



## global witness

Lloyds Chambers, 1 Portsoken Street  
London, E1 8BT  
United Kingdom  
Phone: +44 (0)207 4925820  
Fax: +44 (0)207 4925821  
Email: [mail@globalwitness.org](mailto:mail@globalwitness.org)  
[www.globalwitness.org](http://www.globalwitness.org)

H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf  
President  
Republic of Liberia

4 November 2016

Dear Madam President,

I am writing regarding the recent persecution by Liberian government officials of staff working for the NGO Green Advocates. We are profoundly concerned about the treatment of these staff members, which has included arrest, threats of arrests, harassment at staff members' houses, and the closure of the Green Advocates' office. These actions betray the principles of democratic good governance and rule of law that your government has worked hard to promote and should cease immediately.

Last week, on 28 October, an arrest warrant was issued for Alfred Brownell, the President of Green Advocates. It is our understanding that this warrant violated Liberian criminal procedure and thus should not have been issued. Following this, government agents reportedly began visiting the houses of Green Advocates staff members at night and arrested Alfred's uncle, solely based on his familial relationship with Alfred. Four staff members that we know of have now gone into hiding while the NGO's office has been shut down.

Such persecution of NGO staff should stop. The Liberian government has made considerable efforts to improve the conduct of its security forces and Liberia is a safer country because law enforcement follows the rule of law. Illegal arrests, harassment of NGO workers, and the shuttering of NGO offices undermine these efforts and sends a worrying signal that Liberia no longer respects the vital role civil society plays in Liberia.

Accordingly, we respectfully request you to direct the appropriate authorities to call off their persecution of Alfred Brownell and all the staff of Green Advocates, and their family members, and to guarantee their safety..

As always, we welcome the opportunity to speak with you further on these matters.

Best regards,

Patrick Alley  
Director  
Global Witness

cc:

Cllr. J. Fonati Koffa, Minister of State, Republic of Liberia  
Ambassador Tiina Intelmann, E.U. Delegation, Liberia  
Ambassador Christine Elder, U.S. Embassy, Liberia  
Ambassador David Belgrove, U.K. Embassy, Liberia