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Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone: A Focus on Small-Scale Fisheries

In a groundbreaking move to strengthen the human rights framework surrounding small-scale coastal fishing communities, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) recently partnered with the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) to host a training session intended at building the capacity of its Commissioners, senior staff, and representatives from the Fishermen's Union.

The training, held on February 5th and 6th, 2025, at the Saphyre Court Multi-Purpose Hall in Freetown, was designed to improve participants' understanding of the link between human rights and small-



HRCSL conducts a fact-finding mission to the Mosavie and Tongo Field communities

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) conducted a fact-finding mission from 19 - 21 March 2025, in the Mosavie Community in Mattru Jong, Bonthe District and Tongo Field, Kenema District, to investigate human rights concerns raised by community people and aggrieved workers respectively. In Mosavie, the human rights concerns were against a company known as FOISON Mining Company and include non-availability of safe drinking water and health facility among others while in Tongo Field, workers of Sierra Diamonds Mining Company were concerned about conditions of service, unsafe working environment etc. Additionally community people in Tongo Field also raised concerns over deprivation of the use of their land for farming and other agricultural purposes and over the frequent desertion of their homes due to blasting activities by the said Sierra Diamonds.

The team from the Commission, led by the Vice Chairperson, Victor Idrissa Lansana Esq. first engaged the Paramount Chief (PC) in Mattru Jong, Alhaji AB Sheriff and his council of chiefs as the local leaders to hear their perspective on the human rights concerns raised. The PC disclosed that FOISON took over Sierra Rutille just over 7 months ago and had offered to give as a gesture to the community the sum of NLe500,000 to construct a health centre even before the company could start operations. He added that the community made other requests, including a road, a water well, a school, and electricity.

According to him, the brawl, which went viral on social media, occurred after some com-

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Editorial

Enjoying Human Rights Goes Hand in Hand with Responsibilities

Human rights are fundamental rights that every human being should enjoy regardless the background, creed, color, sexual orientation, tribe, religion and so on. The concept of human rights has expanded over the years since the coming into being of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. These rights have further been classified into; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ECOSOC).

With the advancement of technology and other emerging issues, human rights protection has further expanded to now include climate change, business and human rights, human rights and sustainable development goals, corruption and human rights amongst others.

There are many International and Regional covenants, conventions, charters and treaties that guarantee the protection of human rights around the world. However, countries also protect human rights through their constitutions.

The Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 is the country's fundamental local law that guarantees rights and freedoms of individuals as well as measures that restricts these rights. It is worth noting that human rights are not absolute. They are protected by the law and can be restricted by the law.

Chapter 3 Section 15 of the Constitution which recognises the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms of individuals states thus: "Whereas every person in Sierra Leone is entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, has the right, whatever his race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest..."

Sometimes we get so enamored with our rights that we forget about our corresponding responsibilities. In order to fully realize our own rights and the rights of others, we also need to embrace and practice responsibilities.

In Section 13 (a-j) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 the duties of citizens to the state is specified and this includes, to cultivate a sense of nationalism and patriotism so that loyalty to the State supersedes sectional, ethnic, tribal and other loyalties. It also states that citizens should protect and preserve public property prevent the misappropriation and squandering of funds belonging to the Government, local authorities or public corporations.

A lot of public education on human rights has enlightened the public to rightfully claim their rights and sometimes hold government accountable for human rights related matters. However, this discussion should now shift to having individuals understand that "enjoying human rights goes hand in hand with responsibilities."

When facing a human rights issue, ask yourself not only who bears rights but also who bears responsibility to promote the fulfillment of rights. Don't just ask, "Who is to blame?" That is an important issue, but not always the most relevant one for the enjoyment of human rights. Ask instead, "What together can we do?"

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International Human Rights Laws and the Enjoyment of Human Rights



For this expert interview, we spoke with Solomon Moses Sogbandi a seasoned human rights defender who has been practising human rights advocacy and activism in Amnesty International Sierra Leone. He was head of campaigns from 2009 to 2012 and later recruited as the Director of the organisation. He also worked with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for many years and rose through the ladder to the level of head of the monitoring and evaluation unit. Solomon is a member of the Multi Stakeholder Group (MSG) of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Sierra Leone representing civil society organisations.

Give a background to international human rights laws being the bedrock for human rights and how they promote the enjoyment of human rights globally.

The International Human rights Laws provide the fulcrum upon which human rights and fundamental freedoms are determined. It is the legal framework for protecting and promoting human rights at international, regional and domestic levels. Its primary sources are international treaties, customary international laws and declarations. The Universal Dec-

laration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) are anchored on the provisions of International Human rights Laws which states are obligated to uphold for the protection and promotion of rights of its citizens.

The International Human Rights Laws through the UDHR, ICCPR and the ICESCR provide minimum standards which states are expected to observe in relation to rights of the citizens. These laws also provide remedies for individuals and groups to seek redress for human rights violations through regional and global mechanisms including the Courts and Tribunals, and reporting mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review. International Human Rights Laws hold States accountable for their human rights obligations and sanctions and other measures can be instituted when they fail in their commitment.

What are some of the key international human rights laws that Sierra Leone has signed and domesticated?

Sierra Leone is a party to several international bilateral and multilateral treaties and conventions. The country practices a dualist system of law making. That is, international conventions and treaties ratified by the country, must be domesticated. This means, passing of the legislation in Parliament to have the force of law. Some of the Key international human rights laws signed and domesticated include: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention against Torture, African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Maputo Protocol, etc.

Sierra Leone is a signatory to many international human rights laws, how have these laws promoted the enjoyment of human rights in the country?

As stated earlier, Sierra Leone is a dualist country which means that international conventions signed must be ratified and domesticated in our Parliament for them to have

Empowering HRCSL: A Pathway to the Protection & Promotion of Human Rights



The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat's Human Rights Unit, successfully concluded a capacity-building training for HRCSL Commissioners, senior staff and District Human Rights Committee representatives. The training, which took place from March 24 - 26, 2025, at The Hub Hotel in Freetown, focused on strengthening the Commission's ability to address critical and emerging human rights issues in the country.

This training covered five critical human rights areas: Climate Change, Migration and Human Trafficking, Business and Human Rights, Gender and Children's Affairs, and Treaty Body Reporting.

With the guidance of facilitators, Phulamini Dlamini, Alithia Barampataz and Musu Kaikai from the Commonwealth Secretariat, participants were able to gain insights into the nuances of contemporary human rights issues and developed strategies to incorporate best practices into their work.

For Mrs. Doris Fillie-Faboe, Director of Complaints, Investigations, and Legal Services at HRCSL, the training proved to be an invaluable learning experience. With her years of experience in human rights work, she found the sessions on climate change, migration, and the rights of vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities, particularly enlightening.

"This training has been very insightful for me. Though I have a background in human rights, I have learned new aspects, particularly about how climate change and migration linked with human rights. This knowledge will help me serve the public more effectively," Mrs. Fillie-Faboe shared.

Similarly, Patrick Kamara, a representative from the Bonthe District Human Rights Committee, found the discussions on business and human rights especially relevant to his work. "The sessions on business operations and human rights were eye-opening. This knowledge will empower me to address issues

involving companies, workers, and local communities in my district."

One of the most impactful parts of the training was the in-depth focus on disability rights. Brima Kelson Sesay, Director of Treaty Bodies Reporting and International Mechanisms at HRCSL, expressed how the training reshaped his understanding of disability models. He said: "The new knowledge I gained about the Charity Model, Human Rights Model, and Social Model of disability has been an eye-opener. I now have a broader perspective on how to apply human rights principles in relation to people with disabilities. This will inform my future work on human rights issues related to disability."

The training came at a pivotal time for the HRCSL, as the Commission grapples with an increasingly complex human rights landscape. Mrs. Patricia Narsu Ndanema, Chairperson of HRCSL, commended the Commonwealth Secretariat for responding to the Commission's request for such training, which was first made during the 2023 Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Annual General Meeting in Geneva. The training was seen as a timely and necessary step as HRCSL works to enhance its capacity to address emerging human rights challenges effectively.

"This training came at the perfect time as we work to navigate the complexities of human rights issues in Sierra Leone. We are incredibly grateful to the Commonwealth Secretariat for empowering us with the knowledge and skills to tackle these challenges head-on," Mrs. Ndanema stated.

Phumlani Dlamini, Adviser at the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat, mentioned the Secre-



Empowering HRCSL: A Pathway to the Protection & Promotion of Human Rights



tariat's role in promoting cooperation among its member states and providing technical assistance to strengthen human rights institutions. "One of the Commonwealth's greatest strengths is its ability to bring together expertise and resources to support the protection and promotion of human rights. This training will enable HRCSL to better fulfill its mandate, ensuring that the people of Sierra Leone benefit from a more robust human rights framework," Dlamini said.

Dlamini stressed the importance of the training in preparing HRCSL to tackle the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead, ensuring the sustainable promotion of human rights in the country.

This collaboration between the Commonwealth Secretariat and HRCSL serves as a testament to the power of international partnerships in promoting positive change.

HRCSL: A Focus on Small-Scale Fisheries



scale fisheries in Sierra Leone.

The training, supported by funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), meant to equip HRCSL staff with the knowledge and tools necessary to address human rights issues within the small-scale fishing sector. The two-day session explored how the Commission can effectively exercise its mandate to address the specific challenges faced by coastal fishing communities, especially concerning tenure rights, disputes, and access to remedies.

Sierra Leone's small-scale fisheries are a key part of the nation's economy and food security, providing around 80% of the protein consumed by the population. However, as the training emphasized, the sector has not been sufficiently integrated into a human rights-based frame-

work, leaving many small-scale fishers vulnerable when facing challenges such as poor weather conditions, displacement, and lack of legal support.

Victor Idrissa Lansana Esq., Vice Chairperson of HRCSL, described the training as a critical step in understanding the link between human rights and fisheries. "Our business as a Commission is to cater for those very small fishing enterprises who suffer when the sea is not favorable, and to ensure there are mechanisms for redress," V.I. Lansana said. He further noted that the urgency of adopting

a human rights approach in the country's fisheries sector to safeguard the livelihoods of small-scale fishers, who form the backbone of Sierra Leone's coastal communities.

The primary objective of the training was to help the HRCSL staff reflect on how to incorporate human rights principles into the fisheries sector and examine ways to resolve disputes and strengthen the rights of fishers. Participants also gained insights into how small-scale fisheries linked with broader human rights frameworks, including international human rights law and environmental law, with a particular focus on the "Sustainable Oceans II project", which aims to promote sustainable fisheries management.

Professor Andrew Baio, the Consultant who steered the training, guided participants through the complexities of fisheries policies in Sierra Leone and the West African region, introduc-

HRCSL conducts a fact-finding mission to t

munity members decided against his advice to use the Poro Society to scare off the Chinese people at the company site and then attacked the company, stealing huge sums of money and some company property. The police had to come in to restore calm and make some arrests, the Paramount Chief concluded.



In a mini public hearing at the Mosavie community of over 200 people, including the women's leader, the youth leader, representatives of landowning families, led by the town chief revealed that the FOISON company had failed to fulfilled their obligations especially the provision of safe drinking water to the community. They further revealed that their land was first taken and utilised by Sierra Rutile for 27 years without any development or compensation to the people, and that now FOISON has taken over the same land with signs of the same underdevelopment as the last 27 years under Sierra Rutile.

In Bo, the team engaged the resident judge, Justice Francis Banks Kamara, J., and the Magistrate, Landonet Macauley, to explore the possibility of admitting to bail the accused persons, who had already spent about a month in police custody before being charged in court. Among the 26 people arrested were three juveniles who, upon the request of the Commission, were moved to the Bo Remand Home. The trial of the 23 others is still ongoing at the Bo High Court, with the Commission closely monitoring.

On Thursday, 10th April, 2025, HRCSL engaged top management, including the General Manager and Legal Retainer/ Representative of FOISON Mining Company, to present findings from the fact-finding mission. In their response, the General Manager, Joseph Nanah and Legal Retainer, M.B.S Kamara, refuted all the claims made by the community, but however

committed to finding an amicable settlement.

A protest by mine workers of the Sierra Diamonds Mining Company in front of the company's premises in Tonga Field, Kenema district, was also circulated on social media, where workers were demanding backlog salaries and other emoluments.

In Tonga Field, the team first engaged together traditional leaders, landowners, Civil Society members and ordinary community people in the town's "court baray", creating an opportunity for all in attendance to provide a good background to the issue and express their concerns and grievances.

The chiefs informed the Commission that Sierra Diamonds started mining operations in their community in 2018 and that since then, six (6) communities have been affected by their operations, namely: Kpandebu, Bumpeh, Nguakoma, Mavehun, Sandeyeima, and Torkpombu. They narrated that the people in these communities have had to desert their homes due to frequent blasting by the company, causing serious damage to their homes in addition to the deprivation of their right to use their lands for farming and other agricultural purpos-



es. They emphasised that there has never been any compensation for the deprivation of the use of their land and their homes, save for the SLLe80 (equivalent to about US\$4) provided per household by the company each time they conduct blasting.

Speaking on behalf of Civil Society, Umu Ndanema Sesay working for Women in Mining and Extractive (WOME), said mining activities of Sierra Diamonds have led to the contamination of their water source, a source to which they no longer have access to and that the only source of drinking water now is from a stream running

the Mosavie and Tongo Field communities

through the cemetery. She disclosed that the company usually digs pits in the communities during their mining



operations and leave them open even when they are not working on them, thereby serving as death traps particularly for children to the extent that two (2) children have fallen into them and died including the child of one of the mine workers of the company.

These deaths, she added, have both gone without any form of accountability or compensation. She further stated that they observe that diseases which hitherto were not encountered by the community people have now surfaced in the community. She made specific reference to elephantiasis and river blindness as the notable diseases that the community have had to put up with. She concluded that they have had several engagements with the Paramount Chief and the Management of the company in a bid to address these issues, but nothing has come out of those engagements. She noted that the Member of Parliament (MP) does not come to see them, and they



don't have any contact with him.

The team then proceeded to the premises of the company, where it engaged over sixty (60) employees who narrated their concerns and disappointments with their employer, Sierra Diamonds.

They disclosed that they have gone for ten (10) months without salary and that Management has abandoned them and gone to stay in Freetown, while others have left the country. The employees raised several other human rights concerns including deplorable conditions of service, unsafe working environment, poor sanitation and lack of pure drinking water facilities, grave disparities in pay between local employees and their foreign counterparts even where the job descrip-



tion or terms of reference may be the same, non-payment of NASSIT contributions, poor medical insurance etc.

One of the staff narrated the death of his child in one of the company's pits without compensation while another brought forward his about 6 years old sick child who had gone through major surgery and in need of urgent medical care yet his father cannot afford the cost and fears that he may lose his child since he could not get his salary to take care of his child.

In Freetown, the Commission engaged Senior Management of the company at the Commission's office, who acknowledged the concerns of the workers and promised to resolve, especially payments of salaries, immediately, while working on the other concerns raised.

HRCSL has engaged key stakeholders, including government institutions, on a roadmap to resolving issues that normally emanate in the mining industry in Sierra Leone.

HRCSL Participates in the Regional African Human Rights Academic Network Conference



During the Regional African Human Rights Academic Network Conference in Abuja, Nigeria, held on 19 - 21 February on the theme: "Human Rights, Environment and Climate Change: Access to Environmental and Climate Justice", the Vice Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Victor Idrissa Lansana Esq urged the regional human rights bodies and mechanisms including the African Commission, the African Human Rights Court, and the ECOWAS Community Court to take deliberate actions to close down what he referred to as "a huge disconnect" between these bodies and the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) so that NHRIs can effectively engage their governments to implement judgements and recommendations that come forth from these bodies.

The Vice Chairperson recommended that these bodies should establish direct communication between them and the NHRIs and that Focal Points/persons should be appointed to make communication seamless. This way, he said, judgements will quickly be transmitted and disseminated. He also suggested that NHRIs should feature prominently on the yearly agenda/

activities of these regional human rights mechanisms so that the level of cooperation will be active and mutually beneficial.

The Vice Chairperson revealed that NHRIs have the soft infrastructure already in place to be used as a vehicle to enhance environmental and climate justice. While noting that NHRIs are creations of statutes with the primary and broad mandate to protect and promote human rights of all, he noted that NHRIs can use five (5) of their functions to give effect to

climate justice, namely: Monitoring & Reporting, Complaints Handling and Strategic Litigation, Advocacy and Public Education, Collaboration & Partnerships and offering Advisory Opinions to governments. As he underscored each of these functions and how they can be made use of by NHRIs, he noted that they present an opportunity for NHRIs to help out in pursuing climate justice.

In response, participants expressed appreciation to the Vice Chairperson for making the call and sharing knowledge on the nexus between human rights and climate change and the environment and climate justice in particular.

The conference was attended by a range of professors, researchers, experts, the UN community in Nigeria, NHRIs and many more. It was organized by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute in partnership with the Faculty of Law of the University of Nigeria and the NHRI of Nigeria among others.

International Human Rights Laws and the Enjoyment of Human Rights

the force of law unlike monolist countries where laws signed and ratified immediately become law and enforceable. The following laws have been domesticated and citizens can enjoy their implementation: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women has resulted in laws for the enjoyment of women and girls such as Domestic Violence Act, Devolution of Estate Act, Child Rights Act, Sexual Offences amended Act, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act, Prohibition of Child Marriage Act etc, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which recognizes rights like to vote and be voted for (elections), freedom of expression, association and assembly, protection of right to life, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognizes rights to health, education, housing, welfare of citizens etc, Maputo Protocol which recognizes rights against early, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) etc.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of signing international human rights laws?

Some of the advantages include;

Legal Framework:

Signing and ratifying treaties creates a solid legal foundation for human rights protection within a country, potentially influencing domestic legislation and court decisions.

International Standing:

Adherence to international human rights norms can improve a nation's reputation and standing on the global stage, fostering better relations with other countries.

Global Cooperation:

Participating in international human rights frameworks allows countries to collaborate on issues like refugee protection or combating torture, sharing burdens and resources, as seen in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

Enhanced Rights Protection:

International laws can help address gaps in domestic law and provide a more comprehensive system of human rights protection, especially in areas where domestic legal frameworks may be weak or lacking.

Here are some of the disadvantages;

Sovereignty Concerns

Signing treaties can be viewed as a restriction on a country's sovereignty, potentially limiting its ability to make its own decisions on certain issues such as political, economic and cultural.

Implementation Challenges

Enforcing treaty obligations within a country can be complex and resource-intensive, requiring significant political will and effective mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement

Compliance Difficulties

Some countries might sign treaties for political reasons without genuinely intending to implement them, leading to a disconnect between stated commitments and actual practice.

Potential for Manipulation

Authoritarian regimes might use treaty ratification to gain legitimacy and mask human rights abuses.

Are countries obliged by these international human rights laws? Can they at any point decide to back out without any implications?

Countries are obliged by these international human rights laws especially those that are ratified as part of the treaties. While they can choose to withdraw from a treaty, doing so usually carries implications, and the legal obligation continues until the withdrawal is formally effective.

Some people believe human rights is a western ideology that has affected especially the African culture and way of life, is this true?

This is not true. The concept of human rights is a universal doctrine which is rooted in various traditional and religious as well as legal practices. Freedoms and justice are entrenched in the practices of people the world over. Traditional and modern societies dispense justice using acceptable human rights practices although some of these are now illegal and unacceptable.

International Human Rights Laws and the Enjoyment of Human Rights

What are some of the gains Sierra Leone has made in the protection and promotion of human rights?

Sierra Leone has made some strides in the protection and promotion of human rights through the review of some draconian provisions in existing legislations or the establishing of new laws. In the arena of access to justice, mobile courts have been instituted to increase access to justice to hard to reach areas, judges have been doing rotational hearings to expedite trials, case files and indictments have been reviewed, Part 5 of the Public Order Act 1965 has been expunged, The Criminal Procedure Act 1965 has been reviewed and made human rights friendly, gender justice laws have been reviewed with stricter convictions and punishments e.g the Sexual Offences amended Act 2019, the Prohibition of Child

Marriage Act 2024, The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2024, The Elections Act 2022, Abolition of the death penalty by removing the death punishment in existing legislations – Mutiny Act, etc. The country has gone through the Universal Periodic Review till the third review and has displayed high commitment to the recommendations.

However, we are still challenged by some draconian provisions like Part 3 Section 17 of the Public Order Act on peaceful procession constraining our rights to peaceful protests, some instances of arbitrary arrest and detention of some human rights defenders, some restrictions on freedom of expression through the use of some provisions in the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021 etc.

HRCSL: A Focus on Small-Scale Fisheries

ing them to key concepts in fisheries management. He discussed the challenges faced by small-scale fishers, including access to fishing grounds, conflicts over tenure rights, and the need for a more robust legal framework to protect their rights.

Maria Petersen, Team Lead and Adviser on Human Rights and Development at the Danish Institute for Human Rights, provided a global perspective on sustainable ocean and fisheries management. She underlined the importance of aligning international human rights law with environmental and fisheries regulations to create a protective framework for small-scale fishers.

“Small-scale fisheries are often overlooked in national policies, despite being vital to the livelihoods of millions. Sustainable oceans and fisheries management are key to realizing the human rights of people in the country, especially in coastal communities. This training is a step in the right direction toward addressing these issues,” she said.

Madam Petersen expressed hope that the training would empower the HRCSL staff with the necessary knowledge to advocate for and implement human rights-based solutions for small-scale fishers. She mentioned the importance of ensuring that international frameworks and local laws work together to protect the rights of this vulnerable group.

The training also served as an introduction to the Sustainable Oceans II project, which will support Sierra Leone in addressing the challenges of small-scale fisheries through human rights-based approaches. By applying international human rights instruments and environmental laws, the HRCSL will position itself to play a central role in advocating for the rights of small-scale fishers and ensuring their voices are heard in the broader conversation about ocean sustainability.



Spotlight

In this edition, our spotlight is on the Southern Regional office in Bo.



The regional office in Bo covers four districts – Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba and Pujehun. The office embarks on regular public education on radio/television, schools and community outreach. This has increased the number of complaints recorded at the office with people traveling from the various districts to Bo. Through its regular monitoring exercise of detention facilities, remand homes, among others, the Commission has been effectively fulfilling its mandate to protect and promote human rights of people.

In the first quarter of 2025, the office received thirty-six (36) complaints. Most of the complaints totaling 53% from 19 complainants were from women. These bothered around matrimonial dispute and sexual penetration. On the other hand,

17 complainants totaling 47% were from male relating to deprivation of property.

The Commission resolved twenty-seven (27) out of the 36 complaints received during this quarter. Through its referral partnership drive, two complaints were referred to the Bo East police division while the remaining are pending referral.

During various monitoring visits at Bo West police division, the Commission recorded success through its intervention. In January eight suspects detained without statements been taken from them for three days had their statement recorded through the intervention of HRCSL and others released for lack of sufficient evidence. In February, four suspects detained had their statement recorded while 3 suspects detained for 4 days without statement were released for lack of sufficient evidence on the intervention of the Commission. Similarly, in March, 2 suspects unlawfully detained were released for lack of sufficient evidence.

The remarkable work of the Commission in the southern region has increased its visibility and has created strong network with other organisations for a collaborative approach to the protection and promotion of human rights in the region.

Our Mission Statement

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone exists to take the lead role in building a culture of human rights (including respect for 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.

Our Vision Statement

A Sierra Leone where a culture of Human Rights prevails and the People respect the rule of law and live in peace and dignity.

HRCSL Mandate and Functions

Section 7(1) of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act (No. 9) of 2004 stipulate that "The object for which the Commission is established is the protection and promotion of human rights in Sierra Leone." and section 7(2) states the following functions:

- Investigate or enquire into any allegation of human rights violations
- Promote respect for human rights through public education and awareness raising Programs
- Publish guidelines, manuals, and other materials on the human rights obligations of public officials and others;
- Cooperate with institutions working in the field of human rights;
- Review existing legislation and advise government on its compliance with international obligations
- Monitor draft legislations, policies, programmes and administrative practices to ensure they comply with human rights principles, standards and obligation;
- Advice and support government in the preparation of treaty body reporting.
- Visit correctional centres and other places of detention to inspect and report on conditions;
- Monitor and document violations of human rights in Sierra Leone; and Publish and present to the President and Parliament an Annual Report on the State of Human Rights in Sierra Leone.

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