

## **IG receives human rights report**

The Inspector General of Police on Tuesday February 8 received the Annual State of Human Rights Report 2015 from the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.

The HRCSL report includes the ways in which fundamental rights and freedoms in the 1991 Constitution and international and regional agreements to which Sierra Leone is a party have been observed or violated. It also includes steps taken by the Commission to protect and promote human rights; the results of individual complaints investigated, and the interventions and recommendations made by the Commission in respect of matters brought before it.

Presenting the State of Human Rights Report that contained the findings to the Inspector General of Police, Commissioner Brima A. Sheriff noted swift response from the Police to help victims in various areas nationwide that were seriously affected by floods and the reduction of cases investigated by the CDIID of the SLP from 235 in 2014 to 46 in 2015 on allegations of assault, unlawful detention and other related violations by police personnel.

Commissioner Sheriff brought to the attention of the police that on May 29, seven police officers attached to the Central Police station conducted a raid at the 'common ground' in central Freetown. During the raid, one Samuel Haffner, who was arrested with 9 other youths was allegedly beaten by the officers. He died on May 30 after he was released. A tribunal was set up by the CDIID to look in to matter, the officers involved in the alleged murder were dismissed and handed over to the CID for further investigation and the matter was charged to court. Mention was also made about an OSD officer that was dismissed from the force for shooting one Alimamy Kamara of Victoria Street during an altercation.

Speaking on monitoring conducted by HRCSL on detention facilities, Commissioner Sheriff said the Commission visited 13 police stations in the western area of Mountain Division, Regent, Goderich, Aberdeen, Lumley, Congo Cross, New England Ville, Central, Eastern, Ross Road, Kissy, Calaba Town, and Waterloo Police Stations from the 18<sup>TH</sup>- 20<sup>TH</sup> June. The general findings were, overcrowding, over detention, unhygienic conditions, inadequate electricity and Poor quality and insufficient food supply. At Ross road, Waterloo and New England Ville

stations, the cells for male suspects were overcrowded, without beds or mats, with faeces and urine on the floor.

“This contravenes Part 1(4)(e) of the Luanda Guidelines which states “ The rights to humane and hygienic conditions during the arrest period, including adequate water, food, sanitation, accommodation and rest, as appropriate considering the time spent in police custody”. Commissioner Sheriff stated.

In their recommendations, HRCSL reiterated their call on Government to provide funding and other resources to the SLP which should be appropriately distributed by the SLP to all areas of operations. And the SLP to refrain from using action that would result to unnecessary deaths and institutionalize zero tolerance against unnecessary violence to, or ill-using any person in custody in line with the Police (Discipline) Regulations, 2001 and the Guidelines on the Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre- Trial Detention in Africa. They also recommended that Government and SLP should take steps to establish forensic laboratories and recruit more pathologists, forensic and ballistic experts to expedite investigation of cases.

In his response, the Inspector General of Police, Francis Munu commended HRCSL for their good job and reiterated the support of his institution to the work of HRCSL. He said the SLP felt very good that an independent body checks on their human rights records and stressed that the recommendations would be looked into as a progress for the SLP.

On the area of hygiene in police cells, he called on his Police Commanders to be regularly doing oversight at their divisions and not to always rely on reports from their officers. He thus cautioned his Commanders to be mindful of the International Convention on the minimum treatment of their inmates.

The Deputy Inspector General of Police, Richard Moigbe commented that “this is a well balanced report and my favorite on the report”. Assistant Inspector General of Police, Memuna Jalloh consented that ‘it is a well balanced report’.