

NATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY COUNCIL OF LIBERIA (NCSL) – GRAND BASSA CHAPTER



PROSSER STREET, BUCHANAN CITY

GRAND BASSA COUNTY - REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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MOTORCYCLIST LEADERSHIP INVESTIGATION REPORT

GRAND BASSA – CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION (CSO)

Date of Submission: September 2, 2024.



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Introduction

In an effort to promote peace and reconciliation, the Superintendent of Grand Bassa County, *Julie Bono*, requested the Grand Bassa Civil Society Council to mediate a complaint filed by some aggrieved members, led by David Jackson of the Grand Bassa Federation of Motorcyclists Union, against President Isaac Paye. The Council was officially mandated on June 20, 2024, and a team was formed comprising six individuals. This is not the first time the Council has been involved in mediation efforts. The Council has track record in this regard and handled dispute that could have set the city of Buchanan on fire between the two unions, FOMTUL and NAFOMTEL operating FOMTUL in Grand Bassa County.

The Grand Bassa Civil Society Council is a non-political, not-for-profit organization aimed at promoting the rule of law, peace, and reconciliation while elevating the voices of marginalized and underprivileged people.

To conduct a conclusive investigation, the team met four times with all parties involved and also convened a meeting with the board to gain a clearer understanding of the ongoing issues. An online questionnaire was prepared and young people in Buchanan and Districts #2 and #3 were recruited and trained to assist in gathering information. This exercise aimed to delve deeper into the perspectives of cyclist unions, passengers, and businesses interacting with the cyclists. The survey was conducted in Buchanan, Districts #2, #3, and #4 to promote decentralization efforts within county leadership.

Approach

Upon accepting the mandate from Hon. Superintendent to investigate the ongoing conflict within the Motorcyclist Union, led by Isaac T. Paye, the team undertook the following steps for efficiency and effectiveness:

1. Mobilized necessary resources, including scratch cards, stationery, transportation, and meeting venues.
2. Engaged stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, including representatives from the Muslim Council, church councils, and the Liberia Peace Building Office.
3. Conducted meetings with the board of the cyclists, union leadership, and other union members.
4. Developed a questionnaire to gather more information from motorbike riders, passengers, and those conducting business with the union.

Findings

The mediation committee discovered several issues and concerns responsible for the disputes within the Motorcyclist Union:

- **Financial Transactions and Accountability:** The union lacks a bank account, and there is no financial secretary or treasurer. The president oversees all financial affairs.
- **Asset Control and Accountability:** There is no system in place to manage or protect union properties, with the president acting as the sole custodian.
- **Constitution and Standard Operating Procedures:** The union's constitution is unavailable to most officials, and no standard operating procedures exist. The committee could not obtain a copy of the constitution after promises from President Isaac Paye and Chairman Pastor Bordy Hardy.
- **Centralized Elections:** Elections for national officials occur in Monrovia, with county presidents appointed by the national president, undermining local democratic processes.
- **Internal Disagreements:** Disputes often arise during political campaigns, with the county president following national directives without consulting local members.
- **Limited Leadership Impact:** Only 10% of respondents are aware of the union leadership's functions in Grand Bassa County.

Survey Report: Motorcyclist Union in Grand Bassa

The established committee, led by the Grand Bassa Civil Society Organization (CSO), developed an online questionnaire to gather input from key stakeholders, including Motorcyclist Union leadership, riders, passengers, and motorbike owners. The survey, supported by the Grassroots Agency for Social Services (GRASS), focused on analyzing the challenges faced by the Motorcyclist Union across three electoral districts: Districts 2, 3, and 4.

Survey Coverage

Demography: Data was collected from participants aged 17-55, including union leadership, riders, bike owners, and task force officers. The response distribution was 61% from Buchanan City (District 3), 30% from Compound #3 (District 4), and 9% from Compound #2 (District 2).

Respondent categories included:

- 55.1% motorbike riders
- 3% leadership members
- 1.7% task force officers
- 12.6% bike owners
- 27.6% passengers

Union Membership:

- 60.4% from FOMTUL
- 37.7% from NAFOMTEL
- 1.9% was not union members

Membership Duration:

- 1-3 years: 34.5%
- 3-5 years: 46.6%
- 5-10 years: 19%
- Over 10 years: 1.7%

A total of 58 responses were collected.

Leadership Analysis:

The survey assessed various aspects of union leadership:

- Effectiveness: 61.6% rated it as poor, 31.9% as fair, and 7.5% as good.
- **Communication of Goals and Expectations:** 56.9% said "never," 36.2% "sometimes," and 6.9% "always."
- **Conflict Resolution Ability:** 91% rated it as poor, 6.9% as fair, and 1.7% as good.
- **Support and Development:** 82.8% reported no support or development; 17.2% reported little support.
- **Decision Making:** 5.2% rated it as very poor, 58.6% poor, 34.5% fair and 1.7% good.
- **Financial Records and Reporting:** 48.3% reported no system, 46.6% were unsure, and 5.2% confirmed a system exists.
- **Leadership Elections:** 51.7% said no elections occur, 19% were unaware of elections, and 29.3% confirmed that elections take place.
- **Constitution Availability:** 89% said there was no constitution, 6.9% were unaware, and 3.4% confirmed there was a constitution.

Conflict Resolution Suggestions:

Respondents recommended the following to resolve leadership conflicts:

- 70.9% advocated for merging into one union.
- 18.9% recommended changing all leadership.
- 10.2% suggested suspending the current leadership.

Comments and Recommendations:

- 40% of union members support establishing interim leadership.
- 25% recommend forming a single general union.
- 20% suggest changing the leadership and establishing a new leadership structure.
- 15% call for a committee to set up interim leadership.

Challenges

- The refusal by President Isaac Paye of FOMTUL to release the union constitution to the investigative team.
- The board's failure to present the constitution after promising to do so.
- Board interference with the investigation by forming a separate team to investigate the same matter, despite Superintendent Julia Bono's authorization to the Civil Society Council.
- Lack of funding for the investigation.

Lessons Learned

- *The board is ineffective and inefficient.*
- *The constitution favors the current president.*
- *The institution is undemocratic and operates as a personal entity.*
- *Funding is crucial for resolving such situations.*
- *Many perceived knowledgeable individuals are unaware of the Superintendent's authority, particularly during this period when decentralization is key.*

Recommendations

Based on the findings and methodologies employed during the investigation, we hereby make the following recommendations:

1. *Establish a broad-based interim leadership for FOMTUL and NAFOMTEL with a specific mandate and timeframe.*
2. *Form a board comprising individuals of integrity to whom the interim team will report.*
3. *Conduct an audit of both fixed and current assets.*

Appendix

Grand Bassa Civil Society Organization (CSO) Investigation committee Members

1. K.M. Barley Togba

CSO Head Grand Bassa County/Grassroots Agency for Social Services (GRASS)

Grand Bassa Motorcycle Investigation Committee: Head/Chair

Signed: 

Date: 09/03/2024
0777520977

2. Rebecca Zonoe

WIPNET

Grand Bassa Motorcycle Investigation Committee: Co-Chair

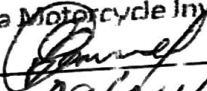
Signed: 

Date: Sept. 3, 2024
0777865406

3. Samuel Wilson

Grand Bassa Pace Building Office (PBO)

Grand Bassa Motorcycle Investigation Committee: Secretary

Signed: 

Date: 09/04/2024
0770113984

4. Pastor Isaac Ceegar

Concern Citizen

Grand Bassa Motorcycle Investigation Committee: Member

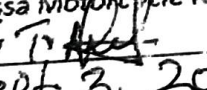
Signed: 

Date: Sept. 3, 2024

5. Timothy Nah

Grand Bassa Muslim Council

Grand Bassa Motorcycle Investigation Committee: Member

Signed: 

Date: Sept 3, 2024
0775804189

6. Rev. James Watt

Grand Bassa Motorcycle Investigation Committee: Secretary

Signed: Rev. James Watt, III

Date: 09/03/2024