

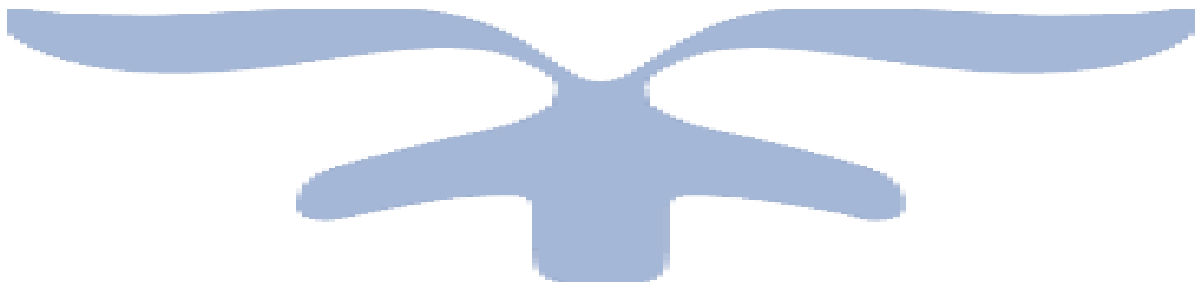


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# **REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PETITIONS**

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## **ON THE PETITION FROM THE WULI EAST ANIMAL PROTECTION ASSOCIATION ON POLICE INACTION TO STOP ANIMAL THET IN THE REGION**



MARCH 2023

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## **CHAIRPERSON'S FORWARD**

This report contains the Committee's procedures on the consideration of the Public Petition regarding police inaction to prevent cattle theft in the Wuli region. This petition by the Wuli East Animal Protection Association was presented to the National Assembly on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2020. Having fulfilled the admissibility criteria set in the Standing Orders, it was referred to the Committee for consideration and scrutiny.

While considering the petition, the executive members of the Animal Protection Association, accompanied by members of the Wuli East Development Association, officials of the Cattle Farmers' Association among others appeared before the Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and made submissions. The Committee travelled to the Wuli region on the 1st June 2021 and conducted public hearings in Boro Kanda Kasse, Foday Kunda, Maka Masireh, Sare Ngai and Basse respectively.

Upon returning to the Assembly building, the Committee heard from other witnesses ranging from police commissioners, a former Governor, the Inspector General of Police, and the Minister of Interior.

The Committee is grateful to the Offices of the Speaker and the Clerk of the National Assembly in providing logistical and technical support during the consideration of the Petition. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the Honourable members of the Committee, the Committee Secretariat, the Press, and all the stakeholders who made submissions towards the preparation and production of this report.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Public Petitions and pursuant to Standing Order 128 (2,B), it is my pleasant privilege and honour to present to this Assembly the report of the Committee on its consideration of the Public Petition No. 2 of 2020 regarding the alleged Police inaction to prevent and investigate animal theft in the Wuli region.

.....  
**HON. SUWAIBOU TOURAY**  
**CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This petition from the Wuli East Animal Protection Association was filed in 2020 after series of complains of animal theft in the Wuli region. This association, formally known as the Wuli East Cattle Herders Association, was formed to serve as a community-led monitoring and policing group to curb the issue of animal theft.

This report therefore explains the findings of the Committee in relation to the allegations raised and complains filed therein. The first part of the report looks at the methodology, mandate, and composition of the Committee; both the current membership and the membership in the 5<sup>th</sup> Legislature, who carried out the bulk of the findings in relation to this petition. Part 2 presents the submissions from the various witnesses, including the petitioners, adversely mentioned persons and officials petitioned. Part 3 presents the Committee's observations and recommendations.

Upon receipt of the petitions, the Committee summoned the petitioners to present oral testimonies. The Committee subsequently organized series of public hearings in the Assembly building, Wuli and Basse. Witnesses were drawn from traditional leaders, the security sector, and adversely mentioned persons. Key points on the summary of each of the testimonies are reflected in part 2 of the report. It highlighted alleged inaction of the police to investigate and prosecute offenders, as well as implement the Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency Act, which issues, suspends and revoke licences to livestock dealers and butchers.

# **PART I**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Standing Committee on Public Petitions is established by Order 125 of the National Assembly Standing Orders, to receive formal complaints from the public. The Committee is one of the newest in the National Assembly of the Gambia, having been established in 2020. The Committee, as detailed in the mandate, receives and reviews public petitions addressed to the Assembly. This petition from the Wuli East Animal Protection Association is one of the earliest petitions received by the Committee. It was filed at a time that the Committee was not established. However, once it was composed, the petition was then referred to the Committee for scrutiny. The findings thereof, is reflected in this report.

### **1.1 Methodology**

Like other petitions received by the Committee, various methods were adopted to gather evidence in dealing with this petition. These include public hearings in the Assembly, various places in Wuli and Basse where the petitioners were invited to seek clarifications and evidence on the petition filed, other witnesses mentioned in the petition, or representing the public institution petitioned are called to make submissions on the issues raised in the petitions. The Committee further reviewed documents presented as evidence.

### **1.2 Mandate of the Committee**

The Committee derives its mandate from section 109 of the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of the Gambia and Order 125 of the National Assembly Standing Orders:

*(1) There shall be a Standing Committee of the Assembly known as the Public Petitions Committee to-*

- a. Consider public petitions addressed to the Assembly;*
- b. Decide in cases of dispute on admissibility; and*
- c. Keep under review the public petitions system.*

*(3) The Public Petitions Committee shall consider, in accordance with the provisions of this Standing Order, any petition addressed to it*

## 1.3 Composition of the Committee

### 1.3.1 Current composition (6<sup>th</sup> Legislature)

#### Members

1, Hon. Suwaibou Touray	-	Chairperson
2. Hon. Fatou K Jawara	-	Vice Chairperson
3. Hon. Sulayman Saho	-	Member
4. Hon. Amadou Camara	-	Member
5. Hon. Gibbi Mballow	-	Member
6. Hon. Kemo Gassama	-	Member
7. Hon. Kebba Lang Fofana	-	Member
8. Hon. Haruna Barry	-	Member
9. Hon. Lamin J Sanneh	-	Member

#### Support Staff

1. Mrs. Haddy Dandeh Jabbi	Subject Matter Specialist
2. Mr. Karu Sallah	Subject Matter Specialist
3. Mr. Mamadou A.M Bah	Assistant Senior Committee Clerk
4. Mr. Ebrima Jawo	Assistant Senior Committee Clerk
5. Mrs. Halimatou Tamba	Assistant Senior Committee Clerk
6. Ms. Mary Mendy	Research Officer

### 1.3.2 Composition of the Committee in the 5<sup>th</sup> Legislature

#### Members

1. Hon. Sunkary Badjie-	Chairperson & Member for Foni Berefet
2. Hon. Dawda Kawsu Jawara-	Vice Chairperson & Member for Upper Fulladu West
3. Hon. Suwaibou Touray -	Rapporteur of the Committee & Member for Wuli East
4. Hon. Amadou Camara -	Rapporteur of the Committee & Member for Nianija
5. Hon. Salifu Jawo -	Jokadou
6. Hon. Fatou K Jawara -	Tallinding Kunjang
7. Lamin F.M Conta -	Kombo East
8. Hon. Alagie Jawara -	Lower Badibou
9. Hon. Ndey Yassin Secka-	Nominated Member

#### Support Staff

1. Mr. Pa Amady Jallow-	Subject Matter Specialist
2. Mr. Amadou Kujabi -	Subject Matter Specialist
3. Mr. Mamadou A.M Bah -	Assistant Senior Committee Clerk
4. Mr. Lamin Dibba -	Research Officer

## **PART 2**

### **2.0 HEARINGS ON THE PETITION**

#### **2.1 ORAL SUBMISSIONS BY THE PETITIONERS AND OTHER LEADERS FROM WULI AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

The petitioners complained of the serious issue of cattle rustling in the region which the police are failing to prevent or prosecute. The police usually raise very negative reservations on coming to their aid whenever they are called upon such as complaining of fuel issues, and failure to investigate and prosecute offenders or releasing accused persons before even prosecuting them.

The security of the livestock in the region is seriously hampered by the inactive role of the police in the region. More worrying, a good number of those rustlers are from Senegal, crossing the borders and the police being inactive.

As a result, an agreement was signed by associations from the two countries around the region. Since the signing of this agreement, 11 animal rustlers were arrested; 6 in Senegal by the Senegalese securities and 5 by the Gambian securities in the region. Senegal, according to the petitioners, has been very cooperative but securities in the Gambia have been very unsupportive, mainly failing to prosecute arrested individuals and frustrating the community thereof. This is reflected on the fact that out of those five arrested in the Gambia, only one is prosecuted.

The Minister of Interior was written to who promised to take steps to address the matter by replacing the police commissioners and other officials. However, even though this has been implemented, the problem is even escalating. Furthermore, series of complains and discussion with the IGP and other police institutions has also been made by the petitioners, but to no avail. A promise was made by the Minister to train the community on Community Policing, which is still not forthcoming.

It was also revealed by one of the witnesses that the police inaction could seriously lead to violence. Several reports were sent to the police to investigate thefts that has been reported, only for personnel on duties to be lax in investigation, instead asking the community to take responsibilities in not only securing their own livestock but also protection of their lives.

The petitioners further requested that the releasing of detained individuals within seventy-two hours be removed because it makes it difficult for a thorough investigation to be done on thefts.

### **2.1.1 SOME OF THE KEY ISSUES RAISED;**

- The inaction of the police in the region, despite several complains.
- Concerns raised on one Amadou Gagigo, who was adversely mentioned as a culprit in cattle and other livestock rustling in the area.
- The absence of a police station in the Wuli East District to monitor and track animal rustlers in the region.
- The Minister of Interior and the Office of the IGP failing to strongly institute steps to respond to the growing problem of animal rustling in the area.
- The failure to prosecute offenders.

### **2.2 HEARINGS IN BORO KANDA KASSE- CHIEF OF WULI EAST AND ALKALOS OF THE VILLAGES IN THE DISTRICT**

Boro Kanda Kasse is the seat of the chieftaincy of the Wuli East constituency. During this public hearing, the Committee received oral submissions from the Chief, Mr. Ebrima Sori Juwara, Alkalos and other representatives of the villages in the Wuli East and renowned elders. They submitted as follows:

The Chief said stealing ruminants and cattle rustling in general has been a practice in the URR region for quite some time. Chief Juwara said they have done everything to persuade the law-enforcement officers to help them stem the tide without avail. He said the Police Commissioners are not willing to protect the property owners but those bent on pillaging the animals in the district. He mentioned one Amadou Gajigo as the ringleader of the thieves, who he claimed are completely supported by the Police.

He said he at one time pleaded with Mr. Gajigo to help him recover 13 of his stolen sheep and goats. Amadou called him one day and said he found them in Senegal and asked him (the Chief) to collect them. Accordingly, he went to that village in the Senegal borders and found them exactly where he directed him. This, according to the Chief, is an indication that Mr. Gajigo might have been conniving with bandits across the border to steal ruminants and cattle across the border. The Chief further stated that it was not him alone who requested for the support of Amadou in locating his lost animals. Many people reported to him that they have paid ransom to Amadou to recover their animals. Some paid handsomely but did not recover anything, whilst a few were able to locate theirs through Amadou. The Chief also informed the Committee that he had written a letter out of frustration to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Interior to prevail on



the former Police Commissioner, Mr. Omar Darboe to cooperate with them to stop

Amadou from engaging in animal dealing but to no avail. He said Commissioner Darboe categorically told them that he would not enforce the GLMA Act because it was not in their purview to do so, even though GLMA officials informed him several times that they have revoked the licence of Amadou Gajigo from dealing with and butchering animals.

Several Alkalolus present in the meeting expressed their disappointment with the police. The Alkalo of Birif Village said anytime they apprehend a suspected thief and take him to Sare Ngai, the Police would push them away from the station. He further informed the Committee that a native of his village called Jarga Sowe, who lost his sheep, and for three months was reporting to the Sare Ngai Police Station, but to no avail.

After a series of complains and reports of theft cases to Sare Ngai and Basse Police stations without any positive outcomes, the Committee was informed that the people resolved in offering ransom to Amadou Gajigo. When the leaders were asked whether they would know the police officer who was doing such dubious act, they named one officer called Alkali Mandafa- a CID Officer.

### **2.3 HEARINGS IN FODAY KUNDA:**

*Members of the Animal Protection Association, Cattle Farmers' Association, Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency, Command Ababacarr (association based in Senegal) and host of others*

During this hearing, the Committee met more than a hundred individuals representing the Wuli East Animal Protection Association, a host of other associations from the Gambia and Senegal, elders from the villages in Wuli East and West. They submitted that animal rustling is a prevalent issue in the region, that most of the people have their livelihood on animal rearing and that the Police in the area are not supportive in the fight against rustling. They gave a history of recent animal thefts that:

- i. One Alieu Banna, the Public Relations Officer of the Association, and a resident of Koli Kunda reportedly had five of his sheep stolen.
- ii. Weeks later, a man named Dukuneh of Baja Kunda had two of his horses stolen.
- iii. The Imam of the village of Foday Kunda also had two sheep rustled shortly after.

iv. Another speaker called Faye Conteh informed the Committee that he lost nine goats. After making a thorough search of the animals to no avail, he enquired from Amadou Gajigo, who requested an amount of three thousand Dalasi to help trace the animals. He (Faye Conteh) refused to pay that amount

v. One Mandou Kebbeh of Wuli Ja-Kunda in the Wuli West, who is also the vice president of the association for the Wuli West branch strengthened the claims made by Mr. Faye Conteh that;

On the third day of Ramadan in 2021, a bull belonging to one Bakary Gaira, a native of Gunjur, who entrusted the animal in a village called Temanto, was stolen and slaughtered in Gunjur itself. On the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan, he (Mandou Kebbeh) was informed about it. After a preliminary investigation by the association members on the issue, a report was sent to Alkali Mandafa (a CID Officer stationed in Sare Ngai Police station). That was the last time the issue was heard, according to Mr. Mandou Kebbeh.

Similarly, stolen horses brought into the village of Sinchu Koli were seized and taken to Sareh Ngai Police station. Nothing was heard on the case again. The Association further informed the Committee that their relationship with the security forces in the area is not cordial. They feel that the support from the police to curtail the problem is not forthcoming. These challenges include: Accessing security officers and ensuring their presence in reported theft zone at the appropriate time prove very difficult

Apprehending suspects also proves difficult. This could be, according to the association, because of the lack of mobility from the station.

Moreover, in a letter addressed to the Chief of Wuli East District, copied to the Governor of URR, Police Commissioner- URR, and the NIA Director dated 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the Association registered complains on the activities of the adversely mentioned witness (Mr. Amadou Gajigo). In the letter, it was alleged that Mr. Gajigo was not only accused of animal rustling but also demanding cash or livestock inducement to help in locating missing animals. From the letter, the Committee was informed that the following persons paid certain amounts or livestock to Mr. Gajigo:

- i. Abdoulie Jallow from Bohum Kunda- (having two heads of cattle missing) paid D2000
- ii. Tunko Singhateh- Foday Kunda (3 female cattle) paid D3000
- iii. Saibeh Nasso- Birifu Village (2 mares)- paid D12,000
- iv. Muhammadou Bah- Bohum Kunda (2 bulls) – paid D15,000

V, Abdoulie Bah- Koly Kunda (1 cow)- paid D2000

Vi, Allie Jallow- Sakono Kunda (1 cow) paid D1000

Vii, Muhammadou Wally-Kanape village (2 horses) paid D10,000

Chief Ebrima Juwara- Boro Kanda Kasse (13 goats) ix. Dawda Jallow- Bohum Kunda, claimed that offered him a cow to prevent him from stealing his animals.

The Committee was informed that this strategy was employed by many others as the only means of regaining their rustled animals or prevent possible rustling from Mr. Gajigo and his accomplices.

#### **2.4 HEARINGS WITH THE PIU IN MAKAMASIREH**

As one of the law enforcement agencies in the area, the Committee called on the officers of the station to gather further knowledge on the issue of animal theft, as mentioned in the petition. This is a police checkpoint established at this border settlement to monitor the incoming and outgoing persons from and to Senegal respectively. The Committee was received on arrival by officers Lamin Kanuteh (overseeing the checkpoint), Modou Musa Saine and Lamin Bah. It is the only armed unit in Wuli East and West. They submitted that;

During one patrol, they apprehended one suspected animal rustler called Gedda from Senegal. They handed him over to the Sareh Ngai Police Station, only to be informed that the suspect has escaped on bail.

In one patrol at Sareh Jami, the officers rescued sheep rustled and tethered in the bush. The officers subsequently handed the rescued sheep over to the CID in Sareh Ngai for further investigation.

That the substation does not prosecute suspects, rather, they intercept cases, arrest and detain suspects and subsequently hand over the cases to the nearest Police Station.

The officers confirmed that they usually receive complains from the public that anytime they (the substation) forward a case to the Sare Ngai police station, it is either not investigated or simply not pressed further to court.

Quizzed on the claims that Amadou Gajigo is still in the animal trading and butchering despite a ban from GLMA, the officers confirmed that it remains the case.

The officers however complained that there is a limited cooperation from the public, especially in helping the substation in information gathering.

The substation however raised substantial challenges faced, such as lack of vehicle for patrol (patrol is done with motorbikes), absence of a perimeter fence to secure the base, limited personnel (only eight officers) and small office space and accommodation.

## ***2.5 HEARING WITH MR. AMADOU GAJIGO (AN ADVERSELY MENTIONED PERSON)***

A native of Sare Gubu, Wuli East, this witness was adversely mentioned in the petition as well as oral testimonies from all public hearings organized by the Committee on the matter. However, to allow natural justice to prevail, the Committee avail him the opportunity to respond to allegations made against him. He submitted as follows:

That he is a businessman by trade (buying and reselling livestock, horses, and donkeys))

He was licenced by the GLMA to operate both as a butcher and trade l However, his licenced was withdrawn in 2020, after series of complaints lodged against him. Presently, he operates using the 2018 GLMA licence. He denied receiving ransom from any individual to help in the search for lost animals. But when asked to respond to allegation that the Chief of the district offered him ransom to locate his missing animals, Mr. Gajigo confirmed that he indeed once helped the chief to recover his lost animals, found with one Hammeh in Sare-Jami.

Mr. Gajigo informed the Committee on several interceptions he made to rescue animals from rustlers. This, he said, was done voluntarily.

Mr. Gajigo confirmed to the Committee that he will continue to operate in the business, even though his licence has been revoked. He, however, agreed that operating as an animal trader without licenced is a violation of the law. But he insisted that he re-applied for a licence but never been granted. He went on to inform the Committee that he slaughtered some goats during the Ramadan of 2021 for business purpose n also a bull some months earlier.

It was put to him that both the petitioners and other witnesses met earlier informed the Committee that he (Mr. Gajigo) has befriended and bribed officers in kind, including the CID officer at Sare Ngai. Mr. Gajigo confirmed that he normally gives a portion of meat he is selling to officers on patrol, but not intended to be inducement.

## ***2.6 HEARINGS AT THE SARE NGAI POLICE STATION***

As the only Police Station in the Wuli region, and adversely mentioned in previous testimonies, the Committee visited the station and received testimonies from officers, including the CID officer Mandafa Camara, who was adversely mentioned by the petitioners and other witnesses. The team was received by ASP Ebrima Krubally, the officer in charge of the station. They submitted that.

The most common case reported to the station is animal theft. Once such a case is reported, according to the Officer in-charge, the suspects shall then be apprehended, and an investigation mounted on the case for prosecution at the Basse Magistrate Court.

The station establishes cordial relations with the Wuli East Cattle Herders Association and their counterparts in Senegal, the Command Ababacarr Association. That they sometimes make findings and report to the station. They, however, could not provide to the committee the number of reported cases from 2018 to 2021.

The officers of the station informed the Committee that they are not familiar with the GLMA Act. As a result, they lack the required capacity to effectively enforce GLMA directives.

During this engagement, the committee interacted with Alkali Mandafa Camara, a CID Officer (and an adversely mentioned), who denied allegations that he is a friend to Amadou Gajigo. He also stated that he never benefitted anything, such as a share of meat slaughtered, contrary to the claims made by Mr. Gajigo.

Mr. Mandafa also informed the Committee that he was never aware of the revocation of Amadou's licence by GLMA. When quizzed on the number of cases involving Mr. Gajigo brought to the station, he Mr. Mandafa confirmed that there was only one cases which he investigated involving Amadou Gajigo. Three sheep, belonging to one Baka Wally of Gunjur-koto were abducted, slaughtered, and thrown in the bush. Mr Gajigo became the principal suspect. The officers noted acute shortages the station is faced with, such as, lack of mobility vehicle for patrol and arrests, absence of communication devices, small office spaces, etc.

## ***2.7 TESTIMONY OF MR. ALPHA COLLEY, DEPUTY POLICE COMMISSIONER OF URR AND TEAM IN BASSE***

The Basse Police Station also serves as the base for the URR Police Commissioner. The Committee was received by Deputy Commissioner Alpha Colley and team. All reports on investigations from Sare Ngai Police station end up at this station for processing and possible prosecution. Therefore, the Committee organized this hearing to solicit testimonies on the issues raised in the petition.

Mr. Colley informed the Committee that the major crimes registered in the area are petty theft or animal rustling and assault causing bodily harm. He was asked to provide details of animal theft which could not do immediately and was asked to provide these details later.

He was asked whether he and his staff are aware of the GLMA Act to which he said they were not very aware but the GLMA officer in the

region came there a few times to brief them about it. He was asked what they did after the engagement with the GLMA officer, he answered that the problem is because the act is not under their purview to implement. He said what they recommended to the GLMA is to write a memorandum of understanding between them and the Police so that they could implement the act which he said had not been done. He was asked why they needed such a memorandum since the GLMA Act was enacted by the National Assembly, he responded that, that was what they were advised to do, citing an example of another act where they received a memo.

Mr. Colley was also asked whether he knew the problem between Amadou and the Association, he responded in the positive because they came to report several times, but the Station's hands were tight.

When asked how many cases were prosecuted relating to animal theft since last year, he said he could not say but he could remember some were prosecuted. He further stated that they have been taking Amadou Gajigo's cases to court, but the court threw them out, for lack of substantive evidence.

## **2.8 SUBMISSIONS BY THE GOVERNOR OF URR, MR. SAMBA BAH**

As the head of the security in the region, the Governor was copied the petition from the Association. Thus, the Committee saw him as an important witness to beef up the investigations. He submitted as follows; Posted to the region in December 2018 as a Deputy Governor. In August 2020, he was appointed as the Governor of the Upper River Region.

At the period, according to Mr. Bah, animal rustling was very prevalent in the URR. When asked why this was so prevalent and difficult to address then, the Governor stated the Police inaction to implement the GLMA Act. This led to a tussle between his predecessor, Mrs. Fanta Bojang Samateh Manneh and the former Commissioner of Police, Mr. Omar Darboe, and that was why the former Commissioner was transferred from Basse for refusing to enforce the GLMA Act. When asked whether he knows the existence of the Wuli East Animal Protection Association, the Governor said he is aware of them because they have lodged several complains to his office.

When further asked whether he is aware that the Police are unwilling to enforce the GLMA Act, he answered in the positive and narrated the experience of his predecessor. When asked whether he heard of one Mr. Amadou Gajigo, he answered in the positive and stated that he (Mr. Gajigo) is the man that everyone complains about in the area.

In subsequent years to date, this has reduced significantly.

Quizzed on the reasons for this massive reduction, the Governor stated that community mobilization and collaboration is the main factor. The establishment of the cattle farmer associations and their collaboration with counterparts in Senegal has helped in policing animals. Secondly, the role of security officers and the office of the Governor (from his predecessor) attached significant interest in curbing the menace.

### ***2.9 SUBMISSIONS BY THE FORMER GOVERNOR OF URR, MRS. FANTA BOJANG SAMATEH MANNEH, FORMER GOVERNOR, URR***

As the former Governor of the region, she was responsible for the coordination of the security units in the area. Accordingly, Mrs. Bojang stated that after receiving several complains from the Wuli East Animal Protection Association, the Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency, and other traditional leaders in Wuli, she invited the Police Commissioner for URR- Omar Darboe for a discussion on the matter. She advised Mr. Darboe to implement the decision of the GLMA to revoke the licence of Mr. Amadou Gajigo and other individuals who has their licence seized, as well as ensure all reported animal theft cases are adequately investigated. She stated that this was not honoured by the Commissioner. She further described the police, during her tenure as highly uncooperative, despite series of meetings with the Police Commissioner- URR, Mr. Omar Darboe. This culminated to her writing a letter to the Ministry of Interior, complaining of the Police inaction to address the issue of animal theft.

### **2.10 SUBMISSIONS BY MR. OMAR DARBOE, FORMER POLICE COMMISSIONER OF URR**

As the Commissioner adversely mention as not very cooperative in supporting the natives to address the issue of animal theft, Mr. Darboe stated that animal theft was a prevalent case. He said after three months of his appointment, he met the Wuli East Animal Protection Association where the issue of animal theft was reported as prevalent, hand the issue of Amadou Gajigo was reported to him. He also stated that he was told that one CID Officer Alkali Mandafa was not also supporting the locals in investigating reported animal theft. He promised them that he will do what is necessary with the law.

He further stated that the Committee that the police lacked the knowledge on the GLMA Act, therefore could not enforce the agency's decision. He informed the Committee that he requested a memorandum of understanding with the agency, which was not forthcoming.

He informed the Committee that during his tenure, the Police Division did investigate issues reported to them and pressed them further to court. However, he informed the Committee that he could neither remember the number of animal theft reported cases during his time, nor could he remember the number of prosecuted cases.

### ***2.11 SUBMISSIONS FROM MR. FAMARA JALLOW, FORMER POLICE COMMISSIONER, URR***

Testimony of Mr. Famara Jallow, Former Police Commissioner, URR

Mr. Jallow confirmed to the Committee that he was appointed as a Police Commissioner in URR in 2016. Confirmed to the Committee that he was appointed to address the issue of animal rustling in the Upper River Region. Commissioner Jallow was summoned to shed light on an incident he was adversely mentioned in which he went to Sutukoba and pressured the community to hand over a motorbike allegedly used by a thief who carried 3 sheep on it but when seen by night hunters, he threw away the bike and disappeared. The bike fell on the sheep and two of them died. The hunters then brought the bike and the sheep to the village and one Sukuta Jabai identified her two dead sheep; that Famara later came to the village and begged them to release the bike to him and he would do everything to ensure the thief was caught and be duly punished and the lady gets her dues but that nothing has been done since then.

Commissioner Jallow informed the Committee that as the head of the Police Division, he brought matter to the Basse Police Station for a comprehensive investigation. The bike, he said, was booked at the station as well as the creation of a case file. However, he informed the Committee that before the conclusion of the investigation he was transferred.

### **2.12 SUBMISSIONS BY THE DIRECTOR OF GAMBIA LIVESTOCK MARKETING AGENCY**

The Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency was established in 2008 and started operation in 2010 with the mandate to regulate livestock trade in the country. They register, renew, and sometimes revoke licences to practicing animal traders and butchers.

Aside from its core mandate, the agency was also established to facilitate the participation of Gambians in the marketing of livestock.

The criteria for the issuance of permit to dealers include;



- a. The applicant must be a Gambian with a valid Identity Card. If non-Gambian, the person must hold a valid residential permit.
- b. The applicant must pay a fixed price as given by the agency
- c. The application must be countersigned by a representative of the local government, i.e a Mayor, Chief or local authorities
- d. Must be of good character and free from conviction on any offence related to this job.
- e. Must abide by the provisions in the agency's act
- f. Must display the card upon request
- g. Must also abide by regulations from the Board.

The agency also reserves the right to cancel any licence if the holder violates any of the provisions in the Act, or the Regulations.

The Director General informed the Committee that Mr. Amadou Gajigo (adversely mentioned) and one Mr. Alagie Ceesay, all from the Wuli East had their licence revoked following an application by the representative of the GLMA in URR, on the 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2020. This application came because of a discussion by the GLMA Representative, representative of traditional leaders, Livestock Owners Association (LOA) members in which these two persons (Mr. Amadou Gajigo and Mr. Alagie Ceesay) were caught in dubious practices and theft.

The DG- GLMA described the police as highly uncooperative in implementing the GLMA Act and decisions, despite all regional police stations in URR copied this cancellation letter.

### **2.13 SUBMISSIONS BY THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE**

Agreed that any act promulgated by the National Assembly must be enforced by the Police without any memorandum signed. He expressed disappointment that the Police at the Sare Ngai and Basse stations are failing to implement the act.

He emphasized that officers on the ground should be aware of the GLMA and any other act. He promised that the failures to enforce this Act shall be addressed.

Furthermore, the IGP further stated that all cases reported to stations must be adequately addressed.

He also said he is aware of the issue of Mr. Amadou Gajigo as it was reported to him by either GLMA or the Cattle Herders Association, and that with the presence of the Police and the Paramilitary at Makamasireh, the general issue of animal rustling shall be comprehensively addressed. One of the ways it would be addressed, continued the IGP, is to build the capacity on the ground and provide a patrol vehicle for the Sare Ngai

station, and investigate the issues raised. He also promised to put up an investigative team on the issue of motorbike and other pending issue.

## **2.14 HEARINGS WITH THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR (HON. YANKUBA JL SONKO)**

The Minister confirmed that there a definite inaction from the police to address the problem in the region. He stated that the issue required a drastic action, replacing the entire police deployment in the region. Furthermore, he confirmed that the report of the investigation he ordered was not submitted to his office. Asked whether, ignorance of the GLMA Act is a genuine excuse for not implementing the provisions of this Act, the Minister stated that it is wrong from the officers for failing to implement these provisions. If the notice of any revocation from GLMA is effectively communicated, then there is no grounds for the police' failure to implement the revocation.

## **PART 3**

### **3.0 COMMITTEE'S OBSERVATION**

Arising from the submissions by the Petitioners and stakeholders, the Committee observed that.

3.1 The police officers in the station of Sare Ngai lack data and information on the number of cases investigated or prosecuted since 2017.

3.2. Animal rustling is prevalent and the main crime in the Wuli region, yet a very low prosecution rate. This alarming conversion rate is not also helped by the absence of relevant data on the registered and investigated cases.

3.3 The police officers (as well as the investigators) in the Sare Ngai police station and the Makamasireh PIU Checkpoint have very little or no knowledge on the provisions of the Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency Act, therefore, could not implement those provisions.

3.4 Mr. Amadou Gajigo, who is adversely mentioned in the submissions, continued to trade in animals and remains a butcher despite the seizure of his documents by GLMA

3.5 That the police in the region are incapacitated with lack of sufficient personnel, absence of a vehicle to apprehend suspects and carry out frequent patrols, etc.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Issues of animal theft is a threat to lives and livelihood of natives in many regions in the Gambia, including Wuli Region. In such an agrarian society,

all measures should be taken to protect the properties of this livestock owners.

That said, it is crucial that issues of public concern are brought to the Assembly for redress. This way, the Assembly gets closer to the people, whose views and aspirations are represented.

## **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

After receiving all the submissions from the witnesses, the Committee recommends:

1. That the Basse Police Division and Sare Ngai Police Station institute an effective community policing and network that shall involve the Animal Protection Association, Chief, Alkalolus and other traditional leaders.
2. Provision of patrol vehicle for the Police Station and the Paramilitary in the area to ensure close tracking of animal rustlers, and effect swift arrests.
3. Capacity building for Police Officers in the region, especially on the provisions and implementation of GLMA Act to ensure a proper documentation and licencing of livestock dealers in the area and develop required knowledge on the implementation of the provisions of the Act.
4. The Police are advised to enforce all laws enacted by the National Assembly irrespective of whether there is any Memorandum of Understanding.
5. The Inspector General of Police shall put in place on **Posting Policy** for the Police to ensure that officers do not overstay at postings to compromise their effectiveness.
6. That the section 180 of the 1997 Constitution that call for establishment of a Police Council should be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters with a view to creating a Police Council.
7. That the Wuli East District should have a Police Station to help curb animal theft and other crimes.

## RESOLUTIONS

1. That all reported cases of animal theft since 2017, including the case involving the motorcycle caught from an alleged thief be investigated by the Police and be brought before a competent court of law.
2. That Mr. Amadou Gajigo, who was adversely mentioned in all the hearings in Wuli, and whose licence have been revoked be permanently banned from trade in animal and butchery

## **6.0 LIST OF WITNESSES**

1. Members of the Wuli East Animal Protection Association
  1. Chief Ebrima Sori Juwara and Alkalos of the villages in Wuli East
  2. Hon. Yankuba JL Sonko- Minister of Interior
  3. IGP Abdoulie Sanyang Gambia Police Force
  4. Mrs. Fanta BS Manneh Former Governor of URR
  5. Mr. Samba Bah Governor- URR
  6. Mr. Famara Jallow Former Police Commissioner- URR
  7. Mr. Omar Darboe Former Police Commissioner- URR
  8. Mr. Demba Jallow Director General- GLMA
9. Members of the Command-Ababacarr Association of Senegal
10. Mr. Amadou Gajigo Sare- Gubu
11. Deputy Police Commissioner Alpha Colley and team- Basse Police
12. ASP Ebrima Kurubally Police Station- Sare Ngai
13. Mr. Lamin Kanuteh Head of Makamasireh PIU Sub-station