

Dire Need to Respect the Sanctity of Human Life in Liberia: DATI Peace Advocates Visit Family of Mordecial Nyemah in Pleebo!



Peace Advocates of the Maryland/Gbenelue Chapter of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) visited the family of Mordecial Nyema on Monday, April 19th, 2021 in Pleebo City, Maryland County. The high-powered DATI delegation was led by its Maryland County Director Meshach Sieh Elliott. During the solemn ceremony, the youths of Dehkontee Artists Theatre’s Maryland Chapter expressed their deepest condolences to Ms. Mary Nyemah, the surrogate mother of slain youth and commercial motor cyclist Mordecial Neyma and his family, for their irreparable loss. Mordecial Nyemah was a twelfth-grade student of Pleebo High School.

DATI also presented a humble consolation package to Ms. Nyema and her family to help defray some of the funeral expenses for their son. During the ceremony libation was poured to acknowledge the presence of the spirits of our forefathers so they would bless the gathering. Mr. Thomas Kuwait Nyemah expressed gratitude on behalf of the family. He stated that what DATI did to reach out to his family was heartwarming. He thanked Dr. Gbaba and the DATI team for a job well done. Ms. Mary Nemah, aunt of the deceased also thanked DATI for their general support.

What Really Happened in Maryland?



Recently, Mordecial Nyema was gruesomely murdered in Pleebo, Maryland County by twenty-eight-year-old suspect named Roland Appleton and three other individuals identified as Moses Malmah, Francis Clarke, and Daniel Wesseh—all youths. According to the April 9, 2021 edition of “The Bush Chicken” online magazine, Mordecial Nyemah was murdered along the

Maryland-Grand Kru Highway in Gbolobo-Bessiken, Pleebo Sodoken Statutory District. As a result, concerned citizens, including mothers, youths, and students organized a peaceful protest and marched from Pleebo to Harper City to seek timely justice and redress from County authorities regarding the death of their slain son and colleague.



Harper Prison Compound vandalized by protesters seeking transparent justice for Mordecial Nyemah.

However, observers reported that the crowd turned angry when the Acting Superintendent informed peaceful protesters Mordecial Nyemah’s murder would be addressed during the August court term while the protesters had hoped their grievances would be addressed by carrying out a speedy investigation and trial. Consequently, angry protestors burned down and vandalized several private and public properties including but not limited to the home of Borfur Chambers, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia, the Harper Central Prison Compound, and vehicles, while expressing their frustrations for the continual ritualistic killings that occur in Maryland with impunity.

In response, the government of Liberia imposed a dusk to dawn curfew and arrested several individuals and youths, including students from Tubman University. They were incarcerated at the Zwedru Palace of Corrections. Those arrested have not been arraigned and/or no fixed court dates have been set for their trial. In addition, the Liberia National Police confirmed that the

The Sanctity of Human Life

Human life is very sacred. It cannot be manufactured in a scientific laboratory, neither does man have the power to create a human being, except Almighty God. Though man plays a role through sexual intercourse during the procreation process, yet, that process of itself is a divine plan which can only occur when a male sperm mates with a female egg. Therefore, to emphasize the essence of human life God included “Thou shall not kill” as part of his Ten Commandments he gave to the Children of Israel.



Furthermore, to make himself very clear regarding the issue about *the sanctity of human life*, God rescued Isaac's when God tested Abraham and asked him to sacrifice his only child. When Abraham raised the dagger to sacrifice Isaac, God miraculously intervened and changed what would have been a human sacrifice to one with an unblemished lamb. God performed this miracle because he wanted to teach mankind that we do not need human sacrifice to please him and/or to get or retain big government jobs. Ever since then, it became customary and the acceptable norm of every civilized society to slaughter an animal if one desires to make a sacrifice, whether to appease the dead, or to seek greater fortune in life.



Grebo culture is very rich. In the photo above, the young man is passing out kola nuts and pepper to traditionally greet the DATI Peace Advocates to the Nyemah home before any other business can be conducted. This is followed by the presentation of water or anything in the form of a liquid, such as gin, rum, etc., as a sacred drink. In which t-shirt is Thomas Kuwait Nyemah, cousin of the deceased.

The slaughtering of human beings is a barbaric act. It dates to barbaric eras when there was no rule of law. During those dark eras, man naively believed that offering another human being as an ultimate sacrifice would bring them fame, wealth, and success in life. However, when man became civilized and began to conglomerate there was a need to put an end to ritualistic killing because there is no scientific proof that killing another man makes you to become successful in life. In most instances success in life derives from hard work, steadfastness, and a firm determination to make ends meet. Therefore, ritualist killing and/or snatching another man's life away in the darkness of the night is wrong and should be discouraged at all levels of society.

Ritualistic Killing Is Not Kwa or Grebo Culture and Not Liberian Culture Either!



Compound of Borfur Chambers, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Liberia, set ablaze during the protest. It is not clear why Speaker Chambers property was signaled out.

Ritualistic killing is not Kwa or Grebo culture or Liberian culture either. It is mainly prevalently carried out in two specific regions of Liberia—Maryland and Montserrado Counties. This does not mean that ritualistic killings do not occur in other parts of Liberia. Nevertheless, when it comes to the frequency with which ritualistic killings occur in Liberia, these two regions rank top on the list. Hence, in my view and observation ritualistic killing as a foreign cult or custom was imposed on the Liberian people through the introduction of foreign cults or secret ‘societies’ in Liberia. Below, I submit some reasons for my assertion and observation as a cultural researcher.



Members of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) dressed in yellow t-shirts pose with the Neyemah Family at their residence in Pleebo, Maryland County. DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia was established in 2019 to promote peace and reconciliation and rule of law. The organization is comprised of college students and graduates of Tubman University in Harper, Maryland County.

Throughout the narratives that were told by our Kwa ancestors I have not heard any mention made of people being brutally killed outside of tribal wars like the way ritualistic killings have taken place in Maryland and Montserrado Counties over the past century. Centuries back, the Krahns were referred to by their Grebo, Kru, Bassa brothers and sisters as “Pineyoun” (Rich People). As descendants of biological brothers, members of these Kwa ethnic groups travelled to one another’s countries (territories) frequently. The Krus, Grebos, Bassas came on pilgrimage to

Mount Gedeh to see the Oracle at Putu and the Krahn or Pineyoun travelled by foot to go to Gbenelue (Cape Palmas) or Zinonqlee (Krus call it Siloklee) in Sinoe County, just to see the Atlantic Ocean or to purchase salt, tobacco and other foreign goods that were not produced in the hinterland of Liberia.

Due to their fraternal relationships, those days a Krahn man traveling to Maryland or Sinoe or Grand Kru or Bassa could stop for days or weeks in any family house along his journey trail without any questions asked. They would accommodate themselves when the hosts were on the farm and when the hosts arrived, they would warmly greet their guests and accommodate them until it was time for them to leave. Not once did I hear the old folks say anyone got ‘mysteriously missing’ or was ritualistically murdered while traveling through Grebo, Bassa, or Kru land. In addition, it is also safe to say that even in the Mel and Mande territories of Liberia (western, northern, central Liberia) people roamed about freely without any incidents of ritualistic killings in Nimba, Bong, Lofa, Bomi, Barpolu, Grand Cape Mount, except for Montserrado where such diabolical act is also rampant!

Therefore, individuals who are members of the “Gboyoy Cult” in Maryland must stop tarnishing the reputation of the Grebo people. Ritualistic killings are not an inherent attribute of Grebo or Kwa culture. It is a custom derived from the imposition of a foreign cult that is mainly prevalent in Maryland and Montserrado Counties.

Conclusion of DATI Peace Advocates Visit with the Nyemah Family in Pleebo



DATI Peace Advocates pose with mothers of the deceased during the condolence visit in Pleebo

During DATI Peace Advocates’ visit with Mordecial Nyemah’s family, Ms. Mary Neymah, aunt and surrogate mother of the deceased, bitterly wept for the loss of her son and nephew. She said Mordicial’s biological parents passed when he was a child and she reared him. She lamented that

he would not be graduating from high school when his colleagues successfully complete their secondary education.

However, despite the pain she and her family are going through, the Nyemah family is appealing to the Liberian government to please release those that are imprisoned as a result of their involvement in the peaceful protest that turned violent. Ms. Nyeman was speaking on behalf of her family on whose behalf thousands of citizens (mothers, fathers, students) took to the streets to protest and to march many miles from Pleebo to Harper City to present their grievances to the authorities. She says the Nyemah family regrets that what was intended to be a peaceful march turned into vandalism. However, she is also appealing to His Excellency George Manning Weah, to please release Tubman University students who are incarcerated so they can return to school. Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. also condemns the violent act perpetrated by individuals to derail the good intent of the peaceful march by the women of Pleebo and pray that our farsighted leader will ensure justice is served and that those who paid teenagers to perpetrate such violent ritualistic act will have their day in court.

Published by Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. Public Relations Section

April 21, 2021