



STATEMENT ON THE DROWNING OF EIGHT PUPILS OF ATIKAGOME

Eduwatch is saddened by the news of the eight (8) school children who drowned in the Volta Lake following a boat disaster on Tuesday, 24th January 2023, in the Sene East District of the Bono East Region. We express our deepest sympathies to the bereaved families and the education community.

Our engagement with education officials in the district indicates that, on a regular basis, over a hundred pupils and staff sail to school under unregulated transport systems/conditions. This includes the absence of life jackets in available boats.

While stories of school children drowning while commuting to or from school may not be new, this must end.

In the immediate term, we urge the Ghana Education Service (GES) to facilitate the availability of life jackets to all school children and staff who sail to and from school, not only in the Sene East district, but all other 'island and settler communities' where children and staff commute by water transport to school. The GES should in collaboration with the relevant state agencies, facilitate health and safety orientation sessions for all its pupils and staff in island communities.

We urge the Minister of Education to work closely with the Sene East District Assembly and other local authorities in districts with island communities to strengthen the enforcement of health and safety standards at all water transport routes across the country, specifically, in the Sene East area where this unfortunate incident occurred.

In the medium-term, the Ministry of Education must provide schools with decent teacher accommodation and financial incentives (for teachers) in 'island and settler communities', including Wayokope, where this unfortunate incident occurred. This will prevent pupils and teachers from sailing through endangered means to school in other communities daily.

Accra, 25th January, 2023.

Africa Education Watch.

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