



## SIERRA LEONE POLICE

### PRESS RELEASE

The public will recall that during the weekend of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2022, social media were awash with video, audio, and text messages about planned demonstrations in Sierra Leone that were scheduled for Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2022. It is no secret that some of the text, video and audio messages were laced with threats of killing drivers, motorcyclists, police officers and soldiers.

Following from the above, the Management of the Sierra Leone Police published a press release which clearly stated that no person or group was granted permission to embark on demonstrations on the said date. The press release further noted that organizing or participating in any unauthorised demonstration contravenes provisions of the Public Order Act 1965.

The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) would like to inform the public that despite the press release from the Police, some protesters were out in the streets of Freetown, Lungi, Port Loko, Mile 91 and Magburaka, on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022, whereby police officers arrested a total number of fifty seven (57) of those protesters.

These arrests were contingent on the following: **a)** the protesters never had permission from the Inspector General of Police to demonstrate; and **b)** to preserve their (protesters) safety; as it was likely that hoodlums and miscreants could have infiltrated and hijack the demonstrations, given the fact that serious threats of killings of people were already distinctly made on social media, in respect of same.

Furthermore, Madam Femi Claudius Cole and Dr. Dennis Bright were arrested and detained for incitement at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) on July 3, 2022. Their arrest came against repeated cautions from the Police to be law abiding and to also maintain the peace at all times.

For the records, during the Mid-Term Census, they were both publicly involved in inciting people not to participate in the process for which they were invited to the CID for interrogation. They were later cautioned and released.

On another occasion, Dr. Dennis Bright was invited to the CID, where he was interrogated, cautioned and released, after a video surfaced of him addressing some marshals (a group that has been outlawed and banned from operating in Sierra Leone). This was during the run up to the Ward 156 Koya bye-election.

Similarly, Madam Femi Claudius Cole was seen in the company of several women, preparing placards, rehearsing songs and issuing out threats against the Police and military, if they disallowed their unauthorised July 4 planned demonstrations.

Despite all of these, the Management of the SLP had agreed on the following:

- I. To caution and unconditionally release all protesters arrested on Monday July 4, as they are considered to be first time offenders. This is already achieved; and
- II. To also release Madam Femi Claudius Cole and Dr. Dennis Bright, but they should be warned to be reporting at the CID Headquarters, until otherwise rescinded or any other determination that could be made.

Everyone is therefore encouraged to be law abiding, peaceful and to go about his or her normal lawful business. Be assured that the Sierra Leone Police will continue to serve you better.

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