



Tolerating abuse of women for tradition strips us of humanity —Veep

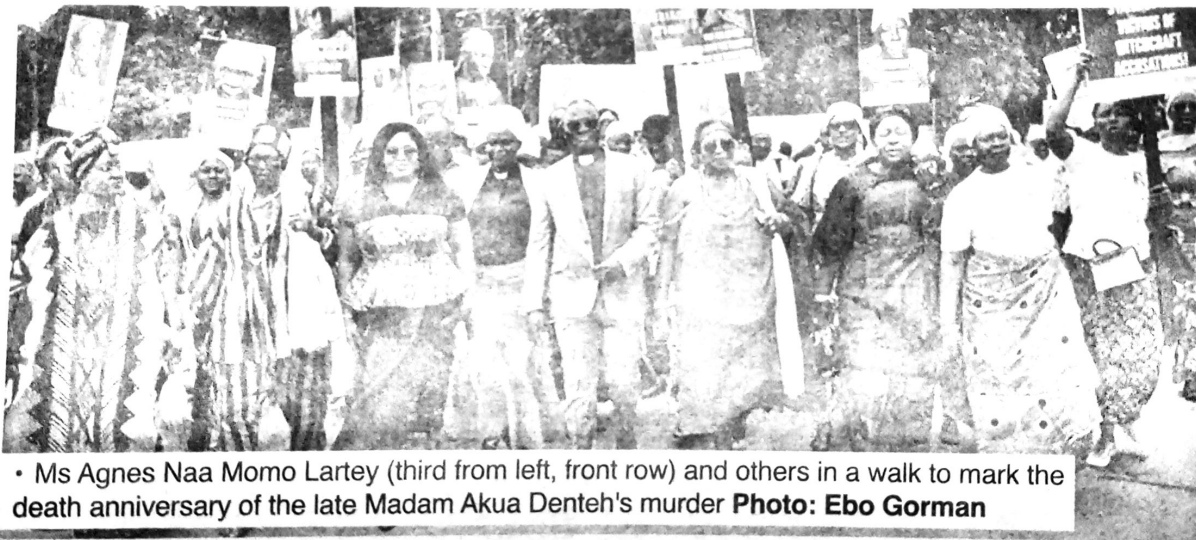
BY BENJAMIN
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THE Vice President, Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang, has pledged support for the passage of the Anti-Witchcraft Bill to help tackle accusations and abuse levelled against women.

Her remarks were delivered on her behalf by the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Development, Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey, during a memorial lecture in Accra marking the fifth anniversary of the murder of Akua Denteh. The event was held under the theme: "Witchcraft Accusations Destroy More than Lives."

According to Prof. Opoku-Agyemang, witchcraft accusations and the existence of witch camps, particularly in northern Ghana, represent a national crisis requiring urgent attention.

She said that the banishment of



• Ms Agnes Naa Momo Lartey (third from left, front row) and others in a walk to mark the death anniversary of the late Madam Akua Denteh's murder **Photo: Ebo Gorman**

vulnerable women to such camps violates basic human rights, stripping them of dignity, family, and freedom.

"My office is committed to treating witchcraft accusations as gender-based violence," she affirmed, stressing that the impact goes beyond physical harm to include psychological, emotional, and social trauma.

"When we allow vulnerable women to be brutalised in the name of tradition, religion or superstition, we diminish the humanity of our entire society," she added.

She further assured that her office would collaborate with civil society organisations and relevant agencies to eradicate the practice. Member of Parliament for

Madina, Francis-Xavier Sosu, also expressed optimism about the bill's progress. He stated that the government was working closely with the Ministry of Gender and the Attorney-General to prepare a Memorandum for Cabinet approval.

"Once Cabinet gives the green light, we will push the bill to President Mahama under a certificate of urgency for his assent," Mr Sosu

said.

The Executive Director of The Sanneh Institute, Rev. Prof. John Azumah, called for more community sensitisation. He described witchcraft accusations as a form of superstition targeting poor women, often used to control or exploit them.

He condemned the dangerous practices used to test the innocence of accused women, such as forcing them to ingest concoctions.

Mr Salaami, son of the late Akua Denteh, expressed gratitude to those who helped seek justice for his mother and highlighted the key role social media played in exposing her brutal treatment.

The lecture featured testimonies from survivors of witchcraft accusations, who appealed for government intervention and the passage of the bill.

Partner organisations present included ActionAid, Songtaba, CHRAJ, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and the British High Commission.