



NATIONAL HEALTH WORKERS' ASSOCIATION OF LIBERIA (NAHWAL)

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Press Statement

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Members of the Fourth Estates, Health workers both in the Public and Private Sectors, Fellow Liberians.

We are grateful to God who had brought us through many calamities and yet has blessed us with the gift of another day. At this juncture, it would be ingratitude on our part should we not pay homage to our colleagues who fell prey to EVD thus we call for a moment of silence in remembrance of those heroes and heroines of our time.

Please permit us to speak to just a few issues in the health sector. Firstly, you have heard about housing units for health workers. We acknowledge the good intention of the Government of Liberia to build houses for health care workers which we highly appreciate. However, the joy of the thought of owning a house of one own did not even see daylight as first of all, we were not included in the final stages of the planning process, and secondly the cost of the housing units does not consider the earning power of the Liberian Health Workers. Thus those who will take those housing units will reside in them while they are still in Government employ, receiving salaries and paying their mortgages. The minute they are retired, they will be unable to pay, therefore, forfeit their mortgages and subsequently evicted.

Because our current salaries cannot allow anyone to complete the payment plan as is now in place. GOL should know by now, that international best practice calls for planning with the local beneficiaries and we must add that there can be nothing for us without us. In fact where are the houses?

you have been told that all health workers have been paid their Ebola related hazards and death benefits. NAHWAL stands tall to announce that contrary to what you have been told, majority of the health workers across the country in both the public and private sectors have not been paid in full their just due Ebola hazard and Ebola death benefits. We call on the Minister of Health, Dr. Bernice Dahn to stop frightening health workers with treats of prosecution as a way to keep them from speaking out the true.

The Ministry of Health has been putting out conflicting information about the fate of 27 health workers in Lofa county. At one point, they have said the health workers were dismissed and another, they said the health workers would be dismissed if they do not return to work. Then again they must report to the Ministry of Health. How can a person returning to work in Lofa come to MOH in Monrovia at the same time? How, too, can a person already dismissed be answerable to his/her former boss?

NAHWAL calls on the Ministry of Health to return to status quo, and conduct a case by case investigation into the Lofa County Health workers situations and find the common ground.

Today marks exactly two (2) years since the President of NAHWAL, Mr. Joseph Soko Tamba and the General Secretary, Mr. George Poe Williams were illegally dismissed by the Ellen led Government for advocating for better working conditions and salaries for Health Workers in Liberia and for better health care delivery system for the Liberian people. Today marks two (2) years of economic incarceration of Trade Union Leaders by our current government thereby grossly violating ILO Conventions 87 and 98 respectively in broad day light. But thank God who brought us through two years of calamities yet healthy and strong. And we know by His grace we shall overcome.

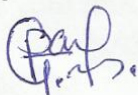
Let it be known today to all Liberians that we do not hold this against anybody, including those who misused their power against us. For we have come two (2) years without a job and an income, but we know that this government has less than two years to go, and we know that by God's grace, we will overcome. However, whenever and wherever this story is told, we will not only remember those who denied us our basic human rights, but we will equally remember our very good friends who are sitting and watching quietly, perhaps to their amusement while we suffer unjustly.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you.

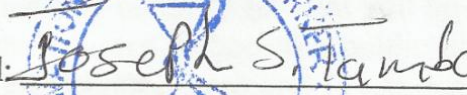

In solidarity we remain.

Signed:



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Approved:

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