



CITIZENS BECOMING LAW-ABIDING AS INTERNAL REVENUE SOARS IN GA EAST MUNICIPALITY

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GEMA 1st quarter 2017 Town Hall Meeting



Snapshots of Town Hall Meeting

The Ga East Municipal Assembly (GEMA) in collaboration with African Development Programme has held a town hall meeting on the 28th March 2017 at Taifa in Accra to account to the citizenry the performance of its 2016 budget.

Speaking at the event, the representative of the Municipal Coordinating Director, Mr. Laud Binka, said the purpose of the Town Hall meeting was a means to deepen governance at the local level as it creates a platform for the Assembly to account to the people how revenue had been utilized and engage the citizens on performance of planned programmes and activities in 2016.

Budget Performance

The Municipal Budget Officer, Torgbui Tali Gafatsi III disclosed that as of the end of 2016, the assembly was able to generate internally Gh¢4,084,818.48 in excess of an expected figure of Gh¢3,848,102.00 representing a 6% increase.

He said the Assembly improved upon its revenue mobilization espe-

cially in the area of Land & Royalties (Building Permits, Registration of Plots, Communication Masts, etc.) generating GH¢1,965,580.26, 25% more than the estimated GH¢1,571,240.00. He was happy that only GH¢24,070.00, representing 28.0% out of the projected GH¢85,840.00 for Fines was actualized.

Torgbui Tali Gafatsi III among other factors explained that the low collection of fines was due to the fact that citizens are becoming aware of their responsibilities towards the Assembly.

Speaking on why only 28% was realized for fines, he said *"If we are not collecting so much from Fines, it means people are not doing the wrong things for them to be charged. So if we have not collected so much from Fines then it means our citizens are becoming law-abiding. We even want the revenue from the fines to become zero (0) in the future so that we will not go about redeeming fines"*

He stated that Assembly implemented its planned programmes and activities through the IGF with funding support from the Central Government and Donor Agencies including the District Assemblies Common Fund (DCAF), GH¢1,487,358.31, 84% out of the expected GH¢1,782,784.43; District Development Facility (DDF), GH¢440,260.00 (80.5%) from the estimated GH¢546,628.00 and Urban Development Grant (UDG), GH¢2,963,648.36 which was 81.9% more than

the anticipated GH¢1,628,725.82 and others.

He described the performance as positive and applauded all the stakeholders who formed part of the revenue mobilization strategy.

The Assistant Municipal Planning Officer, Mr. Alex Amoah presented the Status of Implementation of the 2016 Action Plan. This covered education, health, water and sanitation, roads and other non-physical projects. He also highlighted on some planned programmes for 2017.

During the plenary, the disability community called on the assembly to ensure fairness in revenue collection. They worried that *businesses that operate at night such as indomie sellers were largely not paying any token to the assembly.*

Residents in the Taifa area also complained bitterly about the poor nature of their roads, water and sanitation, and the dwindling performance of their basic schools.

The Presiding Member of the Assembly, Hon. Jesse Nii Noi Anum, urged the citizens to show interest in the work of the Assembly and participate in such fora to be informed and educated. He encouraged participants to share the information acquired from the meeting with people in their communities.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- We even want the revenue from the fines to become zero (0) in the future so that we will not go about redeeming them" Tobge Tali Gafatsi III
- Businesses that operate at night such as indomie sellers were largely not paying any token to the assembly.
- Men are also susceptible to violence yet they are hidden victims of domestic violence
- Male psychological Violence at 28% more than Female 22.5%—GSS,2016

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN...AN ELUSIVE STATISTICS



Kalighat painting; *Woman Striking Man With Broom (1875)*

Domestic Violence (DV) is a violation of basic human rights and a global policy concern. Following several years of advocacy efforts by civil society and women's rights organizations, the Government of Ghana enacted the DV Act (act 732) in February 2007, followed by the formulation of the National Policy and Plan of Action (NPPOA) in 2008.

The NPPOA laid out a strategy for the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, under the direction of the Domestic Violence Secretariat, part of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP).

Conforming to international definitions and to definitions included in the 2007 Domestic Violence Act (Act 732), the following forms of violence constitute incidence of violence in Ghana:

Social violence: defined as acts of controlling behavior, such as preventing someone from seeing friends or family; stopping someone from leaving the house; requiring to know where someone is at all times; stalking; spreading false information, videos or photos without permission; or forcing women to have an abortion.

Physical violence: defined as slapping, pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, dragging or throwing objects at someone; choking, strangling or burning someone; using a weapon, hazardous chemicals or substances against someone; or kicking or pulling someone's external genitalia (for male only).

Sexual violence: defined as acts of unwanted sexual comments or physical contact; rape by physical force, or otherwise forced sex (for instance, by blackmail or threats); denial of using protection during sex; a sexual partner hiding their HIV status; sexual acts and intercourse that were performed on the basis of feeling there was no option; or penetration with an object against someone's will.

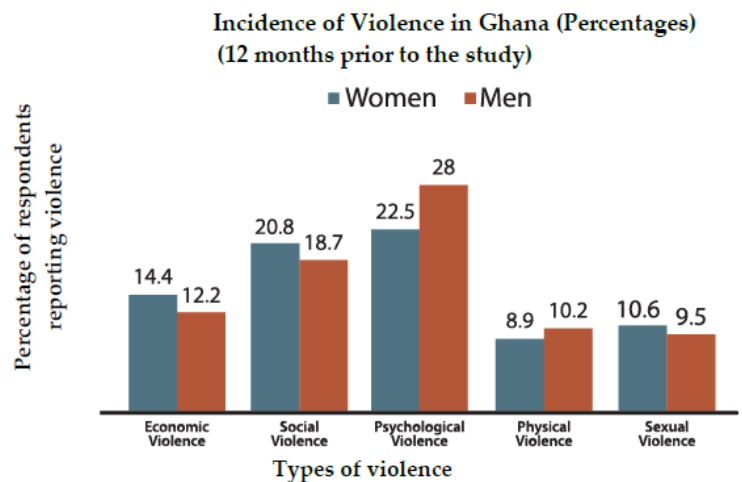
Psychological violence: defined as the use of insults, belittling or humiliation in private or in front of others; threats of abandonment; being ignored or treated indifferently; intimidations and acts aimed at scaring someone; threats of using weapons against someone; or threats of hurting someone or someone one cares about.

Economic violence: defined as the denial of household money for expenses (*chop money*) even if enough financial means are available; unsolicited taking of money; control of

belongings and spending decisions; damage to or destruction of someone's property; denial of the right to work; forcing someone to work against their will; or denial of food and other basic needs.

According to the *Domestic Violence in Ghana Report* 71.5% of women and 71.4% of men reported having experienced at least one form of violence (domestic and non-domestic) over their lifetime, and 42.9% of women and 43.6% of men experienced at least one form of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey.

In the 12 months prior to the study the most common form of violence experienced by women was psychological violence (22.5%), followed by social violence (20.8%), economic violence (14.4%), sexual violence (10.6%), and physical violence (8.9%). The most common form of violence experienced by men was also psychological violence (28%), followed by social violence (18.7%), economic violence (12.2%), physical violence (10.2%), and sexual violence (9.5%). These findings are summarized in the figure below. (These are excerpts from the report)



It would be recalled that in 2007 Between January and August 2007, 150 cases of domestic violence were reported by men, as against 116 cases for the whole of previous year (Social Affairs, 2007).

The number of Ghanaian men "beaten" by their wives in 2014, was 3,143, according to data from the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service.

Men made several complaints, including being beaten by their wives, being denied sex, being denied food and being abused verbally. <https://yen.com.gh/67132-3000-ghanaian-men-beaten-their-wives-2015-dovvsu.html>

Again, in 2015, 518 *men* (husbands) in the Northern Region alone were reportedly beaten by their wives, and a total of 2,807 *men* reported domestic -abuse cases *against* their wives. The statistics of the incidence of violence on men shows an undulating trend. Even in some districts cases of violence against men is not available. The trends in violence against men questions the validity of the official figures collated and churned to the public.

While it is good to know that the legislation seeks to end to domestic violence in Ghana, the focus is too skewed particularly to the abusive practice of “wife beaters” and men who habitually perpetrate violence against their partners. Men were not considered as victims, however they were those who go through some of the most disgraceful and worse experiences in relationships.

Traditionally, men are considered to be the stronger vessels in the African context and Ghana for that matter. Therefore any attempt that seeks to dispose them of their long standing belief of who they are creates an avenue for mockery, stigma and a source of ridicule. It is not surprising that we here phrases like “ohh! You allowed the woman to beat you!” “Don’ t call yourself a man again if you are ever beaten by a woman” and so on and so forth. The tone and body language that normally accompanies these phrases can even shatter a spirited man down. These phrases, largely make it very difficult for men to bring to the fore violent complaints to the attention of the media and police. Men are reluctant to say that they’ ve been abused by women, because it is seen as very weak and unmanly. Men are also susceptible to violence yet they are hidden victims of domestic violence probably because of the stigma and embarrassment men may feel as victims of domestic violence.

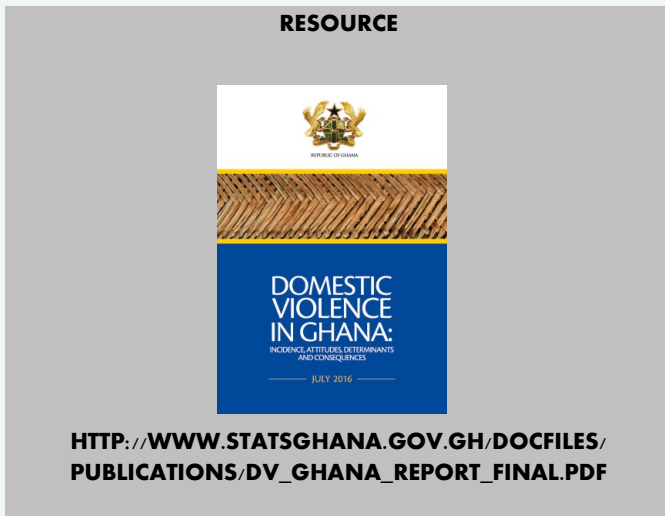
It is against these background, that the statistics on domestic violence for men especially does not reflect the reality of the situation. In fact given what constitute violence one could say the incidence for men could be worse.

Two things can be done to gradually get the picture of who is actually going through misery. First, we need constant awareness on what constitute violence. It appears men mostly take these issues on violence very lightly i.e most act of violence by women is frivolous. Men need empowerment in this area through education. This can be done through our mainstream media (TV, Radio and Newspapers), the power of social media is also there to serve as a channel to educate the populace of domestic violence issues. Secondly, we need a paradigm shift of who violence perpetrators are. For some time now, in this country at the mention of domestic violence fingers are mostly and immediately pointed at the men, yet the evidence shows that men are serious victims also. We live in a country where men seldom report incidents of violence by women. Men must rise up and be bold to report these problems that they face secretly otherwise the worse on them is yet to come.

The time has come for men to rise up and be counted. This year is a year of change and change must be reflected in men. For far too long women have remained on the smooth side of violence issues. Men who are “dying slowly” in their relationships will continue to die if they don’ t make efforts to come out of their “shells” and voice their misery. After all women have claimed what men can do they can do even better. So if men are great perpetrators of domestic violence, off course women are even greater perpetrators

too.

In conclusion, It must be made equivocally clear that a chunk of men are still suffering in their relationships and until the environment is created for men to also see themselves as a vulnerable group, the worst of violence against them is yet to be evident.



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