

LEGAL LINK

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS IN SIERRA LEONE



RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY:

The Executive Director and Interns of LEGAL LINK

2021

DEDICATION

This 2021 Annual report is dedicated to the religious community and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AU	African Union
CAN	Citizens Advocacy Network
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CIDA	Christian Integrity and Development Awards
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GENIDA	Global Engagement Network on Internal Displacement in Africa
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NCPD	National Commission for Persons with Disability
ONS	Office of National Security
PPRC	Political Party Registration Commission
PWD	Persons with Disability
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

CONTENTS

Title Page

Dedication

List of Abbreviations

Content page

Foreword

Meet the Board members of LEGAL LINK

Meet the legal interns, volunteers and members of LEGAL LINK

PART ONE: About LEGAL LINK- what you need to know

PART TWO: Activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK (2021)

PART THREE: Extrajudicial Killings and Attacks on Vulnerable Groups by Law Enforcement Agencies

PART FOUR: Successes and Challenges

PART FIVE: Recommendations and Conclusion

FOREWORD

Today marks an important milestone in the struggle for respect for human rights the world over. The 10th of December is usually referred to as **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**. This day has been set aside by the UN family to reflect and showcase how much successes have been garnered within its 194 member states in the push for compliance and respect for human rights. The 10th of December is also celebrated to remind states of the numerous challenges regarding adherence to their human rights obligations and commitments under International Human Rights Law.



What a joy and privilege to have LEGAL LINK celebrate its third anniversary on this great day called International Human Rights Day.

In **Psalm 68 Verse 5 & 6**, God is referred to as a Father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, the One who gives home to the homeless and the One who sets the prisoners free as well as those who are bound in chains. From this scripture, it is clear that God is the Chief Human Rights Defender of mankind on planet earth.

When we therefore avail ourselves to serve humanity in this noble field of human rights, where service is directed at making lives better particularly for vulnerable persons such as disables, abused women and children, amputees, widows, Ebola/COVID-19 survivors, war wounded, orphans and the aged, we automatically become God's valued partners on earth. What a privilege indeed!

The LEGAL LINK vision started in 2014 when I was pursuing my second LLM degree at the University of Dundee, Scotland, United Kingdom. At a particular night, whilst wrapped on my cold and freezing bed in Dundee, Scotland, the inspiration to form an organization called **CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE (LEGAL LINK)** came strongly on me. At the time, the vision was to primarily provide legal assistance and support to religious communities in Sierra Leone. But the vision has now been expanded to cover vulnerable groups.

After my return to Sierra Leone in 2015 and a brief work in public institutions, I, together with a few Christian lawyers and human rights activists decided to officially launch the organization for full operation on the 10th of December 2018. And just three years on, LEGAL LINK has become a household name not just in Sierra Leone but within the Africa continent winning awards and making tremendous impact in the lives of vulnerable groups. TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY!

In this third annual report therefore, an attempt has been made to showcase some of the key activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK in the year 2021 as well as the successes and challenges encountered as it seeks to defend the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone. Thanks to the Good Lord and all our pastors, sponsors, Board members, interns & volunteers for making this happen.

MEET THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF LEGAL LINK



Rashid Dumbuya Esq.



Thomas Moore Conteh



Morlai Conteh



Pst. Paul Ken Bockarie



Mrs. Shyryl Joy Dumbuya



Andrew Johnson Esq.

MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF LEGAL LINK

Paul Ken Bockarie (Board Chairman)

Pastor Gift Shekune

Rev. Morsay

Mr Gbenda (President, Society for the Welfare of the Aged)

Rashid Dumbuya Esq (Executive Director)

Miss Horacia Cole (Acting Board Secretary)

MEET THE LEGAL INTERNS & HUMAN RIGHTS VOLUNTEERS AT LEGAL LINK



A CROSS SECTION OF LEGAL VOLUNTEERS AT LEGAL LINK





Rashid Dumbuya Esq, Executive Director of CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE (LEGAL LINK)


PART ONE:

ABOUT LEGAL LINK- WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE
LEGAL LINK
Motto: "Defending the Rights of Vulnerable Groups in Society"

A non- profit legal advocacy group that provides legal assistance to:

- Religious Communities
- Disables
- Orphans
- Older Persons
- Abused Children
- Amputees
- War Wounded
- Ebola Survivors
- Abused Women
- Environmental Rights
- Labourers rights
- Indigenous peoples rights
- Human Rights Defenders



Office Address: 89 Fort Street, Freetown.
Tel: +232 79 167457 / +232 77 336904
Email: legallink2018@gmail.com

WHO WE ARE

Christian Lawyers Centre (a.k.a LEGAL LINK) is registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission of Sierra Leone as a non-profit legal advocacy group comprising of lawyers, law students and human right activists that seeks to provide legal assistance to the religious community as well as vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone through legal advocacy, public interest litigations, state and private sector accountability, enforcement of the rule of law and ensuring respect for domestic and international laws that guarantee fundamental human rights and freedoms.

VISION STATEMENT

"To build and consolidate a culture of respect for human rights through the provision of free, effective and timely legal assistance to the religious community and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone."

OFFICE ADDRESS

The Registered office is situated at 89 Fort Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa.

MOTTO

The Motto of the Organisation is “*Defending the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.*”

LOGO

The logo of the Organisation is the scale of justice; symbolic of our pursuit of justice as a Pre-requisite for a peaceful and serene society.

CORE VALUES

Our core values include:

LOVE

INTEGRITY

COMPASSION

COMMITMENT

SPEED

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

We provide legal assistance and support to the following vulnerable groups:

Religious Communities

Persons with Disabilities

Amputees

War Wounded

Ebola/COVID-19 Survivors

Orphans

Abused children

Abused women

Older persons

Environmental Rights

Labourers Rights

Prisoners Rights

Indigenous Peoples Rights

Human Rights Defenders

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SPRITUAL HEADS & MENTORS

There are 3 spiritual heads appointed to provide spiritual oversight of the organization and to help in prayers, counsel and mentorship.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There is a Board of Directors comprising of 6 members to provide supervision and oversight of the work of the EXECUTIVE (Administrative and General Purposes Committee) as well as the organization.

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

There is an EXECUTIVE also called the Administrative and General Purposes Committee comprising of 8 members - the Executive Director, Secretary, Programmes Officer, Finance Officer, Legal aid and Human Rights officer, Organising Secretary, Office Assistant, and PRO/Media Relations Officer.

The EXECUTIVE (Administrative and General Purposes Committee) is responsible for the day to day running of the affairs of the organization and shall keep a list of the names of the members of the organization.

MEMBERS

Membership of the Company is open to Sierra Leoneans and non-Sierra Leoneans and is comprised of Lawyers, law students, legal volunteers, human rights activists, philanthropists and other interested persons that believe and subscribe to the ideals and values of the organization. Members are expected to provide voluntary services at all times and to pay a yearly subscription (which is payable monthly) for administrative and charitable purposes.

Qualified members shall from time to time propose names of persons to become members of the organization. Such members proposed shall be interviewed and approved at a General Meeting.

WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Any member may withdraw from the organization by giving one Calendar months' notice in writing to the Secretary of his/ her intention to do so and upon the expiration of the notice; he/ she shall cease to be a member.

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership can be terminated and dis-membership can be triggered by the Executive where a member engages in gross misconduct or acts in ways that are contrary to the ideals and values of the company.

CORE WORK AND MANDATE

The objects for which the company is established are: -

- a) To provide legal assistance, representation and professional advice to the religious community in Sierra Leone,
- b) To defend and advocate for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, amputees, widows, Ebola/COVID-19 survivors, war wounded neglected and abused children and women, orphans, the aged and the poor in post conflict Sierra Leone due to the pervasive discrimination and marginalization of these vulnerable groups within the society.
- c) To advocate for the protection and promotion of the rights of deprived and marginalized communities that have been negatively affected by the operations of businesses and multinational corporations.
- d) To advocate and defend the rights of workers negatively affected by the operations of businesses and multinational corporations in the country.
- e) To engage in effective and robust public interest litigations in the courts of Sierra Leone and other African legal mechanisms in order to guarantee respect for the fundamental human rights of the aforementioned vulnerable groups and also stimulate legal and policy reforms within Sierra Leone and the African Continent.
- f) To serve as a resource centre that will conduct legal research and produce thematic reports on the rights of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, orphans, amputees, Ebola survivors, war wounded, neglected and abused children and women, older persons, business and human rights; with particular emphasis on neglect and omissions by the state and non-state actors thereby contributing to legal, policy and institutional reforms in the country.
- g) To prepare, produce, educate and disseminate thematic reports, leaflets, brochures and other publications to deconstruct stereotypes affecting the lives of these vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone and within the African Continent.

- h) To advocate and promote justice, human rights, rule of law, accountability, social cohesion, democratic governance and legal /policy reforms in Sierra Leone and the African continent at large.
- i) To produce or cause to be produced jingles, skits, melo- drama, songs, albums, documentaries, advertisements, motion displays and leaflets for purposes of sensitizing and creating awareness to the general public on the need to respect the rights of vulnerable groups and persons in society.
- j) To render charitable services and relief support in the form of aid to affected persons and vulnerable groups and communities within the society.
- k) To train para-legals, offer internships, host seminars, debates, quiz competitions, participate in international conferences and workshops, organize local conferences and workshops and educate the public through TV and radio programmes on legal issues pertaining to the rights of vulnerable groups and the religious community in Sierra Leone.
- l) To provide legal education to the public for effective awareness of fundamental human rights and towards the building and consolidation of a culture of human rights in Sierra Leone.
- m) To provide scholarship assistance and operate a Scholarship Trust for the educational welfare and support of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, amputees, widows, Ebola/COVID-19 survivors, war wounded, neglected and abused children and women, orphans, the aged and the poor in post conflict Sierra Leone;
- n) To organize annual **CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY AND DEVELOPMENT AWARDS (CIDA-AWARDS)** for the Christian community, sponsor Christian programmes, albums, concerts, revivals, missions, crusades, prayer and worship conferences etc in a bid to stimulate a more progressive and development oriented Christian community in Sierra Leone.
- o) To serve as an engine for reconciliation and peaceful co-existence within the religious community in Sierra Leone.
- p) To associate, negotiate; enter into agreement and joint actions with other persons, bodies, organizations, institutions, MDA's and to pay reasonable expenses of such affiliation and agreement in furtherance of the company's objects as enshrined herein.

- q) To establish and maintain contact and network with other legal bodies, Ministries, Department and Agencies, religious associations, Institutions, Civil societies and organizations in Sierra Leone and outside of sierra Leone which share similar goals and ideals and are also engaged in the protection and promotion of the human rights of vulnerable groups.
- r) To purchase, lease, own, hold in trust, use, convey, sell or mortgage real or personal property or dispose of the aforesaid property as may be necessary for the execution, implementation and attainment of the Company's objectives.
- s) To enter into contract with persons, natural and legal as may be necessary for the promotion and attainment of the Company's objectives.
- t) To accept funding from government, local or international bodies, donations, contributions, pledges, or other forms of lawful financial support, to invest and re-invest any funds at hand, to use the income and proceeds thereof for the advancement and enhancement of the purposes for which this company is established.
- u) To establish, maintain and engage in any and all lawful activities relative to the purposes for which this company is established.

CRITERIA TO BENEFIT FROM THE LEGAL AID PROVIDED BY LEGAL LINK:

1. *Beneficiary should fall under the categories of the vulnerable groups listed above.*
2. *Beneficiary should be a victim of injustice.*
3. *Beneficiary should show proof that they cannot afford the services of a lawyer.*

RIGHTS AND BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

A fully registered and paid up member is entitled to:

Use the Centre's library and research materials.

Use the free internet, printing and photocopying facilities at the Centre.

Obtain an I D Card and a T-shirt, cap, hand band and Polo of LEGAL LINK.

Enjoy free legal training, tutorials and capacity building.

Can receive letters of support and recommendation for scholarship and advance training from LEGAL LINK.

Can participate in all programmes undertaken by the organization.

Can enjoy free legal assistance as and when required.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Members of LEGAL LINK have a responsibility to:

Support the vision of LEGAL LINK at all times.

Uphold the core values of the organization

Provide voluntary services to vulnerable groups

Assist in the realization of the core mandate of the organization.

Attend meetings at all times.

Pay monthly subscriptions as and when the need arises.

Help to foster unity and social cohesion between and among members.

Be willing to carry out assigned duties with speed and excellence.

Be prepared to defend the values and ideals of LEGAL LINK at all times.

Be a blessing to humanity through giving of time, talent and resources.

Serve faithfully in the Executive or any other committee one may be assigned to.

METHODOLOGY OF THE REPORT

This report adopts both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative approach reviewed reports, textbooks, law journals and articles. The quantitative approach captured interviews, focus group discussions, expert opinions as well as activities and surveys.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The scope of this report covered the activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK in promoting, protecting, advocating and defending the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone in the year 2021. However, some key incidents that took place in 2020 are also mentioned.

PART TWO

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY LEGAL LINK WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

PROMINENT INTERNATIONAL DAYS COMMEMORATED BY LEGAL LINK

As part of its mandate to celebrate and raise awareness of prominent international days, LEGAL LINK within the period under review commemorated prominent international days such as the International Human Rights Day, International Women’s Day, International Day of Persons with Albinism, International Ant- Corruption Day and International Day for Persons with Disabilities to name but a few.

LEGAL LINK Commemorates International Human Rights Day and Launches its Second Annual Report

It could be recalled that on the 10th December, 2020, LEGAL LINK at the Africell American Corner in Freetown commemorated the International Human Rights and also launched its Second Annual Report.

On this memorable day, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq used the occasion to educate participants about the relevance of celebrating the International Human Rights Day and further explained in summary about the many activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK within the period under review.

Several representatives from the religious communities, civil society organizations and vulnerable groups that witnessed the event expressed thanks and appreciations for the good work LEGAL LINK has been doing for them over the past years of its existence. The programme ended up in a cheerful party celebration in honour of LEGAL LINK's second anniversary.



LEGAL LINK Commemorates International Women’s Day

LEGAL LINK, on the 9th of March 2020 at the Africell American Corner, Bathurst Street Freetown, commemorated the International Women’s Day with the theme – **“Women and their Journey towards Leadership in Sierra Leone: Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects.”**

Dr. Sylvia Olyinka Blyden was invited as the keynote speaker of the event. In her keynote address, she asserted that women are less corrupt in society than men and therefore have greater chances to transform society for the better. But be that as it may, women are less represented in prominent positions within the governance system of the country.

Other motivational women speakers also graced the occasion. The event attracted wide range of representatives from women organizations, civil society organizations, the press and host of other vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.



LEGAL LINK Commemorates International Albinism Day

In fulfillment of its mandate to advocate, defend and raise awareness about the rights of persons with Albinism in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK on the 13th June 2021, celebrated the International Day of Persons with Albinism by calling on the government to increase support for persons living with Albinism particularly with respect to their education, health, housing and employment. The Executive Director of LEGAL LNK also had a roundtable engagement with a cross section of persons living with Albinism regarding challenges faced during the COVID 19 period. Through the motivation and support from lawyer Rashid Dumbuya, a member of the Albinism community by the name of Hamid Kamara is currently pursuing law at the Faculty of Law, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone. He aims to become the first Albinism lawyer in Sierra Leone so as to deconstruct myths and stereotypes regarding persons living with albinism.



LEGAL LINK Celebrates Nelson Mandela International Day by feeding the Poor and making Donations to the Female Correctional Centre and Blind School

In honour of Mandela's legacy and quest to change the world for the better, **LEGAL LINK** celebrated **NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY** (18th July) in Sierra Leone by feeding the poor and making donations to the Female Correctional Centre and Blind School.

The Nelson Mandela International Day was launched by the UN General Assembly on 18th July 2009 in acknowledgement of Nelson Mandela's birthday, his contribution to the culture of peace and freedom as well as his devoted service to humanity across the world.

On this auspicious day, LEGAL LINK donated food items such as rice, oil, onions, cubes of Maggie, sanitary pads and bundles of water to female inmates in the Sierra Leone Correctional Centre at Brookfields, Freetown. Later in the day, the organization also donated bags of rice, onions, oil, cube of maggie and bundles of water to persons with disabilities at the Milton Margai School for the Blind as well as to beggars on the streets of Freetown.





LEGAL LINK Commemorates International Day of Persons with Disabilities

LEGAL LINK, being an advocacy group that defends the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone felt motivated on the 3rd December, 2021 to engage in a face to face discussion with persons living with disability in Sierra Leone as it joined the UN to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disability.

In addressing the plenary, Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya, Executive Director of LEGAL LINK thanked the government for signing and ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disability and also for passing the Disability Act in 2011 and setting up a Commission to adequately address the needs and aspirations of PWDs at the domestic level.



The representative from NACSA made a short statement with respect to the support the Commission has been providing for PWDs in a bid to ameliorate their predicament situation. Other dignitaries that made statements during the occasion was the representative of Don Bosco, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, the president of Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism, a representative from the disability community to name but a few. The celebration ended up with refreshments and prayers in honour of the International Day of Persons With Disabilities.



CSO Court Monitoring Group together with LEGAL LINK Commemorates International Anti-Corruption Day and calls on the ACC and the Special Court on Corruption to do more in the fight against corruption in post conflict Sierra Leone

It could be recalled that on Thursday, 9th December 2021 (International Anti-Corruption Day) LEGAL LINK, together with the CSO Court Monitoring Group Commemorated International Anti-Corruption Day and issued a press statement calling on the ACC and the Corruption Court to do more in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone.

The CSO Court Monitoring Group is a consortium of independent civil society organizations working around accountability issues and also monitoring the ACC and the Special Court on Corruption in their fight against corruption in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

According to the preliminary report findings captured by the Trial Monitoring Group during their monitoring exercise, there is a great deal of successes as well as challenges faced by both the ACC and the Special Court on Corruption in their fight against corruption in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

The press released however recommended that both the ACC and the Special court on corruption do away with selective justice and prolong trials respectively.

PHILANTHROPISM ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY LEGAL LINK WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Donations to the Aged at the King Georges Home and Orphan Children at Manaheim Children Orphanage in Grafton, Freetown

As part of its mandate to ensuring that the world becomes a better place for older persons and orphans, LEGAL LINK on the 14th February 2021 donated food items such as rice, oil, onions, maggi and water to the Aged at Old People's Home and the Manaheim Children Orphanage at Grafton, Freetown.

The leadership of both the old People's Home and Manaheim Children Orphanage expressed delight over the food items and thanked LEGAL LINK for coming to their aid at a time when everyone seemed to have forgotten about them. The programme was climaxed with prayers and beautiful songs of appreciations from older persons themselves.



LEGAL LINK INTERVENTIONS ON THE RULE OF LAW, LEGAL & POLICY ENACTMENTS, DEMOCRATIZATION AND JUSTICE SECTOR REFORMS WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

LEGAL LINK's Advisory Opinion on the Cybercrime Bill

As a leading civil society organization with mandate to advocate for legal and policy reforms in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK puts out an advisory opinion on the Cybercrime Bill having done a critical examination of the proposed Bill regarding its implications on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens in the state and beyond.

The advisory opinion started off by defining what a Cybercrime law is and critically analyzed the Proposed Cybercrime Bill and its implications on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizenry as further advanced cogent recommendations for the attention of lawmakers.

LEGAL LINK concluded in its advisory opinion by commending the move made by the government and in particular, the Minister of Information and Communications to push for the passing of a Cybercrime Act but further appealed that its advisory opinion be given due attention as it does not portend, seek or aim to undermine the passing of this bill into law.



LEGAL LINK's Advisory Opinion on the establishment of a National Commission for Peace and Social Cohesion in Sierra Leone

On the 7th of December, 2020, the legal team of Legal Link superintended by the prolific Executive Director, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, did a critical examination of the proposed bill that seeks to establish a Commission for Peace and National Cohesion in Sierra Leone. In that work, the team identified a plethora of issues that can undermine the efficacy of the proposed Peace Commission. It then issued out a press statement in the form of an advisory opinion to the Parliament of Sierra Leone on how the Peace Commission can be made more independent and resilient to effectively resist political interference, manipulation and control.

Unfortunately, these recommendations were never adhered to and the Bill was passed into law amidst an open walkout by the main opposition party in Parliament. LEGAL LINK calls on the government of Sierra Leone to adhere to its recommendations regarding this law in a bid to making sure that the newly established Peace Commission be made more independent and resilient to effectively resist political interference, manipulation and control.

LEGAL LINK's Advisory Opinion on the Abolition of the Death Penalty Bill

Sequel to an open call made by the speaker of parliament requesting position papers from Civil Society Organizations over the current bill tabled before Parliament entitled: the Abolition of the Death Penalty Act 2021, LEGAL LINK paid heed to such clarion call and did an extensive research enveloped in an advisory opinion for the urgent consideration of members of

Parliament before the passing of the Bill into law.

The advisory opinion piece looked at the legal frameworks that guarantee the right to life both at the international, regional and domestic levels, advanced the pros and cons debate over the death penalty and further interrogated the legislative approach that was initially adopted by the government of Sierra Leone towards the Abolition of the death penalty.

The work concluded by proffering plausible recommendations as to how the death penalty can be permanently abolished in Sierra Leone without the possibility of any return to the status quo in the future and further applauded government's effort to abolish the death penalty.

LEGAL LINK in Partnership with other Civil Society Organizations Launches the CSO Court Monitoring Group for both the Special Court on Corruption and the Sexual Offences Model Court in Freetown

As part of its commitment to promote the rule of law, constitutionalism and best practices, LEGAL LINK in partnership with other civil society organizations successfully launched the CSO Court Monitoring Group for the both the Anti-Corruption Court and the Sexual Offences Model Court in Freetown.

During the formal launching of this court monitoring group, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK explained in detail about the mandate of the CSO Court Monitoring Group and its relevance to promoting constitutionalism, rule of law and best practices in the justice system of Sierra Leone.

Both representatives from the ACC and the Judiciary welcomed the initiative and informed the audience that their institutions are in full support of the project. Participants that graced the launching ceremony expressed great delight and appreciations of the good work LEGAL LINK is doing in the country.

LEGAL LINK organizes the 1st Legal Colloquium on Justice Sector Reforms and Adopts a Joint Communiqué regarding legal reforms

As part of its commitment to promote constitutionalism, justice sector reforms, democratic best practices and the rule of law, LEGAL LINK on the 13th October 2021 successfully held the **1st Legal Colloquium on Justice Sector Reforms in Sierra Leone.**

This programme, among many other things, was organized to incentivize participants and relevant stakeholders with radical understanding about the urgent need for justice sector reforms in Sierra Leone and further develop a joint communiqué regarding same. Several recommendations were proffered towards an independent and sustainable judicial system in Sierra Leone.

Key motivational speakers of the event includes Augustine Sorie-Sengbe Marrah, Legal practitioner and rights advocate; Rashid Dumbuya Esq, Executive Director of LEGAL LINK; Thomas Moore Conteh, Executive Director of CAN; and Alpha Amadu Bah, representative from Law Society, FBC.

The joint communiqué that was adopted in the colloquium had been submitted to relevant stakeholders for their kind attention. Reverend Gibrilla Kargbo happens to be facilitator of the colloquium.



LEGAL LINK COURT INTERVENTIONS

LEGAL LINK within the period under review defended and secured a discharged and an acquittal verdict on six out of the eight counts levied in the case of ***the State VS Alie Foster & others*** in the High Court of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

It could be recalled that sometime in 2019, Alie Foster was fired on his left foot by one of the securities of the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Lahai Lawrence Leema who claimed that Alie Foster and his men were illegally trying to break into the compound of the Deputy Minister with an intention to cause him harm. Later, Alie Foster and his friends were charged at the Magistrate Court with offences ranging from conspiracy to commit murder, riotous conduct, carrying of offensive weapons and throwing of missiles, etc.

At the Magistrate Court, LEGAL LINK was able to secure bail for Alie Foster and advocated strongly for medical treatment to be granted him pending the outcome of the trial. At the High Court, he was represented by two of LEGAL LINK's legal volunteers, Charlie Williams Esq and Claudius Campbell Esq who were able to get an acquittal verdict on six out of the eight counts he was being charged with. LEGAL LINK is currently advocating for compensation to be provided to Alie Foster by the State in the form of medical support so that his foot will be properly treated abroad. Alie Foster is currently out of prisons and a free man.



In a similar vein, LEGAL LINK was able to settle about **600** legal disputes within the period under review. Bulks of these cases were settled through court interventions as well as Alternative Disputes Resolution Mechanisms. The nature of these cases ranges from criminal, civil, tort, labour, etc.

LEGAL LINK INTERVENTIONS TO DEFEND LABOURERS' RIGHTS WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

LEGAL LINK Successfully Secures Huge End of Service/Financial Benefits and Compensation for Labourers

LEGAL LINK, in fulfillment of its mandate to defend laborer's rights in the country was able to successfully secure through ADR means the sum of one hundred and ninety million leones as compensation and end of service benefits to labourers. Over 60 labourers benefitted from this intervention within the period under review.

More significant still, LEGAL LINK within the period under review was able to settle, through ADR mechanisms, about 200 legal matters between employers and employees.



LEGAL LINK OPEN EDUCATION PROGRAMME CONDUCTED WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

The LAW FOR NON-LAWYERS' is a renowned Open Education Programme runned by Legal Link to help human rights activists, journalists, accountants, politicians, parliamentarians, Mayors, Local councillors, legal researchers, students offering law related courses and interested citizens understand and have access to law notes, articles, case laws and commentaries, undertake legal research; and be able to claim their rights successfully when threatened, abused or violated.

Within the period under review, LEGAL LINK conducted a good number of open education programmes on several human rights issues as well as the law and justice system of Sierra Leone using both the social media and the mainstream media. A live broadcast on some of these open education programmes was also done on Star TV in Freetown during the coronavirus crisis period for law students at the University.



JOINT PRESS STATEMENTS PUT OUT BY LEGAL LINK AND OTHER CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Joint Statement at a Press Conference Organized by LEGAL LINK and Citizens Advocacy Network regarding the Indefinite Suspension of the Auditor General and one of der deputies by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

Following the unprecedented move by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone on the 11th November 2021 to indefinitely suspend the Auditor General and one of her deputies, LEGAL LINK and CAN jointly agreed to hold an emergency press conference over this shocking and unfortunate incident and to state their position regarding same. The event took place on the 12th November 2021 at LEGAL LINK's Office.

During the said press conference, it was clearly stated by both organizations that there are indeed grave procedural errors regarding this move by the president to remove the Auditor

General from Office as required by section 137 of the Constitution and further recommended how the issue should be objectively dealt with going forward.

CSO Working Group on Elections and Human Rights Press Statement regarding the EU's Elections Follow-Up Missions Report

LEGAL LINK together with other CSOs that are part of the Civil Society Working Group on Elections and Human Rights put out a press statement on the 5th November, 2021, communicating to the wider public ten reasons as to why the responses from the government, Judiciary, PPRC, NEC, and SLP regarding the EU's Elections Follow-up Missions Report are unnecessary, unprecedented and misplaced.

The CSO Working Group brought to the attention of election management bodies that their reactions to the EU report were certainly an overstretch since the goal of EU was simply aimed at identifying electoral threats and proffering recommendations for reforms before 2023 elections. It further urged the Government of Sierra Leone and election management bodies to make amends with the EU so as to not undermine the good bilateral relationship between Sierra Leone and the EU.

LEGAL LINK INTERVENTIONS ON ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Civil Society Working Group on Elections and Human Rights in Sierra Leone Monitors the Re-Run Parliamentary Election at Constituency 110 – Goderich, Freetown

On the 1st December, 2020, a group of Civil Society Activists met at LEGAL LINK's Office and agreed to form a Civil Society Working Group on Elections and Human Rights in Sierra Leone in a bid to compliment the efforts of the National Electoral Commission, election management bodies and other partners in conducting free, fair and credible elections in Sierra Leone.

The Working Group monitored the re-run parliamentary election at Constituency 110, Goderich, Freetown, during polling hours and developed a report that captured its findings and observations of same.

The report documented the successes and challenges of the re-run parliamentary election and made strong recommendations to the government, NEC, election management bodies and the wider public regarding the enhancement of free, fair and credible election in Sierra Leone going forward.



OPEN LETTERS WRITTEN BY LEGAL LINK TO RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS ON PUBLIC INTEREST MATTERS WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

LEGAL LINK congratulates Francis Ben Kaifala and the Anti-Corruption Commission for winning the United States Anti-Corruption Championship Award and passing MCC Control on Corruption respectively

Following the 2021 global anti-corruption championship award granted by the United States government to Francis Ben Kaifala Esq, LEGAL LINK wrote an open letter congratulating him for being recognized as one of the twelve worthy receivers of the award.

In the said letter, while LEGAL LINK is of the candid opinion that the commission under the leadership of Francis Ben Kaifala Esq has witnessed some outstanding successes in geometric progression leap, it further acknowledged that there may still be room for improvement especially in the area of selective justice.



The LEGAL LINK organization further congratulated the commission for passing the 'control of corruption' indicator under the MCC SCORE CARD for the third time in a progressive manner.

LEGAL LINK however ended up recommending to the ACC to try as much as possible to resist the temptation of selective justice in the exercise of his mandate so as to not only win laurels and accolades at the global and regional levels but also the hearts, minds and trust of all and sundry at the domestic level who may be quite crucial in winning the war against corruption in the country.

Letter to His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio Appealing for the Lifting up of the Suspension on Congregational Worship in Church, Mosques and other Religious Places of Worship

As part of its commitment to defend and advocate for religious communities in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK on the 5th July 2021, wrote an open letter to his Excellency President Julius Maada Bio appealing for the lifting up of the suspension on congregational worship in churches, mosques and other religious places of worship in the country.

While LEGAL LINK acknowledged the intentions of the president as premised on saving lives, it further raised five cogent and convincing reasons in the said letter as to why His Excellency should consider the lifting up of the suspension on Congregational worship within religious institutions in the country. LEGAL LINK also undertook a survey assessing the impact of Covid- 19 on the religious community of Sierra Leone.



The organization ended up calling on the government to incorporate a spiritual approach in the fight against COVID-19 and further encouraged NaCoVERC to carry out some robust and effective monitoring of its earlier measures introduced for the safe operations of religious institutions in a COVID-19 environment.

Letter to His Excellency the President Julius Maada Bio Applauding his Sustained Commitment and Leadership towards the Abolition of the Death Penalty and Calling for three more actions to be done in ensuring that same is permanently abolished in Sierra Leone

On the 27th July 2021, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK wrote an open letter on behalf of the board, legal interns and volunteers of the organization to convey their heartfelt congratulations and openly acknowledged his Excellency's sustained efforts and committed leadership in ensuring that the death penalty is abolished in Sierra Leone.

In the said letter, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK drew the attention of his Excellency to the three(3) recommendations the organization had proffered so as to permanently extinguish the death Penalty from Sierra Leone. These recommendations, if implemented, will prevent a reintroduction of the death penalty in future legislations.

LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE TRAININGS CONDUCTED FOR CHURCH LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

LEGAL LINK Conducts Legal and Compliance Training for over 200 Church Leaders and Administrators in the Western Area of Freetown

In fulfillment of its religious and educational mandate, LEGAL LINK successfully conducted a comprehensive Legal and Compliance training for over 200 church leaders and their administrators in the Western Area of Freetown.

The training which took place at the **Harvest Filed Chapel International Church** was organized against the backdrop of the plethora of cases that are currently in court bothering on churches and their dealings with land, real property, estates and employees.



**CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE
LEGAL LINK**
ORGANIZES

A ONE DAY LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE TRAINING FOR CHURCH LEADERS AND THEIR ADMINISTRATORS IN THE WEST END OF FREETOWN

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

- Understanding church registration process
- Church acquisition of properties
- Preparation of title deeds (conveyances, leases, deed of gifts and tenancy agreements)
- Handling of labour and staff employment matters
- NASSIT, Minimum wage and income tax laws
- Church ethics
- Church versus politics and governance
- Church versus court proceedings

Certificates will be awarded to all attendees

DATE: 11th July 2021 (Saturday)
VENUE: Harvest Filed Chapel, 1985
Sengeh Road, Freetown in the West End
TIME: 9:00am - 5:00pm

HOW TO REGISTER AND BOOK TICKETS: Call 011
02020000000 or 02020000000



Participants benefitted from key teachings such as understanding the procedures involved in the registration of churches, church acquisition of properties, labour employment laws, church and court proceedings amongst others. Certificates were given to all participants that took part in the training. The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK and Bishop Barrister Mike Robert, General overseer & founder of the Harvest Filed Chapel International Church facilitated the training.

LEGAL LINK Conducts Legal and Compliance Training For 50 Nigerian Pastors in Sierra Leone

Significant to mention also, LEGAL LINK within the period under review conducted Legal and Compliance training for about fifty (**50**) Nigerian pastors in Sierra Leone. The training took place at Aberdeen, Freetown and was facilitated by Rashid Dumbuya Esq. Executive Director of LEGAL LINK. Pastors that graced the training learnt a lot about key teachings on legal compliance and expressed great delight to LEGAL LINK for such a wonderful opportunity accorded them.



LEGAL LINK POSITION STATEMENTS ON ISSUES BOTHERING AROUND THE RULE OF LAW, CONSTITUTIONALISM, JUSTICE, LEGAL & POLICY REFORMS, DEMOCRATIZATION AND DUE PROCESS WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

LEGAL LINK Position Statement regarding the Protection of Whistleblowers in Sierra Leone

LEGAL LINK, in its quest to complement government's effort in the fight against corruption in the country, on the 18th March 2021, felt enthused to issue out a position statement calling for the enactment of a comprehensive whistleblower legislation.

In the said position statement, LEGAL LINK humbly submitted that the ineffectiveness of the piece meal provisions on whistleblower protection under the ACC Act of 2008 combined with the sacking and open bashing of people who have made bold to expose corruption within high places in Sierra Leone, underscored the need for a comprehensive whistleblower legislation that will fully protect and reward corruption whistleblowers in the country.

LEGAL LINK Position Statement on the Misconception of a Commission of Inquiry

As part of its educational mandate on the law and justice system of the country, LEGAL LINK on the 28th January 2021 issued out a position statement regarding the misconception of a commission of inquiry.

According to the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, a Commission of Inquiry, in its widest definition, could be best described as a civil court. Little wonder why persons of interest were never compelled to come before the Commission of Inquiry.

The position statement further brought to the attention of the wider public that it was certainly

a grave error in law for the State Counsel/Consultant to refer to persons of interests who might lose their appeals in the Court of Appeal as convicts since they were never before a criminal trial in the first place.

Position Statement of LEGAL LINK regarding ACC's Findings on its Investigation of Parliament for Alleged Corruption and Misuse of Funds

Sequel to the press statement issued out by the ACC regarding its findings on the investigation of alleged corruption and misuse of public funds in parliament, LEGAL LINK puts out a position statement calling on the ACC to demand from MPs a full refund of the monies given to them that they were unable to account for, or expended in ways that were inimical to the object and purpose of the fund.

LEGAL LINK, while in its position statement took cognizance of the immense achievements of the ACC under Francis Ben Kaifala Esq., it also pinpointed that the failure of the ACC to take drastic action on this exceptional situation puts the commission in a bad light and further reinforces the perception of selective justice in the fight against corruption in the country.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

GENIDA in Partnership with LEGAL LINK and other Stakeholders held a Two-Day Workshop on Internal Displacements in Sierra Leone and further developed a Draft National Action Plan on IDPs for Sierra Leone

It could be recalled that on the 5th & 6th May 2021 at the Buxton Hall in Freetown, GENIDA in partnership with LEGAL LINK and other relevant stakeholders successfully held a two-day consultative Conference on Internal Displacements in Sierra Leone.

The keynote speaker of the event was Dr. Aderomola Adeola, human rights expert and Director of GENIDA. Some of the participants that took part in the workshop include the Vice Chair and Executive Secretary of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Representatives from ONS, NCPD, EPA, Inter-Religious Council, the press, civil society organizations, University students and affected victims.

The workshop ended with the adoption of a draft National Action Plan on Internal Displacements and it was agreed that the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone take the lead in ensuring acceptability, compliance and implementation of same. Certificates were given to all attendees of the workshop.

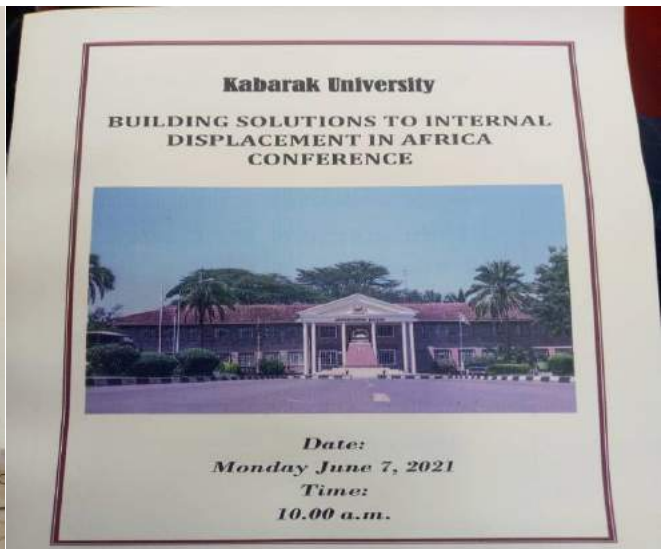


The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK wows Delegates at the GENIDA Continental Workshop on Internal Displacement in Kabarak University, Kenya

Sequel to a two -day consultative stakeholders conference held on the 5th & 6th May 2021 in Freetown by GENIDA in partnership with LEGAL LINK for the development of a National Action Plan on Internal Displacements, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK was invited to attend the GENIDA Continental Workshop on Building Solutions to Internal Displacement in Africa that took place in Kabarak University, Republic of Kenya on the 7th and 8th June, 2021.

During the formal workshop session, Rashid Dumbuya Esq did a comprehensive presentation on the subject - **“Developing a National Action Plan: Lessons from Sierra Leone.”**

Delegates from other countries like Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria etc. also presented on different topics regarding internal displacements in Africa. The workshop ended up with the adoption of a draft curriculum that provides a clear pathway as to how GENIDA would contribute in an inform way to help address internal displacement issues in Africa.



Rashid Dumbuya Esq Represents Sierra Leone at the Legal Colloquium on Internal Displacements in Africa held at Sheraton Hotel, Uganda, Kampala

On the 8th and 9th September 2021, Rashid Dumbuya Esq represented Sierra Leone at the Legal Colloquium on Internal Displacement in Africa held at Sheraton Hotel, Uganda, Kampala.

Due to COVID-19 however, Rashid Dumbuya Esq was unable to attend the Colloquium but did a virtual presentation on the topic: **“Examining the Ugandan Internal Displacement Policy as against the Kampala Convention in the light of the Frameworks for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Sierra Leone”**.

Rashid Dumbuya Esq started off his presentation by discussing the legal regimes that exist for the protection and assistance of internal displacements in Sierra Leone at the international, regional and domestic levels.



He also went further to talk shortly on the Ugandan National IDP Policy and further did a comparative analysis between the Ugandan National IDP Policy and that of the Sierra Leone National Action Plan on Internal Displacement.

Rashid Dumbuya Esq concluded his presentation by putting forward objective recommendations on how to deal with the issue of internal displacements in Uganda and Africa as a whole and the need for reform of the Kampala Convention.

Rashid Dumbuya Esq was invited to do a Presentation at the Peace and Democracy Virtual Panel Discussion Organized by the United States Embassy in Freetown

It could be recalled that on the 21st September 2021, Rashid Dumbuya Esq did a presentation at the Peace and Democracy Virtual Panel Discussion Organized by the United States Embassy in Freetown. He started off by thanking the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Freetown for inviting him to this needful discussion.



He continued to say that peace and democracy provide us with the most conducive infrastructure for entrenching sustainable development, accountable leadership, and respect for the rule of law and human rights in societies across the world. Therefore, any discussion on them must be held with the highest solemnity.

Significantly also, Rashid Dumbuya Esq submitted that LEGAL LINK Organization have been a tireless defender of peace and democracy since its inception within the civil society space in Sierra Leone. Put more simply, the Organization has conducted various panel discussions, training workshops, quiz competitions and seminars for CSO's, journalists, religious institutions and students on peace and democracy so as to liberate their minds on the need to ensure peace and democracy in the society.

He concluded his presentation by putting forward strong recommendations to the government of Sierra Leone, development partners, civil society organizations and young change makers on how peace and democracy can be sustained in Sierra Leone.

LEGAL LINK INTERVENTIONS FOR FAIR TRIAL RIGHTS OF ACCUSED PERSONS

LEGAL LINK within the period under review issued out a press statement calling on the Judiciary to grant bail to Mohamed Kamarainba Mansaray. The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK also engaged with the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone, the press and other relevant stakeholders communicating to them the organization's position as to why it is prudent and timely for bail to be granted to Mohamed Kamarainba Mansaray.

Following the granting of bail to Mohamed Kamarainba Mansaray on the 7th September 2021 by Justice Samuel Omodele Taylor, presiding judge in the case of Mohamed Kamarainba Mansaray and another holding at the Sexual Offences Model Court in Freetown has granted bail to both accused persons in the said trial, LEGAL LINK puts out a press statement notifying the public about this development. The Organization used the opportunity to summarize the bail conditions as set out for both accused persons and further thanked all the defense counsels for their relentless effort in fighting for bail for the accused persons and also all civil right activists and organizations that advocated for the granting of bail to Mohamed Kamarainba Mansaray in particular.



Significantly also, as an Organization that advocates for the fair trial rights of accused persons, and having noted the refusal by the Master & Registrar to approve the bail of Mohamed Kamarainba Mansaray after same has been granted to him long since, LEGAL LINK felt enthused on the 25th October 2021, to hold a press conference and communicate to the public 15 reasons why the actions of the Master & Registrar as well as the Chief Justice is wrong, unjust and dangerous.

The Organization used the occasion to humbly appeal that the bail granted to Kamarainba by the presiding judge be approved forthwith by the Master & Registrar and by extension the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone.

AWARD WON BY LEGAL LINK WITH THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq Receives the Advocate of the Christian Faith Awards

RASHID DUMBUYA Esq, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK was decorated with the 'Advocate of the Christian Faith Award' in 2021 by Christian bishops in the country for his outstanding legal contributions towards the religious communities in Sierra Leone.



PART THREE

EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS AND ATTACKS ON VULNERABLE GROUPS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Extrajudicial Killings at Tombo

The unrest at Tombo took place on Wednesday, 6th June 2020 just after Covid lockdown. It was reported that after authorities have instructed hundreds of youths and fishermen in the Tombo fishing community that only ten boats should head out for fishing due to COVID-19 restrictions, some youths got aggrieved and decided to take on the street, burnt tires and attacked the Tombo Police station setting it on fire.



As a consequence of the above therefore, the Sierra Leone Police decided to embark on sporadic gunfire that left two people dead and several others injured. The streets of Tombo were littered with rocks, tear gas canisters, shattered glass and smoke coming out from burnt tires. A curfew measure was invoked so as to calm down the situation. Some of the youth that were arrested during the riots were later charged to the Magistrate Court in Freetown.

Extrajudicial Killings at Makeni

On the night of the 17th July 2020 gun shots were heard throughout Makeni. This came after residents engaged in a protest against the decision of the Ministry of Energy to relocate a power generator and transformers from Makeni to Port Loko District in a bid to support the airport's operations. Residents reportedly burned tires on the streets and threw stones and rocks during the protest. It is alleged that 6 people were killed by the security forces and 56 people arrested including school kids. 13 were charged to the Magistrate Court in Freetown.



Extrajudicial Killings at Pademba Prisons (Male Corectional Centre), Freetown

The Pademba Prisons riot occurred on 29th April 2020. The riot was as a result of suspending the limited access to the few facilities accorded to the prisoners. According to sources, one of the inmates known as Tanibola was alleged to have set fire in the storerooms that left the building ablaze. He is alleged to have been tortured by correctional centre officers and/or members of the special task force.





According to reports from the Prisons authorities, after the intervention of special security forces, 31 deaths took place during the riot, including one correctional service officer and 30 inmates. Hundreds of other inmates got injured during the riot.

Extrajudicial Killings at Mile 91

On the 10th September 2020, LEGAL LINK notes with grave concern the extrajudicial killings of innocent citizens in Mile 91. Firing at an unarmed civilian in a non-military situation shows utter disregard for the human rights of the citizens of the state. The fact that the Mile 91 killings took place in an opposition stronghold makes it seem very sinister. LEGAL LINK therefore strongly condemned this unfortunate act of the SLP in using live bullets against unarmed civilians.



Extrajudicial Killings at Tonko Limba

Following the conduct of the bye-election by the National Electoral Commission in May 2020 at the Tonko Limba Chiefdom, Kambia District, a political violence ensued which led to the extrajudicial killing of a young and innocent 14 years old and two young men were also injured in Masunthu Village due to the disproportionate use of force by the SLP.

However, it was reported that the arrival of a number of youth allegedly coordinated by a 'thug' referred to as 'Adaff' during the early hours of the voting process in a blue van ignited the unrest at the time when counting of election result was on going.



LEGAL LINK strongly condemns the high-handedness and use of force by law enforcement agencies in their response to chaotic situations of this magnitude.

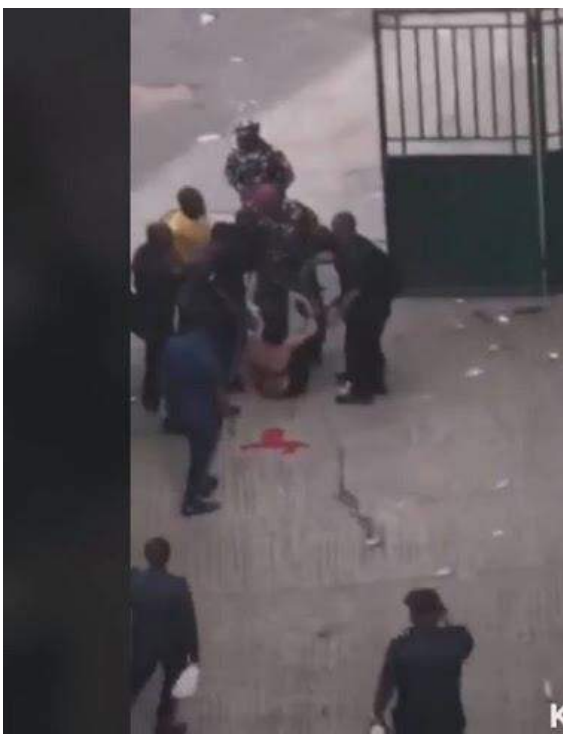
Extrajudicial Killings at Lunsar

LEGAL LINK also notes with grave concern the extrajudicial killings of innocent citizens in Lunsar, another stronghold of the opposition within the period under review. Firing at an unarmed civilian is a blatant violation of the UN Basic Principles of Use of Force and Firearms. LEGAL LINK therefore strongly condemned this unfortunate act of the SLP in using live bullets against unarmed civilians.



Police brutality and excessive use of force on unarmed student at IPAM University

Within the period under review, LEGAL LINK also notes the excessive and disproportionate use of force by the SLP on protesting students at IPAM leading to the assault and open abuse of a female student of the University. The Female student was later charged to court and Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya together with other human rights lawyer represented her and got a discharged verdict for her. LEGAL LINK later made a formal complaint to the Independent Police Complaint Board who has recently issued a report recommending that disciplinary actions be taken against all the police officers that assaulted the female student at IPAM.





As an advocacy group that is working tirelessly for the advancement of human rights and the rule of law in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK strongly condemns these extrajudicial killings and disproportionate use of force by the Sierra Leone Police against unarmed protesters.

While LEGAL LINK is not oblivious of the fact that the reaction of few disgruntled protesters in the given circumstances was uncivilized and uncalled for, it is vital however for law enforcement agencies to understand the circumstances under which they should use firearms against unarmed protesters and as enshrined within the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

PART FOUR

SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES

SUCCESS STORIES

Legal Link was very successful in all of its activities undertaken within the period under review. Discussed below are some of the success stories:

- ❖ Legal Link successfully organized a legal and compliance training for about 250 church leaders and their administrators within the year under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully commemorated the international Human Rights Day and launched its Second Annual Report.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully commemorated the International Anti-Corruption Day and launched its preliminary findings on the Corruption Watch Report.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK together with other CSOs launched the CSO Trial Monitoring Group for both the Anti-Corruption Court and the Sexual Offences Model Court in Freetown.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully held the 1st Legal Colloquium on Justice Sector Reforms and further adopted a Joint Communique regarding same. The said Communiqué has been submitted to relevant stakeholders for their attentions.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully defended and secured a discharge and an acquittal verdict on six out of eight counts charge against ***Alie Foster*** in the case of the ***State VS Alie Foster & Others*** at the High Court of Sierra Leone. In the same vein, LEGAL LINK was able to settle about **600** legal disputes through court and Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK in partnership with GENIDA successfully held a two-day stakeholders consultative conference on Internal Displacements in Sierra Leone and further adopted a National Action Plan on Internal Displacement which has been submitted to the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully represented Sierra Leone in a virtual Legal Colloquium held at the Sheraton Hotel in Uganda, Kampala on Internal Displacement in Africa.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK Wowed Delegates at the GENIDA Continental Workshop on Internal Displacement in Kenya, Kabarak University.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully partnered with other civil society organization to establish a Civil Society Working on Elections and Human Rights in Sierra Leone. This CSO working group was able to monitor and compile a report based on their findings in the Parliamentary Re-run Elections at Constituency 110 Goderich, Freetown.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully provided internship opportunities and career guidance to university students via our internship and volunteer programmes. 15 interns from both

the Fourah Bay College and the National Youth Commission successfully completed their internship at Legal Link within the period under review. Another 3 was sent by Fourah Bay College and are currently undergoing theirs.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully issued out a position statement calling on the ACC and the government to pass a law for the full protection of Whistleblowers in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully commemorated the International Women's Day by inviting prominent women to give a talk on the theme – **“Women and their Journey towards Leadership in Sierra Leone: Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects.”**
- ❖ LEGAL LINK celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in a bid to unearth the challenges faced by PWDs in a COVID-19 environment.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully made donations such as bags of rice, onions, gallons of oil and bundles of water at the King George Home for the Aged and Manaheim Children Orphanage in Grafton, Freetown.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully secured huge end of service, financial benefits and compensation for labourers within the period under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully commemorated the International Nelson Mandela Day and made huge donations such as bags of rice, onions, gallons of oil, sanitary pads, cubes of Maggie and bundles of water to female inmates at the female correctional Centre, persons with disability at Blind School and Beggars on the street of Freetown.
- ❖ Legal Link successfully operated a research, resource and library centre in its head office at 89 Fort Street Circular Freetown. University Students writing their dissertation and research work that were interested in learning more about issues of human rights and the laws of Sierra Leone were given access to the centre. A free internet facility was also provided for researchers.
- ❖ The celebration of the International Albinism Day by LEGAL LINK and their call for government to increase support for Persons living with Albinism as well as raising awareness about the relevance of such day was a huge success.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK, through its LAW FOR NON LAWYERS open education programme, successfully educated and sensitize a good number of Sierra Leoneans on some basic concepts of human rights as well on the law and justice system of the country.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully proffered legal advisory opinions to the executive and parliament of Sierra Leone before the passing into law of both the Cyber and Security Crime Act (2020), the National Commission for Peace and Social Cohesion and the Abolition of the Death Penalty Act (2021). Some of its advisory opinions were captured in these legislations.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK and CAN successfully issued out a joint press statement regarding Kamarainba and the unlawful and unprecedented suspension of the Auditor General, Lara Taylor Pearce and her deputy, Momoh Tamba.
- ❖ The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK was decorated with the Advocate of the Faith Award in 2021 for his outstanding legal contributions towards the religious communities in Sierra Leone within the period under review.
- ❖ Finally, LEGAL LINK also made relevant recommendations on strategic state issues to relevant government Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Parastatals.

CHALLENGES

Amidst the many success stories, there are some challenges that did plague and undermine the efficacy of the work of LEGAL LINK within the period under review. Discussed below is a succinct analysis of the said challenges.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK is seriously challenged with limited office space. Put more simply, LEGAL LINK does not have enough office space for clients and interns as well as staff.
- ❖ The COVID-19 restriction measures in the country gravely undermined the planned activities to be undertaken by LEGAL LINK within the period under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK is also challenged with logistics, computer and internet facilities to do its work. This has to a very large extent undermined the efficacy of the organization to deliver on its planned activities within the period under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK has no alternative source of energy besides the national electricity generated by the state. This has in many instances slowed down the pace of set tasks to be done within a particular time frame in the midst of frequent power outages.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK has limited sources of funding for its interns and volunteers working for the advancement of human rights, rule of law and constitutionality in the country. As it stands, LEGAL LINK has no predictable source of funding in a bid to remunerate its interns and volunteers.
- ❖ Lastly, LEGAL LINK is seriously challenged with funding to undertake its programmes and activities. The source of funding for most of the activities embarked upon within the period under review came largely from the Chambers of Rashid Dumbuya & Partners, voluntary donations from staff, interns, philanthropists, volunteers and founding members of LEGAL LINK. Only a few external partners supported LEGAL LINK with meagre resources within the period under review.

PART FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Listed below are significant recommendations put forward by Legal Link for the attention of all.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

- In a bid to promote democratic best practices, LEGAL LINK has put forward critical recommendations to the government in the form of an advisory opinion as to how the proposed Peace Commission can be made more independent and resilient to effectively resist political interference, manipulation and control.
- Being an advocacy group that seeks to promote accountability and the rule of law, LEGAL LINK recommends to the government to comply with its obligation under international human rights law by ensuring it respect, fulfil, protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities in a covid-19 environment.
- In its quest to making the world a better place for persons with Albinism, LEGAL LINK recommended to government for an increased support to person with Albinism especially in in the country. Also, LEGAL LINK further calls on the government and Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone to pass a specific law that will adequately protect the rights of albinism in the country.
- As part of its mandate to promote constitutionalism, due process and the rule of law, LEGAL LINK recommends that the government of Sierra Leone ensures to always respect the tenure of officials in institutions protected by the law as this is not the first time that this abrogation is being committed by the government. The illegal removal of the human rights commissioners, the ombudsman, the ACC commissioner and now the Auditor General are all bad precedents that have the proclivity to undermine democratic institutions in the country.
- In a bid to promote women's and girls' human rights, LEGAL LINK recommended to government for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission to effectively address the growing inequalities and discrimination meted against women and girls in Sierra Leone.
- Being an organization that is so passionate about peace and stability of this nation, Legal Link within the period under review put forward critical recommendations to government in a bid to dealing with the increased spate of violence, undisciplined and lawlessness in the country.
- LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone pass a law that specifically and comprehensively protects the rights of whistleblowers in Sierra Leone.

- LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone pass a law that specifically and comprehensively protects the rights of internally displaced persons in Sierra Leone.
- LEGAL LINK recommends that any attempt to replace the Auditor General will be deemed as illegal and inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution.
- LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone fully implement the National Action Plan on Internal Displacement adopted by GENIDA, LEGAL LINK and other MDA's and stakeholders in the country.
- LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone take steps so as to avoid either a reintroduction of the death penalty in the future or an outright abuse of the Abolition of the Death Penalty Act 2021 by the highest office of the land. This can be done by amending section 16 & 63 of the 1991 Constitution. The Government can further do so by signing and ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that seeks to permanently abolish the death penalty.
- LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone strengthens its good bilateral relationship with the European Union.
- LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone pass a law that specifically protects the rights of older persons in Sierra Leone.
- LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone take steps to fully implement the Joint Communiqué adopted at the Legal Colloquium on Justice Sector Reforms.
- Finally, LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone passes a law that specifically protects the rights of Human Rights Defenders in the country.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the office of the Chief Justice instructs the Master & Registrar to approve the bail of Mohamed Kamarainba Mansaray.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Chief Justice take steps to fully implement the recommendations captured in the Joint Communiqué adopted at the Legal Colloquium on Justice Sector Reforms.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

- LEGAL LINK recommends that the ACC resists the urge of selective justice in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone.
- There is also the need for the ACC to cultivate a good working relationship with whistleblowers ie Africanist Press.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT BODIES

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that election management bodies give a rethink to the EU Elections Follow-up Mission Report and further take steps to implement the recommendations therein.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that election management bodies dispense their electoral mandate with a deep sense of cosmic responsibility, moral rectitude and consistent with the electoral laws of the land.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

- ✓ LEGAL LINK recommends that civil society organizations must at all-time decry and condemn any attempt by the powers that be to attack our democratic institutions and professional public servants in Sierra Leone.
- ✓ LEGAL LINK recommends that civil society organizations stop the politicking and continue to serve as effective pressure groups and the mouthpiece of the voiceless in Sierra Leone.
- ✓ LEGAL LINK recommends that civil society organizations monitor the implementation of laws, policies and donor funds meant for the protection and promotion of the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone and make known to the public by constructive criticisms and recommendations via the media if these laws, policies and funds are disregarded from their actual purposes in promoting the rights of the vulnerable groups and the voiceless.
- ✓ LEGAL LINK recommends that civil society organizations uphold the virtues and sanctity of the inherent dignities and rights of both vulnerable and non-vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone by seeking funds in order to initiate public education/seminars on the these rights and what should citizens do if these rights are violated by state actors.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Pursuant to section 73(3) of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone, parliament is charged with the responsibility of making laws for the peace, security, order and good governance of Sierra Leone and it is on this predication LEGAL LINK makes the following recommendations:

- LEGAL LINK recommends that Parliament enact laws that will help strengthen the peace, prosperity, development and human rights of all in Sierra Leone.
- LEGAL LINK applauds the passing of the Disability Act but further recommends that Parliament establishes special committees to monitor the implementation of this Act and make report as to the challenges faced in a bid to adequately guarantee the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

- LEGAL LINK recommends that Parliament establishes special committees that will be charged with the responsibility to promote and safeguard the interests of religious communities and vulnerable groups in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

- ❖ LEGAL recommends that the Sierra Leone police and security forces adopt into their training and course structure, the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms so as to inject a culture of respect for human life in the discharge of their duties and to only use force in line with the minimum standards enshrined.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK further urges the SLP and security sectors to hold to account and bring to justice all perpetrators of extrajudicial killings within the period under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK also urges the leadership of the security forces that the recommendations of the Independent Police Complaint Board regarding police brutality and excessive use of force are fully implemented and adhered to by the police and security sector in Sierra Leone.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN SIERRA LEONE

- LEGAL LINK recommends that religious communities conform to the dictates of law within the jurisdiction. Religious communities should also have regard for the laws surrounding the leasing or purchase of realty. They should promptly and adequately register their title deeds of ownership to land in order to avoid contrary future interest (s) to such property.
- LEGAL LINK recommends that religious communities exercise the highest of respect for the rights to conscience and religion of others. In other words, they must uphold section 24 of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone which is instructive on the right to religion.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO VULNERABLE GROUPS IN SIERRA LEONE

- LEGAL LINK recommends that vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone should be energetic and knowledge driven so as to be able to successfully claim their rights when they are threatened, abused or violated.
- LEGAL LINK further recommends that vulnerable groups be more assertive in demanding respect for their rights and be also participatory in helping the government, CSO's and other international actors in promoting and protecting their rights.

CONCLUSION

Christian Lawyers Centre (LEGAL LINK) has been established to help address the above challenges and to serve as a complementary organization to on-going interventions in the country with mandate to protect and promote human rights. The report for the period under review has shown that much can be gained where there is a will to go beyond the ordinary. However, challenges still abound and LEGAL LINK acknowledges that there is still more room for improvements.

But with the full cooperation and support from all and sundry, it is hoped that LEGAL LINK together with other civil society organizations and state institutions will not only serve as a solution center but will be able to build and consolidate a culture of respect for human rights within the body politic of Sierra Leone, Africa and the world at large.

Thanks to all those who made the above happen in 2021.

TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY!

Faithfully Submitted

Rashid Dumbuya Esq.

Founder & Executive Director

For and on behalf of the Board, staff, members and interns of LEGAL LINK

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



***2021# Production**
