



Bridging Gaps for Positive Youth Development

## For Immediate Release

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### Youth Bridge Foundation Laments the Tragic Loss of Lives at Bawku and Nalerigu Senior High Schools and Calls for Strengthening Educational Systems

The Youth Bridge Foundation, a youth-oriented NGO committed to positive youth development in Ghana, is deeply saddened by the killing of a student at Bawku Senior High School and two (2) others at the Nalerigu Senior High School in the Upper East and North East Regions of Ghana, respectively. In a single night, three young lives were cut short. For those who survived, the trauma and psychological scars will remain, compounding the already challenging path to completing their education.

For years, the Youth Bridge Foundation has consistently championed the cause of peace and security within Ghanaian communities, particularly as it affects young people. We have long asserted that at the heart of violence are disrupted dreams, and it is the youth who bear the heaviest burdens. The recent closure of schools in the Bawku enclave due to persistent conflict is a stark reminder of the fragility of learning environments in conflict-affected zones. Coupled with that, the recently implemented curfew, though necessary, will cause strains on the community's economic activities and inherently affect the livelihood of its youth and other marginalised groups.

We commend the swift actions taken by relevant authorities, including the Ghana Education Service and traditional leaders such as His Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, in their efforts to de-escalate tensions and restore peace. However, beyond these efforts, we call for youth-centred responses that prioritise protection, alternative livelihoods, psychosocial support, and academic continuity for affected students and marginalised groups.

While the decision to temporarily close down the school may be necessary to safeguard lives, the academic future of students, especially final-year candidates scheduled to take their exams in August, must not be left in limbo. We urge the Ministry of Education and allied institutions to:

- 1. Strengthen counselling and guidance units within schools to support students dealing with trauma;**
- 2. Provide remote learning alternatives through radio, community-based learning hubs, or digital platforms;**
- 3. Ensure equitable access to educational resources, especially for displaced or at-risk students.**

As a Foundation, we recall our interventions during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Through partnerships with Tullow Oil Ghana, we implemented STEM Mobile Clinics and Radio School initiatives, which allowed students in underserved communities to continue learning from home. These experiences demonstrate that innovative, scalable models exist to maintain academic engagement, even in difficult times.

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While these interventions may not be perfect substitutes for in-person learning, they provide a lifeline that must be explored and expanded, particularly in areas where education remains under constant threat.

The Youth Bridge Foundation extends its deepest condolences to the families affected, as well as to the entire school communities of Bawku and Nalerigu SHS. We reaffirm our commitment to amplifying youth voices, safeguarding their futures, and advocating for education that is uninterrupted, inclusive, and safe because #YouthMatter.

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