

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PROTECT, NOT PUNISH: FaBCA Calls for Justice and Dignity for Street-Connected Children in Ghana

On this year's International Day for Street Children, observed globally on April 12, the Family-Based Care Alliance (FaBCA) joins the international community in amplifying the urgent call to protect—not punish—children in street situations.

This year's theme, "Access to Justice: Protect, Not Punish," underscores a critical reality: children living on the streets are often treated as offenders rather than as victims of systemic neglect, poverty, and abuse.

In Ghana, the situation of street-connected children remains deeply concerning. Estimates indicate that over 61,000 children live on the streets in Accra alone, navigating daily survival under extremely vulnerable conditions.

Earlier national estimates suggest that at least 30,000 children live on the streets across Ghana's major cities, with a significant concentration in urban centers like Accra.

These children are often exposed to violence, exploitation, unsafe living conditions, and limited access to education and healthcare, reinforcing cycles of poverty and exclusion.

More broadly, child protection challenges persist across the country. For example, 94% of children aged 1–14 in Ghana experience some form of physical punishment or psychological aggression, highlighting the wider environment of vulnerability that pushes many children into street situations.

Ghana has made significant commitments to child protection through policies and legal frameworks, including:

The Children's Act, 1998 (Act 560), which guarantees the right of every child to protection, care, and maintenance, and prohibits exploitative child labour.

The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and allied institutions tasked with child protection and rehabilitation.

National child protection systems supported by partners such as UNICEF, civil society, and faith-based organizations.

Despite these frameworks, implementation gaps remain. Studies show that children in street situations are still excluded from essential services and protection systems, and in many cases face stigma, harassment, and criminalization.

At FaBCA, we believe that every child—regardless of circumstance—deserves dignity, protection, and access to justice. Street-connected children are not criminals; they are children whose rights have been violated and whose needs have been unmet.





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We therefore call on:

Government institutions to strengthen the implementation of existing child protection laws and prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration over punitive measures.

Law enforcement agencies to adopt child-sensitive approaches that uphold the rights and dignity of every child.

Civil society organizations and development partners to scale up family-based care solutions and preventive interventions.

Communities and individuals to shift perceptions and respond with compassion, recognizing that no child chooses the streets by default.

At FaBCA, we remain committed to ensuring that every child grows up in a safe, nurturing family environment. Through advocacy, partnerships, and community-based interventions, we continue to work toward a Ghana where no child is forced to live or work on the streets.

As we mark this important day, we reaffirm a simple but powerful truth:

Every child deserves protection.

Every child deserves justice.

Every child deserves a future.

About FaBCA

The Family-Based Care Alliance (FaBCA) is dedicated to promoting family-based care systems and ensuring that every child grows up in a safe, loving, and supportive environment. Through advocacy, partnerships, and community engagement, FaBCA works to prevent child vulnerability and support sustainable care solutions for children in Ghana.

Signed

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