

# ROLE OF CITIZENS' ACTIONS IN ELECTIONS IN GHANA

SUB-THEME: CITIZENS' ACTIONS, INDEPENDENCE OF STATE INSTITUTIONS AND ELECTIONS 2024

## **Keynote by Martin A.B.K. Amidu**

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*Accountable Governance, Violent Extremism and  
2024 Elections*

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024



# My Foundational View

Every **institution** which has been **given the sovereign power of Ghana's citizens** under the Fourth Republican Constitution

has a **Constitutional responsibility and duty** to ensure the will of the electorate

is **expressed freely and without intimidation**

by those who hold the instruments of state power **on behalf of the citizen.**



**April 1992**  
Constitution Approved



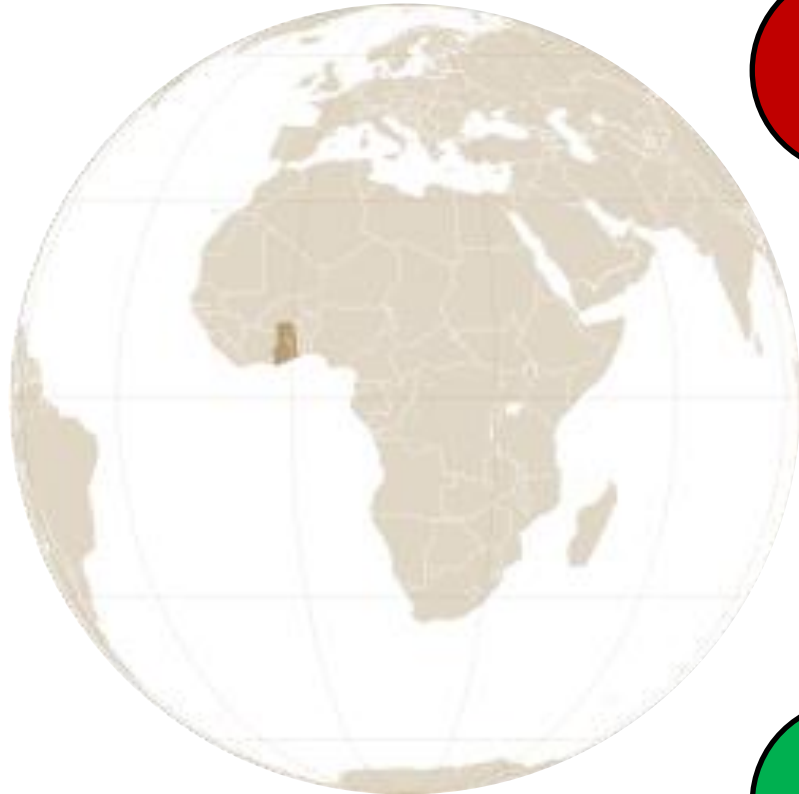
**Nov & Dec 1992**  
Presidential & Parliamentary  
Elections held



**Jan 1993**  
Constitution comes into force

***“The 2024 elections are not going to take place in a vacuum. They are going to be informed by thirty years of electoral history under the 1992 Constitution”***

# Historical Context for Citizen Participation



# Emergence of Citizen Organizations

1989 - **Institute of Economic Affairs**

1990 - **Movement for Freedom and Justice**

1993 - **Centre for Economic Policy Analysis**

1998 - **Centre for Democratic Development**

2004 - **IMANI Centre for Policy and Education**

2008 - **Danquah Institute**

From Jan 2001 to Jan 2008, affiliations emerge as civil society organization members accept positions on governing boards of state organizations and institutions or become advisers to the President

Vigilance of media, citizens' action groups, civil society + other civil society orgs exposes abuses of office and mismanagement & during 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> NDC administrations and corruption + financial losses to the state

*Dedicated to politics: NDC presidential candidate running mate in 2000, to Attorney-General in 2011*

*Responded publicly to Woyome / Waterville Case in Jan 2012*

*Summoned to Presidency, fired from my post: "misconduct"*

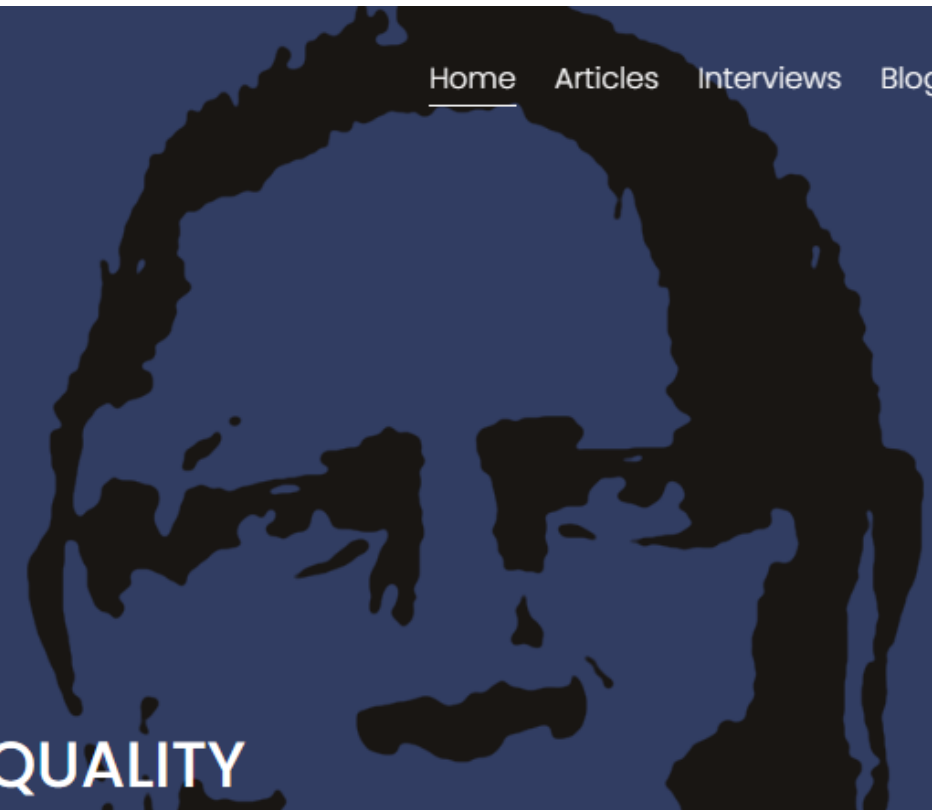
*Began my career as citizen activist & anti-corruption crusader*

*Joined citizenry forces, acted against 2016 Presidential Campaign*

MARTIN AMIDU SPEAKS

**Gargantuan...  
Anti corruption crusader  
emerges in 2012**

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The NPP's victory at the 2016 polls was seen by activist citizens, and civil society organizations as well deserved and beckoning a golden age of good governance, rule of law, democracy, constitutionalism and a zero tolerance for corruption by the Nana Akufo-Addo government.

But Ghanaian citizens have more lessons to learn about the promises made by political messiahs and demagogues...

**#FixTheCountry**  
**Oliver Barker-Vormawor**

**Ghana 2024**

**IMANI Ghana**  
**Bright Simons**

**Political activists**  
**MP North Tongu + others**

“

The projection of citizens action on the 2024 election depends on how the independent state institutions in the three arms of government, particularly the executive branch, and the independent constitutional bodies, particularly the Electoral Commission under the 1992 Constitution, learn from their historical performance and abide by the injunctions of the 1992 Constitution.

”



# Independence of State Institutions

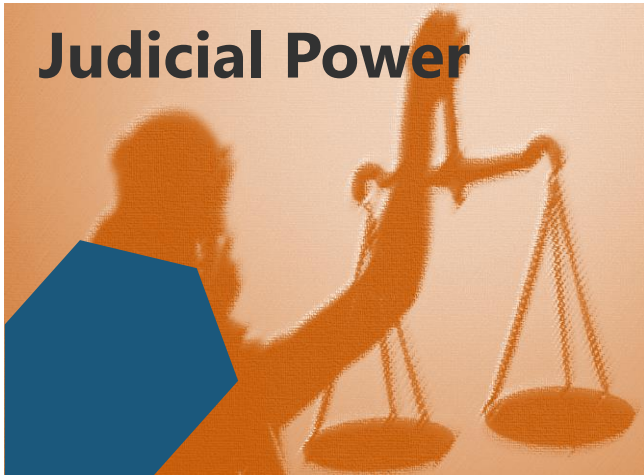
## Legislative Power



## Executive Power



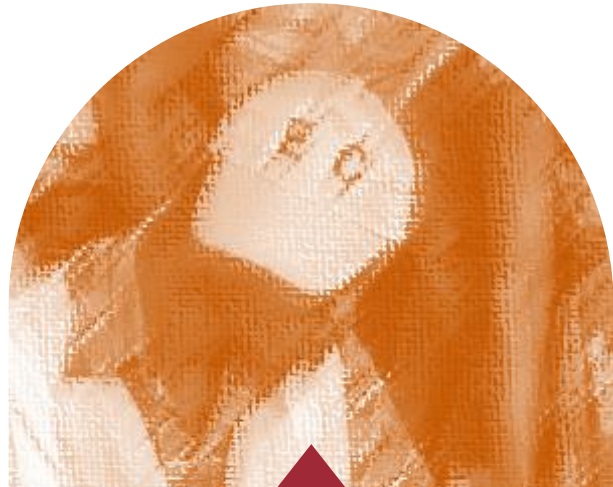
## Judicial Power



Three arms of government **must achieve the general good enshrined in Ghana's national constitution** for the **social, economic, cultural, and political wellbeing of its sovereign people**, informed by the doctrine of separation of powers and coordination of powers of government.



# Independence of Constitutional Bodies



**Electoral  
Commission**



**National  
Commission  
for Civic  
Education**



**Commission for  
Human Rights &  
Administrative  
Justice**

# Impact of Electoral Commission

Photo credit Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana)



“Jean Mensa was criticizing a lot during her time at the IEA platform; she used to talk as an angel. But the same issues she used to criticize, she is now doing those 10 times as EC chair, autocratic leadership...”

Peace FM's Kwabena Marfo

**An independent Electoral Commission which is not under the control or direction of anybody or person in the performance of its functions, is a constitutional injunction if we are to sustain Ghana's democracy and Constitution.**

**Unfortunately, constitutional documents are not self-executing. They depend on the agency and instrumentality of human actors within the constitutional framework to whom the sovereign people have entrusted power...**

**Incipient laxity in fidelity** to core principles of representative democracy, rule of law and constitutionalism.

**Adulteration of the structure, scheme, and design** of the 1992 Constitution by a toxic political culture.

**Public institutions seen as mere appendages of executive**, may be used to undermine the sovereignty of the people.

# Elections and a Presidential Agenda



While the Constitution apportions executive power to the President, it sought to **restrict its concentration in his hands** by creating various public services to which he could delegate the execution of his authority within a regime of the rule of law.

**The strength of a public institution is measured by the integrity of the leadership of that institution to always live up to its official oath and act, to uphold, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution.**



# Impact & Influence of Citizens

**1980s - 2000**

Citizens actions groups, partisan political action groups, civil society organizations (funded by foreign agents to ensure pluralistic democracy) advocated for change of ruling party

**2009 - 2012**

NDC saw growing discontent resulting in citizens actions for good governance and rule of law. Civil Society Organizations and civil society mobilized against the regime leading to the 2012 elections

**2016**

Civil society & individual citizen activists pushed for a change of government using corruption, unpopular taxes, other economic policies as justification

**2020**

Elections marred by intra-party conflict. Still doubts in the minds of citizens' actions groups, civil society, and the electorate generally whether their votes did really count during the 2020 elections

# Prognosis for Ghana Elections 2024

Can EC's Jean Mensah **overcome inexperience** to bring a fair result?



Will **outgoing president** use his executive power to supervise a free and fair election – or to crown his successor?

Is the judiciary the bulwark to **uphold and defend** the well-being of citizens?

FULL TRANSCRIPT OF KEYNOTE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
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**Thank You.**