



# SIERRA LEONE EXCELS IN UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW- 2021

**Freetown- 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

In May, 2021 Sierra Leone had its 3rd Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the Human Rights Council 'The Council' at the ongoing 38th review of States by the Council.

The Human Rights Commission noted the country's overwhelming commendations from other Member States of the Council, for the tremendous progress made in implementing recommendations from the last review of 2016. And for the effective handling of emerging human rights issues like the Covid-19 pandemic and its attendant state of emergency regulations/restrictions.

In particular there were commendations relating to the repeal of the criminal libel law hitherto contained in Part V of the Public Order Act of 1965, the introduction of the Free Quality School Education, the lifting of the ban allowing pregnant girls in school, the Hands-off Our Girls Campaign, the establishment of a Model Sexual Offences Court, the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy, the One Stop Centres for Rape, among others.

Member States made several recommendations; increase budgetary support to the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, laws that fully protect women and girls, to criminalise FGM, to pass laws that protect human rights defenders, and to take steps to curtail the excesses of the Police among others.

Victor I. Lansana, Vice-Chairman of the Commission has said they will popularize the recommendations, monitor its implementation throughout, and engage in constructive advocacy for those recommendations to be fully integrated and implemented albeit progressively.