



Public Engagement on: “The Menace of Political Party Vigilantism and Ghana’s Electoral Politics”

Concept Note

Background

While political party vigilantism may not be new in Ghana’s political history, the phenomenon and their activities have gradually found its way into the centre stage of Ghana’s electoral politics in the Fourth Republic. Over the course of time, manifestation of party vigilante groups with violent approach during each phase of the electoral cycle, particularly since the 2000s, has been apparent and of concern to Ghanaians. In a more recent times, particularly in between the conduct of 2012 and 2016 presidential and general elections for members of parliament, the nation has witnessed several instances of the havoc that these groups have caused and capable of. The activities of the political party vigilantes do not only undermine the peace and stability of the nation; they indeed pose triggers to violent conflict in the country. Indeed, as has been the trend in post elections environment in the last four elections, the immediate post-2016 election environment and the transition period has been marred with mayhem from political party vigilante groups, particularly those associated with the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), including taking over public properties, obstructing public officials from carrying out their mandates and causing physical harm to public appointees in many parts of the country. In this environment, a change of government brings the country to a halt, in semblance of a revolution. Officials of opposition political parties, bureaucrats, and managers of public institutions can hardly predict their faith to continuously occupy their official positions and use of their officially assigned accommodation and vehicles.

CODEO’s Nationwide Public Engagements

CODEO, like many other non-state actors and stakeholders, recognizes the mortal danger that these groups pose to the democratic development of the country. CODEO issued a communiqué on April 6th, 2017 calling on the Ghana Police Service to disband these vigilante groups and also for stakeholders to address this growing menace. To sustain this advocacy against the activities of political party vigilantism in Ghana’s electoral politics in future elections, CODEO is embarking on a nationwide public engagement to conduct civic and voter educations through the conduct of Round Table Discussions (RTDs) in all the 10 administrative regions of Ghana. The theme for the RTDs is “**The Menace of Political Party Vigilantism and Ghana’s Electoral Politics**”. These engagements will also form the basis to collate views from regional level stakeholders on the phenomenon; and also develop comprehensive advocacy policy recommendations for stakeholders and relevant institutions to implement. CODEO will also seek to organize Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with some identifiable vigilante group members’ in selected regions to get a better understanding about the perspectives of these groups.