



International Panel of
Parliamentarians
for Freedom of Religion
or Belief



AfriPAHR
AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS ASSOCIATION
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

27 October 2023

**Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana
Hon Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey**

Dear Madam,

We write to you on behalf of the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPFoRB) and our partner in the African continent, the African Parliamentarians Association for Human Rights (AfriPAHR). We write to you as a global network of parliamentarians from diverse political, religious, and geographical backgrounds committed to promoting and protecting the freedom of religion or belief for all.

On 10 October 2023, the UN General Assembly elected Ghana as one of the 15 new Member States of the Human Rights Council (HRC) for the 2024-2026 term. This appointment reflects the international community's trust in Ghana's commitment to advancing human rights nationally, regionally, and globally. Countries chosen for the Human Rights Council (HRC) are expected to showcase their dedication to the human rights standards, encompassing their complete cooperation with all United Nations mechanisms.

Your country has been known as one that has worked in upholding the human rights of your citizens. Ghana has acted as a pillar for maintaining peace and religious co-existence. We are excited about the vital role you will play globally in advancing human rights, particularly the Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), during your tenure on the Council. We urge you to uphold freedom of religion or belief as part of the human rights framework.

We are aware of the ruling by the Human Rights Division of the Accra High Court in May 2021 when the Court ordered Achimota Senior High School to admit two Rastafarian students - Tyron Iras Marhuguy and Oheneba Nkrabea - who were denied admission by the school because



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of their dreadlocks. We urge Ghana to continue enabling equal access to education for all its citizens and implement public policies that acknowledge that the right to education and freedom of religion or belief are both part of the human rights discourse, being that they are inalienable, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated.

We request that Ghana consider freedom of religion or belief challenges seriously and take measures to ensure that all its citizens' freedom of religion or belief is upheld and protected. We recommend establishing and applying thorough anti-discrimination laws that directly outlaw any acts of discrimination. We have been informed of ongoing concerns regarding the witchcraft accusations in Ghana. We strongly encourage the nation to initiate the essential measures to thoroughly investigate and eradicate these practices, which are leading to the stigmatization of vulnerable segments within Ghanaian society. By doing so, Ghana can further strengthen its commitment to human rights and contribute positively to the work of the Human Rights Council.

We, the Steering Group of IPPFoRB and the Steering Group of AfriPAHR, are willing to engage in a constructive dialogue on this matter and are open to collaborating with the Ghana authorities to find solutions that respect the rights and freedoms of all Ghana citizens.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We welcome any discussions on improving the freedom of religion or belief in Ghana.

Sincerely,



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MP South Africa
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