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ORAL STATEMENT
Item 6:
Consideration of UPR reports: Ghana

UN Human Rights Council
53rd session
19 June - 14 July

Mr. President,

Although no person has been executed in Ghana since 1993, the courts continue to impose death sentences. In 2022, seven new death sentences brought the total of people under the sentence at the end of the year to 172.¹ Amnesty International welcomes Ghana's support for recommendations to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR and to pass pending national bills aimed at abolishing the death penalty.² We urge the government to commute death sentences to prison terms and establish an official moratorium on executions.

Mr. President,

Discrimination and violence towards women remain endemic. Hundreds of women accused of being witches are banished to "witch" camps. We urge the Government to swiftly implement supported recommendations to eradicate this practice³, including by enacting the bill on witchcraft accusations⁴. We also urge the government to develop a comprehensive road map for the reintegration of victims of witchcraft accusations, which will eventually lead to the closure of all witch camps.

Ghana should also adopt the Affirmative Action Bill as soon as possible and ensure better services for survivors of sexual-gender based violence such as swiftly enacting the bill for free medical treatment of survivors of sexual abuse.

¹ Amnesty International, *Death Sentences and Executions 2022* (Index: ACT 50/6548/2023), 16 May 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/6548/2023/en/>

² UN Human Rights Council, Addendum to the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Ghana, 19 June 2023, UN Doc. [A/HRC/53/7/Add.1], recommendations 149.2, 149.3, 149.11-149.22, 149.35, 149.39, 149.71-149.82

³ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Ghana (24 March 2023, A/HRC/53/7) and its addendum, [19 June 2023], [A/HRC/53/7/Add.1], recommendations 149.93, 149.94, 149.173, 149.175, 149.187, 149.191, 149.192, 149.204, 149.225, 149.229

⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Ghana (24 March 2023, A/HRC/53/7) and its addendum, [19 June 2023], [A/HRC/53/7/Add.1], recommendations 149.171, 149.181

Mr. President,

We regret that Ghana did not support 22 recommendations to protect the LGBTI+ people.⁵ In the past two years, an LGBTI organisation's office was shut down and 21 LGBTI rights activists were arrested for unlawful gathering; a hostile environment that has intensified since the introduction of the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill.⁶ This Bill must not be passed as it would infringe the rights of LGBTI people and violate the rights to non-discrimination, freedom of expression, association, privacy and the prohibition of torture.

Finally, we encourage Ghana to swiftly implement supported recommendations. We urge the government to submit a mid-term report on progress towards their implementation and to use an Item 6 General Debate to bring this to the attention of UN Member States.

Thank you.

⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Addendum to the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Ghana, 19 June 2023, UN Doc. [A/HRC/53/7/Add.1], recommendations 149.40, 149.46, 149.48, 149.49, 149.69, 149.276, 149.280-149.295

⁶ Ghana, Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill (formerly Promotion of Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values), 2021