



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

STATEMENT ON THE ALLEGED SEXUAL PENETRATION OF A 5-YEAR OLD GIRL

25th June 2020

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) has been closely monitoring the alleged incident of sexual penetration of a five year old girl which led to her death on 17th June 2020. HRCSL wishes to extend its sincere and deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

The HRCSL strongly condemns all forms of sexual assault against women and girls.

HRCSL wishes to let the public know that acts of sexual penetration and rape contravene the Sexual Offences Act 2012, as amended by the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019. Section 19 of the said Act prohibits ***“sexual penetration of a child”*** whilst Section 20 prohibits ***“sexual touching of a child”***. The Amendment provides for a maximum punishment of life imprisonment for perpetrators of sexual violence against minors.

The HRCSL recognizes the prompt action taken by the Sierra Leone Police to commence investigations into the matter and urges the police to speed up the investigations. Further, the HRCSL commends the various groups, individuals and other organizations for actions taken in various ways to denounce such act of violence. These actions clearly demonstrate that the general public is becoming more aware about their rights and are thus in a position to denounce any incident that has the potential to affect the enjoyment of rights.

HRCSL seizes this opportunity to remind government of its commitment to provide a ‘State-of-the-Art’ Forensic Lab, delivering of free medical services to survivors and the provision of safe homes and psychological care for survivors of sexual violence.

The HRCSL also reminds the government of its human rights state obligations of respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights which are crucial for the overall enjoyment of rights.

The HRCSL further informs the public that the enjoyment of human rights is the collective responsibility of all and strongly encourages the public to continue denouncing all acts immediately as they occur and to promptly report cases of rape, sexual penetration and all forms of violence perpetrated against women and children

to the HRCSL, the Rainbow Center, the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and other appropriate authorities.

The HRCSL assures the public that it will continue to closely monitor the investigations and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.



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Chairperson

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END

Cc:

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice

The Inspector General of Police

The Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs

The Minister of Social Welfare