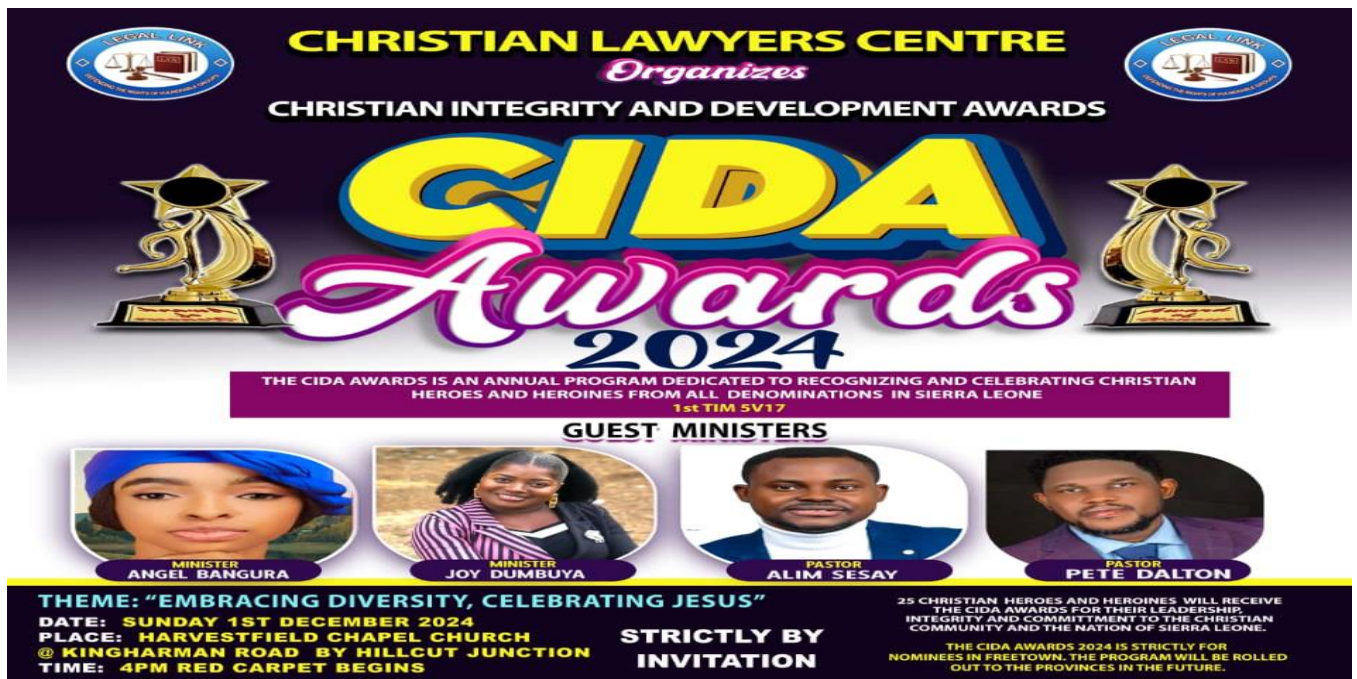


LEGAL LINK

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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



CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE
Organizes
CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY AND DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

CIDA Awards 2024

THE CIDA AWARDS IS AN ANNUAL PROGRAM DEDICATED TO RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING CHRISTIAN HEROES AND HEROINES FROM ALL DENOMINATIONS IN SIERRA LEONE
1st TIM 5V17

GUEST MINISTERS

MINISTER ANGEL BANGURA
MINISTER JOY DUMBUYA
PASTOR ALIM SESAY
PASTOR PETE DALTON

THEME: "EMBRACING DIVERSITY, CELEBRATING JESUS"
DATE: SUNDAY 1ST DECEMBER 2024
PLACE: HARVESTFIELD CHAPEL CHURCH @ KINGHARMAN ROAD BY HILLCUT JUNCTION
TIME: 4PM RED CARPET BEGINS

STRICTLY BY INVITATION

25 CHRISTIAN HEROES AND HEROINES WILL RECEIVE THE CIDA AWARDS FOR THEIR LEADERSHIP, INTEGRITY AND COMMITMENT TO THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND THE NATION OF SIERRA LEONE.
THE CIDA AWARDS 2024 IS STRICTLY FOR NOMINEES IN FREETOWN. THE PROGRAM WILL BE ROLLED OUT TO THE PROVINCES IN THE FUTURE.



RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY:

The Executive Director and Interns of LEGAL LINK
2024

DEDICATION

This 2024 Annual report is dedicated to all vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.



A 2024 MEDIA PRODUCTION

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AU	African Union
CAN	Citizens Advocacy Network
CIDA	Christian Integrity and Development Awards
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
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
ECSL	Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone
NCPD	National Commission for Persons with Disability
ONS	Office of National Security
PPRC	Political Parties Registration Commission
PWD	Persons with Disability
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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FOREWORD

The 10th of December every year marks the official anniversary of LEGAL LINK. Coincidentally also, the 10th of December is referred to as **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**. It is a day 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. Such a day is also celebrated to remind states of the numerous challenges regarding adherence to human rights obligations and commitments under International Human Rights Law. What a joy and privilege to have LEGAL LINK celebrate its anniversary every year 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 in my heart. 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 also 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 six 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 **sixth annual report** therefore, an attempt has been made to showcase some of the key activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK in the year 2024 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. WE ARE 6 TODAY! CONGRATULATIONS!

MEET THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF LEGAL LINK



Rashid Dumbuya Esq.



Thomas Moore Conteh Esq



Morlai Conteh Esq



Pst. Paul Ken Bockarie



Mrs. Shyryl Joy Dumbuya



Andrew Johnson Esq.

MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF LEGAL LINK

Paul Ken Bockarie (Board Chairman)

Rashid Dumbuya Esq (Executive Director)

Pastor Kumba Ganda (Pst. Kuku)

Morlai Conteh Esq

Rev. Morsay

Pastor Edward Kai Josiah

Miss Francess Sellu (Acting Board Secretary)

MEET SOME OF THE LEGAL INTERNS & HUMAN RIGHTS VOLUNTEERS AT LEGAL LINK





A CROSS SECTION PAST 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

Laborer’s Rights

Prisoners’ Rights

Indigenous Peoples Rights

Human Rights Defenders

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SPIRITUAL 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 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 composed 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 composed 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 paralegals, 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. *Beneficiaries should fall under the categories of the vulnerable groups listed above.*
2. *Beneficiaries should be victims of injustice.*
3. *Beneficiaries 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 2024.

PART TWO

ACTIVITIES AND INTERVENTIONS IN SUPPORT OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN SIERRA LEONE IN 2024

LEGAL LINK, as part of its religious mandate, undertook many activities in 2024 with a view to train, award, advocate, represent and defend the rights of religious communities in Sierra Leone. Listed below are the activities undertaken in 2024:

1. LEGAL LINK Conducts Legal and Compliance Training for 130 Church Leaders and Administrators in Freetown

In line with its Christian education mandate, LEGAL LINK on the 28th of March, 2024 successfully conducted legal and compliance training for about 130 Church Pastors and administrators in Freetown.

The training which was hosted at the Zion Praise Church, discussed highly critical legal compliance issues bothering on the law. The overarching objective of the intensive and mind-blowing training was to help broaden the horizon of church leaders and administrators on the area of the law and key legal compliance issues as they operate within and outside of the jurisdiction of Sierra Leone.

The training ended at 5pm with prayers for members of LEGAL LINK and certificates of participation were distributed to all participants that attended the training.





2. LEGAL LINK Conducts Legal and Compliance Training for over 200 Church Leaders and Administrators in Waterloo, Western Rural District

On the 25th May 2024 at the New Apostolic Church Waterloo, LEGAL LINK successfully conducted legal and compliance training for over 200 Church Pastors and Administrators in Waterloo, Western Rural District.

The objective of this impactful training was to help broaden the horizon of church leaders and administrators on the area of the law and key legal compliance issues as they operate within and outside of the jurisdiction of Sierra Leone.

The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, used the occasion to intimate the plenary that the training was a proactive step aimed at reducing the devastating statistics of court cases against churches and pastors in Sierra Leone and to also mitigate the embarrassment faced by the Body of Christ whenever a Pastor comes in conflict with the law.

At the end of the training, certificates were given to all attendees of the programme.



3. LEGAL LINK Conducts Legal and Compliance Training for over 400 Church Leaders and Administrators in the Provinces

In line with its educational mandate, LEGAL LINK has successfully conducted legal and compliance training for over 400 Church Pastors and Administrators in both Kono district and Bombali district (Makeni) respectively.

The training which was held on Wednesday 2nd October (for Kono District) and Thursday, 3rd October, 2024 (for Bombali District, Makeni) discussed highly critical legal compliance issues bothering on the law and the legal system of Sierra Leone.

Regarding the training in Kono, it was hosted by the Assembly of God church situated at Konomanyie Street, Koidu city while the training at Makeni was hosted by the Flaming Bible Church situated at Alex Street, off Ladies Mile, Makeni city.

The objective of the legal compliance training was to help broaden the horizon of church leaders and administrators in the area of the law and key legal compliance issues as they operate within and outside of the jurisdiction of Sierra Leone.

The Executive Director of Christian Lawyers Centre (LEGAL LINK), Rashid Dumbuya Esq, during the trainings, intimated the plenary that the call to be a pastor is a glorious call and they should be proud of themselves to have been privileged by God to be called into such prestigious office. Conversely however, lawyer Rashid stressed that the pastoral call is one that demands responsibility, orderliness, legal compliance and sacrifice.









4. LEGAL LINK Organizes its Maiden CIDA Awards to Recognize and Celebrate Christian Heroes and Heroines within the Body of Christ in Sierra Leone

In an effort to celebrate and recognize Christian Brethren who have exemplified integrity and made significant contributions to the development of the Body of Christ in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully organized its maiden edition of the Christian Integrity and Development Awards (CIDA Awards) at the Harvestfield Chapel Church.

Held on the 1st December 2024, the event brought together diverse groups of Christian heroes and heroines to openly honor and decorate them with the CIDA Awards. The Theme for the event was "Embracing Diversity, Celebrating Jesus."

The CIDA Awards is an annual event dedicated to recognizing and celebrating Christian heroes and heroines from diverse denominations who have exemplified a life of integrity, love, commitment, leadership and dedication towards the unification of the Body of Christ while making significant contributions to the development of Sierra Leone.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the CIDA Awards, which were given in four categories. Each award recipient was selected based on their commitment to Christian principles and dedication to making a positive impact on society. The winners were decorated with the CIDA Awards for their outstanding accomplishments.

One of the recipients of the Life Time Achievement Award was Rev Dr. Canon Modupeh Taylor Pearce, a dedicated Christian servant of God who has made immense contribution to advancing the Body of Christ for the past 30 years in Sierra Leone. Receiving the award, Rev. Pearce shed tears of joy while admonishing Christian brethren to always demonstrated love for one another. The goal of the CIDA Awards is to incentivize Christian unto good works.









5. LEGAL LINK Condemns Unlawful Restriction of Religious Freedoms and Movement in Kenema District

As a legal based organization with a mandate to defend the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK followed with keen interest the plethora of concerns that have been raised by the Christian brethren in Kenema District over a proposed traditional procession ceremony by the Kayndu devil / Bondo society scheduled for Sunday 19th May 2024 and its tendency to affect the freedom of movement of Christians to their churches and worship centres on that day.

LEGAL LINK issued a press statement condemning any attempt to violate the Constitutional rights of Christians to move freely to their churches and religious centers and worship their God on that fateful day. On the same level, we appeal to all Christians in Kenema not to be afraid or timid but remain law abiding and exercise their religious rights and freedoms with a deep sense of cosmic responsibility and moral rectitude.

6. Chief Minister Apologizes after LEGAL LINK's Intervention regarding his malicious characterization and gaslighting Statement against the Religious Community in Sierra Leone

LEGAL LINK, within the period under review, was deeply troubled by the malicious characterization and gaslighting statement made by Moinina David Sengeh against religious institutions in a national programme and in the capacity as Chief Minister of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

As the leading legal-based Organization that defends the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in the country, LEGAL LINK takes great exception to this unfortunate statement from the Chief Minister and demanded an urgent retraction and public apology from him to the religious community in Sierra Leone. The Chief later apologized to the religious community in Sierra Leone over his unfortunate statements.



7. Christian Lawyers Centre Embarks on an Outreach tour to the Logos Hope Ship and engages in Panel Discussions and Worship Sessions on board the Ship

Within the period under review, **Christian Lawyers Centre hereinafter referred to as LEGAL LINK** paid a working visit to the Logos Hope Ship and crew and also engaged in panel discussions and worship sessions on board the Ship.

The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq who was recently appointed as Board Member of OM/ LOGUS HOPE did participate in the panel discussions and explained to the plenary about the services offered by Christian Lawyers Centre to religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

According to lawyer Rashid, the coming of the Logos Hope ship to Sierra Leone is a big blessing to all and further affords a unique opportunity for the Christian Community in particularly to purchase cheap Christian books and literatures and forge strategic partnerships and collaborations for community support and evangelism.

It is important to note that the Logos Hope ship is the largest floating book fair in the world with Over 5,000 different books and literatures and about 350 people volunteers from 70 different Nationalities across the world. It aims to share knowledge, help, and hope. It promotes education and cultural understanding by offering a vast floating bookstore and

organizing community outreach programs. Additionally, it engages in community projects, while also sharing a Message of faith and hope.

After a conducted tour of the Ship and Book fair, some few members of LEGAL LINK also joined the worship and entertainment sessions at the Cafeteria of the Ship blessing the lives of visitors and crew members with spiritual songs. The LEGAL LINK team had lots of fun onboard the ship and also enjoyed the meals and ice cream sold on a cost recovery basis on board the ship.







8. Christian Lawyers Centre Launches 'The Christian and the Law' Radio Program at Flaming Voice of Hope Radio Station

Within the period under review, Christian Lawyers Centre launches the Christian and the Law Radio Program. The rationale for the radio program is to broaden the legal horizon of pastors, church leaders and administrators about the law and ultimately prevent them from being in conflict with the law as they carry out their day to day activities within the state.

The program seeks to entertain legal questions from the Christian Community on the laws and justice system so as to give clarity and increase their understanding of diverse subject matter and complex issues bothering on the law.

The program was moderated by Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya and team and it took place on many Sundays from 7:30 pm to 9pm at the Flaming Voice of Hope Radio FM 93.7 under the auspices of the Flaming Bible Church and His Grace, Bishop Dr Abu Koroma, the General Overseer of the Flaming Bible Church.

CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE
LEGAL LINK
Organizes

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE LAW
A Live Radio phone-in-program that educates Christians about the law

@ Flaming Voice of Hope Radio FM 93.7
Every Sunday from 8pm to 10pm

HOST
BISHOP DR. FREDERICK ABU KOROMA

PRESENTERS
LAWYER RASHID DUMBUYA & TEAM

"Ignorance of the law excuses no man"

PART THREE

ACTIVITIES AND INTERVENTIONS IN SUPPORT OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN SIERRA LEONE IN 2024

9. LEGAL LINK Launches the Security Watch Quarterly Newsletter Report on the use of Force and Firearms in Sierra Leone

Christian Lawyers Centre (hereinafter referred to as LEGAL LINK) on Thursday, 1st February 2024 at its headquarters in Freetown successfully launched the "Security Watch" Quarterly Newsletter initiative.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, affirmed that the "Security Watch" Quarterly Newsletter initiative is not a witch-hunt but a clarion call for law enforcement agencies to understand that impunity has no place in modern day democracy and that law enforcement officials must be held accountable for wrong and excessive use of force in the discharge of their duties. He added further that this initiative would serve the purpose of being an independent security fact-finding and fact-checking hub in the country.

Participants who were in attendance expressed their institution's willingness to complement LEGAL LINK's effort to achieve this initiative and cautioned that LEGAL LINK display professionalism and objective in the writing of the security watch newsletter.





10. LEGAL LINK Celebrates Valentine's Day with Orphans and the Aged at Grafton, Freetown

In a heartwarming gesture aimed at spreading love and compassion, LEGAL LINK on Wednesday, 14th February 2024, extended its caring hand by donating food items worth millions of Leones to the Old People's Home and the Manaheim orphanage in Grafton, Freetown. The event was organized as part of LEGAL LINK's annual Valentine's Day celebration seeking to uplift the spirits of the less privileged in society.

The leadership of both the Old People's Home and Manaheim Children Orphanage expressed delight over the food items and gifts presented, and thanked LEGAL LINK for coming to their aid at a time when everyone seemed to have forgotten about them.

The programme ended with prayers and beautiful songs of appreciation from the old people living in the Old People's Home at Grafton.



11. LEGAL LINK Plays Host to the First Sierra Leone Law Conference Held at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone

In a well-attended ceremony by representatives from the four colleges offering law programs in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK on Thursday 29th February 2024, successfully hosted the first Sierra Leone Law Conference, which took place at the Multi- Purpose Hall, FBC.

According to lawyer Rashid Dumbuya, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, the purpose of the Law Conference was to hold a public dialogue on the theme: "Towards the harmonization

of standards, admissions, curriculum and grading systems within Universities offering law courses and exploring new employment opportunities for legal practitioners in Sierra Leone.”

The 2024 Law Conference ended with a question and answer session and light refreshment was also served to the audience. It was agreed by all at the end of the Sierra Leone Law Conference that the conversation on harmonization of standards must continue and that law Universities across the country must take the message to their constituencies and make a strong case for reforms.







LEGAL LINK

Organizes

SIERRA LEONE LAW CONFERENCE -2024

THEME:

“Towards Harmonization of Standards,
Admissions, Curriculum & Gradings within Universities
offering Law Courses and exploring Employment
Opportunities for Legal Practitioners in Sierra Leone.”

Speakers:



Justice. Dr. Binneh Kamara
Dean, Faculty of Law-FBC



Amadu Justice Bah
Director, Imatt College



Dr. Abu Bakarr Bangura
Director, Law School



Thomas Moore Conteh Esq.
Executive Director, CAN



Rashid Dumbuya Esq.
Executive Director, LEGAL LINK

And other Speakers from UNIMAK & NJALA Universities in Sierra Leone

Place: Multi-Purpose Hall, FBC. Date: Thursday 29th February, 2024. Time: 10am

12. Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya Gives a Resounding Speech at the Celebration of the International Women's Day Organized by Freetown Terminal (Africa Global Logistics) at the Queen Elizabeth 11 Water Quay Port

On the 8th March 2024, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, gave a resounding speech at the celebration of the International Women's Day. In his speech, Lawyer Rashid started by saying that Businesses and corporations do not have an obligation to respect Human Rights. It is the State that does carry such an obligation under International Human Right law to respect, protect, fulfill and promote rights. He therefore salutes the effort of Africa Global Logistics in making time to commemorate the International Women's Day. This is a true manifestation and applicability of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

According to Mr. Dumbuya, he rightly asserted that in the UN Guiding Principles, Businesses have a responsibility to respect human rights. In doing so, business organizations must know and show that they are respecting human rights

He concluded by saying that the commemoration of the International Women's Day is indeed a clear signpost that Freetown Terminal (Africa Global Logistics) is not only knowledgeable about human rights but is also showing that it truly respect Human Rights as required by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.







11. LEGAL LINK Writes the University of Makeni on behalf of Affected Law Students

Within the period under review, LEGAL LINK received several complaints from about 16 affected students from the University of Makeni alleging that the University Administration has taken steps to disqualify them from being a part of the March 2024 Graduation Ceremony.

As an organization that defends the rights of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone including deprived students, LEGAL LINK was deeply concerned with this move intended to be undertaken by the UNIMAK Administration and its untended consequences to the future of this hardworking students and their poor families. While LEGAL LINK noted the existence of a student handbook with a “no reference policy” for year three and four students, the Organization maintained that such a policy has not been consistently implemented since the inception of the UNIMAK institution.

The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK holds the view that the outright cavalier attitude and inconsistent behaviour of the administration and the exams office in not enforcing the strict adherence to the no reference rule is perhaps the true reason why such abrogation have persisted in the said University. With LEGAL LINK intervention and advocacy, the University Administration has seen the need to revisit the policy and affected students have been allowed to graduate. After a long protracted legal battle in which the University was taken to the High Court, an out of court settlement was reached that led to the release of the results of affected students including Precious Thomas, one of the legal interns at LEGAL LINK. She was also later admitted at the Sierra Leone Law School.



Precious Thomas at UNIMAK Graduation Ceremony



Precious Thomas at the Sierra Leone Law School

12. LEGAL LINK Organizes the First National Kush Liberation Conference in Sierra Leone

LEGAL LINK, being an organization that defends the rights of religious community and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone, was so concerned about the way in which young people were being engaged in notorious drugs addictions, particularly the intake of kush and other harmful substances within the period under review.

The Organization decided to partner with both Gaza and Black Street Boys in a bid to bring together victims of drug addictions with a view to incentivize them to stay away from the intake of these harmful substances. The KUSH LIBERATION CONFERENCE was a huge success as young people who witnessed the occasion pledge their commitment to be ambassadors of the anti-kush campaign going forward.

The Conference featured various professional speakers from the Judiciary, the Medical Profession, the Government, the press and Civil Society Organizations. LEGAL LINK used the occasion to urge the Government of Sierra Leone to provide job opportunities for the youth.



LEGAL LINK

In Partnership with the



GAZA AND BLACK STREET BOYS

Organizes

KUSH LIBERATION CONFERENCE

THEME:

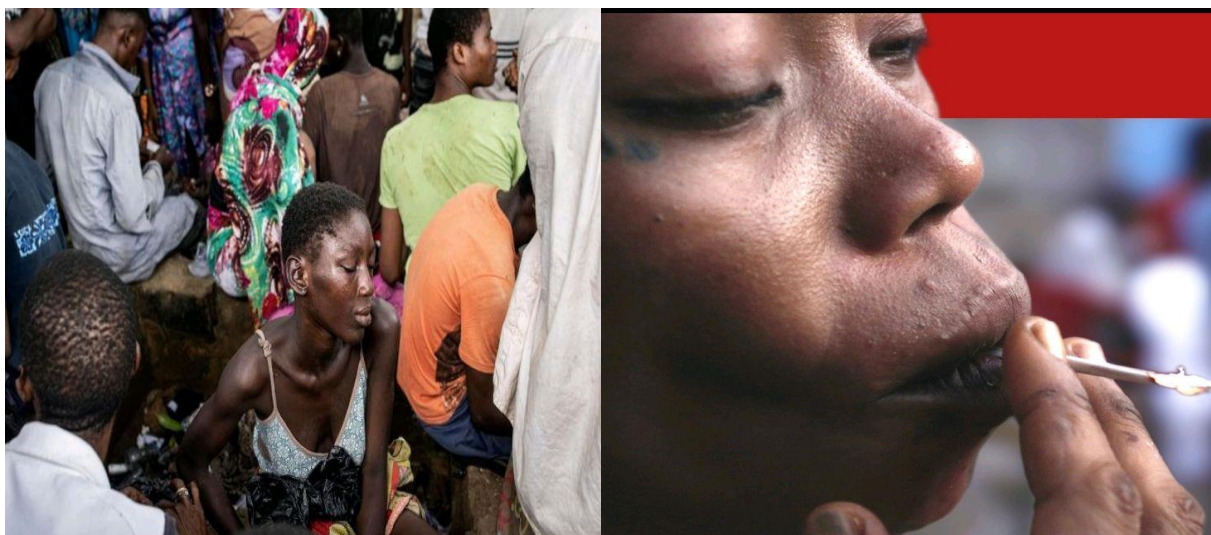
**“EXPERIENCES AND SOLUTIONS
FROM THE GHETTO BOYS”**

Date: Thursday 18th April 2024

Venue: Africell American Corner, Bathurst Street Freetown

Time: 9:30am





13. LEGAL LINK organizes the Youth and the Law Annual Quiz Competition 2024

As part of its mandate to advance legal education in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK in partnership with the African Young Voices (AYV) Media Empire, successfully organized the 4th Edition of the Inter-Secondary School Quiz Competition on the Laws and Justice System of Sierra Leone, also known as The Youth and The Law Quiz Competition.

The auspicious event which took place at the AYV Media Empire in Freetown from the 28th to 31st May 2024 brought together brilliant minds from several outstanding senior secondary schools in Freetown. The primary objective of the quiz competition was to broaden the knowledge and horizon of school-going pupils in senior secondary schools on the law and justice system of Sierra Leone. The Star Prize of 10,000,000 (Old Notes) was won by King Fahad Secondary School from the East.

LEGAL LINK
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
AYV MEDIA EMPIRE
PRESENTS
THE YOUTH AND THE LAW
Contestants

The Sierra Leone Grammar School	VS	Beacon High School
St. Joseph Convent Secondary School	VS	King Fahad Secondary School
Government Model Secondary School	VS	Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood





14. LEGAL LINK Celebrates Ten Years of International Albinism Awareness Day

As part of its activities to raise awareness and advocate for the rights of persons with albinism in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK on the 13th June 2024, felt enthused to join the United Nations and the Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism to commemorate the Decade of Celebrating International Albinism Awareness Day.

The theme for this year's International Albinism Awareness Day Celebrations was: "Ten Years of International Albinism Awareness Day: A Decade of Collective Progress." The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK maintained that the theme invites everyone to celebrate the strides being made to advance the rights of persons with albinism and reflect on the legal frameworks protecting their rights as well as the practical challenges they continue to face.

LEGAL LINK therefore felt profusely proud to commemorate the decade of International Albinism Awareness Day in Sierra Leone by bringing out the successes, challenges and proffering recommendations for reforms. The Organization also used the opportunity to enable persons with albinism share their testimonies as to how LEGAL LINK has been helpful to them.





15. LEGAL LINK Celebrates the Day of the African Child and holds Engagement Dialogue with Street Children and Children of Disabled Parents in Freetown

In commemoration of the Day of the African Child on June 16, 2024, LEGAL LINK embarked on an outreach program to vulnerable children in Freetown to ascertain their peculiar challenges and welfare needs.

The outreach involved interviews with children in primary and secondary school, children with disabled parents and beneficiaries from Don Bosco Fambul Organization. The said interview focused on several key areas such as children's awareness of their rights, community support, future aspirations and challenges faced in participation in community activities, messages to other children and reflections on African Child's Day.

Aminata Koroma, representing children with disabled parents, spoke about her financial struggles and reliance on begging to meet basic needs. Despite these hardships however, she values education deeply and aspires to be a doctor, embodying resilience and determination. Her story highlights the need for support, continued education and awareness-raising about children's rights in the country.

LEGAL LINK used the occasion to call for a special UN Resolution to adopt June 16 as an International Day for Children. This would honor the historical significance of African Child's Day and reinforce the global commitment to children's rights across the world.

The outreach in Freetown was a testament to the power of listening to and supporting vulnerable children. By amplifying their voices and advocating for their rights, society can work towards a future where every child is valued, protected and given the opportunity to thrive.





16. LEGAL LINK Organizes “The Inspire Conference” for Youths and Young Pupils in Senior Secondary Schools in Freetown

As part of its mandate to inspire youths and young people for nation building and positive impact in society, LEGAL LINK successfully organized the INSPIRE CONFERENCE-2024 for school-going pupils and young minds in Sierra Leone.

The theme for this year's Conference is “INSPIRE, INNOVATE, IMPACT.” The conference was organized to help cultivate and inspire dynamism and resilience amongst young pupils to become agents of change and productive members of society.

The Conference took place on the 12th July 2024 at the BUXTON HALL, Charles Street, Freetown and featured a lineup of esteemed speakers from diverse backgrounds, including lawyers, innovator, educator and motivational speakers.

The presentation of various speakers covered a wide range of topics such as Understanding Power-point Tips for outstanding Success in both National and International Exams, the Impact of Drug Abuse and other Harmful Substances in the Life of a Student, a True Life Story of my Successful Academic Journey as a Lawyer, Choosing an Academic Career Path, the Place of God in the Life of a Student, etc.





17. LEGAL LINK Celebrates Nelson Mandela International Day and Feeds Over 300 Street Beggars and Persons with Disability in Freetown

On the 18th of July 2024 (Nelson Mandela International Day), the legal interns, staff and volunteers of LEGAL LINK embarked on a benevolent outreach to vulnerable communities at various locations in the Central Business District in Freetown donating food items to them. Among the food items donated were rice, Maggie, onions and tomatoes.

The Nelson Mandela International Day was launched by the United Nations General Assembly on 18th July 2009, in honor of Mandela's legacy and contribution to the culture of peace, human rights, reconciliation and freedom around the world as well as his devoted services to humanity and vulnerable groups.

This gesture of kindness and generosity from LEGAL LINK did not only provide the much-needed and timely assistance to these vulnerable groups but also showed compassion and love for the vulnerable and marginalized communities in Sierra Leone.

According to the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Lawyer Rashid Dumbuya, this donation outreach exemplifies the spirit of UBUNTU - a philosophy that emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and the importance of compassion, brotherliness and solidarity at all times.

While receiving the donated items, the leaders of the various vulnerable groups thanked LEGAL LINK for coming to their rescue at a time when everyone seems to have abandoned them.









18. LEGAL LINK Donates to the Blind at the Milton Margai School for the Blind in Freetown

Consistent with its passion and quest to improving the lives and livelihoods for vulnerable persons in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK on the 17th October 2024 donated food items such as rice, oil, onions and water to the Blind at the Milton Margai School for the Blind, Wilkinson Road, Freetown.

The leadership of the Milton Margai School for the Blind 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 climaxed with beautiful songs as appreciation from blind students themselves.





19. LEGAL LINK Plays Host to the First National Climate Justice Conference in Sierra Leone

On the 5th of September 2024, at the Africell American Corner Hall in Bathurst Street, Freetown, LEGAL LINK successfully organized the First National Conference on Climate Justice in Sierra Leone.

This pivotal event brought together policy makers, environmental activists, legal experts, representatives from the government, MDAs, civil society organisations, judiciary, security forces, universities, the press and marginalized communities to have a frank conversation about climate change and its debilitating effects on the human population, particularly vulnerable groups in the country.

Bearing in mind its mandate to defend the rights of vulnerable groups as well as push for legal and policy reforms on human rights related issues, LEGAL LINK organized the Climate Justice Conference to incentivize a national conversation around climate change both at the national and local levels in Sierra Leone.



LEGAL LINK

Organizes



CLIMATE JUSTICE CONFERENCE - 2024

A program designed to incentivize a national conversation
around climate change and responses
both at the national and local levels in Sierra Leone.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Special Presentations on addressing climate change from

- ▶ Lawyers,
- ▶ Law Students,
- ▶ Civil Society Activists,
- ▶ Environmental Practitioners,
- ▶ MDA's,
- ▶ Local Councils



**Date: Thursday 5th September 2024 - Place: Africell American Corner
Barthurst Street Freetown, - Time: 9:30am**





20. The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK Develops the Legal Rash Structural Rescue Plan for the Sierra Leone Bar Association

Following the unfortunate incident that took place in Kenema during the Bar elections and the overt display of electoral fraud, unprofessionalism, bad behavior and widespread disenfranchisement of majority of the members of the Association, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK felt motivated to develop a structural rescue plan in a bid to help resolve the impasse within the Bar.

The structural rescue plan provided among other things for a new registration status of the Bar, an electoral framework, a new constitution and replacement of certain executive position with new ones.

According to Lawyer Rashid, the weakness of the governance architecture and frameworks within the Sierra Leone Bar Association made it easier for perpetrators of the sham elections to succeed in their criminal trade.

The structural rescue plan if implemented in good faith and with full cooperation of members of the Bar, it would provide the first step or baseline needed for a resilient, democratic, open, inclusive and transformational Bar in the sub-region.



21. LEGAL LINK Proffers Advisory Opinion on the Criminal Procedure Bill of 2024

In response to a request made by Parliament for a position paper or legal opinion on the Criminal Procedure Bill of 2024, the erudite and prolific legal team of LEGAL LINK decided to proffer an objective critique of the said Bill through an advisory opinion for the urgent consideration of members of Parliament as they embark on the passing of the Bill into law.

The fundamental aim of the legal advisory opinion was to critically analyze the Criminal Procedure Bill of 2024 and proffer recommendations for reform. In doing so, the opinion piece

therefore gave a brief introductory analysis of the CPA Bill, unearthed the positive features and relevant provisions and further unraveled the gaps, loopholes and weaknesses of the Criminal Procedure Bill proffering plausible recommendations for reforms.



22. LEGAL LINK Appeals to President Bio not to give his Assent to the Criminal Procedure Bill of 2024 due to the expulsion of the Jury System by Parliament

Following the Abolition of Jury System in the Criminal Procedure Bill of 2024, LEGAL LINK wrote His Excellency, President Bio, drawing his attention to this matter and appealing that he refused to give his assent to this law. The Open letter maintained cogent and irrefutable reasons why the Jury system should not be abolished in our criminal justice system. One of such arguments raised is the fact that there will be greater risk of miscarriage of justice when a judge alone trial becomes the only option available in our criminal justice system to adjudicate felonious offenses such as treason and murder.

While LEGAL LINK welcomed the efforts of the government to have a new Criminal Procedure Act, the Organization equally decried any attempt to remove the jury system in the revised Act by either Parliament or the powers that be. As such, the Organization kindly appealed that the President withhold his assent to this law and ensure that it is returned to Parliament so that the jury system provisions can be inserted into it once again as it was in the first draft that was sent to the public.



23. LEGAL LINK Conducts Open Education Programme

The '**LAW FOR NON-LAWYERS**' is a renowned Open Education Programme run by LEGAL LINK to help human rights activists, journalists, accountants, politicians, parliamentarians, Mayors, Local councilors, 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 good number of these open education programmes were done on Radio Democracy, Star TV and AYV TV in Freetown.



24. 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 huge millions of old leones as compensation and end of service benefits to labourers in the country. Over 60 labourers benefitted from this intervention within the period under review.

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

25. LEGAL LINK Commemorates International Human Rights Day, Launches its Annual Report and Celebrates its 6TH Anniversary

LEGAL LINK, on the 10th of December 2023 at the Africell American Corner in Freetown, successfully celebrated the International Human Rights Day, launched its Annual Report and commemorated its 6th anniversary in defense of the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

During the celebration of its 6th anniversary which was well attended by interns, lawyers, law students and the media, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, thanked God for making LEGAL LINK to see its 6th anniversary and to also celebrate it in grand style and with outstanding achievements and proofs to show for it.

He also did a PowerPoint presentation explaining the activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK in 2024 bringing out the successes, challenges and recommendations proffered. The legal interns, staff and volunteers of LEGAL LINK were also given opportunities to share their testimonies of what the Organization has done for them.



26. LEGAL LINK Observes its Annual Thanksgiving and Prayer Session at Winners Chapel Church in Freetown

On the 15th December 2024, LEGAL LINK held its annual thanksgiving and prayer session at the Winners Chapel in Freetown.

The programme is being done every year so as to fulfill one of LEGAL LINK's religious mandates which are to return all the glory to God for His enabling grace and manifestations in the organization throughout the year and further receive pastoral blessings.

The Senior Pastor of the Winners Chapel Church offered special prayers for the staff, interns and volunteers of LEGAL LINK and further congratulated them for the good work they have been doing for the religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone. He also encouraged the staff, interns and volunteers of LEGAL LINK to be more committed and passionate in defending the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.





27. LEGAL LINK Organizes Family Outing, End of Year Party, Reunion and Certification Ceremony for its Interns, Staff and Volunteers

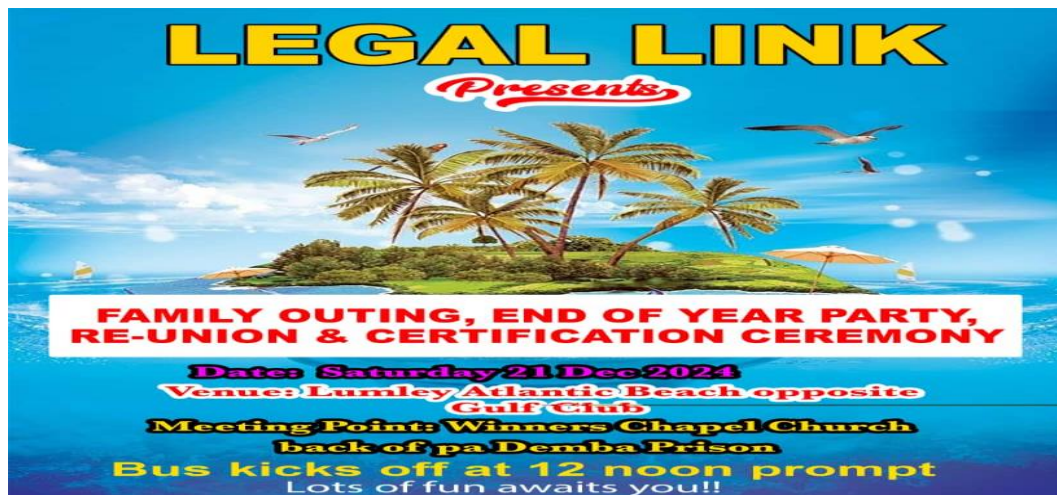
LEGAL LINK, on Saturday the 21st of December 2024, at the Lumley Beach in Freetown, organized its annual family outing, end of year party, certification ceremony and reunion session.

This event is organized every year by LEGAL LINK to enable its staff, interns and volunteers to have some fun and relaxation. It is also organized for both past and present members of LEGAL LINK to meet and familiarize with one another.

During the programme, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, used the occasion to thank and appreciate both present and past interns, staff and volunteers of LEGAL LINK for their unflinching support towards the progress of the organization. He further encouraged them to do more in the year 2025 as LEGAL LINK will be undertaking myriad of activities in defense of the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

The programme also featured the issuance of certificates to all interns for a successful completion of their internship at LEGAL LINK in 2024. Special awards were also given to interns that did extremely well during the course of their internship.

The family outing ended with a party attracting lots of fun and laughter. Food and drinks were made available in their abundance. It was, and certainly so, a tickle pink event that would surely outlast the memories of all those who were in attendance.



PART FOUR

THE NOVEMBER 26th 2023 COUP D'ETAT IN SIERRA LEONE

On the 26th November 2023 at around 4:30 in the morning, a group of assailants attacked the military armoury at the Wilberforce Barracks in Freetown, Sierra Leone, a military barrack very close to the presidential lodge. Later the same morning, the assailants broke into Central Pademba Road Prison in Freetown, releasing nearly its entire population of inmates after the security forces retreated from the area. Other clashes were reported near Murray Town, home of the navy, as well as in another military site near Freetown. The attacks came amid political tensions brought about by the reelection of President Julius Maada Bio in June 2023 which was disputed by the opposition and raised concerns from the United States and the European Union Elections Observer Bodies.

The country was subsequently placed under a nationwide curfew, with a manhunt being called to find the militants. The assailants were repelled by the security forces and the government took control of the situation. Some militants were captured, with video appearing to show uniformed personnel under arrest in the back or beside a military vehicle. Many streets in Freetown were empty, with soldiers on patrol and checkpoints being set up. Fighting was reported to have been pushed back to the outskirts of the capital. That evening, President Bio said in a televised address that most of the leaders of the attack, which he called a "breach of security" and an attack on democracy, had been arrested and that "calm had returned", while the curfew was shortened from 9 PM to 6 AM on 27 November. On 28 November, gunfire was reported in Murray Town, with authorities saying that it was part of a successful operation to capture a person of interest in the attacks.

The Sierra Leone army reported that 14 of its soldiers were killed fighting for the government, while eight other personnel were injured. It added that one police officer, one prison guard, one civilian woman and a private security employee were also killed, placing the total death toll at 21.

The group responsible for the attacks is still unknown. Information Minister Chernor Bah reported that current and former military officials were among those involved. An army spokesperson described the perpetrators as "renegade soldiers".

Law enforcement confined former president Ernest Bai Koroma to his home for questioning on 9th December 2023. Sierra Leonean police chief Fayia Sellu said Koroma was a suspect in the coup attempt, and the government confirmed his statement on 12 December. Koroma had previously said that he "strongly condemned the attack".

On 28 November, the government described the incident "a failed attempted coup" which was intended "to illegally subvert and overthrow a democratically elected government." Police later released photographs of 32 men and two women it said were being sought in connection with the attacks, including active and retired soldiers and police as well as some civilians.

Based on security intelligence, some military officers and civilian were arrested, and on the 5th December 2023, the government announced the arrest of one of the alleged organizers of the coup, Amadu Koita, a former military officer and a prominent critic of Bio's government on social media. Police released a surveillance photo of Koita purportedly carrying a gun in one of the prison attacks.

In January 2024, Koita and 11 other individuals were charged with treason before a court in Freetown. The next day, Koroma was also charged with four counts of treason in relation to the coup. On 17 January 2024, Koroma was allowed by the High Court to leave Sierra Leone and seek medical treatment in Nigeria until April. On 23 July 2024, Koita and other defendants were convicted on charges relating to the coup attempt, with Koita receiving a 182-year prison sentence for leading the attempt. The other defendants received sentences ranging from 30 to 112 years. On 9 August 2024, a court-martial convicted 24 soldiers of participating in the coup and sentenced them to prison terms reaching up to 120 years, the last of which was given to the most senior-ranking defendant, Lieutenant Colonel Charles James Mishek Yamba.

As an Organization that is working towards advancing the course of good governance, democracy and the rule of law, LEGAL LINK condemns in the strongest of terms the violent attacks and security breaches that took place in Freetown on the 26th November 2023 giving rise to chaos and unrest in the nation and the letting out of thousands of inmates both at the female and male correctional centres and other police stations in the Capital.

According to Lawyer Rashid "LEGAL LINK vehemently condemn and take the greatest exception to any move, by anyone, to replace a legitimate government by undemocratic and unconstitutional means; and calls on the relevant authorities to institute an independent

Judge-led public inquiry into the November 26 carnage so as to unearth the true causes for such security breaches as well as the actual perpetrators responsible for such mayhem in our society.”

Apparently, while LEGAL LINK salute the gallant security officers that showed bravery in resisting the violent attacks and restoring calm in the Capital, the Organization however urge all security forces and personnel going forward to adopt a Human Rights - based approach in their treatment of alleged perpetrators by ensuring that they are not dealt with extra-judicially but are investigated, charged and prosecuted in accordance with the laws of Sierra Leone.

LEGAL LINK also requests that all those who have been convicted and currently held in detention should be treated humanely and their families or legal representatives allowed visiting them as dictated by law.

The Organization further appeals to all citizens in the nation to remain calm and peaceful and cooperate fully with the security apparatus and state officials by informing them promptly regarding any security infractions within their communities.

As ours is a democracy and a signatory to many international and regional human rights frameworks, LEGAL LINK entreats the state, as it carries out legitimate security operations, to do so within the ambit of the rule of law, having due regard and respect for due process and fundamental human rights and freedoms of the citizens including alleged perpetrators. The call therefore to bring all suspects before the courts to determine their guilt or innocence cannot be under-estimated.









PART FIVE

SUCCESSSES, CHALLENGES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

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:

- ❖ The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK within the period under reviewed was decorated with the following awards: **Environmental Lecturer of the Year, Best Advocate in 2024 and Human Rights Award for his dedicated and committed service to the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone as a Commissioner from 2017-2018.** These awards were meritoriously granted to the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK for his outstanding legal contributions towards advancing the course of human rights, justice, legal education, professionalism and democracy in Sierra Leone within the period under review.







- ❖ LEGAL LINK's interns and volunteers within the period under review successfully benefited from award recognitions, academic successes, laurels and fellowship opportunities. For example, the Head of Research and Internship at LEGAL LINK, **Abdul Brima Dumbuya**, was decorated with the prestigious **50 Most Influential Students Awards in Sierra Leone**. He has just successfully completed his LLB Honours Degree at Fourah Bay College and graduated with a **First-Class Honours Degree in Law**.





- ❖ **LEGAL LINK** within the period under secures breakthrough for **Precious Thomas over the incessant delay by UNIMAK to release her law degree result**. It could be recalled that one of the legal interns at **LEGAL LINK**, Precious, was faced with a serious challenge with the **UNIMAK** Administration, where she pursued her law degree. The University authority withheld her degree, arguing that she is not qualifies to graduate because she was having a trailer in one of the core modules she offered in Honours One.

This issue was brought to the attention of **LEGAL LINK** and as an Organization; a press release was issued urging the University authorities to release the result of Precious and the other affected students. **LEGAL LINK** also provided legal support to the lawyer whose services was hired and retained by the affected students.

As it stands, the University administration has released the degree of Precious Thomas and some of the affected students. A decision has also been reached by the University Administration to reverse the policy. Precious is currently being admitted into the Sierra Leone Law School and **LEGAL LINK** returns all the Glory to God for this wonderful breakthrough.



❖ LEGAL LINK's Interns within the period under review secures admission into the Sierra Leone Law School. Notably also, the majority of LEGAL LINK's dedicated and workaholic legal interns in 2024 graduated with outstanding honours degree in law and they were successfully admitted into the Sierra Leone Law School.





- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully organized legal and compliance trainings for about 700 church leaders and their administrators in Freetown, Waterloo, Kono and Makeni. In six years of its existence, the Organization has now trained over 7,000 pastors and church administrators and further provided legal aid support and service to over 2,000 vulnerable persons.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK in partnership with the AYV Media Empire successfully hosted the fourth edition of THE YOUTH AND THE LAW ANNUAL QUIZ COMPETITION with the King Fahad Islamic Senior Secondary School emerging as victors of the competition.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully organized the maiden edition of the CIDA Awards in a bid to recognize and celebrate Christian heroes and heroines who have exemplified a life of integrity and further working towards the advancement of the Body of Christ in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully organized the INSPIRE CONFERENCE, a prestigious event designed to cultivate and inspire dynamism and resilience amongst youths and young pupils in senior secondary schools in terms of career choices, studying for international exams and overcoming peer-pressures and youthful distractions in their academic journey.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully commemorated International Human Rights Day and its 6th Anniversary in defending the rights of religious community and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully settled about 200 legal disputes through Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK in partnership with Gaza Boys within the period under review successfully organized a National Kush Liberation Conference in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully organized the National Law Conference for stakeholders in the legal profession and universities offering the study of law in the country.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully embarked on media advocacy calling on the Government of Sierra Leone through her relevant institutions to respect, protect the fundamental human rights of vulnerable persons in the country.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully organized the first national conference on climate justice in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully organized the Inspire Conference for youth and school going pupils in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully provided internship opportunities and career guidance to university students via our internship and volunteer programmes. 15 interns from Fourah Bay College, University of Makeni and the National Youth Commission successfully completed their internship at LEGAL LINK within the period under review. Another set of interns sent by Fourah Bay College and other institutions are currently undergoing theirs.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully commemorated Valentine's Day and made donations such as bags of rice, onions, gallons of oil and bundles of water at the King George Home for the Aged, Manaheim Children Orphanage in Grafton and Blind School in Wilkinson Road, Freetown.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully secured huge end of service, financial benefits and compensation for about 60 labourers within the period under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully commemorated the International Nelson Mandela Day by making huge donations of food items to persons with disability and Beggars on the street of Freetown.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review 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.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK, through its LAW FOR NON LAWYERS open education programme, successfully educated and sensitized 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 Government of Sierra Leone through her relevant institutions on issues bordering around human rights, rule of law, constitutionalism, democracy and international best practices.
- ❖ Finally, LEGAL LINK within the period under review made key recommendations on strategic state issues to relevant government Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Parastatals.

CHALLENGES

Amidst the many success stories, there are few 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 its staff.

- ❖ 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 aside from 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.

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

- ❖ Being an advocacy group that seeks to promote accountability and the rule of law, LEGAL LINK recommends the government to comply with its obligation under international human rights law by ensuring it respects, fulfills, protects and promotes the rights of persons with disabilities 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 and/or suspension of the human rights commissioners, the ombudsman, the ACC commissioner, the Chief Justice 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 recommends to the 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.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone reinstates the Jury provision in the new Criminal Procedure Act of 2024.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone ensure to adopt human rights based approach in holding accountable those who are under the peace, stability and security of the nations. The presumption of innocence of an accused person must be respected by the Government.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone pass a law that specifically and comprehensively protects the rights of persons with albinism in Sierra Leone.

- ❖ 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 passes a law that specifically protects the rights of Human Rights Defenders in the country.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone takes action to comprehensively implement the tripartite electoral recommendations and other recommendations submitted to her by local and international observers.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone increase the minimum wages, salaries and pensions of the working population by 50% in order to mitigate the hardship and pain currently experienced by the masses.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government respects religious rights and freedoms in the country.

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 prediction 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 recommends that parliament adopts the principles of cultural relativism, margin of appreciations and progressive realization as they pass crucial laws for and/on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that Parliament put the nation interest first above party in their deliberations in passing of crucial laws for and/on behalf of the people of 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.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the new Chief Justice take steps to fully implement the recommendations captured in the Joint Communiqué adopted at the Legal Colloquium on Justice Sector Reforms in 2021.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK urges the new Chief Justice to expedite all political cases so as to prevent public distrust in the judiciary.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the ACC resists the urge of engaging in selective justice in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone and adopts a human rights based approach regarding the same.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT BODIES

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that election management bodies take steps to implement all electoral recommendations submitted by both local and international observers.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that election management bodies dispense their electoral mandate with a deep sense of cosmic responsibility, moral rectitude and consistency with the electoral laws of the land.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the ECSL should conduct electoral activities in a very transparent manner so as to not undermine the credibility of the democratic process.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends for the ECSL to ensure fairness and professionalism in the conduct of all public elections in the country and show respect for 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 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 dignity 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 RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN SIERRA LEONE

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that religious communities conform to the dictates of the law within the jurisdiction. Religious communities should also have regard for the laws surrounding the leasing or purchase of land and real estates. 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 and leaders do more in speaking out against injustices, threats and actions that seek to undermine the peace and progress of the nation.
- ❖ The State must also respect and guarantee the rights to freedom of conscience and religion. 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 a 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 soon 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 2024.

TO GOD ALONE 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

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