

February 13, 2023

NEWS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT MUST PASS BROADCASTING BILL IMMEDIATELY

Today, February 13, 2023, is World Radio Day. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly adopted **February 13** as an International Day after it was earlier proclaimed by UNESCO Member States in 2011. The day is meant to, among other objectives, extol the importance of radio, promote international cooperation among radio broadcasters and urge decision-makers and duty-bearers to create and provide access to information through radio.

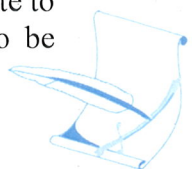
The theme for the commemoration of this year's World Radio Day is: '**Radio and Peace**'. UNESCO seeks to use the occasion to highlight the importance of independent radio as a pillar for conflict prevention and peace-building. The Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) could not have agreed more with the theme due to its significance in the Ghanaian context.

The GJA wishes to reiterate the fact that radio is a powerful communication channel that can be used for good and evil in equal measure. In the case of the latter, the broadcast of hate propaganda by *Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines* in Rwanda, which fueled the infamous genocide that occurred in that country in 1994, leading to the death of about 800,000 people, is still fresh in memory. However, and in the case of the former, one of the cardinal purposes of radio, which UNESCO seeks to highlight in the commemoration of this year's World Radio Day, is to prevent conflict and promote peace.

On this occasion, the GJA also wishes to encourage radio broadcasters to be conscious of their obligation towards peace, especially as the 2024 electioneering gathers momentum. The high stakes at the intra-party and inter-party levels of politics, as well as the high-voltage anxiety, tension and frustration emanating from the country's current economic challenges, provide good seeds of disorder, chaos and violence. But under no circumstance must radio provide the fertile ground for the sowing and germination of such destructive seeds. Rather, radio owners, managers and broadcasters must use their platforms for peace-building and conflict prevention.

Indeed, the GJA is deeply concerned about the many instances of radio programmes or broadcasts that tend to foment violence to a very large extent rather than promote peace. We call on the owners and managers of such radio stations to refine their programmes and ensure sanity on their airwaves. It is disheartening to note that sometimes the owners and managers of radio stations who are expected to guide radio broadcasters on the path of professional righteousness are themselves the masterminds and promoters of unprofessional conduct that tend to undermine peace.

We wish to call on the National Media Commission (NMC), as the regulatory body, and institutions of authority such as the National Communications Authority (NCA), to collaborate to call erring radio broadcasters and stations to order. We expect the NMC in particular to be



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proactive in its monitoring function and sanction radio stations that violate professional and ethical principles.

The GJA believes one critical step needed to be taken to sanitise the airwaves is the passage of the Broadcasting Bill which has been going in and out of Parliament for many years. We urge the Executive and Legislature to give maximum attention to the bill and get it passed immediately. In fact, the Executive and Parliament cannot absolve themselves of blame as far as the current state of radio broadcasting in Ghana is concerned, and until they work in concert to pass the Broadcasting Bill immediately, they cannot raise any clean hands against the ills of radio broadcasting in Ghana.

The GJA wishes to take the opportunity presented by World Radio Day to congratulate all radio broadcasters who have been faithful to professional and ethical practice, as well as working diligently to promote the cause of peace and national development. May you continue to bear the flag of peace, and may your professional deeds bear good fruits for national development.



Kofi Yeboah
(General Secretary)