



OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

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PRESS RELEASE

22nd April 2022

The attention of the Ombudsman, Leon Jenkins-Johnston Esq. has been drawn to two articles in recent times. The latest being on Friday 22nd April 2022 in which it is alleged that some staff of the Office of the Ombudsman possess fake qualifications and that the Ombudsman is refusing to conduct academic credentials verification.

The Ombudsman wishes to note that it is the policy of his office not to respond to social media attacks by faceless individuals, but on this singular occasion since specific allegations have been made; he has deemed it fit to set the record straight.

Firstly, like all right minded thinking Sierra Leoneans, the Ombudsman is surprised and saddened at the developments relating to so many citizens possessing what appears to be fake degrees and he condemns it and will not tolerate it in any way, shape or form.

On Tuesday 19th April 2022, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) put out a press release calling on public sector institutions to conduct academic credentials verification. At that time, the Ombudsman was out of the office on official assignment in Makeni and only returned late on Friday 22nd April 2022.

At no time did the Ombudsman have any discussion with anyone relating to this press release and he certainly has had no opportunity to take action on it as he was away. So to suggest that he has refused is clearly misleading and malicious, and that statement is obviously being made by someone who clearly has their own agenda, and who is attempting to use blackmail to force the hand of the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman wishes the general public to be rest assured that credentials verification will be conducted by the Office of the Ombudsman, and a notice to that effect will be put out on week commencing 25th April 2022. The Office of the Ombudsman joins the ACC in calling for a nationwide audit of Public Institutions.

Turning to the allegations in the article, references have been made to individual staff members. Mrs. Madeline Oneil- Khortu is an ACCA holder who qualified in August 2013 with registration number 1305709. Madeline worked as Principal Auditor at the Audit Service before joining Office of the Ombudsman in 2018. Reference has been made to her specifically because it is alleged that she is not qualified and that it is because of that reason that the Ombudsman has not conducted credentials verification. Mrs. Khortu is the Finance Director at the Office of the Ombudsman, she is happily married and a decent colleague to work with. It is very important to note at this point that the three staff mentioned in the said articles - Madeline Oneil-Khortu, Minkailu F. Sama and Hindowa Monrovia - were recruited during the tenure of Melron Nicol-Wilson Esq, the previous Ombudsman.

The Office of the Ombudsman has just 4 vehicles, all of which are over 10 years old. Recently all 4 vehicles had a makeover including the one used by the Ombudsman which is the same vehicle that was used by Late Justice Cowan since about 2010 and the previous Ombudsman Melron Nicol-Wilson Esq.

The Ombudsman has 4 personal vehicles at his disposal, A Mitsubishi Pajero, A Toyota 4Runner, an ML Mercedes Benz and a Nissan Xterra all of which he acquired before joining the Office.

Finally, the Ombudsman notes with concern the continuous vitriolic, malicious and wicked allegations that have been made against his person, his family, livelihood, etc, right through his tenure in office. Members of the public will recall that this is not the first time that such depraved attacks have been made by unknown persons. It appears to the Ombudsman that from the style of writing and the content, it could be the same entities repeating the attack again. Whoever this entity is, the Ombudsman prays he finds peace and get closer to the Lord as it is only in the Lord that we find true salvation.



Christopher Wallace-Johnson
Communications Officer
Office of the Ombudsman