

LEGAL LINK

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

'DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN SIERRA LEONE'



RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY:

Executive Director and Interns of Legal Link

2019

DEDICATION

This 2020 maiden report is dedicated to all vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APC	All Peoples Congress
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
AU	African Union
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights
MRU	Mano River Union
NGC	National Grand Coalition
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLPP	Sierra Leone Peoples Party
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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FOREWORD

Today marks an important milestone in the struggle for respect for human rights the world over. The 10th of December usually referred to as INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS 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 that still exist in terms of respect and adherence to human rights ideals and obligations and further admonish them of their commitments under the International Bill of Rights; the UDHR, the ICCPR and the ICESCR respectively.

What a joy and privilege therefore it is to have LEGAL LINK celebrate its first anniversary on this great day called International Human Rights Day. A great coincidence indeed!

In **Psalm 68 Verse 5 & 6**, our 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 seize the opportunity to serve humanity in this noble field of human rights, where service is directed at making lives better particularly for victims such as disables, abused women and children, amputees, widows, ebola 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 went to pursue my second masters in Law 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. But it was not until 10th December 2018 that the organization was officially launched for full operation. And just one year on, LEGAL LINK has become a household name not just in Sierra Leone and Africa but also in other continents of the world winning awards and making tremendous impact in the lives of vulnerable groups. TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY!

In this maiden report therefore, an attempt has been made to showcase some of the key activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK in 2019/2020 as well as the successes and challenges encountered in a bid to stimulate legal and policy reforms. 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 (Interim Board Chairman)

Pastor Gift Shekune

Dr. Paolo Conteh

Mr Gbenda (President, society for the welfare of the Aged)

Rashid Dumbuya Esq (Executive Director)

Mrs Victoria Bangura (Board Secretary)

MEET THE LEGAL INTERNS & HUMAN RIGHTS VOLUNTEERS AT 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 Company is "*Defending the rights of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone*"

LOGO

The logo of the Company 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

Disables

Amputees

War Wounded

Ebola Survivors

Orphans

Abused Children

Abused Women

Older persons

Environmental Rights

Labourers Rights

Indigenous Peoples Rights

Human Rights Defenders

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SPRITUAL HEADS & MENTORS

There are 3 spiritual heads appointed to provide spiritual oversight of the company 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 company.

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 company and shall keep a list of the names of the members of the company.

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 company. Members are expected to provide voluntary services at all times and to pay a yearly subscription (which is payable monthly) fee for administrative and charitable purposes.

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

WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

Any member may withdraw from the Company by giving one Calendar months' notice in writing to the Secretary of his intention to do so and upon the expiration of the notice, he 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 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 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, covey, 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. *Beneficiaries should be a victim of injustice.*
3. *Beneficiary should show a 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.

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.

PART TWO

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY LEGAL LINK IN 2018/19

1. FORMAL LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE (LEGAL LINK)

Rashid Dumbuya Esq, together with some Christian lawyers, law students, human rights activists and philanthropists formed a company limited by guarantee called CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE (a.k.a LEGAL LINK) to help provide legal assistance, representation, professional advice and specialized legal services to the religious Community and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

This Human Rights Advocacy group was launched on Monday, 10th December 2018 at the Central Christians in Action Church, Pademba Road in Freetown. This event attracted a wide range of representatives from the religious community, civil society organisations and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone. In the words of Thomas Moore, a leading civil society activist in the country, 'the launching of LEGAL LINK heralds the dawning of a new day for the protection of the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone'.



2. DONATION TO THE AGED AT THE KING GEORGES HOME AT GRAFTON

As part of its mandate to fight for the most vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone, coupled with its quest to ensuring that the world becomes a better place for older persons, LEGAL LINK, as its first outdoor programme, embarked on a donation exercise to the Aged on Tuesday, 1st January 2019 at the KING GEORGES HOME for the Aged in Grafton

Food items such as rice, oil, onions and water were donated to the Aged at Old People's Home in Grafton, Freetown.



The leadership of the old People's home expressed delight over the food items and thanked the **LEGAL LINK** organisation for coming to their aid at a time when everyone seemed to have forgotten about them. They also expressed delight about the idea of having a law that will protect the rights of older persons in Sierra Leone and added that such gesture should not only come on New Year's Day, but rather more often in order to ameliorate their plight.

LEGAL LINK also used the occasion to advocate for the passing of a specific law that will help protect the rights of older persons in Sierra Leone.

3. LEGAL LINK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ASSOCIATION FOR PERSONS WITH ALBINISM CELEBRATES ALBINISM AWARENESS DAY IN SIERRA LEONE

On the 13th June, 2019, at the Africell American Corner in Freetown, LEGAL LINK, in partnership with the Sierra Leone Association for Persons with Albinism celebrated Albinism Awareness Day.

The event attracted a good number of Albinos the country and its main objective was to

address stereotypes and de- mystify myths surrounding persons with albinism in Sierra Leone. The event also provided an opportunity to showcase the enormous challenges faced by Persons with Albinism which include human rights violations such as physical attacks, desecration of graves, prevailing myths of witch craft, trafficking of body parts, displacement, discrimination and deprivation of the right to the highest attainable standard of health care and the right to education.

The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq gave a public lecture during the remarkable event on the theme: "Still standing strong; realising the rights of Persons with Albinism in Sierra Leone,".

Statements were also made by the president for Sierra Leone Association for Persons with Albinism together with other civil society representatives that witnessed the programme.



4. LEGAL LINK DEFENDS LABOURERS RIGHTS AND SECURES HUGE FINACIAL COMPENSATION FOR THEM

LEGAL LINK, in fulfilment of its mandate to defend labourer’s rights in the country, has secured a plethora of judgments in the High Court as well as through ADR means in which hundreds of millions of Leones were paid to casual workers as compensation and end of

service benefits.

Over 75 labourers benefitted from this intervention within the period under review.



5. LEGAL LINK CONDUCTS LEGAL AND COMPLIANCE TRAINING FOR 1000 CHURCH LEADERS AND ADMINISTRATORS IN THE EAST, CENTRAL AND WESTERN PARTS OF FREETOWN

In fulfilment of its religious and educational mandate, CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE (LEGAL LINK) has successfully conducted a comprehensive Legal and Compliance training for 1000 church leaders and their administrators in the Eastern, Central and Western Areas of Freetown, Sierra Leone respectively.

The training which took place on diverse dates and in different locations was organised 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.

In a bid to reduce on this growing number of court cases and to further broaden the horizon of church leaders regarding the laws and procedures on acquisition of land, property, real estate and treatment of staff employment issues, the Executive Director of **LEGAL LINK**, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, and team of experts facilitated the training.

Participants benefitted from key teachings such as procedures involved in the registration of churches, church acquisition of properties, staff end labour employment laws, church and court proceedings amongst other. Certificates were also given to all participants that took part in the training.



6. LEGAL LINK INVITED AT THE AFRICAN UNION'S 34TH GIMAC CONFERENCE

LEGAL LINK in 2019 received an invitation from the AFRICAN UNION to attend the 34th GIMAC Conference.

Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya Esq, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK on 1st July, 2019 represented the institution at Niger, Niamey for the **AU 34th GIMAC CONFERENCE**. The astute Human Rights Lawyer presented a very outstanding paper at the 34th Civil Society Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union and Member States.

Speaking on the Topic **"Post elections induced displacements and its impacts on Sexual Reproductive health rights of women and girls,"** Rashid Dumbuya Esq made a strong case for the African Union and its sub- Regional Organisations to develop strong laws and policies that will help tackle this emerging threat so as to help mitigate violations to women and girl's rights during post elections periods. Rashid further identified several examples of countries where post elections violence has led to internal displacements leading to violations and



abuse of women and girl's rights.

Thanks to IPAS for providing the required sponsorship that enabled Rashid's attendance to the programme.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL LINK, RASHID DUMBUYA ESQ WINS THE AFRICAN ACHIEVERS AWARDS



RASHID DUMBUYA Esq, the Executive Director of Christian Lawyers Centre (hereinafter referred to as LEGAL LINK) was decorated with an African Achievers Award in 2019 for his outstanding contributions in the field of Human Rights and the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.

8. LEGAL LINK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMONWEALTH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF SIERRA LEONE CELEBRATES COMMONWEALTH DAY



Celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the modern Commonwealth, the 60th anniversary of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK, and Commonwealth Day in Sierra Leone were organised by alumnus Rashid Dumbuya in collaboration with LEGAL LINK, and with support from the British Council.

Celebrations took the form of a public lecture on human rights and the values of the Commonwealth, with over 300 people in attendance. The public lecture was delivered by the CEO of LEGAL LINK, Rashid, a qualified international human rights lawyer. Among attendees were secondary school pupils, university students, and representatives of vulnerable groups and civil society Organisations, Commonwealth Alumni, and Legal Link volunteers. The nature of the audience represented the importance of connectivity in achieving equal representation for all groups and individuals.

The public lecture took the form of a PowerPoint presentation detailing the human rights ideals, values, and shared principles of the Commonwealth and the need to enforce compliance on the same going forward. Rashid highlighted the need for the bi-annual summit of the Heads of States within the Commonwealth to be transformed into a peer review and reporting session on the compliance of states under the Commonwealth Charter. He also called for a judicial body to be established within the Commonwealth to investigate complaints of violation of the shared values and principles enshrined in the Charter and to hold states accountable over such violations. Following the presentation, the audience endorsed the need for greater reforms within the modern Commonwealth in a bid to make this a more robust entity.

Tony Raily, Director of British Council Sierra Leone, welcomed attendees and emphasized the role of the Commonwealth and the British Council towards the educational sector in Sierra Leone. Andrew Johnson Esq, a member of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, thanked the Commonwealth on behalf of the Sierra Leone Bar Association for all the scholarship support it has provided to lawyers in Sierra Leone over the years. He further called on the law students present to take advantage of the available opportunities to further their studies and come back to support the country.

President for the Society for the Welfare of the Aged, Mr Gbenga thanked the Commonwealth for the educational support provided to the children of the aged and emphasized on how this support has contributed to the increased life span of older generations. As part of his presentation he called on the Commonwealth not to forget the welfare of the aged and to lobby the government of Sierra Leone to pass laws that will protect the rights and welfare of the aged.

Pastor Gift, a representative of the inter-religious council of Sierra Leone, commended the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK for the educational support provided to the students of Sierra Leone. He called on the wider Commonwealth not to forget the Inter-religious Council in terms of specialized training and support.

LEGAL LINK CELEBRATES NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY BY FEEDING THE POOR AND MAKING DONATIONS TO THE FEMALE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

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.

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 around the world and a mentor to many human rights activists across the world.

The UN Resolution A/RES/64/13 identifies Mandela's values and his devotion to the services of humanity in conflict resolution; race relations; promotion and protection of human rights; reconciliation; gender equality and the rights of children and other vulnerable groups; the fight against poverty and the promotion of social justice.

On this memorable day, LEGAL LINK donated food items such as rice and water to persons with disabilities and beggars on the streets of Freetown. Later in the day, the organization also donated bags of rice, water and sanitary pads to female inmates in the Sierra Leone Correctional Centre at Brookfields, Freetown.

9. JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE BETWEEN LEGAL LINK AND CAN REGARDING THE CANCELLATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY RE-RUN ELECTIONS IN CONSTITUENCY 110 BY NEC

On the 30th August 2019, LEGAL LINK in partnership with CAN organized a joint press conference at the SLAJ Headquarters in response to NEC's decision to cancel the parliamentary rerun elections in constituency 110.



It could be recalled that on the 25th of August 2019, the National Returning Officer of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) cancelled the re-run Parliamentary election of Constituency 110 due to the violence that occurred in one of the polling centres comprising of 10 polling stations in which ballot boxes were destroyed together with other election materials.

In the opinion of NEC, such incident seriously undermined the integrity and credibility of the electoral process for which they believe a cancellation of the entire Parliamentary election was necessary.

LEGAL LINK as a first step wrote an open letter to the Chief Electoral Commissioner of NEC, requesting him to show the extant law that supports his decision to cancel the entire Parliamentary re-run election held on the 24th August 2019 at Constituency 110.

The failure of the NEC boss to give a convincing reply led to the summoning of a JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE by CAN and LEGAL LINK where they called on NEC in a press statement to overturn its cancellation decision and pronounce a winner in the Constituency 110 parliamentary re-run election.



10. RASHID DUMBUYA Esq. CROWNED AS ENVIRONMENTAL LEGAL PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR 2019

SHOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AFRICA, a leading environmental organisation in Africa, in commemoration of their annual Environmental

Care Awards has given this year's Environmental Legal Practitioner Award to lawyer Rashid Dumbuya, Executive Director of LEGAL LINK. According to **SHOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AFRICA**, this decision was reached by the award governing body based on the fact that the Human Rights Activist has strong expertise in Environmental Impact Assessments projects, strategic impact and public interest litigations, human rights and the extractive industries, project planning development, research and advocacy.

During his tenure as Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, lawyer Rashid helped to increase the effective monitoring of over 30 Mining and Agro based

industries operating within the extractive industry in Sierra Leone.

Rashid has also recently published the LEGAL RASH SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ACTION PLAN FOR SIERRA LEONE in a bid to incentivise the use of sustainable energy within the energy mix in Sierra Leone.

Apart from legal representation on climate issues, LEGAL LINK is currently working on a Model contract for Sierra Leone that will effectively handle the challenges of decommissioning and post- decommissioning liability in onshore and offshore operations.



11. LEGAL LINK HELPS FOUR JOURNALISTS SECURE A DISCHARGE VERDICT IN THE MAGISTRATE COURT No 2 AT PADEMBA ROAD, FREETOWN



LEGAL LINK successfully secured a discharge verdict for four leading Journalists in Sierra Leone who were standing trial at the Magistrate Court No 2, Pa Demba Road, Freetown on various criminal charges.

Based on the legal representation provided by LEGAL LINK through its Executive Director, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, the four emigos who had been attending the Court proceedings for over two months, walked out of the Court on the 15th of November 2019 as freemen, discharged on all counts by the Magistrate.

12. FIVE INTERNS FROM THE PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES DEPARTMENT, FBC COMPLETES THEIR INTERNSGHIP AT LEGEL LINK



Having gone through training on Democracy, Human rights advocacy, constitutionality and the Rule of law at the Christian Lawyers Centre (a.k.a LEGAL LINK), five interns have expressed their satisfaction on the mentorship received from Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya and staff of the aforesaid institution.

The five interns, Meshella B.Samura, Adama Deen Sesay, Elizabeth Ama Osei, Mohamed Foday Barrie and Ibrahim Sorie Kamara expressed gratitude to the LEGAL LINK administration for granting them the opportunity to learn about issues ranging from human rights, advocacy, research, court monitoring, public interest litigations to prisons watch amongst many others.

Speaking during the Farewell ceremony on Friday, 6th September 2019 at the LEGAL LINK Head Office at Fort Street in Freetown, one of the interns, Meshella Samura, on behalf of her colleagues expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the CEO, Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya and the Board of Directors of Legal Link for helping them develop the relevant skills in human rights advocacy as students of the Peace and Conflict Department, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone.

She said that as Peace Scholars, they have acquired the relevant expertise in advocating for the less privileged in society.

Miss Samura also stated that they have further learnt many legal issues such as how should the police respond to violence in a democratic environment, skills in conflict resolution, and the relevance of networking with other organizations that have similar visions on issues of human rights and the advancement of public interest litigations in the country.

Responding to the interns during the Farewell Ceremony, the Executive Director and Founder of LEGAL LINK, Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya said that he is expecting the interns to become Peace Ambassadors, having acquired the relevant skills in human rights advocacy from the Centre.

He admonished them to stand up and be a voice of conscience for the less privileged in society such as Ebola Survivors, the aged, indigenous people, religious communities, disables, orphans, amputees, war wounded, abused children and women among others.

One of the founding partners of LEGAL LINK, Thomas Moore Conteh also expressed satisfaction over the performance of the interns and admonished them to stand for peace, democracy and rule of law in society.

13. LEGAL LINK AND THE NATIONAL DISABLED WOMEN'S FORUM CELEBRATE THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

LEGAL LINK in partnership with the NATIONAL DISABLED WOMEN'S FORUM has

successfully celebrated this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities at the Africell American Corner, Barthurst Street, in the Western area of Freetown, Sierra Leone.

The event which took place on the 3rd of December 2019 focused on the theme: ***"The future of Disabled women is accessible"***. Over 150 disabled women were in attendance representing various disability groups in Sierra Leone.

The interim president of the National Disabled Women's Forum highlighted some of the key challenges affecting disabled women in the country.

A remarkable guest lecture was also given by lawyer Rashid Dumbuya on the topic:

"Overcoming the challenges of accessibility affecting Persons with Disabilities in Sierra Leone"

In his delivery, lawyer Rashid Dumbuya thanked the government of Sierra Leone for signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and for enacting the Disability Act and setting up a Disability Commission to superintend over the affairs of persons with Disabilities in the country.



14. LEGAL LINK ORGANIZES THE 1ST INTER-SECONDARY SCHOOL QUIZ COMPETITION ON THE LAWS AND JUSTICE SYSTEM OF SIERRA LEONE



In a bid to inculcate good moral behaviours amongst secondary School pupils and further broaden their academic horizon on the laws and justice system of Sierra Leone, Christian Lawyers Centre hereinafter referred to as LEGAL LINK has successfully conducted the 1st Inter- Secondary School QUIZ competition on the laws and justice system in Sierra Leone.

Eight Schools were selected to participate in the pilot phase but only four were able to go through the auditioning exercise successfully. These schools include the Sierra Leone Grammar School, King Fahad Islamic Secondary School, Beacon High school and Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood. The quiz competition was hosted live at Star TV and the elimination series took place on Saturday, 23rd November 2019.

During the elimination series, Sierra Leone Grammar School defeated Muslim Brotherhood and proceeded to the finals while Beacon High school routed King Fahad Islamic secondary school and also proceeded to the finals. On the 30th of November 2019, King Fahad and Muslim Brotherhood battled for the third position and King Fahad emerged victorious winning a consolation PRIZE of le 500,000.

The battle for the first position was between Sierra Leone Grammar School and Beacon High School and indeed it was a real clash of the titans. But despite the heated battle, Sierra Leone Grammar School narrowly edged Beacon High School at the final rounds of the quiz and took home the star PRIZE of le 1,500,000.

Beacon High School, the runners up, took home the second PRIZE of le 1, 000,000 while the best quizzier prize and best behaved school prize went to the Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood. It was indeed a successfully quiz competition and many dignitaries, secondary school authorities and viewers have appealed to LEGAL LINK for such to be repeated next year and in a wider dimension so as to incorporate many schools including those from the provinces.

15. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL LINK RECEIVES THE PRESTIGIOUS DIASPORA FOCUS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS 2019 FOR PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW IN SIERRA LEONE



DIASPORA FOCUS awarded LEGAL LINK with the NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS 2019 for their outstanding work in the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law in Sierra Leone



16. LEGAL LINK MAKES DONATIONS TO BLIND SCHOOL AND THE MANAHEM ORPHANAGE HOME IN GRAFTON





LEGAL LINK in fulfilment of its mandate to seek the welfare of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone made donations to BLIND SCHOOL and the MANAHEM ORPHANAGE HOME in Grafton. Several food items such as rice, cooking oil, onions, sugar, milk, water and pampas and used clothes were distributed to these vulnerable groups.

PART THREE

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

Success Stories

LEGAL LINK as an organization was very successful in all aspects of its core mandate within the period under review.

Some of the successes are listed below:

- ❖ LEGAL LINK organized three legal and compliance trainings for about 1000 church leaders and their administrators within the year under review. The training was organised to help reduce the increasing rate of court cases and to further broaden the knowledge base of church leaders and administrators regarding the laws on acquirement of land, property, real estates and dealing with staff employment issues.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully mediated over 250 potential litigation matters, involving pastors, the aged, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups like ebola survivors, albinos, abused women, war wounded, and amputees and among others.

- ❖ Under public litigation interest, Legal Link successfully defended Journalists before the IMC that were accused of violating the libel law and media code of practice in the country.
- ❖ Also, LEGAL LINK secured a High Court Judgment in a labour case that concerns one PAUL Bangura, a casual worker of LEOCEM, Sierra Leone's leading Cement Company. Millions of leones were paid to him in the form of terminal benefits and other emoluments.
- ❖ The same is also true for 75 other casual workers who received their terminal benefits, Nassit contributions and other emolument from their various employees as a result of LEGAL LINK's intervention.
- ❖ Also, Legal link secured a discharged verdict for four journalist defendants in the matter between Pa Momoh Fofanah Esq, Vs Sallieu Jalloh & 3 others at Magistrate Court No 2, Pa Demba Road, Freetown.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully mediated the case between Justice Miatta Samba and Mamoud Tim, who was charged on 44 counts at the Magistrate Court No.1 Pademba Road. Though the matter was committed to the HIGH COURT, with the settlement efforts that was made by LEGAL LINK on behalf of the accused, it is clear that the matter may never come up at the HIGH COURT for trial.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK also made relevant recommendations on strategic state issues to relevant government Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Parastatals. The first being to NEC on its decision to cancel Parliamentary Re-run Elections at Constituency 110. Recommendations were also made to the Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB) against Police Brutality and Excessive Use of Force on Students of Njala University, Bo Campus, Southern Sierra Leone, and the SLP itself regarding compensations for the use of excessive force.
- ❖ Legal opinions were also made by LEGAL LINK to the state on what steps to consider when removing public servants with secured job tenures from office etc.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK's open letter of Appeal to the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone to pay all ex- civil and public servants their end of service benefits and other emoluments was adhered to by the Office of the President through the Minister of Finance.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK's celebration of Albinism Awareness Day and their engagement in awareness raising on the rights of Persons with Albinism was a huge success.
- ❖ Celebration of NELSON MANDELA DAY and the feeding of the poor and donation to

female inmates at the Freetown Correctional Centre was mind-blowing.

- ❖ Through, the renowned LAW FOR NON LAWYERS programme, a good number of professionals, (doctors, accountants, pastors, researchers and students) have been educated on some basic concepts of the law and human rights.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK also operates a research and library centre at 89 Fort Street for university students who are interested in learning more about issues of human rights and the law.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK have also successfully provided internship opportunities and career guidance to university students via our internship and volunteer programmes. Five students from the Peace and Conflict Department, Fourah Bay College successfully completed their internship at LEGAL LINK in September 2019. Another 5 sent by the Youth Commission are currently undergoing theirs at LEGAL LINK.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK has also been successful in the promotion of gender equality, defending the rights of persons with disabilities, abused women and girls, the aged, casual ex workers, human rights defenders, religious communities through advocacy, legal education, public interest litigation and lobbying for policy ad legal reforms.
- ❖ Three prestigious awards were also won by LEGAL LINK's Executive Director (RASHID DUMBUYA ESQ) within the period under review. The first being, the AFRICAN ACHIEVERS AWARDS, the second being, The ENVIRONMENTAL LEGAL PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR AWARDS and the third being, THE DISAPORA FOCUS NATIONAL DEVELOPMET AWARDS.
- ❖ In applauding President Julius Maada Bio's interim protective measures and directives on rape and sexual penetration, **LEGAL LINK** however urged the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and the Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone to ensure that the Sexual Offences Act is amended accordingly so that the punishment for Rape and sexual penetration as pronounced by His Excellency will be in tandem with domestic and international law. This was subsequent done during the period under review

CHALLENGES

- Limited office space, Legal Link do not have enough space for client.
- Legal Link shares toilet with four different offices
- Legal Link location is sometimes difficult to find.

- Legal Link office space is congested leading to a non- peaceful environment
- Legal Link has Logistic, computer and internet problems
- Legal Link have no power back up when light is gone.
- Unfunded internship and volunteer programmes
- Lack of funding: The source of funding for most of the activities embarked upon within the period under review came largely from voluntarily donations from staff, volunteers and founding members of LEGAL LINK.

PART FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

As an advocacy organisation defending the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in society, Christian Lawyers Centre (Legal Link) has been making silent recommendations to government on issues relating to the promotion and protection of human rights and behaviours that infringe on the rights of people in society.

Below are listed a number of significant recommendations for the attention of all.

Recommendation to NEC on its decision to cancel Parliamentary Re-run Elections at Constituency 110.

In August, 2019, Legal Link wrote an open letter to the Chief Electoral Commissioner of NEC, requesting him to show the extant law that supports his decision to cancel the entire Parliamentary re- run election held on the 24th August 2019 at Constituency 110.

The failure to provide convincing answers, Legal Link in partnership with CAN called a press conference AND MADE STRONG APPEALS to NEC to overturn its cancellation decision. LEGAL LINK still maintains this position and call on NEC not to proceed with another re-run elections but to pronounce the winners of the elections.

Recommendation to government on issues related to the rights of Albinos in Sierra Leone

LEGAL LINK joined the Sierra Leone Association for Persons with Albinism in calling on the government of Sierra Leone to adopt and implement the Regional Action Plan on Albinism in Africa as well as the newly adopted resolution by the Pan African Parliament to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of attacks on persons with albinism and further ensure effective education and awareness training on the human rights of people with albinism.

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. Legal Link continues to call on the government to ensure that victims and members of their families have access to appropriate remedies.

Recommendation to African Union and sub- Regional Organisations on Post elections induced displacements and its impacts on Sexual Reproductive health rights of women and girl

Speaking on Post elections induced displacements and its impacts on *Sexual Reproductive health rights of women and girls* during the **AU 34th GIMAC CONFERENCE**, the astute legal luminary on behalf of Legal Link made a strong call for the African Union and sub- Regional Organisations to develop procedures and laws that will help tackle such emerging intimidation to women and girls rights in the continent. LEGAL LINK stands by this call.

Recommendation to the Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB) against Police Brutality and Excessive Use of Force on Students of Njala University, Bo Campus, Southern Sierra Leone.

LEGAL LINK calls on the Chairman of the Independent Police Complaint Board to mount up an independent, robust, credible and speedy investigations into the numerous videos and documentary evidences depicting police brutality and excessive use of force against harmless students of the Njala University in Bo, Southern Sierra Leone and make appropriate recommendations and findings.

Recommendation to the state on what steps to consider when removing public servants with secured job tenures from office

In the period under review, the Legal Link gave recommendations to the government of Sierra Leone on how to remove a public servant with secured tenure from office in a more humane, respectful and dignified manner, emphasising on the fact that public servants with secured tenures should be left to complete their tenures without any political interference, manipulation or control. Such recommendation was made via a letter to the state and we still stand by this recommendation.

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 exists to defend the rights of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone through public interest litigations and advocacy for legal and policy reforms in the country. In light of the above, Legal Link urged Government to pass a law that protects older persons in Sierra Leone and improve their wellbeing at the King George old people's home, Grafton in Freetown.

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.

CONCLUSION

Christian Lawyers Centre (LEGAL LINK) has been established to help address the above challenges and to serve as a complementarity organization to other on-going interventions in protecting and promoting the rights of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

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 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 centre but also be able to build 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 2019.

TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY!

Faithfully Submitted

Rashid Dumbuya Esq

Founder & Executive Director

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10TH DECEMBER 2019
