



## **Coalition Against Witchcraft Accusation Celebrates Parliament's Historic Passage of the Criminal Offences Amendment Bill, 2022, Proscribing Witchcraft Accusations in Ghana**

**Accra, Friday, July 28, 2023** – The Sanneh Institute and the Coalition Against Witchcraft Accusation are thrilled to announce our profound excitement and support for the passage of the Criminal Offences Amendment Bill 2022 by the Parliament of Ghana. This landmark legislation aims to proscribe the heinous practice of witchcraft accusations in Ghana, marking a significant step forward in protecting the rights and dignity of individuals, particularly older women who face rights violations each day.

The passage of this vital bill is a sign of Ghana's commitment to addressing a deeply rooted societal menace that has caused immense suffering and injustice to countless innocent lives. For far too long, witchcraft accusations have led to untold levels of discrimination, violence, and human rights violations in Ghana. We commend the Parliament of Ghana for taking this bold and progressive step towards ending this harmful practice and creating a safer and just society for all.

We particularly commend the sponsors of the Bill, Hon. Francis Xavier Sosu, NDC Member of Parliament for Madina Constituency, Dr. Godfred Seidu Jassaw, NDC Member of Parliament for Wa East and the many gallant Members of Parliament who led this historic bipartisan fight.

As a Coalition dedicated to empowering marginalized communities, particularly vulnerable women, we have witnessed the devastating impact of witchcraft accusations on older women and their families. The fear and stigma associated with such allegations have led to ostracism, physical violence, and even public lynchings. We hold a strong conviction that no one should endure the burden of stigma or live in constant fear of being accused of witchcraft, let alone face any form of persecution based on such superstitions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Through years of advocacy and community engagement led by The Sanneh Institute in partnership mainly with ActionAid Ghana, we have relentlessly campaigned for the eradication of witchcraft accusations in our society. We recognize that accusations are the sources that feed the camps and lead to brutal attacks and lynchings. We commend the collaboration and cooperation of various stakeholders, including civil society organizations, government agencies and our international partners, who have contributed to the successful passage of this crucial bill.



As we celebrate this significant milestone, we appeal to the President, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo- Addo, to take steps to assent the passed bill into law. We also call on the government to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the Criminal Offences Amendment Bill, 2022.

As a Coalition, we believe that sensitization campaigns, education, and awareness-raising programs are essential to challenge harmful cultural beliefs and practices such as witchcraft accusations. Moreover, it is imperative to strengthen social support systems and provide protection mechanisms for victims and survivors.

We remain committed to supporting the government's efforts in combating all forms of violence and discrimination and promoting a just and inclusive society for every Ghanaian. Together, we can build a future where the dignity and rights of all individuals are respected and no one lives in fear of being unjustly accused of witchcraft.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the public and all our partners, supporters, and advocates who have been instrumental in this three-year journey. Let us continue to stand together, united in the pursuit of a Ghana free from gender-based violence and all forms of dehumanizing cultural practices and superstitions.

[SIGNED]

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