



PRESS RELEASE

THE PRISONS TRANSFORMATIONAL TASK FORCE (PTTF) DECONGESTS ANKAFUL PRISONS ESTATE TO ZERO

The Prisons Transformational Task Force was set up by the Controller-General of Prisons in January 2014. It is co-chaired by Mr. Stephen Coffie, Deputy Controller of Prisons and the Head of Migration Policy (West Africa), Mr. Charanpreet Singh Walia from the British High Commission. The PTTF was given a mandate to specifically look into the conditions of the country's prisons and advise on appropriate reforms. The PTTF has since made a significant positive impact in the area of decongestion and health delivery.

For many years Ghana's Prisons have been subject to international and domestic scrutiny in relation to overcrowding and poor living conditions of prisoners. This issue came to fore when the UN Special Rapporteur, Mr. Juane Mendez, who visited Ghana in October 2013 concluded in his preliminary report that our prisons were truly overcrowded and lacked basic health care.

This coupled with existing challenges in the prison system, including the high population of remand prisoners and poor health care, led the PTTF to assess the extent of the issues and to identify and implement solutions for improvement.

The PTTF initially focused on the Ankaful Prisons Estate comprising of the Ankaful Maximum Security Prison, the Ankaful Main Camp Prison, the Ankaful Annex Prison and the Ankaful Contagious Diseases Prison (CDP).

The Prisons Administration is proud to note that within the short period of coming into existence, the PTF has been able to reduce the overcrowding situation at the Ankaful Prison Estate from approximately 250% to 0%.

Decongestion was achieved through redistributing the Prison population. At the time Ankaful Annex, then a Category B Prison housed 772 inmates,

comprising of mainly high security risk prisoners and other dangerous offenders. Over 400 prisoners from the Ankaful Annex Prison were successfully transferred to the Ankaful Maximum Prison.

Ankaful Annex has now successfully been converted into a Category C Prison, housing primarily remand Prisoners and population at Ankaful Annex now stands at around 269 Prisoners.

The PTF has now advised the Prison Administration to construct a secure perimeter fence around the Ankaful Main Camp Prison which is currently an Open Camp Prison serving as a Transitional House for inmates being prepared for discharge. When such a security wall is in place, the facility could be upgraded from a Category D to a Category B Prison to house more prisoners of various security classifications and thus help to sustain the decongestion of the prisons in the Central and Western Regions. This recommendation will also assist in converting Ankaful Annex into a dedicated Remand Prison, potentially first of its kind in the country.

The other success story of the PTF has been in the area of improving health delivery. They facilitated the collaboration of the Prisons Service and the Ministry of Health in providing mobile health clinics for prisoners, officers and their dependents at Nsawam and Koforidua prisons.

DSP VITALIS AIYEH
CHIEF PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER