

Submission by Torture Watch Organisation (TOWSL) for the UN Universal Periodic Review of Sierra Leone

11th session of the UPR Working Group of the Human Rights Council

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Introduction

In this submission, Torture Watch Organisation (TWOSL) highlights violations of the rights of children, particularly girls and young women in the context of Female Genital Mutilations. TWOSL concludes with two recommendations for the government of Sierra Leone.

.B. Normative and institutional framework of the State

The Child Rights Act was enacted in 2007 to protect the child from inhumane treatment. Sierra Leone is also a state party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Despite all these laws and instruments under-age girls (between the age of five and eighteen) continue to face female genital mutilation and other inhumane treatment.

C. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

In September and early October 2010, about 80% of young girls between the ages of five to 18 were initiated to secret society through harmful traditional practices in the Pujehun district. This initiation involves partially or totally removing the female genitalia. This causes severe pains and bleeding and constitutes inhuman treatment. Female genital mutilations are widely practiced in Sierra Leone. TWOSL observed that politicians continue to sponsor the initiations of underage girls to get election votes and political party allegiance in return.

D. Recommendations for action by the State under review:

1. The government should enact legislation against Female Genital Mutilation in Sierra Leone
2. The government should ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.