



NATIONAL GRAND COALITION PARTY

Office of the Chairman and Leader



PRESS RELEASE

**STATEMENT
BY
THE NATIONAL GRAND COALITION (NGC)
ON THE ALTERCATION BETWEEN MS. YVONNE AKI-SAWYERR, MAYOR OF FREETOWN AND
MR. PHILLIP TONDONEH, DEPUTY MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

FREETOWN, Monday, 8 October 2018: The attention of the leadership of the National Grand Coalition has been drawn to an unfortunate incident captured on video and widely disseminated on social media over the weekend in which the Deputy Minister of Local Government, Hon. Phillip Tondoneh and Her Worship the Mayor of Freetown, Ms. Yvonne Aki Sawyerr, were having a loud argument in full view of the public on National Cleaning Day.

Many of our members and supporters have expressed their outrage over this disgraceful incident, and we in the NGC consider such incidents as a very poor advert for our democracy in Sierra Leone.

Our party has contacted the Mayor and the Minister in charge of Local Government whose deputy was involved in the altercation. The Minister has explained that although for convenience the funds for the National Cleaning Day are channeled through the Municipalities, this exercise is a special Presidential initiative implemented by his Ministry and not by the Municipality which otherwise has a statutory mandate to clean their localities.

The Mayor was more concerned about transparency and the proper management of funds and informed us that apart from such an isolated incident she enjoyed an excellent working relationship with majority of Government functionaries that she had to deal with.

Thus, we will leave it to the Ministry and the Municipality to clear the air on the reasons why a simple case of difference of opinion could have degenerated into a quarrel that has given rise to heated reactions including pathetic ethnic interpretations in the public place.

We will, however, deplore the aggressiveness and lack of respect demonstrated by the Deputy Minister towards the Mayor who all throughout was taking pains to explain that her actions were based on the principles of transparency and accountability.

By describing the Mayor as a saboteur, the Deputy Minister regrettably invited political interpretations that could only augment the level of toxicity and divisiveness that some political parties have brought to this country.

Furthermore, all political parties without exception have made a commitment in diverse ways to support and encourage women's participation in politics and it is our view that it is not a good example to subject one of the bold few who have stepped forward to this kind of treatment in public.

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C/O 17 WILKINSON ROAD, FREETOWN. Tel: +232 30748961



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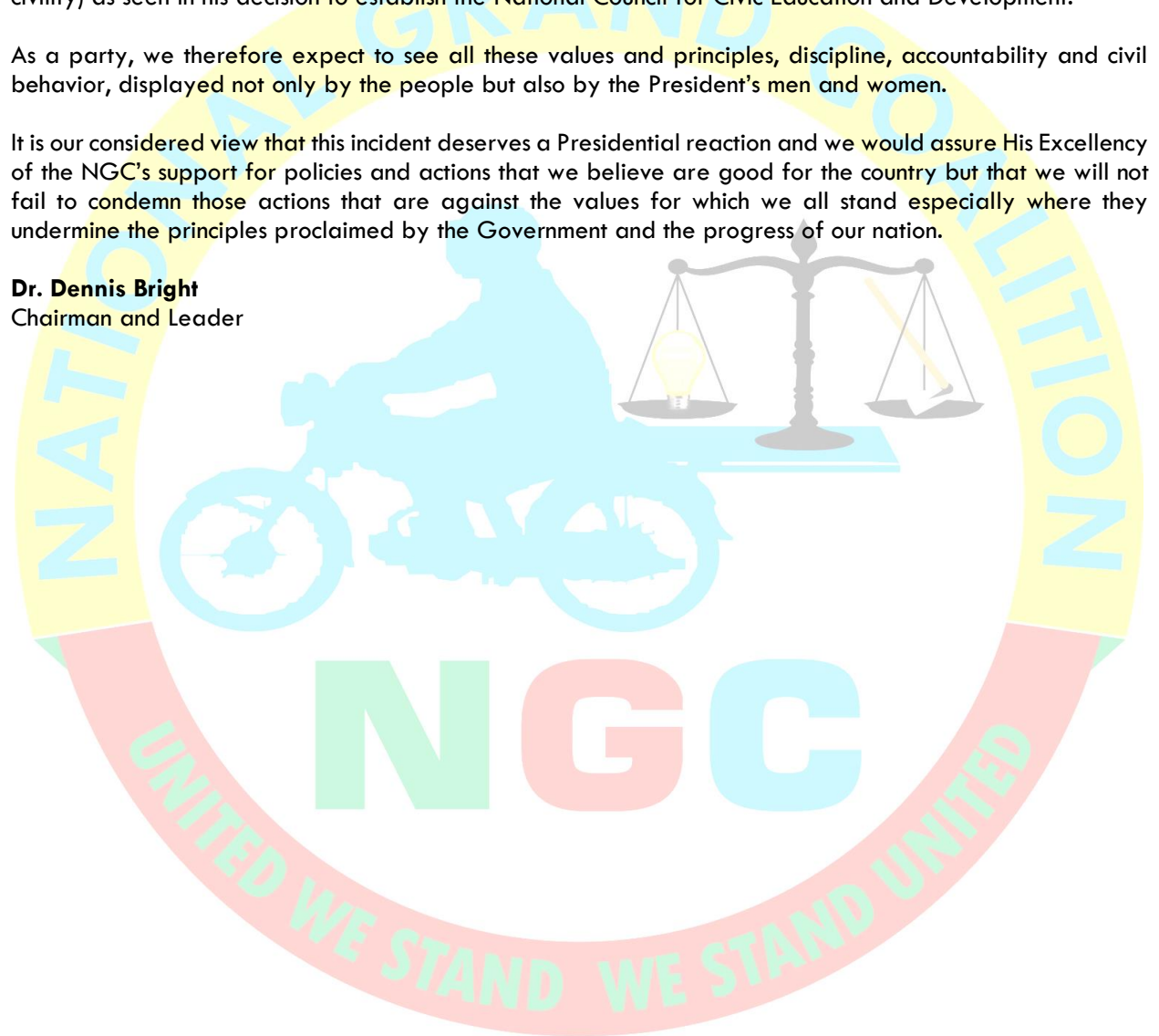


His Excellency the President has made several commitments to the nation which he has started implementing: these include maintaining discipline at all levels, upholding the principles of accountability and transparency as exemplified in the fight he has launched against graft and corruption and civic responsibility (including civility) as seen in his decision to establish the National Council for Civic Education and Development.

As a party, we therefore expect to see all these values and principles, discipline, accountability and civil behavior, displayed not only by the people but also by the President's men and women.

It is our considered view that this incident deserves a Presidential reaction and we would assure His Excellency of the NGC's support for policies and actions that we believe are good for the country but that we will not fail to condemn those actions that are against the values for which we all stand especially where they undermine the principles proclaimed by the Government and the progress of our nation.

Dr. Dennis Bright
Chairman and Leader



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