



Office of the Minister

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

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General Circular No.15

Monrovia, December 13, 2021: The attention of the Ministry of Internal and National Council of Chiefs have been drawn to practices and actions by individuals and groups claiming to represent traditional leaders and Zoes that violate standing administrative guidelines and regulations governing the conduct and operations of Poro and Sande Societies in Liberia, as well as the constitutional rights of freedom of movement and the freedom of association within the Republic of Liberia.

The repeated violations of these guidelines and regulations, in key sections of Liberia have caused and continue to cause embarrassment to the Government and people of Liberia, trauma to affected persons and families, and interruptions to normal lives of citizens and residents; thereby undermining the Government's efforts to ensure that the constitutional rights and civil liberties of all citizens and residents are respected and upheld.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs also condemns all forms of forcible initiations into Poro or Sande Society anywhere within the territorial confines of the Republic of Liberia.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs urges all Zoes, elders and chiefs throughout the Republic of Liberia to carry out their functions within the confines of the traditional laws and guidelines governing the practices of Poro and Sande societies.

Consequently, the Ministry of internal Affairs, in consultation with the National Council of Chiefs, reiterates and stipulates that:

1. No Poro and Sande Zoe or operator shall initiate a child/children or any student into a grove during the normal school year. The is to avoid interference or disruption of normal school activities and impede the academic progress of students;
2. No Poro and Sande Zoe, Elder, Chief or local government officer shall establish a Poro or Sande grove within the legally established city limits in Liberia. All groves; Poro and Sande so established, shall be clearly identified and marked to avoid unintentional encroachment by non-initiates or others.
3. All non-initiate males, females, other citizens and residents are urged to exercise caution not to encroach upon Poro and Sande grove Shrine.
4. No Poro and Sande Zoe, Elder, Chief or local government officer is allowed to set-up road-blocks under the pretext of culture and tradition. Such road-blocks shall be deemed violation of the right to movement and punishable by law.

