



July 21, 2018

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) has viewed with shock a horrendous video circulating on social media of a police officer assaulting a nursing mother on the premises of Midland Savings and Loans Limited in Accra and strongly condemns the act in no uncertain terms.

Information gathered from the video, and audio interviews listened to indicate that the woman had gone to withdraw money she had saved with the company.

The Commission finds it difficult to come to terms with the fact that a woman who is vulnerable, and holding her baby, could be subjected to such torture, inhumane and cruel treatment by a police officer whose duty as an officer of state is among others to promote and ensure peace and order in society and not to abuse his police powers in such an inhumane and undignified manner in the full glare of staff members of the said company.

The Commission wishes to remind all of the import of Article 15 (1), and (2) of the 1992 Constitution which provide in no uncertain terms for the respect for human dignity as follows:

(15) (1) “The dignity of all persons shall be inviolable.

(2) No person shall, whether or not he is arrested, restricted or detained, be subjected to

(a) torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

(b) any other condition that detracts or is likely to detract from his dignity and worth as a human being”.

Even though CHRAJ is reliably informed that the President of the Republic is very angry about the incident, and the Minister of interior has ordered the arrest of the suspect police officer, the Commission is of the considered view that this incident is one too many in recent times and coming on the heels of a number of other egregious violations of the rights of citizens by police officers while going about their normal lives and in some of the instances innocent lives have been lost.

The Commission believes that the Police administration must act in a more accountable and transparent manner to earn the trust of members of the public by allowing independent investigations of errant police officers such as the Midland Savings and Loans Company incident and the recent incident involving the death of seven citizens at the hands of the police in Kumasi.

The Commission in the past had drawn attention to the need to stop the practice where the police administration investigates its own staff involving egregious violation of the rights of citizens and other residents especially when the incidents involve the use of unreasonable force leading to life threatening injury or death of the victims as in these two recent incidents cited above. Our position remains the same.

In other jurisdictions including some sister African countries, Independent Police Complaints Commissions (IPCC) conduct such criminal investigations and it is about time we consider such a body in the light of constant recurrence of police officer impunity.



Joseph Whittal  
Commissioner