

**C/233/2023**

**Malpractices at Human Resources Division of the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management**

On 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023, this Office received an anonymous complaint from a group of staff alleging several malpractices at the Human Resources Division of the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management. The allegations levelled amongst others are as hereunder:

- (a) Corruption and favouritism;
- (b) Harassment and Discrimination;
- (c) Improper procurement practices;
- (d) Corruption practices in Capital Projects; and
- (e) Extra-marital affairs at the Ministry.

The comments of the Ministry of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management were sought which reported that following a thorough internal investigation into the allegations raised, no evidence could be adduced to prove them. It has therefore considered that the accusations were proved to be unfounded and unjustified.

The Ministry also reported that it took these allegations very seriously and was committed to addressing any valid concerns within the Ministry. It added that whistle-blowers were encouraged to provide concrete evidence to support such claims and that appropriate actions would be taken if any wrongdoings would be proved.

Given the seriousness of the complaint levelled against a senior Officer of the Administrative Cadre in the Public Service, the matter was also referred to the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service for a proper investigation.

In response the Office of the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service informed that the matter has been referred to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) for a preliminary investigation.

Finally, in May 2024, this Office was informed that the investigation carried out by the then ICAC now Financial Crimes Commission (FCC), has not substantiated elements of offences falling under the Prevention of Corruption Act or the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act.

After having carefully considered the comments of the Ministry and the outcome of the investigations of the FCC, the Office has not seen evidence that would lead it to conclude that the group of staff was victim of maladministration. The complaint was therefore not upheld.