The principal political issue in 2013 was the challenge brought by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) against the Electoral Commission (EC) in the Supreme Court and the way this impacted on the country’s democracy and security. Economic growth was affected by rising inflation, which resulted in popular dissatisfaction with President Mahama’s economic policies. Throughout the year, the government of the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) was confronted with allegations of corruption, including the infamous “Victoria Hammah saga”; a leaked recording of a telephone conversation revealed that a deputy minister of the ruling party was hoping to receive $1 m before leaving office. The country continued to consolidate its bilateral ties and abide by its bilateral and multilateral obligations, both in Africa and across the world.

Domestic Politics

An electoral petition filed by the NPP against the EC at the Supreme Court on 28 December 2012 took centre stage in many of the country’s political debates during 2013. In the petition, the NPP, led by its presidential candidate, Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo, alleged that irregularities had been found in 24,000 electoral results sheets (known as the pink sheets), which skewed the outcome in favour of the NDC. On 3 January, the NDC was joined in the court action as the matter also involved them.

Despite the inevitable political tensions, the Office of the Chief Justice, in accordance with the provisions of the 1992 Constitution,
proceeded with preparations for the investiture of President John Dramani Mahama and he was sworn in on 7 January. The ceremony was attended by numerous foreign dignitaries, former president and NPP leader John Agyekum Kufuor, and representatives of various political parties. However, the NPP decided to boycott the ceremony, labelling it an “illegal swearing in”. On 9 January, NPP members said Kufuor’s attendance had betrayed the party.

Immediately after his inauguration, Mahama began the process of selecting his cabinet. In accordance with Article 78 of the Constitution, Mahama submitted his first batch of ministerial nominees to parliament on 12 January. By 14 February, a total of 28 ministers had been appointed, which rose to 85 ministers and deputy ministers by 28 March. As a result, Mahama was accused of breaking his promise to run a lean government and of appointing numerous people of questionable competence. Assibey Yeboah, MP for New Juaben South, remarked on 28 March: “The size of government is just too big . . . almost every major Ministry has two Deputies; Finance, Lands and Forestry, Agriculture . . . just jobs for the boys.” He further accused the president of vacillating throughout the selection process. A political scientist at the University of Ghana argued that the cabinet should not number more than 40 ministers. However, the Constitution’s silence on the issue made it difficult to control appointments.

On 16 April, Mahama marked his first 100 days in office. Political parties, think tanks, civil society organisations and the media differed on his achievements. On 15 and 18 April, NGOs such as the policy thinktank IMANI and the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development gave the president approval rates of 47% and 67% respectively. However, on 20 April, the editor-in-chief of the ‘New Crusading Guide’ wrote: “There is nothing to write home about in the 100 days, and it is even in the interest of government that we don’t do an assessment.” Members of the NDC and other parties