

## **"CIVILIAN RULE IS MESSY, BUT MILITARY RULE IS DEADLY"**

The recent Afrobarometer findings, by the Centre for Democratic Development - Ghana (CDD-Ghana) reveal that more Ghanaian youth are endorsing military intervention if elected leaders abuse power, which should awaken every patriotic citizen to action.

According to the 2024 survey by CDD-Ghana, a staggering 52% of young people aged 18–25 support military takeover under such circumstances, with the figure rising to 56% among those aged 26–35. This trend is not only alarming - it is dangerous.

As a nation, Ghana has paid a heavy price under military rule. Those who have lived through the dark years of unconstitutional governance remember all too vividly the brutal repression, economic hardship, fear, and loss of basic freedoms that characterized military regimes. The stability, rights, and opportunities we enjoy today are the fruits of years of sacrifice, resilience, and relentless commitment to democracy.

It is therefore tragic that a generation that has benefited the most from Ghana's democratic dividends is now entertaining illusions about the military as an alternative to civilian governance.

Let us be clear: no matter how flawed civilian leadership may be, it is infinitely better than the very best form of military dictatorship. Under democracy, citizens can criticize, organize, vote out corrupt leaders, and demand better governance. Under military rule, those rights are crushed. Power flows from the barrel of a gun, not from the will of the people accountability disappears and freedom dies.

The frustrations many young people feel today are understandable. Youth unemployment, corruption, and poor public services are real challenges. But the solution is not to tear down the very system that allows us to seek change peacefully. It is to deepen our democracy, not to abandon it. We must work harder to make our leaders accountable. We must engage in civic education, advocacy, and active participation in governance processes.

Democracy is not perfect - but it is self-correcting. Through elections, civil society activism, the judiciary, free media, and other democratic institutions, we can fix what is broken. Military rule, on the other hand, is a dead-end street. Once soldiers seize power, they rarely give it back easily. Ghana's history - from the coups of the 1960s and 70s to the authoritarianism of the 1980s - is a testimony to this bitter truth.

We must not gamble away our hard-won freedoms out of impatience or disillusionment.

The youth of Ghana are the future stewards. Our role is not to seek shortcuts through unconstitutional means but to fortify our democracy with energy, creativity, and commitment. If leaders fail, hold them accountable through the ballot box, civic pressure, and lawful protest. But never through the gun.

Today, we must renew our pledge to defend constitutional rule, no matter the challenges. Democracy demands work, vigilance, and sacrifice — but it is the surest path to a just, free, and prosperous Ghana.

Let us not betray the dreams of our forebears. Let us be the generation that perfects our democracy, not the one that destroys it.

Ghana's future depends on it.

May God bless our homeland Ghana and make her great and strong!

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