



## **PRESS STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT PUBLIC DEBATE ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IN THE COUNTRY**

**30<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) was established by Act No. 9 of 2004 with the mandate to protect and promote the human rights of all in Sierra Leone. Section 7(2)(f) of its Act provides that the Commission shall monitor and document violations of human rights in Sierra Leone.

Through its daily media monitoring activity, the HRCSL is aware of current public debate on human rights concerns raised in various Human Rights reports put out by reputable institutions in the country.

The Commission wishes to draw the attention of the public of its press statements/reports on the following incidents in the past referenced in reports, all of which are reflecting the official position of the HRCSL.

1. *Press Statement on recent incitement and violent protests of 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022.* <http://hrc-sl.org/Pressreleases.aspx>
2. Observation and Monitoring Report of the *Human Rights Violation and Human Rights Abuses in relation to the incidents of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020 in Makeni.* <http://hrc-sl.org/MonitoringReport.aspx>
3. Press Release on the Monitoring of Quarantine Homes and on the *Recent Spate of Violence in the Country (The events at Freetown Male Correctional Center 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020, Lunsar on 30<sup>th</sup> April and Tombo 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020)* <http://hrc-sl.org/Pressreleases.aspx>

In light of the above, HRCSL makes the following statements:

1. That Sierra Leone remains a peaceful country and everyone should aspire to maintain this *status quo* as we go into the June 2023 elections and beyond.
2. That Government should continue to fulfil its obligation under Section 5 (2) (b) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 which states as follows; *“the security, peace and welfare of the people of Sierra Leone shall be the primary purpose and responsibility of Government, and to this end it shall be the duty of the Armed Forces, the Police, Public Officers and all security agents to protect and safeguard the people of Sierra Leone.”*



3. That in a similar vein the Commission draws the attention of citizens of their duties enshrined in Section 13 (a - j) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 and articles 27 (1 and 2) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights respectively. (*see below for ease of refence respectively*).

***All citizens shall;***

- a. abide by this Constitution, respect its ideals and its institutions, the National Flag, the National Anthem and authorities and offices established or constituted under this Constitution or any other law;
- b. cultivate a sense of nationalism and patriotism so that loyalty to the State shall override sectional, ethnic tribal, political or other loyalties;
- c. protect and preserve public property and prevent the misappropriation and squandering of funds belonging to the Government, local authorities or public corporations; #
- d. help enhance the power, prestige and good name of the State and to defend the State and render national service as may be required;
- e. respect the dignity and religion of other individuals, and the rights and interests of others;
- f. make positive and useful contributions to the advancement, progress, and well-being of the community, wherever he or she resides;
- g. work conscientiously in a lawful and chosen occupation and abstain from any activity detrimental to the general welfare of others;
- h. ensure the proper control and upbringing of his children and wards;
- i. participate in and defend all democratic processes and practices;
- and j. render assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order

***Additionally, articles 27(1and2) the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights lays duties on citizens***

**Article 27-** Every individual shall have duties towards his family and society, the State and other legally recognised communities and the international community.

The rights and freedoms of each individual shall be exercised with due regard to the rights of others, collective security, morality and common interest.

**Article 28-** Every individual shall have the duty to respect and consider his fellow beings without discrimination, and to maintain relations aimed at promoting, safeguarding and reinforcing mutual respect and tolerance.

**Article 29** -The individual shall also have the duty:

- a. To preserve the harmonious development of the family and to work for the cohesion and respect of the family; to respect his parents at all times, to maintain them in case of need.
- b. To serve his national community by placing his physical and intellectual abilities at its service;
- c. Not to compromise the security of the State whose national or resident he is;
- d. To preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity, particularly when the latter is strengthened;



- e. To preserve and strengthen the national independence and the territorial integrity of his country and to contribute to his defence in accordance with the law;
- f. To work to the best of his abilities and competence, and to pay taxes imposed by law in the interest of the society;
- g. To preserve and strengthen positive African cultural values in his relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and, in general, to contribute to the promotion of the moral wellbeing of society;
- h. To contribute to the best of his abilities, at all times and at all levels, to the promotion and achievement of African unity.

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:

Patricia Narsu Ndanema (*Mrs.*)

***Chairperson***

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone