

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday 4th December 2024

“SAFEGUARD BOTH NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE CIVIL LIBERTIES OF ALL ZAMBIANS.”

Caritas Zambia in solidarity with other civil society organizations, expresses deep concern regarding the proposed Cyber Crimes and Anti-Terrorism Bills currently before Parliament. While acknowledging the importance of these bills in strengthening national security and combating cyber threats, Caritas Zambia stresses concern and the potential implications of these bills demand immediate attention and reconsideration

The potential impacts of these bills on governance, society, and the economy are multifaceted. Caritas Zambia believes that without proper public participation, the bills could lead to unintended consequences that infringe on fundamental rights, including freedom of speech, expression, and privacy. There is a delicate balance between national security and protecting individual freedoms, and we are particularly concerned about the risks of excessive surveillance and misuse of power by authorities.

We draw attention to historical instances where laws have been used to undermine democratic rights and target political activists and minority groups. We fear that, under the guise of national security, these bills could be misused to stifle political dissent and curtail freedom of expression.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the role of technology as a catalyst for addressing global challenges. However, restrictive cyber laws could deter technological progress and innovation while discouraging investment in Zambia’s growing tech sector. Overregulation risks alienating businesses and investors vital for national economic growth.

Caritas Zambia also expresses concern on the potential strain these laws may place on Zambia's international relations which cannot be ignored, which are crucial for fostering successful trade policies and partnerships with other nations.

Caritas Zambia implores the government to act decisively in withdrawing the bills to allow for comprehensive stakeholder engagement and public participation. It is critical to ensure that any legislative action balances the dual objectives of safeguarding national security and upholding civil liberties. Transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights must underpin any new legal frameworks.

In conclusion, Caritas Zambia urges the government to ensure that national security measures do not come at the expense of individual rights and freedoms. It is imperative that any legislation passed reflects the principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights. The future of Zambia's democracy and social cohesion hangs in the balance. Rushing these bills through Parliament without adequate consultation could lead to long-term consequences that jeopardize the rights and welfare of all Zambians. Caritas Zambia stands firm in its commitment to advocating for legislation that reflects the will and rights of the people. We urge all stakeholders to join us in calling for the withdrawal of these bills until a more inclusive, transparent, and just process is ensured.

We call for careful deliberation and meaningful public participation in the legislative process to safeguard both national security and the civil liberties of all Zambians.

Issued By: Executive Director



Fr. Dr. Gabriel Mapulanga