



BUREAU OF PUBLIC SAFETY

P. O. Box SR 356, Spintex Road, Tema, Ghana. Tel: +233-30-330-9833; +233-20-111-0066
Email: info@ghanasafety.com: www.ghanasafety.com

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TO ALL MEDIA HOUSES

WITHDRAW ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATIONS AMENDMENT EXPANDING SPEED LIMIT EXEMPTIONS AND PERMISSIONS

The Bureau of Public Safety (BPS) has learned with utter dismay and disappointment at some amendments made to the Road Regulations Act LI 2180 and, subsequently laid in Parliament expanding speed limit exemptions and other permissions to include all members of parliament and ministers of State on our roads. This includes roads around schools, residential areas, hospital zones, parks, and recreational areas, among others. The amendment also permits mounting sirens and alarms on their vehicles for official use.

This amendment poses significant concerns for the safety, equality, and accountability of our roadways and governance. Here are our key objections:

1. **Public Safety:** The existing exemptions were already a deep concern to the BPS, as there were no precedents for such wide exemptions in any advanced jurisdiction. Speed limits are established based on thorough research to ensure the safety of all individuals on the road. Allowing more road users to exceed speed limits endangers not only their lives but also the lives of all road users. Furthermore, these exemptions create unnecessary risks and could lead to an increase in traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities. In Ghana today, speeding is the leading cause of road crashes, resulting in more than 2000 deaths and over 15,000 injuries annually, since 2009. Therefore, to create a further exemption is an indication of a lack of proper appreciation of our situation and inconsiderate of the numerous lives that we have lost on our roads over the years.
2. **Emergency Services Disruption:** Allowing public officeholders to use these sirens, alarms, and strobe lights can lead to confusion and potential delays in genuine emergency responses, ultimately compromising public safety. Already, many private citizens have installed law enforcement strobe lights illegally on their vehicles to access undue privileges on our roads exacerbating the indiscipline and chaos on our roads. The police have not yet been able to address this illegality. Adding on to the numbers will greatly affect road safety and discipline. Furthermore, this introduction of alarms, sirens, and strobe lights on vehicles of public officeholders is likely to be perceived as an abuse of power. It risks eroding public trust in our elected officials, who are expected to serve as role models and adhere to the same rules and standards as the citizens they represent.
3. **Inequality and Abuse of Privilege:** This amendment grants undue privileges to ministers of state and members of parliament, fostering a culture of inequality. All citizens, regardless of their position, should adhere to the same traffic regulations. Exemptions should be limited to the Presidency alone.

4. **Best Practices in Civilized and Advanced Jurisdictions:** In our opinion, and based on best practices across civilized and advanced jurisdictions, exemptions from speed limits should be strictly limited to the presidency and emergency institutions. These exemptions are justifiable only when adhering to speed limits would hinder their critical purposes. Broadening these exemptions to include other public officeholders is unnecessary and counterproductive. The use of sirens and strobe lights should be reserved exclusively for emergency services such as police, fire, and medical response teams.

Consequently, the BPS calls upon the Transport minister to withdraw the Bill from Parliament with immediate effect and, cause the wide exemptions and permissions to be expunged before relaying it. Additionally, the National Road Safety Authority, the state agency responsible for road safety, must collaborate with law enforcement agencies to curb the increasing use of illegal sirens on motor vehicles in the country. Furthermore, we urge the government to prioritize policies that enhance public safety, maintain equality, and uphold the integrity of our governance. Public office holders must lead by example, demonstrating a commitment to the rule of law, equality, and the safety of all citizens.

In conclusion, we invite concerned citizens, civil society organizations, and stakeholders to join us in voicing their opposition to this amendment. Together, we can ensure that our roads remain safe and that our leaders remain accountable.

Authorized for immediate release

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For further media discussions:

Dr. Nana Yaw Akwada (Chief of Party/Executive Director) 026-647-0386 – (WhatsApp calls only)

Etonam Korda (Research and Advocacy Director) 059-387-0019

Sampson Deklu (Associate Agent - Built Environment) 026- 446-0067