



POPULARIZATION OF UPR RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE REGIONS

From across the five regions in Sierra Leone on Friday 5th November 2021, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), held simultaneous engagement with District Human Rights Committees, security forces, Ministries Departments and Agencies, civil society organisations and other rights groups to popularize the recommendations in the Universal Period Review.



In May 2021, Sierra Leone underwent a review of its human rights record at the 3rd Universal Periodic Review by the Human Rights Council (the Council). The country was rated high during the review in areas like; repeal of Part V in the criminal libel law of the Public Order Act of 1965, the introduction of Free Quality Education, Hands Off our Girls Campaign, the lifting of the ban on allowing pregnant girls in school, the Model Sexual Offences Court, abolition of the death penalty among others.

During the review, Member States made another 274 recommendations including criminalization of FGM, curtailing police excesses, increase budgetary



support to the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. After the review, the country held consultations with various groups on the recommendations proffered. At the 48th Regular Session of the UPR in Geneva in October, Sierra Leone adopted 216, which include 27 to 45 which highlights government commitments to support the work of the HRCSL in the protection and promotion of human rights as proffered by 13 countries at the UPR, as well as continuing the constitutional review process being one of its voluntary pledges. Also, recommendation 258 looks at protecting children from early and forced marriage, whilst recommendations 84-86 highlight conditions in corrections services i.e. over detention and prison reforms.



The government also noted 58 recommendations, including recommendations 174-179, 192 200, 209-212, targeting steps to be taken by the government for the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation and 46-53 which talks about promoting same-sex marriage and same-sex sexual activities.



In her statement in Makeni during the popularization process, Chairperson of the HRCSL Patricia Narsu Ndanema said the Commission had pledged to work with the government and relevant line agencies to popularize the URP recommendations and to ensure its full impact on the lives of Sierra Leoneans.



According to Vice-Chairperson Victor I. Lansana, the Commission was created to protect and promote the human rights of all in Sierra Leone. He said the Commission cannot be in every part of the country, which is why the Commission creates partnerships with other organisations to support its work. He said the role of stakeholders in the popularization of the UPR recommendations is to look at areas that align with their work and ensure that government meet those recommendations.

In Port Loko, participants pledge to help popularize the UPR recommendations through various platforms, including radio and community meetings in their respective communities so that people would understand them better.

Various commissioners headed the process at the regions— Commissioner Patricia Narsu Ndanema (North), Commissioner Victor I. Lansana (East),



Commissioner Dr Gassan Abess (Northwest), Commissioner Hassan Samba Yarjah (South) and Commissioner Simitie Lavaley (Western area).