



Thursday, May 28, 2026

## **Ghana Welcomes His Holiness Pope Leo XIV's Statement on the Historical Role Of The Holy See in the Transatlantic Slave Trade**

The Government of the Republic of Ghana warmly welcomes the historic statement by His Holiness Pope Leo XIV acknowledging and apologising for the role played by the Holy See in legitimising and sustaining the enslavement of Africans and the transatlantic slave trade. The statement represents an act of moral courage on the part of the Pope and an important contribution to the ongoing global pursuit of historical truth, human dignity and justice.

Ghana recognises His Holiness Pope Leo XIV's longstanding commitment to service, compassion and the dignity of the human person. Throughout his work, he has advanced principles of social justice, solidarity with the vulnerable, dialogue across communities and moral responsibility in responding to the challenges of our changing world.

For five centuries, millions of Africans and people of African descent endured unimaginable suffering and dehumanisation through systems of racialised chattel enslavement whose effects continue to shape societies and communities across the world today. Honest recognition of this painful history remains an essential step toward healing, reconciliation and a more just future.

President John Mahama considers this acknowledgment particularly significant at a time when the international community is undertaking deeper reflection on the historical consequences of slavery and colonialism. It reinforces the growing global understanding that confronting historical injustices demands truth-telling and moral responsibility as essential foundations for justice and reconciliation.

The recent adoption of the landmark Resolution A/RES/80/250 by the United Nations General Assembly, declaring the trafficking of enslaved Africans and the racialized chattel enslavement of Africans as the gravest crime against humanity, marked an important moment in this collective effort. The Resolution affirmed the need to preserve historical memory and sustain international dialogue on justice, dignity and equality for Africans and people of African descent.

Ghana notes that during negotiations on the Resolution, questions relating to historical references concerning the role of the Church, including references to Papal Bulls and related historical issues associated with the transatlantic slave trade, generated extensive discussions. Against this background, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV's apology is particularly significant and refreshing, as it demonstrates a willingness to confront difficult historical truths in the interest of justice, understanding and reconciliation.



## PRESIDENCY COMMUNICATIONS

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As a nation deeply connected to the history and legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, with the most forts and castles along its coast standing as enduring reminders of one of humanity's darkest chapters, Ghana remains committed to working with international partners, faith communities, civil society and peoples of conscience around the world to advance efforts aimed at historical justice, remembrance and the restoration of human dignity. In this regard, Ghana looks forward to welcoming the international community to Accra from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026 for the High-Level Consultative Conference being convened by His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, on the next steps following the adoption of the Resolution, aimed at sustaining global engagement on historical justice, remembrance and human dignity. It is also our hope and prayer that States which did not support the Resolution would, in the near future, align with its objectives and join Ghana and the broader international community in advancing its effective implementation.

His Excellency President John Dramani Mahama expresses his appreciation to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV for this significant step and looks forward to continuing global engagement in promoting truth, healing and a shared commitment to humanity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Felix Kwakye Ofosu'.

Felix Kwakye Ofosu, MP.  
Spokesperson to the President,  
Minister, Government Communications.