



The National Human Rights Commission, The Gambia
PRESS RELEASE
NHRC/PR/ 03112022/001 (001)

Unacceptable Police Brutality Against a Civilian

The attention of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has been drawn to a video on social media in which a group of Police Intervention Unit Officers in full riot gears were seen kicking and beating an unarmed, non-threatening civilian with batons all over his body. While the Commission is investigating the circumstances surrounding this incident which it believes occurred yesterday 10th March 2022, it wishes to state in no uncertain terms that no person, in particular law enforcement officers, has the right to torture, beat, injure or harm another regardless of the provocation. The Commission has also contacted the Office of the Inspector General of Police to raise its concerns. The actions of these Police Officers are condemnable, inhumane, degrading and, above all, a flagrant violation of human rights.

A Police Officer is not only a guardian of the law but is also expected, as a duty bearer, to respect and protect the human rights of all people, including those who are even suspected of breaking the law. By the adoption in 2020 of the Guidelines on Policing Public Assemblies in The Gambia, the Gambia Police has placed upon itself the obligation to put in place mechanisms and standards for the peaceful management of assemblies and demonstrations. Having a group of officers acting contrary to the spirit of the Guidelines is both disheartening and disturbing.

The Commission wishes to reiterate its unequivocal position against impunity and every form of human rights violation. Police brutality has no place in a democratic dispensation. Due process and rule of law are expected to be followed when a person breaks or is suspected of breaking the law.

The Commission calls on the Inspector General of Police to immediately identify and bring to book the Police Officers who are in the video assaulting the civilian. They have violated the law and should therefore be punished accordingly.

We wish to further remind all law enforcement officers that they have a duty to respect and protect human rights, and that they would be held accountable for any human rights violation committed whether under command or not.

As we strengthen our democracy and good governance, we urge everyone to always be law abiding, uphold the rule of law and follow due process when aggrieved. Violence has the potential of disturbing the peace and security of the country and retarding its development.

Emmanuel D. Joof
Chairperson
National Human Rights Commission