

# COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE (CHRI) ENHANCING POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY IN GHANA

## PROJECT SUMMARY

### 1.0 Introduction:

The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)<sup>1</sup> has been involved in police reform for close to a decade and has carried out research and advocacy on police accountability in Commonwealth countries. CHRI has recently launched a comprehensive report on police accountability in the Commonwealth entitled, **"Police Accountability: Too Important to Neglect, Too Urgent to Delay"**. The Africa regional launch for the report was held in Accra, Ghana on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

This report is based on a number of regional studies, including one of the Commonwealth countries of West Africa, including Ghana.

Part of CHRI's previous work in this area includes a study of the police in East Africa, specifically Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The study has investigated the mechanisms for police accountability within the police services in these three countries, outlined the impact of police budgeting on citizens' safety and made recommendations on how the problems identified could be remedied. The Ghana project is therefore informed by the study in East Africa and it is expected that the experience gained in this region – in terms of substantial issues on policing in Africa and the intricate difficulties encountered in investigating a closed and secretive organisation such as the police – will assist and guide the project in Ghana.

The project is expected to cover a two-year period.

### 2.0 Purpose of the Project:

The primary purpose of this project is to assist in the development of a responsive and accountable police service in Ghana and seeks to do so through the following:

- Examining the police system and the mechanisms through which the police are made accountable;
- Identifying the gaps in the accountability systems and suggest remedial measures, drawing on international best practice;
- Facilitating advocacy around accountability both within and outside the police service;
- Facilitating advocacy towards increased acceptance of the centrality of human rights and the rule of law as guiding values in the day-to-day work of the police; and
- Increasing public debate and demand for an improved police accountability system.

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<sup>1</sup> The Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative is an independent, non-partisan, international NGO working for the *practical* realisation of human rights in countries of the Commonwealth. CHRI's Africa Office is situated in Accra, Ghana; Headquarters in New Delhi, India; and also has a London Liaison Office. More information: [www.humanrightsinitiative.org](http://www.humanrightsinitiative.org)

### **3.0 Main Activities:**

The main activities under the project would be the examination of the Ghana Police Service and the ways in which it is made accountable to the Ghanaian public and the law in general. The project will also identify the legal frameworks in the Ghanaian context that best ensure the centrality of human rights and the rule of law as guiding principles for the police in their daily assignments and make appropriate changes to enhance the accountability of the police. The research work conducted under the project will then inform publications, advocacy materials and campaigns for changes in policies relating to the police. Finally, the project will seek to build a network of civil society organisations committed to advocating reforms in police accountability in Ghana and conduct a nationwide sensitisation and public education through the media.

### **4.0 Expected Outputs:**

At the end of the targeted two-year period, the CHRI expects to realise the following outputs:

- A detailed report on the Ghana Police Service and its accountability systems;
- Advocacy documents on improving police accountability in Ghana;
- Conduct workshops to test the suggested reforms among the stakeholders;
- Conduct public hearings on policing issues;
- Conduct publicity and sensitisation on principles of democratic policing in Ghana;
- Build an active and informed civil society network, advocating for police reform; and
- Improve media coverage on police issues.

### **5.0 Expected Impact:**

The main thrusts of this project – research and advocacy – are expected to increase the knowledge of the police, government, civil society organisations and the general public of police accountability, the gaps in the systems and the obstacles to dealing with them and the suggested remedial measures. In addition, specific initiatives are expected to be made to increase accountability and professionalism of the Ghana Police Service. Finally, the project hopes that the relevant authorities will institute a formal police complaints structure – this may not be done within the two-year targeted period, but it hoped that the advocacy campaign will have set in motion a committed drive towards establishing a formal complaints structure.

**For more information**, contact the Ghana office [via email](#), by telephone on +233 21 244 744 or +233 21 663 979 or by fax to +233 21 240 330. CHRI Ghana's postal address is c/o The British Council, PO Box GP 771, Accra, Ghana.