



REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES

POLICY ON CHIEFTAINCY

By Command of the
Defence Policy Committee

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INTRODUCTION

1. The large majority of RSLAF personnel originates or has very strong cultural ties with the provinces, meaning thereby the issue is close to their hearts and souls. Having relatives back 'home' implies that matters of local chieftaincy politics are usually discussed with the desired participation of concerned RSLAF personnel, especially senior officers and NCOs. This also coincided with official policy of the then colonial administration to support the idea that any serving personnel that had a claim to any ruling house should be encouraged to contest for chieftaincy. This policy facilitated the much needed communication line between the colonial administrators and the chiefs. This really improved the level of understanding between the two parties. This actually removed the need to train the 'chieftaincy' candidates in simple administrative and communication skills having regard to the dearth of western education among the provincials those days.

2. The questions we need to answer are whether this kind of support required by these interested chieftaincy candidates from the RSLAF is still relevant to the aspirations of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces? What does the institution stand to gain in the short and long term? How would installed retired RSLAF Paramount Chiefs help in civil military relations in and around their townships? What role will they play in the PROCECS and DISECS? Can this impede or promote the aspirations of the Office of National Security?

BACKGROUND

3. Chieftaincy in Sierra Leone:

Paramount Chieftaincy in Sierra Leone was an administrative concept introduced by the British colonial administration to aid the system of indirect rule. It was also to allow the indigenous Sierra Leoneans serve as agents of colonial power to rule their colonies through native authorities and cultural institutions. The rationale behind this chieftaincy system of rule was that Africans are best ruled through a system they understood and identified with. Before the advent of colonial rule, victorious warriors conquered and subdued their enemies and established their kingdoms. The kings of these kingdoms wielded enormous political power - exercising legislative, executive and judicial powers. They were the be all and end all in their different local domains. Their powers were second to none.

4. However, the coming of colonial rule saw these powers virtually eroded as they could not match the military supremacy of the conquering British colonialists. The African chiefs lost their powers and sovereignty to the colonial administration. The British adopted the system of chieftaincy because colonialism could not afford the material and financial resources to administer the myriad of colonies they possessed. It was very cost effective to adopt indirect rule by using African chiefs who owed allegiance to the Queen in England through the resident colonial governor.

5. In reality, over time, chieftaincy provided the local elite with political power. It is doubtful how ruling houses in Sierra Leone came about. It is believed that these ruling houses were arbitrary creations by the British colonial administrators to limit the number interested contestants in chieftaincy politics. One of these ruling houses would produce a set of candidates from among which, a winner would emerge. In the early stages only 'local natives' who were not civil servants or service personnel could stand for chieftaincy.

6. However, overtime, the need for adequate communication brought about the need for the requirement of certain level of literacy or some amount of understanding the ways of life of the white man. Western education made educated candidates for chieftaincy desirable. Thus, some retired civil servants including police officers and military officers looked at vying for chieftaincy while contemplating retirement, was necessary and desirable in the circumstances.

RSLAF personnel's interest in chieftaincy

7. This dates as far back as colonial times where heavy premium was placed on communication with the traditional rulers. During colonial times military personnel were encouraged to sign up and contest for paramount chieftaincy. Those who had Long Service and Good Conduct (LS&GC) medals stood a better chance of official endorsement of their candidature. Even other personnel who worked for the colonial administration were also encouraged. Evidence shows that retired court messengers and police officers who served the colonial

administration also were officially encouraged to become Paramount Chiefs.

RATIONALE

8. a) For easy communication with the white colonial administration.

Their experience during the service in the army will enhance their traditional administrative skills, hence their exposure to western education and/or experience. Therefore, any RSLAF personnel who attained the rank of sergeant and above and came from/belonged to a ruling house, was encouraged to contest. More often than not, these ex-servicemen, retired police officer of court messengers, were elected as Paramount Chiefs. A list of ex-service men were nominated and appointed. Among them were late WO II Jawara of Musaya, RSM Sankoh of Masimera, a retired Sergeant alias 'Kanya Peppeh', who came from a ruling house was elected in Kamakwie; late Chief Kellie Koroma of Yiffin (was a court messenger); Chief Shengeh of Koinadugu District and Chief Gbauru, all belonged to the category of ex-service men who were honourably discharged from the RSLAF.

Examples of retired civil servants and retired officers are as follows:

- a. Late PC Kelly of Neh Chiefdom, Kabala, Koinadugu District, served as court messenger.
- b. Late PC Dambala was also a retired court messenger.
- c. Late PC Morr-leh Kargbo was also a court messenger.

- d. Late PC alias Kanya Peppah of Kamakwie was a retired RSM.
- e. In recent times late Capt OBL Mansaray whose last posting was in Daru was granted leave of absence and a percentage of his retirement benefit was given to him to contest for the paramount chieftaincy in Sinkunya, this was under the command of Rtd Col LMS Turay.

d. Late RSM Sankoh was a senior waiter at Myohaung officers Mess in his days. He was granted time-off and active support by the military to campaign and win the Masimera chieftaincy election. Though he did not come from the ruling houses he however won with the support of the central government then.

9. The research also revealed that the financial assistance given to the former officers/soldiers who contested chieftaincy elections were loaned from their terminal financial benefits

10. CASE FOR CONTINUED RSLAF SUPPORT TO WOULD BE ASPIRANTS TO CONTEST PARAMOUNT CHIEFTAINCY ELECTIONS

11. Though section 165 (3) prohibits all serving personnel from taking positions as President, Vice President, Minister or Member of Parliament, RSLAF personnel are not precluded from contesting Paramount Chieftaincy elections.

JUSTIFICATION FOR SUPPORT

12. Where an RSLAF aspirant wins an election, the Army would have a reliable ally in terms of providing intelligence and consolidating the good civil military relationship between the RSLAF and the newly elected Chief and his chieftdom.

13. The new chief whose youthful life has been spent in the army will be of immense help and value to the PROSECS and DISECS within the national security architecture. He will be able to relate more to the Office of National Security in the areas of border security and local government administration.

APPLICABLE RULES

14. The following rules shall apply for any RSLAF serving personnel who may aspire to stand for chieftaincy elections:

A. (i) Declaration of Intention to Stand for Paramount Chieftaincy Elections

Any serving RSLAF personnel is eligible to declare to stand for Paramount Chieftaincy elections. However, this intention must be communicated to his immediate commander at least 18 months to the date of the declaration of title for the attention and subsequent action for the next superior authority. Such correspondence should pass through Comd Joint Force (CJF) who will fix a date for the so called aspirant to show reason/s why he/she would aspire to stand such elections. The applicant must show sufficient link with the ruling house.

(ii) The aspirant should have an unblemished disciplinary record.

(iii) CJF shall furnish MOD with a recommendation on the character, attitude and comportment of the aspirant.

(iv) CDS shall form a committee to look at the merits and demerits of endorsing such candidature with a recommendation of RSLAF support.

B. Where the committee recommends that the applicant should be allowed to contest, he will be entitled to the following:

(i) The applicant is entitled to 3 months compassionate leave to enable him engage in the chieftaincy campaign.

(ii) No financial benefit shall accrue applicant on application to stand for chieftaincy elections.

(ii) No RSLAF resources or personnel shall be utilized by the applicant during his electioneering campaigns

(iii) D Def Pers shall prepare a declaration to that effect which must be out filled out and signed by the applicant.

(iv) The applicant shall not wear military uniform during anytime of his campaigns.

(v) The terminal benefits of the successful applicant shall be computed three months from the his installation as Paramount Chief.

17 months - despatched

*survive -> Babu to work
2 months paid leave*