

Ghana: IPPFAR is dismayed by the passing of the new anti-LGBTIQ+ rights bill in parliament

Nairobi, Kenya: 2 March 2024 – The International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Region (IPPFAR) is deeply shocked and disturbed following Ghana's parliament legislation passed on Wednesday 28 February which severely infringes on LGBTIQ+ rights and urges President Nana Akufo-Addo to not assent it.

This regressive bill blatantly violates human rights and sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice, impacting not only the LGBTIQ+ community but all Ghanaians. The introduction of the new anti-LGBTIQ+ bill will undoubtedly result in a surge of attacks on real and perceived members of the LGBTIQ+ community in Ghana, further undermining their fundamental human rights and access to healthcare.

The passage of the bill follows closely after Uganda's enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2023, and amid discussions on a pending anti-LGBTIQ+ bill in Kenya. While Ghana's bill doesn't impose death sentences, it broadens its scope by criminalizing individuals who merely express LGBTIQ+ identity or support, suggesting the exclusion of a significant portion of society.

This unacceptable bill imposes a prison sentence of up to three years for anyone convicted of identifying as LGBTIQ+ and imposes a maximum five-year jail term for forming or funding LGBTIQ+ rights groups.

Violations imposed by the new bill include infringements on the rights to equality, dignity, privacy, freedom of speech, association, health, freedom from discrimination, arbitrary arrest, and the right to a fair trial.

"We wholeheartedly condemn the introduction of this new abhorrent bill and urge President Nana Akufo-Addo to not sign it into law. It has no place in our legal systems or in our societies, and we stand in solidarity with those who continue to stand up for the human rights of all Ghanaians", stated Marie-Evelyne Petrus-Barry, IPPF Africa Regional Director.

Local civil society organizations fear a significant increase in arrests, physical assaults against the LGBTIQ+ community, threats to the safety of civil society organizations, and a distressing rise in hate speech targeting LGBTIQ+ individuals and their allies since the bill was passed in parliament.

"As the foremost provider of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in Africa, we are deeply concerned that the new anti-LGBTIQ+ bill will have a detrimental impact on our delivery of vital SRH services in the country due to the fear of individuals seeking healthcare, including HIV treatment, being targeted, persecuted, or discriminated against", added Marie-Evelyne Petrus-Barry.

This devastating parliament bill is a major setback and is a reminder to remain aware that human rights violations of the LGBTIQ+ community persist across the continent. IPPFAR continues to be concerned about similar attempts to pass anti-LGBTIQ+ legislation in other African countries, as part of a growing effort to curtail SRHR and human rights more broadly.

“We must continue to resist efforts to roll back the human rights of Africans and uphold the full enjoyment and protection of sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice for all, regardless of their background, circumstances, sexual orientation, or gender identity”, said Marie-Evelyne Petrus-Barry.

The vote by the parliament on Wednesday, along with the strong backing of certain groups for the bill, highlights the parliament's disregard for the human rights and social acceptance of LGBTIQ+ individuals. The anti-LGBTIQ+ rhetoric reflects a regression in democratic values, and it is crucial for President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to reject the bill.

We call on all stakeholders to support local activists as they are often at the forefront in the effort for the realization of human rights for all, including SRHR.

IPPFAR stands in unwavering solidarity with the LGBTIQ+ community, wherever they may be.

END

For further information or to request an interview, please contact:

-Mahmoud GARGA, Lead Strategic Communication, Voice and Media, IPPF Africa Regional Office (IPPFAR) – email: mgarga@ippf.org / Tel: +254 704 626 920

ABOUT IPPF AFRICA REGION (IPPFAR)

The International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Region (IPPFAR) is one of the leading sexual and reproductive health (SRH) service delivery organization in Africa, and a leading sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) advocacy voice in the region. Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, the overarching goal of IPPFAR is to increase access to SRHR services to the most vulnerable youth, men and women in sub-Saharan Africa.

Supported by thousands of volunteers, IPPFAR tackles the continent's growing SRHR challenges through a network of Member Associations (MAs) in 40 countries. We do this by developing our MAs into efficient entities with the capacity to deliver and sustain high quality, youth focused and gender sensitive services. We work with Governments, the African Union, Regional Economic Commissions, the Pan-African Parliament, United Nations bodies among others to expand political and financial commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights in Africa.

Learn more about us on our [website](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [You Tube](#).