



## **ENHANCING THE KNOWLEDGE OF PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone on Wednesday 13th September, 2023 trained forty (40) senior personnel from selected private security agencies in Freetown on business and human rights and other related frameworks, including the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The training at the District Women's Fellowship Multi-Purpose Hall, King Harman Road in Freetown, focuses on enhancing the level of security agency's compliance with human rights standards, as well as identifying gaps in the full enjoyment of human rights in their operations.



Meanwhile, private security agencies are allowed by the government to exist and according to the National Security Act of 2023, the Office of National Security (ONS) has the responsibility to register and provide guidelines for the operations of such agencies.

The security agencies also operate as business outfits, geared towards maximizing profit whilst at the same time providing security services to homes. The HRCSL, through its monitoring exercises and complaints handling processes, has discovered a number of human rights challenges faced by personnel of private security companies from their employers, enhancing the provision of business and human rights capacity training to selected security agencies will ensure compliance with human rights standards.

During the training, participants raised several concerns with regard to their welfare, as well as relationships between them, the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security and the Office of National Security (ONS).



Festus Tamba M'Bayo claimed that the government normally implement policies without prior engagement with private security agencies, who contribute significantly to the economy of the country.

“There is no relationship between government and private security agencies. They are not treating us with respect and dignity. If we are not engaged by government on critical issues, how can we work effectively with them? We are losing and suffering a lot,” he said.



Deputy Commissioner of Labour in the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Social Security, Mr. Chiblee Francis Kamara, spoke about the rights, responsibilities and obligations of every worker, especially those working for security companies in the country.

He said the Ministry has been working closely with every entity including private security agencies on labour-related issues and has lots of respect for them.

Chairperson of the Commission, Madam Patricia Narsu Ndanema spoke about a survey conducted by the Commission in 2021/2022 for businesses and companies including security agencies in the country.

She said even though private security agencies contribute to the economy and also protect human rights; there are those that are still not paying the minimum wage which is NLE800 to their employees.

She added that over the years the Commission has been engaging ONS to have a list of private security agencies in the country because of the many complaints received from members of the public against them.