



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
FREETOWN MUNICIPALITY

The Executive Secretary
Local Government Service Commission
Youyi Building
Brookfields
Freetown

24th March 2021

Dear Sir

RE: CONTINUED EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER CONDUCT OF THE NEWLY TRANSFERRED STAFF TO FREETOWN CITY COUNCIL

I would like to thank you, the Chairman and the two Commissioners who attended the meeting at the FCC on Monday 22nd March to discuss my letter of 9th March 2021 and related earlier correspondence re the above subject. Monday's meeting was also attended by 9 councilors who are members of the Freetown City Council Labour and Establishment Committee, by the FCC Chief Administrator and the FCC Human Resource Officer.

The meeting provided an opportunity for myself and the councilors to provide further clarification in respect of the serious concerns raised in my letter of 9th March 2021, that we have about the conduct of Mr. Peter Koroma (posted as Deputy Chief Administrator) and of Mr. Mustapha Kemokai (posted as Environment and Sanitation Officer).

I write to reiterate the two points that the councilors and I made at Monday's meeting: (i) firstly that we agree with the LOCASL decision to accept the recent LGSC staff postings although it has been acknowledged that the recruitment process was unprocedural; (ii) secondly that notwithstanding the foregoing we request that the two staff posted to FCC be responded to differently because of their specific behavior since the staff postings were made.

Firstly, in respect of the LOCASL decision, I explained that at a meeting on 2nd March 2021 chaired by the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development and attended by LOCASL members and LGSC, it was agreed that although the recent postings of core staff to the local councils made by the LGSC had been unmandated and unprocedural, the postings would be accepted on the understanding that going forward,

the provisions of the Local Government Act 2004 and the Human Resource Guidelines Revised in 2014 would be adhered to in respect of core staff recruitment.

Secondly, in respect of the two staff posted to FCC, I stated that whilst FCC supported the LOCASL decision, we were constrained to have the FCC staff postings treated as an exception because of the behavior of the two individuals posted to FCC. I explained that staff posted to other local councils in February 2021 respected the requests of Mayors and Chairpersons for them to wait and not come to the councils to work until the well-publicized dispute between LOCASL and LGSC was resolved. Colleague Mayors and Chairpersons confirmed that posted staff stayed away from their councils when they were asked to do so and communicated by text and phone calls to obtain updates on the resolution of the postings' impasse.

This was not the case with the two staff posted to FCC. In direct defiance of a resolution of Freetown City Council passed on 10th February 2021 at an Emergency Council meeting, that stated that the posted staff would not be accepted by FCC until the impasse was resolved between LGSC and LOCASL, the posted staff insisted on reporting for work at FCC every day. Throughout the period leading up to the 2nd March 2021 meeting in which the LGSC staff posting matter was resolved with LOCASL, the actions of the two staff posted to FCC were challenging and undermining of FCC's leadership.

The two staff were allocated offices in the new City Hall by the Chief Administrator in the second week of February. When this was brought to my attention, in the light of the Council resolution and the LOCASL decision to not accept staff postings until the impasse with LGSC was resolved, I asked for the offices to be withdrawn. That request was met with resistance and confrontation and we eventually had to remove the furniture from the offices to render them unusable. However, Mr. Koroma and Mr. Kemokai held on to the office keys and to date the keys are still in their possession. In a continued challenge to the Council resolution and the LOCASL position, the two staff continued to come to FCC spending their days between the Chief Administrator's office and the City Engineer's office.

At Monday's meeting, FCC councilors explained that on a number of occasions over the past few weeks, they had engaged the two staff and asked them why they have persisted on coming to FCC in defiance of the Council resolution and the expressed request for them to stay away until the matter of the postings was resolved. The councilors reported that these engagements between the councilors and the posted staff did not conclude satisfactorily; the posted staff stated unequivocally that they would not listen to the Mayor nor to the Councilors, they would only take instructions from the Chief Administrator.

At Monday's meeting, the Human Resource Officer stated that he and the Chief Administrator had, on a day which he could not remember, brought the two staff to my office to introduce them to me. I do not have any recollection of this visit and I have checked with my Personal Assistant, my Bodyguard, the two Met Police stationed at the Mayor's Palour reception and other staff in the Mayor's Palour and no one has any recollection of that visit. Even more significantly, the Labour and Establishment Committee met with the Chief Administrator and the Human Resources Officer on Thursday 25th February 2021 to discuss the matter of the posted staff continuing to come to FCC whilst the matter between LOCASL and LGSC remained unresolved and this reported attempt to introduce the posted staff to the Mayor was not

mentioned during that meeting. No mention of this attempted introduction had previously been made to me, the Deputy Mayor or any councilors prior to Monday's meeting.

The Human Resource Officer stated on Monday that I was rushing to attend another meeting and couldn't stop to talk to him when they came to make the introduction and that I said "the posted staff should go home". Although I do not recollect this exchange and cannot identify anyone else who does, and it was not mentioned at the Labour and Establishment Committee meeting where something so significant should have been tabled, and the Human Resource Officer cannot remember the date on which this exchange took place, may I suggest that if I had said that the posted staff should go home, that would have been in keeping with the express position of the Council resolution and adherence to that request would have been expected with a view to re-engagement after the impasse between LOCASL and LGSC was resolved. Instead, in direct defiance of my request and the Council's position and with an active disregard for the ongoing deliberations and correspondence between LOCASL and LGSC up until 2nd March 2021 and between FCC and LGSC after 2nd March 2021, the posted staff continued to come to FCC and sign the staff register. To the best of my knowledge and recollection, and based on the evidence available, at no time did the posted staff attempt to meet with or engage me.

The continued presence of the posted staff is fueling a leadership clash in the council with what appears to be a parallel leadership structure being reinforced. I learnt on Monday, whilst we were in the meeting with LGSC, that the posted staff have been given instructions to take up responsibilities at FCC as confirmed by the signature of Mr. Peter Koroma on the FCC Integrity Management Committee Activity Plan (see attached). I was not aware of the FCC Integrity Management Committee Activity Plan development nor of any related meetings and I was shocked to see Mr. Peter Koroma's signature on FCC documents in view of the ongoing discussions.

May I please take this opportunity to remind you that immediately after the 2nd March 2021 meeting, the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development invited me to his office for a side-meeting to discuss the specific circumstances at FCC. I was accompanied by Chairman Bindi (President of LOCASL and Chairman Bo District), Chairman Probyn (Vice President LOCASL and Chairman Bonthe District) and Mayor Sandi (LOCASL PRO and Mayor of Bonthe Municipality). At that side-meeting I reiterated my concerns about the behaviour of the staff posted to FCC explaining that their consistent and public disregard for the Council's resolutions and the requests of the Mayor did not augur well for the smooth running of the council and for a harmonious working relationship. My concerns were supported and echoed by my colleague Chairmen and Mayor who were present. The Minister assured us that these concerns were understood and that appropriate action would be taken.

I am specifically requesting that LGSC kindly withdraw the postings of Mr. Peter Koroma and Mr. Mustapha Kemokai to FCC and identify alternative staff that can be posted to FCC in their place. We are open and willing to work with anyone posted to FCC in the interest of the development of our city. Sadly, the manner in which Mr. Peter Koroma and Mr. Mustapha Kemokai have behaved has made their positions as staff at FCC untenable. I believe that it is important for there to be clarity of and respect for

the leadership within the local council to ensure the smooth running of the council and the efficient delivery of the services to the residents of Freetown. We are committed to continue our collective and effective efforts to #TransformFreetown.

Assuring you of my highest regards



Yvonne Aki-Sawyer OBE
Mayor of Freetown

cc:

The Minister, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
The Chairman, Parliamentary Committee of Local Government and Rural Development
The Chairman, Local Government Service Commission
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
The President, Local Government Association Sierra Leone
The Chairman, Labour and Establishment Committee, Freetown City Council
The Chief Administrator, Freetown City Council