

PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

By Nat Bayjay

Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs

Liberian Embassy in Abuja, the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Contacts:

Liberia: +231777402737/+231886402737

Nigeria: +2348130748979

Email: nbayjay2010@gmail.com

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Ladies & Gentlemen of the Press;

As most of you may be aware, I'm Nat Bayjay, the Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs at our country's Embassy in Abuja, the Federal Republic of Nigeria where I have served and continue to serve in that capacity for the past years over two different administrations including the current administration of His Excellency Dr. George Manneh Weah.

Straight to the point, one of my daughters, aged just 7 at the time, was unfortunately sexually abused over a period of seven months by not one but two different perpetrators. These rapists not once, not twice but multiple times over a period of seven months abused my daughter right on the premises of the Liberian Embassy in Abuja. These two perpetrators themselves were under the guidance of a colleague diplomat also assigned at the Abuja Mission who himself up to

today's date shows no remorse for the acts carried out by his wards against my baby.

I have come to use this medium to appeal to His Excellency President George Manneh Weah to personally intervene in that very distressful situation that happened to my family while on national duty in Abuja, the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I'm constrained to use this public space because all efforts that I have applied diplomatically to get the attention of relevant authorities here to particularly care for the welfare of my sexually abused baby have only produced no response, making closure on such a traumatizing incident to be yet far off and continues to haunt my family.

While the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Information, and Justice have taken steps to forward the matter to court following my insistence, it is not enough in helping to cater to the welfare of our abused child. While I'm in Monrovia for the past two months to pursue the justice aspect to this matter, I keep getting calls from my family over our young daughter's declining health back in Abuja, costing her to miss out on school several days. As we are aware of the long process of litigation, why can't cater to the welfare of

this innocent child solely on humanitarian grounds? Why if this litigation lingers for a year, we the family remains the only one to be going through the financial stress of her health which is already in a poor state?

For the past 8 months, I have been asking our Liberian Government to take full responsibility of catering to the child's wellbeing while pursuing justice; something that has been completely ignored right from when such an alarming matter finally came to our attention since April 17, 2021.

Ladies and gentlemen of the media, it's very much disappointing that eight months down the line there has been absolutely no concerns over my baby daughter's health which continues to deteriorate. Only my family continues to single-handedly pay for her routine and regular medical checkups and her post-traumatic and other forms of psychosocial counselling section as should be done for such an innocent traumatized child.

The situation compelled me to move my family out of the government assigned apartment based on Ambassador Al-Hassan Conteh's unnecessary biases

over his “intervention” that convinced me that my family was not safe any longer under his leadership. And when I only asked him to show leadership in such a grave case which he had deceptively described as a ‘red line crossed’, the Ambassador’s ego would not any common sense in the sense of sympathy for the victim to prevail but would only ensure that both our personal and professional relationships are erased on account on me, the father of a young victim taking stance against his biased approach that only protected the perpetrators rather than the victim.

As if not enough, my family got confronted with the urgent need to personally pay for an apartment out of the Embassy’s premises after it became very prudent to do so in the aftermath of the Ambassador’s biased intervention, coupled with the need for a change of environment for the victim in particular and the family in general.

I have come here today as a very last resort to gain the attention of President Weah who heads this government, a government that is my direct employer for which I have diligently served with so much passion and commitment in helping to foster the

bilateral relations between our country and Nigeria, a very strategic bilateral partner of ours.

I am seeking the attention of particularly the President, the ‘Feminist In Chief’ because he is so resolved on protecting the rights of the girl child. So, I am using this means to bring to the attention of President Weah over the deteriorating health condition of my eight years old daughter. He is a father and a chief protector of child’s rights and I am very sure that when this reaches him, he will listen.

My appeal to President Weah comes in the wake of the ongoing 16 Days of Activism, with our country’s national theme being “Enough is Enough! Let’s Act Now To End Violence Against Women, Girls, Children and Other Marginalized Groups”. This ties with the global theme “End Violence Against Women Now”!

I also in the same vein extend same appeal to the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia, Her Excellency (Chief) Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor and the First Lady of the Republic of Liberia, Her Excellency Madam Clar Marie Weah, both of whom are not only national but known international female advocates as well as

the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection. The attention of all female advocacy groups, including the Association of Female Lawyers Association of Liberia (AFELL) and the Female Journalists Association of Liberia (FeJaL) are also being sought here.

I would have thought that as a diplomat serving our country in a foreign country, this situation would have the fullest attention of our government on the welfare aspect of the abused child whenever such an unfortunate incident happens to any diplomat while on national duty. This is like sending a soldier in the battlefield to represent your country but gets wounded on the battlefield in the line of national duty. But you can't get attended to while in your pains, pains you acquired not on your personal vacation but on an international assignation, helping to bolster your country's prestigious image.

It's not enough that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Information and Justice have forwarded to court the issue while the very young and unfortunate victim lingers in mental and physical pains. As medical result reveals, our baby's sexual torture at the hands of these perpetrators have caused substantial damages to her

womanhood which if not corrected medically at this very moment, would just ruin her future. And all I have asked from my government is atleast some form of attention for this young victim, someone who suffered repeated abuse from these rapists. But all I have gotten in response from my government in this aspect of welfare for the child is 'cold-shoulder' with no concern at all for my daughter's deteriorating health which is affecting her so gravely in particular and my entire family in general. This is hurting our once brilliant and intelligent daughter's schooling, including her academic performances due to her 'on and off' health situation.

Upon being briefed over the deteriorating health of our baby, I wrote a personal letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Dee Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sir but with up to date there is response or even any courtesy at all to even acknowledge receipt of said letter. I copied on that letter my own Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism which seconded me to the Liberian Embassy in Abuja. I also shared copies with the Offices of the Vice President, Her Excellency Dr (Chief) Jewel Howard-Taylor and the Honorable

Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Nathaniel Farlo McGill respectively for their attentions.

Again and again, as a last resort to get help for my victimized child, I am using this medium to appeal to President Weah to look my direction, to safe an innocent child's health from further decline, an innocent child whose only "crime" would be being the daughter of a committed diplomat whose track record of his service to his country are all written in bold letters. President Weah, this deserves your immediate attention as this has the potential to damage our country's international representation in Nigeria. President Weah, please look the direction of a very potential young Liberian citizen whose future is at risk based on no interest from relevant government officials here to help protect this child, a child who got sexually abused repeatedly as her dad serves her country in a foreign country.

A Summary of The Incident

After being raped at the Embassy by two of its residents, this barbaric act was confirmed by medical doctors and the Nigerian police after which I formally

complained same to the Liberian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Information.

As if that wasn't enough shock for our little baby and my entire family, my colleague whose wards committed such a heinous crime against our baby showed absolutely no remorse over the very unfortunate incident. The worst shock came when our Liberian Ambassador, my own direct boss Professor Al-Hassan Conteh with whom I had have very excellent and cordial professional and personal relationships, so terribly intervened in the matter in which he was unfortunately bent on protecting the perpetrators rather than the victim. Within three weeks of when this came to our public knowledge, the Ambassador refused to notify 'Home Office' (Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in addition to his determination to protecting the two rapists who took turns in sexually abusing my baby for seven uninterrupted months! Ambassador Conteh's biased intervention in the matter compelled me to relocate my family out of our assigned Liberian Government apartment on the chancery of the Embassy at my personal expense as my family was no longer safe under his leadership.

And when I formally complained the incident to the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism which seconded me to the Embassy, the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs initially expressed his disappointment especially in the Ambassador's refusal to have him informed on the matter within three weeks of the incident. Fast forward, the Foreign Ministry sent a three-man investigative panel to Abuja which report in itself inspite of acknowledging that our daughter was actually abused was so tailored in protecting the role of the Ambassador whose mishandling of the situation got the Liberian Government to even commit already scarce financial resources to do an investigation of three officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I also want to use this time to state that the Ambassador Jarjar Kamara Report only amounted to nothing more than a diplomatic appeasement, all aimed at protecting Ambassador Conteh at the expense of us the victims.

The honest and hard truth is that the likes of Ambassador Jarjar Kamara are only concerned about

protecting their own clique at the expense of any victimized situation. Is this because this child is not one of their own? After government spent already limited resources on his team to travel to and from Abuja to conduct an impartial report, Ambassador Kamara would have his team connive with Ambassador Conteh to protect the terrible handling of this matter that compelled me to have the Nigerian police involved.

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, it remains very puzzling that an aggrieved family experiencing psychological anguish resulting from child abuse while choosing to remain quiet for a while would be seen as disrespectful to an Ambassador simply on account of refusal to take a telephone call from the Ambassador. At least this is what the Ambassador Jarjar Kamara Committee's report was bent on rather than emphasizing the needs of this innocent child who found herself at the mercy of two ruthless perpetrators' sexual assault at will right on the premises of our own Liberian Embassy in Abuja. As I know that the Jarjar Kamara Report was intended to protect and appease the Ambassador apparently for

his status as well as to minimize the level of his mishandling of the matter, I had since responded to that report that it should never be done in this matter where all concerns should rather be directed at the welfare of the victimized child.

That the Ambassador's deliberate refusal to report the situation immediately to the Foreign Ministry is not even captured at all in this Report speaks volume on the intent to have him shielded at all cost. Did the Committee even consider the length of time he took to respond and report the incident? Even if he said he was investigating, how long does that take in an environment where everyone is present?

That that I moved my family out of the assigned apartment without any official letter to anyone including the Ambassador is totally untrue. I told the Team in the presence of the Ambassador how the Ambassador was officially written on May 21, 2021 and that he decided for whatsoever reason to not respond to that official communication. I copied Information Minister Ledgehood Rennie on that mail.

I provided to the Team in printed copy that official communication after being asked if I had said proof.

As we decided to shift our attention to seeking a closure on the matter that has traumatized my family for the past 8 months, the Ambassador would meanwhile choose to adopt a non-compliance, non-cooperative posture with my office, going on to cease all forms of working relationship between me and him as a means of reprisal response from Ambassador Conteh to re-victimize us simply because I questioned his biases in the matter in favor of the perpetrator for reasons best known to him. Well, that is the least of my concerns as I have since decided to forge on protecting my family and to seek justice as a deterrence for any future evil act of such magnitude against any human being.

Finally, as I close this press statement which is likely the first of series of actions until I get attention, I am again using this press briefing to bring to the attention of President Weah, the ‘Feminist-In-Chief’ of our dear country, the deteriorating health condition of my eight years old daughter.

Let this also claim the attentions of the First Lady of the Republic of Liberia, Her Excellency Clar Weah and also the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia, both of whom are not only national but known international female advocates as well as the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection. The attention of all female advocacy groups, including the Association of Female Lawyers Association of Liberia (AFELL) and the Female Journalists Association of Liberia (FeJaL) are also being sought here.

I thank you all.