

Not a Done Deal: Mahama Outlines Legal and Procedural Hurdles Delaying Anti-LGBTQ+ Bill

By **Daniel Kwansah** - June 1, 2026

President John Dramani Mahama has dampened immediate expectations surrounding the recently passed Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill, 2025, warning that the controversial legislation still has a significant legal and procedural gauntlet to run before it can become law.

Speaking during a question-and-answer session at Chatham House in the United Kingdom on Monday, June 1, 2026, President Mahama revealed that deep-seated concerns regarding the bill's parliamentary passage must be thoroughly resolved before any presidential assent can be considered.

"The Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill has probably been the bill that has evoked the most interest in Ghana. It shows how important issues of family values are," the President noted. However, he was quick to point out that parliamentary process cannot be ignored.

Quorum and Procedural Red Flags President Mahama disclosed that serious questions have been raised regarding the legitimacy of the bill's passage on Friday, May 29, 2026. Specifically, he pointed to doubts about whether the House actually had the required number of members present—known as a quorum—to legally transact business when the vote was taken.

"There have been a few issues raised. One, that there wasn't a quorum when it was passed. That's an issue that has come up, and then two, there were some procedural lapses in terms of its passage," Mahama stated.

He added that he is aware the Speaker of Parliament is currently taking steps to address the internal parliamentary uproar regarding how the legislation was approved.

The Rigorous Vetting Process Ahead Even if Parliament resolves its internal procedural issues, the bill still faces a stringent vetting process at the Presidency. Because the legislation is a private member's bill—not an executive bill sponsored by the government—the President was entirely removed from its drafting and floor debates.

To bridge this gap, Mahama explained that the bill will be subjected to intense legal scrutiny once it is formally transmitted to his office.

"It must come for assent, and so once the president gets it, you go through it because you are not part of the discussion in Parliament. The legal counsel in the Presidency and the Attorney General would sit on it and make sure that everything is in order before the president is advised to assent," he said.

The President also outlined the constitutional toolbox available to him if significant flaws are found. He noted that if substantial issues are raised during the legal review, he has

the option to refer the bill to the Council of State for advice, or simply return it to Parliament with a detailed brief outlining exactly what the legal and procedural infirmities are.



The Backdrop of Contentious Amendments The President’s cautious approach unfolds against a backdrop of fiery political debate in Accra. While the core intent of the bill is to criminalize LGBTQ+ activities, it was passed with last-minute amendments that inserted critical exemptions.

Under the revised text, legal professionals offering counsel to LGBTQ+ individuals, journalists reporting on related matters in the course of their duties, and medical professionals providing surgical, psychological, or counselling healthcare to LGBTQ+ persons are shielded from prosecution.

These exemptions have sparked outrage from the Minority caucus in Parliament, who fiercely oppose the changes, accusing the majority of capitulating to international pressure and severely watering down the bill’s original punitive scope.

Despite the intense public and political pressure to swiftly sign the bill into law, President Mahama’s message at Chatham House was unequivocal: the legislative journey is far from over.

“So there’s still quite a while to go before that bill becomes law,” the President concluded.

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