



The State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone 2019
13th Annual Report
of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
Presented to the President and Parliament of
The Republic of Sierra Leone
Pursuant to Sections 7 (2) (g) & 24 (1) of
The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
Act (No. 9) 2004.



H.E. Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
State House
Tower Hill
Freetown

31st March 2020.

Your Excellency,

RE: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE
13TH ANNUAL REPORT

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) has the pleasure and honour to submit to you its 13th Annual Report in accordance with Sections 7 (2) (g) and 24 (1) of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act (No. 9), 2004.

“The State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone” is a report of activities of the HRCSL, covering the period 1st January to 31st December, 2019. As required by the Act, the report includes the ways in which the fundamental rights and freedoms in the 1991 Constitution and International and Regional Agreements to which Sierra Leone is a party, have been observed or violated. It also includes steps taken by HRCSL to protect and promote human rights; individual complaints investigated, and the interventions and recommendations made by HRCSL in respect of matters brought before it.

HRCSL respectfully calls on the Executive, the Legislature, the Judiciary and all other state bodies to take necessary actions toward implementation of the recommendations in this report and all outstanding recommendations in its previous reports.

The HRCSL strongly believes that the protection and promotion of human rights, good governance and the consolidation of peace, are prerequisites for sustained democracy and development in Sierra Leone.

Yours faithfully,

.....
Patricia Narsu Ndanema
Chairperson

The Rt. Honourable Speaker
Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone
Parliament Building
Tower Hill
Freetown

31st March, 2020

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Patricia Narsu Ndanema
Chairperson

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Acronyms

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AG	Attorney-General and Minister of Justice
AIAP	Agricultural Investment Appraisal Process
APC	All Peoples Congress
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ARV	Anti-Retro-Viral
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BHR	Business and Human Rights
BRH	Bo Remand Home
CARL	Center for Accountability and Rule of Law
CAT	International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or punishment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CJ	Chief Justice
COI	Commission of Inquiry
CRA	Child Rights Act 2007
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRSG	China Railway Seventh Group
CSE	Compagnie Sahelienne d'Enterprises (Sahelian Company of Enterprises)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DCILS	Directorate of Complaints, Investigations and Legal Services
DECT	Directorate of Education, Communication and Training
DFA	Directorate of Finance and Administration
DFID	Department for International Development
DHMT	District Health Management Team
DHRCs	District Human Rights Committees
DM&R	Directorate of Monitoring and Research
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
DPPM&E	Directorate of Programmes, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DRS	Directorate of Regional Services
EBKUST	Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EMB	Executive Management Board
EP	Eastern Polytechnic

Acronyms

EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ER	Eastern Region
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FGM	Female General Mutilation
FMCC	Freetown Male Correctional Centre
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
FPU	Formed Police Units
FQSEP	Free Quality School Education Programme
FSU	Family Support Unit
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GVWC	Guma Valley Water Company
HQ	Headquarters
HRC	Human Rights Council
HSPR	Health Sector Performance Report
ICC	International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDD	International Disability Day
IDGC	International Day of the Girl Child
IHRD	International human Rights Day
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INWA	Illuminescence National Women's Award
IPCB	Independent Police Complaints Board
IPOs	Independent Police Officers
JSCO	Justice Sector Coordinating Office
KNUSTK	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Kumasi
KRH	Kingdom Remand Home
L.A.W.Y.E.R.S	Legal Access through Women Yearning for Equality Rights and Social Justice
LAB	Legal Aid Board
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MCC	Makeni Correctional Centre
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MIC	Ministry of Information and Communication
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

Acronyms

MLHCP	Ministry of Lands Housing and Country Planning
MLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
MMCET	Milton Margai College of Education and Technology
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFAIC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MoGCA	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
MoHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MP	Member of Parliament
MSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
MWR	Ministry of Water Resources
MYA	Ministry of Youth Affairs
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NANHRs	Network of National Human Rights Institutions
NASSIT	National Social Security and Insurance Trust
NAYCOM	National Youth Commission
NCPD	National Commission for Persons with Disabilities
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NEMS	National Emergency Service
NMA	National Minerals Agency
NPSE	National Primary School Examination
NR	Northern Region
ONS	Office of National Security
OP-ICCPR	Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
OSD	Operational Support Division
PCHR	Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights
PCMH	Princess Christian Maternal Hospital
PHU	Peripheral Health Unit
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
PMFJC	Poor Man's Friend Justice Centre
PwD	Persons with Disability
PWSL	Prison Watch Sierra Leone
RAI	Responsible Agricultural Investment
RCB	Rokel Commercial Bank
RCMDA	Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act
RCRC	Raviera Children Rehabilitation Center
RSCSL	Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
SALWACO	Sierra Leone Water Company
SCSL	Special Court Sierra Leone

Acronyms

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SLAJ	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
SLBA	Sierra Leone Bar Association
SLBC	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SLCS	Sierra Leone Correctional Service
SLIEPA	Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency
SLLB	Sierra Leone Library Board
SLLC	Sierra Leone Labor Congress
SLOIC	Sierra Leone Opportunities Industrialization Centre
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPM	Sierra Leone Peace Museum
SLPP	Sierra Leone Peoples Party
SLRA	Sierra Leone Roads Authority
SMR	United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (or Nelson Mandela Rules)
SOAA	Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019
SOAS	School of Oriental & African Studies
SR	Southern Region
SWASAL	Sports Writers Association of Sierra Leone
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
UBA	United Bank of Africa
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UMU	United Mines workers' Union
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGPs	United Nations Guiding Principles
UNIMAK	University of Makeni
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
URPMICE	Union of Railway, Plantation, Mineral Industry and Construction Employee
UWE	University of the West of England
WA	Western Area
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
WASSCE	West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIMSAL	Women in the Media Sierra Leone

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In compliance with Section 7 (2) (g) & 24(1) of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act (No.9) 2004, HRCSL publishes its 13th report on the State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone. The report is divided into four parts as outlined below.

Part 1 gives a brief historical background of Sierra Leone and the events leading to the establishment of HRCSL, its Mission, Vision and Core Values as well as its structural outlook.

Part 2 provides details on the extent to which human rights were protected, respected and fulfilled by the state during the course of the year.

Civil and Political Rights

The enjoyment of the right to life, liberty and security of the person continues to be challenged by the activities of cliques, gangs and armed robbers. A violent confrontation between supporters of Brookfields United and Fullah Town FC in Freetown resulted in the death of one person and the destruction of property worth millions of Leones. Mass burial of 60 unidentified and unclaimed corpses by the Connaught Hospital Mortuary was a concern to HRCSL and the general public. HRCSL recommends that the SLP should be robust in their duty to protect lives and property and speedily investigate cases of questionable deaths.

Government of Sierra Leone's (GoSL) commitment to maintaining the moratorium on the death penalty was re-affirmed in December. However, HRCSL is concerned that the number of convicts on death row increased from forty (40) in 2018 to sixty four (64) in 2019. HRCSL continues to urge the GoSL to implement the TRC and UPR recommendations on the abolition of the death penalty and to sign the second OP-ICCPR on the abolition of the death penalty.

Freedom of expression and the press was to a large extent enjoyed by all. Cabinet approved the repeal of Part V of the Criminal and Seditious Libel provisions in the 1965 Public Order Act. However, HRCSL noted that the beating up of two female journalists by a Presidential body guard at the National Stadium and the arrest of a male journalist for seeking clarification from a government official were setbacks to the enjoyment of this right. Even though the Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC) set up an investigative panel to look into the matter and implemented the Committee's recommendations, this attack was highly condemned by HRCSL.

HRCSL observed that even though cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment is prohibited by the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, the conditions in police cells were very appalling and suspects slept on the bare floor or on tattered and torn card boards.

Freedom of Assembly, Association and Movement was challenged due the restriction imposed by the SLP on public demonstrations and political gatherings. The opposition APC party was prevented from rallying and showing solidarity with their members following the removal of their MPs from parliament. A group called "Concerned Citizens", was prevented from demonstrating against the rising cost of living. HRCSL recommends that the SLP should refrain from preventing members of the public from expressing their constitutional right to assembly and should rather provide adequate security measures that would safeguard protesters and non-protesters.

The Ministry of Lands Housing and Country Planning (MLHCP) reviewed land laws as a first step towards the development of the National Lands Commission Act and a Customary Land Rights Act.

These efforts were geared towards harmonization of the laws and to address discriminatory practices in the ownership of land. However, some residents in the Bathurst, Leicester, Regent and Grafton Communities in the Western Mountain Rural district encountered challenges in the enjoyment of the right to property as a result of demolition of fifty two make shift structures carried by the MLHCP, on the grounds that they were state lands. HRCSL notes with concern that these demolitions affected the enjoyment of other rights such as the rights to life, security of the person, non-interference in privacy, family and home and the peaceful enjoyment of possessions. HRCSL recommends that MLHCP, EPA and other state agents should apply a human rights based approach in demolition exercises.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

In promoting the right to education, the allocation of 21% of the total government budget to education enabled the Ministry of Basic and Secondary School Education to provide Government and government-assisted schools with teaching and learning materials, pay tuition and public examination fees, continue and extend the school feeding programme to selected districts. These led to an increase in pupil enrolment by six hundred and seventy-one thousand, eight hundred and thirty-one (671,831) pupils nationwide. HRCSL encourages MBSSE to roll out the school feeding programme to other districts in order to foster increase in enrolment and retention in schools

The widespread examination malpractice across the country during the public and private West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) period, was of concern to GoSL and HRCSL. H.E. the President announced measures such as immediate prosecution and cancellation of results as well as termination of service for school authorities and teacher caught in the act to serve as deterrents. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) also intervened by apprehending suspects. HRCSL issued a press statement condemning the act of examination malpractices.

Strides taken by GoSL in promoting the right to health included allocation of 11% of its total budget to the health sector. HRCSL observed that some hospitals were refurbished, upgraded or rebuilt to improve service delivery. GoSL also took over the management of two faith-based hospitals, the Nixon Memorial Hospital in Segbwema, Kailahun District and Panguma Hospital in Kenema District. A new Peripheral Health Unit (PHU) was constructed in Constituency 117 as a means of increasing access to health care services in the community. The Free Health Care scheme was extended to Ebola survivors. However, the non-unavailability of certain free health care drugs in some hospitals, and the late arrival of supplies in hard-to-reach areas affected the implementation of the programme. HRCSL calls on GoSL to further increase its budgetary allocation to the health sector to reach the 15% benchmark set in the Abuja Declaration of 2001 and to continue the establishment of more PHUs to ensure greater access to health services to more people in communities.

Within the course of the year, GoSL efforts to protect rights at work included the review of the 2016 National Employment Policy; popularization of the 2018 Labour Migration Policy, ratification of eleven ILO Conventions and the setting up of the New Industrial and Social Security Court to address challenges of accessing social security benefits from the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) scheme. In addition, HRCSL noted GoSL's intention to improve on the enjoyment of the right to work as proposed in its 2020 annual budget to Parliament which included increasing the Minimum Wage from Le 500,000 to Le 600,000 monthly, 30% salary increment for teachers, recruitment of five thousand (5,000) teachers, three thousand (3,000) nurses and one thousand (1,000) police personnel. HRCSL recommends that the Ministry of Finance should consider further increment of the minimum wage.

Several actions were taken by GoSL to improve access to clean and safe drinking water. Budgetary allocations of Le65.8 billion and Le76.9 Billion were made to Guma Valley Water Company (GVWC) and Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO) respectively, to finance the construction of a gravity system in the western area and of solar powered boreholes in all districts. In spite of these efforts access to clean and safe drinking water remained a challenge for many people across the country. The completion of the 3 Town Water Supply Sanitation Project which started in 2018, was delayed due to late disbursement of funds. Cutting of pipes by local residents, encroachment of catchment areas and inadequate personnel to run the various stations exacerbated the problem and impacted negatively on the enjoyment of this right. HRCSL recommends that the Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) should put measures in place to protect its water supply networks and prevent encroachment on water catchment areas.

In the administration of justice, the continued efforts of the SLP in maintaining law and order and the protection of lives and property across the country and in international peace missions were noted by HRCSL. Two thousand three hundred (2,300) personnel, were recruited to strengthen its human resource base. However, the limited logistics and number of personnel continue to be a challenge in addressing clique/gang violence, political violence and students' riots.

The conditions in police cells remained appalling. Overcrowding, poor hygiene and sanitation were observed in most police stations monitored by HRCSL. For example, the toilet system at the Central Police Station was observed to be completely broken, releasing an overpowering and unbearable stench of urine and faeces. The Lungi Police Cell was also observed to be very unhygienic and smelled of urine and faeces. Over detention and incarceration for petty offences were considered some of the factors responsible for overcrowding. This appalling state of police detention facilities is a violation of suspects' rights to live in humane and hygienic conditions, as provided for in Section 4(e) of the Luanda Guidelines on Arrests, Police Custody and Pre-trial Detention of detainees. HRCSL recommends that the Ministry of Internal Affairs should overhaul police detention facilities in the entire country.

A Commission of Inquiry (COI) was set up in January, tasked to investigate allegations of widespread corruption, abuse of office, stolen public funds and state assets under the government of former President Ernest Bai Koroma between 2007 and 2018. The three judges appointed subscribed to the Oath of Office as Chairmen and Sole Commissioners of the COI as established by Constitutional Instruments Nos.64, 65 and 67 of 2018. The COI formally began its work in February.

The Judiciary's efforts to improve on access to justice included the appointment of fifteen judges (four to Supreme court, four to the Appeals Court and seven to the High Court). The declaration of a "Judicial Week" by the Chief Justice was geared towards accelerating trial of inmates who had been incarcerated without trial from 2009-2017, look into cases of trial inmates without indictments and those whose matters had been adjourned severally due to the inconsistent appearance of a fully constituted Jury. Another measure was the resumption of the Prison Court Sitzings funded by the United Nations Development Programme. Three new divisions of the high court (the Anti-Corruption, the Industrial and Social Security and the Sexual Offences divisions) were established to speed up trial of corruption, social security and sexual offences related cases respectively. These actions by the Judiciary helped to address overcrowding of correctional centres and the human rights of trial detainees held at all correctional facilities in the Country. HRCSL recommends that the Judiciary should continue the "Prisons Court" as it has helped to decongest the correctional centres. Despite these steps, poor

conditions of service for court officials, inadequate staff strength, inadequate funds to run the operations of courts and non-payment of Jury members were observed by HRCSL as some of the factors impeding access to justice. HRCSL recommends that the judiciary should improve the conditions of service for local court staff and provide subvention to Chiefdom Administrations to enhance their operations.

HRCSL notes for the very first time that clemency was extended to juveniles. H.E. President Bio on April 27, granted clemency to ten (10) inmates (9 boys and 1 girl) serving sentences at the Approved School in Wellington. HRCSL remains concerned that there continues to be only one Approved School located in Freetown for the whole country, and fourteen (out of sixteen) districts are without juvenile detentions facilities. At the Kailahun Correctional Centre, HRCSL observed that two (2) juvenile inmates on remand were incarcerated with adults, in contravention of Rule 11(d) of the Standard Minimum Rules (SMR) which states that “Young persons shall be kept separate from adults”.

Late supply of food and non-food items, poor conditions of the dormitories, inadequate number of security personnel, absence of formal educational facilities for inmates to continue their education, absence of medical unit and no stationed medical personnel were observed as some of the challenges that affected the effective functioning of juvenile detention facilities thereby affecting the rights of juveniles in conflict with the law. HRCSL recommends that the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs (MoGCA) should increase the number of Remand Homes and Approved Schools across the country and provide all required services for juvenile in custody.

Strides were taken by the Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS) in assisting inmates gain knowledge and skills that would keep them “actively employed after their release”. A training programme was piloted at University of Makeni (UNIMAK), for 300 inmates of the Makeni Correctional Centre with no cost implication on either the SLCS or the inmates. Three hundred inmates at the FMCC were trained by Sierra Leone Opportunities Industrialisation Centre (SLOIC). Similarly at the Freetown, Moyamba, Port Loko, Kailahun, Kenema and Koidu Correctional Centres, adult literacy classes and vocational training were also conducted for inmates serving long term sentences. However, the problem of overcrowding as in the Freetown Male, Kailahun, Kenema, Makeni, Port Loko and Sefadu Correctional Centres has been partly attributed to over detention resulting from slow processing of indictments by the Department of Public Prosecution, delay by the Judiciary to replace the Resident High Court Judge in Makeni, the absence of Jurors in Bo, the presence of only one Judge and a State Counsel for the entire southern region. One noteworthy gesture at decongesting the Correctional centres was the increase in the number of persons that were granted clemency by H.E. President Bio: 229 in April and 214 inmates in May. Other efforts aimed at decongestion were the relocation of 110 inmates from the Freetown Male Correctional Centre (FMCC) to the Pre-Trial Detention & Simulation Centre in Kissy Town, Waterloo and 282 the Mafanta Correctional Centre in Tonkolili District in October. HRCSL recommends that the Law Officers Department should expedite the production of indictments for inmates committed to the High Court for trial. The SLCS should roll out the education and skills training programmes to all inmates in other correctional centres across the country, irrespective of the duration of their jail terms.

In the protection and promotion of the rights of specific groups, HRCSL noted the following:

- **Women’s Rights**

The declaration by H.E. President Bio of a National Emergency on rape (in response to the high rate of sexual offences perpetrated against women especially young girls), the amendment of the Sexual Offences Act 2012, the removal of the Gender and Children’s

Affairs Portfolio from the Ministry of Social Welfare and the setting up of a Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MoGCA) are viewed as positive steps by GoSL, to focus on issues aimed at promoting the right of women and children. MoGCA's mandate is to focus on the formation and implementation of policy objectives, guidelines and strategies relating to the empowerment of women, men and children.

Despite these actions by GoSL, concerns remain about the non-harmonization and enforcement of laws and policies relating to sexual violence against women, and the slow pace at which issues relating to the enjoyment of women's rights were being handled. GoSL's promises (as cited in the 2018 Women's Position Paper to H.E. President Bio) for 'financial resources to address SGBV, free medical services for survivors of sexual violence and persons with disabilities including HIV/AIDS, the establishment of the National Commission for Women, the abolition of the two shift schools and the adoption of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bill' were yet to be fulfilled. HRCSL calls on GoSL to consider the issues raised in the Women's Position paper in 2019, for inclusion of more women in decision making positions and for MoGCA to expedite the submission of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy to cabinet for speedy approval.

- **Children's Rights**

The practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) particularly on under aged girls persists despite the fact that Sierra Leone is a state party to regional protocols and international conventions and has provisions in some national laws prohibiting harmful traditional practices and violence against women and children.

HRCSL received 13 complaints of FGM, which it successfully monitored. Among them is the case of ten under aged girls (the youngest five years) who were forcefully initiated into the Bondo Society in Malegohun Chiefdom, Kenema District, for eavesdropping on a quarrel between two older members of the society. HRCSL's intervention assisted the children to return to school to sit to their third term promotional examination.

Sexual penetration was observed to be the worse form of child abuse in the period under review. HRCSL documented 32 (thirty two) cases of domestic violence and sexual assault of especially young girls. SLP records for six regional commands revealed that three thousand, two hundred and fifty two (3,252) of the SGBV cases were sexual penetration cases, with the Western Areas accounting for 39.94% of all cases nationwide. This showed an increase from the 2018 record of 2,726 cases. GoSL's actions in addressing this situation included the declaration of a national emergency on rape and sexual penetration by H. E. President Bio in February, the enactment of the Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2019 and the continuation and expansion of the "Hands Off Our Girls" campaign initiated by the First Lady in 2018.

In spite of these laudable steps by GoSL, HRCSL's engagement with the Family Support Unit (FSU) of the SLP threw light on the myriad challenges faced by the (FSU) in processing SGBV cases in a timely manner. These included lack of logistical support especially vehicles and bikes to respond promptly to SGBV cases, prolonged trial and frequent adjournments of SGBV cases at both Magistrate and High Courts, the reluctance of witnesses to appear in court and the unwillingness of complainants to continue their cases. HRCSL recommends that the MoGCA through the AG's office, Law Reform Commission and Parliament should

pass a law prohibiting FGM especially against children under the age of 18 years. The MoGCA and its partners should fully support and provide adequate funding to effectively monitor the full implementation of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019.

In fulfilment of Rule 29 (1) (a) of the SMR, a child friendly centre equipped with a television, toys, and other learning materials to enable kids (who go through incarceration with their mothers) grow up in a child friendly environment, was set up at the Freetown Female Correctional Centre.

- **Persons with Disability**

The expanded Social Safety Net Project was launched by the National Commission For Social Action (NaSCA) during the celebration of International Disability Day (IDD) which was jointly organized by MSW and the National Commission for Persons with Disability (NCPD). The expansion is to include persons with disabilities as beneficiaries of the project. However special needs education and facilities for pupils with special needs in public schools remained a challenge. HRCSL recommends that the NCPD and other key institutions dealing with PwDs should collaborate with the MBSSE to address the key concerns affecting PwDs.

According to the Sierra Leone Integrated Households Survey 2018 youth account for 33.5 % of the population. HRCSL observed efforts made by Ministry of Youth (MYA) in addressing youth unemployment and youth urban migration by engaging them in activities that promote livelihoods and employment. A National Programme on youth entrepreneurship project, the construction of seventy (70) fishing boats, training of 510 youth in different life skills and launching the construction of ten (10) car wash centres across the Western Area were some of the intervention by the MYA. MYA also employed youths to serve as farm coordinators and farm hands on its agricultural projects. In addition, the National Youth Commission (NAYCOM) piloted the “Youth Demonstration Farms” in four (4) districts: Bombali, Bo, Kambia and Moyamba in June. In spite of these efforts youth unemployment and drug abuse continued to be a challenge and these were considered as some of the factors responsible for the increase in youth violence across the country. HRCSL recommends that GoSL should provide more employment opportunities for youth in order to empower them to avoid violence and resort to peaceful means in settling their differences.

GoSL also took other actions in furtherance of human rights by honouring some of its international obligations. GoSL submitted the Second Cycle UPR Mid-Term report to the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 20th September. Initial and/or periodic reports on five of the seven ratified core treaties namely: Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), ICCPR, CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CRD,) and the CRC were submitted to the various treaty bodies. However, HRCSL is concerned a good number of treaty body reports are yet to be submitted. HRCSL urges GoSL through MoFAIC to submit all its outstanding treaty reports and to consider reactivation of the constitutional review process.

Part 3 outlines HRCSL’s activities in the protection and promotion of human rights during the period under review, in compliance with Section 24 (1) of the HRCSL Act 2004.

A total of 326 complaints (171 by men and 155 by women) were received at headquarters and the regional offices of which only 58 (17.8%) were admissible. Eleven (11) of the admissible complaints were investigated and eleven (11) are still being investigated while the rest were mediated or closed. The 268 (82.2%) inadmissible cases were either referred to the appropriate institutions and were monitored for redress or mediated and resolved by the HRCSL. Included in this number of complaints are complaints received during a mobile complaint hearing conducted in Ngiehun Konjo, Malegohun Chiefdom, Kenema District (Eastern region) in October, to address and raise awareness on human rights issues, based on a complaint of forceful initiation received by HRCSL earlier in the year. Two (2) of the complaints were mediated and resolved, two referred while the remaining three (3) were family matters, requiring further engagement. Some of the successes achieved in the handling of complaints are mentioned in the main report.

Monitoring activities were conducted to places of detention, social service institutions and businesses to assess the level of compliance with the relevant national, regional and international standards pertaining to these institutions.

Several routine monitoring visits were made to the Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kenema, Kono and Kailahun Correctional Centres. Additionally, between May and June, Commissioners, visited seven (7) correctional centres during their regional familiarization tour just after they had assumed office on 11th April. The objectives of the visits were to assess the human rights situation and the conditions of the correctional centres as well as the welfare of the inmates. A specific monitoring at the FMCC in August was to ascertain the conditions under which twenty-three (23) All People's Congress (APC) supporters arrested during a riot in Hamilton were being held. Juvenile detention facilities in Freetown and Bo were visited at various times during the course of the year.

Police Stations monitored during the year included the Rogbaneh, Mena and Panlap Police Stations in Bombali District, Northern Region, Central Police and Aberdeen Police Stations in the Western Area Urban, the Lungi and Lokomasama Police Stations in the Port Loko District, North-West Region. In commemoration of Africa Pre-Trial Detention Day (25th April), fifteen (15) police stations and one (1) police post were monitored to highlight the types of petty offences, the number of detainees charged with petty offences, the laws criminalizing petty offences and the conditions of detention centres.

Other monitoring activities included an incident monitoring of the riot at the APC Office on 31st May, which led to the arrest and detention of forty-two (42) persons at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and the Central Police Station; monitoring of the Local Council bye-election in Ward 34, Constituency 103 in Kenema District (which ended peacefully) and that of the Parliamentary re-run election in Constituency 110 in Freetown which ended in violence and destruction of electoral materials at polling centre 15086-Sarah Modern Preparatory School and cancellation of the entire election results.

Seven multinational corporations (3 Mining companies, 2 Agro-business companies and 1 Construction Company) were monitored between July and December, to assess compliance with domestic policies and laws, the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights (BHR) and other relevant international and regional Human Rights standards. HRCSL noted that there were challenges in the managements' ability to implement business and human rights standards.

Training both at the local and international level formed part of the institutional capacity building programmes for Commissioners and staff.

The induction process for the five new Commissioners appointed in April, began on 15th April, at the HRCSL headquarters. The objective was to keep them abreast with the operations of HRCSL; discuss the roles of Commissioners in the discharge of their duties; evaluate the strength and gaps within HRCSL and take possible actions where needed. An international tour to the Uganda Human Rights in October formed part of the induction.

In order to improve on its effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery, a staff retreat for Commissioners and staff was held in September at the Pearl Hotel, Lumley Beach, Freetown. The retreat provided an opportunity for HRCSL to reposition itself.

Public education and outreach activities undertaken included familiarization tour by the new Commissioners from 12th May – 23rd June, to assess the prevailing human rights situation in the country; reactivate District Human Rights Committees (DHRCs); public education in ten schools; training on human rights and establishment of Human Rights Peace Clubs in ten (10) secondary schools (five in Kenema and five in Bo).

Special human rights days were celebrated as follows: Public education in seventeen schools in commemoration of the Day of the African Child, with the theme 'Humanitarian Action in Africa: Children Rights First'. Public education outreach in schools continued during the celebration of International Day of the Girl Child (11th October) with the theme: 'Girl Force: Unscripted and Unstoppable'. International Disability Day (3rd December) was celebrated in collaboration with the NCPD in Kenema District. The theme: "the Future is Accessible" focused on raising awareness on accessibility and creating opportunities for physical accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Commemoration of International Human Rights Day (10th December) with the theme "Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!" commenced with 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25th November -10th December), during which HRCSL joined the campaign for the Elimination of Violence against Women. As part of the celebration, HRCSL upgraded its Women and Children's Unit into a directorate of Gender and Children's Affairs, which was launched on 27th November. The directorate coordinates all issues relating to gender and vulnerable groups particularly women, children and persons with disabilities. Other activities undertaken were community engagements on the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019 and an Inter-Secondary Schools Debate and Quiz Competition (won by the Annie Walsh Memorial School). The celebration climaxed with a March Past /Float Parade and official ceremony in Freetown and quiz competition in the three regional offices on 10th December.

In line with Section 7(2) (d) of HRCSL Act (No. 9) of 2004, in June, HRCSL participated in the review process of the Sexual Offences Act 2012 by conducting internal review sessions and submitting a position paper to the Legislative Committee of Parliament. HRCSL participated in all parliamentary sessions leading to the enactment of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act (SOAA), 2019 and held several community engagements and awareness raising on the provisions in the new law.

HRCSL continued its media engagements as part of its public education activities. Various forms of media outlets were used to share information and receive feedback on its activities.

During the year under review, HRCSL issued three (3) press statements in relation to the following:

the clash between the SLP and supporters of the All Peoples Congress (APC); the violence on the re-run election in Constituency 110 and the display of suspects of examination malpractices by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

HRCSL continued to provide information services to its staff and Commissioners in their daily operations, as well as to external users, through its library and documentation centres. Ninety five external users, mainly students from universities and Polytechnics, made use of this facility.

Strategic engagements with donor partners and other relevant intuitions formed part of the familiarization process for the new Commissioners. Engagements were held with: the National Electoral Commission (NEC), the UNDP Resident Representative and the European Union (EU) Ambassadors; the Irish Ambassador to Sierra Leone and Liberia; the British High Commissioner; the Chief Justice and Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Legal Aid Board (LAB); Save the Children- Sierra Leone; the Sierra Leone Correctional Services (SLCS) and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP). The purpose of these engagements was to share the HRCSL's short and long term strategies in enhancing its work and to particularly thank the UNDP and other partners for their support over the years.

Funds received from GoSL and donor partners supported HRCSL's operations and project implementation. HRCSL received Le13,821,530,916 (Thirteen Billion, Eight Hundred and Twenty One Million, Five Hundred and Thirty Thousand, Nine Hundred and Sixteen Leones) from GoSL for salaries and other emoluments and Le1,428,550,000 (One Billion, Four Hundred and Twenty Eight Million, Five Hundred and Fifty Thousand Leones) for operational costs and programmes. Funding from UNDP/Irish Aid under the UNDP Access to Justice Projects amounted to Le593,601,876 (Five Hundred and Ninety Three Million, Six Hundred and One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Seventy Six Leones) for the implementation of activities.

Part 4 proffers recommendations to relevant state organs for improvement in the various sectors and in the protection and promotion of human rights as well as for full compliance with international human rights standards.

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

This is the 13th edition of the State of Human Rights Report published by the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. I am pleased to state that this report has been compiled, edited and produced by Commissioners, staff of HRCSL through various interventions geared towards the protection and promotion of human rights, and contributions from our District Human Rights Committee members, Civil Society Organisations in our Human Rights Working Group, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). In spite of several financial, logistical and administrative challenges we have been able to put this report together. It is my expectation that this document will serve as a score card for the state to measure its level of compliance with human rights standards as prescribed by international, regional and local human rights instruments. It will also serve as a guide to assist the government and all public officials in the application and observance of human rights standards in service delivery processes and practices. I also hope that it will serve as a tool for strategic engagements and consultation with state and non-state actors.

In April, the HRCSL was reconstituted by GoSL with the appointment and swearing into office of five Commissioners by H.E the President Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, to provide strategic and policy direction for the HRCSL to fully deliver on its mandate.

During the period under review, HRCSL embarked on a number of strategic engagements to strengthen its relationship with key partners and institutions working in the field of human rights. These partners and institutions included: the Chief Justice (CJ), Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS), Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights (PCHR), UNDP, Irish Aid, MDAs, Commissions, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), other development partners and foreign missions.

In keeping with the aim of HRCSL's Regionalization Policy, the Commissioners from 12th May to 23rd June, embarked on a familiarization tour in the regions during which they held engagements with key stake holders on the work of the Commission and possible collaboration. These visits also included visits to places of detention, public education in school and other stake holder engagements.

I am pleased to report that a Gender and Children's Affairs Directorate has been established as a clear demonstration of the HRCSL's commitment to enhancing the protection and promotion of gender equality and the rights of other vulnerable groups. In keeping with Section 20 (1) of HRCSL Act (No. 9) of 2004, which made provision for the establishment of regional offices, HRCSL has established its North Western Region Office in Port Loko District. This new office is meant to address the many human rights concerns raised in the district

I hereby call on GoSL to increase its financial and logistical support to HRCSL in line with the Paris Principles and HRCSL Act (No. 9) of 2004 to enhance its work particularly the operationalization of the new regional office in the north-west.

HRCSL continues to remind government that it is the obligation of the state to protect, respect and fulfill the rights of every human being in Sierra Leone, irrespective of political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, sex, colour or race.

HRCSL therefore urges GoSL to ensure that every challenge in the realization of human rights, especially in the provision of services to improve the quality of life of the people, is addressed.

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Patricia Narsu Ndanema
Chairperson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



HRCSL acknowledges the support of GoSL in its operations and is particularly grateful to its development partners i.e. United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) and Irish Aid for the technical and financial support that facilitated the successful implementation of its activities and programmes during the year under review.

The HRCSL extremely appreciates the Chairperson and members of the Commission, directors, deputy directors both at headquarters and the regions, heads of units and all staff for their contributions in implementing the HRCSL's mandate and for the successful production of this report.

Special thanks to members of the editorial board, in particular, the Chairperson Mrs. Patricia Narsu Ndanema, Vice Chairperson Victor Idrissa Lansana Esq, Commissioner Simitie Lavalley Esq, Commissioner Hassan Samba Yarjah, Commissioner Dr. Gassan Abess, Joseph Kamara, Josephine

Thompson-Shaw, Doris Sonsiama, Brima Kelson Sesay, Paul Jesse Moriba, Abu Bakarr Kamara, Ishmael Bayoh, Moses Massaquoi, Cyphas Williams, and the rest of the Directorate of Monitoring and Research (DMR) staff for editing the manuscript and ensuring the final production of this report.

Finally, HRCSL recognizes the role played by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), District Human Rights Committees (DHRCs), Human Rights Working Group members, other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the media in supporting the HRCSL in its research work through availing themselves as critical research participants in the elicitation of information necessary for the compilation and production of this report.

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Joseph Kamara

Executive Secretary

COMMISSIONERS' PROFILES



Commissioner Patricia Narsu Ndanema was amongst the first set of staff recruited by the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) in 2008 when the HRCSL took up effective operations in 2007. She has a joint post graduate degree in Development Planning and Management from the University of Dortmund, Germany and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi Ghana. She also has a BA degree from Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone. Over the years, she has had several professional training on various human rights thematics and currently pursues International Human Rights Law at Nottingham University UK.

Her twelve years hands on experience in various human rights (HR) interventions are not only limited to; human rights observation, investigations, public inquiries, community awareness raising, follow up on judicial processes, research, reporting and documentation but is also well experienced in collaborating and engaging CSOs, government officials and other partners intervening in the field of human rights. She has a vast knowledge on local, regional and international human rights instruments which are critical tools for human rights interventions. In addition, her work experiences gained in many institutions she has worked such as the African Union in Mali and Burundi, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), Special Court Sierra Leone, National Ebola Response Center (Situation Room), lecturing and as a former teacher span in many other fields.

Over the years, she has distinguished herself in the field of human rights through various fields of interventions specifically on women and children's rights and access to justice for prisoners. She has also made tremendous contributions to the production of regional and international treaty body reports, notably being her sole contribution to a chapter in Sierra Leone's first country report to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

In 2013, Commissioner Ndanema left the HRCSL as Senior Human Rights Officer in the Directorate of Education, Communication and Training following her nomination by the HRCSL to be amongst the first set of African Human Rights Observers to be deployed in Mali, following requests from the African Union, the Network of National Human Rights Institution and ECOWAS and was charged with the responsibility to observe, monitor, document, engage appropriate authorities on human rights violations and report to the African Union and other partners intervening in the field of human rights. In 2015 she was recruited as a consultant by the African Union to perform similar tasks in Burundi and was the Gender Team Lead for the African Union Human Rights Observation Mission where she stayed till her appointment as the Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.

She is a Board member of the Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB), and holds an executive position in the Network of National Human Rights Institutions (NNHRI)-West Africa. She is also a member of many women's groups promoting the rights of women and children.

Commissioner Patricia Narsu Ndanema is the oversight for the Directorates of Administration and Finance, Programming, and Gender and Children's Affairs.

She brings to the HRCSL wealth of experience from various institutions and countries she had worked.



Commissioner Victor I. Lansana is a Barrister & Solicitor of the Superior Courts of Judicature of Sierra Leone and is the Vice Chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. He is an Associate Partner in the Law Firm of Tejan-Cole, Yillah & Bangura where he extensively practiced law both in the criminal and civil courts until his appointment by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio in February 2019 to serve a five-year term as the Vice Chairman of the Commission.

He attended the Albert Academy Secondary School from whence he proceeded to Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in English and later an LLB (Hons.) Degree. He also holds the Utter Barrister

(Barrister-at-Law) Degree from the Sierra Leone Law School. He was appointed to serve as a lecturer in Communication skills / Foundation Studies at Fourah Bay College University of Sierra Leone from 2010 to 2016. He also taught at the Lebanese International School and the Government Model Senior Secondary School while serving as Examiner in English for the West African Examinations Council (WAEC).

Commissioner Lansana is the Founder of the human right organization called Legal Aid for Consumers & Employees (LACE) which he established in 2015 to help address economic and labour injustices in the country. As a lawyer, he has rendered several pro bono legal services to vulnerable and indigent compatriots. He is quite interested in public interest litigations and has been involved in a number of them in courts. He valuably contributed to the preparation of the Legal Aid Board Handbook and has attended trainings and acquired relevant knowledge in both legal and human rights advocacies. He has also severally served as a facilitator at human rights trainings impacting knowledge in the field of human rights. Mr. Lansana is a social commentator who has authored several newspaper and social media articles on contemporary socio-political issues.

The Vice Chairman is someone with passion for the human rights work. He is a team player, accommodating but very disciplined with a forward-looking mentality to succeed.

He is the Oversight Commissioner for the Directorate of Education, Communication and Training.



Commissioner Simitie Lavalley Esq. is a qualified Barrister and Solicitor with a background in criminal law and human rights. She is a graduate in Law and Economics from the School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), University of London and was called to the Sierra Leone Bar in 2008. She also possesses a postgraduate diploma in legal practice from the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol.

After leaving UWE in 2004, Ms Lavalley gained a broad perspective of the legal industry through working as a Caseworker for The Law Society, wherein she investigated complaints made against solicitors practising in England & Wales. In 2008, after being called to the Sierra Leone Bar, she took up a position as a Legal Intern at the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague – the

tribunal mandated to try those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996. During that time, she provided support for senior trial lawyers in the Charles Taylor Trial.

Later Ms Lavalley commenced working for AdvocAid, a female-led human rights legal aid organisation and rose from a legal officer to become Executive Director in 2014. During her time at AdvocAid she represented women and men on death row, advocated for better conditions for women in detention and engaged stakeholders in the criminal justice system. She also helped develop and disseminate preventative legal education messages through AdvocAid's flagship drama Police Case. Before leaving AdvocAid she instituted the campaign for the decriminalisation and declassification of petty (summary or minor) offences in Sierra Leone and also a police accountability project. In her volunteer capacity, she also became the President of the female lawyer's association, Legal Access through Women Yearning for Equality Rights and Social justice (L.A.W.Y.E.R.S). During her tenure as Project co-ordinator and later L.A.W.Y.E.R.S President, she was instrumental in the establishment and strengthening of regional offices for L.A.W.Y.E.R.S in Kenema and Kono, trained paralegals to provide support services to volunteer lawyers and created a website and Facebook page for the organisation. As a result of her advocacy and influencing work on behalf of women and children, in 2016 she was the Human Rights and Social justice award winner of the Illuminescence National Women's Award (INWA). In 2017 she was the winner of Legal Practitioner of the Year award of the Sierra Leone National Achievement Awards ceremony hosted by AWOL.

Ms Lavalley has practised as a legal practitioner and has successfully represented on appeal more than 8 women and men on death row or serving high prison sentences. She is an advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. She is also an experienced trainer and has developed training manuals for child justice actors, including the judiciary, so that children who come in contact or in conflict with the law are treated fairly and are protected from harm. She is regularly consulted on legal issues pertaining to criminal justice and women's rights and in 2019 took a key role in reviewing the Sexual Offences Act 2012.

She currently oversees the Directorate of Complaints, Investigations and Legal Services, but also supports the Southern regional office and the Directorate of Gender & Children's Affairs.



Commissioner Dr. Gassan Abess holds a Doctorate Degree in Criminal Justice and Criminology from Washington State University, USA, a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from Washington State University, USA, a Master's Degree in Sociology from the University of Toledo, USA, and Bachelor of Social Sciences Honors Degree in Sociology, and a Diploma in Adult Education from Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone.

Dr. Abess has taught in three American Universities. At John Carroll University, USA he was a Visiting Assistant Professor for one year and also as an Online Instructor from Sierra Leone for two academic years. At Washington State University for two and half years as a Teaching Assistant, and at the University of Toledo for one year as a Teaching Assistant. In Sierra Leone Dr. Abess

has worked in two different colleges, the Eastern Polytechnic (EP) in Kenema for eight years, and the Milton Margai College of Education and Technology (MMCET) for nine years where he served as Head of Department for Community Development Studies and Social Work, and rose to the rank of a Principal Lecturer and a Tenured Professor.

Dr. Abess also has a wealth of experience working with several NGOs and Civil Society Organizations promoting human rights. Dr. Abess has also served as consultant for several NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) undertaking evaluation and baseline research work. At the "Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law" (CARL-SL), Dr. Abess was the "Human Rights, Criminal Justice and Research Advisor".

Commissioner Abess has a Media Background, and was one of the Founding Members of the Eastern Radio, Kenema and was a Member of Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ).

Dr. Abess is also a member of the American Criminal Justice Sciences (ACJS) and the American Society of Criminology (ASC). He has attended several Local and International Conferences organized on Human Rights. He has several Peer Reviewed Publications: First amongst these is the "International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology" and the title of the journal article is "Transgender Inmates in Prisons: A Review of Applicable Statutes and Policies". The second was in the "Asian Journal of Criminology" and the title of the Journal Article is "Analyzing Citizens' reported levels of confidence in the police: a cross-national study of public attitudes toward the police in the United States and South Korea" while the third is titled "Police Integrity in China" published in the Journal: Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management. The fourth is titled "Victims Role in the Criminal Justice System: A Statutory Analysis of Victims' Rights in U.S": International Journal of Police Science and Management. Speaking Out: Officers Speaking about Police Misconduct in Ghana" The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles.

Commissioner Dr. Gassan Abess is a recipient of two prestigious awards; the University of Toledo Awards, and as a Fulbright Scholar from the Department of State. He is currently the Oversight Commissioner for the Directorate of Monitoring and Research.



Commissioner Hassan Samba Yarjah holds a Bachelor of Science with Honour (BSc. Hons.) degree in Business Administration from the Institute of Public Management and Administration (University of Sierra Leone) and a post-graduate degree in Peace and Development Studies from Njala University. He was among the first set of Human Rights Officers recruited by the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) in 2008.

Commissioner Yarjah, being an astute human rights defender, championed the Commission's first Public Inquiry in 2011 in respect of a complaint received from 235 military ex-servicemen that had been deprived of benefits which their counterparts had received because they were categorized as: 'chronically ill and mentally imbalanced' by the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed

Forces (RSLAF) authorities.

Commissioner Yarjah has served in several capacities within the Commission. He was a Senior Human Rights Officer in the Directorate of Complaints, Investigations and Legal Services. He then became the Regional Senior Human Rights Officer for the Eastern Region and later Head of Treaty Body Unit in the Directorate of Monitoring and Research.

In the protection and promotion of the human rights of all in Sierra Leone, Commissioner Hassan Samba Yarjah faced some challenges in his line of duty. In April 2015, he was arrested and detained by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) in Kenema and charged to court on 11 counts of conspiracy, riotous conduct and incitement. After three years trial, he was acquitted and discharged of all charges in 2018 for lack of evidence.

Before his appointment as a Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, he was the Complaints Manager at the Commission. He was also President of the Staff Welfare Association of the Commission from 2016 to 2019. He has undertaken several local and international trainings on Human Rights Monitoring and Documentation, Complaints Handling and Investigations, Public Education and Advocacy and Conflict Negotiation: The Harvard Method for Problem-Solving.

Commission Hassan Samba Yarjah is the Oversight Commissioner for Regional Services.

PART 1: BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1.1 Context

Sierra Leone experienced a violent and devastating civil war from 1991 to 2002, spanning a period of eleven years. The war wreaked havoc on the country's economy and its entire social fabric, exposing the populace to untold hardship and vulnerability. It destroyed communities, social infrastructure and institutions. People were maimed and an estimated 50,000 people were killed. During that period, lawlessness and gross violations of human rights occurred.

As a way to resolving the conflict, a Lomé Peace Agreement was signed in Togo in 1999. The Lomé Peace Agreement and the recommendations of the 2004 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report led to the enactment of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act (No.9), 2004, which established the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL/the Commission). HRCSL became operational in December 2006, with the appointment of five Commissioners.

In recognition of its outstanding work as a credible and independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and for being in compliance with the Paris Principles, the HRCSL was accredited an "A Status" in 2011 by the UN International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC). The HRCSL was re-accredited 'A' Status in October 2016 by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), formerly known as ICC.

1.2 Mandate of the HRCSL

Section 7 of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act (No.9) 2004 stipulates that the main objective for the establishment of the HRCSL is to 'protect and promote human rights in Sierra Leone', and it states the following as the functions of the HRCSL:

- *Investigate or inquire into complaints of human rights violations.*
- *Promote respect for human rights through public awareness and education programmes.*
- *Publish guidelines, manuals and other materials explaining the human rights obligations of public officials and others.*
- *Cooperate with institutions including public interest bodies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and international organisations working in the field of human rights.*
- *Review existing legislation and advise the Government concerning their compliance with international obligations.*
- *Monitor draft legislation, policies, programmes and administrative practices to ensure human rights compliance.*
- *Advice and support government in the preparation of reports under international human rights instruments or treaties.*
- *Monitor and document violations of human rights in Sierra Leone.*
- *Publish an annual report on the State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone.*

Independence of the Commission

Section 14 of the HRCSL Act guarantees the independence of the HRCSL and states that “except as otherwise provided in the Act, the Commission shall not be subject to the control or direction of any person or authority”, even if such a person or authority provides financial or material support to the Commission.

Jurisdiction

Under Sections 1 and 7 of the 2004 Act, HRCSL has the mandate to address all rights guaranteed by the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, or embodied in all international and regional agreements to which Sierra Leone is a party. This can be done by way of complaints investigations, inquiries or tribunal hearings. However, Section 16 of the Act stipulates that HRCSL cannot investigate any matter pending, or already decided by a court of competent jurisdiction or any human rights violation that occurred before 26th August 2004.

1.3 Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision: “A Sierra Leone where the culture of human rights prevails and the people respect the rule of law and live in peace and dignity”.

Mission: “HRCSL exists to take the lead role in building a culture of human rights (including observance of individual responsibilities) which maintains human dignity for all in Sierra Leone in full compliance with the Constitution, laws, international and regional instruments through effective partnership and collaboration”.

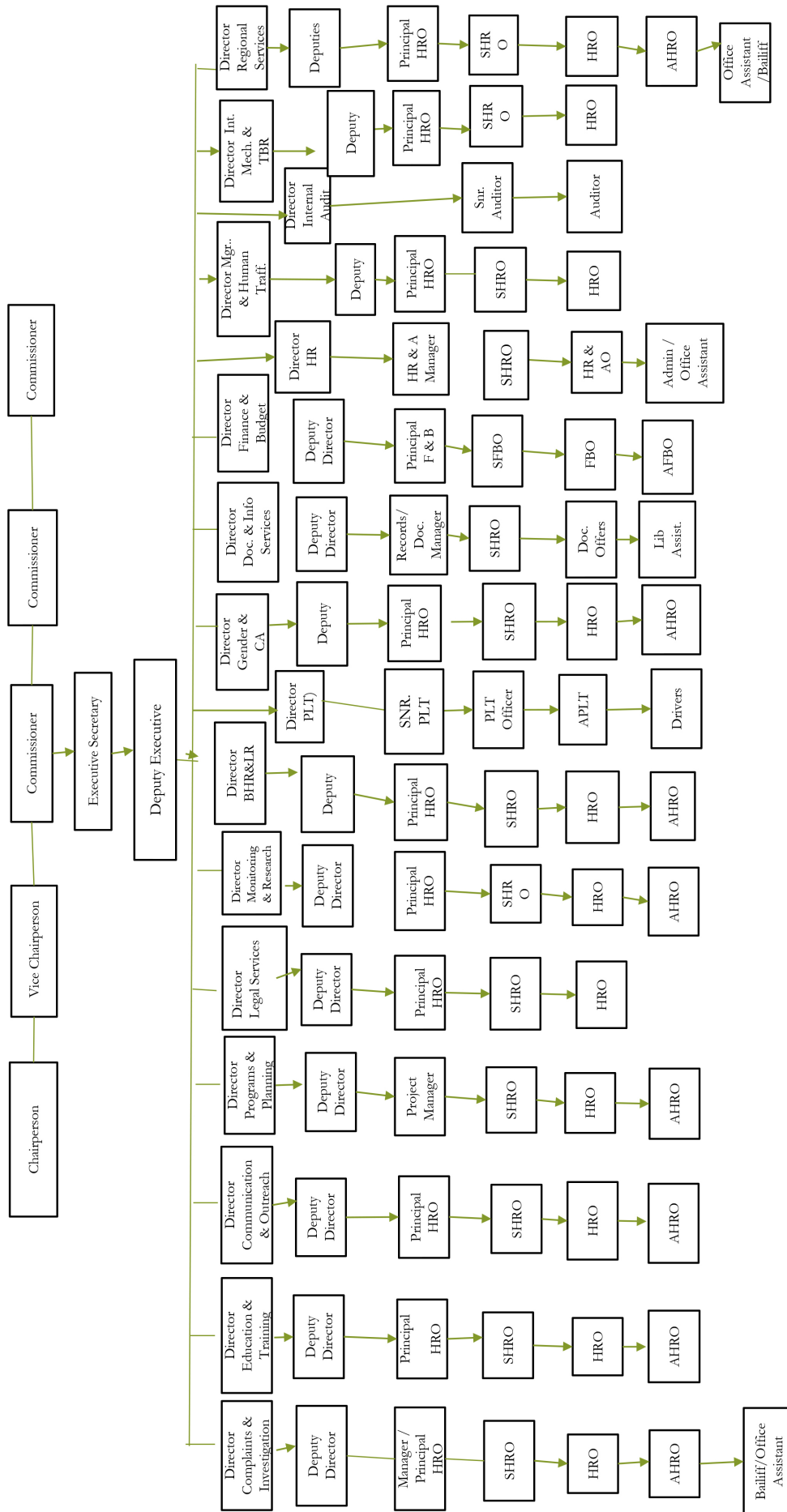
Core Values:

- *“As an Independent Human Rights Institution, the HRCSL is committed to upholding these core values:*
- *Professionalism encompassing discipline, competence, dependability, integrity, expertise, team spirit, tactfulness*
- *Service with humility*
- *Independence including fairness, objectivity, impartiality*
- *Inclusiveness ensuring diversity*
- *Accessibility covering empathy, tolerance, understanding*
- *Accountability embracing honesty*
- *Collaboration with other human rights organisations, stakeholders and development partners”.*

Relationship with the Courts

The HRCSL does not serve as a substitute for the courts. While a matter is before any competent court of law, the Commission can only monitor the proceedings. It can refer to the High Court for contempt, any person who refuses, without justifiable cause, to comply with its decision, direction, or order within a specified time. Any person aggrieved by any decision of the HRCSL may appeal to the Supreme Court [Section 8 (3)] of the HRCSL Act 2004. The HRCSL has powers to intervene in legal proceedings involving any human rights issue by issuing amicus curiae briefs. HRCSL being a corporate body can sue and be sued in a Court of law.

HRCSL NEW ORGANOGRAM





DIRECTORATES OF HRCSL

COMPLAINTS, INVESTIGATIONS AND LEGAL SERVICES (DCILS)

DCILS is responsible for carrying out the function of the HRCSL as enshrined in Section 7(2)(a) of the HRCSL Act (No.9), 2004 which is to “investigate or inquire into on its own or on complaint by any person any allegations of human rights violations and to report thereon in writing.”

The directorate is also tasked with the responsibility to review existing or draft legislation, which may affect human rights and advise Government on same. It supports the HRCSL in effectively collaborating with governmental and non-governmental organisations and other public interests bodies engaged in human rights through its Referral Partnership Forum. The Directorate also advises the HRCSL on legal and human rights issues.

MONITORING AND RESEARCH (DM&R)

DM&R is responsible for monitoring, researching, documenting and reporting on the human rights situation in the country. It comprises three units; Monitoring and Research, Treaty Bodies and Other Mechanisms; and Business and Human Rights and Labor Relations.

EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING (DECT)

DECT is responsible for designing and developing training and educational programmes geared towards awareness raising with a view to creating the culture of human rights nationwide. The Directorate coordinates public information and media engagements, manages HRCSL’s website and the Library and Documentation Centres as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Archives.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (DFA)

DFA manages and supervises the finances of HRCSL and provides the logistical support required for its work. It ensures the timely submission of financial reports to government and donor partners and further provides support for the development and implementation of projects and fundraising activities of HRCSL.

GENDER AND CHILDREN’S AFFAIRS (DGCA)

This Directorate is responsible for engaging on human rights issues in relation to women, children, and other vulnerable groups. This directorate monitors the implementation of provisions highlighted in national, regional and international standards in relation to women, children, disabled persons and other vulnerable groups.

PROGRAMMES, PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION (DPPM&E)

This Directorate is charged with the responsibility of mobilizing resources through development of project proposals and engagement with donor partners. It monitors and evaluates the implementation of programmes and coordinates the development of the HRCSL’s consolidated annual work plan.

REGIONAL SERVICES (DRS)

This Directorate replicates the functions of HRCSL at the regional level. It has four (4) regional offices in the South, East, North and Western Area Rural. Plans are underway for the establishment an office in the new North-West Region in line with country’s new geographical divide.

PART 2: THE STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SIERRA LEONE

The current state of human rights in Sierra Leone could best be described as satisfactory although there are numerous challenges that undermine the fulfilment and enjoyment of rights generally. This assessment was arrived at through HRCSL's monitoring activities, public education and community outreach programmes, stakeholders' engagement and legislative reviews.

Sierra Leone is a post-conflict nation that still grapples with the aftermath of the 11 years civil war which claimed thousands of lives and destroyed millions of property both private and public. However, since the end of the war in the year 2002, the country has made tremendous progress in maintaining peace, building good governance institutions and has held five democratic elections with peaceful transfer of power from one political party in power to opposition party on two different occasions.

While HRCSL noted such progress made, it also observed that "the winner takes all" continues to pose a serious constitutional challenge and this normally leads to political tensions during and immediately after elections. HRCSL also noted the need for the realization of ECOSOC rights which if substantially addressed will drastically reduce political tension.

This Section explains "the ways in which the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 and in the International and Regional Human Rights Instruments to which Sierra Leone is a state party, have been observed or violated".

As a national human rights institution, HRCSL was established through the recommendations of the TRC and the Lome Peace Accord as the lead agency for the promotion and protection of human rights, and a peace consolidation entity.

HRCSL calls on citizens to abide by the provision contained in Section 13 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 which provides mandatory Duties of the Citizen which includes but not limited to:

"a sense of nationalism and patriotism so that loyalty to the State shall override sectional, ethnic, tribal or other loyalties; protect and preserve public property...; ensure the proper control and upbringing of his children and wards; render assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order."

In a similar vein, HRCSL draws the attention of everyone to the provisions contained in Article 29 (3) & (4) of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights thus: (3) "not to compromise the Security of the State whose national or Resident he is;" and (4) "to preserve and strengthen social and national solidarity particularly when the latter is threatened".

2.1 Civil and Political Rights

Civil and political rights are related but not limited to the rights to life, liberty and the security of persons, freedom of expression and the press, freedom of assembly, association and movement and protection from deprivation of property.

2.1.1 Right to Life, Liberty and Security of the Person

The right to life, liberty and security of persons is guaranteed under Sections 15, 16 and 17 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, Articles 4 and 6 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), Articles 6 and 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),

and Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Armed robbery with aggravation, which poses a threat to the enjoyment of the right to life and peace rose by 54.88%. Seven hundred and seven (707) cases of armed robberies were reported in 2019 compared to 319 in 2018. The SLP reported that Freetown west alone constituted 48.23% of all cases reported nationwide. Additionally, loss of lives of 418 persons resulting from fatal road accidents and 265 cases of murder were recorded across the country (Sierra Leone Police General Annual Crime Statistics Report 2019).

On 21st October, an incident of violence occurred after the Central One Football Association League between supporters of Brookfields United and Fullah Town FC in Freetown. This resulted in the death of one person and the destruction of properties worth millions of Leones. The HRCSL notes with concern that the lack of adequate security measures by the Police has been the cause for the recurrence of riots by some football fans, which normally endangers the lives of citizens and causes destruction of properties.

The electoral violence which broke out in Mile 41, Thonko Limba Kambia District, following the bye-elections in constituency 058 Ward 196 led to the death of a 14 years old boy.

On 4th November, the Office of the Coroner buried the first batch of over 60 corpses which had been kept at the Connaught Hospital Mortuary in Freetown. HRCSL's engagement with the Coroner's Technician revealed that these corpses were found in various parts of the city and had not been claimed by anyone for over a month.

HRCSL is concerned about this huge number of unclaimed and unidentified corpses discovered in the city as it points to a lapse in the primary duty of the Police, which is to safeguard lives. HRCSL further notes the direct impact this has on citizens' right to feel safe and secured.

Recommendations:

1. *The SLP should investigate the incident of violence that occurred on 21st October and bring to account those found culpable.*
2. *The SLP should put in place adequate security measures to curb incidences of violence during and after football matches.*
3. *The SLP should be robust in their duty to protect lives and property and to speedily investigate cases of questionable deaths.*
4. *In future, the Office of the Coroner should perform autopsies on all corpses to ascertain the cause of death of unidentified and unclaimed corpses before they are buried.*

2.1.2. Disappearance of Persons

The HRCSL did not receive complaints or reports of enforced disappearance of persons by the government or done by other persons on behalf of government during the period under review.

On 14th June however, the Regional Commander of the Office of National Security South, expressed concerns over the growing missing number of persons in the Southern Regions.

2.1.3 The Death Penalty

HRCSL recognizes the role played by the GoSL for publicly re-affirming on 10th December (International Human Rights Day), its commitment to continue observing the moratorium on the death penalty, since it was pronounced by former President Ahmed Tejan Kabba on 11th December 2006. Till date, no government execution has been carried out since the country last did in 1998.

However, HRCSL is concerned that 13 years after the moratorium was placed, the Government has still not signed the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (OP-ICCPR) 1989, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty. As a result, the courts continued to hand down death sentence verdicts as manifested by the increase from 40 (2018) to 64 (2019) convicted persons in death row as observed during HRCSL prison monitoring visits and stake holder engagements.

Recommendations:

1. *HRCSL urges the GoSL to implement the TRC and UPR recommendations on the abolition of the death penalty.*
2. *HRCSL reiterates its calls on the GoSL to sign the second OP-ICCPR on the abolition of the death penalty.*

2.1.4 Freedom of Expression and the Press

Freedom of Expression is guaranteed by Section 25 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). It guarantees everyone the right to hold opinions, without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds. Article 9 of the ACHPR however expressly states that the enjoyment of this right should be done within the confines of the law. Article 19 (3) of the ICCPR provides that in the exercise of this right, there are also associated special responsibilities and duties that must be observed. Enjoyment of this right can be subjected to certain restrictions, which should be provided for in law and necessary for the respect of the rights or reputation of others and for the protection of national security, public order, public health or morals.

HRCSL observed that radios, televisions and print media houses operated freely in the country. HRCSL did not receive complaints of restrictions on operations neither did it receive complaints on refusal by the Independent Media Commission (IMC) to register a radio, television or newspaper houses.

Furthermore, as required by Section 34 of the IMC Act, HRCSL did not observe the suspension or cancellation of the registration of a newspaper, magazine or Newsletter in respect of which there has been three contraventions of the Media Code of Practice. HRCSL however notes that 14 complaints were forwarded to the IMC by individuals and institutions on publication of false information against their persons. HRCSL notes the steps taken by the IMC to ensure that newspapers and radio journalists publicly retract false information and levied fines against defaulters. HRCSL strongly encourages journalists to practice professional journalism by cross checking information before publication.

In a bid to enhance free press and decriminalize the seditious libel provision in the Public Order Act of 1965, GoSL initiated a repeal of Part V of the aforesaid Act. A Bill entitled Public Order (Amendment) Act 2019 was approved by Cabinet on 11th September and laid before Parliament in December. In spite of government's desire to enhance a free press, HRCSL noted several issues around freedom of the press.

On 8th September, the HRCSL followed up on two female sports journalists who were beaten up by some security personnel attached to the Office of the President during the Sierra Leone versus Liberia football encounter at the Siaka Stevens Stadium. GoSL released a statement on 9th September and constituted an investigating committee comprising two representatives each from Women in the Media (WIMSAL), the Sports Writers Association of Sierra Leone (SWASAL), the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), the Office of the President, the Center for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL), the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) and the HRCSL, which served as Chair of the Committee.

The Committee concluded its investigations on the matter and recommended, amongst other things, financial compensation and apology to the victims, which were accepted and honored by GoSL through the Ministry of Information.

On 11th November, the Managing Editor of the Times Newspaper Sallieu Tejan Jalloh was detained at the CID for alleged defamatory libel having sent an SMS to the Chief Minister regarding an allegation that \$1.5 million was paid into the Minister's account at Ecobank as a bribe by SL Mining Company whose license had been cancelled by the GoSL. He was arrested by CID officers at his office, detained for 18 hours and later released without charge.

Recommendations:

Parliament should pass into law the Public Order Amendment Bill, 2019 which seeks to repeal Part V of the seditious libel provisions.

2.1.5 Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment

The Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 prohibits cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. HRCSL confirmed degrading treatment meted against suspects in most police stations visited. Suspects were found sleeping on the bare floor with tattered and torn cardboards serving as beds. Police cells were found in very appalling conditions not befitting human existence. The HRCSL also received complaints of cruel treatment meted against children by family members.

2.1.6 Freedom of Assembly, Association and Movement

Freedom of Assembly/Association is provided for in Sections 18 and 26 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, Articles 10, 11, 12 of the ACHPR, Articles 12 and 22 of the ICCPR, and Articles 13 and 20 of the UDHR.

Generally, the right to freedom of movement was largely enjoyed across the country. The HRCSL however noted instances where the enjoyment of this right was denied.

On 21st January, GoSL through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) wrote a letter to all resident ministers banning initiation of secret societies nationwide. MLGRD on 13th December issued guidelines titled 'Guidelines on the Operationalization of Secret Societies in Sierra Leone' to ensure safe guards in the enjoyment of the right of Association and Assembly in the cultural context.

Prior to the restriction imposed by GoSL on the activities of all secret societies, in January the Sierra Rutile Company complained that its operations were disrupted by the frequent activities of secret societies

causing panic among members and non-members. Employees and other members of the community were forcefully conscripted into the Poro Society. Roads leading to the Sierra Rutile Company were blocked, vehicles belonging to the company were vandalized, traders were harassed and pupils were taken out of classrooms and forcefully initiated.

The opposition APC party, in a press release dated 28th May, declared 30th and 31st May, as RED Friday and called on its supporters to come out in their party color to show solidarity with the APC MPs on the day the judgments on election petition cases were to be read in court. The SLP issued a release warning all potential protesters to desist from such, as they did not seek for police clearance, which would eventually provide them with adequate security. Following this event, on Friday 31st May, one hundred and seven (107) persons were arrested at the party's headquarters at Old Railway Line Freetown, by the SLP following a confrontation with the party supporters. Arrested persons were later released.

A group of unidentified people who called themselves Concerned Citizens, in a Press Release dated 2nd September expressed intention to demonstrate peacefully on the 19th September, against the rise in the cost of living and pending political cases in court. They were prevented from doing so by the SLP on the grounds that they had not obtained clearance.

Recommendations:

- 1. The SLP should refrain from preventing members of the public expressing their constitutional right to assembly and should rather provide adequate security measures that would safeguard protesters and non-protesters.*
- 2. GoSL and law enforcement agencies should develop and publish clear guidelines on protests and demonstrations so that these rights can be enjoyed by all.*
- 3. Citizens should at all times observe police procedures and modus operandi when staging public protest.*

2.1.7 Protection from Deprivation of Property

The freedom from deprivation of property is provided for in Section 21 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, Article 14 of ACHPR and Article 17 of the UDHR.

HRCSL noted the effort of GoSL through the Ministry of Lands Housing and Country Planning (MLHCP) in initiating a nationwide consultation in a bid to review existing land laws and come up with a National Lands Commission Act and a Customary Land Right Act. HRCSL notes the desire of GoSL to harmonize existing land laws in order to address discriminatory practices in the ownership of land. However, HRCSL notes with concern a number of instances in which the enjoyment of this right was undermined.

Within the period of January and September, HRCSL noted that some residents including women, children and the aged were affected because of demolition exercises in the Bathurst, Leicester, Regent and Grafton Communities in the Western Mountain Rural district. The MLCPE and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) demolished fifty-two (52) makeshift structures in the Bathurst, Regent, Motormeh and Grafton communities. These lands were said to be State lands and disaster prone areas respectively. These demolitions affected the enjoyment of other rights such as the rights to life, security of the person, non-interference in privacy, family and home and the peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

HRCSL noted with concern the use of military personnel to enforce and provide security during demolition exercises. This turned out to be fraught with incidences of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment meted against local residents using the case of the demolition of houses at the “Wan Tik” Community, in Grafton. This is in violation of Part 3, Section 20 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991; Article 7 of the ICCPR (1966); Article 5 of the ACHPR (1981) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT 1984), which all protect persons from “being subjected to any form of torture or any punishment or other treatment, which is inhuman or degrading”.

Recommendation(s)

1. *MLHCP, EPA and other state agents should apply a human rights based approach in the demolition of houses;*
2. *MLHCP should expedite the harmonization of existing land laws and ultimately enact a law that eliminates discriminatory practices in the ownership of land;*
3. *MLHCP should ensure that the SLP takes pre-eminence in its role as a law enforcement agency during enforcement of demolition orders.*

2.2 Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

These rights are related to the rights to right to education, right to health, just and favorable conditions of work, and right to access clean and safe drinking water.

2.2.1 Right to Education

Section 9 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, Article 17 of the ACHPR, Article 12 of the MAPUTO Protocol, Articles 13 & 14 of the ICESCR, Articles 28 & 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) guarantee the right of everyone to education. Also Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals provides for inclusion and equitable quality education.

Section 3(2) of the Education Act of Sierra Leone 2004 states that “every citizen of Sierra Leone shall have the right to basic education which accordingly shall be compulsory”. The Sierra Leone Medium Term National development Plan (2019) which is subtitled “ Education for Development” also provides for the right to education.

HRCSL notes the GoSL’s effort in enhancing the enjoyment of the right to education with the allocation of 21% of the annual budget towards improving education and undertaking, among other things the following for children in government and government-assisted schools:

- *The payment of tuition and public examination fees;*
- *The Provision of four (4) core textbooks in schools as well as the Sierra Leone Library Board (SLLB) for members of the public;*
- *The provision of teaching and learning materials;*
- *The provision of fifty (50) buses, to ease the burden of transportation on pupils nationwide;*

- *The continuation and extension of the school feeding programme to selected districts.*

These efforts by GoSL have led to an increase in pupil enrolment by six hundred and seventy-one thousand, eight hundred and thirty-one (671,831) from one million, three hundred and ten thousand, six hundred and forty-four (1,310,644) in 2018 to one million, nine hundred and eighty-two thousand, four hundred and seventy-five (1,982,475) in 2019. According to the 2019 Annual School Census Report published by the MBSSE, the number of schools also increased by four hundred and twenty-one (421) from ten thousand seven hundred and forty-seven (10,747) in 2018 to eleven thousand one hundred and sixty-eight (11,168) in 2019.

HRCSL further notes that GoSL has recruited 5000 teachers were recruited as reported by the MBSSE website (www.mbsse.gov.sl). HRCSL acknowledges this positive intervention which in a bid to address the shortage of teachers in the country.

Despite GoSL's efforts in promoting the enjoyment of the right to education, HRCSL is concerned about the poor performance of pupils in 2018/2019 NPSE. During an interview of the Minister of Education on Radio Democracy FM 98.1, he revealed that 181 primary schools had zero passes and about 41% failed the examination.

The widespread examination malpractice across the country during the public and private WASSCE was a concern to HRCSL. For example, on 7th September, the Scorpion Squad of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) arrested the Principal and 4 teachers of the Fatibou Secondary School for their involvement in examination malpractices. Similarly, on 14th September, some candidates who were clandestinely taking the Private WASSCE in two private houses instead of the designated examination centres, were apprehended by the police and the ACC.

This spate of examination malpractices prompted H.E. the President on 10th September to announce the following immediate measures to curb same:

1. All those caught or suspected of examination malpractice should be prosecuted without delay or exempted.
2. Any teacher or school authority caught and prosecuted should be terminated from the teaching service.
3. All centres suspected of examination malpractice should have their results cancelled.

This act of examination malpractice which has the potential of undermining the credibility of the country's educational system and government's efforts in promoting the socio-economic development through quality education was strongly condemned by the HRCSL in its press release of 9th September.

Recommendation

1. *MBSSE should speedily investigate the causes of examination malpractice in schools with a view to putting measures in place to forestall its recurrence.*
2. *MBSSE should review the measure that has to do with the cancellation of the entire results in a centre where there are allegations of examination malpractices.*

3. *MBSSE should roll out the school feeding programme to other districts in order to foster increase in enrolment and retention in schools.*

2.2.2 Right to Health

The right to health is provided for in Chapter II Section 8 (3) (d) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991, Section 17 and 18 of the Persons with Disability Act 2011, Article 16 of the ACHPR, Article 25 of the UDHR, Article 12 of the ICESCR, Articles 12 and 14 of CEDAW and Article 25 of CRPD which call on state parties to ensure the enjoyment of the highest and best attainable standards of physical and mental health. This right is also provided for under goal 3 of the SDGs.

During the year under review, GoSL allocated 11% of its annual budget to the Health Sector. HRC SL acknowledges such improvement and however notes that GoSL is yet to accomplish the Abuja Declaration of 2001 which calls for at least 15 % allocation of the GDP of every state into the health sector.

During the year under review, in its bid to improve service delivery and mitigate the pressure of pregnant women and children on Princess Christian Maternal Hospital (PCMH) and Ola During Children Hospital respectively, GoSL, built and recast the facilities at King Harman Road (80 beds) and Rokupa (100 beds) into Maternal and Children Specialist Hospitals. The PCMH is now equipped with a modern blood bank infrastructure. GoSL also completed the construction of the Kailahun Government Hospital with 100 bed capacity. Other hospitals under construction were Lumley and Macaulay Street hospitals in Freetown. GoSL also took over the management of two faith-based hospitals to improve access to quality health care services: the Nixon Memorial Hospital became the Nixon Memorial Government Hospital in Segbwema in Kailahun District while the Panguma Hospital in Kenema District became Panguma Government Hospital.

Furthermore, GoSL operationalized the ambulance National Emergency Service and distributed eighty (80) ambulances to all districts across the country as follows: Pujehun – 5, Western Area Rural – 6, Western Area Urban – 7, Kenema – 5, Bo – 6, Bombali and Karene – 7, Port Loko – 6, Tonkolili – 7, Bonthe – 4, Kono – 6, Kailahun – 6, Moyamba – 5, Koinadugu & Falaba – 6 and Kambia – 4. As a result of this improvement, 90% of the transferred patients were successfully transported to a hospital. Half of the patients were pregnant women and a third of them were children, according to the Health Sector Performance Report (HSPR) 2018/19. HRC SL observed that this expansion of ambulance services at district level enhanced access to the right to health care for vulnerable communities.

HRC SL observed that GoSL, in collaboration with partners, conducted nationwide Measles Rubella immunization catch-up campaign targeting children between 9 months and 14 years (multi aged). The campaign was successful with a national coverage of 98% of the targeted beneficiaries receiving the vaccination.

The MoHS opened a Community Peripheral Health Unit (PHU) at Ward 411 in Constituency 117 on 17th September to serve six communities in the constituency which had high cases of teenage pregnancies and high maternal mortality rate. This PHU will give greater access to health services in the community.

The Free Health Care scheme initially meant for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under five years old was extended to Ebola survivors and physically challenged persons during the year under review. The implementation of the Free Health Care scheme has been fraught with challenges including

the unavailability of certain free health care drugs in some hospitals, inadequacy of drugs given to patients and the late arrival of supplies in hard-to-reach areas.

Recommendations:

1. *GoSL should strive to further increase its budgetary allocation to the health sector to reach the 15% benchmark set in the Abuja Declaration of 2000.*
2. *MOHS should continue the establishment of more PHUs to ensure greater access to health services to more people in the communities.*

2.2.3 Right to Just and Favourable Conditions of Work

Sierra Leone continued to progressively adhere to its international and regional human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of the right to just and favourable conditions of work.

These rights resonate with the provisions of articles 23 of the UDHR, 6 & 7 of the ESCR and 15 of the ACHPR as well as the eight (8) core ILO Conventions ratified by the GoSL. At the domestic level, Section 8(3) of the Constitution 1991 specifically places government policy directives to address employment rights issues, as well as the protection provided by the numerous labour laws enacted by the Sierra Leone Parliament.

Within the course of the year, HRCSL observed that the Ministry of Labour and Social Security took several strides in protecting the rights of workers. One such was the review of the National Employment Policy which was developed in 2016, popularize the 2018 Labour Migration Policy in 10 of the country's 16 districts. Parliament also ratified eleven of the ILO Conventions that are geared towards protection of persons seeking employment abroad.

In addition, the 2020 Annual Budget approved by Parliament in November, increased the Minimum Wage from Le 500,000 to Le 600,000 monthly; teachers' salaries were increased by 30% effective April 2020. The 2020 budget also makes provision for recruitment of five thousand (5,000) teachers, three thousand (3,000) health sector workers and one thousand (1,000) police personnel.

HRCSL notes that the budgetary intentions, if implemented, will assist in reducing the unemployment rates. In spite of the increase in the minimum wage across all sectors, HRCSL is concerned that it is inadequate to meet present day living standards.

Another noteworthy effort in addressing labour rights issues was the establishment on 9th December of the New Industrial and Social Security Court by the Chief Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone. This Court has the mandate to look at challenges faced by workers in accessing social security benefits from the NASSIT scheme.

However, HRCSL noted during its numerous monitoring exercises and observations that employees continued to experience challenges in enjoying their work related rights. Even though rights to freedom of association is protected under Section 26 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, yet in July, the Minister of Labour and Social Security placed a ban on all trade union activities at the Sierra min Bauxite Company, an action that is contrary to the provision of Article (3) (2) of the ILO Convention No. 87 (Freedom of Association and Right to Organize Convention). There were two unions, United

Mines workers' Union (UMU) and the Union of Railway, Plantation, Mineral Industry and Construction Employee (URPMICE) competing for membership, but the Company fully supports the former whilst majority of the workers preferred to join the latter.

Between September and October, HRCSL received a complaint from “Poor Man’s Friend Justice Centre” (PMFJC), a local CSO, on behalf of 350 aggrieved workers of the CSE Construction Company. PMFJC alleged abuse of various labour rights of employees of CSE working on the Hillside Bye-pass Road Project. HRCSL held engagements with MLSS, Sierra Leone Labor Congress (SLLC), the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) and Artisans Union and both parties. Discussions on resolving the matter remains ongoing.

Although MLSS had created the space for at least two labour unions to operate in a company, HRCSL discovered that all seven (7) companies monitored in the course of the year did not create the opportunity for alternative unions to operate in their operational sites, thereby limiting the employees’ right to join unions of their choice. Some workers also claimed that their authorities never consulted with them on the choice of unions permitted to operate and deducted union dues from their salaries without their consent. This action contravenes Section 26 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 and Article 2 of the ILO Convention No. 87.

The Commission commends the steps taken by the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) for the establishment of an Employee – Employer relations unit, charged with the responsibility of arbitrating misunderstandings/conflicts between the teachers and their employing authorities or national union bodies. This unit is expected to provide redress mechanism for the teachers and it could be a means of assuring the teachers of a just and fair hearing of their complaints against their employers. This will improve on the ability of the teachers to deliver the quality that is desired by the FQSEP and improve on the interpersonal relationship between teachers and the employing authorities.

HRCSL is concerned about the delay in payment of benefits and other emoluments to 2,981 teachers, who were retired from the teaching service, two thousand, two hundred and two (2,202) in December 2018 and 779 in August, 2019.

Between July and December, seven multinational corporations were monitored.

Type of Company	Name	Location
Mining companies	Sierramin Bauxite Company	Yankasa Village in Port Loko District
	S.L. Mining Company	Lunsar, Port Loko District
	Dayu Mining Company	Kafe Simera Chiefdom, Tonkolili District
Agrobusiness Companies	Gold Tree Company	Daru Kailahun District
	Sun Bird Bioenergy Company	Mara Chiefdom, Bombali District
Construction Companies	CSE Construction Company	Freetown, Western Area Urban
	China Railway Seventh Group Company	

HRCSL noted challenges in the managements’ ability to implement business and human rights standards in their domains. Foremost among these challenges were:

- *Inadequate knowledge of senior management in the application of business and human rights standards in their work operations.*

- *Poor relationships between Mining and Agribusiness companies on the one hand and landowners and other members of the host communities on the other;*
- *Lack of full implementation of the principles of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in land acquisition processes;*
- *Non-right based implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in communities;*
- *Limited adherence to labour rights standards (which include: poor safety standards, no opportunity to join alternative trade unions, no contracts for casual workers and short-term staff);*

The other labour rights challenges observed during HRCSL's monitoring of companies/businesses included:

- *Poor safety standards (lack of protective gears, no strict supervision of workers on compliance to safety standards, no policy guidelines on safety of workers etc.);*
- *Poor salary structure as the current minimum wage of Le 500,000 fall short of addressing the basic welfare needs of workers;*
- *Short term workers recruited without contract documents;*
- *Nonpayment of NASSIT contribution for short-term contract workers;*
- *Lack of accountability of trade unions to their membership (rarely hold meetings with members and union administrations are more interested in collecting members' monthly subscriptions from companies);*
- *Weak and sometimes no internal redress mechanisms for workers in most companies;*
- *No separate insurance cover for workers engaged in high-risk jobs; such as those working with explosives, dangerous chemicals and climbing towers.*

Recommendations:

1. *Ministry of Finance should consider further increment of the minimum wage to allow beneficiaries meet their daily needs.*
2. *MLSS should step up its monitoring measures of factories and other work places to prevent industrial or work related accidents.*
3. *NASSIT to step up ways for the collection of monthly contribution for all company employees.*
4. *MLSS and the Sierra Leone Labour Congress should monitor activities of trade unions to improve service and accountability to members.*
5. *Ministry of Finance and the TSC should fast-track the payment of benefits and other emoluments to teachers who have retired from the teaching service since 2018.*
6. *GoSL should encourage companies to provide training for senior management on BHR and FPIC issues and monitor compliance in their operations in line with human rights standards.*

7. *GoSL should ensure that companies adopt rights-based approach in the implementation of CSR in host communities;*
8. *GoSL should ensure that companies develop policies on BHR and FPIC to guide their operations and land acquisition using 'HRCSL's Guidelines for Monitoring Businesses in Sierra Leone', the Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI)/ Agricultural Investment Approval Process (AIAP), the Voluntary Guidelines for the Governance of Lands, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).*
9. *MLSS should ensure that companies promote public awareness programmes on FPIC, BHR and labour rights issues in host communities.*

2.2.4 Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water

The right to clean and affordable water is provided for in the Parts III and IV of the Sierra Leone Water Company Act 2017, Parts III and IV of the GUMA Valley Water Company Act 2017, Cluster 3 of the Sierra Leone's Medium Term National Development Plan 2019-2023, ACHPR Resolution 300, Goal 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN Resolution 18/1 adopted by the Human Rights Council on the 12th October 2011 and the UN Resolution 64/292 of the UN General Assembly.

HRCSL acknowledges GoSL allocation of Le 65.8 billion from the domestic capital budget for the construction of water supply systems in various parts of the country including 100 solar powered boreholes, 200 boreholes and 45 industrial boreholes. Also Le76.9 Billion was allocated from the domestic capital budget to SALWACO to finance the construction of gravity system in the western area, construction of solar powered boreholes in all districts among others (source: 2019 budget).

HRCSL acknowledges the steps taken by the government to solve the perennial problem of water in Moyamba District. On 20th July the HRCSL observed that two solar powered boreholes were commissioned by the Minister of Water Resources. The HRCSL hopes that this action will mitigate the challenges faced by residents of Moyamba District. These bore holes are equipped with water tanks of 20,000 liters capacity and each supplies fifteen standing pipes that spread across the town in various locations.

On 4th June, the Commission notes the MOU signed by the Ministry of Water Resources (MWR), the GVWC and the China Gezhouba Group Company Limited in Beijing, China to carry out the Orugu and Congo Dams and Water Treatment Plants projects. It is expected that when completed, the dam will supply a minimum of 70 million liters of water per day to over 600,000 people living in communities in the East End of Freetown.

In spite of these budgetary allocations and efforts by government to provide access to clean and safe drinking water, HRCSL observed that people across the country continue to face challenges in the enjoyment of this right. HRCSL notes the slow pace of the 3 Town Water Supply Sanitation Projects which started in 2018 but is yet to be completed. The project was designed to provide efficient water supply system in Bo, Kenema and Makeni. HRCSL Regional Officers observed that the full effect of this intervention has not been felt by the people due to delay in disbursement of funds, cutting of pipes, encroachment of catchment areas and inadequate personnel to run the various stations.

In Kenema, the HRCSL observed that the present road construction has led to the temporal cutting of the pipes thereby limiting the right to access clean and safe drinking water and also prevent the timely completion of the work.

Widespread deforestation and intense stone mining along the Kamboi Hills has limited the flow of water supply to residents of Kenema and its environs as was observed.

Recommendations:

- 1. The MWR should put measures in place to protect its water supply networks and prevent encroachment on water catchment areas.*
- 2. The Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) should collaborate with SALWACO and GVWC in order to protect water pipes during road construction.*
- 3. The GoSL should discourage stone mining in the Kamboi Hills in order to increase the flow of water supply.*
- 4. MWR in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) should work together to plant fast growing trees around the water catchment areas to prevent encroachment.*

2.3 Human Rights in the Administration of Justice

2.3.1 The Sierra Leone Police

HRCSL recognizes the continued work of the SLP in maintaining law and order and the protection of lives and property across the country. During the year under review, the SLP recruited two thousand three hundred (2,300) personnel to improve on its capacity and output.

The Sierra Leone Police still remains recognized to participate in international assignments. During the year under review, a contingent comprising two batches of Independent Police Officers (IPOs) and Formed Police Units (FPU) personnel were sent to Somalia, Dafur and South Sudan on peacekeeping missions.

However, number of personnel and logistics continue to pose a challenge in addressing clique/gang violence, political violence and students' riots.

On 5th March, the SLP intervened to restore law and order in the Five Mile Community, where violence erupted between two rival youth gangs and cliques. This incident led to several injuries. Also, on 15th April, the Harbour Police Division quelled violence between two rival cliques/gangs allied to the Black and Red Flag Movements. Stones were pelted and machetes brandishing at each other around the Dan Street/Kissy Road Junction. This resulted in injuries amongst opposing forces and damage to properties. In all of these incidents, police personnel were not adequate enough to quickly put the situation under control

Furthermore, on 31st May, the Operational Support Division (OSD) of the SLP fired teargas in and out of the building of the APC party office to disperse APC supporters who burnt tyres and barricaded roads leading to their headquarters at Old Railway Line resulting from parliamentary decisions against their members of parliament. Forty-two (42) persons were arrested by the SLP and detained at the Criminal

Investigations Department (CID) and the Central Police Station.

In Senehun, Southern Sierra Leone, on 20th June, the SLP fired teargas and live rounds to disperse rioters who were determined to vandalise and loot the homes of nine alleged suspects responsible for the disappearance of an old woman in the Community. Similarly, in Bo on 6th August, the SLP put down a riot by students of the Njala University, Bo campus by firing tear gas, beating up some students and arresting ten others (eight males and two female). Some buildings were damaged during the riot.

Police Detention Facilities

During the period under review, HRCSL observed that the problem of over-detention of suspects, overcrowding and poor hygiene and sanitation were on the decline in most police stations monitored.

Over-detention

At the Mena Police Station in Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone, on 19th March, one suspect had spent twelve (12) days in police custody without any charge being proffered against him. He had been in custody on an allegation of rape involving an aged woman. It was however observed that, the issue of bail became a problem as the suspect had no surety and the complainant had abandoned the case.

Also, on 18th March, three (3) suspects were observed to have been over-detained at the Rogbaneh Police Station in Makeni on an allegation of murder. At the time of visit, the three (3) suspects had spent almost a month in the police cell in contravention of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991. The reason given by the SLP for their continued detention was that the State Counsel who was to look into their matter and determine whether to proffer charges or not was in the Northwest (Port Loko) prosecuting cases at the High Court for over a month. They were reluctant to charge without his legal opinion.

Further, during an engagement with the FMCC on 21st June, the Centre Manager informed HRCSL that there were eight (8) military officers in the centre for safe custody. The eight (8) military officers were being investigated by the CID on allegations of negligence which led to the escape of an officer from the Military Custodial Centre in Wilberforce Barracks who was being investigated for missing arms and ammunition at the Presidential Lodge.

The eight (8) military officers had been in safe custody since 22nd May, without charge and were not allowed visits by their relatives or have legal representation. This contravenes Rule 58 (1) (a) & (b) of the SMR which stipulates that: “Prisoners shall be allowed, under necessary supervision, to communicate with their family and friends at regular intervals: (a) by corresponding in writing and using, where available, telecommunication, electronic, digital and other means; and (b) by receiving visits”.

HRCSL is concerned that these eight military officers were held beyond the constitutional time limit without charge as at the time of visit (30th May-21st June) and at the FMCC instead of the Military Custodial Centre.

Overcrowding

HRCSL during of its monitoring visits continues to observe overcrowding at the Waterloo Police Division during court sitting session. On 25th April for example, during the commemoration of Africa Pre-trial Detention Day, HRCSL observed 28 male suspects in a cell with a holding capacity of ten (10). The reason for the congestion according to the police was that the cell was used as a holding cell for the

Waterloo Magistrate's Court to ease the Freetown Correctional Centre's logistical problem of moving inmates to the court from Freetown. On this same date, the Congo Cross Police cell was observed to be congested with twenty-four inmates in a holding capacity of ten (10) and most of them had been in custody for petty offences such as loitering and theft. According to the Crime Officer, most of them were in custody either because of delays in profiling or no surety even when they were granted bail.

Hygiene and Sanitation

Some police stations across the country were observed to be poor in sanitary and hygiene conditions.

On 2nd June, the toilet system at the Central Police Station was observed to be completely broken and flooded with water, releasing an overpowering and unbearable stench of urine and faeces. There was no water and therefore no bathing facility at the police station. Suspects were compelled to buy drinking water or access some through relatives and some generous police officers.

At the Kailahun Police Station, there was no toilet within the police station for suspects. They were often escorted to neighboring houses to attend to nature or to take a bath. This situation was similar to that at the Bo West Police Division which the Commission monitored on 28th August. There was no toilet facility and custody officers escorted suspects to an outside toilet situated few yards away from the facility. Water for drinking and bathing was a challenge. Safe drinking water was bought by relatives of suspects in custody and sometimes by generous police officers. The cell was poorly ventilated and suspects slept on the bare floor. At the Kenema Police Station the HRCSL observed a pool of urine on the walkway during its monitoring in November.

The Lungi police cell was observed to be very unhygienic as the smell of urine and faeces permeated the area around the cell. The roof of the cell was observed to be perforated, causing the flow of water on the floor during the rainy season and putting detainees to put up with a situation described as inhuman and degrading.

This appalling state of police detention facilities affects the health and psyche of detainees in violation of Section 4(e) of the Luanda Guidelines on Arrests, Police Custody and Pre-trial Detention on detainees' rights to living in humane and hygienic conditions including adequate water, food, sanitation, accommodation and rest.

Recommendations:

1. *The SLP should use rights-based approach in policing protests and riots.*
2. *GoSL should adequately equip the SLP to enable it to respond to incidences of violence appropriately and professionally.*
3. *GoSL should provide adequate logistical and technical support to the FSU to aid their response in tackling SGBV cases expeditiously.*
4. *The Office of the DPP should speedily provide legal advice on SGBV cases to avoid delays in investigations and prosecutions.*
5. *The Ministry of Internal Affairs should give a face lift to police detention facilities in the entire country*

2.3.2 The Judiciary

Section 120 (1) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 vests judicial powers in the Judiciary. The right to secure protection of the law is guaranteed in Section 23 of the said Constitution. This right is also enshrined in Article 7 of the UDHR, Article 14 of the ICCPR and Article 7 of the ACHPR. Pursuant to Section 147 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, the President is empowered to appoint a Commission of Inquiry (COI) to look into any matter of public interest. In this regard, in January, three judges were appointed who subscribed to the Oath of Office as Chairmen and Sole Commissioners of the COI as established by Constitutional Instruments Nos. 64, 65 and 67 of 2018. The three judges were Justice Biobele Georgewill from the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Justice William Annan Atuguba from the Republic of Ghana and Justice Bankole Thompson, of Sierra Leone. The Commission was tasked to investigate allegations of widespread corruption, abuse of office, stolen public funds and state assets under the government of former President Ernest Bai Koroma between 2007 and 2018.

HRCSL notes that in January, the Sierra Leone Bar Association (SLBA) challenged the establishment of the COI in the Supreme Court in the absence of established Rules of Court Committee in accordance with Section 150 of the Constitution. Despite this application in the Supreme Court which was not heard, the Commission formally began its work in February. HRCSL further notes the statement of the Chief Justice delivered on the occasion of the official opening of the COI on 29th January in which he referenced Cap 54 of the Laws of Sierra Leone 1960 and the Commission of Inquiry Amendment Act of 1982 which provide for laws regulating Commissions of Inquiry.

HRCSL notes the appointment in March of Judges in the following courts; Supreme Court; four male judges, Appeals Court 2 females and 2 male judges and High Court; one female and 6 male judges.

HRCSL notes that this year's opening session of the High Court in September was declared as a "Judicial Week" by the Chief Justice to address overcrowding, long term detainees without indictment, long adjournment resulting from the absence of a complete jury and inconsistency in appearance and the conditions under which jurors execute their statutory duties.

They specifically looked into and addressed the plights of inmates who have been incarcerated without trial from the period 2009 -2017.

The Prison Courts sessions took place in Freetown, Bo, Moyamba, Kenema, Kono, Makeni and Port Loko from the 17th to 20th September 2019, it created space for 800 backlog cases in the above districts to be adjudicated by judges.

By Constitutional Instrument No. 4 of 2019 dated 4th April 2019, the CJ established 3 (three) separate divisions of the High Court namely the Anti-Corruption Division, the Industrial and Social Security Division and the Sexual Offences Division. The rationale for these additional divisions of the High Court was to address the delays in the adjudication of cases related to corruption, social security and sexual offences respectively. These courts are all fully operational and persons needing their services have been accessing them.

The relocation of all Magistrates' Courts from the Law Courts Building at Siaka Stevens Street to Pademba Road has led to increase court rooms and improved access to justice. However, in the Bo Magistrate's Court number 2 in the Southern Region, HRCSL observed that the entire building had perforated roofs, collapsed ceilings and no toilet facilities. Furthermore, HRCSL observed that the

Local Courts in the Southern Region continued to face a major problem in the payment of salaries since they were subsumed under the judiciary.

The HRCSL also noted the poor conditions of service of local court officials, inadequate staff strength and inadequate funds to run the operations of courts. This impedes the access to justice.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Judiciary should continue the “Prisons Court” as it has expedited the decongestion of the prisons.*
- 2. The Judiciary should ensure an effective and efficient jury system through the provision of resources.*
- 3. The Judiciary should refurbish the court building in Bo and all other dilapidated court buildings to improve access to justice.*
- 4. The judiciary should improve the condition of service for local court staff and provide subvention to Chiefdom Administrations to enhance their operations.*

2.3.3 Juvenile Justice

The rights of juveniles in conflict with the law are provided for in the Children and Young Persons Act (Chapter 44 of the Laws of Sierra Leone, 1960), the Child Justice Strategy 2014-2018 and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules).

In order to improve juvenile justice, the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) in partnership with the Justice Sector Coordinating Office (JSCO) and UNICEF carried out a pilot implementation phase of the Child Welfare and Alternative Care Policy and the Diversion and Alternative Detention Guidelines which were launched in 2018.

HRCSL commends H.E President Bio for the clemency granted on April 27th to ten (10) juveniles who were serving their sentences at the Approved School. HRCSL notes that this was the first time that juveniles have been considered for clemency and notes further that this action was in the best interest of the children as it reunited them with their families, reintegrated them into society and gave them another opportunity to go back to formal school before their respective release dates.

HRCSL noted that eighteen (18) cases were pending in the High Court in 2019; twelve (12) of those cases were continuing matters. The remaining six (6) cases heard for the first time in the High Court were among the eleven (11) which were reported by HRCSL in the 2018 SOHR report (Pg 49) as being without indictment. HRCSL is concerned about the remaining five (5) juveniles who await the processing of their indictments in order for their matters to proceed to the High Court. This contravenes Article 13 (1) of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules) which states that “Detention pending trial shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time” and Article 20 (1) which provides that “each case shall from the outset be handled expeditiously, without any unnecessary delay”.

HRCSL also notes with concern that two juveniles who were in remand at the Male Correctional Center at Pademba Road for two years were remitted to the Kingtom Remand Home awaiting sentence by the

Juvenile Court.

In spite of the legal representation provided by the Legal Aid Board (LAB) and the Commit and Act Foundation for inmates in the Bo Remand Home, the Child Protection Committee (now named Child Welfare Coordinating Committee) is still challenged in ensuring that the rights of children particularly those in the Remand Homes are fully protected due to frequent adjournments, leading to prolonged detention and overcrowding of the Home.

In the absence of a juvenile detention facility in fourteen (14) out of the sixteen (16) districts, HRCSL during its monitoring visit of the Kailahun Correctional Centre, observed that two (2) juvenile inmates on remand were incarcerated with adults. The wrongful placement of these juveniles with adults is in contravention of Article 13(4) of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules) which provides that “juveniles under detention shall be kept separate from adults and shall be detained in separate institutions”.

Equally so, HRCSL is concerned that there continues to be only one Approved School in the country. The absence of Approved schools in other districts has often led to juveniles being incarcerated with adults in the regions or sometimes transferred to Freetown to serve their sentences. As a result, they are often deprived of family visits due to the distance from their homes as revealed by some inmates interviewed. This is a violation of Sections 26 (5) of the Beijing Rules and 58 (1) (b) of the Nelson Mandela Rules of 1955.

Recommendations

1. *MoGC in partnership with JSCO should popularize and implement in full the Child Welfare and Alternative Care Policy and the Diversion and Alternative Detention Guidelines.*
2. *Attorney General and Minister of Justice together with the Chief Justice should set up guidelines for expeditious trial of juvenile matters.*
3. *HRCSL calls on the Attorney General and Minister of Justice to speedily process indictments for juveniles especially the remaining so as to guarantee their rights to expeditious trial.*
4. *HRCSL encourages H.E. the President to continue to offer clemency to juveniles, especially those serving sentences for petty offences and who have shown signs of rehabilitation.*
5. *MoGC should consider establishing Remand Homes and Approved Schools in the regions in order to uphold the rights of juveniles in conflict with the law.*

2.3.4 Juvenile Detention Facilities

The HRCSL conducted monitoring visits to the only Approved School in the country and the two Remand Homes in Freetown and Bo and noted the following.

Accommodation

HRCSL observed that dormitories at the Kingtom Remand Home (KRH) and the Approved School were found in poor conditions. Although mattresses and bed covers are available in all centers, they were found in very deplorable conditions. At the Approved School, the section assigned for female inmates

had been under construction since 2008. As a result, one of the offices of administrators is used as a dormitory for girls with no internal toilet.

Security

Security poses a major challenge for inmates due to the low fence and inadequate number of security personnel at the Approved School and the Kingtom Remand Home in Freetown. In October, a male inmate escaped from the Approved School in Freetown but was apprehended and brought back to the school. Authorities revealed that several appeals to the MSWGCA to increase the perimeter fences of both institutions has proved futile. The Approved School was also noted to be without electricity during the time of visit.

Education and Recreation

Formal education in the Remand Homes in Freetown and Bo was observed to be a serious concern as no regular school schedule was found in place for the inmates.

At the Approved School, there was an education center, which caters for secondary school inmates. There were four (4) male inmates who sat to the BECE; they were all reported to be successful. The facility has space for outdoor games like football, table tennis and basket-ball.

At the KRH, the tailoring department operates as a school with twelve (12) inmates on its roll. The department has six (6) functioning machines out of a total of ten (10).

At the BRH there are two teachers assigned from the MSWGCA who were paid by Prison Watch Sierra Leone (PWSL). These teachers, provided services for inmates taking the NPSE and BECE.

Health and Hygiene

The KRH had access to water for safe drinking and other purposes and had three working toilets. However, the facility was challenged with the supply of toiletries as at the time of visit. HRCSL did not observe nor was informed about any designated medical unit or stationed medical personnel at the KRH. HRCSL noted that GoSL only provided first-aid drugs for the facility. Common ailments reported were malaria, skin diseases, cold and pain which are hardly urgently addressed due to the absence medicines or medical personnel. Management of the Home reported to have received assistance twice from Don Bosco and Raviera Children Rehabilitation Center (RCRC).

At the Approved school in Wellington there was one room that was used for first aid purposes with an assigned first aider. The school continued to face challenges in the supply of water, especially during the dry season. Inmates fetched water in the surrounding communities with strict supervision from the correction officers.

Provision of Food

During monitoring visits to the Remand Homes (KRH) in Freetown and Bo, and the Approved in May to September, issues around inadequate food supply were raised in both homes.

In Bo, HRCSL learnt that the Home received a five (5) month supply of food and non-food items in January which lasted for only four (4) months. Since May, there had been no supply of food and non-food items to these homes despite several requests by the authorities to the MSGWCA. Food items were later supplied in October after series of engagements by HRCSL and other organisations.

Recommendations:

1. MoGC should supply new and adequate foam mattresses and beddings to all juvenile detention facilities.
2. MoGC should ensure that the centres have adequate drug supplies and stationed medical personnel.
3. MoGC should ensure that the quantity of food and quality of education and healthcare for juveniles in detention facilities meet with International Standards.
4. MoGC should ensure that volunteers and skills training teachers are on GoSL payroll.
5. MoGC should ensure that the Approved School in Wellington has adequate supply of water as well as ensure the supply of electricity within the facility.
6. MoGC should increase the number of Remand Homes and Approved Schools across the country.

2.3.5 The Sierra Leone Correctional Service

HRC SL conducted monitoring of correctional centres across the country at various times in the year under review and documented the following:

Overcrowding

Overcrowding continues to pose a challenge in correctional centres. All centres visited noted increases in the number of persons incarcerated as shown in the table below.

Centre and Month	Holding Capacity	No. of Inmates	Overcrowding
Freetown Male – June	324	1,795	554%
Kenema Male – January	80	305	381%
Makeni Male - August	83	288	347%
Bo Male – June	80	247	309%
Kono Male– January	150	167	139%
Kailahun Male– January	80	88	110%

The HRC SL is concerned about overcrowding as it impacts the full enjoyment of the right to health of inmates in contravention of Rule 13 which states that “All accommodation provided for the use of prisoners and in particular all sleeping accommodation shall meet all requirements of health, due regard being paid to climatic conditions and particularly to cubic content of air, minimum floor space, lighting, heating and ventilation”.

Overcrowding of the Makeni Correctional Centre was compounded by the delay of the Judiciary to replace the Resident High Court Judge who retired in February. As a result, all cases committed from the Magistrate’s Courts to the High Court were not heard and the accused persons without bail remained in detention without trial. Overcrowding in the Bo Correctional Centre on the other hand was partly attributed to delays in trial as a result of the absence of jurors, the presence of only one judge and a State Counsel for the entire southern region.

Over-Detention

HRCSL observed that there were trial inmates without indictments for over four (4) to eleven (11) years in the Correctional Services below:

Correctional Service Centres	Number of Inmates
Makeni Correctional Service	142 including 12 females
Port Loko Correctional Service	75 including 2 female
Moyamba Correctional Service	39
Bo Correctional Service	83
Kenema Correctional Service	174 including 3 females
Kono Correctional Service	47

In Kenema, in particular, HRCSL observed that an inmate DK had spent eleven (11) years without an indictment. With the intervention of HRCSL, an extra-ordinary court session was organized by the DPP and DK was subsequently acquitted and discharged. Also in Kailahun, one (1) inmate had been on remand for one year and five months without appearing in court, while in Kono four (4) inmates had been appearing in court for between eight and nine times without any conclusion to their cases. This breach by the Judiciary is in contravention of Article 9 (3) of the ICCPR which stipulates that; “Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release ...”

Similar cases were also documented in Makeni on 3rd August, where thirty-one (31) inmates who had been on remand for six months; three other inmates were identified to have made several appearances either at the High Court or the Magistrate’s Courts in Makeni without their matter being called up for hearing. There was a similar situation at the FMCC, where in November, some inmates who had just arrived from court were ranting in a chorus of frustration for going to court several times and their cases were not being heard.

Furthermore, in Bo, Kenema, Kono and Moyamba correctional centres, HRCSL observed inmates in Bo, Kono and Moyamba Correctional Centres incarcerated for petty offences such as loitering, frequenting a place, minor traffic offences, owing a debt and simple larceny for between six months and two years as a result of their inability to pay fines ranging from two hundred thousand Leones (Le200, 000) and one million Leones (Le1,000,000).

Presidential Pardon

On 22nd January and 10th May, 214 inmates and 229 inmates respectively including 11 women from various Correctional Service (SLCS) Centres across the country received presidential pardon. This action by His Excellency was a step towards decongesting the Correctional Centres and giving a second chance to inmates who have served longer jail terms and acquired skills to reintegrate into society.

In September, the SLCS in an effort to decongest the Freetown Male Correctional Centre (FMCC) relocated one hundred and ten (110) inmates, including ten (10) females to the Pre-Trial Detention & Simulation Centre in Kissy Town, Waterloo. Additionally, two hundred and eighty-two males (282) inmates from the FMCC were relocated to the Mafanta Correctional Centre in Tonkolili District on 26th October. HRCSL commends the SLCS for these efforts aimed at easing congestion at the FMCC as it has been a concern articulated by the HRCSL in its previous annual State of Human Rights reports.

Clothing and Bedding

HRCSL acknowledges GoSL's effort in striving to ameliorate the condition of inmates in correctional centres across the country when on 8th July, it supplied beddings to 4,438 inmates in the various correctional centres across the country. The supplies included foam mattresses, pillows and blankets. However, HRCSL observed during its visit to the FMCC in November some inmates within the facility were found wearing torn and thread-bare uniforms in contravention of Rule 19 (1) & (2) of the SMR which states that: 1. "Every prisoner who is not allowed to wear his or her own clothing shall be provided with an outfit of clothing suitable for the climate and adequate to keep him or her in good health. Such clothing shall in no manner be degrading or humiliating". The Moyamba Correctional Centre was noted not to have the required jumpsuit based on the jail term status as a result of their non-availability.

Education

Rule 4 (2) of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (SMR) states that "prison administrations and other competent authorities should offer education, vocational training and work, as well as other forms of assistance that are appropriate and available, including those of a remedial, moral, spiritual, social and health- and sports-based nature. All such programmes, activities and services should be delivered in line with the individual treatment needs of prisoners".

In line with the above provision, the Makeni Correctional Centre now benefits from the University of Makeni (UNIMAK) education pilot programme which started on the 29th July. Inmates who had two or more credits at the WASSCE enrolled in the programme free of charge and benefited from the following courses; Information Technology, Poultry Management, Community Development Studies, Entrepreneurship and Agriculture. Those who do not have the entry requirements were encouraged to enroll for tutorial lessons in English Language, Mathematics and Social Studies.

Similarly, during the monitoring of the FMCC, HRCSL was informed that the Correctional Centre has affiliated with Sierra Leone Opportunities Industrialization Centre (SLOIC) to train three hundred (300) inmates who would be awarded certificates upon completion of their courses. HRCSL observed that adult literacy classes and vocational training continued in all Centres visited. The Freetown Male and Female Correctional Centres introduced computer classes for inmates. In addition, the FMCC also conducted skills training in tailoring, carpentry, shoe-making welding and brick-making.

An earning scheme has also been instituted in the Correctional Centres where a percentage of proceeds from the sale of items produced by inmates are kept in a bank account. HRCSL was informed that these funds would be made available to their families while incarcerated or to them upon their release.

HRCSL commends the SLCS for these strides in assisting inmates to gain knowledge and skills as it would not only keep them "actively employed for a normal working day" but also foster their reintegration and rehabilitation in their communities as well as enable them "to earn an honest living after release.

Health and Sanitation

The HRCSL observed that pipe-borne water has been restored via the Guma Valley Water Company (GVWC) after twenty (20) years of disconnection to the Freetown Male Correctional Services (FMCC). HRCSL notes that drinking water facilities were found in all correctional services visited. However, inmates who wish to buy water were allowed to do so in the newly constructed 'Tok Shops' (provision shop) which the HRCSL observed has been located in almost all services visited, or outside the center

like in the case of the Makeni Correctional Services. Generally, inmates reported to be supplied with toiletries including sanitary pads, laundry and bathing soap.

In May, inmates interviewed in Correctional Centers in Moyamba, Kailahun, Bo, Makeni, and Port Loko informed the HRCSL that they have not encountered any restrictions in terms of accessing medical facilities. Prisons authorities informed the HRCSL that they receive medical supplies, including Anti-Retro-Viral (ARV) drugs for HIV patients on quarterly basis. Conditions requiring major surgeries and x-rays were referred to the Connaught Hospital or hospitals in neighboring districts for further examination and treatment.

In contravention of Rule 109 (1) of the SMR which states that “Persons who are found to be not criminally responsible, or who are later diagnosed with severe mental disabilities and/or health conditions, for whom staying in prison would mean an exacerbation of their condition, shall not be detained in prisons, and arrangements shall be made to transfer them to mental health facilities as soon as possible”, the HRCSL observed that three (3) inmates at the Bo Correctional Centre had been suffering from mental illness for over four (4) and nine (9) years, instead of being transferred to a mental health facility. The continued incarceration of mentally disabled inmates poses a security threat to not only fellow inmates but also the correctional centre personnel.

A visit to the FMCC in June by the HRCSL revealed that there is a laboratory and 25 beds in the hospital. Enough drugs for treating malaria were observed. Concerns were however raised about inadequate drugs for diabetic, tuberculosis and hepatitis patients. As at the time of visit, there were four (4) diabetic and eight (8) hepatitis inmates who suffered from the drug inadequacy challenge. This contravenes Rule 24 (1) of the SMR “The provision of health care for prisoners is a State responsibility. Prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, and should have access to necessary health-care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status. The need for an oxygen machine, counseling room, bigger space for the laboratory and more test kits for HIV were major concerns expressed by medical personnel.

HRCSL observed that inmates at the Makeni Correctional Centre (MCC) developed skin diseases such as scabies and ringworm, as a result of the overcrowding and poor ventilation. On 3rd October, HRCSL was informed by the Nurse-In-Charge that an inmate was incarcerated with chicken-pox that was not detected at the time of screening. It infected up to twenty (20) inmates, thus threatening the enjoyment of their rights to health. Cell windows at the Makeni Correctional Services were noted to be very small and prevented adequate flow of air into the dormitories. Inmates interviewed complained of frequent skin rashes as a result of the heat accumulated in the dormitories.

Recommendations:

1. *The Law Officers Department should expedite the production of indictments for inmates committed to the High Court for trial.*
2. *The SLCS should roll out the education and skills training programmes to all inmates in other correctional centres across the country, irrespective of the duration of their jail terms.*
3. *SLCS should improve on the hygiene and ventilation facilities at the Makeni Correctional Centre to limit the spread of disease among inmates.*

4. *The Ministry of Internal Affairs should provide SLCS with the requisite equipment to properly screen inmates before they are admitted to prevent the spread of any contagious disease that a new-comer might be carrying.*

2.4 Women's Rights /Sexual and Gender Base Violence

Government is a state party to several regional and international human rights conventions, protocols, and charters that promote the rights of women and also has its national laws. Notably are Section 15 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 which guarantees the enjoyment of the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual irrespective of the person's sex, the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2003 (Maputo Protocol).

GoSL took positive steps to focus on issues aimed at promoting the rights of women. One of the issues raised in the Women's Position Paper of 2018 was the 'Harmonization and enforcement of laws and policies relating to sexual violence against women'. On 7th February, H.E. President Bio declared a National Emergency on rape. The declaration was in response to the high rate of sexual offences perpetrated against women especially young girls, thus leading to physical and psychological consequences on the enjoyment of their rights to health and life. The Sexual Offence Act 2012 being an Act to consolidate laws relating to sexual offences was amended. Subsequently, Parliament on 19th September debated and passed into law the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill 2019, which seeks to amend the Sexual Offences Act of 2012 and provides for 'the increase of the maximum penalty for rape and sexual penetration of a child from fifteen years to life imprisonment; and to make provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault'. On 7th November, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) was separated, having Gender and Children's Affairs as a standalone Ministry. The rationale for the establishment of the Ministry is to focus on the formation and implementation of policy objectives, guidelines and strategies relating to the empowerment of women, men and children. This Ministry is fully operational.

Concerns however, continued to be raised by HRCSL and women's groups at the slow pace in which women's rights have not been given the urgency they deserve. Some concerns raised in the women's position paper of 2018, crept unaddressed in 2019. Government's promise of 'financial resources to address SGBV, free medical services for survivors of sexual violence and persons with disabilities including HIV/AIDS, the establishment of the National Commission for Women, the abolition of the two shift schools and the adoption of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bill' are still pending. Women still await their full inclusion in the participation in all decision-making processes.

Recommendation:

1. *GoSL should consider the issues raised in the Women's Position paper in 2019 regarding inclusion of more women in decision making positions.*
2. *MoGCA should expedite the submission of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy to cabinet for a speedy of same.*

2.4.1 Gender Based Violence against Children

Children's Rights are provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) 1990 and the Child Rights Act 2007. The

HRCSL during the reporting year received cases of forceful initiation of children, cruelty to children, child abandonment and sexual and gender base violence amongst young girls.

2.4.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a traditional harmful practice. Sierra Leone is a state party to regional protocols and international conventions prohibiting harmful traditional practices and violence against women for which FGM is classified. However, despite the precautionary measures highlighted in Section 11 (2) (e) of the Child Rights Act (CRA), Article 5 (b) of the Maputo Protocol and Article 24 (3) of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which the country is a state party, the practice remains widespread amongst girls younger than 18, who continue to be forcefully initiated.

Till date, Sierra Leone has no legislation or policy that prohibits the practice. “Soweis” and other persons involved in the initiation of girls do not suffer any form of penalty for their actions due to the lack of legislation. The HRCSL received 13 cases of FGM which it successfully handled.

HRCSL notes the initiative put forward by the Amazonian Initiative Movement (AIM) to introduce FGM without cutting. This initiative encouraged Soweis to put down the blade and turn a new page in the ‘Bondo Initiation.’ In December 2019, 75 (seventy-five) girls went through this rite of passage, where they were taught different courses including Home Economics which encompasses child caring, food preparations and other practices worth knowing for girls.

2.4.3 Early and Forced Marriages

Section 34(1) of the Child Rights Act (CRA) and Article 21 (2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) make provisions for marriage at age 18 and above but the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act makes provision of same but also provides in Section 2 (2) 7 the consent of parents to marry off their children below the age of 18.

In 2018, a draft Abolition of Early Marriage Bill to address the inconsistencies in the age of marriage was produced by the Law Reform Commission for onward transmission to Parliament. This action is still pending. HRCSL continued raising the issue in its sensitization and awareness raising activities to align the laws with regional and international provisions to which Sierra Leone is a state party.

2.4.4 Sexual Penetration and Rape

Government has enacted several laws aimed at protecting women and girls against SGBV. These include; the Domestic Violence Act 2007, the Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act 2009, the Sexual Offences Act 2012 and the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019. Regional and international laws include the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and on the Rights of Women in African (i.e. the Maputo Protocol under which women have rights to dignity and protection from all forms of violence particularly sexual violence) and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), both to which Sierra Leone is a state party.

HRCSL recognizes the strides taken by the government to address sexual violence perpetrated especially against children and subsequently the declaration of a national emergency on rape and sexual penetration by H. E. the President on 7th February 2019 as a response to the high rate of sexual violence and its terrible consequences on young children. This declaration led to the amendment of the Sexual Offences Act 2012 through the passage of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019 which provides for stringent

measures for perpetrators of rape and sexual penetration up to life imprisonment. The launching of the “Hands Off Our Girls Campaign” in 2018 continued in 2019 to raise awareness on SGBV. The HRCSL documented 32 (thirty-two) cases of domestic violence and sexual assault of especially young girls.

Records from the Sierra Leone Police, General Annual Crime Statistics Report 2019 for all regional commands revealed an increase in the gruesome practice. In 2019, out of the 12,314 (Twelve Thousand, Three Hundred and Fourteen) cases, 3,252 (Three Thousand, two hundred and fifty-two) of the SGBV cases were sexual penetration cases perpetrated against minors, Western Urban and Rural Areas accounted for 39.94% of all cases. A total 145 constituted rape. Sexual penetration cases showed an increase from the 2018 records of 2,726.

The HRCSL during its monitoring of different Family Support Units (FSU) in its operational districts noted the myriads of challenges faced by the FSU in processing SGBV cases in a timely manner. Lack of logistical support especially vehicles and bikes to promptly respond to SGBV cases in real time were major issues raised by police officers. Furthermore, prolonged trial and frequent adjournments of SGBV cases at both Magistrate and High Courts, the failure of witnesses to appear in court and the unwillingness of complainants to continue their cases were also some of the reasons the HRCSL noted during court monitoring for the delays in the prosecution of SGBV cases.

2.4.5 Children Incarcerated with Mothers

At the Freetown Female Correctional Centre, there were 4 inmate mothers with young children. HRCSL observed that a child friendly centre, staffed by correction officers, had been established within the facility. It is equipped with recreational facilities for children. This is in fulfillment of Rule 29 (1) (a) of the Mandela Rule which states that “Internal or external childcare facilities staffed by qualified persons, where the children shall be placed when they are not in the care of their parent.”

However, at the Makeni and Kenema Correctional Centres, HRCSL observed that two (2) babies were living with their mothers in the centres with no facilities for babies incarcerated with their mothers. HRCSL is concerned that these two centres were lacking in child care facilities to aid in the development of the children.

Recommendations:

1. *The MoGCA through the AG’s office, Law Reform Commission and Parliament should pass a law prohibiting FGM especially against children under the age of 18 years*
2. *The Ministry of Finance should provide adequate funding to effectively monitor the full implementation of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019.*
3. *Government to speedily enact the draft Abolition of Early Marriage Bill to harmonize of laws bordering on the age of consent for marriage.*
4. *Government should speedily provide logistical support to the Family Support Unit of the SLP to enable them to promptly respond to SGBV cases in real time*

2.4.6 Persons with Disabilities

The rights of persons with disabilities are provided for in the Persons with Disability Act 2011, Article

18 (4) ACHPR and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD). According to the Sierra Leone Integrated Survey 2018, there are 310,973 persons with disability in Sierra Leone accounting for 4.3% of the population of Sierra Leone.

On International Disability Day (IDD) celebration, 3rd December, MSW and NaCSA officially launched the expanded Social Safety Net Project to include persons with disabilities and committed to launching and making operational the National Development Fund for PwDs as provided for in Section 31 (1) of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2011.

HRCSL observed that pupils with special needs at public schools faced some challenges. For example, at the Vine Memorial Secondary School, there were four (4) hearing and speech impaired (deaf and dumb) pupils but the school had no sign language interpreter to assist them in learning.

The Milton Margai School for the Blind

HRCSL during its monitoring visit, at the Milton Margai School for the Blind, HRCSL was informed that the school was not assessed to ascertain its specific needs and had therefore not been supplied any teaching and learning material and assistive learning devices since the commencement of the FQSE. HRCSL learnt that six (6) special needs children were denied admission into the institution due to inadequate accommodation facilities in the dormitories, depriving them of the enjoyment of the right to education. The school was observed to be understaffed and the salaries of most of the teachers on payroll were below the minimum wage. This problem was compounded by the late receipt of subvention.

The Hosetta Abdulla School for the mentally retarded informed HRCSL on 17th June that the school had not received subvention for the past (3) years nor benefitted from FQSE program.

2.4.7 Persons with Mental and Intellectual Disabilities

HRCSL noted the effort made by GoSL in ensuring the enjoyment of the right to health by persons with intellectual disability. The Kissy Psychiatric Hospital which previously had only one Psychiatrist increased by three following the retirement of the only psychiatrist it had over the past years. The hospital was also renovated and capacitated with additional staff.

HRCSL also noted the improvement in the provision of three (3) square meals a day, as opposed to one in 2017, the provision of recreational games such as scrabble and musical instrument i.e. tambourine, and guitars were also observed.

“Autism Sierra Leone”, a Non-Governmental Organization, organized a mini-conference on “Acceptance of Persons with Autism”. HRCSL welcomes this great move as it opened minds and broadened knowledge on the scope of vulnerability of persons with autism and bringing it to the attention of government.

HRCSL was informed of challenges such as the absence of a specific mental health budget line at the level of the MoHS or the District Health Management Teams (DHMT). Psychotropic drugs are included on the list of essential medications but have rarely been procured by the MoHS. Most psychotropic drugs in the country are donations by NGOs. The lack of mental health funding and a severe shortage of psychotropic drugs continue to pose barriers for mental health patients.

Recommendations:

1. *The NCPD and other key institutions dealing with PwDs should collaborate with the MBSSE in highlighting and addressing key concerns affecting PwDs.*
2. *The GoSL should empower the NCPD and show total commitment in implementing the provisions of the PWD Act 2011.*
3. *GoSL through the MoHS should view mental health as an emerging issue in the country as a key aspect of well-being.*
4. *GoSL through the respective MDAs should create the enabling and encouraging space for the operations and implementation of vital projects by NGO's*
5. *GoSL through the MoHS should include institutions dealing with mental health in the national budget.*

2.5 Youth

Youth are persons between the ages of 15-35 years, according to the National Youth Policy of Sierra Leone and the African Youth Charter. In Sierra Leone, several institutional frameworks exist to protect the rights of youth. These include: the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the National Youth Commission (NYC (NAYCOM)), the National Youth Policy and the National Youth Service Scheme. Youth account for 33.5 % of the population of Sierra Leone according to the Sierra Leone Integrated Households Survey 2018.

During the year under review, HRCSL observed efforts made by GoSL in addressing youth unemployment and youth urban migration. These include several activities to get youth engaged in activities to promote livelihoods and employment.

On 5th March, the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MYA), in consultation with youth entrepreneurs from Freetown Belgium Base Freetown, Sweizzy, Lumley, Makeni, Bo, Kenema, Kono and other areas in Sierra Leone started the project of a National Programme on youth entrepreneurship. The main idea of this project was to provide investment skills to youth and to empower them to import goods which would eventually help them to own and manage their businesses.

In June, MYA commenced the process of constructing seventy (70) fishing boats for youth engaged in fishing in the Riverine Districts. On 5th November, the MYA trained and certified 510 youth in different life skills Programmes and launched the construction of ten (10) car wash centres across the Western Area.

In a bid to boost the agricultural sector, NAYCOM piloted the “Youth Demonstration Farms” in four (4) districts: Bombali, Bo, Kambia and Moyamba in June. Similarly, MYA started farming activities in November-December, in Port Loko, Tonkolili, Koinadugu, Kono and Kenema districts where it has two hundred and fifty (250) acres of land respectively for youth engaged in agriculture. Youth were employed to serve as farm coordinators and farm hands on these farms and paid monthly stipends. This is an effort by GoSL to make agriculture attractive to rural youth and ensure that their minds are taken away from the growing urbanization.

On 19th November, with support from UNDP, NAYCOM launched the Career Advisory and Placement Service Centres in Eastern Polytechnic in Kenema and the Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (EBKUST) in Magburaka. This project was also cascaded to the Njala University

with the main goal of empowering university students and alumni to attain lifelong successes through career services that would improve the pathways from universities to employers and thus reduce youth unemployment.

2.5.1 Youth Violence

In spite of these efforts by GoSL during the year under review, youth unemployment and drug abuse continued to be a challenge and this was also a factor in the increase of youth violence across the country.

On 4th and 5th February, pupils of Ahmadiyya Muslim Secondary School and the Municipal Secondary School in the Kissy Dockyard Community were involved in street battles, compelling the entire community to go into a lock down.

On 5th March, in the Five Mile Community, Waterloo, two sets of youth belonging to rival cliques engaged in violence in which two youth were stabbed and one later died of his injuries. Also, in May, youth from the Levuma Beach bearing knives and cutlasses attacked residents of the Portor Community in Goderich.

During the conduct of the WASSCE on 16th and 17th May, pupils of the Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Secondary School and St. Clement Senior Secondary School in Waterloo rioted when police arrested pupils and teachers who were involved in examination malpractices.

Furthermore, in May violence among youth groups marred the “headman” elections in Waterloo and in August, the election re-run in Constituency 110 was cancelled by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) as a result of violence perpetrated by youth of political parties.

These violent activities have often resulted in deaths, injuries to persons, destruction of property, disruption of education activities and arrests and detentions of alleged perpetrators of such violence by the SLP. This has ultimately affected the enjoyment of the right to life, liberty and security of persons, right to property, right to education, right to health and freedom of movement.

Recommendations:

1. *MoF should fast track funding for the youth in entrepreneurship programmes so that youth in other regions of the country can benefit from said programme.*
2. *MYA should ensure that the youth in car wash, youth in agriculture, youth in fisheries and other youth projects be extended to other regions in order to reduce the rapidly growing urban migration.*
3. *GoSL should provide employment opportunities for youth in order to empower them to avoid violence and resort to peaceful means in settling their differences.*
4. *MYA should reactivate the Campaign against Drug Abuse and Alcoholism in order to produce healthy and development oriented youths for national progress.*

2.6 Status of Ratification of International Treaties and Conventions

GoSL is a signatory to several Regional and International Human Rights Treaties/laws. Chapter 2 Section 10 (d) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 states that “The Foreign Policy Objectives of the State shall be respect for international law and treaty obligations, as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or adjudication”.

GoSL demonstrated its commitment to international obligations by submitting the Second Cycle UPR Mid-Term report to the Human Rights Council (HRC) on 20th September.

Within the course of the year, HRCSL observed the strides taken by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) in protecting the right to work by reviewing the National Employment Policy which was developed in 2016; popularizing the 2018 Labour Migration Policy in 10 out of the 16 districts; facilitate the ratification by Parliament of eleven (11) ILO Conventions that are geared towards protection of persons seeking employment abroad. The conventions include the undermentioned:

- I. Convention 97 – Migration for Employment Convention (revised) 1949;
- II. Convention 143 – Migrant Workers (supplementary provisions) 1975;
- III. Convention 155 – Occupational Safety and Health 1981;
- IV. Convention 187-Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation 2006
- V. Maritime Labour Convention 2006
- VI. Convention 160 - Labour Statistics,
- VII. Convention 181 - Private Employment Agencies,
- VIII. Convention 102 - Social Security Minimum Standards,
- IX. Convention 189 - Domestic Workers,
- X. Convention 150 - Labour Administration and
- XI. Protocol 29 of 2014 to the first Labour Convention

Sierra Leone has submitted initial and/or periodic reports on five of the seven ratified core treaties: Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), ICCPR, CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CRD,) and the CRC to the Human Rights Council.

The GoSL still has the following outstanding treaty body reports as indicated in the table below:

Matrix on GoSL’s Status of Implementation of International/Regional Treaties/Laws

No.	Convention	Signed	Ratified	Accession	Status
1	International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	17th Nov 1966	2nd Aug 1967		Report submitted
2	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	23rd Aug 1996			Report submitted
3	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	23rd Aug 1996			Report Not submitted yet

No.	Convention	Signed	Ratified	Accession	Status
4	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women(CEDAW)	21st Sep 1988	11th Nov 1988	3 gender Justice Laws; Sexual Offenses (SOA) Act 2012, SOA Amendment Act (September, 2019)	Report submitted to Committee of Experts on the 17th May, 2007
5	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	18th Mar 1985			Initial report submitted to Committee of Experts on 12th March, 2014
6	Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Feb 1990	11th June, 1990	2007(Child Rights Act 20007	Report submitted
7	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families(ICMW)	15th Sept 2000			Report not submitted yet
8	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance(CPED)				Report not submitted yet
9	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)			PWD Rights Act 2011	Report not submitted yet
10	Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR-OP)				
11	First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights(ICCPR-OPI)	23rd August 1996			Report not submitted yet
12	Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (ICCPR-OP2)	Not Signed			
13	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (OP-CEDAW)	8th Sept 2000			Report not submitted yet
14	Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OP-CRC)	8th Sept 2000	15th May 2002		Report not submitted yet
15	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure(OP-CRC)				Report not submitted yet

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No.	Convention	Signed	Ratified	Accession	Status
16	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OP-CAT)				
17	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (OP-CPRD)				
18	United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	27th Nov 2001			Report not submitted yet
19	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime Preamble, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime				Report not submitted yet
20	Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	27th Nov 2001			Report not submitted yet
21	Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	26th Sept 2003			Report not submitted yet
22	Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention	15th June 1961			Report not submitted yet
23	Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention	13th June 1961			Report not submitted yet
24	Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour	13th June 1961			Report not submitted yet
25	Equal Remuneration Convention	15th Nov 1968			Report not submitted yet
26	Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	13th Jun 1961			Report not submitted yet
27	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention	14th Oct 1966			Report not submitted yet
28	Convention against Discrimination in Education		ratified		Report not submitted yet
29	Convention relating to the Status of Refugees		22nd May 1981		Report not submitted yet
30	Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees		22nd May 1981		Report not submitted yet

No.	Convention	Signed	Ratified	Accession	Status
31	Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	17th Oct 1998	15th Sept 2000		Report not submitted yet
32	Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field		10th Jul 1965 (rat/acced)		Report not submitted yet
33	Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea		10th Jul 1965 (rat/acced)		Report not submitted yet
34	Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War		10th Jul 1965 (rat/acced)		Report not submitted yet
35	Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War		21st Oct 1986 (rat/acced)		Report not submitted yet
36	Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)		21st Oct 1986 (rat/acced)		Report not submitted yet
37	Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims on Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)		21st Oct 1986 (rat/acced)		Report not submitted yet
38	International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages			26th Sept 2003	Report not submitted yet
39	International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombing			26th Sept 2003	Report not submitted yet
40	International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism	27th Nov 2001	26th Sept 2003		Report not submitted yet
41	Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft	19th Jul 1971	13th Nov 1974		Report not submitted yet
42	International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against International Protected Persons			26th Sept 2003	Report not submitted yet
43	Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations			13th Mar 1962	Report not submitted yet
44	Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel	13th Feb 1995			Report not submitted yet

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No.	Convention	Signed	Ratified	Accession	Status
45	African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)	27th Aug 1981	21st Sept 1983		Report not submitted yet
46	Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa	10th Sep 1969	28th Dec 1987		Report not submitted yet
47	Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)	9th Dec 2003	2nd July 2015		Report not submitted yet
48	Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights			9th Jul 1998	Report not submitted yet
49	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child		14th Apr 1992	13th May 2002	Report not submitted yet

Even though, South Africa, Lesotho, Chile, and Niger during the second UPR process recommended (recommendation 111.39, 111.40, 111.41 and 111.43) to GoSL to expedite the Constitutional Review Process, HRCSL noted that nothing was done in relation to the constitutional review process during the period under review.

Recommendations:

1. *GoSL should fully comply with its international obligations.*
2. *HRCSL urges GoSL through MoFAIC to submit all its outstanding treaty reports.*
3. *GoSL should consider the reactivation of the constitutional review process.*

PART 3: ACTIVITIES IN THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

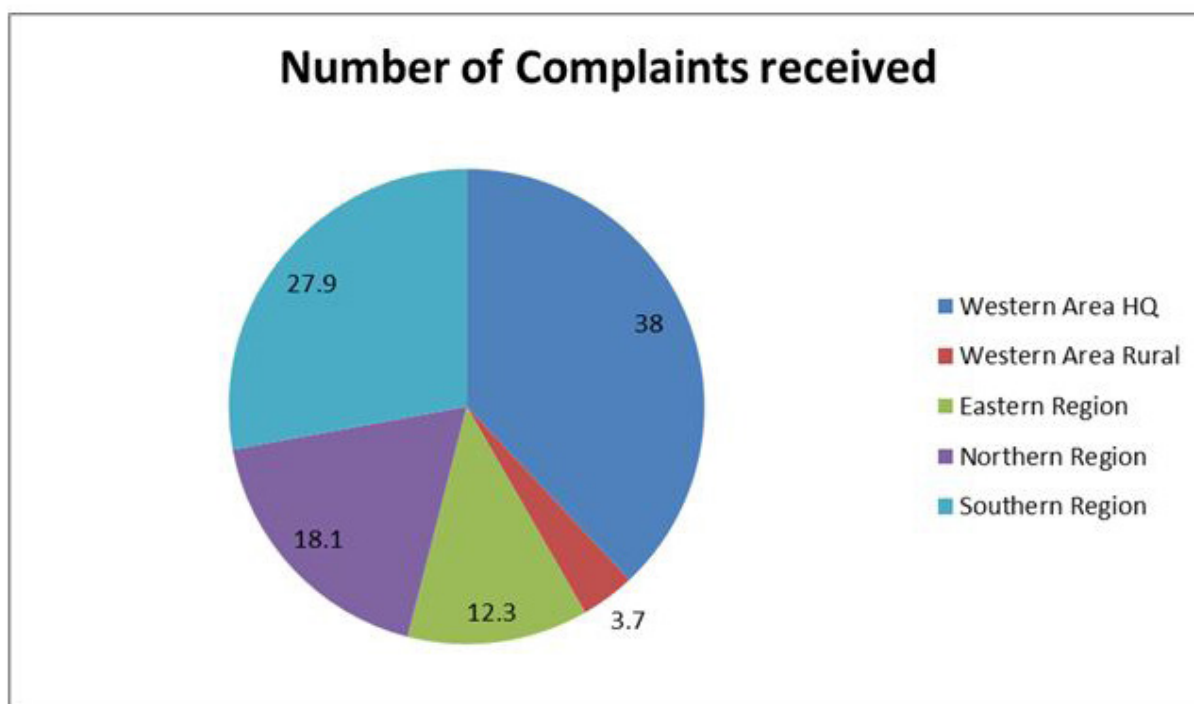
This section highlights various interventions undertaken by the HRCSL during the reporting year. They include receiving, enquiring into and handling of complaints, c g, monitoring, investigations, community engagements on various human rights thematics, media engagement, public education and also held several strategic engagements with relevant stakeholders which includes MDAs, Parliament, the Sierra Leone Police, Sierra Leone Correctional Centres, NGOs, International Partners, educational institutions and Civil Society Organizations.

3.1 Complaints Handling / Management

Section 7 (2) (a) of HRCSL Act (No. 9) of 2004, provides that HRCSL shall “investigate or inquire into on its own or on complaint by any person any allegations of human rights violations and to report thereon in writing”. In the year under review, a total of 326 complaints were received as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.1. Table 1: Complaints received by Regions

Region	Western Area Urban (HQ)	Western Area Rural	Eastern Region	Northern Region	Southern Region	Total
No. of Complaints	124	12	40	59	91	326
Percentage	38.0	3.7	12.3	18.1	27.9	100

Figure 1.1 Pie chart illustrates the number of complaints received at headquarters and the four regional offices in percentages.



Admissibility Decision on Complaints

The HRCSL takes decisions on complaints received and categorizes them as admissible or inadmissible. Admissible complaints are those which fall within the HRCSL's mandate to investigate. Complaints that do not fall within the HRCSL's mandate are inadmissible and are therefore referred to various MDAs that are best suited to handle them through our Referral Partnership Forum. The HRCSL can also mediate on cases on request of both parties. Complaints referred are also closely monitored to ensure that complainants get redress.

Table 2: Admissibility Decision of complaints per Region

No.	Decision on complaints received	W/A HQ	W/Area Rural	Eastern Region	Northern Region	Southern Region	Total	%
1	Admissible	12	3	0	13	30	58	17.8
2	Inadmissible	112	9	40	46	61	268	82.2
Grand Total		124	12	40	59	91	326	100

Table 2 - Explains that out of 326 complaints received, only 58 (17.8%) were admissible, 268 (82.2%) were inadmissible. This large turnout of inadmissibility was as a result of the fact that many of the complaints received were abuses rather than violations of human rights. Some of these complaints were mediated by the HRCSL while others were referred to the appropriate institutions and were monitored for by the HRCSL in order to ensure that complaints see redress. as shown in table 3.

Table 3: Summary of outcomes of Complaints received

Category of Complaints Received	HQ	WA	NR	ER	SR	Total	Percentage
No. of Investigations completed	5	3	0	0	3	11	3.4
No. of Investigations ongoing	4	0	1	1	3	11	3.4
Mediated and resolved	25	3	25	10	5	69	21.1
No. of Complaints Referred and Monitored	23	1	12	11	6	108	33.1
Advised and Counselling	57	2	19	13	8	99	30.4
Complainants who could not be reached for further information	10	3	2	5	8	28	8.6
TOTAL	124	12	59	40	91	326	100

Table 3 - shows the categorization in the number of complaints received. Eleven (11) of the admissible complaints were investigated and eleven (11) are still being investigated. A total of sixty-nine (69) complaints were mediated and resolved and one hundred and eight (108) inadmissible complaints were referred to the appropriate institutions mandated to handle such complaints and monitored. Ninety-nine (99) complainants received legal advice and counseling by the HRCSL and were successful.

Table 4: Categorization of respondents lodged against Individuals/Institutions nationwide

No.	Respondent	W/A HQ	Western (Rural)	Eastern Region	Northern Region	Southern Region	Total	%
1	Individual	71	5	20	29	22	147	45.1
2	SLP	16	4	4	10	28	62	19.0
3	RSLAF	4	0	0	0	0	4	1.2
4	Judiciary	5	1	0	3	3	12	3.7
5	Local Court	0	0	8	1	13	22	7
6	Traditional Authorities	0	2	1	5	12	20	6.1
7	Private Institutions	13	0	4	4	10	31	9.5
8	Educational Institutions	1	0	1	2	2	6	1.8
9	NGO	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
10	Ministry of Labour	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.3
11	Ministry of Lands	3	0	0	0	0	3	0.9
12	Medical Institution	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.6
13	NASSIT	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.6
14	ACC	4	0	0	0	0	4	1.2
15	NIC	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
16	Statistics Sierra Leone	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
17	SLRA	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
18	SLIEPA	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.3
19	Ministry of Local Government	0	0	0	4	0	4	1.2
20	SIERRATEL	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.3
TOTAL		124	12	40	59	91	326	100

Table 4 - is a categorization of respondents for complaints received. The highest number of complaints (45.1%) was made against private individuals which constitute human rights abuses. This showed an increase from 83 complaints in 2018 to 147 in 2019. This could be attributed to increased public confidence in the HRCSL's ability to address human rights issues and providing the needed redress. HRCSL conducts public education on its mandate but however does not discourage these types of complaints as the appropriate advice, mediation, referral and/or follow up is done to ensure that complainants get the needed redress.

The second highest number of complaints (19%) received was against the Sierra Leone Police. Some of the complaints lodged against them constituted human rights violations and were investigated by HRCSL. Other complaints against the SLP were recorded for purposes of monitoring, because at the time of receiving the complaints they did not constitute a violation. In addition, 9.5% of complaints were made against the private sector but were referred to the appropriate institutions which the HRCSL monitored to ensure that complainants seek redress. Also, 7% of the complaints were against Local Courts and were followed by the Traditional Authorities with 6.1%.

Table 5 - Nature of complaints filed by sex

No.	Nature of Complaints	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1	Right to Property	50	30	80	24.5
2	Worker's Right	26	16	42	13
3	Inhumane & degrading Treatment	9	4	13	4
4	Unlawful Detention	10	6	16	4.9
5	Crime Related	20	8	28	8.6
6	Matrimonial Dispute	4	28	32	10
7	Domestic Violence	4	23	27	8.3
8	Child Rights	4	18	22	6.7
9	Forceful Initiation	0	3	3	0.9
10	Right to Education	4	0	4	1.2
11	Fair Hearing	15	8	23	7.0
12	Right to Health	2	2	4	1.2
13	Sexual Assault	2	3	5	1.5
14	Discrimination	1	0	1	0.3
15	Administrative Injustice	1	1	2	0.6
16	Unfair Treatment by Traditional Authorities	19	1	1	0.3
17	Unequal Protection before the Law	19	4	23	7.0
Total		171	155	326	100

Table 5 - is a disaggregation of complaints by sex. One hundred and seventy-one (171) complaints were filed by men and one hundred and fifty-five (155) by women. The table further shows that a high number of complaints reported (80) were related to property issues. This was followed by workers' rights/labour related issue (42) and matrimonial dispute (32).

Table 6: Comparative analysis of complaints received by the Regions from 2007-2019

No.	Region	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total	%
1	W/Area	40	190	252	374	126	182	220	68	100	101	74	60	124	1911	59.1
2	Western (Rural)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	6	22	11	12	64	2.0
3	Eastern Region	00	04	06	39	74	25	45	52	28	30	25	16	40	384	11.9
4	Northern Region	00	04	09	22	23	20	23	18	18	11	23	19	59	249	7.7
5	Southern Region	00	06	63	57	33	53	41	66	39	49	54	72	91	624	19.3
Grand Total		40	204	330	492	256	280	329	204	198	197	198	178	326	3232	100

Table 6 - shows that HRCSL has received a total of 3,232 complaints since 2007. The highest number of complaints, 492 was received in 2010. This was mainly due to complaints made by 311 ex-service men. In 2019, 326 complaints were reported. It is also noted that HRCSL's Headquarters cumulatively received the highest number of complaints from 2007 to date which is 1,911(59.1%). This is largely due to the accessibility of the Headquarters and increased awareness raising in the Western Area as compared to other regions covering three or more districts.

3.1.1 Mobile Complaints Hearing

HRCSL continued to observe the pervasiveness of human rights abuses and violations in rural communities. As a way of providing an opportunity to bring the communities closer to HRCSL, in 2017 HRCSL started conducting mobile complaints hearing in various communities. The objectives of the mobile complaint hearings were to increase access to HRCSL by rural communities in terms of complaints handling, identify and address systemic abuses or violations of human rights and increase HRCSL's visibility in rural communities.

In the period under review, HRCSL with support from UNDP/Irish Aid conducted a mobile complaints hearing in Ngiehun Konjo Village, Malegohun Chiefdom, Kenema District (Eastern Region) from 29th – 3rd October.



HRCSL in a mediation process in Ngiehun Kojo



Engaging local authorities of Ngiehun Kojo

Ngiehun Konjo was chosen for the mobile complaints hearing as HRCSL had engaged local authorities there in June upon receiving a report of forceful initiation of 10 school girls between the ages of 5 to 13 into the Bondo Society. The intervention of HRCSL resulted in the release of those girls.

During the session, seven (7) complaints were received on land related matters and other family issues, disaggregated as follows: male (4) and female (3). Two (2) of the complaints were mediated and resolved, two referred while the remaining three (3) were family matters, requiring further engagement.

During the mobile complaints hearing exercise, HRCSL held further engagements with local stakeholders including Paramount Chief, bike riders, Soweis, market women and conducted public education in schools. Radio discussion was also held in Kenema to raise awareness on human rights and how they can access the Commission's regional office.

3.1.2 Summary of HRCSLs Success Stories

MM vs. IT

On 26th March, MM in the Western Area lodged a complaint against Respondent IT, alleging that IT had refused to pay him his end-of-service benefits, in spite of the fact that the MLSS had calculated his benefits. As a result of HRCSL's intervention, the Respondent agreed to pay the Complainant's end-of-service benefits in full as calculated by the MLSS and a payment plan was developed which the Respondent complied with. This enabled him to enjoy his right to just and favorable conditions of work.

RCK and Ten others vs. SLP (SUPT. K)

On 18th June, RCK and 10 others (9 Indians and 1 Guinea Bissauan) in the Western Area lodged a

complaint against the SLP alleging violation of their rights to movement and deprivation of property. Their travelling documents and personal effects were confiscated, preventing them from leaving the country on allegations of unlawful possession of arms and ammunition and illegal entry into the country through the waters of Sierra Leone. HRCSL had several engagements with the hierarchy of the SLP and the Chief Immigration Officer. As a result of HRCSL's intervention, their personal effects, including their travelling documents were returned and they were allowed to leave the country, thereby restoring their freedom of movement and ownership of their properties.

TMC (on behalf of RK) vs. The Attorney General and ACC

On 1st July, TMC in the Western Area lodged a complaint on behalf of RK against the ACC alleging violation of RK's right to health. TMC alleged that the ACC had refused to release RK's travelling documents on medical grounds even though RK had a serious medical condition for which he needed to seek further medical attention out of the country.

HRCSL engaged the ACC and was informed that they were not averse to releasing RK's documents to him but needed to get clearance from the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice. HRCSL engaged the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice his critical health condition which had strong potential to deprive him from the enjoyment of his right health and life.

RK's travelling documents were returned to enable him seek medical attention abroad. SS on behalf of MTS and 7 others vs. RSLAF

On 19th June, SS in the Western Area lodged a complaint on behalf of his brother MTS and 7 others alleging prolonged detention and inhuman and degrading treatment meted against them whilst in detention. The HRCSL engaged the RSLAF and the CID. HRCSL advised the RSLAF that MTS and the others should be released from detention or charged to court if they have a case to answer. The detainees were released on 20th August.

LS and AK vs. LASL

HRCSL received a complaint from LS and AK alleging that LASL, the ambassador of one of the embassies in Sierra Leone had refused to pay them their salaries and failed to give any explanation as to why they had not been paid. They alleged that they were also dismissed from employment. They further alleged that the ambassador made false accusations against them and they were later arrested and detained by the Police.

HRCSL engaged the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation on this complaint and requested for their intervention. The complainants were later reinstated and their arrears fully paid. This ensured the enjoyment of their rights to employment and just and favourable conditions of work.

MKK vs. SLP

On 2nd May, MKK made a complaint on behalf of members of her family at HRCSL Regional Office in Makeni alleging that the SLP had arrested and detained her mother, father and elder brother for over ten days because they claimed that they knew the whereabouts of a suspect who was on the run. HRCSL intervened and after series of engagements with the SLP, bail was granted to all the complainant's family members and they were released. Their rights to freedom of movement as guaranteed in the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, the UDHR and the ICCPR was restored.

RJ vs Sierra Leone Police

On 9th October, HRCSL mediated a case of child dispute in Lunsar, Port Loko District, between RJ (mother of the child) and AK who claimed to be father of the child and absconded with the two months old baby, RJ reported the matter to the FSU of the Lunsar Police Station but they failed to investigate.

A team from HRCSL (Headquarters & the Northern Region) engaged the Local Unit Commander and the Line Manager - FSU of the Lunsar Police and visited the residence of the 'father'. The matter was successfully handled by HRCSL and the child was handed over to her mother in compliance with Article 9 of the CRC and Article 4 of the ACHPR on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

China Railway Seventh Group – Payment of Benefits and Other Compensation

In October, an employee at China Railway Seventh Group (CRSG) was killed by one of the company's crushers whilst working at the company's quarry at MacDonald, Waterloo, in Western Rural. He was denied his benefits and other compensation. HRCSL had several engagements with the management of CRSG to ensure payment of benefits to the family of the deceased. As a result of the intervention of HRCSL, CRSG compensated the family on 27th December. The CRSG was also cautioned to take precaution measures on safety to protect the lives of its workers.

Female Genital Mutilation -HRCSL Interventions

Kenema District: In June the HRCSL rescued 10 underage girls (the youngest age five years) from a Bondo Bush in Malegohun Chiefdom, Ngiehun Kojo Village, Kenema District, Eastern Sierra Leone. These girls were forcefully initiated on the grounds that they had listened to a quarrel between two older members of the Bondo Society and should therefore be initiated because they were now familiar with the processes in the practice. Although the girls had already been initiated before the arrival of the HRCSL to the village, they were removed from the bush and sent back to school to take their third term promotional examinations.

Freetown, Dodoo Community:

On 31st October, the HRCSL investigated allegations of threats to be initiated into the Bondo Society, and rescued two girls aged 5 and 15 years, who had stayed two weeks away from school, following threats to be initiated by Soweis at Dodoo Community in the capital city Freetown, Western Area Rural, as a result of a debt which their mother had failed to honour at a local court. The two girls stopped going to school for fear of being waylaid. HRCSL intervened by engaging the Chief of the Chief's Court in the Metchem Goderich Community. The matter was amicably resolved and the girls gained their freedom of movement and continued their schooling.

3.2 Monitoring Activities

3.2.1 Places of Detention

In the year under review, HRCSL monitored Correctional Centres, police stations, and remand homes across the country on diverse dates in fulfillment of its function enshrined in Section 7 (2) (f) of the HRCSL Act (No. 9) 2004. The monitoring objective was to assess compliance with Chapter 3 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, and international standards such as the Mandela Rules, the Beijing Rules, the Luanda Guidelines, and the Bangkok Rules in respect of the treatment of inmates and suspects.

3.2.2 The Sierra Leone Correctional Service

During the course of the year, HRCSL undertook routine monitoring visits to the Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kenema, Kono and Kailahun Correctional Centres.

Between the 13th May and 19th June, Commissioners, supported by staff from headquarters and the regions, visited seven (7) correctional centres across the country during their regional familiarization tour after they assumed office on 11th April. The objectives of the visits were to assess the human rights situation and the conditions of the correctional centres as well as the welfare of the inmates.

The Makeni, Port Loko, Moyamba, Bo and Kenema correctional centres were noted to be overcrowded while those in Kailahun and Kono were not as seen in the table below:

No.	Date	Name of Correctional Centre	No. of Inmates		Total	Holding Capacity
			Males	Females		
1	13/5/	Makeni Correctional Centre	228	20	248	80
2	16/5/	Port Loko Correctional Centre	136	02	138	120
3	21/5/	Moyamba Correctional Centre	104	06	110	65
4	22/5/	Bo Correctional Centre	265	00	265	65
5	27/5/	Kenema Correctional Centre	296	11	307	75
6	28/5	Kailahun Correctional Centre	78	00	78	80
7	19/6	Kono Correctional Centre	143	02	145	150

In addition, on 13th August, HRCSL undertook a specific monitoring of the FMCC to ascertain the conditions under which twenty-three (23) All People's Congress (APC) supporters arrested during a riot in Hamilton were being held. During this visit, HRCSL had an engagement with some of the inmates (indicted persons), who reported degrading treatment and intimidation at the hands of the SLP at Adonkia police station. Four (4) of them raised health concerns including an elderly man who reported serious health concerns. The HRCSL confirmed injuries on the left ankle, knee, back and head of a young boy who had been allegedly beaten by the SLP during the riot. The Regional Commander made a firm commitment to HRCSL to seriously look into the medical concerns which were brought to his attention by HRCSL and to take immediate and appropriate actions where needed.

These twenty-three (23) APC supporters were refused bail after three court appearances and continued to be remanded at the FMCC. On 22nd August, the elderly detainee was released on health grounds while the others continued in detention until 30th August when they were granted bail.

3.2.3 Juvenile Detention Facilities

In March, April, May, June and October, HRCSL monitored the Kingtom Remand Home, the Approved School in Wellington, and the Bo Remand Homes respectively.

On 13th May, HRCSL visited the Approved School to inquire about the food situation which was reported to be a serious challenge leading to a reduction in food rations. Several follow-ups were made to Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs until October when the food bidding process was completed and food and non -food items were supplied to the School. The same situation was observed at the Bo Remand Home in October where inmates disclosed that they were starving and had not been provided adequate food for over 3 months unless through external sources.

On 17th June, HRCSL celebrated the Day of the African Child with a public education in various schools

across the country. During the engagement at the Approved School, an inmate who had served three years at the Remand Home in Kingtom during his trial and later sentenced to three years imprisonment intimated the HRCSL that he was transferred to the Approved School on 22nd December 2017 and had been there for over 18 months. Being a matter of over detention and a major human rights concern, the HRCSL engaged appropriate authorities of the Sierra Leone Correctional Services and the Approved School. He was released on 7th August and reintegrated with his uncle in Freetown.

3.2.4 Police Stations

In line with the HRCSL's mandate to visit prisons and other places of detention, several police stations were visited across the country. This includes but not limited to the Rogbaneh Mena and Pamlap Police Stations in Makeni, Bombali District, Northern Region, Central Police and Aberdeen Police Stations in the Western Area Urban, the Criminal Investigations Department (CID), the Lungi and Lokomasama police stations in the Port Loko District, North-West Region were also monitored during the period under review.

In addition, on 25th April, HRCSL commemorated Africa Pre-Trial Detention Day by monitoring: fifteen (15) police stations and one (1) police post across the country as follows: six (6) police stations in the Western Area Urban, one (1) police post and three (3) police stations in the Western Area Rural, three (3) police stations in the Eastern, two (2) in the Southern and two (2) in the Northern Regions. This monitoring was done in order to observe adherence to or violations of regional human rights standards, as set out in the "Luanda Guidelines". The specific focus of the monitoring was to 'highlight the types of petty offences, the number of detainees charged with petty offences, the laws criminalizing petty offences and the conditions of detention centres'.

HRCSL found that suspects were being held for long periods for petty offenses such as loitering, owing a debt, frequenting a place, disobedience to one's parents and a breach of minor motor traffic regulations. After the monitoring in each of the stations visited, HRCSL engaged the Officers-in-Charge on the reasons for the detention of suspects for long periods and was informed that it was mostly due to the unavailability of sureties even when bail was granted.

HRCSL also noted that the Family Support Units (FSUs) charged with the responsibility of investigating Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) cases within the police stations, were ill-equipped and lacking in logistical, financial and administrative support, despite the proclamation of a State of Emergency on SGBV by H.E. President Bio on 7th February. This caused delays in processing SGBV cases and a consequent frustration to victims and their families.

3.2.5 Monitoring of the Riot at the APC Office

On Friday 31st May, violent clashes broke out between the Operational Support Division (OSD), which is the armed paramilitary wing of the SLP and APC supporters at the APC Party Office located at Old Railway Line, Brookfields. This clash occurred following a ruling by the High Court, which disqualified ten (10) of the party's sitting Parliamentarians who had won the 2018 general elections.

HRCSL on visiting the party's office, observed that the APC supporters barricaded roads leading to their headquarters, burnt tyres around their office and pelted stones at the SLP. The SLP too fired tear gas in and out of the party's office to disperse the supporters, arrested, and detained forty-two (42) persons at the CID and the Central Police Station.

On 2nd June, HRCSL visited the suspects at the CID and Central Police Station, to ensure that their human rights including granting of bail as enshrined in the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 were protected. HRCSL also reminded the suspects of their responsibility to operate within the law as required by Section 13 (c) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 of a good citizen.

In its press statement of 3rd June, HRCSL condemned both the SLP and APC party supporters as their actions prevented others from enjoying their rights to freedom of movement. HRCSL reminded the SLP of their obligation to protect lives and property and the use of force and firearms and called on them to apply a rights-based approach to policing. HRCSL further reminded the public that the enjoyment of one's freedom of assembly and association must not impede the rights and freedoms of others.

3.2.6 Elections Monitoring

In a view to ensure that human rights and democratic principles were adhered to during electoral processes, the HRCSL observed and monitored Parliamentary and Local Council bye elections within its operational jurisdiction and also followed up on other elections through the national and other TV stations. Elections in some communities were noted to be peaceful, while others were characterized by violence and intimidation and subsequently leading to death and cancellation of results by the National Electoral Commission (NEC).

Constituency 110, Western Area Urban-The re-run parliamentary elections in Constituency 110 on 24th August resulted from a High Court Order due to election malpractices and irregularities noted by the Court during the 2018 parliamentary elections. HRCSL served as an accredited observer to this election, which ended in violence and destruction of electoral materials at Polling Centre 15086, which was located at the Sarah Modern Preparatory School. This incident led to the cancellation of the entire election results by the National Elections Commission (NEC). On 12th August, HRCSL put out a press statement unreservedly condemning the violence by some unaccredited observers of the APC and SLPP parties, and the inaction of the security personnel present at the scene to address the situation. HRCSL also expressed concern over NEC's cancellation of the entire election results which till date has left the electorate of Constituency 110 with no parliamentary representative.

Ward 196, Kambia District, Northern-Western Sierra Leone- The HRCSL conducted media monitoring and noted that the Local Bye Election in Ward 196, Mile 14, Tonko Limba Chiefdom was characterized by chaos and violence which subsequently led to the death of a 14-year-old boy in the community.

Ward 34, Kenema District, Eastern Sierra Leone- The bye-election in Ward 34, resulted from a vacancy caused by the death of the Councilor of that Ward. HRCSL observed that the electorate exercised their rights to vote in a peaceful manner.

Ward 30, Kono District, Eastern Sierra Leone- Similarly in June, the Local Bye Elections in Ward 30 observed by the HRCSL was noted to be peacefully conducted.

3.2.7 Monitoring Compliance with Business and Human Right Standards

HRCSL continued its monitoring activities of business entities to assess compliance with local domestic policies and laws, the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights (BHR) and other relevant international and regional Human Rights standards.

HRCSL also collaborated and conducted joint monitoring exercises with the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA), Environment Protection Agency (EPA), National Minerals Agency (NMA), Ministry of Lands Housing and Country Planning; Ministry of Mines and Minerals Resources; Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working on similar issues at various times during the year, to promote adherence to business and human rights standards within the country.

Between February and April, HRCSL participated in the joint implementation of the Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) project through awareness raising programmes on radio stations in all 16 districts and television programmes in the Western Area. This was done jointly with training sessions for CSOs and other stakeholders on the Agricultural Investment Appraisal Process (AIAP). HRCSL Commissioner facilitated sessions on Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and business and human rights standards. The project was coordinated by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) through the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA) with support from the Department of Foreign International Development (DFID) funds.

3.3 Human Rights Education Activities

3.3.1 Institutional Capacity Building

3.3.1.1 Records of International Trainings/ Conferences/ attended by Commissioners and Staff

No.	Name	Activity	Organizers	Country	Date
1	Commissioner Simitie Lavalay	Experts Advisory Meeting		Johannesburg, South Africa	18th – 23rd June
2	Patricia N. Ndanema (Chair) and Joseph Kamara (ES)	Annual meeting of NHRIs – West Africa HRCSL for the first time became an Executive Member of NHRI-WA	NNHRI-WA	Accra, Ghana	29th – 31st May
3	Commissioner Hassan Samba Yarjah	Regional capacity strengthening for national Human Rights institutions.	South Africa Human Rights Commission	Johannesburg, South Africa	16th – 18th September
4	Commissioners Patricia N. Ndanema and Simitie Lavalay	65th Ordinary of the ACHPR	ACHPR	Banjul, The Gambia	18th – 22nd October
5	Simitie Lavalay	Workshop on the Role of NHRIs in eliminating Sexual Harassment			
	Dullah Omar Institute	Banjul, the Gambia	19th – 22nd October		
6	Commissioner Victor I. Lansana	12th Biennial Conference on the Role of NHRIs in the Implementation of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.	NNHRI		
	Cairo, Egypt	4th – 9th November			
7	All Commissioners and the Executive Secretary	Study Tour	Ugandan Human Rights Commission	Kampala, Uganda	9th – 15th November
8	Joseph B.M. Kamara	ECOWAS Human Rights Day Celebration	ECOWAS Commission	Abuja Nigeria	9th - 16th January

9	Patricia N. Ndanema	3rd Policy Forum	AUC/NANHRI	Addis Ababa/ Ethiopia	5th – 6th September
10	Dr. Gassan Abess	Training on Security Challenge: the Fight against Terrorism and the Protection of Human Rights in the ECOWAS region.	ECOWAS Commission	Abidjan	12th – 13th September
11	Joseph B.M. Kamara	Capacity building workshop of the bodies in charge of election on the respect for Human Rights during the election period.	UNOWAS	Abidjan	3rd – 5th November
12	Patricia N. Ndanema	South-South Human Rights Forum	Chinese Embassy	China	6th – 12th November

3.3.1.2 Induction for Commissioners

Upon assumption of office on 11th April, the five new Commissioners went through an induction training conducted by HRCSL from 15th to 25th April, at the HRCSL headquarters. The objectives of the induction were to:

- Keep the Commissioners abreast with the operations of HRCSL
- Discuss the roles of Commissioners in the discharge of their duties
- Evaluate the strength and gaps within HRCSL and

The Executive Secretary and heads of Directorates / Units within the HRCSL facilitated the sessions. The sessions served as a platform for Commissioners and the facilitators to interact and discuss on the different roles of both the directorates and the Commissioners. At the end of the eleven days engagements, the Commissioners were acquainted with the general operations of HRCSL.

Key action points noted during the induction included:

- The review of the HRCSL Act (2004)
- The establishment of new offices in Kono and Port Loko
- The recruitment of new staff
- The setting up of new directorates in a bid to respond to the increased demand in the services of HRCSL in protecting and promoting the human rights of specific groups
- To intensify resource mobilization efforts.

3.3.1.3 HRCSL Retreat for Commissioners and Staff

After four years of not holding a retreat, HRCSL organized a retreat for Commissioners and staff from the 26th – 28th September at the Pearl Hotel, Lumley Beach, Freetown. The retreat provided an opportunity for HRCSL to reposition itself for action by creating a forum for Commissioners and the entire staff to meet, plan, discuss and review HRCSL's operational plan for the subsequent year.

The objectives of the retreat included;

- Fostering internal learning and further understanding of the HRCSLs operations;
- Collective sharing of the operational goals of HRCSL;
- Reviewing HRCSL's previous work as per the strategic plan 3, its successes and challenges;
- Providing staff with the new dimension of operations and policies

Key outcomes at the end of the three days retreat included:

- The basic operational procedures of HRCSL's work reviewed
- Staff performance/policy guidelines reviewed in order to provide clarity on some gray areas highlighted in the current Human Resources Manual
- Updates on Directorates and Regional activities discussed in a bid to provide insight into the operations of members of staff of other Directorates

3.3.2 Public Education and Outreach

3.3.2.1 Commissioners' Regional Tour

From 12th May to 23rd June, the Commissioners accompanied by staff, embarked on their maiden outreach activities in all the regions. The objectives of the tour were to: familiarize themselves with key stakeholders, such as regional MDAs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), engage and reactivate the District Human Rights Committees (DHRCs) and other institutions intervening in the field of human rights. Visits to prisons and other places of detention formed part of the regional tour. The Commissioners also embarked on an extensive media publicity and public education in several schools in the districts visited. The purpose of the tour was to assess the prevailing human rights situation in the country; and reactivate District Human Rights Committees (DHRCs).

A major outcome of the tour was the release of an inmate DK, who had spent over eleven years in detention without indictment and the reactivation of some DHRCs.



School public outreach at the Queen of the Rosary Secondary Sch. Bo

3.3.2.2 Public Education in Schools during Commissioners' Regional Tour

During the familiarization tour in the regions from 12th May to 23rd June, the Commissioners and team conducted human rights public education activities in schools. The team targeted ten (10) secondary schools in different districts as mentioned below.

1. *The St. Joseph's Convent Secondary School, Makeni;*
2. *Schlenker Secondary School, Port Loko;*

3. *Port Loko Catholic Secondary School (Junior and Senior school)*
4. *Pathway Academy, Waterloo (Co-educational school JSS & SSS);*
5. *Kholafa Islamic Secondary School, Moyamba (Co-educational school, JSS)*
6. *Queen of the Rosary Secondary School, Bo; (girls only, JSS)*
7. *Nasir Ahmadiyya Secondary School, Kenema (Co-educational school, JSS & SSS).*
8. *National Secondary School, Kailahun (Co-educational school, JSS & SSS).*
9. *Sewafeh Secondary School, Kono (Co-educational School)*
10. *Yengema Secondary School, Kono (Co-educational School)*

In each of the secondary schools visited, HRCSL team conducted at least an hour-long sensitization and awareness raising session during the usual school devotion period.

At the end of the public education, HRCSL observed that some pupils in schools visited had some knowledge on human rights, based on the questions they asked but a higher percentage had little or no knowledge about the HRCSL and its work and human rights generally. This motivated HRCSL to reactivate its Peace Clubs and establish more human rights and peace clubs in selected schools to extend its awareness raising activities to other schools.



Human Right School Education at the St. Joseph Convent in Makeni

3.3.2.3 Establishment of Human Rights and Peace Clubs

In HRCSL's continuous drive to build a culture of human rights in the country, HRCSL extended its training and establishment of human rights and peace clubs in ten (10) secondary schools comprising five (5) in Kenema and five (5) in Bo. The trainings, supported by UNDP and Irish-Aid were conducted on 22nd and 23rd October respectively.



The Objectives of the trainings amongst others included; Increase pupils and teachers understanding about the concept of human rights and peace and to discuss the importance of human rights and peace clubs in schools.

The major outcome from the training sessions included; capacity building of forty (40) pupils, ten pupils drawn from the 10 selected secondary schools in Kenema and Bo respectively. It also prepared pupils and teachers to take the lead for the formation of human rights and peace clubs in their respective secondary schools in the Southern and Eastern regions. These school clubs are now in full operations in the targeted schools.

3.3.3 Commemoration of Special Human Rights Days

3.3.3.1 Public Education in Commemoration of the Day of the African Child

On 17th June, HRCSL commemorated the Day of the African Child by conducting public education sessions in seventeen (17) schools, the only two Remand Homes in Freetown and Bo and one Approved School nationwide. The theme for the celebration was ‘Humanitarian Action in Africa: Children Rights First’.



HRCSL Team at the Remand home in Kingtom & Vice Chair Addressing Pupils at B.J. Sec. School - Fourah Bay Road

The specific objectives were to raise awareness about children's rights and their responsibilities. The sessions gave pupils and teachers the opportunity to ask questions about human rights and the work of HRCSL.



Commissioner Lavalley at Milton Margai School for the Blind

The table below shows the regions, schools/remand homes covered, and the number of schools/inmates benefited from the public education.

Region	Number of schools/Remand Homes	Number of pupils/inmates
Western Urban	Ten (10) schools, 1 Remand Home and 1 Approved School	4,471 persons
Western Rural	three schools	2,828
Southern Region	Two Schools & 1 Remand Home	1,642
Eastern Region	One school	370
Northern Region	Two Schools	1,047
Total		10,358

HRCSL also used the opportunity to do some monitoring exercises at the Kingtom and Bo Remand Homes and the Approved School at Wellington, which findings are captured under Juvenile Justice and Juvenile detention in Part 2 of this report.

HRCSL engaged the Attorney General and Minister of Justice as a follow-up on the deplorable condition of the Remand Home in Bo; and the non-attendance of inmates to court for two (2) consecutive years in the Remand Home at King Tom.

3.3.3.2 International Day of the Girl Child - 11th October

On 11th October, HRCSL continued its nationwide public education outreach in schools in commemoration of the International Day of the Girl Child (IDGC). The IDGC was commemorated with the theme: 'Girl Force: Unscripted and Unstoppable'; celebrating achievements by, with and for girls since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and also to support girls amplify their voices and stand up for their rights.



The Chairperson, Patricia Narsu Ndanema at the Government Model Secondary School Berry Street

The objectives of the public education were to raise awareness about girls' rights and related laws for the protection and promotion of those rights.

The table below shows the extent of the public education and the number of pupils benefited from each region.

Region	Number of secondary schools	Number of pupils/inmates
Western Urban	Ten (10) secondary schools and one primary school	11,550 pupils
Western Rural	Three(3)Secondary schools	386
Southern Region	Two(2) Secondary Schools	829
Eastern Region	Two (2) Secondary school	701
Northern Region	Two Secondary Schools	760
Total		20,536

3.3.3.3 International Disability Day 3rd December

On 3rd December, HRCSL collaborated with the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) in celebrating the International Disability Day (IDD) which was done in Kenema District. The IDD celebrated with the Theme: "The Future is Accessible" focused on raising awareness on accessibility and creating opportunities for physical accessibility for persons with disabilities. Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) and National Commission officially launched the Social Safety Net for persons with disabilities for Social Action (NaCSA) on the said date.

3.3.3. 4 Commemoration of International Human Rights Day (IHRD) - 10 December

Towards the commemoration of the IHRD, HRCSL joined the international campaign in the observance of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence from 25th November to 10th December. The

Global theme for the campaign was “Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands against Rape!”. The theme and was localized by the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs as “Orange the World:” We tinap tranga wan for tap rape na Salone”.

During the 16th days of activism, HRCSL undertook several activities aimed at raising awareness on issues of rape, sexual and gender based violence against women and girls. A key activity was the launch of the Directorate of Gender and Children’s Affairs.

a) Launching of the Directorate of Gender and Children’s Affairs:



Launching of the Directorate of Gender and Children’s Affairs

The existing Women and Children’s Unit was upgraded to a Directorate. The directorate is responsible for coordinating all issues relating to gender and vulnerable groups particularly women, children and persons with disabilities.

The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs formally launched the new directorate on 27th November.

It was graced by representatives from UN Women, 50/50 Group, EU, SLP, RSLAF, MSWGCA, Irish-Aid, Human Rights Working group, UNDP, Children’s Commission, NCPD, LAWYERS, Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, CFN and the media.

b) Community Engagements on the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019

HRCSL conducted community engagements in Kaningo-Lumley and Grafton communities on 4th and 5th December respectively in commemoration on the 16 Days of Activism. The engagements attracted other surrounding communities. The aim of the community engagements was to raise public awareness on the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019 (SOAA) which had just been passed into law. The community engagements targeted eighty (80) participants (38 males & 42 females) in Kaningo-Lumley and forty-five (45) participants (28 males & 20 females) in the Grafton communities.



Community engagement on the Sexual Offences Act at Grafton

The key outcome of the engagement was the enhanced knowledge of community members on the provisions of the newly Amended Sexual Offences Act, 2019; and their responsibility to prevent the occurrence of SGBV as evidenced in the responses and questions from participants.

c) Inter-Secondary Schools Debate and Quiz Competition

HRCSL conducted Inter-Secondary School debate on 6th December in Western Urban and inter-secondary school quiz competitions on 3rd and 9th December in the Western Urban and Western Rural respectively. The theme for the debate was ***“Does Life Imprisonment Deter Rape and Sexual Penetration?”*** The questions for the quiz competition were centered on Winners of the Quiz Competition, the Annie Walsh Memorial School human rights, national and international instruments protecting rights of women, children and persons with disabilities, and about the operations of the HRCSL.

In Freetown, three schools namely; the Annie Walsh Memorial School, Government Municipal Junior Secondary School and the Ahmaddiyya Muslim Junior Secondary School participated in the quiz competition and the Russell Technical Secondary School and the Peninsular Secondary School participated represented Waterloo in the Western Area Urban. The Annie Walsh Memorial School in Freetown and Peninsular Secondary School in Waterloo emerged winners for the debate and quiz competitions respectively.



Winners of the Quiz Competition, the Annie Walsh Memorial School

In the Eastern Region, four schools participated: the Holy Rosary Secondary school, the Holy Trinity Secondary School, Methodist Secondary School and the Islamic Secondary School; First position was won by Holy Rosary Secondary School. In the Southern Region, three schools participated: the Bo School, the Queen of the Holy Rosary Secondary School and the Methodist Girls High School and the Queen of the Holy Rosary Secondary came first.

d) Formal Events on the International Human Rights Day – 10th December

HRCSL, with funding from UNDP and Irish Aid, and in collaboration with the Human Rights Working Group, commemorated the International Human Rights Day (IHRD) on 10th December. The IHRD was celebrated with the global theme ‘Stand up for Human Rights’ and adopted by HRCSL into a local theme: ‘Stand Up for Human Rights and Fight Against Sexual and Gender Based Violence.’ HRCSL and its partners used this commemoration to raise public awareness on the issues of rape, sexual penetration and other forms of gender based violence against women and girls.



IHRD march past through the principal street of Freetown

The formal events celebration of the IHRD on 10th December was preceded by March Past /Float Parade and an official ceremony in Freetown and quiz competitions simultaneously held in the three regional offices.

The IHRD celebration was climaxed at the British Council where statements were made by the UN Country Representative; the Irish Ambassador; High Commissioner of the Nigerian High Commission; and the Deputy Minister of Justice (MoJ) Hon. Umaru N. Koroma, who acted on behalf of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice (AGMJ). He reiterated government’s commitment to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all in Sierra Leone without discrimination. He underscored the relevance of the principles enshrined in the UDHR. He condemned the increase of rape and sexual penetration cases that have become systemic and as a result and strongly highlighted His Excellency the President’s declaration of a National Emergency on Rape on 7th February, followed by the enactment of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019 into law with specific provisions on the life sentencing of possible perpetrators.

Also key among his submission was his reiteration of GoSL’s commitment to upholding the Moratorium on the death penalty which the HRCSL considers as a step towards the abolition of the death penalty.



The High Table on International Human Rights Day

3.4 Review of the Sexual Offences Act 2012

On 24th June, HRCSL participated in the review process of the Sexual Offences Act 2012 and submitted a position paper to the Legislative Committee of Parliament after reviewing and identifying the gaps in the Sexual Offences Act 2012 and the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill 2019. This was in fulfilment of its functions under Section 7(2) (d) of HRCSL Act (No. 9) of 2004, which states that it has the function to “advise the government concerning draft legislation, which may affect human rights”.

On 10th July, a one day National Stakeholders Consultation on the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill 2019 was held in Bo where HRCSL facilitated sessions and made a presentation on the content of its position paper submitted to AG & MJ and the Legislative Committee in Parliament. In addition, HRCSL guided the review process and pledged its commitment in the fight against SGBV. HRCSL attended all parliamentary sessions leading to the passage of the Bill in Parliament. This intervention by HRCSL was followed by several community engagements and awareness raising on the provisions in the SOAA, 2019.

3.5 Media Outreach

HRCSL continued its media engagements across the country using the various forms of media. These media engagements were geared towards protecting and promoting human rights in the country. They also formed part of educating the public on the activities of HRCSL and other emerging human rights issues and how rights holders can access the services of the HRCSL.

The social media sites, WhatsApp, Facebook and the HRCSL’s website were used effectively to enhance its public education functions and share information on its activities.

During the year under review, HRCSL issued three (3) press statements in relation to the following incidents:

- 3rd June -Press statement on the incident of 31st May between the SLP and supporters of the APC following the removal by High Court Order of sitting MPs of the APC.
- 27th August-Statement on the violence of 24th August on the re-run election in

Constituency 110.

- *9th September-HRCSL statement on the display of ACC's suspects (teachers) at the Cotton Tree.*

3.6 The Library and Documentation Centres

The library and documentation centres at headquarters and the regional offices continued to strengthen and enrich the human rights education and research drive in terms of support to the information needs of Staff and Commissioners in their daily operations as well as the public. During this reporting year, 95 student researchers from Fourah Bay College, Institute of Public Administration and Management, Njala University, Limkokwing University, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, UNIMAK, Law School and other Polytechnic training colleges who conducted research on human rights issues, accessed the library.

HRCSL strengthened its relationship with the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone (RSCSL) and the Management of the Sierra Leone Peace Museum (SLPM) in relation to the custodianship of the TRC archives, currently housed at SLPM. On 10th December, HRCSL and Management of the RSCSL re-launched the newly refurbished TRC and Special Court for Sierra Leone archives and the SLPM artifacts.

3.7 Strategic Engagements

3.7.1 Engagement with NEC, UNDP and EU Delegation to Sierra Leone

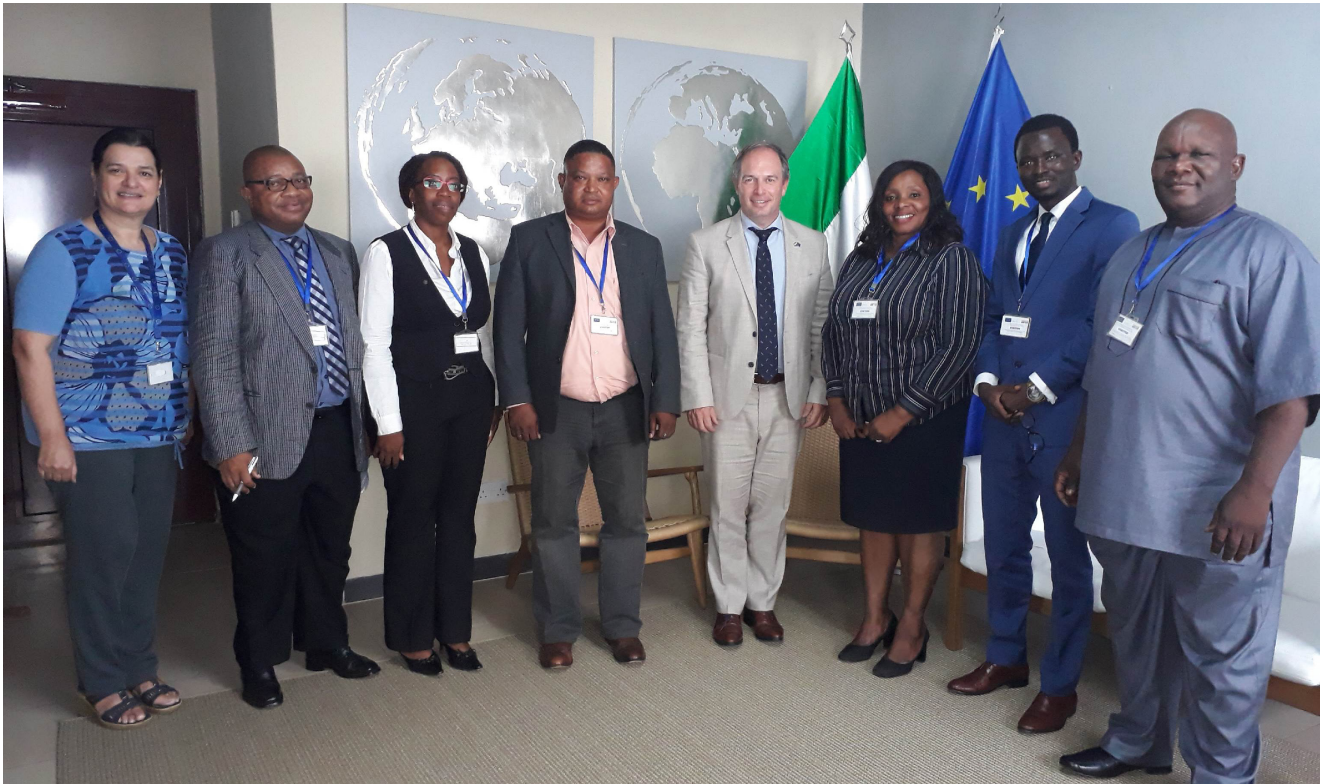
On 23rd April, HRCSL held engagement meetings with the Chairman and Commissioners of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), the UNDP Resident Representative and the European Union (EU) Ambassadors. The purpose was to share the HRCSL's short and long term strategies in enhancing its work in the regions and districts and to particularly thank the UNDP for their support over the years to the HRCSL. Issues on how to reposition the HRCSL, technical advice, and strategic vision on how to drive the Commission forward were also discussed. UNDP Resident Representative assured UNDP's continuing support to the operations of HRCSL.



The UNDP Country Director Samuel Doe with the HRCSL Commissioners

Following the engagement with UNDP, HRCSL received funding to implement various projects highlighted in this report.

EU Ambassador and Head of Delegation to Sierra Leone also expressed willingness to work with HRCSL as one of EU partners and also relayed the issues of women and girls' rights that need attention.



The EU Ambassador to Sierra Leone Tom Venns with HRCSL Commissioners after an engagement

3.7.2 Engagement with the Irish Ambassador to Sierra Leone and Liberia

HRCSL held a strategic engagement with the Irish Ambassador to Sierra Leone and Liberia, at the Embassy Residence in Freetown on 25th April. The goal of the engagement was to rekindle the long term relationship between the two institutions and to extend HRCSL's appreciation to Ireland for their support over the years. The Ambassador reiterated Ireland's interest in human rights protection especially on gender issues and pointed out that while the GoSL has shown commitment to the realization and respect for human rights, the HRCSL should play a great role in holding duty bearers accountable for human rights violations. The Ambassador pledged Ireland's readiness to support the work of HRCSL. The Irish Aid made significant financial contributions in the work of the HRCSL during the reporting year.

3.7.3 British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone Visits HRCSL

On 9th May, the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone paid a courtesy call to the Commissioners at HRCSL's Headquarters, NEC Building, and Freetown. The purpose was to discuss issues centered on the strategic goals of HRCSL and the UK's human rights interest on the abolition of the death penalty, gender issues on sexual violence, FGM, LGBTI issues, exclusion of girls from schools, freedom of speech and interest in trafficking of persons.



British High Commissioner, Guy Warrington with HRC SL Commissioners at the HQ

3.7.4 Engagement with the Chief Justice and Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)

On 5th June, HRC SL held two separate engagements with the Chief Justice and the DPP following findings of monitoring of correctional centres in the regions in May. The issues discussed included, prolonged detention without indictment, lack of State Counsel in the regions, the slow pace of prosecutions and convictions for petty offences.

The Chief Justice assured HRC SL that his office would look into these issues and take the appropriate measures to address the concerns raised and ensure the full operation of circuit courts in places where High Court do not exist such as Port Loko, Sefadu, Moyamba etc. The DPP, also assured HRC SL of his commitment to ensure that prolonged detention without indictment, lack of State Counsel in the regions and the slow pace of prosecution and conviction for petty offences would be addressed. He also facilitated the release of DK who had spent over eleven (11) years in detention without indictment.



Engagement with the Chief Justice Babatunde Edwards

3.7.5 Engagement with the Sierra Leone Correctional Services (SLCS)

On 18th June, HRCSL engaged the SLCS to formally introduce the newly appointed Commissioners and discuss the findings of its monitoring of selected Correctional Centres across the country from the 13th -28th May. The SLCS Director General noted HRCSL's findings were perennial because of inadequate budget allocation. He appealed to HRCSL to continue to advocate to GoSL and donor partners for additional funding for SLCS.

HRCSL however commended the SLCS for centres where women were regional commanders and for creating the child-friendly space in some of their facilities. HRCSL further advocated that a holding cell be built for inmates to be kept while they await their matters to be called upon.



Engagement with the Director of Correctional Services

3.7.6 Engagement with the Sierra Leone Police

On 26th June, HRCSL held a meeting with the Executive Management Board (EMB) of the SLP at their headquarters at George Street in Freetown. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the new Commissioners and to discuss ways in which the two institutions can strengthen their collaboration in areas such as capacity building of the SLP on human rights-based approach to policing, data collection on SGBV cases, security concerns and other issues, which may affect the enjoyment of rights.



HRCSL Commissioners engagement with the SLP executive management board

The Inspector General of Police, while congratulating the Commissioners, highlighted some of the challenges faced by the SLP in the execution of their duty. He expressed concern that while the SLP is criticized in their handling of violent incidents, little regard is given to police personnel who are injured or die in the line of duty. At the end of the meeting, HRCSL recommended the relocation of the police cell at the Central Police Station in Freetown as it was observed to be in appalling condition.

3.7.7 Engagement with Legal Aid Board (LAB)

On 13th June, HRCSL engaged with LAB to strengthen the partnership of the two institutions in the protection and promotion of the rights of all Sierra Leoneans. The two institutions discussed their respective mandates in order to avoid duplication of activities.

3.7.8 Engagement with Save the Children- Sierra Leone

On 18th June, HRCSL held a strategic meeting with the Child Protection/ Child Governance Advisor of Save the Children to discuss the formal launch of the ‘State of Children in Sierra Leone 2017’ report. This report, which details the situation of children in Sierra Leone concerning SGBV was a collaborative work done by HRCSL and Save the Children, with funding from the EU.

3.8 Finance and Administration of HRCSL

During the year under review, HRCSL received funding from GoSL and UNDP/Irish Aid for operations and project implementation.

3.8.1 Government Support

GoSL provided financial support to HRCSL as follows:

Salaries and other emoluments: Le13, 821,530,916 (Thirteen Billion, Eight Hundred and Twenty-One Million, Five Hundred and Thirty Thousand, Nine Hundred and Sixteen Leones)

Operational costs and programmes: Le1, 428,550,000 (One Billion, Four Hundred and Twenty-Eight Million, Five Hundred and Fifty Thousand Leones). The activities undertaken were:

- *Complaints handling*
- *Monitoring of human rights compliance across institutions*
- *Monitoring of Africa Pre-trial Detention Day*
- *Monitoring of headman elections in Waterloo Rural District re-run election in Constituency 110 and bye-election in ward 34 in Kenema District.*
- *Public Education in Schools to mark Day of the African child*
- *Monitoring of two agri-based, two construction and three mining companies on their compliance with Business and Human Rights.*
- *Community outreach by Commissioners*
- *Monitoring of flash flood disasters in Tombo, Kerry Town and John O’bey*
- *Retreat for editing of State of Human Rights Report 2018*
- *Payment of rent for regional offices*
- *Staff retreat*
- *Commissioners’ Regional Familiarization Tour*
- *Commemoration of International Day of the Girl Child*
- *International Human Rights Day celebration*
- *Community engagement on Human Rights and sexual violence/ rape*
- *Operational support to HQ and all Regional Offices*
- *Attendance of Commissioners and staff at international conferences, seminars and meetings (See Pg 73-74)*

3.8.2 Donor Funding

As mandated by its Act, HRCSL can source funding from partners. Funding was received from UNDP/ Irish Aid under the UNDP Access to Justice Projects:

HRCSL received funding from the UNDP Access to Justice Projects in the sum of Le593,601,876 (Five Hundred and Ninety-Three Million, Six Hundred and One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Seventy Six Leones) for the implementation of the following activities

- *Study tour to Uganda Human Rights Commission*
- *Human Rights Working Group meetings*
- *Printing of 400 copies of the 2018 SoHR Report*
- *Referral Partnership meetings*
- *Mobile Complaints Hearing in Malegohun Chiefdom*
- *International Human Rights Day Celebration*
- *Inter Secondary School quiz and debate competition in commemoration of International Human Rights Day*
- *Production of IEC materials*
- *Radio discussion programmes on Human rights Issues*
- *Training of Human Rights and Peace clubs in school*

PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Civil and Political Rights

Civil and political rights are related but not limited to the rights to life, liberty and the security of persons, freedom of expression and the press, freedom of assembly, association and movement and protection from deprivation of property.

4.1.1 Right to Life, Liberty and Security of the Person

Recommendations:

1. *The SLP should investigate the incident of violence that occurred on 21st October and bring to account those found culpable.*
2. *The SLP should put in place adequate security measures to curb incidences of violence during and after football matches.*
3. *The SLP should be robust in their duty to protect lives and property and to speedily investigate cases of questionable deaths.*
4. *In future, the Office of the Coroner should perform autopsies on all corpses to ascertain the cause of death of unidentified and unclaimed corpses before they are buried.*

4.1.2 The Death Penalty

Recommendations:

1. *HRCSL urges the GoSL to implement the TRC and UPR recommendations on the abolition of the death penalty.*
2. *HRCSL reiterates its calls on the GoSL to sign the second OP-ICCPR on the abolition of the death penalty.*

4.1.3 Freedom of Expression and the Press

Recommendations:

1. *Parliament should pass into law the Public Order Amendment Bill, 2019 which seeks to repeal Part V of the seditious libel provisions.*

4.1.4 Freedom of Assembly, Association and Movement

Recommendations:

1. *Citizens should at all times observe police procedures and modus operandi when staging public protest.*
2. *The SLP should refrain from preventing members of the public expressing their constitutional right to assembly and should rather provide adequate security measures that would safeguard protesters and non-protesters.*

3. 6. GoSL and law enforcement agencies should develop and publish clear guidelines on protests and demonstrations so that these rights can be enjoyed by all.

4.1.5 Protection from Deprivation of Property

Recommendation(s)

1. MLHCP, EPA and other state agents should apply a human rights based approach in the demolition of houses;
2. MLHCP should expedite the harmonization of existing land laws and ultimately enact a law that eliminates discriminatory practices in the ownership of land;
3. MLHCP should ensure that the SLP takes pre-eminence in its role as a law enforcement agency during enforcement of demolition orders.

4.2 Economic, Social And Cultural Rights

These rights are related to the rights to right to education, right to health, just and favorable conditions of work, and right to access clean and safe drinking water.

4.2.1 Right to Education

Recommendation

1. GoSL should speedily investigate the causes of examination malpractice in schools with a view to putting measures in place to forestall its recurrence.
2. GoSL should review the measure that has to do with the cancellation of the entire results in a centre where there are allegations of examination malpractices.
3. GoSL should roll out the school feeding programme to other districts in order to foster increase in enrolment and retention in schools.

4.2.2 Right to Health

Recommendations:

1. GoSL should strive to further increase its budgetary allocation to the health sector to reach the 15% benchmark set in the Abuja Declaration of 2000.
2. GoSL should continue the establishment of more PHUs to ensure greater access to health services to more people in the communities.

4.2.3 Right to Just and Favourable Conditions of Work

Recommendation

1. Ministry of Finance should consider further increment of the minimum wage to allow beneficiaries meet their daily needs.
2. MLSS should step up its monitoring measures of factories and other work places to prevent industrial or work related accidents.

3. *NASSIT to step up ways for the collection of monthly contribution for all company employees.*
4. *MLSS and the Sierra Leone Labour Congress should monitor activities of trade unions to improve service and accountability to members.*
5. *Ministry of Finance and the TSC should fast-track the payment of benefits and other emoluments to teachers who have retired from the teaching service since 2018.*
6. *GoSL should encourage companies to provide training for senior management on BHR and FPIC issues and monitor compliance in their operations in line with human rights standards.*
7. *GoSL should ensure that companies adopt rights-based approach in the implementation of CSR in host communities;*
8. *GoSL should ensure that companies develop policies on BHR and FPIC to guide their operations and land acquisition using 'HRCSL's Guidelines for Monitoring Businesses in Sierra Leone', the Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI)/ Agricultural Investment Approval Process (AIAP), the Voluntary Guidelines for the Governance of Lands, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).*
9. *MLSS should ensure that companies promote public awareness programmes on FPIC, BHR and labour rights issues in host communities.*

4.2.4 Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water

Recommendations

1. *The MWR should put measures in place to protect its water supply networks and prevent encroachment on water catchment areas.*
2. *The Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) should collaborate with SALWACO and GVWC in order to protect water pipes during road construction.*
3. *The GoSL should discourage stone mining in the Kamboi Hills in order to increase the flow of water supply.*
4. *MWR in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) should work together to plant fast growing trees around the water catchment areas to prevent encroachment.*

4.3 Human Rights in the Administration of Justice

4.3.1 The Sierra Leone Police

Recommendations:

1. *The SLP should use rights-based approach in policing protests and riots.*
2. *GoSL should adequately equip the SLP to enable it respond to incidences of violence appropriately and professionally.*

3. *GoSL should provide adequate logistical and technical support to the FSU to aid their response in tackling SGBV cases expeditiously.*
4. *The Office of the DPP should speedily provide legal advice on SGBV cases to avoid delays in investigations and prosecutions.*
5. *The Ministry of Internal Affairs should give a face lift to police detention facilities in the entire country*

4.3.2 The Judiciary

Recommendations:

1. *The Judiciary should continue the “Prisons Court” as it has expedited the decongestion of the prisons.*
2. *The Judiciary should ensure an effective and efficient jury system through the provision of resources.*
3. *The Judiciary should refurbish the court building in Bo and all other dilapidated court buildings to improve access to justice.*
4. *The judiciary should improve the condition of service for local court staff and provide subvention to Chiefdom Administrations to enhance their operations.*

4.3.3 Juvenile Justice

Recommendations

1. *MSW in partnership with JSCO should popularize and implement in full the Child Welfare and Alternative Care Policy and the Diversion and Alternative Detention Guidelines.*
2. *Attorney General and Minister of Justice together with the Chief Justice should set up guidelines for expeditious trial of juvenile matters.*
3. *HRCSL calls on the Attorney General and Minister of Justice to speedily process indictments for juveniles especially the remaining so as to guarantee their rights to expeditious trial.*
4. *HRCSL encourages H.E. the President to continue to offer clemency to juveniles, especially those serving sentences for petty offences and who have shown signs of rehabilitation.*
5. *MSW should consider establishing Remand Homes and Approved Schools in the regions in order to uphold the rights of juveniles in conflict with the law.*

6.2.5 Juvenile Detention Facilities

Recommendations:

1. *MSW should supply new and adequate foam mattresses and beddings to all juvenile*

detention facilities.

2. *MSW should ensure that the centres have adequate drug supplies and stationed medical personnel.*
3. *MSW should ensure that the quantity of food and quality of education and healthcare for juveniles in detention facilities meet with International Standards.*
4. *MSW should ensure that volunteers and skills training teachers are on GoSL payroll.*
5. *MSW should ensure that the Approved School in Wellington has adequate supply of water as well as ensure the supply of electricity within the facility.*
6. *MSW should increase the number of Remand Homes and Approved Schools across the country.*

4.3.4 The Sierra Leone Correctional Service

Recommendations:

1. *The Law Officers Department should expedite the production of indictments for inmates committed to the High Court for trial.*
2. *The SLCS should roll out the education and skills training programmes to all inmates in other correctional centres across the country, irrespective of the duration of their jail terms.*
3. *SLCS should improve on the hygiene and ventilation facilities at the Makeni Correctional Centre to limit the spread of disease among inmates.*
4. *The Ministry of Internal Affairs should provide SLCS with the requisite equipment to properly screen inmates before they are admitted to prevent the spread of any contagious disease that a new-comer might be carrying.*

4.4 Women's Rights /Sexual and Gender Base Violence

Recommendation:

1. *GoSL should consider the issues raised in the Women's Position paper in 2019 regarding inclusion of more women in decision making positions.*
2. *MGCA should expedite the submission of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy to cabinet for a speedy of same.*

4.4.1 Gender Based Violence against Children

Recommendations:

1. *The MGCA through the AG's office, Law Reform Commission and Parliament should pass a law prohibiting FGM especially against children under the age of 18 years*

2. *The Ministry of Finance should provide adequate funding to effectively monitor the full implementation of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019.*
3. *Government to speedily enact the draft Abolition of Early Marriage Bill to harmonize of laws bothering on the age of consent for marriage.*
4. *Government should speedily provide logistical support to the Family Support Unit of the SLP to enable them to promptly respond to SGBV cases in real time*

4.5 Persons with Disabilities

Recommendations:

1. *The NCPD and other key institutions dealing with PwDs should collaborate with the MBSSE in highlighting and addressing key concerns affecting PwDs.*
2. *The GoSL should empower the NCPD and show total commitment in implementing the provisions of the PWD Act 2011.*
3. *GoSL through the MoHS should view mental health as an emerging issue in the country as a key aspect of well-being.*
4. *GoSL through the respective MDAs should create the enabling and encouraging space for the operations and implementation of vital projects by NGO's*
5. *GoSL through the MoHS should include institutions dealing with mental health in the national budget.*

4.6 Youth

Recommendations:

1. *MoF should fast track funding for the youth in entrepreneurship programmes so that youth in other regions of the country can benefit from said programme.*
2. *MYA should ensure that the youth in car wash, youth in agriculture, youth in fisheries and other youth projects be extended to other regions in order to reduce the rapidly growing urban migration.*
3. *GoSL should provide employment opportunities for youth in order to empower them to avoid violence and resort to peaceful means in settling their differences.*
4. *MYA should reactivate the Campaign against Drug Abuse and Alcoholism in order to produce healthy and development oriented youths for national progress.*

4.7 Status of Ratification of International Treaties and Conventions

Recommendations:

1. *GoSL should fully comply with its international obligations.*
2. *HRCSL urges GoSL through MoFAIC to submit all its outstanding treaty reports.*
3. 4. *GoSL should consider the reactivation of the constitutional review process.*

**FAITHFULLY SUBMITTED BY
THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF
SIERRA LEONE**

SIGNATURE

PATRICIA N. NDANEMA **COMMISSIONER**

.....

VICTOR I. LANSANA **COMMISSIONER**

.....

SIMITIE LAVALY **COMMISSIONER**

.....

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.....

HASSAN S. YARJAH **COMMISSIONER**

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