



General Assembly

Distr.: General
6 November 2015]

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Twenty-fourth session
18-29 January 2016

Summary prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21

Sierra Leone*

The present report is a summary of 16 stakeholders' submissions¹ to the universal periodic review. It follows the general guidelines adopted by the Human Rights Council in its decision 17/119. It does not contain any opinions, views or suggestions on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), nor any judgement or determination in relation to specific claims. The information included herein has been systematically referenced in endnotes and, to the extent possible, the original texts have not been altered. As provided for in Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, where appropriate, a separate section is provided for contributions by the national human rights institution of the State under review that is accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles. The full texts of all submissions received are available on the OHCHR website. The report has been prepared taking into consideration the periodicity of the review and developments during that period.

* The present document was not edited before being sent to United Nations translation services.



I. Information provided by the national human rights institution of the State under review accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles

1. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) was accredited 'A' status by the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) in 2012. HRCSL urged the Government to comply with the Paris Principles and support the Commission with adequate resources.²

2. In 2011, the Commission organised a national conference on the development of a roadmap and strategy for the implementation of the UPR recommendations of Sierra Leone. In 2013, the Commission collaborated with the Government and the Civil Society UPR Monitoring Group in organizing a national mid-term consultative conference to assess progress in the implementation of the 1st cycle UPR recommendations.³

3. The Commission noted that the Government was yet to ratify the Optional Protocol on the Convention Against Torture, inhuman and Degrading Treatments or Punishments (OP-CAT), the Optional Protocol on Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), the International Convention for Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances (ICPPED) and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW). The Government did not sign and ratify the Optional Protocol of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). The Commission urged the Government to sign and ratify these treaties and optional protocols and implement the provisions therein.⁴

4. A Constitutional Review Committee was launched by the Government in July 2013, and subsequently delayed by the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). The Commission encouraged the Government to continue supporting the Constitutional Review Process, ensure citizens' participation and that the new version of the Constitution fully protects and promotes human rights through domesticating international human rights standards.⁵

5. The Commission stated that in response to the EVD outbreak, the Government declared a State of Emergency and subsequently enacted Public Health Emergency Regulations and Bye-laws to control the spread of the virus. This further restricted the enjoyment of human rights.⁶

6. According to the Commission, women participation in governance and public offices still remains a challenge as the Government is yet to enact the Gender Equality Bill. The Commission recommended that the Government continue its effort to address violence against women and speedily enact the Gender Equality Bill.⁷

7. Following the reopening of schools after the EVD outbreak, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology banned pregnant girls from taking their Basic Education Certificate Examination and from attending school. This contravenes the Government's obligation under Article 13 and 17 of the ICESCR and ACHPR respectively; and Section 3(2) of the Education Act of Sierra Leone. The Commission recommended ending discrimination against women and children, and adhere to Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and CEDAW.⁸

8. The Commission received 168 complaints between 2011-2014 against the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) for unlawful detention, arbitrary arrest, ill treatment of suspects and the

use of excessive force in maintaining public order.⁹ The Commission also observed that the general sanitary conditions in police cells were appalling. However, the Commission also noted some improvements in the work of the Complaints, Discipline and Internal Investigations Department of the SLP. The Commission recommended improving the work conditions of the police to improving their accountability and professionalism and further improve the sanitary conditions of police cells.¹⁰

9. The Commission acknowledged the enactment of the Sierra Leone Correctional Service Act, 2014, which provides for the rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates.¹¹ However, the general conditions in the correctional centres are yet to meet the required standards. The Commission recommended that the Government adequately fund the Correctional Service Centers and enact the revised Criminal Procedure Act to improve the administration of justice.¹²

10. Efforts were made to enhance the capacity of local courts through training of personnel and the enactment of the Local Court Act of 2011 bringing them under the supervision of the judiciary. The work of these courts is however affected by nonpayment of salaries and stipends to court personnel. The Commission urged the Government to recruit more legal personnel and provide the necessary resources to improve access to justice.¹³

11. The Commission reiterated its call on the Government to repeal the Seditious Libel Provision in the Public Order Act of 1965. The Commission noted that during the period under review there were police harassments, arrests and intimidation of journalists and human defenders, including members of the Commission, and it recommended that the Government respect the immunity of Commission's members and staff, and further ensure the protection of human rights defenders.¹⁴

12. There was concern at the enjoyment of freedom of association, assembly and movement particularly by trade unions and LGBT rights activists. Large gatherings and demonstrations are banned under the 2014 Public Health Emergency Regulations, and movement of people restricted. The Government should fully comply with ICCPR regulations on state of emergency and ensure that the SLP act in an impartial and professional manner.¹⁵

13. In 2013, the Parliament enacted the Right to Access Information Act. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone recommended that the Government adequately fund the Access to Information Commission, which should operationalize the Act.¹⁶

14. The Commission observed that acute shortage of water in the capital and its environs continues to impact negatively on the well-being of all, particularly women and children.¹⁷ In the provinces, people rely on poorly constructed wells, boreholes and rivers as the main sources of water.¹⁸ The Commission recommended that the Government take urgent steps to ensure the availability of adequate water in the country.¹⁹

15. The Commission commended the Government and partners for their efforts in the fight against EVD and called on the Government to continue its efforts to eradicate the disease. The Commission further urged the Government to strengthen the health infrastructure and the management of public health system.²⁰

16. The Commission noted that there have been protests by communities where multinational companies operate due to forced acquisition of land, inadequate compensation, poor resettlement of locals and obsolete labour laws. The Commission developed a monitoring tool (Guidelines for Monitoring Business and Human Rights in Sierra Leone) to ensure that multinational companies carry out their activities in line with human rights standards. The Commission called on the Government to review labour laws and ensure compliance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.²¹

17. The Commission noted that the implementation of the new educational system suffered from inadequate structures, shortfalls in Government's subsidies and shortage of qualified teachers. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone recommended that the Government ensure the provision of the resources for the full implementation of the new educational system.²²

II. Information provided by other stakeholders

A. Background and framework

1. Scope of international obligations²³

18. ICAAD noted that Sierra Leone ratified CEDAW without reservations.²⁴

19. OFP called on the Universal Periodic Review Working Group (UPR WG) to urge the Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.²⁵

20. TDF²⁶ and TCC²⁷ recommended that Sierra Leone ratify the Maputo protocol²⁸. TDF recommended ratifying the CEDAW optional protocol, adopting explicit national laws against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and achieving women rights standards through women autonomy and empowerment.²⁹

2. Constitutional and legislative framework

21. AI noted that Sierra Leone has taken initiatives to improve its human rights framework, such as enactment of the Legal Aid Act 2012, the Sexual Offences Act 2012, the Right to Access Information Act 2013 and the Corrections Act 2014. The Gender Equality Bill, which provides for a minimum 30% representation of women in Parliament, local councils and ministries, has yet to be enacted.³⁰ AI recommended expediting the enactment of the Gender Equality Bill and implementing the 2012 Sexual Offences Act.³¹ TCC encouraged revising and reintroducing the Gender Equality Bill for parliamentary consideration.³²

22. JS3 observed that the Government enacted the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act in 2011 protecting persons with disabilities against discrimination in education, transportation, employment, accessibility to public buildings and health services.³³

23. JS1 stated that in October 2013 the Government passed the Right to Access Information Act, which is a positive step to increase transparency and respect for the rule of law.³⁴ MFWA noted that the adoption of the Act satisfied a recommendation from the first UPR cycle.³⁵ ISHR recommended fully implementing the Right to Access Information Act.³⁶

24. MFWA stated that the Public Order Act of 1965 criminalises defamatory and seditious libel and publishing false news. The Act allows for prison sentences of three to seven years for defamatory and seditious libel, and of up to one year for publishing false news.³⁷

25. ICAAD noted that the HIV/AIDS Commission Act was passed in 2011, making it illegal to deny employment or education based on HIV status.³⁸

26. TDF recommended adopting explicit national laws against FGM to support its elimination and achieve women rights standards.³⁹

3. Institutional and human rights infrastructure and policy measures

27. ISHR noted that in March 2015 a Focal Contact Point in the Office of the President was established to address the human rights situation in the country.⁴⁰ ISHR recommended that Sierra Leone implement a specific national law on human rights defenders and establish a mechanism for their protection, in line with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and Sierra Leone's own statement at the Council's 28th session.⁴¹

28. AI recommended that the Government ensure the Independent Police Complaints Board is well resourced and that its mandate and procedures are accessible to the public.⁴²

29. JS3 noted that the Government has been developing the Agenda for Prosperity for 2012- 2017. With the assistance of the international community it has improved urban roads, feeder roads and food security through opening rural agricultural banks.⁴³ WV noted that the Ebola outbreak has interrupted Sierra Leone's progress towards the Agenda for Prosperity goals and targets.⁴⁴ OFP noted that the Agenda for Prosperity (2012-2017) policy does not provide for the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). As a result the majority of school trained and qualified PWDs rely on street begging as a means of livelihood.⁴⁵ OFP called on the UPR WG to urge the Government to develop a national employment scheme for all PWDs including provision of skills training; and to adopt an employment quota policy to ensure the right to work of PWDs.⁴⁶

B. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Equality and non-discrimination

30. TDF stated that women rights problems include societal discrimination and violence against women, FGM and child abuse. Tribal secret societies hold forcible FGM initiation rites upon women and girl children. Moreover, as a result of customary laws and patriarchal structural setups, most women are treated as second-class citizens. They are also routinely denied access to education, medical care and employment.⁴⁷

31. ICAAD stated that the life of most women living outside the capital is subject to customary law that affects women's rights in areas such as marriage, divorce, property and inheritance. Attempts by the Government to promote gender equality are undermined by this dual system of laws in spite of constitutional protection for women's rights.⁴⁸ ICAAD recommended taking steps to implement, throughout the country, laws and policies aimed at promoting equality for women.⁴⁹

32. AI stated that discriminatory provisions against women remain under Section 27(4)(d) of the Constitution, in relation to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death, and other areas of customary law,⁵⁰ and recommended the abolishment of that section.⁵¹

33. AI was concerned at the Ministry of Education's policy, based on discriminatory views and negative stereotypes, of barring pregnant girls from attending school and sitting their Basic Education Certification Exams.⁵² JS2 expressed similar concerns.⁵³ AI recommended taking measures to comply with international and regional legal obligations to protect and fulfil the rights of all girls to education, equality, privacy and physical integrity, and to issue an urgent directive to all schools to guarantee that pregnant girls can continue with their education without fear.⁵⁴ JS2 made a similar recommendation and also recommended providing reparation and support to children who have suffered from discriminatory practices in education, particularly for pregnant teenagers.⁵⁵

34. ICAAD stated that illiteracy among women continues to be widespread despite the enactment of the 2004 Education Act. Women and girls face substantial obstacles accessing educational opportunities.⁵⁶ ICAAD recommended that the Government focus on changing traditional norms that affect women's access to education; continue to devote resources to increase girl's participation in education and improve the quality of education.⁵⁷

35. JS3 noted that discriminatory laws and practices against women, especially in land ownership and use, still exist. Women also face discrimination in decision making processes and political representation, mostly due to stereotypes, traditional norms and customs. Equally persons with disabilities in Sierra Leone are facing discrimination with regards to access to transportation, employment, infrastructure, health and education.⁵⁸

36. AI stated that in Sierra Leone the law criminalizes same sex relationships between consenting adults,⁵⁹ and recommended amending the Constitution to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity; and ensuring that crimes motivated by any form of discrimination, including sexual orientation or gender identity, are investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.⁶⁰

37. ICAAD noted that the 1973 Citizenship Act places severe restrictions on the rights of people of non-patrilineal Negro-African descent to obtain citizenship and significantly impacts residents of Lebanese and Indian descent.⁶¹ ICAAD recommended that the Constitutional Review Committee review the issue of citizenship and make laws to prevent discrimination of non-African descendants.⁶²

2. Right to life, liberty and security of the person

38. Noting that in the first UPR cycle Sierra Leone accepted 13 recommendations on the abolishment of the death penalty and the ratification of the ICCPR Second Optional Protocol,⁶³ JS4 stated that Sierra Leone is an abolitionist country in practice and that no person has been sentenced to death since 27 April 2011, when all those sentenced to death had their sentence commuted to life imprisonment.⁶⁴ AI made an analogous statement.⁶⁵ JS4⁶⁶ and AI⁶⁷ recommended Sierra Leone to abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

39. AI stated that the Government has not done enough to investigate and hold accountable police officers accused of using arbitrary or abusive force⁶⁸ and recommended investigating police officers accused of these crimes; and ensuring that all police officers are aware of and abide by international human rights standards, including the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.⁶⁹ MFWA made similar recommendations.⁷⁰

40. AI stated that conditions in prisons and detentions centers are well below international standards. Juveniles are often detained with adults. There are instances of arbitrary arrests, especially by the police for minor offences, such as loitering and fraudulent conversion. People are regularly detained beyond constitutional time limits by the police.⁷¹ AI recommended that Sierra Leone enact new prison rules in line with international standards, such as the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Female Prisoners; encourage the consideration of alternatives to detention by the courts, taking into account the UN Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules). AI also recommended taking steps to implement the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Accelerating Prisons and Penal Reforms in Africa.⁷²

41. In August 2013, 18 members of the Armed Forces were detained for allegedly plotting to mutiny at the Tekoh barracks in Makeni. They were held in incommunicado

detention for eight months. Fourteen of them were indicted and brought to trial, still on-going.⁷³

42. ICAAD noted that violence against women is widespread and efforts to combat domestic violence are limited. The Domestic Violence Act of 2007 is not sufficiently broad to address this issue and suffers from a complete lack of enforcement. Family Support Units, created by the Government and located at police stations, lack the resources to provide assistance to victims of sexual violence.⁷⁴ AI made a similar statement.⁷⁵ ICAAD recommended aligning the Domestic Violation Act with UN conventions; allocating resources to Family Support Units to provide adequate assistance to victims of sexual violence; and increasing the rate of prosecution of domestic violence cases.⁷⁶ AI recommended that Sierra Leone guarantee access for victims of sexual violence to post-rape health care services.⁷⁷

43. JS2 noted that in the first cycle report, several recommendations were presented to tackle gender based violence and sexual abuse of women and children in Sierra Leone.⁷⁸ Though Sierra Leone has made some progress in this area by passing the Sexual Offences Act in 2012 and the three gender Acts in 2007, lack of effective implementation and enforcement of these laws continue to make particularly girls and women vulnerable to such crimes.⁷⁹ JS2 recommended ensuring implementation of the Sexual Offences Act 2012 and strengthen Family Support Units, Prosecutors, Hospitals, Social Service providers and the Court; strengthening community based child protection mechanisms; and reviewing laws and policies and practices in line with the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children (A/61/299).⁸⁰

44. ICAAD noted that women and girls suffer from harmful traditional practices such as FGM. Widely practiced in rural areas, FGM is part of Sierra Leone's traditional culture and initiatives to eliminate the practice have met significant obstacles.⁸¹ TDF stated that nine out of ten women have undergone a certain form of FGM, mostly as rites of passage to womanhood, making a countrywide total of 88% of affected women, aged 15-49 years.⁸² TDF also noted that successive governments have failed to protect women and girls from FGM. Civil society organizations feel abandoned in their campaigns to eradicate this practice and activists working against it must be protected against violent attacks.⁸³ ICAAD recommended taking additional steps to promote the elimination of the practice of FGM.⁸⁴

45. GIEACPC noted that in Sierra Leone, corporal punishment of children is lawful, despite recommendations to prohibit it by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee Against Torture, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Human Rights Committee and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone.⁸⁵ In the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review no recommendations were made to Sierra Leone specifically on corporal punishment⁸⁶ and GIEACPC hoped States will raise this issue during the review in 2016 and make a specific recommendation that Sierra Leone clearly prohibit all corporal punishment of children in all settings including the home and explicitly repeal the right "to administer punishment" in the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act.⁸⁷

3. Administration of justice, including impunity and the rule of law

46. TDF stated that the absence of a law criminalizing FGM makes it hard to hold offenders accountable to punishments. Criminalisation is needed to tame the powers of secret societies, which hold forcible initiations.⁸⁸

47. JS3 stated that in the first UPR cycle the Government accepted to strengthen the judiciary by improving the conditions of service for judges, the conditions in prisons, especially for juvenile offenders, and the Family Support Unit.⁸⁹ JS3 recommended further strengthening the capacity of judicial system both in budgetary allocation and facilities in

the local and national court systems; and building more juvenile detention centers to comply with minimum international detention standards.⁹⁰

4. Freedom of movement

48. TCC recommended that steps be taken to ensure that freedom of movement of Sierra Leone's citizens will be respected in future elections.⁹¹

5. Freedom of religion or belief, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and right to participate in public and political life

49. ADF International stated that some Christians have been stoned and poisoned, pastors have been beaten and churches destroyed. In order to comply with ICCPR article 18, the Government should guarantee that Christians are free to profess and practice their faith everywhere, including in predominantly Muslim villages, and that perpetrators of crimes against Christians are brought to justice.⁹²

50. JS1 stated that the authorities intimidate and arrest journalists for expressing concerns about government failures. On several occasions the authorities have used draconian provisions in the Public Order Act (1965) and Criminal and Seditious Libel laws to target and prosecute journalists who wrote about government officials.⁹³ ISHR made a similar statement adding that a journalist reporting on a public land dispute was stabbed to death in 2011 and two other arrested and charged in October 2013 with conspiracy to commit acts with seditious intent.⁹⁴ MFWA stated that over the last four years, state and non-state actors have physically, verbally and legally attacked free expression actors and censored free expression.⁹⁵

51. JS1 recommended that the restrictive provisions of the Public Order Act (1965) and the Criminal and Seditious Libel laws, restricting freedom of expression and media freedom, be repealed; all instances of criminal intimidation of journalists and representatives of the media be investigated; and that the rights of journalists and representatives of the media be protected during periods of emergency.⁹⁶ AI made a similar recommendation.⁹⁷ ISHR made analogous recommendations including a recommendation that the Government refrain from criminalising the activities of human rights defenders, repeal or amend all laws and policies, and the restrictive elements of the 2009 Revised NGO Policy Regulations.⁹⁸

52. MFWA noted that the Government does not restrict internet access, but as a result from poverty, illiteracy, and sparse electricity coverage its penetration is very low.⁹⁹ Many journalists are untrained and poorly paid, vulnerable to pressures from, inter alia, media owners and businesses.¹⁰⁰ MFWA recommended to the UPR WG to make more recommendations related to the protection and promotion of free expression and reemphasise the importance of decriminalising defamation.¹⁰¹ Noting that Sierra Leone accepted UPR WG recommendations on defamation,¹⁰² AI stated that the increased use of criminal defamation charges against journalists threatens the right to freedom of expression in Sierra Leone.¹⁰³

53. JS1 was concerned at the Government's failure to implement the recommendations it accepted, during its first UPR, on civic space and human rights activists.¹⁰⁴ JS1 was also concerned that peaceful demonstrations have been violently repressed, and the authorities had used emergency provisions, aimed at curbing EVD's spread, to restrict peaceful assembly.¹⁰⁵ AI¹⁰⁶ and MFWA¹⁰⁷ made similar statements. JS1 recommended that Sierra Leone place in a national policy to protect the civil society in line with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders; and that all cases of intimidation and attacks on civil society and human rights defenders be investigated.¹⁰⁸ JS1 also recommended that best practices on freedom of peaceful assembly prescribed by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of

Peaceful Assembly and Association be adopted by the Government; and that security forces be provided training on the UN Basic Principles on the use of Force and Firearms.¹⁰⁹

54. TCC noted that a disproportionately low number of women stood as candidates in the 2012 elections, as one of the principal shortfalls of the electoral process. The participation of women candidates was impeded by high registration fees, intimidation, societal attitudes, and a history of electoral violence. TCC recommended further consideration of alternative steps to ensure greater numbers of women candidates.¹¹⁰ TCC also recommended improving voters' education, in order to ensure the effective exercise of the right to vote.¹¹¹

6. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

55. ISHR stated that HRDs working on land rights and corporate accountability face particular threats and restrictions: on 10 December 2013, police opened fire on a protest against the expansion of palm oil plantations operated by an international enterprise.¹¹²

56. JS3 stated that Sierra Leone has obsolete labour laws, inadequate health and safety measures at work and weak implementation of labour laws and policies. Most of the jobs in the mining and agricultural sectors are held by foreign nationals.¹¹³ JS3 recommended ensuring that all existing labour laws are reviewed to comply with international minimum ILO standards, especially child labour, health and safety at work.¹¹⁴ TUCSL recommended setting up a multi stakeholder "National Minimum Wage Implementation Committee" to supervise the implementation of the minimum wage.¹¹⁵

57. TUCSL recommended that the Government review the Regulation of Wages and Industrial Relations Act (No. 18) of 1971 in accordance to the laws of a plural democracy. Specifically, the words, 'Sierra Leone Labour Congress' in the Act be replaced with the words, 'national labour centers' in line with the requirements of the Constitution and ILO Conventions 87 and 98 respectively. TUCSL also recommended that the Ministry of Labour grant formal recognition to the Trade Union Confederation of Sierra Leone as a separate national labour centre, as directed by the High Court of Sierra Leone, and in conformity with the Constitution and ILO Conventions 87 and 98.¹¹⁶

7. Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living

58. JS3 noted that the majority of Sierra Leoneans, especially youth and women, suffer from inaccessibility of basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, and water) despite the abundance of Sierra Leone's natural resources.¹¹⁷ JS3 recommended increasing budgetary allocation by at least 20% towards accessing basic social facilities, and constructing additional affordable low cost housing for poor communities.¹¹⁸

59. WV noted that malnutrition rates among children were still alarmingly high, with severe effects on child health and psychological and physical development. The increased scarcity of food due to Ebola puts pregnant women and young children at higher risk of malnutrition.¹¹⁹ WV recommended prioritizing food assistance and nutrition interventions for pregnant women and young children, and strengthening Government's policies and programs to address the situation of the most vulnerable children living in rural or remote areas of the country.¹²⁰

8. Right to health

60. JS3 stated that the Government is still supporting the 2010 Free Health Care Initiative for children under five years, lactating mothers and pregnant women.¹²¹ WV stated that the scale and severity of the Ebola outbreak has significantly devastated Sierra Leone's health system which was ill-equipped and resourced to handle such an outbreak.¹²² WV recommended ensuring that the provision of Free Health Care is sustainable and

accessible to provide quality health services to all children and women, in order to reduce child and maternal mortality.¹²³ JS3 made a similar recommendation.¹²⁴ WV also recommended that maternal, child and adolescent health issues be prioritized at the national level through strategic integration into national policies.¹²⁵

61. AI noted that EVD has weakened Sierra Leone's already fragile health care system. Concerns were raised regarding, inter alia, the mismanagement of Ebola funds.¹²⁶ AI recommended that Sierra Leone address the impact of Ebola on women, particularly on the provision of maternal health services; apply a human rights framework to protect the dignity and freedoms of communities affected by the Ebola crisis, and to work with development partners to strengthen health care systems.¹²⁷

62. ADF International stated the high number of maternal deaths in Sierra Leone is a human rights crisis. Sierra Leone has promised free health care to pregnant women, new mothers, and young children, but many women are still asked to pay for health services that should be free.¹²⁸ AI made a similar statement.¹²⁹ ADF International recommended improving the health care system infrastructure and eliminating user fees for pregnant women, mothers of infants, and young children.¹³⁰ ICAAD recommended that the Government continue its campaign to reduce maternal mortality.¹³¹ JS2 recommended that the Government promote sexual and reproductive health rights for girls through the re-introduction of family life education in schools.¹³²

63. JS2 stated that the EVD outbreak in Sierra Leone increased children's vulnerability to violence, exploitation and abuse, and high levels of trauma.¹³³ JS2 recommended the rapid expansion of support to vulnerable children, including orphans and those directly affected by Ebola, and financial support to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) to provide alternative care, psychosocial assistance, while promoting reintegration into communities. JS2 also recommended making increasing efforts to address food insecurity and malnutrition, supporting livelihoods and prioritizing interventions to ensure EVD affected children are linked to a food safety net.¹³⁴ WV made similar recommendations.¹³⁵

9. Right to education

64. JS3 stated that in Sierra Leone there are growing signs of decline in educational standards mostly due to high level of poverty and inadequate government policy.¹³⁶ TDF stated that there is a need to promote and support qualitative education initiatives and encourage more women in the education sector.¹³⁷ JS3 recommended strengthening all policies to improve basic education, especially girl child education, adult literacy and education of persons with disabilities,¹³⁸ and allowing teenage pregnant girls to return to school.¹³⁹

10. Persons with disabilities

65. JS3 observed that despite the adoption of the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act in 2011,¹⁴⁰ there has been little effort to raise public awareness on the existence of these rights.¹⁴¹ JS3 called on the Human Rights Council to urge the Government to ensure that the PWD Act and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are fully implemented.¹⁴² JS3 recommended providing secondary and tertiary institutions with Braille, sign language teachers and other relevant teaching and learning materials.¹⁴³

66. OFP stated that most PWDs in Sierra Leone live in isolated and over-crowded, make-shift dwellings, with little or no sanitation due to high level of poverty and therefore rely on street begging for their daily maintenance.¹⁴⁴ OFP observed that the 2011 PWD Act provides free health care services for PWDs. However, the implementation of these provisions is still a serious challenge. In the entire country, with a population of over six

million people, there are only three physiotherapists and one psychiatrist, no facilities for training of other nationals, and only one mental health facility. The only National Rehabilitation Centre is poorly equipped and PWDs therefore rely on traditional healers for medication.¹⁴⁵ OFP recommended the UPR WG to urge the Government to strengthen and decentralize the National Rehabilitation Center to, inter alia, ensure availability of devices and subsidise their cost, and to ensure full implementation of Free Health Care Act.¹⁴⁶

67. OFP stated that most schools in Sierra Leone are not accessible to children with disabilities and lack appropriate teaching and learning materials. There is only one government primary school for the speech and hearing impaired located in Freetown. Equally in most schools water and sanitation facilities are not accessible to children with disabilities. Girls with disabilities continue to drop out of school due to lack of support, teacher abuse and pregnancy.¹⁴⁷ OFP called on the UPR WG to urge the Government to ensure that all fees for educational institution are free and accessible to all children with disabilities; and to seek international support to develop an inclusive education policy.¹⁴⁸ OFP recommended setting up a disability unit in all government ministries, departments and agencies and undertake measures aimed at awareness raising among population on elimination of stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities.¹⁴⁹

Notes

¹ The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org. (One asterisk denotes a national human rights institution with “A” status).

Civil society

Individual submissions:

ADF International	Alliance Defending Freedom, Geneva (Switzerland);
AI	Amnesty International, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
GIEACPC	Global Initiative to End all Corporal Punishment of Children, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
ICAAD	International Centre for Advocates against Discrimination, New York, (United States of America);
ISHR	International Service for Human Rights, Geneva (Switzerland);
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa, Accra (Ghana);
OFP	OneFamilyPeople, Freetown (Sierra Leone);
TCC	The Carter Centre, Atlanta (United States of America);
TDF	Terre des Femmes, Berlin (Germany);
TUCSL	Trade Union Confederation of Sierra Leone, Freetown (Sierra Leone);
WV	World Vision, Geneva (Switzerland).

Joint submissions:

JS1	Joint submission 1 submitted by: Civicus World Alliance for Citizen participation and Campaign for Good Governance Sierra Leone;
JS2	Joint submission 2 submitted by: AMNet, Defence for Children International (DCI), Plan International, Save the Children International, World Vision International Sierra Leone, Christian Brothers, St. George’s Foundation, Health for All Coalition, Children’s Forum Network, Detention Watch, FORUT-SL, Coin a Child Campaign, Centre for Youth and Exploited Children, Every Child Matters-Sierra Leone, Don Bosco Fambul, Community Concern Network, African Youths and Children’s Network, Animated Area Development, Children and Women Empowerment Society, CRC-SL Kono branch, CRC-SL Kenema

- branch, CRC-SL Bombali branch, CRC-SL Bo, CRC-SL Kailahun, CRC-SL Port Loko, CRC-SL Moyamba, CRC-SL Pujehun, CRC-SL Kambia, CRC-SL Bonthe;
- JS3 Joint submission 3 submitted by: Vocational Training Centre for the Blind, Kenema; Movement Against Poverty; Opportunity Training Centre, Kenema; Women’s Forum; Women’s Coalition; Women in Action Against SGBV; DRIM Sierra Leone; Voice of Women; Pikin to Pikin Movement; Youth Advocacy Network; Mustard Seed Foundation; Defence for Children International; Sierra Leone Red Cross Society; OneFamilyPeople; International Rescue Committee; Sister’s Unite; Matru on the Rail War Wounded and Amoutte Camp; Mission 4 Salone; St Paul School for the Blind; Amnesty International Sierra Leone; Polio Persons Development Association; Campaign for Good Governance; Mater Peace Sierra Leone; Coalition for Justice and accountability; Kids Advocacy Network; Campaign Against Violence; Ladies in Development; Civil Society Budget Advocacy Network; Awoko News Paper; Women Forum for Human Rights and Democracy; Forum for Sierra Youth Network; Capacity Builders- Sierra Leone; Centre for Accountability and Rule of law; Youth in Action International; Disability Watch- Sierra Leone; Conscience International;
- JS4 Joint submission 4 submitted by: The Advocates for Human Rights, the Mano River Union Youth Parliament, The World Coalition against the Death Penalty(United States of America).
- National human rights institution(s):
- *HRCSL The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Freetown (Sierra Leone).
- ² Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 1.1.
- ³ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 1.2.
- ⁴ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 2.1.
- ⁵ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 2.2.
- ⁶ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.4.1.
- ⁷ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 2.3.
- ⁸ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.1.2.
- ⁹ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.7.1.
- ¹⁰ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.7.2.
- ¹¹ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.8.
- ¹² Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.8.1.
- ¹³ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.9.1.
- ¹⁴ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.5.
- ¹⁵ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.6.
- ¹⁶ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 2.4.
- ¹⁷ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.2.1.
- ¹⁸ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.2.2.
- ¹⁹ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.2.3.
- ²⁰ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.4.1.
- ²¹ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.3.1.
- ²² Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 3.1.
- ²³ The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:
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| ICERD | International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination |
| ICESCR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| OP-ICESCR | Optional Protocol to ICESCR |
| ICCPR | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights |
| ICCPR-OP 1 | Optional Protocol to ICCPR |

ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
OP-CRC-IC	Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

- ²⁴ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 4.
- ²⁵ OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.10.
- ²⁶ TDF, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras.11 and 17. Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (13 September 2000).
- ²⁷ TCC, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 2.
- ²⁸ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2013).
- ²⁹ TDF, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras.11 and 17.
- ³⁰ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 1 and 2.
- ³¹ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 8.
- ³² TCC, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 2.
- ³³ JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.17.
- ³⁴ JS1, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 2.1.
- ³⁵ MFWA, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5. A/HRC/18/10/Add.1, page 2, recommendation 82.10 (United States of America).
- ³⁶ ISHR, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5.
- ³⁷ MFWA, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.4.
- ³⁸ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 14.
- ³⁹ TDF, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.17.
- ⁴⁰ ISHR, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 1.
- ⁴¹ ISHR, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5.
- ⁴² AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 6.
- ⁴³ JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.30.
- ⁴⁴ WV, page 1.
- ⁴⁵ OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.15.
- ⁴⁶ OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.16.
- ⁴⁷ TDF, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 1.
- ⁴⁸ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras. 1 and 2.
- ⁴⁹ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5.
- ⁵⁰ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 6.
- ⁵¹ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 8.
- ⁵² AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 4.
- ⁵³ JS2, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 5.
- ⁵⁴ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, pages 7 and 8.
- ⁵⁵ JS2, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 6.
- ⁵⁶ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras.11 and 16.

- ⁵⁷ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.18.
⁵⁸ JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.13.
⁵⁹ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 6.
⁶⁰ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 8.
⁶¹ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 27.
⁶² ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 30.
⁶³ A/HRC/18/10 and A/HRC/18/10/Add.1, recommendations 82.1 (Ecuador), 82.2 (Portugal), 82.3 (France), 82.4 (Belgium), 82.14 (France), 82.15 (Ireland), 82.16 (Spain), 82.17 (Austria), 82.18 (Germany), 82.19 (Argentina), 82.20 (Brazil), 82.21 (Chile), 82.22 (Switzerland), 82.23 (Portugal), 82.24 (United Kingdom), 82.25 (Ecuador).
⁶⁴ JS4, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras.1,3 and 7.
⁶⁵ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 2.
⁶⁶ JS4, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.8.
⁶⁷ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 6.
⁶⁸ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 2.
⁶⁹ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 6.
⁷⁰ MFWA, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras.60-63.
⁷¹ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 3.
⁷² AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 7.
⁷³ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 3.
⁷⁴ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras 6 and 9.
⁷⁵ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 5.
⁷⁶ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 10.
⁷⁷ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 8.
⁷⁸ A/HRC/18/10, recommendations 81.19 (Norway), 81.20 (Austria), 81.21 (Hungary) and 81.22 (Switzerland).
⁷⁹ JS2, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 7.
⁸⁰ JS2, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 8.
⁸¹ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras. 20 and 23.
⁸² TDF, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 2.
⁸³ TDF, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras.12, 14 and 18.
⁸⁴ ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 25.
⁸⁵ GIEACPC, Submission for the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 1.
⁸⁶ GIEACPC, Submission for the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 1.1.
⁸⁷ GIEACPC, Submission for the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 1.3.
⁸⁸ TDF, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 18.
⁸⁹ JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 22. See A/HRC/18/10: recommendations 80.30 (Algeria); 80.31 (Austria); 80.32 (United States of America); 80.33 (Switzerland); 81.20 (Austria); 81.21 (Hungary) and 81.41 (Canada).
⁹⁰ JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 27 (i) and (iii).
⁹¹ TCC, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 3.
⁹² ADF International, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras. 4 and 5.
⁹³ JS1, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 2.3 and 2.4.
⁹⁴ ISHR, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras.1 and 2.
⁹⁵ MFWA, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.31.
⁹⁶ JS1, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5.1.
⁹⁷ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 7.
⁹⁸ ISHR, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.5.
⁹⁹ MFWA, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.10.
¹⁰⁰ MFWA, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.11.
¹⁰¹ MFWA, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras. 70 and 71.
¹⁰² 81.45 (Netherlands), A/HRC/18/10, page 19; 82.10 (USA),A/HRC/18/10/Add.1, page 2.
¹⁰³ AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 4.
¹⁰⁴ JS1, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5. See A/HRC/18/10 and A/HRC/18/10/Add.1: recommendations 81.45 (Netherlands), 81.55 (Poland), 81.56 (Austria), 82.10 (United States of America).

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- 105 JS1, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 4.1.
106 AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 4.
107 MFWA, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.55.
108 JS1, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5.2.
109 JS1, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5.3.
110 TCC, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 1.
111 TCC, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 3.
112 ISHR, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 3.
113 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 5.
114 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.12.
115 TUCSL, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.3.1.
116 TUCSL, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.2.2.
117 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 28.
118 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 32 (i) and (iii).
119 WV, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 3.
120 WV, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 4.
121 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 35.
122 WV, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, pages 1 and 2.
123 WV, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 3.
124 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 37 (i) and (ii).
125 WV, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 3.
126 AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 5.
127 AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 8.
128 ADF International, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, paras 19 and 21.
129 AI, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 5.
130 ADF International, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para 26.
131 ICAAD, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 19.
132 JS2, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 6.
133 JS2, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 2.
134 JS2, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 4.
135 WV, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, page 5.
136 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 38.
137 TDF, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.20.
138 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 42 (ii).
139 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 48 (i) and (ii).
140 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.17.
141 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.18.
142 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 20.
143 JS3, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.42.
144 OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 7.
145 OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.11.
146 OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.12.
147 OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.13.
148 OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para.14.
149 OFP, Submission to the UPR of Sierra Leone, para. 8.
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