

Amnesty International Ghana pays a Courtesy Call to the Office of the Attorney General & Ministry of Justice

Introduction

On March 12th, Amnesty International Ghana together with other Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) visited the Office of the Attorney General for a crucial discussion on human rights issues in Ghana.

The meeting was attended by Amnesty International Ghana's Country Director, Genevieve Partington, accompanied by staff and board members, and representatives from The Sanneh Institute, Perfector of Sentiments (POS) Foundation and Legal Resources Centre.

During the meeting, Genevieve Partington, and the representatives of the CSO's present, highlighted concerns over recent human rights developments in Ghana and the need to address these urgent issues with immediate attention. Genevieve Partington elaborated on key human rights challenges in Ghana, which are outlined below:

Witchcraft Accusations Bill

She first expressed her deep concern with the continued prevalence of witchcraft accusations in Ghana adding that such accusations often lead to violence, discrimination, and human rights abuses against innocent individuals, particularly elderly women. She then inquired of the steps currently being taken to reintroduce the bill to parliament since the president refused to sign it based on constitutional and procedural grounds. She called for the president to place a certificate of urgency on the passage of the bill to protect several women from being physically and mentally abused because of witchcraft accusations. She concluded by calling on the government to take decisive action to address this issue, including implementing comprehensive awareness campaigns, providing support services for victims, and enforcing laws to hold perpetrators accountable.

Anti-LGBT Bill

Speaking on the Anti-LGBT Bill, she stated that the bill is a flagrant violation of the rights to privacy, non-discrimination, and freedom of expression guaranteed under international human rights law. She added that the bill would not only institutionalise discrimination but also foster a climate of fear and hostility towards marginalised communities. She then urged the government to repeal this discriminatory law and uphold its obligations to protect the rights of all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. An

appeal was made to the President to not sign the bill into law as it would have dire consequences on Ghana.

Death Penalty

Speaking on the death penalty, the board chair of Amnesty International Ghana, Francis Nyantakyi expressed his concern regarding the president's refusal to sign the armed forces bill amendment to abolish the death penalty. He added that the death penalty is a violation of the fundamental human right to life, and the president's refusal to sign the bill into law threatens to undermine Ghana's progress in upholding human rights standards. He further inquired on the necessary steps to take to reintroduce the bill to parliament and how NGOs can support to ensure it is finally abolished. He ended by expressing the need to commute the sentences of those who currently on death row to life sentences and inquired on what steps are being taken for this and on how CSO's can support this also.

Other Human Rights Issues

Other human rights issues such as prison conditions and over-crowding were highlighted by the partner CSO's in attendance. They, also inquired on the progress made so far on the Community Sentencing Bill to reduce over-crowding in prisons in Ghana and improve methods of reform for offenders.

Conclusion

Genevieve Partington in her closing remarks urged the office of the Attorney General to take immediate action to address these human rights concerns, adding that upholding human rights is not only a legal obligation but also a moral imperative that defines our commitment to justice and equality for all. She expressed Amnesty International's readiness to collaborate with the government and other stakeholders to advance human rights in Ghana and ensure that every individual can live with dignity and respect.

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