



United for Impact

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PRESS STATEMENT

ON RECENT BUILDING COLLAPSE NEAR THE EXPERIMENTAL D/A SCHOOL IN ACCRA NEWTOWN AND THE URGENT NEED FOR ENFORCEMENT OF BUILDING REGULATIONS

The Architecture Alliance (TAA), a professional association of built environment experts, expresses deep concern and sympathy to the families and friends of those who have lost their lives, and all persons injured in the recent building collapse in Newtown. Our thoughts are with you in this difficult time.

This unfortunate incident is yet another painful reminder that building collapses in Ghana are no longer isolated events but symptoms of a systemic institutional failure in the enforcement of existing laws and regulations governing the built environment.

Institutional Failure Must Be Acknowledged

Ghana has adequate legal and regulatory frameworks, including planning, building permitting, and inspection requirements. However, the consistent breakdown in enforcement has allowed:

- Development without approved permits
- Unauthorized changes to approved designs
- Use of substandard materials
- Lack of professional supervision
- Weak inspection regimes, and
- Political or administrative interference in enforcement actions

When institutions mandated to regulate development fail to act decisively, unsafe structures inevitably emerge, placing lives at risk. Institutions such as the Ministry of Works and Housing, Local Government Ministry and the MMDAs, Ghana Standards Authority, National Disaster Management Organization, professional bodies amongst others must collaborate to ensure this does not occur again.

Enforcement, Not More Laws

TAA reiterates that the challenge is not the absence of laws, but rather:

- Weak monitoring systems
- Inadequate resourcing of Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)
- Failure to issue and enforce stop-work orders

- Delayed or absent sanctions against offenders, and
- Lack of accountability for regulatory officers

This cycle of inaction allows non-compliant developments to continue until disaster strikes.

Our Call to Action

The Architecture Alliance calls on relevant authorities to:

1. Strictly enforce building permit requirements before construction commences
2. Strengthen inspection regimes at critical construction stages
3. Empower MMDAs with resources and technical personnel
4. Apply sanctions to developers and professionals who breach regulations
5. Protect enforcement officers from political and external interference
6. Demolish unsafe and unauthorized structures proactively, not after tragedies, and
7. Institute accountability mechanisms for institutional lapses

Professional Responsibility

TAA also calls on built environment professionals to:

- Uphold ethical standards
- Refuse participation in illegal developments
- Report unsafe construction practices, and
- Ensure proper supervision of projects

Public Awareness

We urge the public to:

- Demand approved building permits before renting or purchasing property
- Engage qualified professionals to conduct structural integrity of buildings before purchase
- Report suspicious of unsafe developments to local authorities

Conclusion

Every collapse is preventable. Every life lost reflects failure somewhere within our regulatory system. The time for reactive responses has passed. Ghana must transition from disaster response to prevention through strict enforcement.

The Architecture Alliance remains committed to collaborating with government, regulators, and stakeholders to strengthen compliance and ensure safer buildings for all.

Signed

Patience Ewurama Ocran

President

The Architecture Alliance (TAA)

