

Gender

Safeguarding Ghana's women, children: A gendered perspective on the recent floods

By Mercy Catherine Adjabeng

THE devastating impact of the Monday, June 29, 2026 rains in Ghana, which affected the Greater Accra, Central and Volta regions, lingers on.

The official NADMO record of 12, 18 and 4 deaths, respectively, is heartbreaking.

Through a Women, Peace and Security lens, disasters are never gender-neutral. They hit women, girls, and children first — and deepest. The water may have receded from the streets, but for many, the flood is not over. With the forecast from the Ghana Meteorological Agency predicting more rains, we need to be proactive.

While the catastrophe is not the most terrible in Ghana's history, the

Ghana Meteorological Agency describes the water volume of roughly 169.2mm as uniquely severe in intensity.

In the last disaster, women were the first responders in their homes. They helplessly carried babies on their backs through waist-high water, pulled elderly parents from rooms, and made impossible choices. Many were faced with the dilemma of saving their documents and belongings, or their children and relations. Motherly instincts certainly chose the latter with its consequences. Afterwards, they became the shelter managers, the cooks, and the counsellors. They often carried out these responsibilities with little or no support, despite their own exhaustion.

Silent trauma

In such situations, girls lose more than a day, week or school term. They

lose safety. In crowded shelters and disrupted communities, the risk of exploitation, abuse and early marriage rises. The painful reality is that a girl who misses school today may never go back.

Children carry the silent trauma. The sound of rain now means panic. The smell of wet earth brings fear. Nightmares, bedwetting, withdrawal — these are not “bad behaviour.” They are a child's body remembering a night they almost didn't make it. And too often, no one asks them how they are feeling or managing the situation.

This is a safeguarding issue. Our duty is not only to rescue, but to protect dignity even after the rescue. This requires safe spaces in shelters, provision of dignity relief items including sanitary pads and other female toiletries, psychosocial support in communities, schools, and women

leading the recovery plans so they can present empathetic survivor-centred services.

Let's be very clear in our minds: rain will fall again!

Bitter lessons

While the water has receded, these bitter lessons must not. They must compel government and citizens, the opposition, technocrats and the business community to desire and support stringent measures of compliance — no building on watercourses, proper drainage, waste management, and early warning systems that reach the market woman and the mother in the compound.

Peace and security start in the home. And a home is only secure when we choose to protect the most vulnerable before the next rain and flood.

To every woman who held her family together in the water: we see you.

To every child who is still scared: you are not alone.

To all of us: let this be the last time we are surprised.

#AccraFloods
 #WomenPeaceAndSecurity
 #Safeguarding #BeyondTheFloods

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