



THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

PRESS RELEASE IN RESPECT OF THE CHILD RIGHTS ACT, 2025.

Monday 7th July, 2025

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) through its monitoring of the social media has come across a press statement from Parliament of Sierra Leone dated 7th July 2025 titled: “DISCLAIMER FROM THE PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE” in which the people’s representatives categorically stated that the new law (the Child Rights Act, 2025) which awaits Presidential Assent “neither criminalizes FGM nor prescribes a fine...for individuals found guilty of circumcising girls under the age of eighteen (18).”

The Commission finds this development very troubling and feels disappointed that underaged girls will still continue to be subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment under the guise of cultural practices of the longest standing.

In its Position Paper developed during the review of this new law which was submitted to Parliament, the Commission underscored the fact that underage girls should not be subjected to cruel treatment as they are not competent in law to give consent. With reports of serious bodily harm and sometimes death emanating from the practice of FGM, we thought that this was a good opportunity that the people’s representatives had to correct this historical injustice/violation against vulnerable children of our country. But alas, those who represent the people believe differently!

Given the above revelation by Parliament itself, HRCSL hereby encourages and calls on the President of the Republic to decline his Assent to this law and remit it back to Parliament for a provision to be added exempting children under the age of 18 years old



from the practice of FGM. We believe that this will further protect our children and create a safe environment for their growth and wellbeing.

HRCSL assures the public of its unwavering commitment to the protection and promotion of the rights of all in Sierra Leone.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Victor Idrissa Lansana', is positioned above the printed name.

Victor Idrissa Lansana (Esq.)
Vice Chairperson

END

For more enquiries please contact:

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