



## **PRESS STATEMENT ON THE KILLING OF THE NORTH-EAST REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF THE OPERATIONAL SUPPORT DIVISION (OSD) OF THE SIERRA LEONE POLICE**

**Freetown, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2023**

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) as the statutory body charged with the mandate to protect and promote human rights of all in the country is deeply saddened by the brutal killing of the North-East Regional Coordinator of the Operational Support Division (OSD), Mathew Moiwah Gbanya on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 by an unknown gunman in Makeni, northern Sierra Leone.

HRCSL through its regional officers in Makeni conducted a preliminary investigation and has confirmed that the deceased police officer was on duty fully cladded in his police uniform sitting in his official police vehicle waiting on a junior personnel he had sent to town when an unknown assailant came around, opened the other side of the vehicle and instantly shot the regional Commander to death and took off. The Police has commenced investigations and some arrests have already been made while the township which was gripped by panic following this ugly incident is now returning to normal business.

HRCSL hereby **STRONGLY CONDEMNNS** this act of inhumanity executed in the most brutal form as it has no place in modern day Sierra Leone. The intentional and unlawful deprivation of human life fundamentally offends both national and international laws as human life is regarded as a sanctity which cannot be restored when taken.

Sections 15 and 16 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 protect the right to life. Section 16 (1) in particular provides as follows; “*No person shall be deprived of his life intentionally except in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence under the laws of Sierra Leone, of which he has been convicted.*” Article 6 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (ICCPR) and Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, 1981 (ACHPR) have a similar provision. Article 6(1) of ICCPR states that, “*Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.*”

HRCSL therefore calls on citizens to help the police with any vital information leading to the arrest and prosecution of the assailant (s) in a bid to foster peace and security and to prevent a recurrence of such unfortunate incident. The Commission also calls on the Sierra Leone Police to speedily investigate this matter within the confines of the law and bring to book those who may have aided, abetted and subsequently killed Mr. Mathew M. Gbanya.

Again, as in our Press Statement of 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022, HRCSL urges the Police and other relevant security agencies to go in search of guns which have evidently found their way in the wrong hands and retrieve them so as to prevent a similar catastrophe.



HRCSL calls on the Sierra Leone National Commission on Small Arms charged with the responsibility to ***regulate and supervise the manufacture, trade and use of arms and ammunition*** to ensure that they educate and sensitize the public and provide information on the dangers associated with the illicit manufacture, trade and use of arms as provided in Section 15(2) (b) of the ***Sierra Leone National Commission on Arms Act 2021***.

HRCSL uses this opportunity to express heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and friends of the late compatriot and to the Sierra Leone Police (SLP). May his soul Rest in Peace.

HRCSL takes this opportunity to assure the general public of its unwavering commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights of all in Sierra Leone.

***END***

Signed:

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***Chairperson***

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