

PRESS BRIEFING BY THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATION, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATIONS AND MINISTER OF GENDER CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION - HON. DR. AGNES NAA MOMO LARTEY

On Ongoing Cybercrime Investigations and Engagement with the Russian Ambassador

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the media.

Thank you for honouring this invitation.

The Minister of Gender Children and Social Protection and I are gathered here today to brief the nation on actions we have jointly taken regarding an ongoing cybercrime investigation involving the alleged non-consensual recording and dissemination of intimate images of Ghanaian women by a Russian national.

Let me state clearly from the outset: this matter is being treated strictly as a cybercrime. It is not a moral issue. It is a criminal matter.

Under Section 67 of the Cybersecurity Act, 2020 (Act 1038), the non-consensual recording, publication, or dissemination of intimate images where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy constitutes a criminal offence. Consent to a private encounter does not, in law, amount to consent to publication or distribution.

Preliminary investigations by our cybersecurity and law enforcement agencies indicate that the suspect allegedly recorded private encounters without consent for publication and subsequently monetised the content through online platforms. These activities reportedly involved charging fees for access and receiving payments through cryptocurrency channels.

Government has initiated steps to trace and secure relevant digital and financial evidence.

In view of the transnational nature of this matter, together with the Gender Children and Social Protection Minister Hon. Dr Agnes Naa Momo Lartey, we held a formal engagement with the Russian Ambassador To Ghana, Sergei Berdnikov, to Ghana to brief him on the status of our investigations and to formally submit a detailed brief through diplomatic channels.

During our meeting, we reiterated that the government of Prez. John Dramani Mahama is committed to Ghana's constitutional duty of protecting its citizens and ensuring accountability for crimes committed against them.

The Ambassador acknowledged receipt of our brief and confirmed that the information will be transmitted to authorities in Moscow for further consideration. While noting that there is currently no extradition treaty between Ghana and the Russian Federation, he indicated that the alleged conduct would also constitute a criminal offence under Russian law and assured us of continued diplomatic engagement.

In addition, Government has activated cooperation mechanisms with international law enforcement partners, including INTERPOL, as well as relevant immigration, cybersecurity, and financial intelligence agencies.

We would like to emphasise that investigations are not limited to the foreign national involved. Any individual, including Ghanaian nationals, who has shared, rebroadcast, or redistributed the illegal material is also liable under our laws.

We want to use this opportunity to caution the public: do not share, download, circulate, or monetise this illegal content. Doing so constitutes a criminal offence.

President John Dramani Mahama's government remains resolute in protecting victims, safeguarding the dignity and privacy of our citizens, and ensuring that justice is pursued through all lawful means available to us, whether domestically or through international cooperation.

Now this is to victims affected by this act, the Gender Children and Social Protection ministry has a victim support desk set up full equipped with clinical professionals to provide all the psychological and emotional support you need. Be assured that all these will be done in confidence.

We will continue to provide updates as investigations progress.

Thank you.