

Gender Ministry launches 16 Days of Activism

By Diana Mensah

THE Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), has launched this year's 16 Days of Activism campaign to raise awareness and fight gender-based violence (GBV) in the transport sector.

The "16 Routes, 16 Stations: Transport Unions Unite Against GBV" was held on the theme: "30 Years After the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: UNITE to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Ghana."

It aims to mobilise the transport sector to create a safer and more equitable environment through daily dialogues, information sharing, and grass-roots engagement about GBV and its impact on women and girls.

It is also in collaboration with the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) under the Trade Union Congress; MTN Ghana; and other stakeholders.

As part of the launch, stakeholders and participants joined a symbolic walk to demonstrate their solidarity with survivors of gender-based violence and reaffirm their commitment to ending GBV.

The Minister of MoGCSP, Dakoa Newman,

called for urgent and collective action to address the menace, saying, "reports of women being killed in their matrimonial homes or public spaces are troubling and entirely unacceptable".

She said the ministry in collaboration with UNFPA had established Orange Support Centre to provide counselling, legal advice and medical support and operate on a toll-free hotline 080-0111222.

"Since its inception in 2021 the centre has handled 718 cases, resolving and closing 547, with 171 cases still ongoing," she added.

She said over 180 market executives have been trained as paralegals in six markets across Accra and four regions, while 105 service providers were trained in essential services for survivors in 2024.

She said, "The Victims of Domestic Violence Fund will soon be operationalised so we call on organisations and individuals to contribute to this fund to expand support for survivors".

Research

A Representative from the UNFPA, Dr Wilfred Ochain, said there was no specific data on GBV within the transport sector, hence expressed the belief that action-oriented research would help to better inform decisions.

He said: "Since the transport system is operated predominantly by men, this movement also brings a call for them to act as allies and champions for a violence-free environment".

Dr Ochain called on policymakers, transport operators and community leaders to take decisive steps against GBV.

"Let us raise awareness among thousands—if not millions—of gender-based violence and how we can contribute to its eradication. Let us challenge harmful norms and stand in solidarity with survivors," he added.

The General Secretary of the Ghana Private

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Road Transport Union (GPRTU), Godfred Abilbire, underscored the union's unique capacity to disseminate critical messages to a wide audience through extensive transport network.

He described the campaign as an opportunity for transport unions to champion behaviour change and create a ripple effect that reaches drivers, passengers and the general public.

He said: "If all drivers in our union and other unions spread this message, we can help end gender-based violence. It's about ensuring issues within our lorry parks and domestic homes are addressed without resorting to violence."

Commendation

The UN Resident Coordinator, Charles Abani, lauded the partnership between the stakeholders and urged all to continue advocating to end GBV.

He expressed concern over the prevalence of verbal, physical and sexual violence in public transport space, which often targeted vulnerable women and girls.

He said: "Let us unite and ensure the next generation inherits a world of safety, dignity and opportunity for all".