



## HRCSL ENGAGES A DELEGATION FROM AFRICAN PLATFORM ON CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone on Wednesday 6th September, 2023 met with a delegation from the African Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflict, an agency of the African Union.



Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, who led the delegation, said the purpose of their visit was to hear from the Commission on the programmes that were designed to support the welfare of children affected by armed conflict.

She added that they were also engaging the Commission to know their collaboration and cooperation with institutions and partners that they worked with to support children affected by armed conflict, as well as update on the current status of these children.

Chairperson of HRCSL, Madam Patricia Narsu Ndanema, welcomed the delegation and informed them that the HRCSL did not play a strategic role during the time of the armed conflict because the establishment of the Commission came into existence after the conflict following recommendations from the Lome Peace Agreement of 1999 between the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of 2004.



She however drew the attention of the visiting team that Section 18 of the TRC Act 2000 provided for the ‘establishment of “a .....Follow-up Committee to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the TRC recommendations.



The Commission, she added took the lead role in the follow- up Committee following the oral pronouncement in 2006 by Late President Kabba.

The Commission’s first intervention, she said was to set up a TRC liaison Desk in the Commission and recruited a TRC Liaison Officer. “The Commission liaised with the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) that was charged with the responsibility to implement recommendations targeted at reparations,” she said.

She added that several recommendations were proffered in the TRC report for the protection of children which had to do with the signing or review of laws to promote the rights of children.

The Chairperson noted that the recommendations included but were not limited to the enactment of the Child Rights Acts 2007, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2005, considering 18 years as the age of adulthood and other laws.





She informed the team that the Commission's monitoring activities on the operations of NaCSA for children included mainstreaming of educational support to child victims in 2012, provision of grant in aid to qualified children whose parents were amputated during the war to access university and also Free Health Care for amputees and severely wounded victims which also included children.



Madam Ndanema further informed the delegation that Commission in 2019 expanded its children's Unit to a full-blown directorate, thus creating a platform to address cases related to children and other vulnerable groups.

She spoke about the formation of approximately 60 Human Rights and Peace School Clubs across the country with the objective to inculcate the culture of human rights in children.

She also highlighted the Commission's role in the review of the Sexual Offences as amended Act 2019 and the monitoring and reporting on cases of sexual violence perpetrated against children.

On collaborating partners, she added that the Commission is required by its Act to collaborate with other partners intervening on human rights thus leading to the formation of the Human Rights Working Group that constitutes MDAs, CSOs and other partners.



She also made reference to the Commission's Referral Partnership Forum that deals with matters not falling within the Commission's Jurisdiction.

She encouraged the team to have strong synergies in terms of their intervention.

©HRCSL Communications Team