

#WeAreUnprotected: Charter of Demands

October 18, 2018

We remain deeply troubled by the horrid report titled “UNPROTECTED”, released by Propublica and TIME Magazine on Thursday, October 11, 2018, which detailed horrific incidents of rape, sexual abuse and exploitation of Liberian children under the care of More Than Me (MTM) Academy. We note that today marks one week since the release of the report. We therefore are re-echoing our call to the Liberian government to institute the following measures:

- To immediately revoke the national accreditation of More Than Me (MTM) Academy and their management of schools under the Ministry of Education’s Liberia Education Advancement Program (LEAP).
- To appoint a Trustee(s) to take More Than Me (MTM) Academy inaugural school on Ashmun Street which is at the center of these allegations. This should include relocation of the school given circumstance around ownership and the stigma associated with the current coverage.
- To reassign all nineteen (19) public schools under the management of MTM Academy in the LEAP program.
- To demand the establishment of an Independent Trust of funds raised by MTM to cover school fees, uniforms, feeding, transportation stipend, and or medical costs for all the students at MTM Inaugural school (Ashmun Street) through their graduation from high school. The fund should be administered by a selected Liberian Woman Organization with oversight from the trustee(s).
- The release of the selection process for the contracting of MTM under the “Partnership for School” Program (and now as LEAP) with the Ministry of Education in 2016 and 2018, respectively.
- To institute healthcare and psychosocial counselling for all the students under More Than Me (MTM) from its After School Program to the establishment of its inaugural school on Ashmun Street and up to present, fully covered by MTM.
- An independent audit report of MTM financial activities in Liberia since 2013.
- An independent investigation to review the activities of More Than Me (MTM) in Liberia, from its After School program in 2011 to present, in order to determine the full scope and magnitude of the organization’s activities in regards to the safety, security and welfare of these girls under their care.
- To demand that More Than Me (MTM) makes available key documentation as part of investigation to ascertain what actions were taken by MTM and its Board to curb further exposure of these girls to danger. The documentation should include but not limited to:
 - i. Two (2) reports by senior staff cited in publication, i.e. MTM Risk Management Policy.
 - ii. Video of interview of McIntosh Johnson conducted by MTM’s camera man Holden Warren.
 - iii. MTM’s Report on 2014 Investigation and Action Plan (including review of implementation)
 - iv. Bylaws of Local Advisory Board to ascertain extent of their involvement in affairs of MTM
- A release of the 2014 Investigation report to ascertain who were the parties involved (government and other actors) and what recommendations and subsequent actions were taken.
- To institute an Oversight Committee to ensure the roll-out and the implementation of the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy (SEA) for NGOs, INGOs and all public and private education institutions.
- The resignation of the Director of the SGBV Crimes Unit of the Ministry of Justice, **Cllr. John A.A. Gabriel and Tenneh Johnson**, staff of the said unit. We no longer have the confidence and trust that they will and can continue to enact their duties in a fair, objective and committed manner.

We express our solidarity with the survivors and are concerned about their wellbeing given the public attention of these allegations. We will appreciate that appropriate measures are taken by the Government of Liberia to prioritize and ensure the safety and wellbeing of these girls, which may or may not include their temporary relocation. It is imperative that this covered fully by funds raised by MTM on the students' behalf and should include direct support the students' and families.

The prevalence of violence against women and girls in our society is enabled by the culture of impunity which continues to prevent women and girls from accessing justice. The More Than Me incident highlights the critical need for improving the justice system and strengthening the legal framework to protect Liberian women and girls from violations in the first place. We therefore remind the Liberian government to use this as an opportunity to advance its commitment to Liberian women and girls and ensure adequate laws and mechanisms are in place to protect Liberian women and girls from these horrifying and inhumane experiences. We reaffirm our position against the proposed amendment to the New Rape Law and call on the National Legislature to pass the Domestic Violence Bill. We remain prepared to hold the government accountable in the event that no action is taken to protect these girls and ensure access to justice and adequate care and support. We are also ready to lend our support to government in implementation of demands above.

“Women Rights Are Human Rights”

End the Violence Against Women and Girls in Liberia.