



Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone secures the release of 11 foreign nationals.

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) has on Monday 1st July, 2019, secured the release of 11 foreign nationals whose rights were restricted by the Sierra Leone Police.

Their release clearly demonstrates that human rights are universal in principle and practice. The universality of human rights means that Human rights must be the same everywhere and for everyone. By virtue of being human, every individual is entitled to his/her inalienable rights and freedoms.

These rights ensure the dignity and worth of the human person and guarantee human well-being.

As the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) mandated by law to protect and promote the rights of everyone in Sierra Leone, HRCSL successfully resolved a matter between the Sierra Leone Maritime Administration and 10 Indian and 1 Guinea Bissau nationals.

On the 18th May, 2019, the HRCSL received a complaint from the aboved nationals alleging that their rights to freedom of movement and access to justice were violated by the Sierra Leone Police. The said nationals were in Sierra Leone as part of the crew on Sea with the vessel named MIV JINZHAN.

The vessel was arrested on the 22nd January 2019 and its crew members detained on grounds that they were engaged in suspicious and criminal activities. The crew had their traveling documents and other personal items confiscated whilst they were being investigated.

Six of the crew members were detained at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for more than a month before they were released on bail. This in the Commission's view is a violation of their right to fair trial, access to justice a freedom of movement.

As a result of the intervention of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, the matter was amicably resolved. The crew members cleared of all criminal offences, released and had their traveling documents and personal items returned to them.

The intervention of HRCSL delineates the universality of human rights in principle and practice. Human Rights are universal because everyone is born with and possesses the same rights, regardless of where they live their gender or race, or their religious, cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

It therefore the obligation of the State to protect, respect and fulfil the rights of every individual within its jurisdiction.