

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, September 22 (Infosplusgabon) - Human rights watchdog, Amnesty International, has blasted Tanzania for the government's decision to suspend family planning commercials on television and radio.

“There’s no doubt that sexual and reproductive rights are coming under increasing attack in Tanzania. The government’s deplorable decision to pull these family planning ads comes less than two weeks after the President made derogatory remarks about Tanzanians wishing to exercise their fundamental right to make decisions about their bodies,” Amnesty International’s Deputy Director for East Africa, the Horn and the Great Lakes, Seif Magango said in a statement on Friday.

Magango added: “The Tanzanian authorities must immediately stop obstructing access to sexual and reproductive health services and end the intimidation of anyone providing information about such services – be they health workers, journalists or activists.”

Amnesty International also called on the government of Tanzania to repeal any laws, policies or other barriers to the services and information women and girls need for a healthy life.

This, it said, includes regulations that make it legal for pregnant girls to be expelled from school. “The authorities have an obligation to ensure that every Tanzanian can enjoy their sexual and

reproductive rights without fear, coercion or discrimination.”

On 19 September 2018, the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children in Tanzania banned the airing of all family planning advertisements on radio and television pending further notice.

On 9 September, President John Magufuli publicly cautioned Tanzanians from using contraceptives, saying that the people going for family planning options were “lazy”, accusing them of not wanting to work hard and trying to avoid the responsibility of feeding their children.

In June 2017, President Magufuli declared that girls who gave birth should not be allowed to return to school and publicly censured human rights groups pushing the government to repeal Regulation No 4 of the Education Regulations, (Expulsion and Exclusion of pupils from schools) G.N. No.295 of 2002 used as basis for expelling pregnant girls from schools.

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