

VIGILANTISM AND RELATED OFFENCES ACT, 2019 (ACT 999)

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

Preliminary

1. Application

Vigilante Groups

- 2. Disbandment of vigilante groups**
- 3. Prohibition of vigilante groups and activities**
- 4. Aiding and abetting of activities of a vigilante**
- 5. Funding of a vigilante group**

Vigilantism

- 6. Prohibition of vigilantism in political party activities**
- 7. Prohibition of activities of land guards**
- 8. Prohibition of a convicted person from contesting public elections or holding public or political party office**

Miscellaneous Provisions

- 9. Power of Minister to prohibit activities of vigilante groups**
- 10. Regulations**
- 11. Interpretation**

SCHEDULE



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**THE NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY-NINTH
ACT
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA
ENTITLED
VIGILANTISM AND RELATED OFFENCES ACT, 2019**

AN ACT to disband vigilante groups including political party vigilante groups and land guards; to proscribe acts of vigilantism in the country and to provide for related matters.

DATE OF ASSENT: 23rd August, 2019

PASSED by Parliament and assented to by the President:

Preliminary

Section 1—Application

(1) This Act applies to an act or a threat of violence or intimidation undertaken by a person or a group of persons to further the interest of that person or any other person affiliated or associated with or connected or related to—

- (a) a political party,
- (b) a political officer holder,
- (c) an official or member of a political party,
- (d) a landowner or purchaser of landed property,
- (e) a real estate developer,
- (f) a public office holder or any other person who holds an office of a public nature,
- (g) mining activities, or
- (h) a person who engages in any act of vigilantism.

(2) This Act does not apply to

(a) a person who lives within the same neighbourhood or community, and who acts alone or with other persons, in concert with the aim of preventing the commission of an offence within that neighbourhood or community; and

(b) a person, who having witnessed the commission of an offence, acts with the sole aim of preventing the further commission of that offence or any other offence.

(3) This Act may be read together with relevant enactments and in particular, the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29) except that where the offence under prosecution relates to vigilantism, the provisions of this Act shall apply.

Vigilante Groups

Section 2—Disbandment of vigilante groups

A vigilante group in existence before the coming into force of this Act, including the groups set out in the Schedule, is disbanded.

Section 3—Prohibition of vigilante groups and activities

(1) A person shall not directly or indirectly,

(a) form, organise, operate; or

(b) promote the formation, organisation, operation or activities of a vigilante group.

(2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than fifteen years.

(3) A person shall not take part in the activity, act as a member or subscribe to a membership of a vigilante group.

(4) A person who contravenes subsection (3) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than fifteen years.

(5) Despite a provision in any enactment, a person who takes part in an activity of a vigilante group armed with an offensive weapon commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than fifteen years and not more than twenty-five years.

(6) Despite subsection (2), (4) and (5) a person who is convicted for contravening subsection (1), (3) or (5) is disqualified from holding any public, political or political party office until at least ten years have elapsed from the date of the conviction or after the end of the sentence.

Section 4—Aiding and abetting of an activity of a vigilante

(1) A person shall not, directly or indirectly instigate, command, counsel, procure or solicit in any other manner, whether by a personal act, presence or otherwise, an activity of a vigilante.

(2) A person shall not whether by a personal act, presence or otherwise or in any other manner purposely aid, facilitate, encourage or promote vigilantism.

(3) A person who knows or has reason to believe that another person is a member of a vigilante group or participates in the activities of a vigilante group, shall not aid, conceal or harbour that other person, with the purpose of enabling that person to avoid lawful arrest.

(4) A person who contravenes subsection (1), (2) or (3) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than fifteen years.

Section 5—Funding of a vigilante group

(1) A person shall not, directly or indirectly, provide or make available money or any other resource to fund or facilitate the organisation, operation or activity of a vigilante.

(2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than fifteen years.

Vigilantism

Section 6—Prohibition of vigilantism in political party activities govern

(1) A political party shall not directly or indirectly,

(a) form, organise, operate or engage; or

(b) facilitate the formation, organisation, operation or activities of a vigilante group whether belonging to that political party or any other political party.

(2) A political party that contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of not less than ten thousand penalty units and not more than twenty-five thousand penalty units.

(3) Where a political party convicted under subsection (2) fails to pay the penalty imposed, the National Chairman, the General Secretary, the National Organiser and the National Treasurer of the political party are severally liable to a fine of not more than ten thousand penalty units or to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than fifteen years.

Section 7—Prohibition of activities of land guards

(1) A person shall not, directly or indirectly, facilitate, organise or promote the organisation of land guards, for the purposes of protecting or guarding land or property, whether belonging to that person or any other person.

(2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than fifteen years.

(3) A person shall not act as a land guard.

(4) A person who contravenes subsection (3) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than fifteen years.

(5) A person shall not directly or indirectly, engage a land guard to protect or guard the property of that person or any other person.

(6) A person who contravenes subsection (5) commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than fifteen years.

(7) Despite a provision in any enactment, a person who acts as a land guard armed with an offensive weapon commits an offence.

(8) A person who commits an offence under subsection (7) is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than ten years and not more than twenty-five years.

Section 8—Prohibition of a convicted person from contesting public elections or holding public or political party office

(1) A person convicted of an offence under this Act is disqualified from

(a) contesting an election for a public office, or

(b) holding any public, political or political party office until at least ten years have elapsed from the date of the conviction or after the end of the sentence.

Miscellaneous Provisions

Section 9—Power of Minister to prohibit activities of vigilante groups

The Minister may, by legislative instrument, expand the list of prohibited activities of a vigilante group as specified in the Schedule.

Section 10—Regulations

The Minister may, within twelve months after the coming into force of this Act, by legislative instrument, make Regulations which are necessary to give effect to this Act.

Section 11—Interpretation

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "land guard" means a person who uses violence or the threat of violence to protect or guard land or property belonging to that person or another person;

"Minister" means the Minister responsible for Justice;

"offensive weapon" means an article made or adapted for use for causing injury to a person or damage to property or intended by the person who has the article to use the article to cause injury or damage;

"political party member" means a registered member of a political party;

"political party" means a free association or organisation of persons, one of whose objects is to bring about the election of its candidates to public office or to strive for power by the electoral process and by this means to control or influence the actions of Government;

"political party officer" includes—

(a) an elected and appointed officer of a political party; and

(b) a member of a committee, a unit, a department, a group and an organisation of a political party;

"public office" includes an office, the emoluments attached to which are paid directly from the Consolidated Fund or directly out of moneys provided by Parliament and an office in a public corporation established entirely out of public funds or moneys provided by Parliament;

"public election" includes general, presidential and district level elections and referenda conducted or supervised by the Electoral Commission;

"vigilante" means a person who resorts to an act or threat of violence or intimidation to further the interest of that person or another person;

"vigilante group" means two or more persons, acting in concert by resorting to an act or threat of violence or intimidation to further the interest of the group, the interest of the sponsors or benefactors of that group; and

"vigilantism" means an act or threat of violence or intimidation undertaken by a person to further the interest of that person or any other person affiliated or associated with or related to a person or connected with an activity listed under section 1.

SCHEDULE

(section 2)

1. The Hawks
15. Burma Camp
2. Invincible Forces
16. The Crocodiles
3. Delta Force
17. Eastern Members
4. Azorka Boys
18. Gbewaa Youth
5. BambaBoys
19. Lions
6. Kandahar Boys
20. NATO Forces
7. Bolga Bulldogs
21. Pentagon
8. 66 Bench
22. Rasta Boys
9. AL Jazeera
23. Sese Group
10. AL Qaeda
24. Taliban Boys
11. AlutaBoys
25. The Dragons
12. Asamankese Forces
26. The Rock
13. Baafira
27. Tohazie
14. Bukurisung.

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