that are committed to ensuring the promotion of human rights. The following paragraphs will discuss some of these organisations and their contribution to the adherence of human rights in Ghana.

2.6.1. The Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC)

This is a not-for-profit, independent, non-partisan, research and advocacy organisation set up to advance and protect human rights in Ghana. Established in 2008, the Human Rights

Advocacy Centre (HRAC) is an organisation situated in the Greater Accra region that operates across Ghana. The HRAC was set up by Nana Oye Lithur, the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection in the John Mahama administration. With over fifteen years of legal practice, Mrs Lithur has dealt extensively with human rights issues. The mandate of the HRAC is to deal with these issues by providing free legal assistance to needy individuals, communities, vulnerable groups, Most-Risk-Populations and institutions.¹⁹⁷

The vision was conceived when Mrs Lithur headed the African regional branch of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI). The CHRI is an international NGO that works to promote and protect human rights in the Commonwealth countries. From 2004-2008 she led extensive human rights campaigns and activities to sensitise Ghanaian rural communities, state institutions and the public on human rights standards. In contrast to the work at the CHRI, the HRAC provides free legal support to individuals and groups who are victims of systemic abuse.¹⁹⁸

From its beginnings, the HRAC has grown to become a respected human rights organisation, both within Ghana as well as globally. Within the human rights field, the work of HRAC primarily focuses on three main areas; research, advocacy and the provision of free legal aid services. Specifically, the HRAC conducts human rights advocacy and research: protects and promotes women and children's rights; promotes and advocates reproductive health rights; initiates and supports public interest litigation; protects the rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS; monitors and advocates for democratic policing; conducts prison advocacy to protect the rights of prisoners; monitors and evaluates compliance with international human rights standards and works to educate and create awareness on human rights.¹⁹⁹

The objectives of the HRAC include conducting human rights advocacy and research, protecting and promoting women and children's rights, advocating good governance,

accountability and transparency on key policies and promoting and advocating reproductive health rights. Their objectives also comprise initiating and supporting public interest litigation, monitoring and advocating democratic policing, conducting prison visits and advocating the rights of prisoners. The Centre equally aims at monitoring and evaluating compliance with international, regional and national human rights standards, educating and creating awareness about human rights and offering human rights training for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Security Agencies and Civil Society Organizations. In 2012, the Centre helped two individuals, Joseph Amarboye and Josephine Armah to receive their redundancy entitlements after they were laid off without reason or prior notice in 1986 from the Central Revenue Service now the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).²⁰⁰

2.6.2. Womankind

Another human rights organisation operating in Ghana is Womankind. This organisation has Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal, Uganda and Zimbabwe as its focus countries. It has been working in Ghana since 1991 and has subsequently collaborated with women's organisations in Ghana. During this time, the organisation has supported Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) to increase women's participation in Ghana's political processes and was to ensure the government's 40 per cent women in politics commitment by 2015. It has also collaborated with the Gender and Human Rights Documentation Centre (Gender Centre) on a programme to reduce women's susceptibility to HIV infection through the establishment of HIV education and prevention teams. This was to increase awareness and provide information and support, as well as the convening of a national coalition of civil society organisations to lobby policy-makers for change in Ghana.²⁰¹

Although Ghana is not a current Womankind focus country, the organisation's strategy is about working in greater depth to have the biggest impact possible. It aims at continuing to network, share learning and funding opportunities with its partners in Ghana and advocate at the international level, alongside and in solidarity with partners across its network. Below are some highlights of how Womankind has supported women's rights partners in Ghana. It has funded leadership opportunities for women, considering the fact that supporting women to take part in the decision-making processes both at home and in wider society is a crucial part of reducing poverty and ending violence against women and girls. As leaders, women can play a vital role in promoting equality, and making their voices and opinions heard locally and nationally.²⁰²

With its partner, the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (Gender Centre), the organisation has supported female candidates for local and national leadership positions, and female members of parliament, through research, campaign materials and media opportunities. It has also established young women's clubs focused on rights and democracy and promoting leadership skills. This supports the next generation of women to have an equal say and share in Ghana's progress. In order to ensure this, it educates voters to support female candidates to improve women's involvement in society, conducts meetings with women's associations and high profile figures to discuss women's involvement in governance and promotes gender equality and women's rights to government officials and politicians.²⁰³

2.7.State Agencies

2.7.1. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) is a good governance institution established in 1993 under the 1992 Constitution and by its enabling Act, Act 456 to pursue the synergy between human rights protection, administrative fairness in public service and transparent and accountable governance. The Commission investigates complaints of violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms; administrative injustice, abuse of power and unfair treatment of persons by public officers in the exercise of their duties; corruption, conflict of interest and breach of the code of conduct by public officers. The Commission also undertakes preventative and promotional programmes to build the capacity of the public to respect rights, to denounce and report corruption, to uphold the integrity of public offices and hold public offices accountable.²⁰⁴

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice exist to protect fundamental human rights and to ensure good governance for every person in Ghana. The Commission's mandate is threefold. It encompasses a National Human Rights Institution, an Ombudsman, an agency, which ensures administrative justice, and an anti-corruption agency for the public sector.²⁰⁵

The Commission was vested with this broad and inclusive mandate for several reasons. International standards for National Human Rights Institutions, including the Paris Principles, recommend that National Human Rights Institutions in developing countries be given a broad mandate within the constitution, so they can use their limited resources to the greatest possible effect. Additionally, issues of administrative injustice and corruption often occur along with human rights abuses, and one body can more effectively address all three situations.²⁰⁶

The Commission is entrusted with the following functions:

1. To investigate complaints of violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, injustice, corruption, abuse of power and unfair treatment of any person by a public officer in the exercise of his official duties.²⁰⁷
2. To investigate complaints concerning the functioning of the Public Services Commission, the administrative organs of the State, the offices of the Regional Coordinating Council and the District Assembly, the Armed Forces, the Police Service and the Prisons Service in so far as the complaints relate to the failure to achieve a balanced structuring of those services or equal access by all to the recruitment of those services or fair administration in relation to those services.²⁰⁸
3. To investigate complaints concerning practices and actions by persons, private enterprises and other institutions where those complaints allege violations of fundamental rights and freedoms under the Ghanaian constitution and to take appropriate action to call for the remedying, correction and reversal of instances specified in paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) of this clause through such means as are fair, proper and effective measures including-
 1. negotiating a compromise between the parties concerned;
 2. causing the complaint and the findings on it to be reported to the superior of an offending person;
 3. bringing proceedings in a competent Court for a remedy to secure the termination of the offending action or conduct or the abandonment or alteration of the offending procedures; and bringing proceedings to restrain the regulation by challenging its validity if the offending action or conduct is sought to be justified by subordinate legislation or regulation which is unreasonable or otherwise ultra vires;²⁰⁹

4. To investigate all instances of alleged or suspected corruption and the misappropriation of public money by officials and to take appropriate steps, including reports to the Attorney-General and the Auditor-General, resulting from such investigations.²¹⁰
5. To educate the public as to human rights and freedoms by such means as the Commissioner may decide, including publications, lectures and symposia; and
6. To report annually to Parliament on the performance of its functions.

Concerning human rights, CHRAJ has a broad mandate to protect universal human rights and freedoms, especially those vested in the 1992 Constitution, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Specific mandates concerned with the protection of human rights can be found in Article 218 (a), (c) and (f) of the 1992 Constitution and Section 7 (1) (a) (c) and (g) of the CHRAJ Act. As the National Human Rights Institution of Ghana, the Commission has a duty to promote and protect fundamental human rights and freedoms in Ghana. The Commission's human rights functions can be divided into two categories: promotion and prevention and then protection and enforcement.²¹¹

2.7.1.1. Promotion and Prevention of Human Rights Abuses

In relation to the promotion of human rights and the prevention of human rights abuses, the Commission advances respect for human rights in Ghanaian society through public education and awareness creation, research and monitoring. The Commission also undertakes public education activities to promote and deepen the culture of respect for human rights in Ghana using:

- Electronic & print media – TV, Radio, Newspapers, Newsletters, et cetera

- Workshops, seminars, conferences, training programmes, lectures, debates, quiz competitions, et cetera²¹²
- Outreach programmes to religious institutions, civil society groups, schools, markets, rural communities, et cetera.²¹³

In the area of research and monitoring, the Commission:

- Conducts research to help develop best practice guidelines for the general public to deepen respect for human rights;
- Conducts research into practices of societal and cultural institutions and recommends measures to improve those practices and eliminate abusive ones;
- Monitors the observance of human rights in Ghana to ensure that the State complies with its obligations under national and international human rights law.
- Supports initiatives that seek to review legislation, policies and practices to ensure that they do not offend or undermine human rights principles;²¹⁴

Monitoring and research activities are aimed at preventing human rights violations from occurring, prompting early warning signal; providing reliable information for government, the international community, and the general public and finally, providing data and information for the Commission to perform its oversight role in promoting and protecting human rights.²¹⁵

2.7.2. The Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit

The Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), is another state agency responsible for the protection and promotion and of human rights in Ghana. It was formerly

known as the Women and Juvenile Unit. It is a specialized unit within the Ghana Police Service, which was established in 1998 to address the rising number of cases of abuse and violence against women. The unit also researches the characteristics and trends of crimes against women and children. The name of the unit changed between 2004 and 2005 because male victims of domestic violence needed to be included. It has offices in each of the capital cities of the ten regions and in some districts in Ghana. The unit describes its role as being to, among other things, protect the rights of women and children against all forms of abuse, provide advice on crime prevention to perpetrators and members of the public; and arrest and prosecute where necessary.²¹⁶ The unit's functions include the following:

- To investigate all female and children related offences;
- To handle cases involving domestic violence;
- To handle cases of child abuse;
- To handle juvenile offences;
- To handle cases of child delinquency;
- To prosecute all such cases, where necessary, and to perform any other functions as directed by the Inspector General of Police.²¹⁷

The unit does not operate as a regular police station. However, services provided by DOVVSU are cost-free and include taking statements, briefing victims on their cases, providing advice on crime prevention, referring clients to community-based medical and counselling services, as well as providing the services of clinical psychologists and social workers. The unit also conducts extensive public education campaigns.²¹⁸

2.8. Conclusion

The working areas of Amnesty International cut across various aspects of human rights abuses on different continents. In Ghana, the political, economic and cultural conditions prevailing in the 1970s onwards influenced the work of the organisation in Ghana. The human right abuses that existed then and now have seen some modifications and Amnesty International and other organisations have been working to promote and protect the rights of Ghanaians.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER THREE

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TOWARDS THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GHANA

3.0.Introduction

In Ghana, a number of issues have been of concern to Amnesty International, and as a result, the organisation has turned its attention towards these issues. This chapter concentrates on the current areas of interests of Amnesty International towards the promotion of human rights in Ghana, the successes and challenges it faces in its line of work, and the way forward for the organisation in Ghana.

3.1.Current Interest Areas of Amnesty International in Ghana

The Growth and Mobilization Manager of Amnesty International Ghana on 8th May 2017 revealed that significant reductions in the overcrowding in prisons and other places of detention are one of the interests of the organisation in Ghana.²¹⁹ The government estimates that there are approximately fourteen thousand inmates in prisons in Ghana while there is capacity for only eight thousand prisoners.²²⁰ Amnesty International has received reports from Ghanaian civil society organizations such as Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) and The Legal Resource Centre (LRC) that prisons are under-resourced; there are poor medical and sanitary facilities and not enough beds or bedding.²²¹ As prison cells are extremely overcrowded, people sleep on the bare floor and some inmates are forced to take turns to sleep.²²²

By the end of 2008, Nsawam Medium Security Prison, built for 8,000 inmates, incarcerated approximately 3,000 people while more than 60% were awaiting trial.²²³ It is for this reason that Amnesty International urged the then President John Agyekum Kuffour to take all necessary steps to ensure that all prisoners awaiting trial are able to exercise their right to challenge the lawfulness of their detention before a court. There is also the need to apply for release pending trial and receive a prompt and fair trial. This to ensure that the government respects and fully implements the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment as Ghana is a party to these two legal instruments.²²⁴

He further mentioned that human rights education, activism, campaign, fundraising and growth are key areas of interest of the organisation in Ghana. These rights are essential parts of activist experiences that reinforce Amnesty International to multiply efforts to change people's lives.²²⁵

3.1.1. Activism

Activism is aligned to wider campaign and organisational strategies and ensures a balance between working on local issues and global priorities or international solidarity through direct participation. Amnesty International Ghana has a community of activists who are ready to spring into action and lead to rapid response actions. To achieve this, human rights education and activism are essential to building the capacity of its members and supporters to effect change. Amnesty International Ghana seeks to build the capacity of activists through human rights education aimed at developing their knowledge, skills and attitudes so they become more effective. Activists will be empowered to claim their rights, take action for the rights of others, become donors and educators.²²⁶

On November 17th 2009, Amnesty International organised a seminar for 15 journalists to improve their performance on human rights and issues on mob action in Accra.²²⁷ This was

undertaken under the theme “Ending Mob Violence in Ghana – The Role of the Media.” They discussed issues around mob action, democracy and rule of law, the lynching of a suspect without defence, violence against victims, right of persons with disabilities, right to education and health and arbitrary detention.²²⁸

3.1.2. Advocacy

In 2017, Amnesty International advocated greatly against the issues of the death penalty in Ghana. As stated in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, “a death penalty is one of the punishments meted out to persons who have been convicted of having committed treasonable offences and in cases of murder in Ghana.”²²⁹ In a research report launched by Amnesty International, which was presented by West African research, Sabrina Mahtani, their advocacy was based on an interview with 107 death row prisoners locked up and forgotten. The need to abolish the death penalty in Ghana provides further evidence of why Ghana should abolish this cruel punishment, in line with the recommendation of the 2011 Ghana Constitution Review Commission.²³⁰

Hence in 2011, the Constitutional Review Commission after many consultations, suggestions and proposals from human right scholars, institutions and certain organisations, took into consideration the importance of repealing Article 3(3) of Ghana’s 1992 Constitution. Through this advocacy work by Amnesty International, for the past decades, no person has been executed in the country and [Ghana] has an established practice of not executing anybody.²³¹

Amnesty International advocated against mob justice in Ghana. In June 2017, they held their Annual General Meeting at the Tamale Catholic Guest House to project the issue of mob justice under the theme “Protecting Our Environment and Our Rights to Life”, which was partnered by the Northern Regional Environmental Protection Agency.²³²

3.1.3. Collaborations

In 2011, Amnesty International collaborated with the Right to Information – Ghana (RTI) to advocate for the passage of the Right to Information Bill, which had been in parliament for over a year then. This coalition was an initiation by RTI for Amnesty international to help them educate the Ghanaian public on the knowledge of the RTI bill and their rights. Amnesty International’s role was to hold the government of Ghana accountable and champion the issue of transparency in governance. RTI believed the collaboration would enhance the passage of the bill. Mr. Lawrence Amesu, the Country Director of Amnesty International affirmed this that the organisation is willing to collaborate with RTI on engaging “the media and other stakeholders to sensitize the public on the needs for the passage of the bill and the benefits it would offer Ghana as a whole.”²³³

In 2015, Amnesty International collaborated with the Goethe Institute to organize a program on Human Rights Film Screening and Discussion with the theme “Stop Forced Eviction and Torture”. This took place at the Goethe Institute in Accra on 17th February 2015. This was the maiden series of presenting and discussing human rights issues through audio-visuals. The film was based on two of Amnesty International’s global campaigns named “Stop Forced Eviction” and “Stop Torture”. The purpose of the film screening was to raise awareness concerning the violation of the fundamental human rights and freedoms of people who are affected by forced eviction and torture. It was also to provide a platform for interactive and participatory discussions of the issues that are identified in movies. The final objective for the film screening was to mobilize and support the works of Amnesty International and Goethe Institute in the promoting and protecting of human rights. The screening was in two sessions and each was followed by an open forum where questions were generated and answers discussed on human right issues. There were a set of questions, which was moderated by an expert in the field of

human rights. After each screening session, there was a brief discussion and at the end of it all, there was an open forum.²³⁴

3.1.4. Domestic Violence

Amnesty International has been running a project dubbed “West African Human Rights Education Project. This project is partnered and receiving funding from the European Union. A training workshop concentrates on educating the ordinary people on human rights and urges the Ministry of Education to inculcate the study of human rights in the curriculum from basic schools. This is to ensure that children from the tender age are well informed about human rights so that they can grow in the knowledge and respect the rights of others. The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) also endorsed this project and stated, “it was important for communities to focus on gender-based violence in addition to other human right issues”.²³⁵

Stopping violence against women is one of the areas of interest of Amnesty International Ghana. Violence against women continues to be widespread in Ghana, with violence in the family estimated to affect one in three women. After years of debate and discussions, the Domestic Violence Act finally became law in 2007.²³⁶ Despite this positive development, further legislative reforms are needed to ensure effective action against all forms of violence against women, whether inside or outside the home, as well as equal rights between women and men. Furthermore, the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Units (DOVVSU), established within the police service, remains under-resourced with serious shortcomings in their services to victims of domestic violence. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women observed in 2008: “DOVVSU is seriously under-resourced. At the time of my visit, it had only 66 desks and offices and 320 staff. Large parts of rural Ghana were not adequately covered.”²³⁷

Despite the fact that female genital mutilation became a criminal offence in 1994, it continues to be practised, particularly in the North of Ghana. As a result, Amnesty International Ghana urged the then President Jerry John Rawlings to make a public commitment to prohibit all forms of violence against women and girls in law and in practice and provide reparation and appropriate services for survivors of violence. The President was also urged to repeal laws that allow violence and discrimination against women to persist and ensure laws that persecute those who commit acts of violence against women are enforced as well as ensure a budget is allocated for the implementation of the national action plan for the Domestic Violence Act.²³⁸

3.1.5. Negotiation

After many meetings of negotiations by Amnesty International, the Ghanaian government has accepted the recommendation of the Constitutional Review Commission to abolish the death penalty in Ghana (among others) and has now set up an Implementation Committee to impress upon the review of the country's constitution based on the recommendations made by the Review Commission.²³⁹ Amnesty International Ghana will intensify its lobbying works to ensure that the death penalty is abolished in Ghana by 2019. It intends to lobby policymakers to influence the abolition of the death penalty, increase initiatives towards drawing mass advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty, use social media, involve younger people in campaigns and engage Amnesty International members at all levels to undertake campaigns and advance coalition building towards the abolition of the death penalty.²⁴⁰

3.1.6. Education

Together with The Demand Dignity Campaign of the organisation, which aims at enabling people living in poverty to claim their rights and the 'dignity' that defines what it means to be human in Ghana, Amnesty International empowers right-holders, through human rights education to influence government policy and legislation, and organise public actions. It will

engage with the government of Ghana and policymakers to adopt eviction guidelines while lobbying the regional and international governance bodies, such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Union, on housing rights.²⁴¹

Increasing human rights awareness and sensitization in schools and local communities in Ghana is another contribution of Amnesty International towards the promotion of human rights in Ghana. Amnesty International Ghana has received an offer of free-airtime at Radio Windy-Bay, a community FM Radio station at the University of Education, Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana for the weekly human rights education discussion programme. Speakers have been trained to use this tool for effective activism and human rights education to promote human rights among students and teachers, the fishing community and the entire district.²⁴²

3.1.7. Partner Institutions

3.1.7.1. African Human Rights Education Project

In relation to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, fifty residents (thirty women and twenty men) in a fishing community in Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana participated in a community workshop to stop violence against women and girls. Four hundred (400) trainee-teachers and fifteen tutors of Holy Child College of Education, initially a teacher-training college in Takoradi, in the Western Region of Ghana participated in a human rights education symposium in March 2010 and took action (music and dance, signature collection or urgent action letters) to prevent violence against women and girls. Amnesty International's Human Rights Friendly Schools Project in Ghana continues to increase human rights activism among stakeholders - students, teachers, parents, board, and auxiliary staff to promote safe school environments for effective teaching and learning and improved performance.²⁴³

Again, students of Accra High School organized a public demonstration and peace walk to create awareness and promote human rights in the school community. Closely related to this is the African Human Rights Education (AHRE) Project that seeks to improve human rights for the most disadvantaged by empowering marginalized communities to promote and defend their human rights for development. The eight (8) approved AHRE projects in Ghana have all targeted women and girls as well as community leaders as their primary beneficiaries and the entire communities as the secondary beneficiaries. The implementation of these projects, which commenced at the beginning of 2010, is currently ongoing in various communities in the three (3) northern regions of Ghana. The targeted communities are therefore receiving human rights sensitization and education on various human rights issues, which negatively affect women and girls and ultimately the entire community. Even though it is quite early to show the level of impact of the project, indications from project monitoring reports and mid-term reviews show that the project activities are beginning to show positive results.²⁴⁴

3.1.7.2. Ghana Prisons Council

Research by Amnesty International indicates, “overcrowding is severe in many of the country’s prisons; food and medical care are inadequate and many prisoners rely on family members and outside organizations for additional food, medicines and other necessities. Skin diseases are common; and tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis and pneumonia are also prevalent but the prison health system is unable to guarantee adequate medical care within the prisons.”²⁴⁵ Interestingly, Ghana’s Human Rights Obligation states that “Ghana is committed to the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights and freedoms.”²⁴⁶ The findings of the research helped to tackle some reforms such as the Justice of All programme, which began in 2007. Judges were brought to the prison to conduct hearings of prisoners who were not tried. As a result, the

late President John Atta Mills commissioned the Ankaful Prisons in 2012 to take about 200 prisoners, which minimised the overcrowding status of other prisons. In addition, medical teams were assigned to screen prisoners of diseases, whereas beds and mattresses were provided.²⁴⁷ Amnesty International has played a huge role in the abolishing of the death penalty in Ghana. Through several quests to the Ghana Prisons Service, in 2013, Ghana accepted the Constitutional Review Commission's recommendation to abolish the death penalty. Mrs. Patience Baffoe Bonnie, the then Head of Legal Department of the Ghana Prisons service commended Amnesty International for their efforts.²⁴⁸

3.1.7.3. UN Agencies

Amnesty International in partnership with the United Nations (UN) agencies has worked together in diverse ways in the field of Human Rights globally. The UN stands as the highest in order of importance in terms of intergovernmental organisation, which shoulders the responsibility to maintain world peace, whereas Amnesty International stands as one of the best international non-governmental organisation that has championed works of human rights globally. In the 1990s, they both played complementary roles in many human right issues; where Amnesty International projected to investigate human right cases by any government and the UN concentrated on some governments.²⁴⁹

Amnesty International has limited rights independently as it is a sovereignty-free institution whereas the UN is a sovereignty-bound institution.²⁵⁰ In June 2017, through the efforts of Amnesty International, the human rights records in Ghana was reviewed for the first time under the supervision of the UN Human Rights Committee. This was to assess that Ghana is complying with the obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Through the Justice for All Programme, Amnesty International witnessed the contribution of many organizations including the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) and United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) among others coming together to contribute and fund causes that bring justice to the poor and vulnerable in societies globally.²⁵¹

3.1.7.4. Ghana Police Service

In recent times there have always been reports concerning the Ghana police using excessive force during demonstrations and mass evictions. During the ‘Justice for all’ programme, the Ghana Police Service was one of the institutions together with other institutions that worked with Amnesty International, for the enhancement of Ghana’s democracy with respect to the fundamental human rights, freedom and the rule of law. The Ghana Police Service stated that besides all accusations from the public they use due diligence in following every single case to its logical conclusion.²⁵²

3.1.7.5. Government of Ghana

In 2017, Ghana in its commitment to the acceptance of the international standards in human right practices and the respect the government has for the fundamental human rights once again signed the United Nations Human Rights Conventions (UNHRC) in order to remain committed. In view of this, it was reported by the then Minister of Information, Mr. Mustapha Abdul-Hamid, in an address which was delivered on his behalf by Mrs. Aqua Essel, the then Acting Director at the Information Services Department (ISD), stated that the government expressed its commendation and support to work with Amnesty International to promote and protect the dignity of the people.²⁵³

3.1.7.6. The Coalition on the Right to Information-Ghana (RTI)

In 2011, Amnesty International collaborated with RTI to help in the education of the RTI Bill in the Ghanaian community. Mr. Francis Ameyibor, the then RTI Project Coordinator indicated, “People have a right to know what the government is doing. A Right to Information is, therefore, necessary to ensure that people can hold public bodies and officials accountable on a regular basis. To participate in the planning processes and to judge whether certain plans and schemes are useful for them or not, people must have sufficient information about the nature of the projects and programmes proposed by the government. This will enable them to give their opinion well in time for required changes or modifications to reduce project costs and increase project outputs manifold.”²⁵⁴ In this coalition, Amnesty International’s role was to hold government accountable and champion transparency in governance. Amnesty International expressed willingness to engage “the media and other stakeholders to sensitise the public on the need for the passage of the bill and the benefits it would offer the country as a whole.”²⁵⁵

3.2. Successes of Amnesty International in Ghana

3.2.1. Abolition

One area of interest of Amnesty International in Ghana is the abolition of the death penalty. There has been significant progress made in this regard. Between August 2016 and March 2017 Amnesty International interviewed 107 death row inmates in Ghana’s prisons. Based on that research Amnesty International Ghana campaigned on the death penalty and sent a recommendation report to the Ghana Constitutional Review Commission. The recommendation made milestones during the constitutional review process. Some crimes

punishable by the death penalty have been removed and all women have been exempted from the death penalty.²⁵⁶

3.2.2. Policy Change

The issue of criminal justice indicates that most constitutions, which guarantee the right to life, also provide for much wider grounds for the use of lethal force and torture than is permissible under international standards.²⁵⁷ In Ghana for instance, while the use of force and firearms may sometimes be permissible when making an arrest or preventing a person from escaping, the provisions of Article 13 of Ghana's Constitution are impermissibly broad and do not require the existence of an imminent or grave threat of death or serious injury and have a more lenient standard of necessity than that which is required by international standards. Amnesty International Ghana has been leading the campaign against torture and police brutalities in Ghana, urging the government to, as a matter of urgency, bring the UN Optional Protocol Convention Against Torture (OPCAT) before Parliament for ratification and domestication.²⁵⁸

The UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials make it clear that lethal force should not be used unless certain additional requirements are met, including as a preliminary matter that there exists a grave or imminent threat of death or serious injury. Basic Standard 5 of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials states that lethal force should not be used except when strictly unavoidable in order to protect your life or the lives of others.²⁵⁹

Principle 9 of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms states:

Law enforcement officials shall not use firearms against persons except in self-defense or defense of others against the imminent threat of death or serious injury, to prevent the perpetration of a particularly serious crime involving grave threat to life, to arrest a

person presenting such a danger and resisting their authority, or to prevent his or her escape, and only when less extreme means are insufficient to achieve these objectives. In any event, intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.²⁶⁰

Under this project, Amnesty International Ghana will contribute to international actions to end the practice of torture worldwide. International solidarity action is now needed to urge all countries to end torture in law and in practice.²⁶¹

The organisation was interested in making sure that Ghana carries out the prompt and fair trial in accordance with international standards. In many cases, the police fail to bring suspects before a court within a reasonable time. Amnesty International received reports suggesting that rather than bringing suspects before a court of law, some police officers sign remand warrants themselves and bring suspects to prison directly.²⁶²

Over a third of prisoners have not received a trial. Sometimes prisoners await trial longer than the maximum period prescribed as a sentence of imprisonment for their alleged offence. Some wait for up to ten years. Cases of detainees are often not filed by the police or not sent to the office of the prosecutor to decide whether the suspect should be brought to trial. Amnesty International received several reports of prisoners whose case files were lost or whose court warrants had expired.²⁶³

The effect of the ‘Justice for all Programme’, initiated in 2007 by the Ministry of Justice and the judiciary to speed up the trials of those remanded in prison by allowing the court to sit in prison and review cases, is commendable but still leaves much to be desired. In view of this, Amnesty International calls on the President to ensure the arrest and detention procedures followed by police comply with international law and standards, train police effectively to follow these and implement appropriate sanctions for police who fail to follow procedures and also ensure effective oversight of the police so that action is taken promptly to ensure lawful practices at all times. The organisation prevails on Ghana’s premier to ensure that all detainees

are able to effectively exercise their right to challenge promptly the lawfulness of their detention before a court, and ensure that they are immediately released if their detention is found to be unlawful. This should be done along with taking effective steps to ensure prompt and fair trials for those accused of a criminal offence, in compliance with international and regional standards of fair trial.²⁶⁴

Generally, Amnesty International Ghana as an international non-governmental organisation is interested in ensuring that Ghana complies with international and regional human rights obligations, as explicitly set out in the treaties it has ratified. Ghana has international human rights obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights for everyone within its jurisdiction, without discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, social origin, political opinion or other prohibited grounds. These human rights include the right to life, the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to a fair trial, the right to freedom of expression, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, and the right to an adequate standard of living. Ghana has explicitly accepted obligations in regard to these rights in the international and regional human rights treaties which it has ratified, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Many of these rights are also recognised in Ghana's Constitution.²⁶⁵

To this end, Amnesty International calls on the President to:

- Ensure that all international human rights obligations are fully implemented in Ghana's national legislation.²⁶⁶
- Take the necessary steps to ensure the prompt ratification, without reservations, of the second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on

the abolition of the death penalty; and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.²⁶⁷

- Ensure that Ghana complies with its reporting obligations under international and regional human rights treaties, by presenting all overdue periodic reports to the relevant treaty monitoring bodies.²⁶⁸

Concerning the death penalty, Amnesty International Ghana has been campaigning for its abolition. These campaigns have taken the form of public education. It equally involved organising public forums where military personnel, officials of the Ghana Prisons Service as well as other government officials have indicated their disapproval of the death penalty. It is worth mentioning at this point that it is a great feat for Amnesty International Ghana that the Constitutional Review Commission accepted the abolition of the death penalty and captured it in its white paper.

3.2.3. Policy Births

According to the Human Rights laws and operation in Ghana, there has been an upward increase or improvement generally in the housing system and accommodation settlements. This was brought about by the birth of the National Housing Policy, which was launched in 2016. This success story was the result of the influential work by Amnesty International to support the Ministry of Housing and the Urban and Town Planning Department.

3.2.3.1. Security of Tenure in Informal Settlements in Ghana

In 2009, Amnesty International started its campaign on housing rights. Following this, the Ghanaian Government developed a National Housing Policy in 2016. This was in the bid to ensure that Ghana adheres to the tenets spelt out in the International Covenant for Economic,

Social and Cultural Rights. While the Policy will guide the government and stakeholders in providing adequate, decent and affordable housing for the Ghanaian public, it will also provide a legal backing for people to fight for their rights to adequate housing if they believe that these rights have not been fulfilled or that they are being violated. The policy will serve as a reference point for human right activists and rights holders when demanding the right to adequate and affordable housing for the marginalized and the needy.²⁶⁹

Additionally, it gives clear direction by making provision for housing programmes to be more accessible to the poor (Social Housing), upgrades existing slums and prevents the occurrence of new ones. As part of this project, Amnesty International Ghana worked to influence the Ministry of Housing and the Urban & Town Planning Department to create a National Housing Policy. The organisation also engaged with the metropolitan authorities, local community leaders, representatives of slum dwellers and civil society organisations to promote the creation of a National Housing Policy and be engaged in its development. Again, Amnesty International Ghana worked with rights holders in slum communities to empower them to be able to fight for their rights independently.²⁷⁰

The National Housing Policy is a progressive step to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right to adequate and affordable housing. This will also in effect ensure that Ghana complies with International Human Right Standards and ensure economic, social and cultural rights are made justiciable in Ghana's domestic courts. Amnesty International Ghana held several round table meetings with stakeholders to discuss the rights of people to adequate housing and the need for the country to develop a housing policy. Through capacity building programmes such as training workshops and related activities, Amnesty International Ghana empowered rights holders in slum communities in Ghana to be able to fight for their rights. Amnesty International's actions were effective in bringing civil society and local community actors into a dialogue informing the development of the policy.²⁷¹

Organising stakeholder round table discussions and encouraging stakeholders to make presentations based on their different perspectives ensured high active participation. The different stakeholders, Amnesty International worked with included representatives of slum dwellers, civil society organisations (CSOs), national level government officials, metropolitan authorities, local authorities (chiefs), among others.²⁷²

About 22,000 activists or supporters of twenty (20) of Amnesty International Ghana's human rights friendly schools participated in a signature petition calling for the development and adoption of eviction guidelines in Ghana. The organisation has also learnt that human rights change will happen quickly when it adopts various campaign strategies. The combinations of strategies (e.g. public forums, TV video and shows, youth work, etc.) that the organisation has adopted are contributing and will continue to contribute to foster the human right changes it is working towards.²⁷³

3.3.The Problems Amnesty International Faces in Carrying out its Activities in Ghana

3.3.1. Insufficient Human Rights Education

The Growth and Mobilization Manager of Amnesty International Ghana, in relation to the challenges the organisation faces, is the low level of human rights education. The state institutions responsible for educating Ghanaians on their rights are not well resourced to do so and are therefore not up to the task. This implies that other people take advantage of and infringe on the rights of fellow Ghanaians. Since such victims have little or no human rights education, they may not know who or where to go to, once their rights are infringed upon.

This little or lack of human rights education implies an extra burden on Amnesty International as more of the organisation's funds have to be directed towards this course.²⁷⁴

3.3.2. Corruption

Corruption is one way of abusing the power that affects the progress of projects, where human rights are no exception. This deters people from enjoying their rights.

3.3.2.1. The Impact of Corruption on Amnesty International's Operations

Amnesty International Ghana encounters corruption in its line of duty. According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights (OHCHR), corruption negatively impacts the enjoyment of all human rights – civil, political, economic, social and cultural, as well as the right to development, which underscores the indivisible and interdependent nature of human rights. The impact on the realization of human rights depends on the level of pervasiveness, the different forms and levels of corruption. Corruption can affect human rights as an obstacle to their realization in general and as a violation of human rights in specific cases. Corruption in the public and private spheres and its proceeds are not confined within national borders, nor is its impact on human rights. It typically diverts funds from state budgets that should be dedicated to the advancement of human rights. It, therefore, undermines Ghana's human rights obligation to maximize available resources for the progressive realization of rights recognized in Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights²⁷⁵.

3.3.2.2. Effect of Corruption on Amnesty International's Operations

Corruption undermines the fairness of institutions and processes and distorts policies and priorities. As a result, it damages the legitimacy of regimes leading to a loss of public support and trust for state and government institutions. It affects Ghana's ability to protect and fulfil its human rights obligations and to deliver relevant services, including a functioning judiciary, law enforcement, health, education, and social services. In Ghana for instance, where corruption pervades governments and legal systems, law enforcement, legal reform and the fair administration of justice are impeded by corrupt politicians, judges, lawyers, prosecutors, police officers, investigators and auditors. Since illegal actions are not punished, accountability may be diverted to innocents, redress may be frustrated and laws not consistently upheld. Similarly, disadvantaged groups and vulnerable persons in Ghana including women and children suffer disproportionately from corruption. They are often more reliant on public services and public goods and have limited or no means to look for alternative private services. Disadvantaged sectors of society typically have fewer opportunities to participate meaningfully in the design and implementation of public policies and programmes. They often lack the resources and knowledge to seek redress and remedies. With regard to women, a recent study highlighted the gendered impact of corruption, such as in access to public services and resources, the specific vulnerability to sexual extortion and the impact of corruption on reducing women's access to markets and credit. Corruption has the effect of reinforcing marginalization in economic life.²⁷⁶

Another study also indicates a strong correlation between corruption, poverty, and inequality. The literature tends to agree that the poorest segments of the population are those who suffer the most from corruption, as they tend to be more vulnerable to bribe extortion and the number of bribes represents a higher share of their income.²⁷⁷ Exploitation of natural resources through

corrupt practices may involve environmental degradation and threaten the traditional modes of indigenous life. The benefits from the exploitation of natural resources may not be shared equitably. Corruption can undermine the right of indigenous peoples to participate in decisions related to natural resource extraction.²⁷⁸

The various impacts and effects of corruption undermine the processes of Amnesty International's work in diverse ways. This is because it directly affects the various groups of people that are target objectives and beneficiaries of the work of Amnesty International as well as undermines the rapid results of projects undertaken by Amnesty International. It will and does affect project implementations, results expected and the period in which a problem is to be executed.

3.3.3. Inadequate Legal Aid

This refers to the unavailability of enough funds in the judicial coffers to cater for the less privileged that have no money to employ the services of a lawyer to defend them when their rights have been abused. Inadequate legal aid may also refer to the presence of any regulatory, be it social or economic obstacles that impede or hamper persons living in poverty from accessing justice. On March 2013, the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers stated that legal aid is an essential component of a fair and efficient justice system founded on the rule of law. It is also a right in itself and an essential precondition for the exercise and enjoyment of a number of human rights, including the right to a fair trial and the right to an effective remedy. Access to legal advice and assistance is also an important safeguard that helps to ensure fairness and public trust in the administration of justice.²⁷⁹

Access to justice is a core element of the right of an individual to an effective remedy, the right to fair trial and the right to equality before the law. It is an essential prerequisite for the protection and promotion of all human rights and ensuring that victims of rights violations can secure appropriate remedies. In this respect, all states have an obligation to ensure remedies, which are ‘accessible, affordable, timely and effective’.²⁸⁰ When there are obstacles to access to justice including those that disproportionately exclude people living in poverty and discriminate against other marginalised groups and individuals, it adversely affects the promotion of human rights in Ghana. This is because, once their rights are infringed upon, such people will not be able to afford the services of a lawyer to defend them in a court of law.²⁸¹

3.3.4. Poverty

Poverty is an exacerbating factor for many human rights violations and can act as a considerable structural obstacle for people seeking remedies for the violations that they have suffered. People living in poverty are often less aware of the existence and contents of their legal rights and entitlements and how to secure the assistance they need.²⁸² The level of poverty causes the Ghanaian government to channel most of its resources towards self-sustenance and the provision of social amenities to its citizens. Therefore, resources for human rights campaign and education are limited. Poverty also creates the avenue for financially stable citizens to settle victims of human rights abuse with appropriate sums of money; hence, human rights violations are not punished in accordance with the law. In a poor economy, like Ghana, duty bearers have a higher tendency of being corrupt when enticed with money and this hampers human rights promotion.²⁸³

3.3.5. Poor Accountability of Government and State Institutions

Poor accountability increases the tendency of government institutions charged with human rights promotion and protection, to focus on different projects other than those of their core responsibilities. It also leads to a loss of faith in the government, which would make the promotion of human rights more difficult because a push and pull effect acting on both parties guarantee better success. That is, as a state, individuals should be able to speak up and challenge human rights abuses and not the contrary. ²⁸⁴

3.4. Conclusion

Amnesty International has promoted human rights in Ghana in many ways. It has focused on specific objectives working with many other institutions to improve the human rights situation in Ghana. In doing so, they have used different methodologies, which include activism, advocacy, collaboration, partnering with other institutions and UN agencies. Their work has indeed brought about the awareness and education of human rights laws to ordinary Ghanaian while seeking justice for the vulnerable. Through their works, there has been some policy introductions, policy births and changes, abolishing of the death penalty, and reduction of domestic violence among others. Beside such great works, they have been challenged in diverse ways with issues of corruption and inadequate legal aid and insufficient human right education in the Ghanaian community. Yet, they have been able to lobby well enough to influence the Ghanaian government to review some of its human right policies to the benefit of the Ghanaian populace. The contribution of Amnesty International in Ghana is quite immense and therefore laudable and is to be encouraged and supported by all and sundry.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter concludes the assessment of the contribution of Amnesty International towards the promotion of human rights in Ghana. It outlines the findings of the research, draws conclusions, and finally makes recommendations.

4.1. Summary of Findings

The research found out that Amnesty International has contributed significantly towards the promotion of human rights in Ghana both in the past and currently. The contribution of Amnesty International towards the promotion of human rights in Ghana is in line with its global aim of protecting and promoting human rights. Its work in Ghana is also in line with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and other international protocols and conventions on human rights. These include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women among others. Gradually, Amnesty International in conjunction with other human rights agencies has ensured steady progress in the promotion of human rights in Ghana.

The study also discovered that Amnesty International has played a pivotal role in the curbing of human rights violation in Ghana as a developing country. The organisation is involved in

controlling overcrowding in prisons, ensuring the expunging of the death penalty from the constitution, protecting the socioeconomic rights of people living in communities where resources are extracted. Additionally, human rights education, activism, campaigning and fundraising are among the mechanisms employed by Amnesty International. As an international non-governmental organization that keeps working tirelessly day in day out, their tremendous efforts have been graced with some successes. These achievements include:

- ***National Housing Policy:*** Their endless campaigns, research, individual and community engagements led to the establishment of the National Housing Policy by the Ministry of Housing and the Urban and Town Planning Department. This is in the bid to create equality in living conditions in terms of providing shelter for the average Ghanaian. Evictions undertaken should make provision for relocation and compensations for the poor Ghanaian who even struggles to afford three square meals a day.
- ***Death Penalty Abolition:*** After countless calls by other human rights groups, civil society organisations and religious bodies, relentless efforts via public education and public forums by Amnesty International Ghana resulted in the Constitutional Review Commission's recommendation as part of its white paper, the expunction of the death penalty from Ghana's constitution.
- ***Increasing Human Rights and Awareness and Sensitization:*** One of their key milestones is the massive response and support Amnesty International has enjoyed over the years. Free-air time at Radio Windy-Bay, a community FM Radio station at the University of Education, Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana for the weekly human rights education discussion programme for students, teachers, the fishing community and the entire district. The physically disadvantaged especially women and girls in the three northern regions were also not left out in this pursuit.

However, in the light of these victories, Amnesty International continues to suffer challenges in some areas. Insufficient Human Rights Education due to limited resources does not match up to Ghana's current population of about 28 million. Corruption, a major contributing factor to the rise of human rights violation continues to be a bottleneck in the successful resolution of human right violations. Funds are diversified for personal gains with the rich and affluent always infiltrating the justice system with their dubious means of getting away with offences punishable by law among others. The unavailability of enough legal aid and poverty are factors hindering the eradication of human rights violation. The fight for justice for the poor who cannot afford legal services is faced with limited funds in the government coffers assigned for such purposes.

4.2. Conclusion

The discussion through the various stages of this research has clearly pointed out the need for the continuation of the fight against human rights abuse in Ghana and across the world. Amnesty International has become a benchmark organisation doing its possible best to minimise human rights violation in all spheres politically, socially, economically and culturally in Ghana. Through various partnership projects between Amnesty International and other institutions both locally and internationally, the case of human rights and its related policies and implementation strategies are addressed on a daily basis globally through education, the media, awareness programs, workshops, seminars and conferences for everyone in the society to have knowledge of their individual human rights no matter their status. These activities of Amnesty International face challenges accompanying the processes of meeting the organisation's objectives worldwide including Ghana with respect to this research. Despite all the challenges, their existence in Ghana has contributed greatly to human right issues in the

country such as negotiations toward the abolishing and policy changes in death penalties and prison services; the engagement, development and introduction of the National Housing Policy and projects towards the minimising domestic violence among others. All the mentioned contributions attract huge financial demands hence, it is necessary for every individual to support the good cause of Amnesty International both in kind and financially to foster unity among tribes, create equality between the privileged, marginalised and vulnerable, promote peace and understanding in conflict areas to cause the economy to develop and advance.

4.3.Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are outlined for assessment to promote further scholarly studies on Amnesty International in the future.

- **National Housing Policy**

Amnesty International has successfully worked towards the establishment of the National Housing Policy. This has promoted some level of equality in living conditions in terms of shelter. For this policy to be sustained there should be a monitoring platform that can receive data on landlord/ladies and tenants. This would help assess the success of the policy in practical terms, identify possible gaps and unearth new ideas that will emanate from it for further development to enhance the policy as the country advances in development. For example, the capacity of the State Housing Corporation should be improved to build more affordable houses in order to reduce the country's housing deficits. Government lands should be well protected by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources to prevent encroachment, which will later result in evictions.

- **Death Penalty Abolition**

Amnesty International contributed greatly to a recommendation by the Constitutional Review Commission for the death penalty to be expunged from Ghana's constitution. Despite these developments, the country has experienced several reported cases of the mob justices. In view of this, Amnesty International can achieve its objectives by focusing on changing the mind sets of the people. Hence, the organisation needs to put in place certain measures to make individuals accountable to each other. It could begin from the basic educational level and maintain one voice or a united front through awareness programs to the cause of action that follows the breach of a person's right.

- **Increasing Human Rights, Awareness and Sensitization**

Amnesty International has enjoyed massive support through the media, community awareness and sensitization programs among others all in the quest to create an avenue for people at all levels to have knowledge of their basic human rights. Human rights violation does not only affect economies politically, culturally and socially but also weakens the confidence, physiology and psychology of the individuals who go through this unfair treatment. Therefore, in general, it is recommended that Amnesty International's initiative on public education and sensitization of communities needs revision to expand its scope of operation.

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APPENDIX

Dissertation Title: An Assessment of the Contribution of Amnesty International towards the Promotion of Human Rights in Ghana

Interview Guide 1: Amnesty International

1. How long have you known about Amnesty International?
2. What are some of the projects Amnesty International have done in different countries across Africa?
3. Do you know anything about the history of Amnesty International in Ghana? Why and when it came to Ghana?
4. What are the effects of the following situations on Amnesty International's work since it began operating in Ghana?
 - The political situation.
 - The cultural situation.
 - The economic situation.
5. What is the political climate in Ghana now and when did Amnesty International Ghana change its focus?
6. What are some of the current interests of Amnesty International in Ghana?
7. What are some of Amnesty International's contribution to the promotion of human rights in Ghana?
8. What are some of the problems Amnesty International has encountered in the process of promoting human rights in Ghana?

Interview Guide 2: The Slum Union of Ghana and Self-help Initiative Support Services

1. What are the projects that your organisation has undertaken with Amnesty International?
2. Who was the initiator of these projects?
3. Who were the beneficiaries of these projects?
4. What was the duration (specific dates) of these projects?

5. Which organization(s) sponsored these projects?
6. Is there any living beneficiary of these projects?