



## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

### PRESS RELEASE

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC EMERGENCY REGULATIONS 2014, CONSTITUTIONAL INSTRUMENT NO.5 of 2014**

(**Thursday 23rd April 2015**).The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) is concerned about the implementation of the Public Emergency Regulations 2014 by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), particularly the discriminatory application of Section 15 which derogates the Right to Freedom of Assembly and Association.

HRCSL observes that whilst some groups of the citizenry have been allowed to assemble and exercise their rights to express their views without hindrance, other groups have been denied the opportunity to do so by the SLP.

HRCSL reminds Government of its obligations under International Law to protect, respect and fulfill basic rights and fundamental freedoms even during State of Emergencies, such as: Freedom from discrimination, Right to a fair trial, Freedom of thought and conscience as stated in Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). HRCSL further reminds Government of its obligations to respect International Treaties to which it is a signatory and as provided for in Section 10 (d) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 Act No. 6 of 1991.

The Commission draws Government's attention to its recommendation in the State Of Human Rights Report 2010 that "**GoSL should ensure that the right to hold peaceful, open and public demonstration is available to all individuals, groups or political parties without undue restrictions**" (pg41, par 3.1.7).

Furthermore, while it is understandable that the SLP has a duty to protect life and property and to maintain law and order, the right to hold peaceful demonstrations should not be withheld. The SLP should be provided with adequate resources to maintain law and order when the right to hold peaceful demonstration is exercised by various groups.

HRCSL calls on the SLP to ensure that all individuals or groups of individuals have equal opportunity to exercise their freedom of Assembly and Association within the ambit of the law and to observe the principles of consistency and non-discrimination in the implementation of Section 15 of the State of Emergency Regulations 2014.

The Commission urges the SLP to maintain their professionalism even during this State of Public Emergency and calls on the government and members of the public to respect and uphold the law.

Finally, in order to restore the full enjoyment of human rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of Sierra Leone and International Human Rights Instruments, HRCSL calls on Parliament to review the State of Emergency with a view to reducing the limitations imposed under the emergency regulations following the significant reduction of new Ebola cases and the reopening of schools and other educational institutions.

END

Signed:



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Chairperson  
Brima A. Sheriff

*The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone is an independent institution established by the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act (No. 9), 2004 with the mandate to protect and promote human rights nationwide.*

**Contacts:**

- **Headquarters:** NEC Building, OAU Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown
- **Southern Region:** 1 Old Railway Line, Bo
- **Northern Region:** 30 Wallace Johnson Street, Makeni
- **Eastern Region:** 68 Blama Road, Kenema

**Web Site:** [www.hrsl.org](http://www.hrsl.org)

**Email:** [hrsl1@yahoo.com](mailto:hrsl1@yahoo.com)