



## **HRCSL ENDS MOBILE COMPLAINTS HEARING IN MAKEGOHUN CHIEFDOM**

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) with funding from the IRISH AID/UNDP from Tuesday October 29th to Wednesday October 30th, 2019 conducted mobile complaints hearing in Giehun Konjo, Malegohun Chiefdom- Kenema District.

The Chiefdom Speaker, the Local Court Chairman, Section Chiefs, the Crime Officer of the Sierra Leone Police, the Community Health Officer, the Imam, Soweis, youth leaders and other community stakeholders from Sembahun, Weima, Bendu, Nyandehun, Kpatema and Geihun benefitted from the HRCSL public education on complaints handling procedures of the HRCSL, human rights violations and abuses against women and children, the sexual offences Act and issues affecting the various communities.

The Oversight Commissioner for the Regions, Hassan Samba Yarjah who chaired the stakeholders' engagement said that the mobile complaints hearing was to give opportunities to communities to easily and directly lodge their complaints to the human rights commission for redress. He called on the stakeholders to preach about human rights in their various locations and to desist from compromising alleged complaints of human rights violations.

The HRCSL Chairperson, Patricia Narsu Ndanema told the various stakeholders that because the presence of HRCSL was not in every chiefdom, the Commission has moved to them to receive complaints from them.

She explained further that the HRCSL informed decision for the mobile complaints hearing in Giehun Konjo was against an investigation and intervention done by the Commission in June this year when they sought the release of 10 under aged girls who were forcefully initiated during school hours in Malegohun Chiefdom. She said their intervention gave the school girls their rights to education.

"HRCSL is aware of the prevalence of harmful traditional practices in rural communities that are in contravention of international human rights principles and best practices. As a result, many victims of human rights violations go without redress and perpetrators go unpunished" the Chairperson of HRCSL stated.

The stakeholder engagement which were on issues from the sexual offences Act was facilitated by Commissioner Simitie Laval, who is the Oversight Commissioner for Complaints Investigations and Legal Services (CILS); human rights abuses and violations against children which was facilitated by a Senior Human Rights Officer, Jotham Johnson and an overview of the complaints handling procedures of the HRCSL done by the Deputy Director of CILS, Sidratu Kargbo.

The Commission also undertook public education at the Starline Radio 98. 4 in Kenema and the National Islamic Primary School in Konjo. Commissioner Simitie Laval also engaged the bike riders in Konjo on human rights.



On Wednesday October 30th, the HRCSL received complaints from people who felt their human rights have been violated. Some of the complaints had to do with property rights/inheritance, sexual and gender based violence and forceful initiation. The Commission also did mediations between families. Fifty five stakeholders within the Chiefdom were targetted. Out of that number, 41 were male and 14 female.