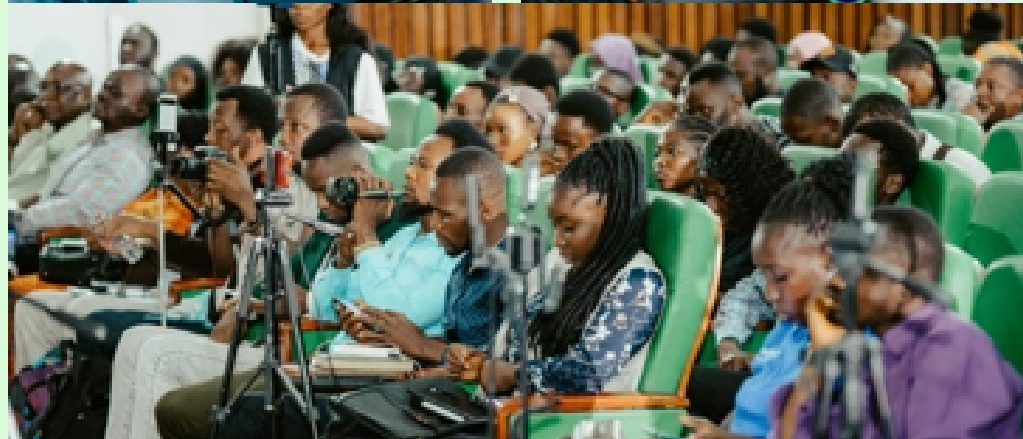


At Special Town Hall to address threats to quality education....

Citizens Demand Tougher Measures To Tackle Exam Malpractice

By Mariama Benovia Davies



Government officials, education stakeholders, anti-corruption authorities, civil society representatives and members of the public gathered at the Miatta Civic Centre on Tuesday, 26th August, 2026, to brainstorm on addressing the "Threats to Quality Education in Sierra Leone". The event which was hosted by Hon. Chernor Bah, the Minister of Information and Civic Education, focused on examination malpractice, weak administration, unaccredited institutions, fake qualifications and the need for stronger accountability across the education sector, among others.

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Editorial

From Consultations To Parliamentary Approval: Reflections On Recommendation 78 Of The Tripartite Report. Part four

Readers will recall that part three of these reflections spent time explaining the National Dialogue, emphasising the long period of consultations on the electoral systems. We said over a year ago and across the country, the public had the opportunity to discuss PR and FPTP and took a decision upon which to solve fundamental problems plaguing elections in Sierra Leone. We said concerns that there had been fewer consultations on the subject were untrue in view of the fact that there had been a year plus consultations across the country leading to a national dialogue on electoral systems. We said beyond the National Dialogue, there were consultations on reviewing the drafted legislations as proposed by the Tripartite Report and the two constitutional review committees.

At this stage, appetite may have been heavy to learn about the findings of the consultants as regards the nationwide consultations on recommendation 78. There were three consultants namely: Joe Pemagbi, Valnora Edwin, and Chibeuze Onah. The latter is a Nigerian.

According to the consultants, advocates of FPTP argued that the system was simple, leading to direct accountability by MPs, providing local representation, and offering power to the constituency. However, PR supporters highlighted the inclusive and multiparty nature of the system, especially its potential to reduce wasted votes and enhance gender representation, curtail election violence, and minimize cost of elections.

Clearly we can see how the public was able to identify advantages of the two systems as captured in the findings of the facilitators. This was the case principally because the electorates had interacted with both systems three times each since 1996. PR was used in 1996, 2000, and 2023. FPTP was used in 2006, 2012, and 2018 respectively.

But, there were debates during the consultations around a critical issue. It was identified as the reason for undermining representation in Parliament and participants were determined to address that in the new system they would prefer. According to the consultants, participants unanimously opposed the 11.9% threshold used in the 2023 elections because it prevented emerging parties from meeting that height and be represented in parliament. There was a consensus for a 5%-7% threshold, which was considered an accepted range since it encouraged representation, affirmative action, and political diversity.

The consultants found an appetite for a Hybrid Model, whose proponents recommended combining advantages of both systems, where FPTP would be used in councils and PR for parliament. On the notion of affirmative action there were calls for minimum 30% representation for women (some proposing 40%); and 5% reserved seats for persons with disabilities and youth as recommended by the TRC report. These findings uphold the spirit of the content of the Tripartite Report, and further support recommendations of the facilitators.

The consultants recommended a Hybrid Electoral System as the national electoral system of Sierra Leone with safeguard provisions relating to guidelines and regulations to address threshold, representation, accountability, political party candidate selection, list management, gender and diversity, and maintaining boundaries, etc. This accounts for a system that accommodates merits of both PR and FPTP consolidated into a new home-generated PR that will define the socio-political context of elections in Sierra Leone to promote national cohesion. On electoral reforms, there was a consensus on adoption of an affirmative action that would reserve seats to engender representation of women, youth, and PWDs in parliament.

These reflections to draw our attention to the journey of the implementation of recommendation 78 and the output of that process clearly support the content of the Constitutional Amendment Bill

2025. It gives a true indication that the drafters of the legislations, the drafting was informed by the following instruments: the nation-wide consultation report on Recommendation 78, the Tripartite Report, the two constitutional review committee reports etc.

Furthermore, following the drafting of the legislative proposal on electoral reforms, several consultations were conducted to review the drafted legislations that informed the amendment bill. The first consultation on the legislative proposal was held at Country Lodge on 28 October 2025, comprising the Electoral Commission Sierra Leone, Political Parties Registration Commission, Office of National Security, Independent Media Commission, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, and National Civil Registration Authority. The proposal contained changes made to several legal instruments such as the Political Parties Act, Public Elections Act, Cyber Security and Crime Act, SLBC Act, IMC Act etc. The technical consultation offered a platform for debating, reviewing, and proffering expert advice regarding the legislations drafted by the Office of the Attorney-General. At that meeting, the Attorney-General had this to say: "Today we are here. This is what an inclusive and participatory process is. We are obliged to put before you what we have drafted as a legislative proposal informed by the tripartite committee recommendations. This is a true definition of what our democracy is - a process that consults with the public for the roll-out of legislative reforms that define our political behaviour in so far as elections and electoral processes are concerned."

Another session was held with political parties at Brookfields hotel on 30th October 2025. It provided the agencies the stage to review the drafted legislations, while they debated on threshold and advocated and recommended its reduction to allow for increased political participation and increased political representation in parliament. The 50+1 presidential threshold received a merit on the basis of annulling run-offs in presidential elections thereby obviating electoral violence.

The third and final consultative meeting in that set was held at Country Lodge on 31st October, 2025. It converged CSOs and the media since they were instrumental in holding government accountable to account on how the legislative drafting was done, and what processes would be followed for the arrival of the proposal in parliament. The consultation was part of the process of accounting to a constituency that was equally part of the process.

Dr. Emmanuel Gaima, Senior Adviser to President, emphasized on the need of consulting with a variety of stakeholders in fulfilling the political principles of participation and inclusivity. Laws created by the people would stand the test of time than laws created by politicians. CSOs and the media were believed to be impartial representatives of the public, speaking their minds, advocating their interest, and defending their rights.

It is important to explain that the bill Parliament passed barely ten days ago contained a chunk of the tripartite recommendations and those of the constitutional review committees dealing with elections. It is obvious that electoral laws can generate intense partisan interest. That process could not have been slowed down in any way considering the nature of the content of the bill and considering time.

The rest of the other provisions, as contained in the Tripartite Report and the two Constitutional Review Committee Reports, including those touching on entrenched clauses will now start its own process. It is obvious that there will be a new constitution since alterations to the existing one will be enormous with several new chapters created. Nearly twenty entrenched clauses will be affected by the alteration, presenting a difficulty of holding a referendum asking nearly twenty questions to a largely unlettered public.

So the thinking will be to hold a number of consultations and civic education activities with various sectors of the public, and present a referendum asking a single question requiring a simple 'yes or no' answer about whether Sierra Leoneans 'want the new constitution or not'.

As we close on part four of this series entitled: from consultations to parliamentary approval: reflections on recommendation 78 of the Tripartite Report, you have been taken through a protracted journey of consultations on proportional representation and first-past-the-post electoral systems to attest to the fact that there was a marathon year plus consultations and technical legislative reviews on the drafted legislations that eventually formed the Constitutional Amendment Bill 2025, which sailed through in Parliament and met its subsequent approval. No doubt, we have learnt that outcomes of both the consultations on Recommendation 78 and the reviews on the legislative proposal constituted the Constitutional Amendment Bill 2025. This Bill is owned by the people of Sierra Leone.

Governance & Development

By Bockarie Abdel Aziz Bawoh, Deputy Minister of Information and Civic Education

Why Sierra Leone's debate over PR should focus not merely on how MPs are elected, but on how the system can strengthen accountability, reduce violence and consolidate national cohesion

The debate over Proportional Representation (PR) in Sierra Leone is too important to be reduced to the narrow question of which political party benefits from which electoral system. Electoral systems are ultimately instruments of democracy. The real test should therefore be whether the system we choose gives meaningful expression to the votes of citizens, promotes inclusion, reduces conflict, strengthens accountability and contributes to the peace and stability of the state.

For years, the Government of Sierra Leone has advanced the argument that Proportional Representation offers advantages over the winner-takes-all character of First-Past-the-Post (FPTP), particularly in a country where political competition can easily assume regional, ethnic and community dimensions.

Interestingly, this debate is far from uniquely Sierr Leonean. It is increasingly taking centre stage in some of the world's established democracies.

A recent article in The UnPopulist, titled "Britain's New Prime Minister Sees Proportional Representation as a Cure to Polarization," makes an argument remarkably similar to one that has featured in Sierra Leone's electoral reform discourse. The article argues that winner-take-all politics can intensify polarization, while proportional systems can create incentives for collaboration and coalition-building. It cites research suggesting that democracies using proportional representation can experience less severe affective polarization than winner-take-all systems.

That international discussion should encourage Sierr Leoneans to look at PR beyond immediate partisan interests.

FPTP and the Politics of Life and Death

Under First-Past-the-Post, an electoral constituency effectively produces one winner and several losers. A candidate may win by the narrowest margin, yet take 100 percent of the representation attached to that constituency. Thousands of citizens who voted differently may consequently feel that their votes have produced no representation at all.

That winner-takes-all psychology can be particularly dangerous in deeply competitive political environments. In Sierra Leone, parliamentary and local elections have historically involved intense constituency-level competition. Candidates and supporters know that losing by even a handful of votes can mean losing everything. That raises the stakes and can encourage confrontation, intimidation and politically motivated violence.

PR changes that political psychology.

When parties understand that their overall share of votes can translate into representation, elections become less of a desperate fight for one constituency and more of a competition for public support across a broader electoral area.

This is why the argument for PR should not merely be that it produces proportionality. It can also serve as an instrument of peacebuilding.

Sierra Leone has paid too high a price for political division to ignore any democratic mechanism capable of reducing the temperature of electoral competition.

PR Can Reduce Electoral Violence and Costs

There is another practical consideration: money. FPTP requires political parties to wage individual battles across constituencies. Candidates establish campaign structures, organise rallies, deploy agents, transport supporters and mobilise resources constituency by constituency.

This makes elections enormously expensive, not only for political parties and candidates, but also for the institutions responsible for administering and securing them.

More importantly, where individual political careers depend entirely on winning one geographical constituency, candidates can become personally invested in the contest to dangerous levels.

A properly designed PR system can reduce some of those pressures by shifting emphasis from hundreds of individual winner-takes-all contests towards broader competition based on the total support received by political parties.

Proportional Representation: Beyond Politics, A Choice for Peace, Inclusion and Democratic Stability

That does not eliminate competition. It makes competition more proportional.

The Question of Accountability

The strongest criticism against PR in Sierra Leone deserves serious attention.

Critics argue that PR takes Members of Parliament away from the people. Under constituency-based FPTP, citizens know their MP and expect that person to be directly accountable to them. Under a party-list PR system, critics fear that MPs become accountable primarily to political parties rather than voters.

That concern should not simply be dismissed.

But part of the problem also arises from our misunderstanding of the constitutional responsibilities of Members of Parliament.

An MP is fundamentally a legislator and representative, not a local development contractor.

We frequently judge MPs by whether they personally construct roads, provide scholarships, pay medical bills, finance funerals, build community centres or distribute money during ceremonies. These may demonstrate generosity and political responsiveness, but they should not become the principal measurement of parliamentary performance.

The more important questions should be: Does my MP attend Parliament? Does my MP participate meaningfully in debates? Does my MP scrutinise legislation? Does my MP represent the concerns of our district or region? Does my MP participate effectively in parliamentary committees? Does my MP hold public institutions accountable? Does my MP explain parliamentary decisions to the people?

Those are closer to the democratic responsibilities for which legislators are elected.

Therefore, rather than rejecting PR because citizens fear losing contact with their representatives, Sierra Leone has an opportunity to design a PR system that preserves proportionality while institutionalising accountability.

Let the Electoral Law Define Sierra Leone's PR

There is no single universal model of Proportional Representation. Sierra Leone does not have to copy another country's system wholesale.

The Constitution can establish the broad principle while electoral legislation provides the detailed architecture necessary to make the system responsive to Sierra Leone's peculiar circumstances.

For example, the electoral framework can require parties and MPs elected under PR to maintain permanent offices within the districts or electoral areas they represent. MPs could be required to conduct periodic constituency or district consultations and publish reports of those engagements.

Political parties could also be required to demonstrate geographical diversity, gender inclusion, youth participation and representation of persons with disabilities in constructing their candidate lists.

Most importantly, mechanisms can be developed to ensure that citizens know precisely which MPs are responsible for representing their electoral jurisdiction, even where several MPs are elected proportionally.

PR should therefore not mean representation without responsibility.

It should mean proportional representation with measurable accountability.

From Personality Politics to Issue-Based Politics

Another potential benefit of PR is its capacity to gradually shift elections from personality-based contests towards competition over ideas, programmes and political platforms.

Under FPTP, an election can become centred almost entirely around individual candidates. Personal rivalries, family divisions, community disputes and local antagonisms can become intertwined with national politics.

PR encourages parties to campaign more strongly on their collective record and manifesto because every additional vote contributes towards their overall representation.

That can encourage a citizen in an area dominated by Party A to vote for Party B without believing that his or her vote is automatically wasted.

That is important for national cohesion.

Political parties should have incentives to campaign everywhere, listen everywhere and seek votes everywhere, not merely concentrate resources in areas where they believe they can capture individual constituencies.

Representation Should Reflect the People

The fundamental democratic attraction of proportional representation remains simple: if a political party receives a certain proportion of the people's votes, its representation in Parliament should broadly reflect that support.

Winner-take-all systems can produce substantial disparities between votes received and seats won. The British debate cited above offers a striking illustration: in the 2024 UK election, Labour secured around 63 percent of parliamentary seats with just over 33 percent of the vote. (theunpopulist.net)

Whatever one's political persuasion, such examples raise a legitimate democratic question: should parliamentary power substantially exceed the proportion of citizens who actually voted for a party?

PR attempts to narrow that gap.

It recognises that democracy is not merely about producing winners. It is also about ensuring that significant political opinions within society find legitimate representation inside democratic institutions.

When people believe their voices can be heard in Parliament, they have less incentive to express political frustration outside democratic institutions.

PR as a Peace and Governance Instrument

Sierra Leone's history requires us to examine electoral reform through the additional lens of peace.

Our politics should continuously move away from the mentality that one side must completely defeat another before it can participate meaningfully in governance.

Political opponents are not enemies of the state. Elections should determine representation and political authority without destroying relationships among communities that must continue living together after polling day.

This is where the global debate around PR becomes relevant to Sierra Leone.

The argument that proportional representation can make politics more collaborative and less about political point-scoring is particularly significant. Research cited in the international discussion suggests that proportional systems can reduce the tendency of political supporters to demonise opponents because today's competitor may become tomorrow's coalition or legislative partner. (theunpopulist.net)

That philosophy resonates strongly with Sierra Leone's own need for national cohesion.

Reform PR Rather Than Fear It

No electoral system is perfect.

PR can create problems if political parties are allowed excessive control over candidate lists. It can weaken accountability if MPs become detached from the communities whose votes placed them in Parliament. It can also concentrate enormous power in party executives if legislation does not provide adequate safeguards.

Those concerns are legitimate.

But they are arguments for designing PR properly, not necessarily for abandoning it.

Our electoral laws can establish clear rules governing candidate selection, internal party democracy, geographical representation, public consultation, parliamentary reporting and the relationship between elected MPs and the communities they represent.

The objective should be to create a distinctly Sierr Leonean model of proportional representation, one that combines fairness in representation with direct responsibility to citizens.

The choice before Sierra Leone should therefore not be framed simply as PR versus FPTP.

The bigger question is this:

What electoral system best protects our democracy, consolidates our peace, reduces political violence, lowers unnecessary electoral expenditure, broadens representation and gives every Sierr Leonean confidence that his or her vote matters?

If PR can be carefully designed to achieve those objectives while legislation strengthens the accountability of Members of Parliament to the people, then proportional representation should not be feared as a retreat from democracy.

It should be understood as an opportunity to deepen it.

After all, the strength of democracy is not measured merely by how successfully it produces winners. It is measured by how fairly it represents everyone, including those who did not win.

Local Peace Actors Step Up Conflict Prevention Efforts In Koinadugu



Local peace actors in Koinadugu District are playing an important role in helping communities deal with disagreements before they grow into serious conflicts. Recent interventions in Kabala and Karako, Siakara, Wara Wara Yagala have shown how community-based peace structures can help people address their differences through dialogue and mediation. The cases were discussed during a field visit by the Northern Regional Team of the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC) to Kabala on 12 August 2026. The visit was led by the Northern Regional Coordinator, Foday Momoh Kanu, and brought together members of the CSO Coalition for Peace in Koinadugu District, Peace Monitors, Peace Mediators and other local peace building actors. The engagement formed part of the Commission's ongoing work to strengthen peace building and conflict prevention at community level. It also gave the ICPNC team an opportunity to hear from local peace actors about what is happening in their communities, the interventions they have made and the difficulties they face in carrying out their work. For many communities, local peace actors are often among the first people who hear about disagreements or tensions. Their closeness to the communities allows them to engage with people early, understand the issues involved and, where possible, help those affected find a peaceful way forward. Speaking during the meeting, Mr. Kanu said local peace structures have an important role in keeping communities peaceful. He encouraged the peace actors to remain committed to their responsibilities and to continue working together to prevent and resolve conflicts. He said cooperation among peace actors is important because no single group can deal with every peace and conflict issue on its own. Sharing information and working together can help ensure that concerns are identified and addressed before they become more difficult to manage. The Chairperson of the CSO Coalition for Peace in Koinadugu District, Nabie Turay, welcomed the ICPNC Northern Regional Team and thanked the Commission for its continued support to local peace structures. Mr. Turay said the Coalition remains committed to working with communities to promote peace and national cohesion in Koinadugu. He also called for continued cooperation between the Commission and the local peace structures, particularly as they work to respond to issues affecting communities across the district. Giving an update on the activities of the local peace infrastructure, the Secretary of the CSO Coalition, Madam Mankie Tejan, shared details of two recent interventions. One of the cases involved a disagreement among members of the All People's Congress (APC) in Kabala. Madam Tejan said the disagreement had the potential

to disturb peace in the township. Members of the Coalition intervened and helped the people involved to address the matter. The intervention helped to ease the situation and prevent the disagreement from becoming a wider problem in Kabala. The case also showed the role that local peace actors can play when political disagreements arise within communities. Political differences can sometimes create tension among community members, particularly when disagreements are not addressed early. Having people who can bring the affected parties together and encourage them to talk can help reduce tension and prevent further problems. Madam Tejan also reported another intervention in Karako, Siakara, Wara Wara Yagala, involving an Imam and members of the community. The Coalition intervened in the matter and helped the parties involved to address their disagreement. The case was another example of the different types of issues that local peace actors may be called upon to handle. Disputes involving religious leaders and community members can affect relationships within a community if they are not handled carefully. Through dialogue and mediation, local peace actors can help create an opportunity for people to listen to each other and work towards a solution. The two cases discussed during the meeting also showed why early intervention matters. A disagreement may begin between a small number of people, but if it is not addressed, it can affect families, groups and the wider community. This is where local peace structures can make a difference. Peace Monitors, for example, help to keep track of developments within communities and report concerns. Peace Mediators can help bring parties together when disagreements arise, while civil society organizations and traditional leaders provide important links to the people. Together, these actors form part of the local peace infrastructure that supports conflict prevention and peaceful dispute resolution. However, the people carrying out this work say they cannot do it alone. Madam Tejan told the visiting ICPNC team that limited funding remains one of the main challenges facing the local peace infrastructure in Koinadugu. She explained that many of the communities where concerns are reported are outside Kabala. Reaching these communities requires transportation and other resources. When peace actors do not have the means to travel, it becomes difficult to respond quickly to reports of conflict or other issues that could affect peace. This is a particular concern for a district where communities are spread across a wide area. Madam Tejan appealed for greater support to help local peace actors reach communities across Koinadugu when their intervention is needed. She also raised the need for identification T-shirts for members of the Coalition. According to her, the T-shirts would help community members easily identify recognized peace actors when they are carrying out mediation, monitoring and other peace building activities. For people working directly with communities, being easily identified can be important. It can help residents know who the peace actors are and who they can approach when they have concerns or need help in resolving a dispute. The request for identification T-shirts is therefore not

only about visibility but also about helping the peace actors establish a clear presence in the communities where they work. The Chiefdom Speaker of Wara Wara Yagala, Mr. Yembeh Marah, who is also a member of the Local Peace Infrastructure, thanked the Peace Commission for its continued support to peace building work in the Northern Region. Mr. Marah called for closer cooperation between the Commission and local peace structures. Traditional leaders have an important role to play in community peace building because of their close relationship with residents and their knowledge of local issues. They are often involved when disputes arise and can help bring people together to find solutions. The involvement of traditional authorities, civil society organizations, peace monitors and mediators therefore gives communities several points of support when dealing with conflict. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the ICPNC Northern Regional Team to hear about other peace building activities taking place in Koinadugu and to discuss ways of improving coordination among local peace actors. Better coordination can help ensure that information moves quickly between communities and the relevant peace structures. It can also help avoid situations where different actors are responding to the same issue without knowing what others are doing. For the ICPNC, regular engagement with local peace actors is important because peace building cannot be done effectively without understanding what is happening at community level. People living in communities are often the first to notice changes in relationships, disagreements or other issues that may lead to tension. Their information can help peace actors and institutions respond before a situation becomes more serious. The engagement in Kabala therefore went beyond a routine meeting. It provided an opportunity to listen to the people who are working directly with communities and to understand both the progress they are making and the difficulties they face. The cases from Kabala and Karako also show that conflict prevention can take many forms. Sometimes it means bringing political supporters together to settle a disagreement. At other times, it may involve helping a religious leader and members of a community resolve a misunderstanding. In both situations, the aim is the same: to prevent disagreement from turning into a bigger conflict and to help people find a peaceful way forward. This kind of work may not always make the news, but it is important to the daily lives of communities. Peace is often protected through conversations that take place before a conflict becomes serious. It is protected when people are willing to listen, when community leaders step in and when those involved in a disagreement are given a chance to settle their differences peacefully. The work of the local peace infrastructure in Koinadugu is therefore an important part of the wider effort to maintain peace and national cohesion. The ICPNC Northern Regional Team encouraged the local peace actors to continue their work and maintain regular communication with the Commission. The engagement ended with discussions on recent peace building activities, challenges facing local peace actors and ways to strengthen cooperation in preventing and resolving conflicts across Koinadugu District. The visit also showed that local peace actors need to be supported if they are to continue reaching communities and responding to concerns. For Koinadugu, strengthening these structures means giving communities people they can turn to when disagreements arise. It means creating more opportunities for dialogue and helping people deal with problems before they become larger conflicts. The ICPNC will continue to engage local peace structures and other community stakeholders as part of its work to prevent conflict, support peaceful resolution of disputes and promote national cohesion in Koinadugu District and the wider Northern Region.

Spotlight On Health Care

"At Day 178 Of Its 300 Days Of Activism Campaign, Sierra Leone Is Accelerating Progress Towards Its Triple Zero Target"

Sierra Leone's 300 Days of Activism for Triple Zero campaign continues to demonstrate what is possible when political leadership, health workers, communities, partners and citizens come together around a shared national commitment to save lives and strengthen the health system.

Launched as a focused national effort to accelerate progress towards Zero Preventable Maternal Deaths, Zero Preventable Child Deaths and Zero-Dose Children, the campaign has placed accountability, data-driven action, community engagement and service delivery at the centre of Sierra Leone's health agenda.

By Day 178, the country was recording encouraging gains across all three areas, reflecting the impact of sustained interventions and coordinated action under the leadership of the Ministry of Health.

Zero Preventable Maternal Deaths: Intensifying the Fight to Save Mothers

Reducing preventable maternal deaths remains one of the most urgent priorities of Sierra Leone's health sector. The 300 Days of Activism campaign has therefore intensified efforts to identify and address the factors that continue to put pregnant women and mothers at risk.

By Day 178, maternal mortality had declined by 32.9% compared with the same period last year, representing significant progress in the national effort to protect mothers.

The progress is being supported by strengthened maternal and reproductive health services, improved monitoring of maternal deaths, greater attention to emergency obstetric care, and efforts to ensure that pregnant women reach health facilities in time to receive appropriate care.

The campaign has also strengthened accountability around maternal deaths. Through regular reviews and coordination mechanisms, health authorities are using real-time information to identify where deaths are occurring, understand the contributing factors and determine what corrective action is required.

At the community level, the emphasis remains on ensuring that women and families recognize danger signs, seek care early and are connected to the formal health system. Community health workers, local leaders, women's groups, religious leaders and other community influencers continue to play an important role in encouraging pregnant women to attend antenatal care and deliver in health facilities.

The goal is not simply to reduce the number of maternal deaths, but to ensure that every pregnancy has a better chance of ending safely and every mother receives timely, quality and respectful care.

Zero Preventable Child Deaths: Protecting Children through Stronger Services

The second pillar of the Triple Zero agenda focuses on reducing preventable child deaths and improving survival among newborns, infants and children. By Day 178, child mortality had declined by 12.4% compared with the same period last year. This progress reflects intensified efforts to identify the causes of child deaths and strengthen the services needed to prevent them.

The campaign has placed greater emphasis on early recognition and treatment of childhood illnesses, improved referral systems, strengthened hospital and facility-level monitoring, and closer attention to the quality of care provided to sick children.

Health facilities are increasingly using routine data to monitor admissions, deaths and patterns of mortality. This allows health managers and clinical teams to identify facilities or periods where mortality is increasing and respond with targeted interventions.

The campaign also recognizes that preventing child deaths begins before a child arrives at a health facility. Families and communities must have the knowledge, confidence and access needed to seek care quickly when a child becomes sick.

Community health workers therefore remain critical to the Triple Zero response. By connecting households to health services, supporting health education and facilitating referrals, they help bring essential services closer to children and families who might otherwise face delays in accessing care.

The objective is clear: no child should die from a preventable cause simply because care was delayed, unavailable or inaccessible.

Zero-Dose Children: Taking Immunization to Every Child

Immunization has emerged as one of the strongest areas of progress under the 300 Days of Activism campaign.

Zero-dose children are those who have not received any routine vaccination and are often among the hardest-to-reach children in the country. Finding them requires more than simply waiting for families to come to health facilities. It requires the health system to actively go into communities, identify missed children and connect them with life-saving vaccines.

By Day 178, Sierra Leone had identified and vaccinated 8,347 of an estimated 9,006 zero-dose children nationwide, representing 92.6% of the national target.

This achievement demonstrates the power of community mobilization and targeted outreach.

District health teams, community health workers, social mobilization coordinators, Paramount Chiefs, religious leaders, women's groups, local councils and other community influencers have been instrumental in locating children who had previously been missed by routine immunization services.

The strategy has particularly focused on hard-to-reach and low-performing communities, where health teams have worked with local stakeholders to identify children who are outside the reach of conventional service delivery.

The significance of this effort goes beyond the number of children vaccinated. Every child identified represents a new connection between the health system and a family that may previously have been missed.

The immunization drive therefore demonstrates a fundamental principle of the Triple Zero campaign: the health system must go where the people are, particularly those who are hardest to reach.

A Coordinated National Response

The progress across the three zeros reflects a broader transformation in how Sierra Leone is approaching health-sector challenges.

Rather than treating maternal deaths, child deaths and zero-dose children as isolated problems, the 300 Days of Activism campaign brings them together under a single national accountability framework. The campaign is strengthening collaboration between national and district health authorities, health workers, communities, development partners and other stakeholders.

Data is increasingly being used not only to measure progress but to guide action. Regular reviews

provide an opportunity to identify gaps, recognize areas of improvement and ensure that interventions are directed towards communities and facilities where they are most needed.

This approach is helping to move the health sector from reacting to problems towards anticipating risks, identifying gaps early and taking corrective action quickly.

Communities at the Centre of Triple Zero

One of the most important lessons from the campaign is that achieving Triple Zero cannot be the responsibility of the Ministry of Health alone.

Communities are central to the success of the campaign.

From encouraging pregnant women to seek care early, to recognizing childhood danger signs and ensuring that children receive their routine vaccinations, families and community leaders are critical partners in protecting lives.

The involvement of Paramount Chiefs, religious leaders, women's groups, youth groups, community health workers, local councils and other trusted community voices has helped to strengthen the connection between health services and the people they are intended to serve.

This community-centred approach is particularly important for reaching populations that have historically experienced barriers to healthcare.

Sustaining the Gains beyond 300 Days

While the progress recorded by Day 178 is encouraging, the Triple Zero campaign is ultimately about creating sustainable improvements that extend beyond the 300-day period.

The gains in maternal survival, child survival and immunization must be consolidated through stronger primary healthcare, improved quality of care, reliable medicines and supplies, better referral systems, continuous training and supportive supervision of health workers.

The remaining zero-dose children must also be reached, while children who have already entered the immunization system must continue to receive their full schedule of vaccines.

Similarly, the reduction in maternal and child deaths must be sustained and accelerated until preventable deaths become increasingly rare.

The Road to Triple Zero

Sierra Leone's progress under the 300 Days of Activism campaign provides evidence that coordinated national action can produce measurable results.

A 32.9% decline in maternal mortality, a 12.4% reduction in child mortality, and the identification and vaccination of 92.6% of the estimated zero-dose target represent important milestones on the journey towards Triple Zero.

But the campaign is not only about statistics. Behind every percentage is a mother whose life may have been saved, a child who has received timely care, and a family whose previously unvaccinated child has now been protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

The message is therefore simple and urgent:

No mother should die from a preventable cause.

No child should die from a preventable illness.

No child should be left unprotected because they have not been reached by the health system.

As Sierra Leone continues its 300 Days of Activism, the focus remains on accelerating these gains, closing remaining gaps and building a health system that reaches every community.

Triple Zero is not only a campaign target. It is a national commitment to protect lives, strengthen the health system and ensure that no one is left.



Government Of Sierra Leone Presidential Address Delivered By His Excellency Dr. Julius Maada Bio G.C.R.S.L
 President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

On the Occasion of the State Opening of the Fourth Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of
 Sierra Leone In the Chamber of Parliament Building Tower Hill, Freetown On Friday, 7th August 2026 At 10:00 a.m.

Continued from last edition

ECONOMY

232. Gold is emerging as a second pillar, with export value increasing by more than fivefold. However, iron ore still accounted for 73.3 per cent of mineral exports, with a single operator responsible for 64.9 per cent. Diversification is therefore essential to protect our economy from shocks affecting any one commodity or company.

233. Twenty new exploration licences issued in 2025 signal renewed investor interest. Planned expansions are expected to create 4,500 additional jobs and increase annual mineral exports to between USD 2 billion and USD 2.5 billion by 2028.

234. Our 2026 minerals reform programme will strengthen artisanal mining, geodata and critical-minerals governance, while promoting greater processing and value addition within Sierra Leone.

235. We are also strengthening price verification, inter-agency revenue coordination and the digital Mines and Minerals Management System to secure a fairer return from our natural resources.

236. Where suspended operations or restructuring threaten jobs and local stability, we will continue working with companies, workers and affected communities.

237. Under the Mines and Minerals Development Act 2022, qualifying companies must contribute at least 1 per cent of gross revenue to Community Development Funds. In 2025, Marampa Mines Limited contributed NLe 83.7 million and Leone Rock Metal Group approximately NLe 62.2 million - a combined total of NLe 145.9 million for host communities.

238. These funds must be managed transparently and invested in local priorities, including roads, water, schools, healthcare and sustainable livelihoods. Mining companies must also meet their environmental obligations, rehabilitate affected land and protect host communities.

239. Women currently represent 18.6 per cent of the mining workforce, while their participation in senior management has risen from 15 per cent to 20.4 per cent. We must accelerate this progress by opening more technical and leadership opportunities to Sierra Leonean women.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

240. The true measure of success is not how much we extract or export, but how mineral wealth improves the lives of our people. We will create decent jobs, strengthen Sierra Leonean businesses and equip our engineers, geologists and other professionals to lead world-class mining operations.

X. TOURISM, CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

241. Our beaches, islands, forests, wildlife, historic sites and cultural traditions offer significant opportunities for jobs, enterprise, investment and foreign-exchange earnings.

242. We are promoting these assets and improving access, infrastructure and standards. Each visitor supports Sierra Leonean livelihoods in lodging, transport, food, guiding, crafts and entertainment.

243. We will strengthen heritage conservation, community-based tourism and cultural festivals, while supporting music, film, fashion, literature, crafts and the performing arts.

244. Through skills development, intellectual property protection, and better access to finance and markets, we will help Sierra Leonean creatives build sustainable livelihoods.

245. The communities that preserve our natural and cultural heritage must also share fairly in the economic benefits.

246. Tourism depends on a country that is both beautiful and safe. Preserving that beauty requires responsible environmental stewardship.

XI. THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

247. Our natural resources must build our future without destroying the land, waters and communities that sustain us.

248. Climate change is already affecting lives. Changing rainfall, flooding, coastal erosion, deforestation and land degradation threaten agriculture, infrastructure, health and livelihoods, especially in vulnerable communities.

249. Illegal logging and indiscriminate tree-cutting for charcoal, scaffolding and other commercial purposes are destroying forests and watersheds, increasing the risks of erosion, flooding and landslides.

250. We will strengthen enforcement, expand reforestation and sustainable woodlots, and promote cleaner alternatives to charcoal.

251. As the heaviest rains approach, responsible agencies must prepare and respond swiftly. Citizens must exercise caution, heed official warnings and stop dumping waste in drains and waterways.

252. Proper urban planning is essential to protecting lives and property. Construction must not be permitted on waterways, drainage channels, unstable slopes or other high-risk locations.

253. We will enforce planning regulations, clear obstructed waterways and, where necessary, lawfully and humanely relocate unlawful settlements from dangerous areas, with appropriate support for vulnerable households.

254. We are strengthening disaster preparedness, early-warning systems, ecosystem restoration, waste and drainage management, and the protection of forests, mangroves, wetlands, watersheds and coastlines.

255. Local councils, planning authorities and environmental agencies must enforce the law consistently, while citizens and businesses share responsibility for protecting our communities and natural resources.

256. Climate resilience must guide how we plan our cities, develop agriculture and build infrastructure. Internationally, Sierra Leone will continue to advocate for fair access to climate finance, technology and support for loss and damage.

257. Development must be sustainable and inclusive. How we share its benefits and costs shapes public trust, national cohesion and confidence in democracy.

XII. NATIONAL COHESION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

258. Our progress as a nation depends on peace, trust and a shared sense of purpose. Development must reach every region and benefit every Sierra Leonean, regardless of ethnicity, gender or political affiliation.

259. Our investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare, agriculture and social protection must reduce regional inequalities, expand opportunity and bring Government closer to the people.

260. Political disagreement is natural in a democracy. Tribalism, hate speech, misinformation and violence, however, divide our people and weaken our Republic.

261. Government, Parliament, political parties, traditional and religious leaders, civil society and the media all have a responsibility to promote tolerance, responsible dialogue and peaceful engagement. Whatever our differences, we are Sierra Leoneans first.

262. In this spirit, I acknowledge the decision of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to discontinue the criminal proceedings against former President Ernest Bai Koroma, in accordance with the authority conferred by Section 45 of the Criminal Procedure Act 2024.

263. I hope this decision will help reduce political tensions, advance reconciliation and enable us to

To be continued next edition

Ministers And Deputies Participate In Final Consultation On Revised Public Financial Management Act



The Ministry of Finance on Friday, August 21, 2026, held the final stakeholder consultation on the proposed revised Public Financial Management (PFM) Act, 2026. The session, held at the Ministry's Conference Room on George Street, Freetown, brought together Ministers, Deputy Ministers and their representatives. It followed previous consultations with key stakeholders and formed part of the Ministry's broader efforts to ensure

that the proposed legislation reflects current economic realities, strengthens fiscal governance and promotes greater accountability and efficiency in the management of public resources.

Chairing the session, Financial Secretary Matthew Dingie described the consultation as an important stage in the review process, noting that public financial management is dynamic and must evolve to address emerging economic, institutional and

technological challenges. He assured Ministers and their representatives that all views, recommendations and concerns raised would be properly documented and carefully considered in refining the draft legislation before it is submitted to Cabinet and subsequently Parliament. Mr. Dingie emphasized the Ministry's commitment to an inclusive, evidence-based and transparent process that safeguards the public interest.

In her address, Acting Minister of Finance Kadiatu Allie welcomed the review of the PFM Act, describing it as timely and essential to strengthening Sierra Leone's fiscal governance framework. She underscored the importance of a modern legal framework capable of supporting effective fiscal planning, sound treasury management, stronger financial oversight and improved management of fiscal risks. She also highlighted the need for the revised Act to recognize digital financial management systems and emerging approaches to public finance.

Technical presentations by the Ministry's legal representative and PFM consultants provided an overview of the 2016 PFM Act, the rationale for its review, emerging issues and key proposed reforms, including new, modified and expanded provisions.

The presentations were followed by discussions during which Ministers, Deputy Ministers and their representatives raised comments, suggestions and concerns on various aspects of the proposed legislation. Participants offered practical recommendations aimed at improving the clarity, effectiveness and applicability of the revised Act and ensuring that it adequately responds to Sierra Leone's public financial management needs. The Ministry assured participants that all contributions and recommendations from the session would be documented and taken into consideration in finalizing the draft. The conclusion of the consultation marks a significant milestone in the review process, with the revised PFM Act expected to proceed to Cabinet for consideration and approval before being submitted to Parliament.

MOF Communications

Development Minister Launches Gender Accountability

The Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Kenyeh Barlay, has officially launched the Gender Accountability Framework and the 2025 Annual Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act 2022, describing the Framework as a critical instrument for strengthening gender equality and accountability across government. The launch took place on Tuesday, 18 August 2026, at the New Brookfields Hotel in Freetown, under the theme: "Strengthening Accountability, Advancing Gender Equality, Delivering Results."

Chairperson of the ceremony, Madam Isata J. Kabba, said the launch marked a defining step in translating Sierra Leone's commitment to gender equality into measurable action, stressing that the GEWE Act 2022 must be backed by accountability to deliver tangible results. She emphasized that gender accountability is a shared responsibility and urged government institutions, the private sector, civil society and development partners to use the Framework to strengthen planning, measure progress and ensure no woman or girl is left behind. Delivering the keynote address, the Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Madam Kenyeh Barlay, said the Gender Accountability Framework is an integral part of Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2024-2030, particularly its gender mainstreaming agenda under Enabler 4. She said the Framework provides the data and performance indicators needed to track progress, translate

national development aspirations into measurable targets and strengthen accountability.

Minister Barlay highlighted progress in women's representation, noting that women in Parliament increased from 13 percent to 30 percent, Cabinet representation from 15 percent to 34 percent, and women's representation in local councils from 18.4 percent to 34 percent. She further disclosed that gender units have been established in 28 ministries, with trained gender focal points supporting the integration of gender perspectives into government planning and programmes.

However, Minister Barlay identified financial inclusion as an area requiring greater attention, noting that only 27 percent of women currently have access to financial services. She called for continued efforts to expand women's access to skills, education, scholarships, employment and senior decision-making positions.

She also called for stronger mechanisms to address sexual harassment, particularly to ensure that women can report cases without fear of intimidation or retaliation.

"Today, we are not just launching a framework; we are presenting evidence of progress," Minister Barlay said, emphasizing the need to build on existing gains while addressing remaining gaps.

The Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs, Dr. Isata J. Mahoi, said the Framework transforms gender commitments into actionable, measurable and enforceable responsibilities, requiring all government institutions and stakeholders to account for progress in implementing the GEWE Act.



Dr. Mahoi stressed that gender mainstreaming must be integrated across all sectors of national development rather than treated as the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs.

United Nations Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone, Madam Serafina Wakana, congratulated the Government on the launch, describing the Framework as an important tool for translating gender commitments into measurable results.

She called on government institutions, Parliament, local authorities, development partners, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations to embrace the Framework as a shared instrument for action.

The Government of Ireland also commended the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs for producing the first

annual report covering implementation across 34 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), while calling for accelerated efforts to ensure that all MDAs meet or exceed the 30 percent minimum target for women in decision-making. The launch brought together government officials, diplomatic representatives from DR Congo and Nigeria, development partners from Ireland and Iceland, UN Women, civil society, private-sector representatives, gender focal points and members of the media. The Gender Accountability Framework is expected to strengthen monitoring of the GEWE Act and ensure that commitments to women and girls translate into measurable actions, improved resource allocation and tangible development results.



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- T-shirts, hats printing & customization
- IC cards, access cards, smart cards
- Trophies, medals, souvenir gifts customization
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Policy & The People

When Education Policy Meets the Classroom

By Alice A. Kamara Esq.

A child entering school is only the beginning of the education journey. What happens after that matters just as much.

Over the years, Sierra Leone has introduced a number of policies and programmes aimed at improving education. From expanding access through the Free Quality School Education programme to promoting greater inclusion and improving the quality of learning across the basic and senior secondary education system.

But policies are ultimately tested in places far removed from the offices where they are written.

They are tested in classrooms.

Can the teacher effectively teach the lesson? Does the school have the resources it needs? Is the learning environment safe and supportive? Can a child who faces particular challenges remain in school and participate fully? And, at the end of the day, are children actually learning?

These questions are important because getting children into school and ensuring that they receive a quality education are not the same thing.

Sierra Leone's education reforms recognise this distinction. The country's Education Sector Plan places improved learning outcomes at the centre of the education agenda, while policies such as Radical Inclusion seek to address barriers that have prevented some children from fully participating in education.

But no education policy can succeed on paper alone. Its success depends on what happens when national policy reaches the school, the teacher, the parent and, ultimately, the child.

That requires more than Government action. It requires teachers who are supported, parents who are engaged, communities that value education and institutions that work together to address the challenges facing schools.

The progress made in education matters. So does the work that remains.

Because the real question is not simply how many children are in school.

It is:

What are they learning, and what kind of future is that learning preparing them for?

MTHE Engages University Leaders On Higher Education Reforms

By Arthur Hedd-Williams, Assistant Director of Information MTHE



The Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) has engaged Vice-Chancellors and Principals of various Universities on key reforms to improve efficiency, accountability and service delivery in Sierra Leone's higher education sector.

The meeting, held on 20 August 2026 at the MTHE Conference Room, Sababu Building, New England Ville, focused on centralised admissions, NUS constitutional reforms, secure certificate production, WanGov digital payments, research and industry partnerships.

The Senior Permanent Secretary of the MTHE, Sheick Kargbo said the engagement formed part of the Ministry's regular consultations with higher education institutions under the sector's performance contract, urging stakeholders to identify challenges and find practical solutions.

The Minister Dr. Haja Ramatulai Wurie called for stronger collaboration with university leadership and highlighted plans for secure local certificate production, digital fee payments through WanGov, centralised admissions and stronger research and industry-linked programmes. She also disclosed that Nigeria's JAMB has offered to deploy technical officers to Sierra Leone for 12 months to support the centralised admissions system.

The Government Printer and also Managing Director Salifu L. Suma said the Government Printing Department, which was the first Printing Department in British West Africa, has the capacity to produce secure academic certificates locally, using features such as QR codes, UV ink, watermarks, micro-printing, security threads and embossing.

Dugba Kenneh, CTO of Korlin Ltd WanGov, explained that WanGov will allow students and sponsors to make and track payments digitally, while integration with university systems will improve payment verification and transparency.

In giving an update on the activities of the National Union of Sierra Leone Students (NUS), the Director of Higher Education Emmanuel J. Momoh Esq said that NUS is set to review its constitution to provide clear guidelines for leadership and the conduct of future elections.

The meeting reaffirmed MTHE's commitment to digitalisation, secure certificate production, improved admissions, research development and stronger governance across the higher education sector.

The meeting was climaxed with the signing of performance contracts between the Minister and the various University Heads to ensure implementation of key deliverables.

Minister Barlay Commends ECOWAS Volunteers For Three Years Of Dedicated Service To Sierra Leone



The Minister of Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Kenyeh Barlay, has today 20th August, 2026 commended nine (9) outgoing ECOWAS Volunteers for their dedicated service and contribution to communities across Sierra Leone, particularly in the health and education sectors. Hon. Barlay made the commendation at an end-of-service ceremony marking the completion of the volunteers' three-year assignment under the 2023-2026 ECOWAS Volunteer Programme at the Ministry's Conference Hall at Tower Hill in Freetown.

The Minister described the occasion as a bittersweet moment, particularly for the seven volunteers from other ECOWAS member states who had spent three years in Sierra Leone, while also recognizing the contributions of the two Sierra Leonean volunteers who served in different communities. She said the volunteers arrived with professional expertise, passion and a commitment to make a difference, and succeeded in positively impacting schoolchildren, patients, young people and communities through their work in schools, hospitals and health centres.

"You have made a difference to the lives of the many beneficiaries," Hon. Barlay said, commending the volunteers for demonstrating selfless service and strengthening the bonds of regional solidarity. She noted that their service had helped empower communities and build bridges across cultures and borders, leaving behind a legacy of dedication, compassion and excellence.

She encouraged the volunteers to carry pleasant memories of Sierra Leone and assured them that the country would always remain a home for them.

She further expressed appreciation to the ECOWAS Commission for investing in the Volunteer Programme, describing it as a valuable aspect of Sierra Leone's partnership with ECOWAS and an important contribution to regional cooperation, peace and development.

In his remark, The ECOWAS Resident Representative in Sierra Leone, Ambassador John Azumah,

also commended the volunteers for serving as ambassadors of ECOWAS and promoting the values of unity, solidarity and regional integration. He encouraged them to maintain the relationships they established in Sierra Leone and continue contributing to the ideals of ECOWAS. Delivering farewell remarks on behalf of the Commissioner, Mr. Francis Njoaguani, ECOWAS Volunteer Programme Country Coordinator Preaches G. GBessaangee thanked the volunteers for their service, particularly their contributions to education and health. He urged them to remain connected to the ECOWAS

family and take advantage of future opportunities within the regional institution.

The Deputy Development Secretary II and Head of the ECOWAS National Office, Mr. Komba Momoh who chaired the programme, also commended the volunteers for their diligent service, noting that many of the schools and institutions where they worked would miss their contributions.

He also highlighted the importance of the programme in advancing ECOWAS integration and fostering relationships among citizens across the region.

Giving the vote of thanks on behalf of the volunteers, Obinna Joseph Ziba, a Chemistry/Physics Teacher in Pujehun, expressed appreciation to the ECOWAS Commission, host institutions, supervisors, coordinators, the Old Boys Association of St. Paul's Secondary School and other stakeholders for their support throughout the volunteers' assignments.

He particularly thanked the host institutions and their leadership for providing the guidance and assistance that enabled the

volunteers to successfully deliver on their responsibilities, while pledging that the volunteers would continue to uphold the confidence placed in them.

The programme climaxed with the presentation of gifts and certificates to the nine outgoing volunteers. The volunteers received locally made traditional Sierra Leonean outfits bearing the national green, white and blue colours, while certificates were presented by their respective supervisors in recognition of their service.

The ceremony brought together government officials, ECOWAS representatives, principals and vice principals of host schools, health-sector representatives, supervisors, development partners and other stakeholders to celebrate the volunteers' contribution to Sierra Leone. The nine volunteers, drawn from various ECOWAS member states, including two Sierra Leonean nationals, served in different communities and institutions, further strengthening the bonds of friendship, solidarity and regional integration between Sierra Leone and other ECOWAS member states.

MoPED Communications

Local Tax Launched In Western Rural District

By Sahr Sewa, Senior Information Officer, MLGCA

The Acting Minister of Local Government and Community Affairs (MLGCA), Alfred Moi Jamiru, has officially launched the 2026 Local Tax in Ward C, Western Rural District, with a call on residents to support local development by paying their taxes. Speaking at the launch, the Acting Minister described local tax as one of the most important sources of revenue for local councils and urged residents to take it seriously. He explained that payment of local tax is closely linked to participation in community governance, noting that those who qualify as taxpayers can become eligible to participate in the election of various Community Leaders. "Local tax is a very, very important tax," the Acting Minister emphasized, while expressing concern that some people appear to place greater value on the National Identification Card than on their local tax obligations. According to him, while the National ID card provides national identity, the local tax serves as an important form of community identification and contributes directly to the development of local communities. Minister Jamiru said the government demands that Local Councils raise enough funds to embark on developing their communities, and not depend entirely on central government funding for development. He explained that local councils need to generate their own-source revenue through local tax, market dues and other locally generated revenues to provide services to their communities.



He therefore called on Village heads, residents, community leaders, marketing officers and other citizens to educate people about the importance of paying local tax and encourage others to do the same. The Acting Minister also urged local council authorities to ensure that the revenue collected through local tax is properly used in service delivery in the communities. He said that Minister, Amb. Tamba Lamina, had been working with Local Councils to strengthen the local tax system. Acting Minister Jamiru therefore encouraged residents to comply with their obligations. Meanwhile, the Acting Chief Administrator of the Western Rural District Council, Peter A. Koroma, said the council had put measures in place to ensure transparency and accountability in the distribution and sale of the 2026 local tax receipt books.

He explained that the council had developed Memoranda of Understanding with various Union

groups that will assist with the sale of the local tax. Under the agreements, he said, the conditions, time frame, responsibilities and incentives for those involved in selling the books are clearly stated. The Groups will receive a small percentage as an incentive based on the number of books they sell. Koroma added that the agreements would also help the Council keep proper records of the receipt books issued and ensure that sellers account for the books allocated to them and revenues collected. He warned against the unauthorized distribution or sale of local tax receipt books, noting that individuals would only be issued receipt books after signing the appropriate agreement with the Council. The launch concluded with a ceremonial presentation of local tax receipt books, marking the commencement of the sale of the 2026 local tax collection in Ward C. The council is expected to continue engaging communities and stakeholders to increase awareness of local tax and improve revenue mobilization for local development.

Five Takeaways From VP Juldeh Jalloh's Local Government Tour

By Mohamed Jaward Nyallay, Strategic Communications Adviser, MOICE

Twenty-two years after Sierra Leone returned to elected local government, the jury is still out on one important question: has decentralization delivered the kind of governance transformation we imagined when we decided to revive it?

The question is not an indictment of the system. If anything, it is a recognition that decentralization is a long institutional project. In a post-war country like Sierra Leone, its logic was always compelling. The idea was that government would become more responsive when citizens could participate closer to where they live, and that local institutions could help rebuild the legitimacy of the state.

Bardhan and Mookherjee, in *Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing Countries*, make this case quite well. Decentralization, they argue, can expand political space, improve accountability and encourage citizen participation in public affairs, thereby strengthening state legitimacy.

But there is a second part to the argument that is sometimes missed: decentralization only works when the institutions closest to citizens are empowered to function.

That is what made Vice President Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh's recent engagement with local councils particularly important. The tour was not simply another government visit to the districts. It was an opportunity to listen to the people running the machinery of local governance, understand what is working, identify where the system is struggling and think through how central government can make decentralization more effective. There was something refreshing about the approach.

Rather than beginning with a list of instructions from Freetown, the conversation began with listening.

And five things stood out:

1. Listening is a serious instrument of governance

In government, listening can sometimes be mistaken for courtesy.

It is much more than that.

For a Vice President sitting with mayors, chairpersons, Paramount Chiefs and local administrators, the value is not simply in hearing their grievances. It is in acquiring a different kind of information - information that is generated from the point where policies actually meet citizens.

A policy may look perfectly sound from Freetown. Its implementation can look very different in a district like Falaba. Local authorities know where the pressure points are. They know which services are struggling, which communities are growing rapidly, where infrastructure is inadequate and where the gap between policy and implementation is widest.

That local knowledge should matter to national policy-making. The Vice President's engagement therefore demonstrated something important: governance is also a process of information gathering.

The centre needs the districts as much as the districts need the centre.

When local government speaks and central government listens, national policy becomes better informed by the realities of implementation. That is not merely good politics. It is good public administration.

2. Respect between central and local government is reciprocal

There is an interesting tension at the heart of decentralization.

Local councils have responsibilities that affect citizens directly, but they operate within a national system in which central government remains responsible for policy, financing and, in many cases, the completion of devolution itself.

This means decentralization cannot be understood simply as "Freetown giving power to the districts."

It is better understood as a negotiated distribution of authority.

Some responsibilities have been devolved, while others remain incomplete. In some instances, responsibilities have moved without sufficient

resources following them.

That creates a familiar problem in public administration: you cannot easily hold an institution accountable for delivering a function if it does not have the authority or resources to perform it. This is why the Vice President's decision to engage directly with local authorities matters.

Listening to local government is an acknowledgement that these institutions are not merely implementing arms of central government. They are important democratic institutions in their own

right.

And respect in governance works both ways.

The centre must support local government to perform. Local government, in turn, must demonstrate that it can use the authority and resources entrusted to it responsibly.

That symbiotic relationship is fundamental to making devolution work.

3. Sustainability could become the next big test

There is a less obvious challenge facing decentralization: success itself creates new demands.

As populations grow, towns expand. Places that once had relatively modest needs begin to look and function like major urban centres.

The demand for waste management, drainage, roads, markets, health facilities, sanitation and public spaces grows with them.

But local revenue does not always grow at the same pace.

This raises a difficult question: how do we build local governments that are financially sustainable enough to meet the needs of increasingly demanding populations?

This is one of the issues that deserves much more attention. Central government transfers will remain important, but a sustainable local government system will also require stronger local revenue mobilisation, better financial management, improved planning and greater economic activity within localities.

The Vice President's engagement helped bring this issue to the fore.

As someone who is interested in local governance delivery, I have always believed that, the future of decentralization will not only depend on how much authority we devolve. It will also depend on whether we can build the fiscal and institutional capacity to sustain that authority.

4. Government does not have all the answers

Perhaps one of the most important lessons from the tour was that solutions do not always have to come from the center, they can come from the base too.

This is one of the fundamental ideas behind decentralization.

The people closest to a problem often have the clearest understanding of how to solve it.

A council may have developed a better approach to waste management. Another may have found a more effective way of mobilising local revenue. A third may have developed a more meaningful way of involving citizens in local decision-making.

These are not isolated experiments. They are potential lessons for the wider governance system.

The role of central government should therefore not always be to prescribe.

Sometimes it should be to listen, identify what works and create the conditions for those solutions to be



scaled.

In that sense, local government can become a laboratory for governance innovation. This is one of the reasons the Vice President's engagement was important. It created space for local experiences to feed into the national conversation.

5. There is still reason to believe in decentralization

After 22 years, it would be easy to focus only on what has not worked.

But that would miss the bigger picture.

Sierra Leone has rebuilt a local government system from the ashes of the civil war. Councils now form part of the country's institutional architecture. They provide a critical channel through which citizens interact with the state and through which government delivers services at the last mile.

The system is not perfect.

But institutional development is rarely linear. There are still challenges around capacity, resources, accountability and the completion of devolution. Yet there is also evidence that the system can continue to evolve.

This is where political leadership becomes important.

The Vice President's tour was significant not because it solved all the problems of local government in one engagement. It could not.

Its value was in recognising that the problems are worth listening to, discussing and solving.

There is something inherently democratic about that process. Fareed Zakaria said last week on his GPS program on CNN about democracy; democracy is not designed for speed, it is designed for legitimacy. It consults, bargains, compromises and balances competing interests.

Decentralization is much the same.

It can be frustratingly slow. It can be messy. It can produce disagreements between institutions, local authorities and different expectations about who should do what. But that is partly because it is bringing more people into the business of governance.

The lesson from the Vice President's tour, is that decentralization remains unfinished business.

The task now is to listen more carefully, devolve more meaningfully, finance local government more sustainably and give local institutions enough space to innovate. Because government does not happen only in Freetown.

It happens in the council offices in Pujehun, the markets at Sembehun, the communities in Kamakwei and the neighbourhoods in Tagrin where citizens experience the state every day.

And when national leadership takes the time to go there, listen and engage, it does something important.

It reminds us that decentralization is not simply an administrative reform.

It is a democratic promise - and Vice President Juldeh Jalloh's tour showed that the government remains

300 Days of Activism
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workers dae call
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ENTERTAINMENT

Dolly Parton: Remembering an American Icon Who Gave the World Music, Laughter and Love

By Marian Magdalene Bangura

The world has lost one of its most beloved entertainers. Dolly Parton, the legendary American country music singer, songwriter, actress, author, businesswoman and philanthropist whose extraordinary career stretched across nearly six decades, died peacefully in Nashville, Tennessee, on **August 25, 2026**, at the age of 80. Her death was announced by her family, and reports said she had recently faced a brief battle with cancer. With her passing, the world says goodbye to an artist who was far more than a country music superstar. Dolly Parton was a cultural institution—a woman whose voice, songwriting, personality, unmistakable appearance, humour, business acumen and extraordinary generosity made her one of America's most enduring global icons. For millions who grew up listening to her music, watching her movies or reading stories distributed through her literacy programmes, Dolly was simply unforgettable. From a Little Girl in East Tennessee to a Global Superstar

Dolly Rebecca Parton was born on January 19, 1946, in the rural community of Locust Ridge in Sevier County, Tennessee, the fourth of 12 children born to Robert Lee Parton Sr. and Avie Lee Parton.

She grew up in poverty in the Great Smoky Mountains, in a small cabin where music and family played central roles in her upbringing. Her difficult childhood would later become one of the richest sources of inspiration for her songwriting. Her famous song "Coat of Many Colors" was inspired by her mother's attempt to make her a coat from pieces of fabric when the family could not afford new clothes.

Dolly began performing while still a child, singing in church and appearing on local radio and television. By the age of 13, she had performed at the Grand Ole Opry, introduced by the legendary Johnny Cash.

After graduating from high school in 1964, she moved to Nashville, determined to build a career in music.

And she did.

The Songwriter Behind the Hits

Although the world came to know Dolly as a performer, one of her greatest gifts was her ability to tell stories through songwriting.

She wrote hundreds of songs throughout her career, many of which became classics recorded not only by herself but by some of the biggest names in music.

Among her most celebrated compositions is "I Will Always Love You," which she originally wrote and recorded as a farewell to her professional partner Porter Wagoner. The song became a country classic before being transformed into a global pop phenomenon when Whitney Houston recorded it for **The Bodyguard** soundtrack in 1992.

Other unforgettable Dolly Parton songs include:

- * "Jolene"
- * "9 to 5"
- * "Coat of Many Colors"
- * "Hello God"

- * "Here You Come Again"
- * "Islands in the Stream" with Kenny Rogers
- * "Joshua"
- * "Two Doors Down"
- * "Why'd You Come in Here Lookin' Like That"
- * "Light of a Clear Blue Morning"
- * "Dumb Blonde"
- * "Applejack"
- * "Travelin' Thru"
- * "The Bargain Store"
- * "Tennessee Homesick Blues"

Her songwriting was characterised by emotional honesty, vivid storytelling and an extraordinary ability to transform ordinary experiences into

universal stories of love, heartbreak, poverty, ambition, family and hope.

A Marriage That Lasted Nearly Six Decades
Dolly Parton's personal life was remarkably different from the glamorous world surrounding her career.

She married Carl Thomas Dean on May 30, 1966, in a small ceremony in Ringgold, Georgia. Dolly was 20 and Carl was 23. Unlike his famous wife, Carl Dean deliberately avoided the entertainment spotlight and lived a largely private life. Their

relationship nevertheless endured for almost six decades.

The couple renewed their wedding vows in 2016 to mark their 50th wedding anniversary. Carl died in March 2025 at the age of 82.

Dolly and Carl never had children of their own. However, Dolly maintained a close relationship with her large extended family, particularly her nieces and nephews, who affectionately gave her the nickname **"Aunt Granny."** She was also the godmother of singer and actress Miley Cyrus. Dolly often spoke about her decision not to have children with remarkable acceptance, saying she believed it allowed her the freedom to build her career and dedicate herself to helping other children around the world.

From Music to Hollywood

Dolly Parton was not content to remain within the boundaries of country music.

She successfully crossed into Hollywood, becoming a celebrated actress with memorable performances in films including **9 to 5**, **The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas**, **Rhinestone**, **Steel Magnolias**, **Straight Talk**, **Joyful Noise**, and **The Beverly Hillbillies**.

Her performance in **9 to 5**, alongside Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin, became particularly iconic. The film's title song also earned Parton an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song.

Her acting career further demonstrated the extraordinary range of a woman who could sing,



write, act, produce, entertain and connect with audiences across generations.

A Career Filled with Honours

Dolly's contribution to music and entertainment earned her an extraordinary collection of awards and honours.

She won 11 Grammy Awards, received an Emmy Award, earned **two Academy Award**

nominations, and was recognised by both the ***Country Music Hall of Fame and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame**.

She was also an honorary Oscar recipient and became one of the rare entertainers to receive recognition across

America's major entertainment institutions. Her achievements were not limited to music.

She became a successful entrepreneur and the driving force behind Dollywood, the celebrated theme park in Tennessee that became one of the region's major attractions.

But perhaps her most profound legacy was not a trophy, a hit record or a movie.

It was a book.

The Gift of Books to Millions of Children

In 1995, Dolly Parton launched the Imagination Library, a literacy initiative inspired in part by her father's inability to read and write.

The programme began by providing free books to young children in her home community before expanding nationally and eventually internationally.

Sierra Leone Correctional Service Delegation Holds Study Tour In Liberia To Strengthen Corrections Cooperation



A delegation of senior officers from the Sierra Leone Correctional Service (SLCS), led by Director General Joseph John Senessie, is currently in Monrovia, Liberia, on a study tour aimed at deepening institutional cooperation between the SLCS and the Liberia Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation supervised by the Ministry of Justice.

The visit follows a letter written in June this year by the SLCS to the Minister of

Justice of Liberia, in which the Service formally requested a partnership with the Liberia Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation, encompassing exchange visits, joint training and the sharing of best practices in correctional administration. A subsequent letter, submitted in August through the Sierra Leone Foreign Office in Freetown, formalised the request for a study tour running from 23 to 26 August 2026.

The delegation, which includes the

Director General, the Director of Policy Planning and Legal Services, the Director of Human Resource, the Principal Staff office 2, the Deputy Procurement Officer, three drivers and a security detail for the Director General, arrived in Monrovia on 23 August. Owing to a public holiday in Liberia, official engagements commenced on 25 August, following a courtesy visit on 24 August from Liberia's Assistant Minister of Justice for Corrections, and Rehabilitation, Ministry of Justice by the name of Atty. Gabriel F. Ndupelleh who heads the Liberia Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

On 25 August, the SLCS team was received at the Assistant Minister of Justice for Corrections and Rehabilitation, where the Director General and his team met with Liberia's Solicitor General. The Assistant Minister of Justice for Corrections and Rehabilitation introduced his working team and outlined the framework for the Sierra Leonean delegation's visit. Discussions were described as fruitful.

The delegation subsequently toured the Monrovia Central (Maximum) Prison to observe facility operations, before proceeding to Judiciary specifically the Office of the Administrator General for further engagement with the Administrator

General, his deputy and other staff. The day's programme concluded with a meeting with the Justice presiding over Liberia's main Magistrate Court. The study tour is intended to allow both institutions to learn from one another's systems, policies and practices in corrections administration, with particular focus on areas including institutional management, prison security and intelligence, inmate rehabilitation and reintegration, staff development, policy planning and monitoring, inmate welfare and vocational training, use of technology and records management, health and psychosocial services, care for women and juveniles in custody, and public-private partnerships in corrections reform.

Lessons drawn from the visit are expected to be shared with wider SLCS staff through management debriefings, town hall meetings and knowledge-sharing sessions, in support of the Service's ongoing reform and modernisation agenda.

The delegation is scheduled to depart Liberia for Freetown on 26 August. Liberia's Assistant Minister for Justice and Rehabilitation has indicated that, the team will be taken to view the proposed relocation site for the Monrovia Central Prison.

Mamawa S. Richards, Information Attaché, Sierra Leone Embassy, Monrovia, Liberia

At Special Town Hall to address threats to quality education.... Citizens Demand Tougher Measures To Tackle Exam Malpractice

Speaking on the recently announced NPSE results, Hon. Conrad Sackey, the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, clarified concerns surrounding the withholding of 1,927 results. He explained that about 161,000 candidates took the examination and that the overall pass rate stood at 78.2 percent. According to the Minister, approximately 1,640 of the withheld results were not necessarily linked to examination malpractice but were affected because schools had failed to submit the pupils' continuous assessment grades. He said the decision to withhold the results was intended to protect the

interests of affected pupils, particularly those whose continuous assessment scores could improve their chances of gaining admission to highly competitive schools. Hon. Sackey further stated that alleged cases of examination malpractice accounted for only about 0.2 percent of the affected results. Nevertheless, he stressed that the Government remained committed to eliminating malpractice through stronger laws, public awareness and technology. He disclosed that a new education Act would strengthen the legal framework for addressing wrongdoing, while digital systems were increasingly being used to

detect duplication and other irregularities. He also noted that 58 principals had previously been suspended for one year without pay and warned that further punitive measures would be taken where there was sufficient evidence of malpractice or maladministration.

The Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission, Francis Ben Kaifala, also delivered a strong warning against impunity and attempts to justify examination malpractice. He said the ACC's intervention in examination-related matters was not intended to make the Commission a permanent monitor of examinations, but rather to draw attention to failures within the administrative system. According to him, investigations had revealed coordinated malpractice involving, in some instances, principals, teachers, parents, examination administrators and other individuals. He urged that education authorities establish effective internal systems to prevent and address such practices.

Commissioner Kaifala maintained that poor salaries should not be used as an excuse for cheating or facilitating examination malpractice. He disclosed that the ACC currently had a teacher in custody in connection with allegations involving examination scripts and the solicitation of money from parents. He stressed that individuals found engaging in exam malpractice must be held accountable, saying the country could not continue to compromise the future of its children through excuses and weak enforcement. He called for a collective commitment to finding practical solutions and restoring integrity to the education system. Meanwhile, Hon. Dr. Haja Ramatulai Wurie, Minister of Technical and Higher Education, raised concerns about threats to quality within universities and other higher education institutions. She warned that examination malpractice was gradually becoming normalised in society and said

the cycle must be broken before students carry such practices into their professional lives. Drawing on her experience as a lecturer, Head of Department and Dean before becoming Minister, she stressed the importance of educators serving as examples to students and promoting a culture of zero tolerance for academic dishonesty. The Minister also highlighted technology as an important tool for improving accountability, transparency and efficiency in higher education. She proposed the expansion of digital examination platforms, including computer-based tests, randomised question banks and the use of artificial intelligence to support the marking of certain types of assessments, subject to quality checks by academic authorities. She said such systems could reduce unnecessary human interference and minimise opportunities for cheating, while noting that their nationwide implementation would require significant investment in ICT infrastructure and resources. On the broader issue of quality assurance, Dr. Wurie expressed concern about unaccredited institutions, unapproved programmes and fake academic qualifications. She said the Ministry would work with regulatory bodies, including the relevant technical and tertiary education authorities, to strengthen oversight and make information on accredited institutions and programmes more accessible to the public. She urged parents and students to verify the accreditation status of institutions before enrolling, emphasising that Sierra Leone could not afford to compromise the quality of education for the young people who would become the country's future leaders. The Town Hall concluded with a renewed call for Government, regulatory institutions, schools, teachers, parents, students, civil society and the media to work together to protect the integrity and quality of education in Sierra Leone.

CHANGE OF NAME

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that by a Deed Poll dated the 24th day of July, 2026 and registered in the office of the Registrar-General as NO.1178/2026 as page 18 in Volume 213 in the Book of Miscellaneous Instruments kept at the office of the Registrar-General in Freetown I **MOSES WILLIAM FORNAH [MR]** of No. 11 Grandcess Street, Krootown Road, Freetown, a



citizen of Sierra Leone by birth formally and absolutely renounced and abandoned the first name and surname of **MOSES WILLIAMS** and have assumed and adopted and intend thenceforth upon all occasions whatsoever to use and subscribe to the first name of **MOSES WILLIAM** and the surname **FORNAH** instead of the first **MOSES** and the surname of **WILLIAMS** so as to be at all times thereafter called, known and described by the names of **MOSES WILLIAM FORNAH [MR]** exclusively.

DATED THE 18TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2026

Young Leone Stars Gain Valuable Lessons Despite Early Exit At FIBA Zone II U-16



Sierra Leone's U-16 Male Basketball Team ended their campaign at the FIBA Africa Zone II U-16 Tournament on August 23rd after two tough group stage matches in Dakar. The young Leone Stars opened with an 88-45 loss to tournament hosts Senegal, before falling 70-31 to Cape Verde in their second outing. The results meant Sierra Leone did not progress to the knockout phase of the competition. Despite the defeats, the tournament provided crucial international exposure for the squad. Coaches and officials said the experience will be vital in the players' long-term development as Sierra Leone continues to build its youth basketball program. The Sierra Leone Basketball Federation praised the team's effort and commitment, noting that competing against established programs like Senegal and Cape Verde offers lessons that cannot be learned at home. With a growing pool of young talent, the federation says the focus now shifts to grassroots development and preparing for future regional competitions. The aim is to turn this year's challenges into progress ahead of the next FIBA Zone II cycle.

SLFA Officials Land Four Major CAF Appointments In September

Sierra Leone's football administration has earned fresh continental recognition after CAF handed multiple appointments to three SLFA officials for key matches next month. SLFA Vice President 2 Prince Kai Saquee has been named Match Commissioner, while Referees Manager Alhaji Sanusi Rasheed will serve as Referee Assessor for the CAF Confederation Cup preliminary round tie between Nigeria's El Kanemi Warriors FC and União Desportiva on September 6, 2026. The same duo will also handle those roles in the TotalEnergies CAF AFCON 2027 Qualifier between Gambia and Somalia on September 25. Meanwhile, Mohamed Alphaka Conteh has been designated Match Commissioner for the AFCON 2027 Qualifier between Cape Verde and Rwanda on September 29. Conteh has also been tapped for the Confederation Cup preliminary round clash between Nigeria's Shooting Stars SC and Tunisia's CS Sfaxien. The SLFA said the appointments reflect CAF's growing confidence in Sierra Leonean officials and highlight the association's focus on professionalism and competence on the continental stage.



Prince Kai Saquee—
Match Commissioner



Alhaji Sanusi Rasheed—
Referee Assessor



Mohamed Alphaka Conteh Esq. —
Match Commissioner

PRINCE KAI SAQUEE- SLFA Vice President 2

- Match Commissioner
- CAF Confederation Cup Preliminary Round El Kanemi Warriors FC vs União Desportiva

ALHAJI SANUSI RASHEED- SLFA Referees Manager

- Referee Assessor
- CAF Confederation Cup Preliminary Round El Kanemi Warriors FC v União Desportiva

BOTH OFFICIALS ALSO APPOINTED FOR:

TotalEnergies AFCON 2027 Qualifiers Gambia vs Somalia

MOHAMED ALPHAKA CONTEH- Executive Director (NSA)

- Match Commissioner
- TotalEnergies AFCON 2027 Qualifiers Cape Verde and Rwanda
- CAF Confederation Cup Preliminary Round Shooting Stars SC vs CS Sfaxien

Waterloo FC Turn To Experienced Sillah To Lead Fry Fish Boys



Waterloo FC have appointed veteran coach Sillah as their new head coach ahead of the upcoming Sierra Leone football season. The club confirmed the move this week, tasking Sillah with taking charge of the Fry Fish Boys as preparations begin for the new campaign. His immediate mandate will be to build a competitive squad and get the team ready for the challenges ahead. Sillah arrives with notable experience from the Sierra Leone Premier League. He previously handled technical duties at East End Lions and Bhantal FC, two of the country's established clubs. That background is expected to bring leadership, tactical knowledge and familiarity with the local league to Waterloo. Club officials say the appointment is part of a broader push to strengthen the team and improve on last season's performance. With preseason set to kick off soon, all eyes will be on how Sillah shapes the Fry Fish Boys into contenders for the upcoming season. Credit: Miracle Kargbo