



HRCSL DISCUSSES LAWS PROTECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS RIGHTS WITH ARMY AND POLICE WIVES

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) on Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th December, 2023 engaged the Armed Forces Wives Cooperative Society and the Sierra Leone Police Wives Association on laws and policies protecting women and girls' rights in the country.



The engagement in Freetown is part of the 16 Days of Activism against sexual and gender-based violence which runs from November 25th to December 10th of every year.

The thrust was to strengthen the capacity and knowledge of wives of the military on International, Regional and National laws and policies protecting and promoting women's rights.



The theme for this year's 16 Days of Activism is "Unite! Invest to prevent violence against women and girls".

President of Armed Forces Wives Cooperative Society, Mrs. Fatmata Bintu Lavahun, stressed the importance of women in all spheres of society and urged her colleagues to serve as ambassadors on women's rights issues at the end of the session.



"Please let us take the message to our different areas. Many a time we are confronted with problems but can't find solutions to them because of the lack of knowledge," she said and expressed hope that the engagement will serve as an eye opener for them on laws and policies protecting women's rights.

Vice President of the Police Wives Association, Mrs. Zainab Williams welcomed the move by the Commission to educate them on laws and policies protecting women and girls, and called for continued engagement on issues affecting the rights of women.



In her statement, the Chairperson of HRCSL, Mrs. Patricia Narsu Ndanema spoke about the establishment of the Commission by an Act of parliament in 2004, as well as its mandate and functions.



She said the Commission has a very good working relationship with the military as they are part of the HRCSL's Referral Partnership Forum.

She added that human rights protection deals with the laws, while the promotion aspect has to do with public education and awareness raising.

Presentations were done on the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act of 2022 and the Sexual Offences Act of 2012 as amended in 2019, among others.