

16 Days of Activism Against GBV: Gender Ministry, UNFPA call for end to online abuse against women, girls

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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 Against Gender-Based Violence campaign with a call for stronger action to end abuses against women and girls, particularly online.

The campaign, launched in Accra on Tuesday, was held on the theme: "Unite! End digital violence against women and

girls".

The initiative, in collaboration with the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU), aimed to mobilise state institutions, civil society, and communities to address all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including those carried out with technology.

GBV pervasive

The Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey, who launched the campaign, said progress had been made, but violence against women and girls remained pervasive, especially in digital spaces where new forms were emerging.

Citing a domestic violence study conducted by the ministry, she said about 37.7 per cent of women in the country had experienced at least one form of domestic violence in their lifetime. Data from the 2014 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) also indicated that about 32 per cent of women and girls, aged 15 to 24, believed wife-beating was normal.

"These figures show that harmful norms and attitudes have continued to fuel violence and discrimination against women and girls. Gender-based violence is a serious human rights violation and must not be tolerated in any form," she said.

She said this year's theme was timely, as technology and innovation had increasingly shaped national life while online abuse had gained ground.

She said digital and technology-facilitated GBV, including cyberbullying, online sexual harassment, sextortion, stalking and the sharing of intimate images without consent, was disproportionately targeted at women and girls and required a coordinated national response.

Measures

Outlining measures undertaken by the ministry, the minister said over 200 market executives in six regions had been trained as paralegals, while 100 professionals, including clinical psychologists, health workers, legal officers and volunteers, had been

equipped to provide specialised services and referrals for victims.

She added that the ministry had continued to work with stakeholders to respond to cases received through the Orange Support Centre, a toll-free helpline, and encouraged the public to report abuses.

Dr Lartey said efforts were underway to operationalise the ministry's shelter in Accra and to facilitate the construction of 16 regional shelters within the next three years.

UNFPA's support

The UNFPA Country Representative, Dr Wilfred Ochan, said UNFPA Ghana had partnered the ministry and the GPRTU to use the public transport system as a nationwide platform to prevent and end GBV.

"Transport stations are epicentres of daily economic and social activity. Every day, thousands of commuters, drivers, porters and traders converge there. By working through these spaces, we are taking the message and services to where people live, work and move," he said.

He explained that the initiative formed part of a six-year social movement (2024-2030) supporting national efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those on gender equality and protection of women and girls.



• Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey (4th from left), Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection; Zia Choudhury (2nd from right), UN Resident Coordinator, and Dr Wilfred Ochan (left), UNFPA Country Representative, with some fire service officials at the launch

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Graphic
Yesterday
Today
Tomorrow