



# CITIZEN'S FORUM

## DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

We Aspire To Inspire And Empower

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### PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2022

#### A CALL FOR THE IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION OR DISMISSAL OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE FOR ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE SIERRA POLICE UNDER HIS WATCH

**Freetown, 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2022-** In the service of democracy and good governance, Citizens Forum for Democratic Accountability (hereinafter referred to as C4D) an independent institution with a niche in democratic accountability, service delivery, human rights and national cohesion condemns through advocacy, public education monitoring and reporting, and as a way to aspire and inspire citizens to hold government, elected and public officials to account, combat corruption and abuse of power.

In lieu of the above, C4D is worried about the spate of human rights abuses in the country by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and at the same time, following the recent incident of incarceration, inhuman and degrading treatment inflicted on Salone Rap Star, Alhaji Amadu Bah, aka BOSS L. A, and others, since Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2022. It is alleged that he (Alpha Amadu Bah) was taken to the OSD headquarters (Benghazi) and placed in solitary confinement, where he was said to have been injected with red substance and his stunned dreadlocks cut to ground level by the Sierra Leone Police without any specter of respect for his dignity as a Sierra Leonean and a human being who is entitled to his fundamental human rights. This inhuman and degrading treatment meted out to Alhaji Amadu Bah and other Sierra Leoneans compounded with other human rights abuses by the police under his supervision is a cause for concern and its worrying for the country.

From the foregoing and moving forward, C4D unreservedly and unequivocally condemn the preposterous act of the police as unacceptable and at the same time, frowned at the disorderly behavior of Alpha Amadu Bah and his crew and above all, avidly and fervently **call for the resignation or dismissal of the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Ambrose Michael Sovula for the incessant human rights abuses by the Sierra Leone police under his watch and supervision, coupled with the question of incompetence, fake degree saga, where he has outlived his usefulness and exceeded the age bracket required by law and above all, lacks leadership, competitive balance and emotions in a very polarized society, especially when the 2023 general elections are forthcoming.**

If Mr. Ambrose Michael Sovula continue holding the enviable office, there is the likelihood that his uncontrolled disposition will impugn the progress made over the years in the democratization process and maintenance of peace and security, which is germane to the people of the country, since the scars and agonies of the civil war are still in reminiscence.

In retrospect, the IGP, Michael Sovula proved unable to deal with occurrences between the police and the people they vowed to protect given rise to police violence and human rights abuses against unarmed civilians. The most striking incidences of police /civilian skirmishes under the command of Inspector General, includes, the incessant clamp down on the opposition; the use of force against peaceful protesters, leading to police brutality, arrests, detentions and eventual deaths were visible at the Padema Road Correctional center, the Tombo, Lunsar and Makeni riots, student protesters at Institute of public Administration and Management (IPAM), Limkokwing and the Fourah Bay College (FBC) election stalemates; as well as Constituency 110 election impasse that placed democracy under siege as election materials were destroyed with impunity in the presence of the police who did nothing to salvage the situation, the recent bye elections campaigns at Sama Bendugu and other bye elections in Koinadugu and in Kailahun and Port Loko.

The aforementioned brutality against unarmed civilians and the recent allegations of inhuman and degrading treatment against Alhaji Amadu Bah and his colleagues, combined with the red substance injected in him and the dreadful cutting of his dreadlocks to ground level has left Sierra Leoneans and the world aghast with many tongues-wagging, minds boggling, hearts beating and guts wrenching over the preposterous and unprofessionalism displayed by the police without regard for constitutional provisions and international instruments and protocols dealing with the prohibition of torture, inhuman, cruel and degrading treatment as provided in Section 20 (1) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone Act NO 6, which stipulate that **“No person shall be subject to any form of torture or any punishment or other treatment which is inhuman and degrading”** This provision is in tandem with international instruments to which Sierra Leone is a signatory, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights as provided in Article 5; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, as provided in Chapter 5; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as provided in Article 5; the International Covenant on Civil and political rights as provided in Article 7 and above all, the Nelson Mandela Rules which protects the rights of persons deprived of liberty, the obligation to treat all prisoners with respect for their inherent dignity and value as human beings and to prohibit torture and other forms of ill treatment. On this basis, C4D IS calling on the government to put a ban on the inhuman and degrading treatment meted out to suspects at the police headquarter

In as much as C4D condemns the action of the police as above and calls for the resignation of the Inspector General of Police, C4D simultaneously frowned at the level of lawlessness and disorderly behaviour exhibited by Alhaji Amadu Bah and his crew at the gas station which eventually led to their arrest, detention and subsequent charges of assault and robbery under investigation. C4D is mindful of the fact that the case in court and therefore preclude itself from discussion the merits of the case. However, C4D calls on the authorities concerned to expedite the process and do the needful to ascertain the veracity of the allegations and avert mounting tensions. C4D is also calling on the government to change the trajectory a stop using the Operations Security Division (OSD) headquarters (BENGHAZI) as a place of terror with a different Standard Operating procedure (SOP) where detainees’ must be hairless at all cost.

In conclusion, **C4D is strongly calling on the President and Commander -In- Chief of the Republic of Sierra Leone Police to exercise his constitutional powers to sanitize the police by asking the Inspector General of Police, MR. AMBROSE MICHAEL SOVULA for his immediate resignation or dismissal as Inspector General of Police.** The country needs an able and competent Inspector General of Police to uplift the police force, exhibit competitive balance of leadership and discipline, exercise tolerance, soothe emotions and not politically charged for the peace and security of the country.

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