



Civil Society Platform Moyamba
Civil Society Moyamba District

MOYAMBA DISTRICT CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM

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C/O Forum for Child Welfare Office, 35b Yoyema Road, Moyamba.

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Press Statement on the Lower Banta Chieftdom Current Status

The National Civil Society Forum is a national platform of civil society organizations and civil rights activists, working in partnership to raise voices on Public matters of the Society, and at the same time partnering with Government and other Development Partners to foster national development through participatory, accountable and transparent mechanisms. We also promote good governance and the rule of law.

In line with our mandate, we are gravely concern about the peace and stability in Lower Banta in Moyamba District. Lower Banta Chieftdom has been without paramount chief almost clocking three years. In October 2018 the Paramount Chief John Jibao Rusell Nyama 11 was asked out of his chieftdom as a result of series of allegations that center on misappropriation of chieftdom funds and unlawful removal of sub-chiefs by some certain set of people in the chieftdom. As Civil Society, we recognised the role of the government by appointing a caretake chief of the chieftdom and by setting up a committee to look into the allegations made against the Paramount Chief. However, since then we have noticed that there is no sufficient leadership in that chieftdom from our findings, the caretaker chief has abandoned the chieftdom long ago leaving the chieftdom with no central command.

Lower Banta Chieftdom is one of the strongest sources of revenue for the Moyamba District Council and the District Office. Revenues from the jetty in Gbangbatoke, local tax, and other revenues for the past years have not been collected as a result of these problems in the chieftdom between the paramount chief and some set of people.

Thirdly, as district civil society we have received series of complaints from some section chiefs and other citizens in the chieftdom that they are facing humiliations and some have even abandoned their communities for their safety. The section chief Bengelor (Mr. Joseph Lassayo Gbota) alleged that he was beaten and his house was burnt down by supporters who are perceived to be against the paramount chief.

In line with our findings and the complaints received so far, we are therefore making the following recommendations to the government

- The government to speedily bring out the report of the committee that was constituted in February 2021 to investigate the allegations against the Paramount Chief
- We are recommending the government take over the jetty since the chieftdom and the District Council are not benefitting from the proceeds
- The government to provide effective leadership structure in the chieftdom whiles we await the decision of the government. As the Chieftaincy Act states in the absence of the Paramount Chief and Chieftdom Speaker the senior section chief shall preside over the administration of the chieftdom.
- The Ministry of the local government finance department to constitute an investigation in financial activities of the chieftdom administration from 2018 –date.

- Ministry of local government to organize peace dialogue forum between the paramount chief and chiefdom people to enhance sustainable peace and timely return of the paramount chief to his chiefdom.

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