

Ghana's bid to prevent a second flooding may usher in a new set of challenges

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GHANA

In the last year or two, Ghana is said to have shifted swiftly from a success story to one struggling to survive. It was the [fastest growing economy in Africa in 2011](#) [2] and was talked up as a model for struggling African economies. The west African country even received commendations from US President Barack Obama, during his first visit to the continent, for maintaining a stable democracy in a period where dictatorships ruled. However, in recent months, that narrative has been altered as Ghana has grappled with a tide of socio-economic challenges. The past 48 months have seen Ghana run to the IMF for a sustainable plan to manage its rising debt, which analysts say is [more than 70 percent of GDP](#) [2]. It has also had to contend with utilizing one of the worst-performing currencies on the continent, while its major cities continue to suffer from power blackouts. However, among the growing list of problems on Ghana's plate, one which is taking centre stage is flooding.

The rains, this year, have been coming down with increased ferocity, and the world is feeling it. From Russia, US, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Hungary, to Nigeria, Malawi and Kenya, floods have threatened to halt business activity across major global cities. Ghana has suffered a similar fate. Two weeks ago, it experienced its worst-ever flooding, one that ended up killing over 150 people—90 of whom were burned to death when after the running water destroyed a petrol station—and caused damages running into millions of dollars. The disaster has been termed the “worst in decades” for the west African country.

Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama revealed to Journalists earlier that plastic bags, which once served as a symbol of a growing middle class and a prospering economy, were now clogging the country's drainage systems. “Plastics are choking the drains....It's mind-boggling, the plastic bottles, the pieces of timber, and firewood, and old mattresses, and old furniture, and pieces of old cars.”

However, like its economic woes or power challenges, Ghana is already finding ways to address its flooding problem. The government, over the weekend, ordered the widening of the Korle Lagoon, a part of the Agbogbloshie suburb, to prevent a similar occurrence.

According to Reuters, Bulldozers were said to have razed hundreds of homes and businesses in the poor Sodom and Gomorrah neighbourhood of Ghana's capital on Saturday to make way for free flow of water to the Lagoon. But this has rendered many homeless or without a means of livelihood.

“What they have done is not good for us because this is where some of us work and take care of our families,” said Muhammed Abdul Karim, a local metal worker who had his workshop reduced to a pile of zinc sheets. Tear gas was also sprayed by security forces to dispel those seeking to protect their kiosk or homes.

The government said it has been left with limited alternatives as locals of both communities have raised solid structures that are blocking the flow of water and waste to the Lagoon. Accra Regional Minister Joshua Afotey-Agbo however told Reuters that those affected will be gradually relocated, as will the local markets within the affected communities.

But many have said the move to bulldoze settlements will prove costly for the ruling party in the coming elections, which is expected to hold 18 months from June. “Tell Mahama we are not voting for him again,” many told Reuters.

The ruling National Democratic Congress, founded by political juggernaut Jerry Rawlings, assumed power in December 2012 after a hotly contested election that saw President Mahama emerge victorious with only 50.7 percent of the votes secured. Many from northern Ghana, where both communities are situated, are said to be strong supporters of the ruling party. They are expected to

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join the opposition now after burning their homes in protest of the destructions.

President Mahama has been very vocal of his desire to see Ghana emerge victorious from its current challenges, stating that steady power supply will soon return to the country. But his latest stride to swiftly address another issue may usher in a new set of problems for him, and Ghana.

The post [Ghana's bid to prevent a second flooding may usher in a new set of challenges](#) [3] appeared first on [Ventures Africa](#) [4].

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