

Civil Society and Media Alliance on Human Rights and Corporate Governance



Motto: Steadfastness

Telephone: 232-33-803-217

Email: alliance.h@yahoo.com

The Civil Society Alliance was established in 2010, to advocate, educate and inform the public on health as well as promoting justice, human rights, safety and security issues across the country.

The Alliance after its formation has transcended its traditional objectives to an expanded mandate of advocacy for "Poor people in Resettlement areas". The thematic areas deals with people relocated from their traditional land mostly for commercial and agricultural investments. The compensation of people in rural communities has posed critical challenges which have mostly resulted to conflicts between investors and landowners.

A team of leveled-headed members of the above organization made three-days working visits in Pujehun District, Sahn Malen Chiefdom where the Agricultural Company Socfin is operating to ascertain the reality on the ground and also to proffer solutions.

As a responsible and patriotism Civil Society Organization, we cannot give a hurriedly investigation into the Malen issues and starts putting blames on the government and the company in the case of our other colleagues who went to the chiefdom with a deliberate mind to put the government in a bad light which have the propensity to scare genuine investors to help our fading economy.

The crux of our findings was to investigate the wide-spread allegations in the chiefdom and how we as Civil Society can proffer better solutions to the government, chiefdom authorities and the agricultural company.

Upon our arrival to the chiefdom on Friday the 8th of February 2018, we directly engaged villagers in several communities within the operational areas of the agricultural company which was a hot spot during the fiasco that resulted in the death of two hapless villagers.

According to some of the villagers in Fakama, Kpange, Mallay, Jao and other affected areas to know the nitty-gritty of the issues at hand that resulted to the death of two Sierra Leoneans put the blame squarely on the Member of Parliament.

The Member of Parliament should held accountable for the killing of two Sierra Leoneans in Malen Chiefdom, we urged the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Sierra Leone Police to speedily charged the matter to court for justice to be done.

Observation:

1. From our findings we were told by the villagers that the attack was premeditated by the villagers with the help of the Member of Parliament.
2. The chaos started when the Independent Member of Parliament was paying homage to his people during a funeral ceremony.
3. The fragility of the villagers gives the MP leeway to injects problems into the lives of the people with the help of other senior stakeholders in the chiefdom that are not seeing eye-to-eye with the chiefdom authorities like the Paramount Chief.
4. communication gap between the paramount chief and his subject

5. The Member of Parliament Hon. Sheka Sama according to our observations fan the chaos in the chaos in the chiefdom by inciting the villagers against the chiefdom authorities thus leaving the agricultural company unhinged in the hands of the fighting villagers.
6. Members of the Malen Land Owners Association (MALOA), are frontrunner into the debacle across the chiefdom
7. The heavy land presence of security apparatus has being elapsed as normalcy returns to the chiefdom.
8. The alleged displacement of villagers into other chiefdoms have returned back to their houses as they continued with normal life
9. Over 50 illegal mills were discovered as the villagers continued to harvest the fruits of the agricultural company with impunity.

Recommendation to the Government:

1. Government to speedily investigate into the alleged allegation on security forces excesses
2. Ensure the protection and infrastructures of the agricultural company from the hands of offenders
3. Set up an investigation committee of stakeholders in the chiefdom and district for final lasting peace
4. Work with the Pujehun District Descendants for lasting peace in the chiefdom
5. Massive education to the villagers on the needs to accept investors in the country and their respective chiefdoms
6. The government should take final decision on the long standing issues in Malen
7. The Member of Parliament should be part of finding amicable solution towards peace in the chiefdom.

SOCFIN

1. The agricultural company should continued to interface among the villagers for confidence purposes
2. The radio station should be the main channel to communicate with the people, Barray meetings, public sensitization etc
3. The company should spread its cooperate social responsibility across the operational areas of the chiefdom
4. Provides more jobs for the villagers
5. One to one interaction with villagers on how the investment is going through

FINDINGS:

Our findings also exonerates the Chiefdom authorities from any wrong doings, the Member of Parliament during his campaign trail deceived the people that if they elected him as Member of Parliament for constituency 104 he will make sure that the agricultural company will triple their surface rent money to an unimaginable figure.

As an uninformed villager, they accepted the erroneous campaign messages of the Member of Parliament in good faith, after the election Sheka Sama won the election in a landslide victory at against the genuine aspirants.

Now the villagers are pressuring their legislator to actualize his bogus promises he made towards the people during his campaign trail, the government should try his level best for peace and tranquility to prevail.

The Hon. Sheka Sama is on records to have mandated the villagers that they should harvests the fruits of the agricultural company at will and nothing will come out of it.

The government r should focus on the tone and public incitement of the Member of Parliament who continued to play chilling politics to the detriment of the poor people.

Final Conclusion:

Though we partially respect the views of other Civil Society Organizations that were in the Chiefdom during the troublesome time we also want to ask some of the CSOs what have they done for the people of Malen-Chiefdom all these years, Sierra Leone cannot prosper without the intervention of foreign investors. The government should come out clean with a position to openly criticize some these CSOs that is bent on given an appalling name to the government in the international arena.

The battle in Sahn Malen chiefdom is between the Paramount Chief and that of the Member of Parliament in which the agricultural company is being cut in the middle of all these senseless political fights.

The government and other institutions like the media the media should openly investigate the several ghost projects of Green Scenery across the country, they solicited funds on behalf of the government and people of Sierra Leone but barely implements such projects.

The madness of Joseph Rahall and his caboodle of operatives in poking their nose on genuine investors in the country should be discouraged by all form of seriousness by the government and other well-meaning institutions that thinking alike.

Investors all over the world needs an enable environment to operate and should be encouraged by the government and the people including Civil Society Organizations.

We are calling on the government to fully implements the above recommendations for lasting peace in Malen Chiefdom, Pujehun District.

CC The President Republic of Sierra Leone
Vice President Republic of Sierra Leone
Chief Minister
Resident Minister Southern Region
Minister of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security
Hon. Sheka Sama
Paramount Chief, Malen Chiefdom
Pujehun District Council Chairman
Malen Affected Land Owners Association (MALOA)
Civil Society Organizations Western Area
Civil Society Organization Southern Region
Green Scenery
Society for Democratic Initiative (SDI)
Human Rights Defenders in Sierra Leone
European Union
British High Commissioner
America Ambassador
Socfin Agricultural Company
The Media

Submitted by Civil Society and Media Alliance
on Human Rights and Corporate Governance

National Chairman



Comrade Augustine Rahall