



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONDEMNATION OF ALLEGED CHILD MARRIAGE PERPETRATED BY A TRADITIONAL PRIEST IN ACCRA

Plan International Ghana and World Vision Ghana express profound concern regarding the purported marriage between a 12-year-old girl and a 63-year-old traditional priest in Nungua, Accra - Ghana, as highlighted by various media outlets.

We have also noted with concern the various media reports of certain individuals attempting to justify and defend the alleged union under the guise of traditional and cultural practices.

We strongly condemn this repulsive act and assert unequivocally that there is no justification for the marriage, union, or betrothal of a girl child to a man, regardless of cultural traditions or any other pretext. She is a child, not a bride! The welfare of the child is paramount in all situations.

Child marriage is a form of gender-based violence and a grave violation of human rights that perpetuates a cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and gender inequality, depriving children, particularly girls, of their rightful childhood, education, and opportunities for a brighter future.

This grave and unlawful act constitutes a major infringement of the rights to bodily autonomy for the 12-year-old girl and potentially to all Ghanaian girls exposed to such traditional malpractices. The purported marriage of this 12-year-old girl undoubtedly possess a significant threat to her health, education, and holistically, her personal and professional development.

This action violates the Children's Act of Ghana, 1998 (Act 560), specifically Section 14, which forbids the marriage or betrothal of children under the age of eighteen (18) years. Additionally, Section 16 underscores the State's solemn duty to shield children from exploitation, abuse, and any form of violence, including early marriage.

As a signatory to international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Ghana is bound by its commitment to eradicate child marriage and align its laws and policies with the principles enshrined in such conventions.

It is imperative that the Government of Ghana upholds its obligation to protect the rights of all individuals, and take concrete actions to eliminate harmful practices such as Child Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM), including through effective legislation and awareness raising

with communities about the physical and mental harm, and long-term adverse impacts that result from this harmful practice.

In light of this, while we commend the Ghana Police Service for taking swift action to keep the child and her mother under police protection, we demand the following:

1. That the laws be enforced to their fullest extent in order to effectively deter similar acts from occurring anywhere within the country.
2. That the government of Ghana collaborates with law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations to ensure that justice is served swiftly.
3. That the parents of the child are prevented from supporting and affirming this purported marriage.
4. That this harmful traditional practice(s) be abolished with immediate effect.
5. That the 12-year-old girl is released to continue her education in a safe environment.
6. That the 12-year-old girl is protected from victimization and stigma and provided with all the support she needs to thrive in her environment.
7. That the government extensively rolls out public education to create awareness of the harmful traditional practices that prevent girls from developing their full potential. Every girl and child should have the autonomy and necessary knowledge to make informed decisions about her body.

As we condemn this act, Plan International Ghana and World Vision International Ghana stand in solidarity with rights groups and advocates, who are tirelessly working to promote gender equality and end CEFM. We stand firm in our commitment to protecting the rights and wellbeing of children and girls. CEFM has no place in our society and must be eradicated.

We would continue to provide resources in all forms to ensure the protection, fulfillment and promotion of children's rights, especially, the girl child in line with the CRC and all other international frameworks that enhances the fundamental rights of children.

Sign for:

Plan International Ghana



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Country Director

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Laura Cristina del Valle
National Director