

PRINCETON DIPLOMATIC INVITATIONAL 2026



Striking Gold

Ghana's Path to Independence

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FROM YOUR DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to PDI 2026! I am so excited to have you join us for what promises to be an incredible conference. I'm Eric, and I'll be serving as your Director-General for the next four days. I can't wait to get to know all of you throughout the weekend and help make this experience as rewarding as possible.

A little about me: I'm a second-year student majoring in Public and International Affairs with a minor in Computer Science. I'm originally from Chişinău, Moldova but have also lived in Kyiv (Ukraine), Moscow (Russia), Ankara (Turkey), and Baku (Azerbaijan) throughout my life. On campus, I am also involved in PMUNC and PMUNT, am an international student leader at the Davis IC, and write for the Prince. If I'm not doing any of those things, I'm probably listening to, playing, or geeking out about heavy metal.

I'm thrilled to be working with an amazing team of Chairs and Crisis Directors to bring you exciting and thought-provoking crisis committees this year. I hope you come prepared to dive deep into past, present, and fictional issues, push your negotiation skills to the limit, and engage with the diverse perspectives that make conferences like PDI so special. Most importantly, I hope that you have fun and make the most of your time here.

Feel free to reach out to me anytime with any questions or thoughts you might have. I look forward to seeing you in committee!

Sincerely,

Eric Mohorea '28 (em4523@princeton.edu)



FROM YOUR CHAIR

Dear Delegates,

I am Luqmaan Bamba, and I'd like to join the secretariat, the directors, and staff in welcoming you to PMUNC 2025. I'm excited to be your chair for this exciting crisis committee: "Striking Gold: Ghana's Path to Independence."

In summer 2022, I visited Ghana, and when I was at the Cape Coast Slave Castle along Ghana's southern border with the Atlantic, I purchased a book by David Rooney: Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy. That book opened my eyes to the turmoil of Ghana, shedding the legacy of slavery and colonialism and achieving sovereignty and national self-determination. The book importantly nuanced the hero worship Ghanaians have of Nkrumah and the sanitized view we have of the independence period. It's certainly a recommended read. Watch videos and documentaries and read all you can from wherever you can to prepare for this truly exciting committee we will have.

I'm available at luqmaanbamba@princeton.edu in case you have any questions as you do research and prepare, or for anything else at all.

Sincerely,
Luqmaan Bamba



COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

This committee will involve key players from the West and in Ghana itself from various domains, political and economic, as they navigate the path from colony to republic.

TOPIC: GHANAIAN INDEPENDENCE

On March 6, 1957, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from colonial rule, igniting a wave of liberation across the continent. But freedom brought formidable challenges. Independence required deep collaboration with British Colonial powers to craft a new constitution and government, and a delicate power transition had to be threaded.

The CPP (Convention People's Party) led the nation in parliamentary seats with Nkrumah as the nation's Prime Minister and later its first president. The period leading up to independence even presented crises that the independence-bound nation had to navigate. The National Liberation Movement presented a crisis as they fought for the rights of chieftains and regions in opposition to Nkrumah's centralization efforts. In the economic vein, cacao prices collapsed in the mid-60s, destabilizing the economy. This, along with growing discontent, will in the end lead to a coup to oust Nkrumah and his eventual exile.

In this Crisis Committee, delegates will navigate Ghana's turbulent early years—from Cold War entanglements to internal party rivalries, ethnic divisions, economic crises, and the threat of military coups. Representing politicians, merchants, colonial officials, and international actors, delegates must steer Ghana through the dilemmas of nation-building, all under the shadow of global powers and local ambitions.

Delegates will confront urgent questions: Should Ghana pursue non-alignment in the Cold War or embrace aid from the East or West? How should the new government balance the demands of ethnic federations like the National Liberation Movement with the drive for national unity? Can the state respond to collapsing cocoa prices without alienating local farmers or foreign partners? How should the government treat powerful traditional leaders, opposition figures, and diasporic economic actors? Delegates must weigh political loyalty against national interest, navigate palace intrigue, and manage external pressures from both Western democracies and Soviet-aligned states. Each decision will shape the path of a fragile new republic—and missteps could bring civil unrest, foreign interference, or a premature end to Ghana's democratic experiment.

TOPIC: *Ghanaian Independence*

POST-WWII AND EARLY CONSTITUTIONS

In August 1947, J.B. Danquah, Edward Akufo-Addo, Paa Grant, and other members of the educated elite founded the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), a nationalist movement calling for self-government. Funding came largely from merchants like Paa Grant, whose businesses were constrained by colonial economic controls. Across the globe, decolonization was gathering pace, inspired in part by India's independence that same year, and in the Gold Coast, demands for change were reaching a breaking point.¹

¹ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "J.B. Danquah." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 31, 2025. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/J-B-Danquah>.

² "Coussey Committee," *Wikipedia*, last modified August 10, 2025, accessed September 5, 2025, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coussey_Committee.

³ University of Central Arkansas, Department of Government, Public Service, and International Studies, "British Gold Coast/Togoland (1946–1957)," *DADM Project: Sub-Saharan Africa Region*, accessed September 5, 2025, <https://uca.edu/politicalscience/home/research-projects/dadm-project/sub-saharan-af-rica-region/british-gold-coasttogoland-1946-1957/>.

The flashpoint came in February 1948, when ex-servicemen, frustrated by the colonial government's failure to pay promised benefits after the Second World War, marched through Accra. Police opened fire, killing several veterans. The shootings ignited days of riots and looting, later known as the Accra Riots, which shook British confidence in the colony's political stability. The government responded with mass arrests, including several UGCC leaders, and charged the Watson Commission to investigate the unrest.

The Commission's findings led to the formation of the Coussey Committee², tasked with drafting constitutional reforms. These reforms built on earlier steps toward African participation: the 1925 Constitution, introduced by Governor Guggisberg, had created a Legislative Council dominated by Europeans, while the 1946 Burns Constitution gave Africans a majority in the legislature but kept executive authority firmly with the Governor. The 1951 Constitution went further, establishing an 84-member Legislative Assembly, 38 members directly elected by the people, and granting Africans a majority in the Executive Council.

In the political reshuffling of these years, Kwame Nkrumah emerged as a decisive figure. Invited by Danquah to serve as UGCC General Secretary in late 1947, Nkrumah soon broke with the party's gradualist approach, forming the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1949 with the rallying cry of "Self-government now!" The CPP's

mass appeal was evident in the 1951 elections, when it won 34 of the 38 directly elected seats, securing Nkrumah's release from prison to serve as Leader of Government Business, and later, Prime Minister.

INDEPENDENCE AND EARLY TROUBLE

In July 1956³, the Gold Coast held its final Legislative Assembly elections under British rule. Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) won a commanding majority, 72 of 104 seats, on a platform of immediate independence and national unity.

The Ashanti-based National Liberation Movement (NLM), by contrast, called for a looser federal structure that would grant greater autonomy to traditional kingdoms, particularly the powerful Ashanti chieftaincy. The NLM's resistance foreshadowed the regional and ethnic fault lines that would persist after independence.

On March 6, 1957, the Gold Coast formally became the independent state of Ghana, with Nkrumah as Prime Minister under a constitutional monarchy headed by Queen Elizabeth II. The celebrations drew not only African leaders but also prominent figures from the Black diaspora, including African-American civil rights activists, Pan-Africanists, and scholars. Ghana's independence resonated powerfully in the United States, where leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. saw it as a beacon of self-determination and a blow against colonialism and racism.

Ghana's Path to Independence

Nkrumah cultivated these ties, positioning Ghana as both an African and a global symbol of liberation.

The young nation's first years were marked by both ambition and friction. Nkrumah's government launched sweeping education² reforms, infrastructure projects, and state-led industrialization, financed by robust cocoa revenues. Yet tensions with the NLM and other regionalists persisted, as they feared Accra's centralization would sideline local authority. Political opponents accused Nkrumah of using his parliamentary dominance to erode checks and balances.

In 1960, Ghana adopted a new republican constitution⁴ through a national referendum, replacing the British monarch with an executive presidency. Nkrumah won the first presidential election with over 89% of the vote, an overwhelming mandate that further concentrated power in his hands. The transformation from a parliamentary monarchy to a republic was hailed as a milestone in full sovereignty, but

²4 "Ghana — Independence, Gold Coast, Kwame Nkrumah," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, last updated September 5, 2025, accessed September 5, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ghana/Independence>. *Encyclopedia Britannica*

⁵ Laverle Bennette Berry and Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Ghana: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, for sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., 1995), 134–36, <https://www.loc.gov/item/95018891/>.

also marked the beginning of a more centralized and personalized style of governance that would define the rest of Nkrumah's rule.

ECONOMIC WOES

The heady promise of independence, however, began to collide with harsh economic realities. Cocoa, the lifeblood of the economy and Ghana's dominant export, saw global prices tumble in the mid-1960s. With more than half the nation's foreign exchange earnings tied to the crop, the decline created a severe fiscal crisis.

Nkrumah's industrialization drive, from state-owned factories to the monumental Volta River Dam, was meant to reduce dependence on cocoa.⁵ But many projects were rushed, underperforming, or plagued by cost overruns. Foreign reserves dwindled, forcing the government into heavy borrowing. Farmers protested low state-purchased prices for cocoa beans, while urban workers faced inflation and shortages. Discontent seeped into all sectors of society, eroding the CPP's once-solid base.

POLITICAL QUAGMIRE

Even as domestic pressures mounted, Nkrumah's gaze turned increasingly outward. A committed Pan-Africanist, he poured resources into liberation movements across the continent, hosted conferences in Accra, and became a founding architect of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. His dream was bold: a continental

government to unite Africa economically and militarily. But this vision unsettled many African leaders, particularly Côte d'Ivoire's Félix Houphouët-Boigny, who saw it as an overreach and preferred a loose confederation of independent states.

Within Ghana, Nkrumah's grip on power tightened. Opposition parties were outlawed; critics were detained under the Preventive Detention Act⁶. The 1960 constitution had already expanded presidential authority, but by 1964, Ghana was formally declared a one-party state. Abroad, Ghana's deepening ties with the Soviet bloc alarmed Britain and the United States, both wary of a socialist foothold in West Africa. Relations with fellow African states also grew tense as Nkrumah's Pan-African ambitions began to clash with their own national interests.³

CULMINATION

The pressure cooker boiled over in the mid-1960s. Ghana's economy was faltering, political freedoms had withered, and rumors of plots

³6 Thaddeus Ulzen, "July 18, 1958: Preventive Detention Act Promulgated," *EJM Blog*, Edward A. Ulzen Memorial Foundation, posted July 18, 2017, accessed September 5, 2025, <https://www.caumf.org/ejm-blog/jul-18-preventive-detention>. *Edward A. Ulzen Memorial Foundation*

⁷ Austin Ogunsuyi, "Overthrow of Nkrumah in Ghana," *Research Starters: History*, EBSCO, 2023, accessed September 5, 2025, EBSCOhost database.

swirled in military barracks. The Kulungugu bombing of 1962, an attempt on Nkrumah's life during a visit to northern Ghana, had already hardened his suspicion of rivals. His security apparatus grew more intrusive, but it could not contain growing unrest.

On February 24, 1966, while Nkrumah was abroad on a state visit to Vietnam and China, the National Liberation Council, led by Lt. General Joseph Ankrah and Lt. Colonel Emmanuel Kotoka, seized power. Tanks rolled into Accra, radio stations blared coup announcements, and the CPP regime collapsed overnight. The coup leaders accused Nkrumah of bankrupting the nation, undermining democracy, and entangling Ghana in costly foreign adventures.⁷

Nkrumah, blindsided and stranded abroad, was offered refuge in Guinea, where President Sékou Touré made him honorary co-president. He would never return to power. Ghana entered a new era under military rule; its brief democratic experiment cut short.

QUESTIONS

- Should Ghana pursue non-alignment in the Cold War or embrace aid from the East or West?
- How should the new government balance the demands of ethnic federations like the National Liberation Movement with the drive for national unity?
- Can the state respond to collapsing cocoa prices without

alienating local farmers or foreign partners?

- How should the government treat powerful traditional leaders, opposition figures, and diasporic economic actors?

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POSITIONS & PORTFOLIO POWERS

GHANAIAI NATIONALISTS & POLITICIANS

Kwame Nkrumah – As Ghana's first Prime Minister and later President, Nkrumah led the country to independence and dreamed of a united Africa. But his socialist ideals and sweeping reforms came hand-in-hand with authoritarian control and political repression.

J.B. Danquah – A lawyer and philosopher, Danquah was Nkrumah's chief intellectual rival. He championed democracy and federalism and helped found the UGCC, laying the groundwork for Ghana's nationalist movement.

Edward Akufo-Addo – A legal scholar and founding member of the UGCC, Akufo-Addo served as Ghana's Chief Justice and ceremonial President. He was a strong advocate for the rule of law and regional autonomy.

William Ofori Atta – Known as "Paa Willie," Ofori Atta was a founding nationalist and devout Christian whose moral authority shaped the early opposition to Nkrumah's one-party state.

Komla Agbeli Gbedemah – A skilled political strategist and Nkrumah's Finance Minister, Gbedemah helped secure international aid and managed Ghana's early economic policy before falling out with the regime.

Kofi Abrefa Busia: British-trained academic and strong critic of Nkrumah, Busia became Prime Minister in 1969, promoting liberal democracy and rural development before being ousted in a coup.

Baffour Akoto: A powerful Ashanti chief and founder of the National Liberation Movement, Akoto opposed centralized rule and fought to preserve traditional authority in Ghana's new political order.

COLONIAL OFFICIALS & BUREAUCRATS

Sir Charles Arden-Clarke: The final British governor of the Gold Coast, Arden-Clarke worked closely with Nkrumah and helped guide Ghana's peaceful transition to independence.

Sir Geoffrey de Freitas: A British diplomat and Labour MP, de Freitas played a key role in shaping the UK's postcolonial policy toward Ghana and managing Cold War tensions in the region.

MILITARY & SECURITY FIGURES

Emmanuel Kotoka: Initially a rising star in Nkrumah's army, Kotoka became disillusioned with authoritarianism and helped lead the 1966 coup that brought down the regime.

Joseph Ankrah: A senior military officer, Ankrah became Ghana's head of state after the coup, overseeing a transitional military government under the National Liberation Council.

ECONOMIC ACTORS

George Grant (Paa Grant): A wealthy merchant and shipping magnate, Paa Grant funded the early nationalist movement and helped found the UGCC in 1947.

Nana Ofori Atta II: As the paramount chief of Akyem Abuakwa, he wielded significant economic and political influence, representing the enduring power of traditional leadership during independence.

FOREIGN POWERS & ADVISORS

John F. Kennedy: As a U.S. Senator and later President, JFK viewed Ghana as a key Cold War battleground and sought to win its allegiance through aid and diplomacy

Alexei Kosygin: Soviet Premier during the 1960s, Kosygin pushed for stronger Soviet–Ghana relations, offering economic and military support to Nkrumah's government.

Houphouët-Boigny: The conservative President of Côte d'Ivoire, Houphouët-Boigny rejected Nkrumah's radical Pan-Africanism and promoted pro-Western capitalism in West Africa

Gamal Abdel Nasser: Egypt's revolutionary leader and Nkrumah's close ally, Nasser helped promote Afro-Arab solidarity and supported Ghana's role in the Non-Aligned Movement.