



From Rhetoric to Accountability: Dealing with Hate Speech against the Fulbe in Ghana

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Abstract

The Fulbe have been living in Ghana before independence. While they number over one million and make significant contributions to the country, they are not captured in the periodic population censuses as an ethnic group. This study examines the reasons why the Fulbe are excluded and the gaps in the existing legal and institutional frameworks in place to safeguard their human rights. The study revealed that hate speech and the violations of Fulbe human rights were driven by the perception that they are aliens and destroyers of indigenous livelihoods in Ghana. The study showed that the country's human rights legal and institutional frameworks were in place but ineffective in enforcing Fulbe human rights. Key recommendations include strengthening enforcement of existing human rights laws, more public education on human rights, training of media practitioners on ethical reporting, and development of anti-Fulbe hate speech digital monitoring platforms to track violations of Fulbe human rights.

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Introduction

The democratic principles of Ghana were again tested in a general election on the 7th December, 2024. Happily, Ghanaians successfully elected Mr. John Dramani Mahama in a generally peaceful election though there were some pockets of violent incidents. This marks 31 years of uninterrupted democratic rule in Ghana. Whilst this accomplishment deserves commendation as rightly demonstrated by the international comity of nations, the declining peace situation in Ghana needs to be addressed as the country's ranking on the Global Peace Index continues to drop. The country's Global Peace Index ranking declined from 40th (2022) to 55th (2024), reflecting a deterioration in the state of security (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2024). This situation raises questions about the safety, human rights, and the effectiveness of the country's conflict prevention and peace mechanisms. The evidence on the ground points to a waning public trust in key institutions vested with the authority to safeguard the rights and privileges of Ghanaians. According to the Ghana Center for Democratic Development Afro barometer survey (2024), 96.4% of Ghanaians perceive the Police to be corrupt, 95.9% perceive the Parliament to be corrupt, 95.2% perceive the Judges to be corrupt, 94.2% perceive the President to be corrupt and 90.3% perceive the Traditional leaders to be corrupt. What is obvious is that state institutions mandated to protect the fundamental rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, and other minorities such as the Fulbe are often neglected.

The Fulbe in Ghana

The *Fulbe* (Plural) *Pullo* (singular), Peul in French and Fula in Portuguese predominantly speak the Fulfulde language. The Fulbe are largely a dispersed ethnic group across West and Central Africa (Anter, 2011) ^[3]. The presence of the Fulbe pre-dates Ghana's independence and fall within the category of socially excluded ethnic groups in Ghana. Their exact population is not known because they have been excluded from national population censuses.

The Ghana Statistical Service (2021), for instance, captured the population of the Fulbe under the Mande-speaking group,

probably because they share similar religious and cultural identities. This ethnic group represents 2% of Ghana's population.

This is contrary to the fact that the Fulbe are a known ethnic group in Ghana (Tonah, 2005). However, in the 2000 census, the Ghana Statistical Service (2002) recorded approximately 300,000 Fulbe but they were excluded in subsequent censuses.

However, recent estimates put the population of the Fulbe in Ghana at over one million

The Fulbe can be classified into various categories. The sedentary Fulbe, usually living in urban areas, semi-sedentary Fulbe, mostly involve in animal husbandry mainly cattle and other businesses, the pastoral Fulbe, who are solely into cattle rearing and the agro-pastoralist Fulbe who combine farming and cattle rearing (Abubakari, 2024). This implies that they are not a homogenous group but often wrongly viewed as such and accorded the same negative stereotypes despite their heterogeneity in terms of their socio-economic and linguistic differences. Elements that show their heterogeneity are seen in their dialects and customs. The common Fulbe sub-groups found in Ghana are the *Fulbe Mossi*, *Fulbe Mbororo*, *Fulbe Bargube*, *Fulbe Hausa* and *Fulbe Bobolakobe*. They also belong to different clans or sects which exhibit different cultural traits. The dominant ones in Ghana are the: *Jaadey*, *Jallo*, *Barry*, *Dicko*, *Sidibe* and *Taal*.

A key development concern in Ghana is inclusivity. There are obvious concerns about the level of representation and participation of women, young people, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities like the Fulbe in local governance and community developing processes and structures.

The Fulbe in particular continue to suffer from an avalanche of negative perceptions, stereotypes, prejudices, hate speech, hate crimes and indignities. The hate speech against the Fulbe by the media, including panellists, hosts, and editors on media platforms, can be rightly described as media terrorism against the Fulbe. This trend has exacerbated the mob attacks and hostility against the Fulbe in Ghana. The hate speech against the Fulbe has contributed to the statelessness of some Fulbe as they are denied access to key citizenship documents such as the Ghana Card, Passport and Birth Certificates.

Xenophobic attacks against some Fulbe who are full blooded Ghanaians are also not uncommon. Incidents of hate speech are often not reported or under-reported. However, a few of such atrocities which are by-products of hate speech culled from google search are indicated below:

1. A report by African News Politics on Tuesday, May 22, 2024 revealed that two Fulbe boys were beheaded in a town called Donkorkrom, in the Eastern Region of Ghana. This was in reaction to alleged destruction of crops by Fulbe cattle.
2. On Tuesday, the 28th of March 2023, the Fulbe settlement in Bongo-Soe was attacked by the youth following an allegation that three Fulbe herdsmen had attacked a young man who was going to fish at the riverside. The media alleged that the Fulbe broke the young man's leg and made away with his motorcycle, a phone and unspecified amount of money. This created a rift between the youth and the paramount chief of Bongo who allegedly was supporting the Fulbe against the people of Bongo-Soe.
3. On 18th December 2022, the youth of Buipe staged a

mammoth demonstration in Buipe against the Buipewura for allegedly enskinning a Fulbe man as the Chief of Mande, a community close to Buipe. This disrupted free movement of goods and people and paralyzed the local economy and equally challenged the authority of the traditional leader of Buipe.

4. On the 13th of April 2022, eight (8) Fulbe were killed, and their buildings, foodstuff, and motorcycles burnt at Zakoli, a village near the Yendi in Ghana. This unfortunate development was triggered by the killing of a teacher by armed robbers alleged to be Fulbe. This widely reported incident obviously affected the human rights record of Ghana and food security in the local area.
5. On 23rd August 2021, angry youth in Widnaba attacked the Fulbe settlement destroying 18 houses and displacing about 400 Fulbe. The reason for the attack was the conviction of the youth that the Fulbe were the ones behind the armed robbery incidents in their community. This attack affected local economic activities as people were afraid of reprisal attacks from the Fulbe.

Yet most of these heinous hate crimes against the Fulbe have either been trivialized or justified by the media and state institutions responsible for protecting the rights of all people. This study is therefore significant because it highlights the geo-political, socio-economic and security implications of hate speech against the Fulbe and the need for urgent attention to nip this in the bud.

The Rwandan genocide which occurred in 1994 is a clear testament of the negative consequences of hate speech in communities. In the Rwanda case a reckless statement on radio led to the death of an estimated 800,000 to 1 million Tutsis and a few Hutus. While the genocide obviously had some historical and political undertones, it was triggered by hate speech (United Nations, 2023). Other examples could be cited of the hholocaust which started with hate speech resulting in the death of some six million Jews. Also, the killing of the Rohingya people in Myanmar was equally fuelled by hate speech.

The overarching objective of this paper is to raise public awareness to the growing menace of hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the drivers of hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana.
2. To examine the effectiveness of the anti-Fulbe hate speech legal and institutional framework in Ghana.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The study employed a deductive reasoning approach, drawing on relevant theories and concepts related to perceptions of different groups of each other as discussed below.

Social Categorisation Theory

Social categorisation theory seeks to explain how individuals are categorized and placed into social groups based on their membership on the basis of their ethnicity, gender, educational status, social roles and livelihood activities (Fiske, Haslam, & Fiske, 1991; Stangor, Lynch, Duan, & Glass, 1992) ^[10, 25]. The overgeneralisation associated with social categorisation leads to stereotypes and prejudice against that social group, resulting in discrimination. The social categorisation theory therefore resonates with the Fulbe in Ghana.

The Fulbe, despite their visible differences as nomadic pastoralists, sedentary farmers, businessmen and women, traders, artisans, professionals in various fields, different educational attainments, different settlement patterns, and different citizenship status, are all classified as “aliens”, foreigners” and discriminated against in policy design and implementation in Ghana. The underlying assumptions of the social categorisation theory therefore, provided good basis for study.

Conflict Theory

Marx and Engels (1848) argued that the competition for limited resources is the underlying cause of the perpetual societal conflicts. Conflict theory provides plausible explanations for wars, revolutions, domestic violence, and discrimination in many societies. The key assumptions are that there are always competition and power struggles in every society. More recent contributors to conflict theory have criticised the notion that resource scarcity is the basis for conflict (Sassen, 2012)^[24]. They posit that there is now a new awareness of interdependence and mutual benefit in the use of limited resources which do not necessarily result in open violence. This they opined is the case in the current globalised world where we find ourselves. The study, therefore, equally drew on conflict theory to assess the drivers of hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana.

Discrimination

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana defines discrimination as the act of treating people differently due to their gender, economic status or religious orientation. (Republic of Ghana, 1992, Article 17(3)). It is also seen as an unfair treatment meted out to members of a particular group basically because of their peculiar characteristics which could be their ethnicity, religion and beliefs systems (American Psychological Association, 2022). Discrimination can be based on gender, ethnic group, age, religion, health, and other indicators. In the case of the Fulbe in Ghana, even those born in Ghana are denied access to citizenship and national identity documents including the Ghana Card, passport and voter identity card. They are also discriminated against when it comes to them accessing health, education and other public services. This has resulted in their social, political, cultural and economic exclusion.

Hate Speech

The concept of hate speech remains fluid making it challenging to defined and measure it. As a result, there are obviously different legal and institutional frameworks for hate speech depending of the country. Though a global phenomenon the interpretation and sanctions against hate speech are culture and country specific. “Hate speech is degrading, threatening, harassing or stigmatizing speech which affects an individual’s or group’s dignity, reputation and status in society by means of verbal and or visual effects that promote negative feelings, attitudes and perceptions based on characteristics such as ethnicity, race, colour, religion, political, language, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age other opinion (National Peace Council (NPC), 2023, p.7). It is palpably clear that the NPC in Ghana is concern with the loss of dignity and hostility against individuals and groups due to hate speech. “Hate speech is an expression that conveys hateful or discriminatory views against specific individuals or groups, particularly those who

have historically faced discrimination” (Waldron, 2012, p. 45). It includes “verbal or non-verbal manifestations of hatred, such as gestures, words or symbols like cross-burnings, bestial depictions of members of minorities, hate symbols, among others” (Strossen, 2018, p.10)^[26].

“Lepoutre *et al.* (2024)^[17] define hate speech as any spoken, written, or symbolic expression intended to intentionally harm or belittle a person or a group. Hate speech could also be defined as any utterance that tends towards certain ethically prohibited ends, which are damaging in terms of their consequences, and expresses certain ideas that are contraventions of specific ethical norms (Hietanen & Eddebo, 2023)^[14]. Yin & Zubiaga (2021)^[32] emphasize the need to make a distinction between hate speech and other forms of verbal abuse such as cyberbullying. They opined that though both invoke hatred and harm, hate speech often attacks group identify rather than individual attributes.

Researchers on hate speech against the Fulbe also link it to the nature of their livelihoods. They propose that sedentary farming communities in parts of West Africa have long-standing conflicts with nomadic Fulbe herders. Bukola (2020)^[6] postulates that the Fulbe largely rear cattle; hence, they move from place to place purposefully to feed their flock. This series of movements, according to Human Rights Watch (2022)^[15], results in disputes with local farmers over crop damage and the excessive use of limited water resources by their cattle. This accounts for the hate speech against the Fulbe population, who they view as destroyers of rural livelihoods and personal property.

Media outlets usually reinforce unfavourable stereotypes against the Fulbe, viewing them as inherently violent and uncivilised individuals who engage in all manner of criminalities (Bukari & Schareika, 2015)^[5]. A study by Suleman and Owolabi (2021)^[27] also argues that certain media outlets engage in sensationalism over objectivity, resulting in biases usually against the Fulbe, thus inciting hostility and fear against them. They further established that the lack of representation of the Fulbe in the media accounts for the hate speech perpetuated by the media outlets. This makes it imperative to target the media in the advocacy against hate speech directed at the Fulbe in Ghana.

Hate crime

A hate crime refers to a criminal act motivated by bias or hostility toward a particular group, often those who are in the minority (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2009). Hate crimes perpetuated against specific groups are either captured in laws or not reflected in the existing legal systems (Chakraborti & Garland, 2015b; Hardy, 2019)^[7, 13]. In the view of Awan & Zempi (2018)^[4], hate crimes transcends the harm caused to the individual to include erosion of community spirit and social cohesion and a general atmosphere of insecurity, fear and panic. It is therefore for the cascading effects and consequences on the large community that hate crimes have to be nip in bud.

Inclusive Development

Inclusive development is about addressing the inherent structural, cultural, economic, environmental and legal barriers that hinder poor people and other minorities from accessing resources and political spaces for decision making. Whilst, the focus of countries on economic growth is justified, this has to be translated into an equitable distribution system that ensures the welfare of all people.

Therefore, Inclusive development transcends growth and income, to include the equitable sharing of the benefits of growth for the improvement of the welfare of all humanity. The UNDP, (2005) posits that inclusive development should address the twin concerns of equal participation and equal access to productive resources for all people. This unfortunately is not the case in Ghana with respect to the Fulbe.

Pastoralist

Pastoralists are people whose occupation is to take care of livestock. Pastoralism involves the domestication of animals which have access to large grazing lands in communities. Pastoralist nomads are therefore people who rely on herding animals as their primary economic activity. Herding entails moving the herd of animals from place to place to graze and drink water. A good number of Fulbe in Ghana are pastoral nomads. The increasing resentments against the Fulbe herders in recent times in Ghana is as a result of the contestations over the scarce water and grazing lands exacerbated by the extreme climate change events such as floods, droughts and wild fires.

Prejudice

Prejudices are derivatives of deep-rooted beliefs, attitudes, feelings that one group of people manifest towards another group. It is associated with causing harm because it devalues and undermines the dignity attached to people from another group. A principal characteristic of prejudice is that it is based on prejudgment and not actual experience. In spite of the many ills associated with prejudices, many people still prefer to believe in prejudices, which violates the universal advocacy for equality and equal rights. Prejudice is associated with biased thinking, and a negative attitude toward a certain group and its individual members. In Ghana the prejudice against the Fulbe has often resulted in violence against them, hate speech and discrimination.

Statelessness

Stateless people are considered as non-nationals in the country where they reside and are equally not recognised as nationals of any other state (Chiacchia, 2018) ^[8]. The key explanation for statelessness can be attributed to ethnic and religious discrimination in citizenship laws of a country which makes it difficult for some group of people to access the needed citizenship documentation. In the case of the Fulbe in Ghana, they are often denied access to birth certificates which also affect their ability to acquire other citizenship documents. Some Fulbe in Ghana may be in the state of statelessness since they are neither recognised as a citizen of Ghana or any other country.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes oversimplify group identities by attributing fixed traits to them without evidence (Stangor *et al.*, 1992) ^[25]. Stereotyping occurs when a person associates the collective characteristics link to a particular group to every member of that group, discounting individual characteristics. It is an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Stereotypes are often based on misconceptions or incomplete information. Some of the peculiar characteristics associated with stereotypes are:

- Fixed rigid ideas
- Associated with a group or category

- Not supported by evidence
- Can be favourable or unfavorable
- Driven by motive
- Socialization process

The stereotypes are largely formed from the socialization process, reading of books, mass media, educators and public officials. As indicated above, stereotypes can be negative or positive. However, in Ghana the stereotypes against the Fulbe are predominantly negative. Some of the stereotypes are that they are foreigners, non-citizens, violent and armed robbers. Also, in spite of the diversity of Fulbe livelihoods they are all invariably connected with cattle herding.

Methods

This study was conducted between June to August, 2024. Relevant literature was reviewed and field-based interviews also conducted. The researcher reviewed websites and databases on hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana and West Africa. These included: (1) the HERDphobia: HERDphobia is a hate speech dataset on Fulbe herders in Nigeria. It monitors social media hate speech against the Fulbe herders in Nigeria, (2) Google advanced search on hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana. The search used key words such as “Fulbe in Ghana” “hate speech against the Fulbe” Hate crimes against Fulbe in Ghana”, “Attacks on Fulbe in Ghana “and: “hate propaganda against the Fulbe in Ghana”. The search engines generated several themes on hate speech against the Fulbe which were then analyzed and prioritized base on years of the hate incident, impact of hate incident, responds to the hate incident and perpetrators and victims of the hate incident and (3) a review of legal and institutional frameworks related to hate speech in Ghana.

The field-based study was conducted in Northern Ghana. It covered five districts and ten communities that were purposively selected based on the following criteria:

- The district and community have a good concentration of Fulbe.
- The district and community have a history of conflicts between the Fulbe and non-Fulbe ethnic groups.
- The community members are predominantly crop farmers.

The selected districts were Builsa North (Upper East Region) Central Gonja (Savannah Region), Mamprugu Moagduri (North-East Region), Sissala West (Upper West Region) and Gushegu (Northern Region). A convenient sample size of 480 respondents was used for the study, comprising:

- 300 non-Fulbe community members (134 women and 166 men),
- 92 Fulbe community members (28 women and 64 men), and
- 15 staff members (5 women and 10 men) drawn from traditional councils and decentralized institutions.

The primary data collection methods employed were (1) Key informant interviews (KIIs), (2) Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), and (3) Survey. The KIIs targeted staff of the Regional Peace Councils, Department of Agriculture, District Security Councils and Traditional Councils. The FGDs involved both Fulbe and non-Fulbe community members. Each FGD did not exceed twelve (12) participants including women, men and young people. Separate FGDs were organised for the Fulbe and the non-Fulbe community

members. This ensured the unhindered participation of both ethnic groups without any fears of intimidation or victimisation. In total, twenty (20) FGDs were organised with non-Fulbe community members and ten (10) FGDs with Fulbe community members. The third method used was a survey. The survey tool contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions which targeted women and men from the selected communities.

The data collection tools included interview guides for the KIIs and FGDs and a questionnaire for the survey. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with the KIIs and FGDs respondents. These interviews were recorded with the consent of the respondents and later transcribed for analysis. The survey questionnaire was, however, programmed using the Kobo collect App and administered electronically by trained research assistants.

The quantitative variables were analysed with the aid of SPSS software and presented in the form of graphs and tables. The data from the qualitative variables gathered from the FGDs and KIIs were analysed according to the themes of the study. The study observed the required research ethical protocols. These included securing informed consent from the various categories of respondents, observing the required community entry protocols by explaining the objectives of the study to community leaders, conducting FGDs in local languages spoken by the respondents and holding field engagements at locations acceptable and accessible to the respondents.

Results and Discussion

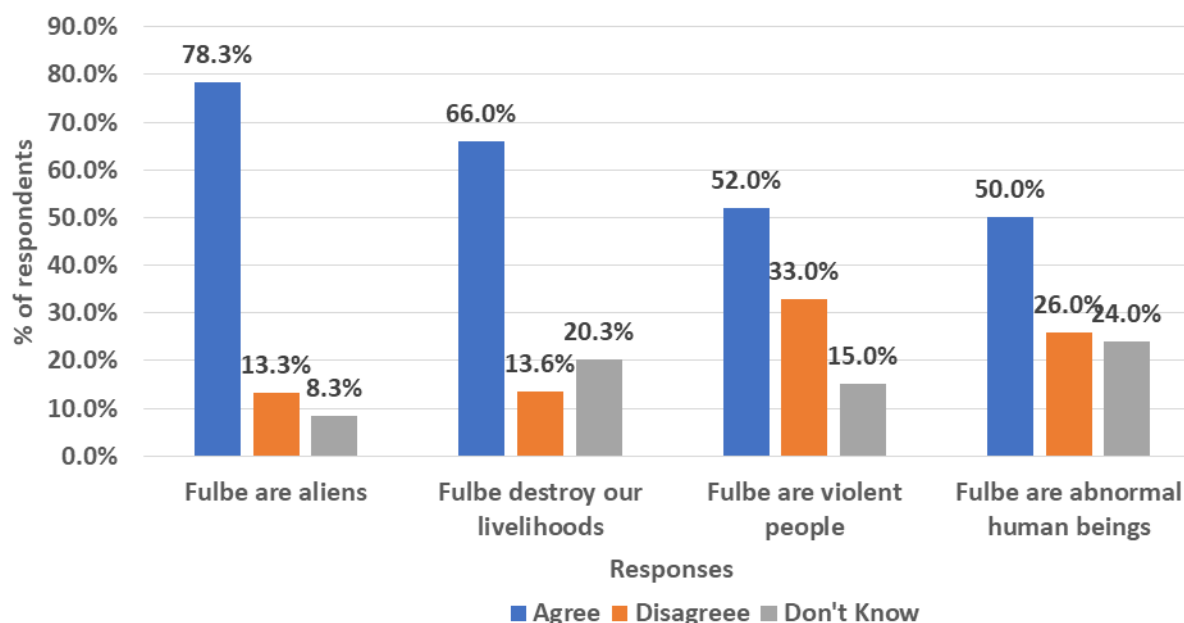
Drivers of hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana

The study showed that the hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana was driven by negative perceptions. This is supported by the fact that nearly 8 out of 10 (78.3%) non-Fulbe Ghanaians perceived them as aliens and not deserving of equal rights and opportunities as the supposedly indigenous Ghanaians. The notion of the Fulbe not being Ghanaians was conveyed by a Fulbe female participant as follows:

"You don't deserve to be in Ghana. Go back to your country you foreigners. We will one day burn your thatch houses and drive you aliens out of this community". (Fulbe lady participant in a FGD, Kpisinga, Gushegu Municipality July, 2024).

The alien tag on all Fulbe in Ghana is however erroneous as some Fulbe are Ghanaians through birth, registration, naturalisation or adoption (Republic of Ghana, Citizenship Act 2000 (Act 591).

The second driver of hate speech against the Fulbe according to the study was the perception that the Fulbe herders destroy their livelihoods. As noted by Bukola (2020) ^[6] the predominant occupation of many of the rural Fulbe is cattle herding. Annually, the Fulbe have been accused of depleting water bodies, overgrazing, felling of economic indigenous trees to feed their cattle and destruction of crops. The increasing farmer-herder conflicts exacerbated by the extreme climate change events have resulted in violent attacks and expulsion of some Fulbe from some communities in Ghana.



Source: (Field Survey, 2025)

Fig 1: Question: Why do you the non-Fulbe hate the Fulbe in your community

The findings also showed that 5 out of 10 (52%) generally feel that the Fulbe are violent people. They are branded as gun and cutlass wielding individuals who are ever ready to perpetuate violence against other ethnic groups to achieve their interest and at the least provocation. This was captured by one of the respondents as follows:

"One major concern is that the Fulbe always draw their knives and cutlasses when you confront them about a wrong issue. We don't know what to do. They steal our cattle and destroy our farms but we are helpless because they are well

armed with light weapons.". (Community member in a FGD in Sinasi, Builsa North District, July, 2024).

The study also showed that the hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana was exacerbated by unfounded myths as 5 out of 10 non-Fulbe community members harbour the feeling that the Fulbe have supernatural powers which they use to harm people. For instance, some non-Fulbe during the study indicated that the Fulbe turn into monkeys or snakes when they die which this study could not verify. These myths account for their isolation as well.

The key informant interviews with the Fulbe leadership revealed their disaffection with the unprofessional media rapportage on them. Ahmed Barry the president of Fulbe youth Association of Ghana (FUSAG) noted; ‘If three people commit a crime and one of them is a Fulbe, the media headlines will be ‘A Fulbe man and two others were arrested.’ The Fulbe are always projected in the negative light’. He called for a stop to these biases and unethical journalistic practices against the Fulbe.

Effectiveness of the legal and institutional frameworks to protect Fulbe from hate speech

1992 Republic Constitution of Ghana (Amendment, Act, 1996). The 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana (Amendment Act, 1996) includes clear provisions on citizenship and human rights of the Fulbe. Fulbe who are citizens of Ghana just like their non-Fulbe counterparts are protected by the 1992 Constitution. Some specific articles which border on Fulbe human rights in Ghana include the following:

Relevant Articles & Clauses	Implications for Fulbe
• 8 (1) A citizen of Ghana may hold the citizenship of any other country in addition to his citizenship or Ghana.	This implies that the Fulbe can be citizens of Ghana and other countries as well.
• 12(2) Every person in Ghana, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed or gender shall be entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual contained in this Chapter but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest.	This implies that the fundamental human rights and freedoms of Fulbe living in Ghana are guaranteed by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana.
• 15(1) The dignity of all persons shall be inviolable. (2) No person shall, whether or not he is arrested, restricted or detained, be subjected to (a) torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; (b) any other condition that detracts or is likely to detract from his dignity and worth as a human being	This implies that Fulbe found violating the law have to be given a fair hearing and not subjected to torture and other indecent treatment such as burning of their settlements and killing of their animals and other properties.
• 17. (2) A person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status.	It implies that state or non-state institutions have no right to discriminate against the Fulbe.

The Citizenship Act, 2000 (ACT 591)

The Citizenship Act, 2000 (ACT 591) outlines five forms of citizenship in Ghana. These are: (1) Birth, (2) Registration, (3) Naturalization, (4) Foundling and (5) Adoption. The study revealed that some of the Fulbe are not familiar with the citizenship provisions in the Act. Also, some state institutions deliberately prevent them from acquiring key citizenship documentation such as the Ghana Card, National Passport, Birth Certificate and Voter ID. This barrier has therefore rendered some Fulbe stateless.

Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) Act 1993 (Act 456)

The CHRAJ was established by Act 1993 (Act 456). A key function of the institution is to investigate complaints bordering human rights violations in Ghana. This is therefore, an important public institution for preventing and addressing hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana. In 2024, CHRAJ received a total of 10,156 Human rights related complaints with many of the complaints bordering on child rights, 1509 (34.6%). However, the services of CHRAJ are only available currently at the Regional Capitals which makes it difficult for Fulbe experiencing hate speech in the hinterlands to lodge complains for redress.

Non-state Actors advocacy against hate speech targeted at Fulbe in Ghana

The study showed that some NGOs have been actively monitoring hate speech incidents against the Fulbe in Ghana. The down side of these NGO led initiatives are that they are ad hoc since they are donor funded and also do not address the specific situation of hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana. Some of these include the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) that deploys a monitoring system for Indecent Language on Radio. However, in recent times this mechanism has only focused on election related intemperate language and not specifically on hate speech against the Fulbe. There is also the IMANI Public Understanding and Literacy for Sentiment and Election analysis (PULSE) platform that monitors the sentiments of Ghanaians related to

elections. The West African Network for Peace in Ghana (WANEP-Ghana) equally has a National Early Warning System (NEWS) which produces a weekly and monthly Early Warning System Bulletin which monitor oorganized crime and violent extremism, gender, peace, and security, democracy and governance and environmental security. However, these mechanisms are not accessible to most Fulbe who live in the peripheral areas in Ghana. Another NGO championing Fulbe rights in Ghana is STAR Ghana Foundation. The organization has invested in research and produced a comprehensive manual for Fulbe integration in Ghana. What is now required is for the roll-out of the actions contained in the Fulbe integration manual.

Recommendations

Preventing and protecting the Fulbe from hate speech and hate crimes will require the following actions outlined below. (1) Enforcement of human rights laws in Ghana by public institutions such as CHRAJ in Ghana. This will mean the state investing in expanding the CHRAJ services throughout the country to enable persons to report human rights violations for redress. (2) Embarking on educational campaigns on the human rights of the Fulbe and providing clear guidance on the compliance procedure. This is a function a state institution such as the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and non-state actors especially human rights NGOs could undertake. (3) Organizing refresher courses for media practitioners on ethical journalism and human rights investigation and reporting. It also includes sanctioning media houses that promote hate speech, misinformation and disinformation about the Fulbe in Ghana. This is a function the Ghana Journalist Association and the National Media Commission could prioritize to purge the media of hate speech against the Fulbe in Ghana. (4) Anti-Fulbe hate speech state and non-state institutions could also establish a human right monitoring digital platform for Measuring Anti-Fulbe Attacks (MAFA) in Ghana. This will build the needed evidence for legal and institutional reviews and actions.

Conclusion

Hate speech remains a common occurrence in Ghana, especially targeted at the Fulbe. This phenomenon is fuelled by unsubstantiated prejudices against the Fulbe population. Media biases have also helped to build up public hatred and hostility against the Fulbe in Ghana, resulting in mob attacks and their social exclusion, which have negatively affected the inclusive development agenda of Ghana.

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Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest

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