

# Cabinet approves bill to decentralise births, deaths registration

News Desk Report

**C**ABINET has given approval to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to submit a Bill to decentralise births and deaths registration in Ghana to Parliament for consideration.

The objective of the bill is to provide for a more efficient births and deaths registration system in the country as well as decentralise effectively the births and deaths registration system.

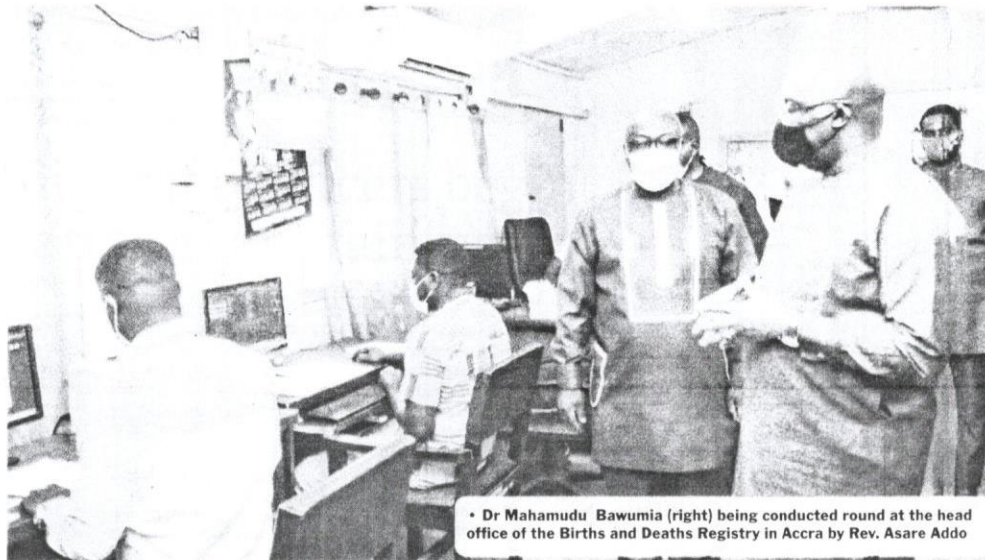
Vice-President, Dr Mahamudu Bawumia, disclosed this when he paid a surprise visit to the head office of the Births and Deaths Registry in Accra yesterday.

He was conducted round the offices by the Principal Assistant Registrar, Rev. Asare Addo, who took him through the processes and records of the registry.

The current administrative, institutional and operational architecture for the registration of births and deaths in Ghana under the 1965 law (Act 301) has become obsolete, according to experts.

The Registry fails to provide for the registration of surrogate births; notification of births and deaths by supervising professionals such as nurses and traditional birth attendants; and the use of electronic technology for the capture, transmission and storage of births and deaths data.

## Highlights



• Dr Mahamudu Bawumia (right) being conducted round at the head office of the Births and Deaths Registry in Accra by Rev. Asare Addo

The Vice-President had the privilege to go through the 1912 register which contains Ghana's first attempt at recording births.

### The Bill

Dr Bawumia explained that the bill, presented to Cabinet by the sector Minister, Hajia Alima Mahama, among others, seeks to expand the births and deaths registration

coverage nationwide and devolve the functions of births and deaths registration to metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs).

It also intends to ensure consistency of the births and deaths registration system with the Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 936).

### Digitising database

While efforts by the registry, including public education, awareness creation and boosting the capacity of the registry had yielded an increase in birth registration coverage from 17 per cent in 2001 to an all-time high level of 80 per cent as of the end of 2019, this achievement is, however, still below the UN standard of 90 per cent

coverage.

Vice-President Bawumia thus expressed his delight at the rapid pace of work on the digitisation of the paper records of the registry, which would allow for the integration of its database with other state agencies, thereby streamlining service delivery further.

"I am happy to learn that thus far, 80 per cent of the paper records have been digitised and we should see the process completed by the end of this year or latest early next year. When completed, the database of the Births and Deaths Registry will be integrated with that of the National Identification Authority (NIA) for the issuance of a single NIA number for everyone from birth to death.

"It is expected that this database will also be integrated into other agencies such as SSNIT and NHIA as part of ongoing efforts by the government to make the provision of public services easier," he added.

## Decentralisation

Briefing the Vice-President, Rev. Addo indicated that efforts were underway to ensure the establishment of a Births and Deaths Registry in every government hospital, as well as every district in the country as the 414 centres were not adequate.

He said several engagements had also taken place between the technical staff of the NIA and the registry to work out a smooth integration of records.



• Personnel from the Rapid Response Unit on parade to receive briefing before heading for the training

## 60 Immigration officers begin counter-terrorism training

### News Desk Report

SIXTY Officers from the Rapid Response Unit (RRU) of the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) have begun a three-week training in counter-terrorism at Huhunya in the Eastern Region.

The officers constitute the second batch of trainees for the exercise which is aimed at enhancing their skills to prevent cross-border crimes.

The training, which forms part of a national counter-terrorism strategy to tackle head-on any threat of terrorism in the country, will help enhance the combat fitness, weapon

handling, shooting skills, willpower and speed, among other skills of participants.

After the training, the officers will serve as a backup force to support the military and the police in maintaining law and order in the country.

### Specialised training

Briefing the officers in Accra to send them off for the training, the Head of Operations, Deputy Commissioner of Immigration (DCOI) Isaac Luortey, urged them to be disciplined and exhibit good conduct.

He indicated that the training was to mould them for special

assignments and internal security at the frontiers.

"Securing our borders against transnational organised crime and activities of terrorists are very crucial to the sustenance and security of the country", he noted.

DCOI Luortey added that the officers would be deployed to the borders after their training in order to provide the needed security for exceptional situations that require increased firepower and specialised tactics, as well as contribute to internal security by supporting the military and the police.

The Commander for the RRU, Chief Superintendent of

Immigration (CSI) Adam Osman, told the officers to take the training seriously, pay attention to detail and not go against instructions given them.

"Whatever you do will be assessed; therefore, take the training seriously," he advised.

He reminded them of the coronavirus pandemic in the country and urged them to adhere to the safety protocols at all times in the course of the training.

### Background

The first batch of 60 Immigration officers underwent the training in October last year.

Also held at Huhunya, it was a joint exercise with officers from the Ghana Police Service who were trained in counter-terrorism, codenamed High-Risk Operation Survival.