



MEDIA FREEDOM REVIEW-OCTOBER 2021

The monthly 'Media Freedom Review' is a publication of the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) produced from the monitoring and reporting on freedom of expression, media freedom, internet, digital and online rights, and safety and security of journalists in Sierra Leone.

In October 2021, the MRCG followed incidents on alleged arrest and detention of journalists, intimidation and death threat against a journalist, followed-up on the arrest and detention of a journalist, and appointment of SLAJ's Disciplinary Committee Chairperson.

The Sierra Leone Police on 5 October 2021 arrested and detained ten journalists including the station manager, Abdurahman Kamara of *Star Radio's Media One Center* in Freetown. The arrest was in connection with a complaint made by the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority (EDSA) on an alleged illegal electricity connection by *Star Radio*. The Station Manager, Abdurahman Kamara, denied the allegations. Deputy Media and Public Relations Officer of the Sierra Leone Police, Samuel Saio Conteh said the police arrested the journalists for obstructing the investigation process. The Proprietor on his visit to the police station was also detained. With the intervention of SLAJ, nine journalists were granted bail on the same day excluding the proprietor and the station manager who spent three days at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID). The matter was charged to court and three hearings were held in October with the next hearing adjourned to November 2021.

The Times Newspaper Editor, Salieu Tejan Jalloh, was reportedly subjected to intimidation and death threat by anonymous callers in October 2021 as a result of his publications about perpetrators behind the 'alleged attempted ritual murder of the six virgins'. Mr Jalloh's 'Alert for Public Attention' on his Facebook post stated that his life was under threat and that he wanted the public to know that the alleged suspects had been planning to either kidnap him or get him eliminated. Mr Jalloh said the matter had been settled as the alleged anonymous callers contacted him and apologized to him.



On the matter of journalist Osman Hardy Jalloh and Magistrate Joseph Toby of Magistrate Court Number 2 in Kenema, the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone, had not yet responded to the complaint filed by the journalist against the magistrate. The Magistrate said he has a case with no one.



The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) on 31 October 2021 appointed Claudia AR Anthony as Chairperson of its reconstituted SLAJ Disciplinary Committee (SDC). The Disciplinary Committee was established to look into the excesses of its members in relation to their work as journalists. Taking over from Mrs Bernadette Cole, Mrs Anthony has over 40 years of media experience with international journalism recognitions.

The details of the cases and issues will be published in the MRCG Bi-Annual Press Freedom Report for June to November 2021.

The MRCG's freedom of expression, media freedom and internet and digital rights initiative is funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the United States of America. The MRCG seeks to strengthen democratic dialogue and accountability, consolidate peace and ensure development through professional, independent and sustainable media, based on the right to freedom of expression and of the press.