



**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE
PRESS RELEASE**

**ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION DISPLAY OF SUSPECTS AT THE COTTON TREE
(Monday 9th, September 2019)**

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone has been following reports of widespread examination malpractices in the country. The HRCSL strongly condemns such acts by everyone involved. HRCSL is of the opinion that such act undermines the credibility of the country's educational system and government's efforts in promoting socio-economic development through quality education.

HRCSL has been closely monitoring the incident that occurred on Saturday 7th September at the Fatibu School in Wellington in which six persons were arrested by the Anti-Corruption Commission on allegations of examination malpractices. The Commission on Monday 9th September further monitored the public display of the suspects arrested during Saturday's raid at the Cotton Tree in the center of Freetown. The suspects were handcuffed and had placards with inscriptions around their necks admitting guilt in full view of the public even before being tried in a competent court of law thereby defeating the principle of the presumption of innocence.

While the Commission wholeheartedly applauds the efforts of the ACC in the fight against corruption, particularly the fight against examination malpractices in the country, the Commission equally condemns such public display which suggests guilt without due process. The Commission considers such act as inhuman and degrading and runs contrary to Section 20(1) of the 1991 Constitution, Article 5 of the UDHR, Articles 7& 10 of the ICCPR and Article 5 of the ACHPR.

The Commission strongly believes that the action by the ACC in publicly displaying suspects exposes them to the risk of harm and it undermines their rights to life, security and fair trial. The Commission calls on the ACC to follow due process at all times.

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone remains committed to building a culture of respect for human rights within the nation of Sierra Leone.

SIGNED

Patricia Narsu NDANEMA - Chairman

**COMMISSIONERS: Patricia N. Ndanema; Victor I. Lansana Esq; Hassan S. Yarjah; Simitie Lavalley Esq
& Dr. Gassan Abess**