

**RESPONSE OF THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
REGIONAL INTEGRATION TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION**

The Business Committee of the Parliament of Ghana has requested for the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Hon. Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey (MP), to respond to the following question:

*.....if the Ministry is aware of reports by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) that sixty-two thousand, four hundred and twenty-two (62, 422) Ghanaians are stranded in Libya, and what the Ministry is doing to assist the stranded Ghanaians.”

RESPONSE

Mr. Speaker,

At the outset, I wish to state that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration through its Missions abroad continues to offer consular support and assistance to all Ghanaians abroad and seeks the welfare of all Ghanaians despite the volatile conditions that may exist in a particular country.

I wish to highlight in the particular case of Libya that the conditions remain precarious, but the Ministry has maintained a physical presence to continue to offer consular assistance to all Ghanaians in the country.

The Ministry is aware that there are some stranded Ghanaians in Libya who contact the Consulate for assistance. However, the figure put out by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) office in Accra conflicts with figures provided by the IOM Office in Tripoli to both our Consulate in Tripoli and our Mission in Valletta.

This, coupled with the highly volatile security situation in Libya has made it very difficult to obtain credible information on the actual number of Ghanaian nationals in that country. This is because Libya today has vast areas of its territory in the hands of rival militia groups operating outside the control of the internationally recognised interim Government of national accord which is based in Tripoli.

Similarly, in view of the serious security challenge in the country, the IOM funded Fact-Finding Mission that was dispatched from Accra to Libya in February this year to ascertain allegations of maltreatment of African migrants in that country could not visit most parts of the country. As a result the team interviewed and identified only seventy-two (72) Ghanaians in the four detention camps that they managed to visit, who were subsequently issued with Travel Certificates for their repatriation to Ghana through the assistance of the IOM.

It is worthy to note that there is a sizable population of Ghanaians who live and work in Libya who on occasion approach the Consulate for renewal of their passports, to facilitate their continued stay in the

country and also their travels.

Another dynamic in the situation under consideration is the fact that the numbers of migrant foreign nationals in Libya fluctuate on regular basis due to the fact that it is a transit country, and not a preferred destination in Europe. Added to this is the reality that some Ghanaians who are accosted in Libya deny their nationality, thereby affecting the reliability of existing information.

Consequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration will require additional time to ascertain the veracity of the figures that have been put out by the IOM, and will revert to this house at a later date with more reliable information on the numbers of Ghanaians in Libya.

On the question of what the Ministry is doing to assist stranded Ghanaians, we wish to state that we are aware of our mandate to protect and promote the interest and welfare of our compatriots. We have since April, 2018 opened a Consulate in Tripoli with experienced Officers. Another Consulate has also been opened in Niamey, Niger, which is a transit country, since May 2018 to offer assistance to Ghanaians who require such services. It must also be noted that in collaboration with the IOM, about two hundred (200) Ghanaians have been repatriated to Ghana since April this year.

In closing, I wish to reiterate that despite the challenges, the Ministry through its Missions in Valleta and the Consulates in Tripoli and Niamey are deploying all available resources to offer assistance. If we ascertain the alleged huge numbers and it becomes necessary, Government will consider evacuations.

Q Mission/Consulate
We cannot move around

→ any arrangements to enhance security & surveillance

Q - efforts as a nation ↓
educating the nation