INCHR-LIB/BBC/ACP-876/”20

April 11, 2020

Dear Hon. Minister:

**RE: A Reminder to Exempt the INCHR from COVID 19 Shut-down**

We present our compliments and write to acknowledge the April 8, 2020 nationwide address to the citizens and residents of Liberia on the declaration of the proposed state of emergency bordering on rights and public health safety wherein the President of the Republic of Liberia named institutions to be exempted without including the National Human Rights Institution, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR).

Accordingly, Article III (Power of the Commission), Section 1 of the Act creating the INCHR states clearly that “The Commission shall have general competence to protect and promote human rights in the Republic of Liberia according to the provision of this Act, Constitution and other relevant laws of Liberia. Section 3 states that “Without affecting the generality of the competence vested in the Commission by Section 1, the Commission is, among other things authorized and empowered….(e) “to conduct free and unfettered on-site inspection and investigation, if necessary without the prior consent of the concerned authority including powers to visit all civil, military and paramilitary places of detention in the Republic of Liberia”. (i) “to give advice and assistance to the Government in the implementation of national and international human rights standards in Liberia.”

Given this mandate Honorable Minister, the INCHR in all of the sectorial arrangement of national institutions is part and parcel of the Justice, Peace, Security and the Rule of Law Sector and therefore should be exempted from the “COVID-19 shut-down”. Besides, the INCHR mandate extend to the monitoring of the actions of all duty bearers in the Republic, and the monitoring of the state actors and non-state actors in the prevention and spread of this deadly COVID-19 which has its implication on the right to life is of no exception.

Hon. Minister, we considered the un-naming of the INCHR as an exempting institution in the “COVID-19 shut-down” and in the state of emergency is inadvertently as an over sight given the reasons stated above.
Therefore, Hon. Minister, we respectfully request your timely and urgent intervention to include the INCHR as an exempt in order to fulfill our statutory mandate of promoting and protecting human rights in Liberia, especially during the fight against CONVID-19.

Thanks for the usual cooperation and support to the Commission.

Best regards,

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Bartholomew B. Colley (Atty.)
AG Chairperson
Independent National Commission on Human Rights-Liberia

Hon. Frank Musah Dean
Minister
Ministry of Justice
Republic of Liberia