



HRCSL LAUNCHES PUBLIC INQUIRY REPORT INTO CONDUCT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone on Monday 26th August, 2024 officially launched its Public Inquiry Report into the Conduct of Law Enforcement Officials in the country.



The report catalogue the findings of alleged human rights violations by the Sierra Leone Police and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), as well as directives/orders and recommendations by the Commission.

In January 2022, the HRCSL with support from OSIWA, UNDP, Irish Aid and the Government of Sierra Leone, launched the Public Inquiry into the Conduct of Law Enforcement Officials in Sierra Leone with the aim of establishing the fact about alleged human rights violations by LEOs, especially in the maintenance of law and order.

The Commission has the mandate to conduct a public inquiry into allegations of systemic human rights violations pursuant to Section 7 (2)(a) of the HRCSL



Act (No. 9) of 2004 and Rule 42 of the HRCSL (Complaints, Investigations, and Inquiries) Rules of 2008.

The Public Inquiry covered five law enforcement agencies namely, the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), Sierra Leone Police, Road Safety Corps, Sierra Leone Correctional Service, and the Metropolitan Police and covered the period 2015 to 2021.

During the launching in the Commission's conference room, Director of Climate Change and Information Services who doubles as Head of the PI Secretariat, Abu Bakarr Kamara stated that during the pre-inquiry stage, strategic engagements were held with civil society organizations, NGOs and the LEOs that were involved.



He added that community engagement and roundtable discussions on the inquiry process were hosted across the country before sending statement takers to the field to gather the necessary information needed for the inquiry proper.

He disclosed that a total of 178 complaints were received during the statement taking period, of which 133 were admissible.



Speaking on procedures, Commissioner Simitie Lavalay said the inquiry sittings were held simultaneously in North/Northwest and South-east and later in the western area.



According to her, three panels were set consisting of Commissioners of HRCSL and the Lawyers whose services were hired. The panels heard cases presented to them, cross-examining the complainants, witnesses, respondents, and interested parties after a summary of the cases were read out.

Launching the report, Vice Chairperson of HRCSL, Victor Idrissa Lansana thanked OSIWA alongside the UNDP, Irish Aid and the Government of Sierra Leone for supporting the Commission to undertake such an inquiry.

He also commended the RSLAF for been so cooperative throughout the public inquiry process, especially sending legal practitioners to defend the institution during the circuit sittings.

Commissioner Lansana explained the legal framework which the Commission relied on in conducting the public inquiry and put together a report detailing findings, directives/orders and recommendations. He cited Section 8 of the HRCSL act which speaks to the powers of the Commission and Rule 60 of the

