



Parents give one month ultimatum to Gov't

Tuesday, 15 July 2011

Freetown — Dozens of affected parents of the Held A Needy Child International Sierra Leone (HANCI-SL) child adoption saga have issued a month's ultimatum to government for a redress of the matter or they storm the streets of the capital naked to vent out their frustrations.

The HANCI-SL child adoption saga has been one of the most controversial issues that government is still grappling with. However, a commission of inquiry was set up by government to look into the matter but the affected parents lately are expressing extreme doubt as to the credibility of the commission, alleging that it is being headed by a signatory to the documents being investigated.

At a well-attended meeting yesterday with the minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs at his ministry's conference room, one of the aggrieved parents, Abu Bakarr Kargbo - who doubles as the spokesperson of the affected parents - said they have spent over five months in Freetown awaiting the verdict of the judicial inquiry on the issue but that the commission has not been sitting for the past five weeks.

He said the commission, headed by Justice Adeliza Showers, has kept them in complete suspense for the past five weeks with no better explanation from the commissioner as to her suspension of the on-going hearings.

"We have been in Freetown for the past five months only to find answers to our children's adoption matter, but nothing absolutely seems to be happening at the moment. We are running out of patience because the commissioner has put us in complete suspense. We want to know what is going on," demanded Kargbo.

Another aggrieved parent, Kassim Kargbo - in a more angry tone - said they were giving the government one month to settle the matter or will be forced to take action by themselves. "We are ready to die for our children," Kassim vowed. "We will demonstrate to show the world that our children's rights are being abused by an unscrupulous organization."

Kassim said they will not relent until they know the true situation of their children. "We have been in this fight for the past 15 years and will follow it to its logical conclusion," he said.

In tears, some of the aggrieved mothers of the adopted children threatened to march on the streets of Freetown naked if the authorities continue to treat their concerns with blatant disregard.

"We are in pain, we want to set eyes on our children," they cried out. "We are ready to take to the streets of Freetown naked if government fails to address this matter."

Meanwhile, the minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, Dr. Dennis Sandy assured the parents that government will see to it that justice was done on the matter.

"Government is in full support of you," Dr. Sandy assured. "We know what it takes to have a child. We are very much sensitive to your feelings, so we are going to follow your matter to the fullest."

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