

LEGAL LINK

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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



RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY:

The Executive Director and Interns of LEGAL LINK

2022

DEDICATION

This 2022 Annual report is dedicated to the vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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

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FOREWORD

The 10th of December every year marks the official anniversary of LEGAL LINK. Exceptionally, we are commemorating our 4th anniversary this year on the 13th because the 10th fell on a Saturday. The 10th of December is usually referred to as **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**. It is a day set aside by the UN family to reflect and showcase how much successes have been garnered within its 194 member states in the push for compliance and respect for human rights. Such a day is also celebrated to remind states of the numerous challenges regarding adherence to their human rights obligations and commitments under International Human Rights Law. What a joy and privilege to have LEGAL LINK celebrate its anniversary every year on this great day called International Human Rights Day.

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

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

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

After my return to Sierra Leone in 2015 and a brief work in public institutions, I, together with a few Christian lawyers and human rights activists decided to officially launch the organization for full operation on the 10th of December 2018. And just four years on, LEGAL LINK has become a household name not just in Sierra Leone but within the Africa continent winning awards and making tremendous impact in the lives of vulnerable groups. TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY! In this fourth annual report therefore, an attempt has been made to showcase some of the key activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK in the year 2022 as well as the successes and challenges encountered as it seeks to defend the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone. Thanks to the Good Lord and all our pastors, sponsors, Board members, interns & volunteers for making this happen.



MEET THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF LEGAL LINK



Rashid Dumbuya Esq.

Thomas Moore Conteh

Morlai Conteh



Pst. Paul Ken Bockarie

Mrs. Shyryl Joy Dumbuya

Andrew Johnson Esq.

MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF LEGAL LINK

Paul Ken Bockarie (Board Chairman)

Pastor Gift Shekune

Rev. Morsay

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

Rashid Dumbuya Esq (Executive Director)

Miss Larisha Faulkner (Acting Board Secretary)

MEET THE LEGAL INTERNS & HUMAN RIGHTS VOLUNTEERS AT LEGAL LINK



A CROSS SECTION OF LEGAL VOLUNTEERS AT LEGAL LINK





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

PART ONE:

ABOUT LEGAL LINK- WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**CHRISTIAN LAWYERS CENTRE
LEGAL LINK**

Motto: "Defending the Rights of Vulnerable Groups in Society"

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

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



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WHO WE ARE

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

VISION STATEMENT

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

OFFICE ADDRESS

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

MOTTO

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

LOGO

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

CORE VALUES

Our core values include:

LOVE

INTEGRITY

COMPASSION

COMMITMENT

SPEED

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

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

Religious Communities

Persons with Disabilities

Amputees

War Wounded

Ebola/COVID-19 Survivors

Orphans

Abused children

Abused women

Older persons

Environmental Rights

Labourers Rights

Prisoners Rights

Indigenous Peoples Rights

Human Rights Defenders

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SPIRITUAL HEADS & MENTORS

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

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

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

MEMBERS

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

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

WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

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

TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

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

CORE WORK AND MANDATE

The objects for which the company is established are: -

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

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

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

CRITERIA TO BENEFIT FROM THE LEGAL AID PROVIDED BY LEGAL LINK

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

RIGHTS AND BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

A fully registered and paid up member is entitled to:

Use the Centre's library and research materials.

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

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

Enjoy free legal training, tutorials and capacity building.

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

Can participate in all programmes undertaken by the organization.

Can enjoy free legal assistance as and when required.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

Members of LEGAL LINK have a responsibility to:

Support the vision of LEGAL LINK at all times.

Uphold the core values of the organization

Provide voluntary services to vulnerable groups

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

Attend meetings at all times.

Pay monthly subscriptions as and when the need arises.

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

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

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

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

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

METHODOLOGY OF THE REPORT

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

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The scope of this report covered the activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK in promoting, protecting, advocating and defending the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone in the year 2022.

PART TWO

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY LEGAL LINK WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

PROMINENT INTERNATIONAL DAYS COMMEMORATED BY LEGAL LINK

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

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

On the 14th February, 2022, LEGAL LINK celebrated Valentine's Day and made donations to the Aged at the Old People's Home and the abandoned children at Manaheim Children Orphanage at Grafton, Freetown.

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

The programme was climaxed with prayers and beautiful songs of appreciations from the old people living in the home.



b) LEGAL LINK Commemorates International Women's Day, Convenes the 1st Girls Empowerment Seminar and Launches the Freedom Project for Women and Girls in Sierra Leone

LEGAL LINK, on the 9th of March 2022, at the Africell American Corner, Bathurst Street, Freetown, commemorated the International Women's Day by convening the **1st Girls Empowerment Seminar and Launched the Freedom Project for Women and Girls in Sierra Leone.**

While launching the project, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq emphasized that the Freedom Project is a project that seeks to provide specialized legal services for women and girls who are victims of early marriage, forced labour, sexual and gender based violence, female genital mutilation, human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual exploitation etc.

At the end of the Empowerment Seminar, many of the participants thanked LEGAL LINK for bringing up such a timely and brilliant initiative to help protect and promote the rights of women and girls in Sierra Leone.



c) LEGAL LINK Commemorates International Albinism Day and Organizes a Friendly Football Match with the Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism

In fulfillment of its mandate to advocate, defend and raise awareness about the rights of persons with Albinism in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK on the 13th June 2022, celebrated the

International Day of Persons with Albinism by organizing a successful friendly football match at the S.S. Camp football pitch with the **Sierra Leone Association of Persons with Albinism**

The friendly match, codenamed "**FOOTBALL WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION**" was geared towards creating a platform for Persons with Albinism to exhibit their talents especially in the area of sports and other recreational activities.

LEGAL LINK used the occasion to call upon the government to provide the necessary opportunities for PWA's to also showcase their talents in sports both in the country and beyond particularly in the para- Olympic games.

The match ended in victory for the Persons with Albinism and in a joyful party celebration.



d) LEGAL LINK Celebrates Nelson Mandela International Day by feeding the Poor and the vulnerable

In honour of Mandela's legacy and quest to change the world for the better, **LEGAL LINK** celebrated **Nelson Mandela International Day** on the 18th July 2022 in Sierra Leone by feeding the poor and persons with disabilities in the street of Freetown.

On this auspicious day, LEGAL LINK together with other volunteers have donated food items such as rice, maggie, onions, water, etc to the disability community at PWD compound, Pa Demba Road, House of Jesus for the Disabled and beggars hanging around the cotton tree area in the Central Business District of Freetown.

Beneficiaries expressed great delight that the organization could come out even in the rains to bring them food in their homes to eat as well as their children. The Chairman at the House of Jesus for the Disabled remarked that: "**I am overwhelmed with this love you have shown to us today and may God richly bless you for all you have done for us.**

The distribution exercise ended by 3pm with interns and volunteers returning to the office in wet clothes but with great enthusiasm and satisfaction.



e) **LEGAL LINK Celebrates International Human Rights Day and its 4TH Anniversary**

LEGAL LINK, on the 13th of December 2022 at the Africell American Corner, successfully celebrated the International Human Rights Day and its 4th anniversary and also gave an update about its 4th annual report in defense of the rights of religious communities and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.

It should be noted that the 10th of December every year marks the official anniversary of LEGAL LINK. Exceptionally, the organization commemorated its 4th anniversary on the 13th December 2022 because the 10th fell on a Saturday.

During the celebration of its 4th anniversary which was well attended by interns, lawyers, law students, civil society organizations and representatives from the religious communities and vulnerable groups, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, thanked God for making LEGAL LINK to see its 4th anniversary and to also celebrate it in grand style and with outstanding achievements to show for it. He further explained in summary about the myriad of activities undertaken by LEGAL LINK in 2022 as well as the great successes achieved.



PHILANTHROPISM ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY LEGAL LINK WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

a) Donations to the Blind at the Milton Margai School for the Blind, Freetown

Consistent with passion and quest to improving the lives and livelihoods for vulnerable persons in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK on the 9th of December 2022 donated food items such as rice, oil,

onions and water to the Blind at the Milton Margai School for the Blind, Wilkinson Road, Freetown.

The leadership of the Milton Margai School for the Blind expressed delight over the food items and thanked LEGAL LINK for coming to their aid at a time when everyone seemed to have forgotten about them. The programme was climaxed with beautiful Christmas carols as appreciations from blind student themselves.





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

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

The aged and orphans were also given pin ups as a gesture of LEGAL LINK's love and commitment to seeking their welfare.

LEGAL LINK expressed thanks and appreciation to all those that contributed in cash or in kind to making this project a great success.



c) Donations to Vulnerable Persons in Freetown

In line with its mandate to addressing the welfare of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully distributed free food to over 500 vulnerable persons in Freetown.

While receiving the donations, the chairmen of the various disable groups thanked LEGAL LINK for always coming to their rescue including but not limited to a time like this when serious economic hardship has engulfed the country.

LEGAL LINK conveyed special thanks to all those that contributed either in cash or in kind towards the success of the feeding program.





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

a) LEGAL LINK's Advisory Opinion for the Continuation of First Past the Post Electoral System in Sierra Leone

As a leading civil society organization with mandate to advocate for legal and policy reforms in Sierra Leone, **LEGAL LINK** puts out an advisory opinion by making a strong case as to why the First Past the Post electoral system is perhaps the better of the two evils in the conduct of Parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone.

The advisory opinion started off by explaining both First Past the Post and Proportional Representation and the relevance constitutional provisions that guarantee their legal efficacy.

The said advisory opinion went further to unravel ten cogent points in a bid to justifying that First Past the Post electoral system is a lesser of the two evils in the conduct of Parliamentary elections in Sierra Leone.

LEGAL LINK concluded in its advisory opinion by submitting that if a cohesive society is to be maintained and election violence eradicated in our electioneering process, it will require a

change of political culture, respect for human rights, rule of law, independent judiciary, equitable distribution of the resources and ensuring accountability for police brutality.



b) Legal Link's Advisory Opinion as to why the Position of the ACC Commissioner regarding the Fake PHD Saga may be Wrong, Outrageous and Misplaced

On the 8th of April, 2022, the legal team of Legal Link superintended by the prolific Executive Director, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, issued out a press statement in the form of an advisory opinion disagreeing with the ACC Commissioner over his defiance to not seize jurisdiction of the fake PHD matter that has impugned on the image of all academics in Sierra Leone and the nation at large.

The press statement unearthed 11 points argument showcasing why the ACC must seize jurisdiction over such a public interest matter and take appropriate action against those found wanting.

As a valued partner with the ACC, LEGAL LINK called on the Commission to seize jurisdiction over the matter and further pledge its continued support to the ACC in ensuring that the institution continues to wages war against corruption in Post conflict Sierra Leone.

c) LEGAL LINK's Advisory Opinion to put on hold the Parliamentary Proceedings regarding the Proposed Public Elections Act of 2022 so as to allow for Civil Society Inputs, Wider Consultations and Education of the Public

Being one of the leading civil society organizations that have always cooperated with Parliament in its legislative mandate, on the 30th June 2022, LEGAL LINK felt enthused to

write the Speaker of Parliament in the form of advisory opinion calling requesting him to put on hold the Parliamentary Proceedings regarding the Proposed Public Elections Act of 2022.

LEGAL LINK primary concern over such a bill is the fact that MPs have tabled the proposed law without public consultations, education and/or expert inputs from key stakeholders such as the Sierra Leone Bar Association, civil society organizations, human rights defenders, elections management bodies, the media etc.

The Organization therefore urge parliament to allow for Civil Society Inputs, Wider Consultations and Education of the Public of the said bill before passing it into law.

d) LEGAL LINK's Advisory Opinion on the Highs and Lows of Justice Adrian Fisher's Judgment in the Case of Alfred Peter Conteh Vs APC and Others

As part of its commitment to promote the rule of law, constitutionalism and best practices, LEGAL LINK have taken time out to do a thorough analysis of the judgment delivered by Justice Adrian Fisher in the aforementioned case brought out the "highs" and "lows" of the said judgment. Such was done to not only applaud best practices but also hold the judiciary to account where applicable.

The advisory opinion concluded by stating that the Judgment of Justice Adrian Fisher, notwithstanding its downsides, will go a long way to instilling democracy, rule of law, constitutionality and respect for human rights within the APC party and its legal frameworks if followed through.

LEGAL LINK's ENGAGEMENT IN COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER WORK

Legal Link Engages in Community Volunteer work at Mothaim Village, Grafton and calls on Young People to help Build Communities through Volunteer Work

In line with its mandate to defend the rights of Vulnerable groups and further inspire hope amongst young people through volunteer work, a cross section of the staff, interns and volunteers at LEGAL LINK embarked on a cleaning exercise and volunteering work at the MOTHAIM village, Grafton community in the Western Rural area of Sierra Leone.

The particular area targeted in MOTHAIM village was the Grafton High way road which had been eclipsed with debris for months to the extent that a two lane road was reduced to one lane posing serious risks to vehicles plying the high way.

LEGAL LINK therefore calls on young people to rise up and build our nation through community volunteering work. Waiting for the government all the time, for everything is clearly an unpatriotic act!



LEGAL LINK COURT INTERVENTIONS TO DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE PERSONS WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

LEGAL LINK on Friday, 13th of May 2022, defended and secured a discharge verdict for Blacka at the Magistrate Court No 4, holden at Pa Demba Road Freetown, presided over by Magistrate Rashid Jalloh.

It could be recalled that Mohamed Mansaray (alias Blacka) together with one business woman Kadiatu Yankaday were both charged with one count of Public insult and provocation contrary to section 2 of the Public Order Act of 1965.

In making his application for a discharge before the Magistrate, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, opined that this case has no merits as the prosecution has not been able to lead any witness after taking about four adjournments in the matter. He further averred that Blacka, being a mental health patient, had no business to have been charged by the police in the first place but rather kept in a mental home.

Magistrate Rashid Jalloh upheld the application of lawyer Rashid Dumbuya and discharged Blacka as well as Kadiatu Yankaday accordingly.

Given all the injustices that have been meted out against Blacka, LEGAL LINK called on the Sierra Leone Police, through the Inspector General of Police, to provide adequate compensation to Blacka over the malicious and vexatious proceedings instituted against him.



Within the period under review, the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, made frantic efforts to transform BLACKA as born again Christ and take him out of the street, but due to the lack of adequate support and consistent supervision, BLACKA's transformation seems to be getting deteriorated on a daily basis. LEGAL LINK is appealing to both state and non-state actors to provide adequate support and supervision for BLACKA who is a mentally derailed patient.

In a similar vein, LEGAL LINK was able to settle about **200** legal disputes involving vulnerable persons within the period under review. Bulks of these cases were settled through court interventions as well as Alternative Disputes Resolution Mechanisms. The nature of these cases ranges from criminal, civil, tort, labour, etc.

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

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

LEGAL LINK, in fulfillment of its mandate to defend laborer's rights in the country was able to successfully secure through ADR means huge millions of leones as compensation and end of service benefits to labourers. Over 30 labourers benefitted from this intervention within the period under review.

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

b) LEGAL LINK urges the Government of Sierra Leone to Increase the Minimum Wages, Salaries and Pensions of the Working Population by 50% in order to mitigate the Hardship and Pain Currently Experienced by the Masses

As an organization that defends the rights of vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK on the 18th March 2022 issued out a press statement expressing grave concern over the unprecedented rise in fuel prices coupled with the rise in prices of essential commodities, foreign exchange earnings and inflation in the country.

The organization opined one sure step towards reducing this burden and suffering on the masses is by increasing the minimum wage, salaries and pensions of the working population in the country by a reasonable margin or percentage. As such, it therefore called on the government to increase salaries by 50% as good starting point though may still not be adequate given the economic realities in the country.

LEGAL LINK OPEN EDUCATION PROGRAMME CONDUCTED WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

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

Within the period under review, LEGAL LINK conducted a good number of open education programmes on several human rights issues as well as the law and justice system of Sierra Leone using both the social media and the mainstream media. A good number of these open education programmes was done on Star TV and AYV TV in Freetown.

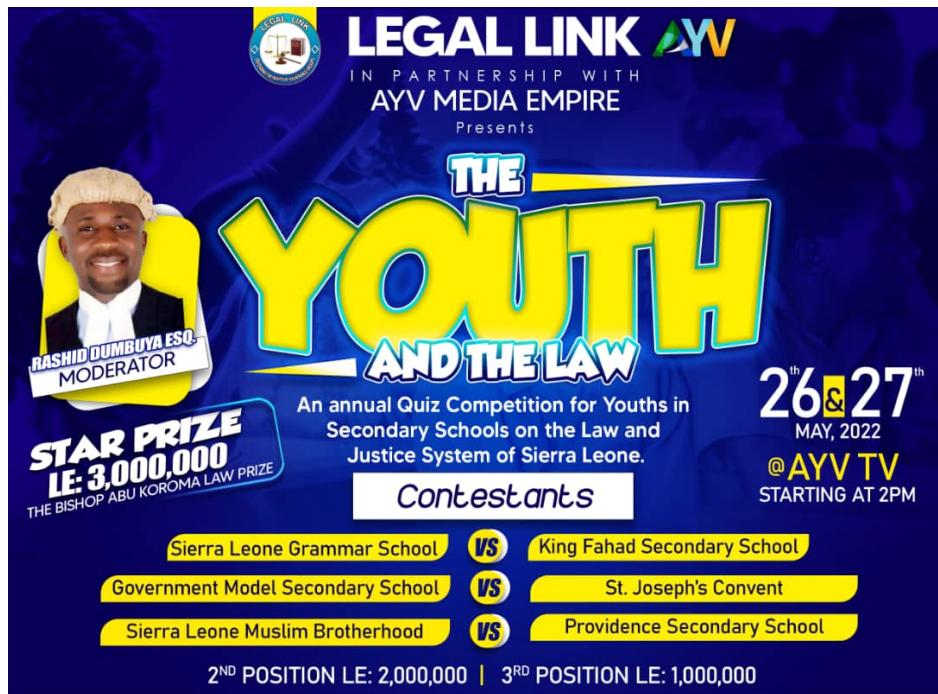


The Youth and the Law Quiz Competition 2022

In May 2022, LEGAL LINK in partnership with AYV Media Empire organizd the YOUTH AND THE LAW annual Quiz Competition on the law and justice system of Sierra Leone. About 10 Senior Secondary schoolsin Freetown took part in the competition with Sierra Leone Grammar School emerging as the victors of the competition. The Star Prize of 3,000, 000 which was donated by Bishop Abu Koroma of Flaming Evangelistic Ministeries, was won by Sierra Leone Grammar School.

The fundamental objective of organizing the Quiz Competition was to empower the youths of Sierra Leone with a general understand of the law, the justice system as well as their human rights so that they will become law abiding and responsible youths that are able to claim their rights under the law when abused, threatened or violated.





THE BEST YOUTH QUIZZER WILL RECEIVE THE JAMES BLYDEN JENKINS JOHNSTON PRIZE.





LEGAL LINK INTERVENTIONS ON ELECTORAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

a) Observation of the voter registration exercise by ECSL

As an organization that is of the firm belief that the right to vote and be voted for is a Constitutional right and that every citizen must be given a fair chance to participate in all electoral activities, LEGAL LINK monitored the first, second and extension phases of the voter registration exercise organized by the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone.

The main aim of undertaking this monitoring exercise is to ascertain best practices as well as unearth the challenges facing the voter registration process and to proffer timely and plausible recommendations to ECSL and the government of Sierra Leone for timely reforms and intervention.

Having monitored the different phases of the voters' registration process, LEGAL LINK documented its findings in two separate reports bringing out myriad of successes and challenges of the said voters' registration process and proffering recommendations for reforms.



LEGAL LINK expressed its gratitude to the ECSL for the accreditations provided to monitor the voters' registration exercise and pledged its unflinching support to continue to advocate for and on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone and defend the rights of vulnerable groups in the country.

b) LEGAL LINK Requests the Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone to extend the Voter Exhibition Exercise and to Transparently Explain and show Stakeholders how and why they deleted over 250,000 Registrants from the Voters' Register.

By an open letter dated the 28th November, 2022, addressed the chairman and national returning officer of ECSL, LEGAL LINK requested the Commission to extend the voter exhibition exercise and to transparently explain and show stakeholders how and why they deleted over 250,000 registrants from the voters' register.

The letter revealed that the decision taken by the ECSL to delete over 250,000 registrants from the voter's register if not transparently addressed has the proclivity to undermine the integrity and credibility of the 2023 general elections and further pose a clear and present danger to the peace and stability of our nation. It went further to reveal that the fundamental objective of the exhibition exercise has been clearly undermined due to the shortness of the time frame allocated to complete the exercise.

The organization urged the ECSL to look into its request and further emphasized that it calls to action should not be misconstrued as taking the sides of election fraudsters but to ensure that ECSL provides an evident-based explanation showcasing how they arrived at such decisions.

c) LEGAL LINK exposes ECSL'S Refusal to Extend the Voters Exhibition and Verification Exercise as a Violation of Section 27 (5) of the Public Elections Act Of 2022

Sequel to an open letter dated the 5th December 2022, and address to the Chief Electoral Commissioner and National Returning Officer of ECSL, LEGAL LINK drew the attention of the ECSL that it is in violation of section 27(5) of the Public Elections Act of 2022 which requires the institution to do the voter exhibition and verification exercise for a period of 14 days.

As a valued electoral partner, LEGAL LINK urged the ECSL to be in compliance with section 27(5) of the Public Elections Act of 2022 otherwise it would file legal papers to court compelling the said ECSL to follow its public duty under the law.

LEGAL LINK concluded by affirming that the right to vote and be voted for in periodic elections is a fundamental human right to be enjoyed by all eligible citizens in a democratic society as guaranteed under section 31 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Denying citizens therefore the enjoyment and / or exercise of such fundamental human rights without justifiable limitations constitute a violation of both domestic and international law.

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

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

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

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

Participants benefitted from key teachings such as understanding the procedures involved in the registration of churches, church acquisition of properties, labour employment laws, church and court proceedings amongst others.

The training ended at 5pm with prayers for members of LEGAL LINK and all attendees by the National Pastor of Winners Chapel, Pastor David Kareem. On behalf of LEGAL LINK, Bishop Konoyima distributed the certificates to all participants of the programme.



b) Rashid Dumbuya Esq and Barrister Fornah Sesay issues investigative report on PFSL

The executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq who also doubles as one of the legal advisers of PFSL was instructed by the Minister of Social Welfare to produce an investigative report regarding complaints brought to her attention by some disgruntled executive officers of the organization. A detailed investigative report on the organization, its executive decisions and activities have been done by Barrister Fornah Sessay and Barrister Rashid Dumbuya and submitted to the Minister of Social Welfare for urgent action.

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

Legal Link Highlights 9 Fundamental Flaws in the Setting up of the Special Investigations Committee to look into the Violent Protests of August 10, 2022

In a press statement dated the 25th August, 2022, LEGAL LINK while applauding government's efforts in setting up of a Special Investigations Committee to unearth the real causes, inciters as well as the effects of the August 10 violent protests, highlighted 9 fundamental flaws regarding this committee.

Among other things highlighted as flaws are the Conflict of interest, mandate of the Committee is limited, no representation of youth in the committee, lack of time limit, membership of the committee is over bloated with appointed public officials, to name but a few.

The organization puts forward 10 recommendations and called on the government to urgently implement all of them. Where these recommendations are blatantly refused, LEGAL LINK affirmed that it would certainly undertake a CSO independent investigations / inquiry into the events of August 8, 9 and 10 in a bid to set the records straight and to ensure a fair and unbiased outcome of the investigative process.

LEGAL LINK INTERVENTIONS ON FAIR TRIAL RIGHTS OF ACCUSED PERSONS

The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, within the period under review embarked on media advocacy calling on the Sierra Leone and Judiciary to respect, protect the fundamental human rights of LAJ. He has further urged the Judiciary to grant bail to the said LAJ who is currently on remands at the Male Correctional Centre in Freetown.



AWARDS WON BY LEGAL LINK WITH THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK, Rashid Dumbuya Esq, was decorated with the following awards in 2022: Award of Honour by the Bai Bureh Heritage Foundation, Top 100 Professionals in Sierra Leone 2022, Best Outstanding Lecturer in the Law Department at Fourah Bay College 2020/21, amongst others. Five awards were given to LEGAL LINK in 2022.

These awards were meritoriously granted to the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK for his outstanding legal contributions towards advancing the course of human rights, justice, legal education, professionalism and democracy in Sierra Leone within the period under review.





PART THREE

AUGUST 10TH VIOLENT PROTESTS AND EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS AND ATTACKS ON VULNERABLE CITIZENS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

On the 10th August 2022, LEGAL LINK notes with grave concern the extrajudicial killings of innocent citizens in Freetown and Makeni as well as the brutal killings of six police officers by civilians. The demonstration was championed by a young guy living in the Netherlands by the name of Adebayor. Through audio recordings, he was able to foment anger amongst disgruntled youths to come out in their thousands and storm the capital city. The demonstrations started from August 8th and 9th with a sit-home strike action and ended up in a violent fashion on August 10th 2022.

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

Firing at unarmed civilians in a non-military situation shows utter disregard for the human rights of citizens within the state. Also, the killing of security forces by civilians offends human rights and international humanitarian laws to which Sierra Leone is a state party.

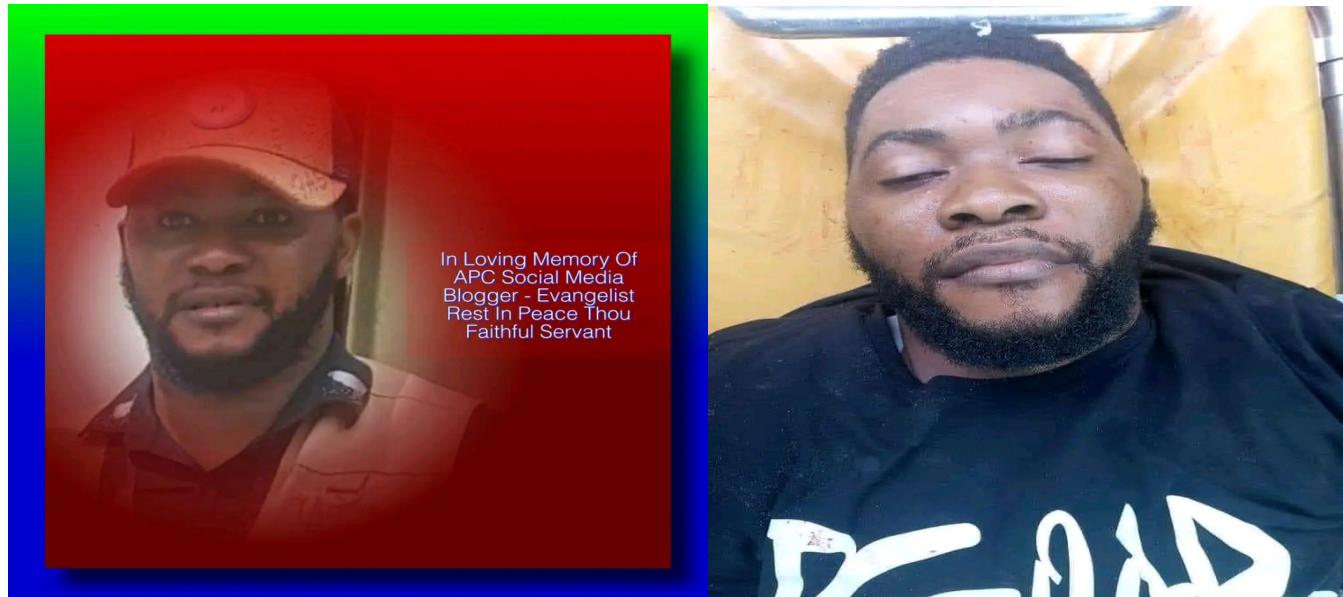




THE COLD BLOODED AND BRUTAL KILLING OF EVANGELIST SAMSON

On the 14th of August 2022, Evangelist Samson, a political activist and social media commentator of the main opposition party was gunned down by alleged security officers in his home town in Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone. Though much has not been done to take

responsibility, there are unconfirmed rumors that his killing would have been motivated by his social media blogging and critical audios against the ruling government. The fact that this killing took place in an opposition stronghold makes it seem very sinister indeed. LEGAL LINK therefore strongly condemned this unfortunate act of the security forces in using live bullets against an unarmed civilian and activist, killing him in cold blood.



As an advocacy group that is working tirelessly for the advancement of human rights and the rule of law in Sierra Leone, LEGAL LINK strongly condemns these extrajudicial killings that took place on August 10 2022 and thereafter in the country.

The President has set up a Special Investigations Committee to look into the events of August 10 and the killings that took place. LEGAL LINK would have loved for the setting up of an independent public inquiry instead of the Special Investigations Committee. But be that as it may however, we trust and hope that the Committee will execute their task without fear or favour or ill-will.

PART FOUR

SUCCESES AND CHALLENGES

SUCCESS STORIES

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

- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully organized a legal and compliance training for about 250 church leaders and their administrators within the year under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully commemorated its Fourth Anniversary in defending the rights of religious community and vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully defended and secured a discharge for BLACKA in the Pademba Road Magistrate Court of Sierra Leone. In the same vein, LEGAL LINK was able to settle about 300 legal disputes through court and Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanisms.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully issued out a press statement showcasing strong arguments why the ACC must seize jurisdiction over the Fake PHD saga and take appropriate action against those found wanting.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully monitored the Voters' Registration and Exhibition Exercises organized by the ECSL. The Organization was able to release a comprehensive report detailing its findings and recommendations regarding the monitoring exercises.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully monitored the Voters' Registration and Exhibition Exercises organized by the ECSL
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully urged the Government of Sierra Leone to increase the minimum wages, salaries and pensions of the working population by 50% in order to mitigate the hardship and pain currently experienced by the masses.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully embarked on media advocacy calling on the Sierra Leone and Judiciary to respect, protect the fundamental human rights of LAJ.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully provided internship opportunities and career guidance to university students via our internship and volunteer programmes. 15 interns from Fourah Bay College, University of Makeni and the National Youth Commission successfully completed their internship at Legal Link within the period under review. Another 3 was sent by Fourah Bay College and are currently undergoing theirs.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully issued out a position statement highlighting 9 fundamental flaws in the setting up of the special investigations committee to look into the violent protests of august 10, 2022.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully commemorated the International Women's Day and launched the first Freedom Project for Women and Girls in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully made donations such as bags of rice, onions, gallons of oil and bundles of water at the King George Home for the Aged, Manaheim Children Orphanage in Grafton and Blind School in Wilkinson Road, Freetown.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully secured huge end of service, financial benefits and compensation for many labourers within the period under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully commemorated the International Nelson Mandela Day and made huge donations such as bags of rice, onions, gallons of oil, sanitary pads, cubes of Maggie and bundles of water to persons with disability and Beggars on the street of Freetown.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under successfully operated a research, resource and library centre in its head office at 89 Fort Street Circular Freetown. University Students writing their dissertation and research work that were interested in learning more about issues of human rights and the laws of Sierra Leone were given access to the centre. A free internet facility was also provided for researchers.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK within the period under review successfully celebrated the International Albinism Day and organized a football match with persons living with albinism for such an event.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK, through its LAW FOR NON LAWYERS open education programme, successfully educated and sensitize a good number of Sierra Leoneans on some basic concepts of human rights as well on the law and justice system of the country.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK successfully proffered legal advisory opinions to the executive and parliament of Sierra Leone before the passing into law of the Public Elections Act (2022) and made a strong case for the continuation of First Past the Post Electoral System. Some of it advisory opinions were captured in these legislations.
- ❖ The Executive Director of LEGAL LINK was decorated with awards such as: Award of Honour by the Bai Bureh Heritage Foundation, Top 100 Professionals in Sierra Leone 2022, Best Outstanding Lecturers in the Law Department at Fourah Bay College, among others. These awards were meritoriously granted to the Executive Director of LEGAL LINK for his outstanding legal contributions towards advancing the course of human

rights, justice, legal education, professionalism and democracy in Sierra Leone within the period under review.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK in partnership with the AYV Media Empire successfully hosted THE YOUTH AND THE LAW ANNUAL QUIZ COMPETITION with the Sierra Leone Grammar school emerging as victors of the competition.
- ❖ Finally, LEGAL LINK also made relevant recommendations on strategic state issues to relevant government Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Parastatals.

CHALLENGES

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

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

PART FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

- ❖ In a bid to promote democratic best practices, LEGAL LINK has put forward critical recommendations to the government in the form of an advisory opinion for the continuation of First Past the Post Electoral System.
- ❖ Being an advocacy group that seeks to promote accountability and the rule of law, LEGAL LINK recommends to the government to comply with its obligation under international human rights law by ensuring it respect, fulfil, protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities in the country.
- ❖ In its quest to making the world a better place for persons with Albinism, LEGAL LINK recommends to government for an increased support to person living with Albinism in the country. Also, LEGAL LINK further calls on the government and Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone to pass a specific law that will adequately protect the rights of albinism in the country.
- ❖ As part of its mandate to promote constitutionalism, due process and the rule of law, LEGAL LINK recommends that the government of Sierra Leone ensures to always respect the tenure of officials in institutions protected by the law as this is not the first time that this abrogation is being committed by the government. The illegal removal of the human rights commissioners, the ombudsman, the ACC commissioner and now the Auditor General are all bad precedents that have the proclivity to undermine democratic institutions in the country.
- ❖ In a bid to promote women's and girls' human rights, LEGAL LINK recommends to government for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission to effectively address the growing inequalities and discrimination meted against women and girls in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ Regarding the August 10 Nationwide protest in the country, LEGAL LINK urges the Special Investigation Committee and government to speed up the investigations and ensure a fair and non-partisan outcome.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone pass a law that specifically and comprehensively protects the rights of PWDs in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone pass a law that specifically protects the rights of older persons in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone passes a law that specifically protects the rights of Human Rights Defenders in the country.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone provides adequate compensation to BLACKA, a mentally derailed patient, regarding the injustice meted against him.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone increase the minimum wages, salaries and pensions of the working population by 50% in order to mitigate the hardship and pain currently experienced by the masses.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Judiciary grant bail to Kamarainba (a politician) and LAJ (a hip-pop musician and rapper in Sierra Leone).
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the Chief Justice take steps to fully implement the recommendations captured in the Joint Communiqué adopted at the Legal Colloquium on Justice Sector Reforms in 2021.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK urges the Chief Justice to expedite all political cases latest January 2023 so as to prevent public distrust in the judiciary.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the ACC resists the urge of selective justice in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT BODIES

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that election management bodies give a rethink to the EU Elections Follow-up Mission Report and further take steps to implement the recommendations therein.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that election management bodies dispense their electoral mandate with a deep sense of cosmic responsibility, moral rectitude and consistent with the electoral laws of the land.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that the ECSL extend the Voters Exhibition Exercise so as to not disenfranchise electorates and further undermine the credibility of the 2023 general elections.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends for the ECSL to ensure fairness and professionalism in the conduct of all public elections in the country and show respect for the electoral laws of the land.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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

- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that Parliament enact laws that will help strengthen the peace, prosperity, development and human rights of all in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that Parliament follows the due process in making amendments to the 2001 Constitutional Amendment Act that allows for the Proportional Representation Electoral System. A statutory Instrument cannot amend a constitution.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK applauds the passing of the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Act but further recommends that Parliament establishes special committees to monitor the implementation of this Act and make report as to the challenges faced in a bid to adequately guarantee the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK recommends that Parliament establishes special committees that will be charged with the responsibility to promote and safeguard the interests of religious communities and vulnerable groups in the country.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

- ❖ LEGAL recommends that the Sierra Leone police and security forces adopt into their training and course structure, the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms

so as to inject a culture of respect for human life in the discharge of their duties and to only use force in line with the minimum standards enshrined.

- ❖ LEGAL LINK further urges the SLP and security sectors to hold to account and bring to justice all perpetrators of extrajudicial killings within the period under review.
- ❖ LEGAL LINK also urges the leadership of the security forces that the recommendations of the Independent Police Complaint Board regarding police brutality and excessive use of force are fully implemented and adhered to by the police and security sector in Sierra Leone.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY IN SIERRA LEONE

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO VULNERABLE GROUPS IN SIERRA LEONE

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

CONCLUSION

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

But with the full cooperation and support from all and sundry, it is hoped that LEGAL LINK together with other civil society organizations and state institutions will not only serve as a

solution center but will be able to build and consolidate a culture of respect for human rights within the body politic of Sierra Leone, Africa and the world at large.

Thanks to all those who made the above happen in 2022.

TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY!

Faithfully Submitted

Rashid Dumbuya Esq.

Founder & Executive Director

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

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***2022# Production**
