



REPORT ON PRESS FREEDOM, INFORMATION, INTERNET AND DIGITAL RIGHTS IN SIERRA LEONE



Press Freedom in Sierra Leone June to November 2022 - Ninth Edition

Produced by Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG)
With support from
The National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms & Abbreviations	Meaning
AGM	Annual General Meeting
APC	All Peoples Congress
AYV	Africa Young Voices
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CARL	Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DC	Disciplinary Committee
DCI	Defense for Children International
DISEC	District Security Committee
ECSL	Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone
GOE	Guild of Editors
GYW	Girls and Young Women
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IGP	Inspector General Police
IMC	Independent Media Commission
IRN	Independent Radio Network
IDUAI	International Day for Universal Access to Information
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MIC	Ministry of Information and Communications
MRCG	Media Reform Coordinating Group
MP	Member of Parliament

MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
NCSCC	National Cyber-Security Coordination Centre
NCA	National Communications Authority
NATCOM	National Telecommunication Commission
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
ONS	Office of National Security
PPRC	Political Parties Registration Commission
RAIC	Right to Access Information Commission
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
SLAJ	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
SLBC	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SLRU	Sierra Leone Reporters Union
SLAWIJ	Sierra Leone Association of Women in Journalism
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SWASAL	Sport Writers Association of Sierra Leone
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange
WIMSAL	Women in the Media Sierra Leone
VOPAD	Voice of Peace and Development Radio

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report, which addresses issues on ‘Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Access to Information, and Internet Freedom and Digital Rights in Sierra Leone, is the ninth in a series produced by the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG). It is a component of a project titled, “**Enhancing Press Freedom and Media Reforms**”, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the United States of America. The Report which covers the period June to November 2022 is the outcome of the monitoring of the exercise and legal guarantees of freedom of expression and of the press, and internet freedom and digital rights issues in Sierra Leone, including invitations, intimidations, attacks, assaults, arrests, detentions and prosecution of journalists and other citizens; and also tracks media performance.

This edition is mainly divided into the following areas: Thematic Issues- Freedom of Expression and of the Press (focusing mainly on the assault, arrest and detention of journalists and other citizens); Right to Access Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; Media and Good Governance; Performance of Media Institutions; Positions of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists and the Government on the said issues; Status of Media and Communication Laws in Sierra Leone; Conclusion, Recommendations, References and Appendices.

The Report has been produced from the monitoring of issues relating to freedom of expression and of the press, internet freedom and digital rights broadcast on radio and television stations, published on newspapers and posted on social media platforms. Interviews were conducted, where necessary, with individuals who were either reportedly attacked or arrested. Officials of institutions named in some of the issues reported were also interviewed.

The cases and issues covered in this Report are:

1. The alleged physical assault of journalist Abdulai Gbla of ***Gbla TV online***, on 28 June 2022, by a Member of Parliament (MP), Hon. Abdul Muniru Lansana of Constituency 121, in the well of parliament.
2. The enactment of the Bill entitled “The National Electronic Communication Act, 2021” on 22 June 2022 by the Sierra Leone Parliament.
3. The commissioning of the implementation of Sierra Leone’s first Cyber Investigative Directorate by President Julius Maada Bio on 22 June 2022.
4. The concerns about the transfer of Superintendent Samuel Saio Conteh, who was the Deputy Media and Public Relations of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), to Rotifunk Police Station after an interview he granted on ***AYV*** on the 15 June 2022.
5. The physical assault of journalist Maada Jesse Jengo, a journalist working for ***Voice of Peace and Development Radio FM 96.5 (VOPAD)*** in Waterloo, Western Area Rural by ‘four officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)’ on 2 July 2022.
6. The shutdown of the country’s internet for about some hours on 10 August 2022, following protests and civil unrests in Freetown and other parts in the Northern and North-West Regions.
7. Online death threat against Umaru Fofana, ***BBC***’s Correspondent in Sierra Leone from unknown members of the public.
8. The suspension of the licences of Star Radio and Television by the National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM) in a press release on 19 August 2022.
9. The physical assault on the Managing Editor of ***Night Watch Newspaper***, Emmanuel Christian Thorli by staff of Njala University, in Waterloo on 11 September 2022.

10. The arrest and detention of the former Anti-Corruption Commissioner, Ady Macauley Esq., at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on the 6 October 2022 in relation to an opinion expressed on *AVY*.
11. The suspension of the Station Manager of *Radio Bintumani 93.1* by the Coordinator of the Office of National Security in Kabala, Koinadugu district.
12. The Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations 2022 were published on the government's gazette.

The MRCG data showed that for this reporting period five (5) cases were monitored and seven (7) issued were covered. Out of the five cases, four are inconclusive. They are the matters of Abdulai Gbla of *Gbla TV online* Maada Jesse Jengo, a journalist working for *Voice of Peace and Development Radio FM 96.5 (VOPAD)*, Managing Editor of *Night Watch Newspaper*, Emmanuel Christian Thorli, and Ady Macauley Esq.

The MRCG notes that there were still inconclusive cases as at the end of the reporting period on cases in the first edition of the Press Freedom Reports (June to November 2018), second edition (December 2018-May 2019), third edition (June to November 2019), fourth edition (December 2019 to May 2020), seventh edition (June to November 2021), eighth edition (December 2021 to May 2022) and ninth edition (June to November 2022). From the First to the Ninth Edition of the Press Freedom Report, sixty-two cases were monitored. Forty-three of them were concluded, settled, resolved, dropped or abandoned, because of lack of progress; five were in court; and fourteen under police investigation/inconclusive/stalled. See details in the appendices.

The MRCG continues to note that the country is making progress in press freedom rankings and calls for the general climate for freedom of expression for everybody to be guaranteed. Institutions that implement, interpret and enforce the law should do so within acceptable democratic standards. The State cannot guarantee press freedom without freedom of expression. While the MRCG urges media practitioners to abide by the ethical and legal standards of the journalism profession, it is also calling on the Government, media organisations, civil society and the public to ensure the safety and security of journalists across the country at all times.

The MRCG is a coordinating Secretariat comprising Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), Mass Communication (Fourah Bay College), Independent Media Commission (IMC), Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC), Guild of Editors (GoE), Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL), Independent Radio Network (IRN), Sierra Leone Reporters Union (SLRU), Sport Writers Association of Sierra (SWASAL) and the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC).

1. INTRODUCTION

This ninth report, produced by the MRCG, is one of the components under a project titled, “**Enhancing Press Freedom and Media Reforms**”, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the United States of America. The activity continues to track media performance and monitor the exercise and legal guarantees of press freedom and freedom of expression in Sierra Leone, including attacks, intimidations, assaults, arrests, detentions and prosecutions of journalists and civil society activists, internet and digital rights.

The report covers a six-month period; June to November 2022. It is divided into the following areas: Thematic Issues focusing mainly on the cases/issues of Freedom of Expression and of the Press; Right to Access Information; Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; Media and Good Governance; Performance of Institutions Dealing with Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; Performance of Media Institutions; Position of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists on Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; Government’s Position on Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; Status of Media and Communication Laws in Sierra Leone; Conclusion; Recommendation; References; and Appendices.

Twelve cases and issues have been addressed on freedom of expression and of the press. In addition, this report follows up on cases from the first to the eighth edition, from June 2018 to November 2022 that were still inconclusive cases. From the First to the Ninth Edition of the Press Freedom Report, sixty-two cases were monitored. Forty-three of them were concluded, settled, resolved, dropped or abandoned, because of lack of progress; five were in court; and fourteen under police investigation/inconclusive/stalled. See details in the appendices.

Sierra Leone as a country, has specific statutes (Acts) containing laws, regulations, policies and institutions governing the media space in Sierra Leone. The major laws used to regulate the media are the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 (Section 25 (1) and Section 11), the Independent Media Commission Act, 2020, the Defamation Ordinance, 1961 and the Media Code of Practice, 2007. On the professional aspect, there is the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) Code of Ethics.

There is the Right to Access Information Act, 2013, that provides for access to certain information held by public bodies. There is also the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021. The Act, among other things, provides for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment of cybercrimes; and protection of privacy rights.

The report is produced from the monitoring of issues relating to freedom of expression and of the press. Two monitors contracted by the MRCG take daily records of major issues relating to freedom of expression and of the press, right to access information; internet freedom and digital rights by tracking radio, television and newspaper contents, as well as following up on issues on social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. Interviews were conducted where necessary, with some individuals who were reportedly attacked, intimidated or arrested. Officials of institutions named in some of the issues were also interviewed. The MRCG thanks NED for funding the project. Special thanks also go to the authors of the monthly reports, Osman Sesay and Ishiaka Sannoh, and their supervisors, Augustine S. James and Jonette-Ann Matilda O. Greene. This ninth biannual report was written by Francis Sowa (Ph.D.) and Rosaline Katimu Amara.

2. THEMATIC ISSUES

2.1 Freedom of Expression and of the Press

The MRCG monthly media monitoring reports from June 2022 to November 2022 documented the following cases.

On 28 June 2022 Abdulai Gbla, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of *Gbla TV Online* wrote a letter of complaint to the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) regarding an alleged ‘physical assault’ on him by a Member of Parliament (MP), Hon. Abdul Muniru Lansana of Constituency 121. Mr. Gbla in his complaint said “he [Hon. Lansana] physically assaulted (pushed) me in the Well of Parliament and knocked my gadget (Samsung Galaxy Note 20 ULTRA) on the floor with the intent of destroying it to prevent me from videoing a scuffle that the All Peoples Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) MPs were having in the Well of Parliament immediately after the Parliamentary proceedings at about 7:09 PM, on the 28th June 2022.” Hon. Abdul Muniru Lansana in response told the MRCG that he ‘did not assault’ the journalist as he had alleged, but rather ‘hit his phone to stop filming the incident’ after he had previously asked the journalist not to film since the parliamentary sitting had been adjourned. He said the journalist had entered a place in the ‘Well’ where only dignitaries and accredited persons were allowed and not journalists. Abdulai Gbla told MRCG that after the Executive of SLAJ had met with the Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Paran Umar Tarawally on 5 July 2022 nothing had been done by Parliament to further investigate the matter and none of the parties had reached out to him. SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla, told MRCG that they were yet to have another meeting with the Clerk of Parliament on the issue, but confirmed that investigations were still ongoing, and that they have asked the journalist to exercise some patience. In November, the SLAJ President Ahmed Sahid Nasralla told the MRCG that the leadership of SLAJ had again contacted the Clerk of Parliament on the matter, but he was yet to get an update from him on the status of the investigation.

On 2 July 2022, Maada Jesse Jengo, a journalist working for Voice of Peace and Development Radio (VOPAD) FM 96.5 in Waterloo, Western Area Rural was physically assaulted by ‘four officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)’. Maada told the MRCG that on his way to work on a commercial motor bike, they ran into a ‘Black Jeep’ with registration number ‘ANK 156’ parked in the middle of the road at 5-5 Gas Station in Waterloo that denied them access. He said four officers disembarked from the jeep and started beating him and the bike rider after they had remarked against the actions of the soldiers to park in the middle of the road. He said during the „severe beating“ by the officers, his phone, tape recorder and money got missing. SLAJ’s 4 July 2022 press release condemned the act of the RSLAF officers for assaulting the journalist and called on the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and RSLAF to investigate the incident and to take appropriate actions against the perpetrators. “The action of those soldiers is totally unacceptable in a democracy. An attack on any journalist is an attack on press freedom. I, therefore, urge personnel of the RSLAF to respect the MoU we have with the security sector to protect and support one another's role in our democracy,” said SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla. <https://www.facebook.com/slj.sierraleone>. The RSLAF in a press release dated 8 July 2022, said the ‘soldiers have been identified and an investigation into the allegations’ was ongoing in ‘accordance with military procedures’. RSLAF assured SLAJ of its ‘commitment for mutual cooperation and cordial relationship in the discharge’ of their duties. The Station Manager, VOPAD radio, Joseph Lamin, told the MRCG that the perpetrators had held a meeting with the management of the radio, the journalist’s family and some Waterloo community stakeholders to settle the matter amicably. He said during the meeting, they agreed that the perpetrators would refund the journalist’s items that got missing during the incident and his medical bills. He continued that the perpetrators had paid half of the agreed amount, but have not showed up

or called for any further arrangements, noting that he would soon take the matter with the RSLAF. Director of Public Relations and Information, RSLAF, Col. Abu Bakarr Bah, confirmed to MRCG that, both parties had agreed to settle the matter. He assured that the RSLAF would ensure full compliance from the perpetrators. The Station Manager updated MRCG in November that, the officers who were involved in the matter had apologised to the journalist and his family, adding that the officers promised to refund the medical bills of the journalist, pay for the items that got missing during the incident and also do a public apology through the Radio. <https://www.facebook.com/slaj.sierraleone>.

On 12 August 2022, the **BBC** Correspondent in Sierra Leone, Umaru Fofana posted on his Facebook about a death threat he had received from some ‘unknown members’ of the public. Mr Fofana told the MRCG that in as much as he took the threat seriously; he would not allow such to negatively affect his professional practice to judiciously serve the interest of his country and its citizens. <https://www.facebook.com/100050433761914/posts/pfbid02yBpoBfWagq6ByRonAqHnULr9c8LZsJDfau2cQTHsVVzPZBoqas9JmXsUNNBS16GPI/?app=fbl>. In an enquiry with the police by MRCG, they said that the matter was not reported to them. The MRCG reiterates that there have been concerted efforts by the media stakeholders to strengthen the safety and security of journalists in their line of duty, and such death threats have no place in a democratic country which should guarantee freedom of expression. It notes that there is now a National Comprehensive Framework on the Safety of Journalists in Sierra Leone.

On 11 September 2022 the Managing Editor of **Night Watch Newspaper**, Emmanuel Christian Thorli, was assaulted and beaten in Waterloo by some staff of Njala University. The fracas reportedly ensued from a tribute reportedly given by the journalists at the New Life Ministries International Fellowship Church to his late colleague Ralph Simeon Sesay, who was the former Editor of **Night Watch Newspaper**. An aspect of the tribute did not go down well with staff of the university, and the journalist told MRCG that he was ordered by the staff to return to the church and withdraw it. The Assistant Public Relations Officer, Njala University, Ayuba Koroma, denied the allegation, stating that the journalist was not assaulted by any staff of the University, but confirmed that the University staff peacefully told the journalist to return to the Church and withdraw his tribute. He, however, said that the University has instituted an investigation into the matter. The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) in a press release dated 12 September 2022, condemned the alleged assault and beating of the journalist and called on the administration of Njala University to speedily investigate the unfortunate incident and to take appropriate actions. The Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) in a press alert on 12 September 2022 joined SLAJ to call for an immediate investigation into the alleged assault on the journalist. https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0BMttdZGaCMVEzrEcBiU3eDvWTHowfhq2RhZJ1hJcayrGygVEEQTMm2VCJUrwhJCsl&id=100001182651239. SLAJ and MRCG continue to call on the management of Njala University to institute an investigation into the matter as the issue is still pending. In a follow up on the matter with the management of Njala University, the Acting Public Relations Officer said the matter was under investigation. This was also confirmed by SLAJ President Ahmed Sahid Nasralla. However, the Managing Editor told MRCG that since the matter was reported to the Police for investigation no one had updated him on the progress of the matter, nor had the management of the university reached out to him. In a follow up with the police, they told MRCG that, the journalist was supposed to go with officers to Njala Campus in Mokonde to do further investigation, but the journalist was yet to do so.

On 6 October 2022 the former Anti-Corruption Commissioner, Ady Macauley Esq., was arrested and detained at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) as a result of his legal opinion in relation to issues of protest and assembly, which he expressed on the **Africa Young Voices Television (AYV)** program called

‘AYV on Sunday’ on 10 July 2022. He was released on bail, and the matter is now at the Directorate of Public Prosecution awaiting legal advice.

2.2 Right to Access Information

In an interview, the Chairman of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC), Dr. Ibrahim Seaga-Shaw, told MRCG that public awareness about the work of the Commission was on the increase even though they are faced with series of challenges. ‘We have seen more public disclosure of information this year which shows that MDAs are complying with what is stated in the Act,’ he added. Section 8 sub section 2 of the Act provides that all public authorities must proactively disclose information upon request. ‘From June to November 2022, the RAIC received 187 information requests nationally, out of which 84 escalated to complaints. Out of the 84 complaints, 62 were resolved with, most if not all, of the information requested, 13 are still pending and 7 were declined.’”

“Information requests have shifted from only civil society organisations and individuals, but these days even the MDAs request for information from civil society organisation to aid their decision making or policy, hence the supply and demand of information comes both ways - you can be the supplier today and tomorrow you want to be the demander or requester of information,” the Chairman stated.

The RAIC still has a matter at the High Court of Sierra Leone between the Bank of Sierra Leone and the Commission. In 2020, a journalist, Martha Kargbo made a request to the Bank of Sierra Leone pursuant to the RAIC Act of 2013, but was reportedly denied the information requested. The matter awaits ruling.

2.3 Internet Freedom and Digital Rights

Since the enactment of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021 there have been arrests made pursuant to breach of its provision(s). The Act, among other things, provides for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment of cybercrimes; and protection of privacy rights. Sierra Leoneans who use social media and mobile phones to communicate may risk being criminally prosecuted for cyberstalking and/or cyberbullying, based on Section 44 of the Cyber Security and Crime Act, if they share information or opinions perceived to be abusive, harassing, insulting, or detrimentally affects other people. <https://sierraloaded.sl/news/slaj-raises-concern-implementation-cyber-law/>

On 22 June 2022, President Julius Maada Bio commissioned the implementation of Sierra Leone’s first Cyber Investigative Directorate (CID) that gives the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) the capability to investigate and prosecute cybercrime and crimes committed using the internet. The CID’s cyber forensic system was set up to fight crimes. <https://snradio.net/sierra-leone-institutes-1st-cyber-investigative-directorate/>

On 10 August 2022, the country’s internet was shut down for about two hours during the day, following protests and civil unrests in Freetown and other parts of the country. Zoodlabs Sierra Leone, a technology and smart utility infrastructure company in Sierra Leone, stated in a press release published on their Twitter page that, the internet shutdown in the country was as a result of an emergency technical maintenance on some of their international routes (<https://twitter.com/ZoodlabsS/status/1557432953541722118?s=08>). The MRCG on the same date issued a press release where it called on all journalists and media practitioners to ensure their safety while covering and reporting on the protests. <https://www.facebook.com/2226750424106118/posts/pfbid0VW7wAGPgVdRjt54JRQMj7ZsRo3xuLjekipX7FaMWBGTvj5Hvwth16cAX7QCsqdwMI/>

The National Cybersecurity Coordination Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC) and the Security Sectors in a press release dated 11 August 2022 stated that Section 49(1) of the Cybersecurity and Crime Act, 2021 indicates that anyone who aids in the act of [cyber terrorism] , “which in this instance is the spreading of incendiary information on social media platforms to destabilize the State also commits the same offence.” The release that came after the August 10 2022 protests, also noted that “government has now put mechanisms in place for a robust monitoring of the social media spaces and platforms that can be accessed by Sierra Leoneans.” The release warned that “anyone who is caught in the sharing of such information shall face the full consequence of the law.



Figure 1: NCSCC press release

2.4 Media and Good Governance

The MRCG reviewed the electoral process for the 2023 general elections with reference to the voter registration period. The Chairman of the Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL) on 14 March, 2022 pronounced the date for the Presidential election on the 24 June 2023 after consultation with the President. In preparation of the 2023 general elections, the ECSL on 24 August 2022 launched the 2022 Voter Registration Exercise at the New Brookfield’s Hotel, Freetown. The exercise commenced on the 3 September to 4 October and was done in two phases. The voter registration is part of the fulfillment of the functions of the Commission. The exercise had a huge turnout of citizens; however there were challenges which resulted to the extension of the process by two days from the 7 -8 October 2022. At the end of the entire process, the ECSL published the analysis of the provisional registration.

During the entire voter registration period, the MRCG was fully involved in monitoring the process and assessing the role played by media houses in terms of coverage and voter education. At the end of MRCG’s monitoring of the first phase of the voter process, it was found out that ECSL was not readily open and accessible for the timely release of information as well as poor coordination between ECSL and media houses, especially the ones in the regions. One key recommendation that came out was for ECSL and Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) to warn political parties to desist from sending out campaign messages during the voter registration process. Even though the relationship between media houses and ECSL was not that cordial in the first phase of the voter registration process, all media houses and organizations ensure adequate coverage of the process, some with special programs dedicated to voter education. In the second phase of the exercise, MRCG found out that there were more partnerships among ECSL media houses and organizations. The MRCG continues to call on the ECSL and other election management bodies to ensure that journalists are given the space to operate and that freedom of expression and of the press are guaranteed.

3. PERFORMANCE OF INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF THE PRESS, INFORMATION, INTERNET FREEDOM AND DIGITAL RIGHTS

Established by an Act of Parliament in 2013, the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) provides for the disclosure of information held by public authorities or by persons providing services for them and to provide for other related matters. The Commission's key responsibilities are to facilitate and promote the supply and demand of public information in the country with requests from an individual or a body.

There is the SLAJ Disciplinary Committee established pursuant to Article 14 (3) of its constitution responsible to adjudicate upon matters of indiscipline and professional misconduct of individual members of SLAJ. Under the reporting period, the Committee said it did not receive or adjudicate on any complaint from members of the public against journalists in their line of duty.

The Cyber Security and Crime Act, 2021 provides for the effective, unified and comprehensive legal, regulatory and institutional framework for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment for cybercrimes; prevention of the abusive use of computer systems; to provide for the establishment of structures to promote cybersecurity and capacity building; to provide for the timely and effective collection of electronic evidence for the purpose of investigation and prosecution of cybercrime; to provide for the protection of Critical National Information Infrastructure and the protection of computer systems and networks, electronic communications, data and computer programs, intellectual property and privacy rights to provide for facilitation of international cooperation in dealing with cybercrime matters and to provide for other related matters.

The National Telecommunications Commission was established by an Act of Parliament in 2006, as amended in 2021. The main function of the Commission is to license and regulate the activities of telecommunications operators to promote efficiency, fair competition, expansion of investment in the sector, development of the sector and the protection of users of telecommunications networks and services.

On 19 August 2022 the National Telecommunications Commission (NATCOM) in a press release "suspended the licences of *Star Radio and Television* to operate and broadcast." According to the release, the suspension follows a breach in the licenses conditions pursuant to sections 30 and 65 of the NATCOM Act of 2006 as amended. The release stated that the action was taken after several correspondences and meetings relating to the licenses conditions between the Commission and *Star radio and Television* which the management failed to follow through.

The Sierra Leone Police and Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic with support from the European Union's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) project, from 12 to 14 October 2022 conducted a three-day intensive training program with the SLP on European best practices to respond to disinformation with full Human Rights and Freedom of Speech approach. (<https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/TAIEX%20police%20training%20press%20release%20171022.pdf>).

On 18 and 22 October 2022 NATCOM in press releases directed all Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to implement the minimum floor price of Le 18 (new Leone) per megabyte for telecommunication data services, but later suspended its earlier instructions, as a result of public outcry that the increase would affect freedom of expression.

4. PERFORMANCE OF MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

There are improvements in the outputs of media institutions. This is reflected in their contents and programming. However, there were major concerns that a number of media institutions continued to publish and broadcast contents that breached ethical standards or were in contravention of the country's media laws, the IMC Act and Media Code of Practice.

On 1 August 2022, the MRCG and Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) organised a training workshop on Investigative and Anti-Corruption reporting for 15 investigative journalists from various media houses in Freetown. The MFWA also used the workshop as a platform to launch the Right to Access Information Manual for journalists in Sierra Leone at the New Brookfields Hotel, Freetown. <https://www.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/534862175103777/?app=fbl>.

On 2 August 2022 the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) and MRCG convened a Forum for the adoption of the Comprehensive National Framework on the Safety of Journalists in Sierra Leone. The Forum brought together various stakeholders, including the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), Ministry of Information and Communications, Independent Media Commission (IMC), Office of National Security (ONS), Sierra Leone Police (SLP), Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL), Civil Society Organizations, and students from journalism schools etc. <https://www.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/1081623939226470/?app=fbl>.

The Independent Media Commission (IMC) on 22 August 2022 held a consultative meeting with editors and station managers at the Commission's Conference Hall in Freetown on ethical publications and broadcast. The IMC's Executive Secretary, Khalil Kallon stated that the consultative meeting was to curb unethical broadcast and publications by certain media houses during and after the August 10 civil unrests. IMC's Chairman, Dr Victor Massaquoi cautioned journalists that as they report on issues and events, they must be responsible in the discharge of their duties to avoid unethical reportage. The meeting ended with the following five key resolutions, which included: managers/editors to uphold and respect the provisions of the IMC Act 2020 and Media Code of Practice; managers/editors to denounce promotion of hate speech/messages in the media; IMC to distinguish publications considered to be tribal, political, inciting and hate speeches; and IMC to ensure that the media has more ethical reporting standards training across the country.

On 24 August 2022, the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) in collaboration with Sierra Leone Film Industry held a consultative meeting at the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau conference room, ferry junction for purpose of drafting a Policy that would regulate the film industry in Sierra Leone. The Minister of Information and Communications, Mohamed Rahman Swaray, said that the government was willing to support the process. He also confirmed that, Sierra Leone had signed up to the African Continental Free Trade Area, which has a market of 1.3 billion viewers and help reduce the policy level and we can go digital on Netflix and many other film streaming platforms.. <https://www.facebook.com/mic.gov.sl/videos/8162480133777126/>

SLAJ, on 24 August 2022 held a workshop with bloggers to continue discussion on the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021 under a project titled 'Cyber Safe Sierra Leone.' The purpose of the engagement was an attempt by SLAJ to bring together bloggers to educate them about the provisions of the law and solicit their support in the awareness-raising drive. "We also want to build advocacy around certain provisions in the law that have the potential to undermine fundamental human rights such as free expression, online freedoms, and data privacy rights," said SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla

<https://www.facebook.com/100001182651239/posts/pfbid02bJepQyYdsK87aYcA13aNKUveWnZZkzrTv eeyS4mDrSthyrJbxF3c1sJEP7ofimAwl/?app=fbl>

On 26 August 2022 MRCG organized a workshop to review and finalize the draft Policy on Safety of Journalists in Sierra Leone at the Negus Nagas Complex, Grafton village, Western Rural District. The workshop, which was funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the United States of America, assembled heads of national journalists' associations and organizations. The Policy was drafted to promote the safety of journalists in Sierra Leone; to comply with international standards on safety of journalists in the country; to ensure that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and the Security Sector Institutions is implemented; and to provide a generic template which media institutions can use to develop their own policy on the safety of journalists.

<https://www.facebook.com/2226750424106118/posts/pfbid025m6538m3a6qSLEfU3LG6gX4cQUZdaa9PL yCvud vXUXn9FnP5E2mYEGEnBQKFomQdl/>

On 12 September 2022 the newly-elected National Executive of SLAJ paid a courtesy visit on the Minister of Information and Communications at the Ministry's Conference Room Youyi Building Freetown. The Information Minister, Mohamed Rahman Swaray noted that government understood the critical role of the media in national development, for which the government would continue to support media development in the country.

<https://www.facebook.com/100001182651239/posts/pfbid02FGHH4QcuMvW2DG1AYWeQZU5ZZjoUoA PWEtFRWL4kHfK 97WANoENSVVmkkgRPAWgUl/>

On 27 September 2022, SLAJ paid a courtesy call on the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) at the Commission's Tower Hill Office. SLAJ called on the Commission for cooperation on Access and Information Integrity as the country approached the June 2023 general elections.

<https://www.facebook.com/100001182651239/posts/pfbid0R2mBXsCmWvyqa6FDWBiuHQVBaDRRDp9 M3EvJSZHMroSUJ3FM8mbdW5AiNjWZ2Cf3l/>

On 28 September 2022, the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) in commemoration of the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI), organized a one-day symposium at the Family Kingdom Resort, Aberdeen Freetown, on the theme 'e-Governance and Open Data: Pathway to Access Information' (<https://fb.watch/fPW8lM5g-V/>).

On 5 October 2022, SLAJ paid a courtesy call on the new Inspector General of Police (IGP) William Fayia Sellu at the Police Headquarters in Freetown. The objective of the visit was for both the SLP and the Media to support each other in carrying out their respective duties in order to reduce incidence of police-journalist clashes during and after the electioneering periods.

The MRCG monitored and followed up on the suspension of the Station Manager of Radio Bintumani 93.1 FM by the ONS District Coordinator of Koinadugu, Mr. Lawrence Kpangu after a District Security Committee (DISEC) meeting. The Independent Media Commission (IMC) investigating the matter has condemned the involvement and actions of the ONS District Coordinator. The MRCG is part of stakeholders trying to address the matter. It notes that issues of governance and operations of the radio stations are within the purview of the IMC and not the ONS.

Figure 2 IMC Press Release

5. POSITION OF THE SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF THE PRESS, INFORMATION, INTERNET FREEDOM AND DIGITAL RIGHTS

June to November 2022 has been a remarkable period for SLAJ with the Association releasing dozens of press releases on its Annual General Meeting (AGM), welfare of journalists and self-regulation, among others. The crucial issue under the reporting period was the welfare of journalists which has been a perennial challenge for decades. SLAJ, together with other media organizations, have called on the Government to ensure the welfare of journalists, as it is an age-old problem of the media industry in the country. SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla, noted that when the media houses become economically viable entities, it should naturally reflect in the welfare conditions of its practitioners. He urged all media houses to be compliant with NASSIT and NRA regulations. He also encouraged the Independent Media Commission (IMC) to be robust in ensuring compliance with same. SLAJ and the Sierra Leone Reporters Union (SLRU) are working to address what is best described as ‘poverty of the media,’ as a result they have requested the Ministry of Labour for a bargaining certificate that will help to address the welfare of reporters in the country.

Public interest journalism depends on economic viability, independence and professionalism of the media. To support this path, the Disciplinary Committee (DC) of SLAJ has been very active in promoting adherence to the SLAJ Code of Ethics on independence and professionalism. With support from a NED project, the DC now works with district media monitors across the country to promote professionalism in the media sector in Sierra Leone and to flag threats against free media. Members of DC also embarked on provincial trips to evaluate the work of the monitors and organise hearings on cases of professional misconduct and threats against the work of the media and do a comprehensive report on their observation on journalists from both the print and electronic media. The Freetown media confirmed that breaches of the media code of practice were more predominant among print journalists, which indicated that the print media should step up in their observance of the Code. Several challenges including lack of remuneration, dependency on adverts, and unprofessionalism among some journalists were discussed.

SLAJ President, at the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Media Dialogue with His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio on reflections on the August 10 ‘Violent Protests’ in Sierra Leone emphatically stated that everyone should take responsibility for what happened, the government, opposition parties, the security sector, the media, CSOs, traditional and religious leaders, and Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora. He expressed that the responsibility to ensure the security, stability, peace and national cohesion does not only lie with the state, or the police or the army but every Sierra Leonean.

SLAJ was also concerned that there were still complaints against media houses at the IMC for unethical journalism practices. The Association noted the improvements in contents of media houses but called on the few defaulting ones to continue to improve on their performance. SLAJ further urged media houses to draft and implement their individual safety and security policies after the adoption of the policy drafted by the MRCG and other media organizations.

On Safety of Journalists and Media-Security Relations in Sierra Leone, SLAJ considered the media and security sector to perform different roles in the country’s democracy towards a common goal: serving the interest of the general public, noting that it is when both decide to serve other interests that will lead to breakdown in safety and security of journalists. In commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists in November 2022, SLAJ and the National Security Sector reiterated commitment to safety and security of journalists and maintenance of law and order in Sierra Leone. The President mentioned that under the MRCG platform, the parties that signed the Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU) had developed a framework and a national policy on the safety and security of journalists in Sierra Leone. He also said that a National Coordination Committee on same had been established, comprising media stakeholders, the security sector, the judiciary of Sierra Leone, Civil Society, traditional and religious leaders.

SLAJ President confirmed that a joint training for the media and the security sector was being planned ahead of the 2023 general elections, to promote understanding of the role of the media and the role of the security sector to foster partnership, cooperation and support for each other to ensure free, fair and violence free elections in 2023.

6. GOVERNMENT’S POSITION ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF THE PRESS, INFORMATION, INTERNET FREEDOM AND DIGITAL RIGHTS

The key highlights of the government’s position on Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Right to Access Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights are; the implementation of the recommendations from the two-day Media Viability and Investment Conference in Freetown which was held in April 2022 and the safety of journalists in Sierra Leone. There were seven (7) recommendations from the Conference which were all geared towards addressing the economic and other systemic challenges that the media industry had faced in Sierra Leone over the years and developed a roadmap for practicable investment that would make the country’s media viable, sustainable and profitable.

In an interview with the Director of Information, Ministry of Information and Communications, Emmanuel AB Turay, he expressed that the Government had worked with other national media organizations like MRCG and SLAJ to put in place a concept, which had been developed into a proposal and had been forwarded to the International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM) “The process is on-going and the Ministry together with SLAJ and MRCG had formed stirring and technical committees that will ensure a smooth implementation of the project, for which SLAJ will be the implementing partner.

On steps taken by the government to ensure and strengthen freedom of expression and of the press, Mr Turay stated that the Government had committed to the Global Coalition for Media Freedom and the country had participated in several meetings in relation to that. He said the Government was still committed to creating a conducive political space to enhance media freedom. He said that the Ministry was also part of the National Coordination Committee for the Safety of Journalists in Sierra Leone and that very shortly, the draft policy on safety of journalists will be officially presented to the Ministry.

The Ministry had attended several conferences to share the Sierra Leone study about being committed to safety of journalists and is part of the committee that had been set up in Sierra Leone for the protection of journalists and for freedom of expression.

He said media institutions should work within all the laws and regulation, and that SLAJ should regulate its membership to practise professionally. He called on SLAJ to strongly ensure the safety of their members and that Government would provide the political will and space for press freedom and media freedom to thrive.

7. STATUS OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION LAWS IN SIERRA LEONE

On 22 June 2022 Sierra Leone’s Parliament enacted the Bill entitled: “The National Electronic Communication Act, 2021.” The Act established the National Communications Authority (NCA) and provided for the licensing and regulation of electronic communication operators and other related matters. The MRCG reviewed the Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2022, the Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022, which was developed from nationwide consultations with the media and other stakeholders. The document contains four parts: the preliminary, regulations of print and electronic media, registration of print and electronic media and complaints policy and procedures. The Statutory Instrument was gazetted on the 20 October, 2022.

Table 7.1: Specific Acts containing Media Laws and Regulations still in Force

No.	Specific Statutes on Media Laws/Regulation - Acts of Parliament	Year	Status of the law
1.	Undesirable Publications Cap 113 of the Laws of Sierra Leone, 1960	1961	In force
2.	Undesirable Advertisement Ordinance - Cap 114 in the Laws of Sierra Leone, 1960	1960	In force
3.	Defamation Ordinance - Act No. 32	1961	In force
4.	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation Act, 2009 (Act No. 1 of 2010).	2010	In force
5.	The Independent Media Commission (IMC) Act, 2020 (Act No. 5 of 2020)- It repealed and replaced the Independent Media Commission (IMC) Act, 2000 (Act No. 12 of 2000) as amended in 2006 and 2007	2020	In force
6	Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021	2021	In force

Source (Sowa & Kapuwa, 2015 and updated regularly)¹

¹ Francis Sowa and Joseph Egbenda Kapuwa, Media Laws and Regulations: Review and Update on Sierra Leone’s Statutory and Self-Regulatory Models (2015)

Table 7.2: Other Statutes (Acts of Parliament) relating to Media Regulation still in Force

No.	Other Statutes (Acts of Parliament) with laws relating to media regulation	Year	Status of the law
1.	The Treason and State Offences Act, 1963	1963	In force
2.	Criminal Libel - The Public Order Act, 1965 (Act No 46 of 1965)	1965	Repealed
3.	Publication of False News - The Public Order Act	1965	Repealed
4.	Seditious Libel - The Public Order Act	1965	Repealed
5.	Constitution of Sierra Leone - Freedom of Expression and of the Press	1991	In force
6.	Constitution of Sierra Leone - Public Emergency Law	1991	In force, but under review
7.	Constitution of Sierra Leone - Law of Contempt of Parliament	1991	In force
8.	The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	1995	In force
9.	Pharmacy and Drugs Act	2001	In force
10.	The National Electronic Communication Act, 2022 (Act. No. 16 of 2022) repealed and replaced the Telecommunications Act 2006 as amended	2021	In force
11.	The Child Rights Act 2007 (No. 7 2007)	2007	In force
12.	The Anti-Corruption Act, 2008 (Act No No. 12 of 2008) as amended in the Anti-Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2019 (Act No. 9 of 2019).	2008, as amended in 2019	In force
13.	The Copyright Act, 2011 (No. 7 of 2007)	2011	In force
14.	The Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (Act No 00 of 2012) as amended	2012 as amended in 2019	In force
15.	The Right to Access Information Act, 2013 (Act No No. 2 2013)	2013	In force
16.	Public Order (Amendment) Act, 2020 (Act. No 4 of 2020)	2020	In force
17.	The Law on Contempt of Court	Common Law	In force

Source (Sowa & Kapuwa, 2015; updated regularly)²

² (Ibid,2015)

Table 7.3: Codes Dealing with Media Regulation Still in Force

No.	Codes	Year	Status of the law
1.	Code of Conduct of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists	2000 (reviewed in 2014/2015)	In force.
2.	The Independent Media Commission (IMC) Media Code of Practice	2007	IMC regulations is now a Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2022 is gazetted.

Source (Sowa and Kapuwa, 2015; updated regularly)³

³ (Ibid,2015)

8. CONCLUSION

The issues covered in this report relate to freedom of expression and of the press, Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights and the safety and security of journalists. The MRCG will continue to re-echo one of the provisions in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report, which says: “Freedom of expression is the lifeblood of a democracy. A culture of public debate and tolerance for dissenting ideas is the sign of a vibrant and healthy democracy. Restrictions on the freedom of expression represent a fearful state; it reflects a State that has no confidence in its ability to promote and disseminate its doctrines in the marketplace of ideas.” The MRCG is pleased to see the enactment of the National Electronic Commission Acts 2021 and hopes that the provisions in the Act will address the issues with co-location, infrastructure, economic regulations, interconnections, transfer of ownership, and among others to guide the operations of the industry. The MRCG also looks forward to the speedy enactment of the Data Protection Law which will guarantee the privacy and safety of citizens’ data both online and offline, and implementation of the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021 in a way that it does not hinder freedom of expression and of the press.

The MRCG commends the government and media stakeholders for the steps taken to implement some of the recommendations made at the first ever media viability and investment conference. With reference to the MoU SLAJ signed with the Security Sector, the MRCG hopes that SLAJ will continue to engage the security sector to address issues of press freedom and to forge a good working relationship with the security sector especially the police and the military as the country prepares for the country’s general elections. Safety and Security of journalists is at the heart of MRCG; the organisation therefore hopes that the government, media owners and security sector will guarantee the safety of journalists in their line of duty.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should ensure that journalists and citizens continue to enjoy their rights to freedom of expression, including press freedom and assembly without the fear of being intimidated, harassed, assaulted, arrested or detained and prosecuted.
- Government to speedily enact the Data Protection Law to fully promote citizen's digital rights, protect citizen's data, consumer protection and block potential loopholes to data exploitation by private entities and government agencies.
- Government, SLAJ and partners to continue to implement the recommendations from the Media Viability and Investment Conference.
- Politicians, senior civil servants and other powerful groups of people to desist from intimidating and harassing critical journalists in line of their duties.
- Government officials should stop stone-walling and be willing and ready to respond to requests from journalists to cross-check their information.
- The Government to ensure that journalists especially those whose rights were violated in line of their duty receive justice.
- The Sierra Leone Police to speed up and conclude investigations of all cases against journalists and civil society activists, including those who were assaulted or threatened and those who had been invited and/or detained, but released without charge.
- Security sectors must ensure the safety and security of journalists by respecting and abiding by the Memorandum of Understanding they signed with SLAJ.
- The security sectors management to conduct trainings for security personnel on handling protests and dealing with the media during their operations.
- The Justice office through the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to facilitate the resolution of outstanding libel matters in the spirit of the repealed Criminal Libel Law as requested by the Ministry of Information and Communications to review and discharge all seditious and/or criminal libel-related cases against journalists.
- Media owners and managers to develop their in-house safety policy from national safety policy for journalists that was developed by MRCG to ensure their safety.
- The MRCG, SLAJ and other media groups to train and build the capacity of journalists to match international best standards of practice through the support of non-governmental organizations by supporting mentorship and fellowship programs for journalists. SLAJ should strengthen its Disciplinary Committee to promptly and effectively deal with issues of unprofessional practice and excesses of any journalist.

10. REFERENCES


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- ECSL analysis of Provisional Registration data – 17 November, 2022
- Interview with the Chairman of Right to Access Information
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- MRCG and Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) organised a training workshop on Investigative and Anti-Corruption reporting for 15 investigative journalists <https://www.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/534862175103777/?app=fbl>
- MRCG and MFWA convened a Forum for the adoption of the Comprehensive National Framework on the Safety of Journalists in Sierra Leone <https://www.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/1081623939226470/?app=fbl>
- Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) in collaboration with Sierra Leone Film Industry <https://www.facebook.com/mic.gov.sl/videos/8162480133777126/>
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- President Julius Maada Bio commissioned the implementation of Sierra Leone's first Cyber Investigative Directorate (CID) <https://snradio.net/sierra-leone-institutes-1st-cyber-investigative-directorate/>
- Press release from National Cyber-Security Coordination Centre (NCSCC) Sierra Leone as a result of the August 10 protest
- RAIC in commemoration of the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) (<https://fb.watch/fPW8IM5g-V/>).
- SLAJ workshop with bloggers on the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021 <https://www.facebook.com/100001182651239/posts/pfbid0ZSUYZQ4iqRw4QKsjLnWp6MfLCBSQxxEAjvYJnLKaQuXhWiwpTWYkUNBG8HEr29Bl/?app=fbl>
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- The letter of complaint of journalist Abdulai Gbla
- The case of Maada Jesse Jengo, a journalist working for *Voice of Peace and Development Radio FM 96.5 (VOPAD)* in Waterloo <https://www.facebook.com/slaj.sierraleone>.
- The transfer of superintendent Samuel Saio Conteh (<https://www.facebook.com/sulaiman.janneh/video/782581956486107/?app=fbl>)
- The death threat against BBC Correspondent in Sierra Leone, Umaru Fofana by some 'unknown members' of the public which he posted on his Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/100050433761914/posts/pfbid02yBpoBfWagq6ByRonAqHnULr9c8LZsJdfau2cQTHsVVzPZBoqas9JmXsUNNBS16GPI/?app=fbl>.

- The case of Managing Editor of *Night Watch Newspaper*, Emmanuel Christian Thorli
https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0BMttZGaCMVEzrEcBiU3eDvWTHowfhq2RhZJ1hJcayrGygVEEQTMm2VCJUrwhJCsl&id=100001182651239.
- The August 10 protest in Freetown and some part in the Northern region
<https://twitter.com/ZoodlabsS/status/1557432953541722118?s=08>
- Training of Sierra Leone Police (SLP) on European best practices to respond to disinformation with a full Human Rights and Freedom of Speech approach
[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/TAIEX%20police%20training%20press%20rele ase%20171022.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/TAIEX%20police%20training%20press%20release%20171022.pdf)).

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Reported Cases in the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Editions Respectively of the Press Freedom Reports

The table below shows the cases, dates of attack/arrest or invitations and their current status.

The cases in the ‘gold columns’ have been concluded, settled, resolved, dropped or abandoned. 

Those in ‘blue columns’ are in court. 

Those in the ‘red columns’ are under police investigation/inconclusive/stalled. 

From the First to the Ninth Edition of the Press Freedom Report, **sixty-two** cases were monitored. **Forty-four** of them were concluded, settled, resolved, dropped or abandoned, because of lack of progress; **four** were in court; and **fourteen** under police investigation/inconclusive/stalled.

Table 11.1: Status of cases monitored by MRCG from March 2018 to November 2022

No	Cases Reported in the First Edition	Date of Attack/Arrest/Invitation	Status of Cases
1	Attack on a reporter of <i>Concord Times Newspaper</i> , Patrick Jaiah Kamara by thugs allegedly on the instruction of former Mayor of the Freetown City Council, Herbert George Williams, Sanusi Bruski and other All Peoples Congress (APC) Party members during the 31 March 2018 Presidential run-off election	During the 31 March 2018 Presidential run-off Election	Matter resolved out of court after few appearances.
2	Attack on the late Editor of <i>New Age Newspaper</i> , Ibrahim Samura by the then ruling APC party members and supporters allegedly on orders of former Freetown Mayor of the APC, Herbert George Williams, and the APC Public Relation Officer, Abubakar at a polling station in Lumley during the 31 March 2018 Presidential run-off election who later died at the 34 Military Hospital at Wilberforce on 6 June 2018.	31 March 2018 Presidential run-off Election	The two accused had been acquitted and discharged for murder and conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm by Justice Augustine Musa of the High Court of Sierra Leone in Freetown as the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.
3	Arrest and detention of a civil society activist, Edmond Abu, Executive Director of Native Consortium and Research Centre, by the Sierra Leone Police for staging a peaceful protest in Freetown against the increments in fuel pump price.	17 July 2018	Released on bail; matter not charged to court.
4	Invitation of the Leader and Chairman of the Alliance Democratic Party (ADP), Mohamed Kamarainba Mansaray and Abdul Fonti Kabia, formerly of <i>AYV</i> , to CID for interview he granted in response to allegation relating to the alleged publication of false news, contrary to the Public Order Act of 1965.	22 July 2018	All charges dropped and matter terminated.

5	Invitation of journalist to Parliament to answer to some questions in connection with a story broadcast on <i>African Young Voices TV</i> , titled “Caught on Camera”, involving a member of parliament, Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay and two others in a land matter.	September 2018	The AYV Director of News and Current Affairs, Mr. Samuel Wise Bangura, appeared before Parliament and was asked to retract and apologise. But he refused/declined and nothing happened after that.
6	Attack on the publisher of <i>The Elephant Newspaper</i> , Nimalty Kamara, allegedly by youth of the ruling Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) for allegedly criticising the new regime of President Julius Maada Bio.	10 September 2018	Matter is still at the Kenema High Court.
7	Attack on <i>AYV TV</i> journalist, Ransford Metzger, while investigating an alleged corruption matter at the St. Joseph Secondary School in Freetown.	September 2018	Alleged perpetrators arrested and held at the CID, but were released after the journalist and AYV management accepted the apology of the perpetrators.
8	Attack on the former Editor of <i>Awareness Times Newspaper</i> , John Koroma, during a Bye-Election in Tonko Limba, Kambia District, Northern Sierra Leone, on 29 September 2018, allegedly by a team of Sierra Leone Police officers and persons who openly identified themselves as SLPP supporters.	29 September 2018	Matter still with the police and no arrest effected. John Koroma said he availed his witnesses to the police and that statements were obtained from them individually. He said the police had promised to get on to him but have not done so since and that he is gradually forgetting the matter. The police said that Koroma had not been able to identify those that attacked him; and as such, they were constrained to arrest any suspect. They however said they will continue to follow up on the matter.
9	Arrest of Fayia Amara Fayia of <i>Star Radio and Standard Times Newspaper</i> by CID officers outside the AYV media on what the CID said was a post on his Facebook page containing defamatory words against His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio.	29 September 2018	Police said since Part 5 of the Public Order Act of 1965 has been repealed, the file has been closed.
10	Harassment of Alhassan Jalloh, Editor of the <i>Unique Newspaper</i> , by police officers attached to the Lumley Police Station in the West end of Freetown, while investigating a fracas between Leonco Filling Station at Lumley and a mosque.	5 November 2018	Mr. Jalloh said the matter was not progressing and he has dropped it and moved on.
No	Cases Reported in the Second Edition	Date of Attack/Arrest	Status of the matter

11	Arrest and detention of Alpha Thorley, Managing Editor of <i>the NightWatch Newspaper</i> by the Sierra Leone Police on 14 January 2019 on the allegation of publishing false information that several diplomatic passports were illegally given to families of the ruling government officials.	14 January 2019	Police said the matter has been closed because of the decriminalization of Part 5 of the Public Order Act of 1965
12	Attack on two <i>AYV</i> journalists, Augusta Ethel Turay and Bockarie Samai, on the 16 January 2019, allegedly by supporters of the opposition All People's Congress Party (APC), whilecovering the visit of officials of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to the home of former President Ernest Koroma in Makeni, Bombali District.	16 January 2019	Matter stalled as police claim complainants were yet to return with their endorsed medical reports; hence they could not take any further action. But Augusta Ethel Turay, said they submitted their medical reports as was requested by the Police; yet there was no progress on the matter. "We submitted the medical reports at the Mena Police Station in Makeni as requested, but up to date, the police did not call us, neither discharged the matter nor charged it to court and so we stopped following the matter." The police said that they were still waiting for the journalists to take their endorsed medical forms to the police headquarters.
13	Death threat against the <i>BBC's</i> Umaru Fofana apparently by a member or supporter of the opposition APC in an audio circulated on social media, after an interview he conducted with Sierra Leone's former Vice President, Victor Bockarie Foh.	17 January 2019	Matter still under investigation according to the Police. However, Umaru Fofana said the Police investigating the matter disclosed the identity of his key witness and he eventually lost confidentiality in them and hence, he has stopped following up on the matter. The police in their response said that the matter has been kept in view.
14	Attacks on and intimidation of civil society leaders, including the Executive Director of Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), Madam Marcella Samba-Sesay, who had publicly expressed critical views on the media about the	3-6 May 2019	Matter ended after several press releases condemning the attack on her.

	governance challenges.		
15	Attack on a civil society activist, Morlai Conteh, President of the National Youth Coalition of Sierra Leone, allegedly by a group of military officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) after the main opposition All People's Congress (APC) party did a walkout protest of the ceremony marking the Presidential State Opening of Parliament on 2nd May 2019.	2 May 2019	Mr. Conteh said his moves to further the case were fruitless; so he decided to drop it.
No	Cases Reported in Third Edition	Date of Attack/Arrest	Status of the matter
16	Arrest and detention of four local journalists- Sallieu Tejan Jalloh, Publisher of the <i>Times SL Newspaper</i> ; David Johnson, Editor of <i>Times SL Newspaper</i> ; Mustapha Sesay, General Editor, <i>Standard Times Newspaper</i> ; and Abu Bakarr Kargbo (Father Bakish), a Senior Staff Writer of <i>Standard Times Newspaper</i> - in Freetown on Friday 28 June 2019. They were charged with eight-count for allegedly publishing defamatory articles in the <i>Times SL Newspaper and the Standard Times Newspaper</i> respectively against Pa Momoh Fofanah Esq, a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of Sierra Leone.	28 June 2019	Journalists discharged.
17	Assault on two female sport journalists (Frances Bernard-Bundor and Easter Marie Samura) of SLBC by Officers of the Sierra Leone Presidential guard on Sunday 8 September 2019 at the National Stadium, during the FIFA 2022 World Cup Preliminary return-leg match between Sierra Leone and Liberia.	8 September 2019	Action taken against the presidential guards. Government refunded the medical expenses by the journalists and their property destroyed or stolen paid for.
18	Arrest and detention of Mahmud Tim Kargbo on 20 September 2019 for allegedly publishing a defamatory article against Hon Justice Miatta Samba', an Appeal Court Judge, titled 'Justice Redefined by Miatta Samba', which is said to have accused the judge of corruption and incompetence.	20 September 2019	Granted bail after tendering an apology letter to Hon Justice Miata Samba; matter is still in Court.
19	Arrest and detention of the Managing Editor of the <i>Times Newspaper</i> Sallieu Tejan Jalloh (Sal Tee) on 11 November 2019 in Freetown, by plainclothes police officers in connection with an SMS text message that he sent to the Chief Minister of Sierra Leone, Prof. David Francis enquiring about an alleged payment of US\$ 1.5 million into his private ECOBANK account by	11 November 2019	Police said the matter has been closed because of the decriminalization of Part 5 of the Public Order Act of 1965.

	SL Mining, which license had been cancelled by the state.		
No	Cases Reported in Fourth Edition	Date of Attack/Arrest	Status of the matter
20	Attack on three local journalists - Ibrahim Manasaray, aka 'Hebro' of <i>SLBC</i> , Makeni, Abdul M. Jalloh of <i>Amzas Radio</i> , Makeni and Foday Moriba Conteh of <i>Calabash Newspaper</i> , Tonkolili Districts - in the Northern Region of Sierra Leone.	January 2020	Matter under police investigation as police said journalists are yet to corroborate their witnesses. One of the victims, Abdul M. Jalloh of Hamzas Radio, said there was no progress on the matter and hence they had decided to move on with their different jobs. Police said that the matter has been kept in view for lack of evidence and witness.
21	Alleged threat by the former Inspector General of Police to arrest Alex Lawrence Koroma, a producer of <i>Radio Democracy FM 98.1</i> 'Good Moring Salon Programme', for a programme he produced on the state of security.	23 February 2020	Arrest not affected.
22	Arrest and detention of Chernor Jalloh, Reporter, <i>Radio Democracy</i> , Yusuf Bangura, Reporter, <i>Concord Times</i> , and a civil society activist, Thomas Moore Conteh, Executive Director of Citizens Advocacy Network (CAN) by police during a Limkokwing University protest over fee subsidies by the Government of Sierra Leone	5 March 2020	The two journalists were released, while the matter of Mr. Moore was dismissed by the Court.
23	Invitation of the Managing Editor/Publisher of the <i>Nationalist Newspaper</i> , Mohamed Sankoh (AKA, One Drop) by the police in connection with an opinion piece he authored titled 'Is the Catholic Church in a Mess?'	20 March 2020	Police dropped case against Mr Sankoh as they said it was a mistaken identity as they mistook Mr Sankoh for another person.
24	Assault on journalist Fayia Amara Fayia of <i>Star Radio and Standard Times Newspaper</i> , allegedly by military officers in Kenema and his subsequent arrest and detention by Police in Kenema.	4 April 2020	The matter is still at the Magistrate Court No. 1 in Kenema. Fayia Amara Fayia told the MRCG that after the intervention of SLAJ, MRCG and MFWA by issuing a petition letter to His Excellency the President, Julius Maada Bio (through the Minister of Information and Communication), the 'matter had died down and I have moved on.' The court is yet to discharge the

No	Cases Reported in Fifth Edition	Date of Attack/Arrest	Status of the matter
25	Assault on Stanley Sahr Jimmy, Station Manager, <i>Wusum Radio FM 88.5</i> in Makeni, allegedly by five police officers at the Mena Police Station.	April 2020.	matter. The police said four of the officers were seriously reprimanded in the presence of the complainant and that there was no case against one of the officers. The police said the matter has been closed. Mr Jimmy claimed the police are yet to call him to identify those that assaulted him nor had they been disciplined. The Police said the matter was resolved in an informal way.
26	Arrest and detention of Adeyemi Jackson of <i>Universal Radio</i> by police in Freetown after reportedly requesting an interview with Dr Ibrahim Bundu, a medical doctor attached to the Connaught Hospital in Freetown, in relation to an alleged sexual assault matter.	21 May 2020.	Police said the matter has been closed.
27	The arrest and detention of Dr. Sylvia Blyden and Hussain Muckson Sesay by CID in Freetown, because of her alleged critical and controversial publications and postings on social media. She was later charged with 10 counts of various offences, ranging from seditious libel, to publication of false news, and defamatory libel, among others	1 May 2020	The matter rendered, “Nolle Prosequoi”, as the Government of Sierra Leone dropped all charges against them on the 16 November 2020
28	On the Police harassing and intimidating the Manager of <i>Lunsar Radio</i> , Mr Alhaji Foday Labay to produce a recording of a radio program he hosted Prof Sheikh Umaru Kamara, the Community Relations Officer of Sierra Leone Mining Company in Lunsar on 23 April 2020 which led to a strike action calling for the resignation or replacement of their Paramount Chief.	12 June 2020	The matter has been dismissed.
29	Supreme Court of Sierra Leone ordering the arrest of Lawyer Augustine Sorie-Sengbe Marrah for publishing information on social media about the ruling on the qualification of lawyers in holding certain offices, which have political undertones and allegedly had the tendency to put the legal profession into disrepute as his post was	28 October 2020	The matter ended when he complied with the Supreme Court ordering to do a retraction of the said post in an article and write a letter of apology to the judiciary and the presiding judges; and also publish the said

	rated as demeaning to the apex court of the land.		letter of apology in the front pages of two widely read newspapers in Sierra Leone.
No	Cases Reported in the Sixth Edition	Date of Attack/Arrest/Invitation	Status of Cases
30	The verbal attack, insult and intimidation of BBC reporter, and Former President of SLAJ Umaru Fofana in December 2020, from social media for his alleged “biased reports on political events in Sierra Leone” from people claiming to be members of the main opposition All Peoples Congress (APC) party.	December 2020	Umaru Fofana said he has decided to move on as he receives such threats frequently. “I find it very harassing and sort of bullying that they can dedicate so much time to attacking and seeking to intimidate me. And the fact that APC party doesn’t distance itself from it, let alone condone, it is irksome. Failing to condemn it is akin to condoning it.”
31	The arrest and detention of Emmanuel C. Thorli, a reporter for the <i>Night Watch Newspaper</i> on 7 February 2021, by the Sierra Leone Police for allegedly taking snapshots of the 7 February 2021 Jui demolition exercise carried out by the police at Jui Junction, Western Area Rural.	7 February 2021	Police said the matter has been closed.
32	The invitation and detention of the Editor-in-Chief and Proprietor, Joseph Turay and Ezekiel Dumbuya, News Editor of the <i>Public Review Newspaper</i> , on 22 March 2021, by officers of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Freetown for more than five hours, over a matter involving land dispute in the Western Rural Area which police claimed that the newspaper had reported erroneously on.	22 March 2021	The police said none of them was detained. “They were only at CID for statement making; maybe, according to them, they see it as detention,” said the police. Police said the matter has been closed.
33	The arrest and detention of Hassan Gbessay Koroma, a <i>Concord Time Newspaper</i> journalist on 6 May 2021 by the Sierra Leone police for allegedly taking pictures of the Minister of Internal Affairs, David Panda Noah at the Siaka Stevens Street during an operation of him and police chasing commercial bike riders off the Central Business District (CBD) area, an operation that is said to clean the CBD of commercial motor bikes.	6 May 2021	The matter has been closed.
No	Cases Reported in the Seventh Edition	Date of Attack/Arrest	Status of Cases
34	The arrest and detention of Osman Hardy Jalloh of <i>TV-News24</i> for the second time by Magistrate Joseph Toby of Court No.2 in Kenema on 10	10 June 2021	The matter is still at the Human Rights Commission-Kenema for further investigation. The new

	June 2021 for allegedly publishing a story relating to a matter between an Imam and a female chief in Blama.		Deputy Director, HRCSL Regional Service East, Tom Sandi, said the complainant was yet to sign and send the admissibility study to the Commission. The owner of TV-News24, who was the lead complainant on the matter, told MRCG that “Hardy is no longer affiliated with Tv-News24, so I can’t speak on his intentions on this matter.” Journalist Osman Hardy Jalloh told MRCG that “my former boss, owner of TV-News24, was pursuing the matter on my behalf; but I am no longer affiliated with the organization. I don’t have the finance to pursue the matter on my own. So, if my former boss said he was no longer pursuing it, then so be it.”
35	The alleged verbal attack on BBC Sports Journalist Mohamed Fajah Barrie by the Adviser to Sierra Leone’s Sports Minister, Alie Kadar for publishing a story on his Facebook timeline relating to Leone Stars players spending several hours at the Sierra Leone-Guinea border crossing point after they were refused entry into Guinea by the Guinean Immigration Authorities for lack of COVID-19 test results	13 June 2021	The Minister of Sports intervened, mediated and settled the matter between both parties.
36	The dismissal of Phebian Swill-Randall from the Sierra Leone Board of Entertainment and Investment by the Ambassador of Entertainment and Investment, Amara Dennis Turay commonly known as ‘Kao De Nero’ for a Facebook post she made on increment in the pump price of fuel in the country.	On 12 August 2021	Phebean Swill-Randall accepted her dismissal as she did not apologize to be reinstated.
37	The arrest and detention of 10 of Star Radio’s journalists for allegedly obstructing the Sierra Leone Police as they went to the media house to investigate alleged illegal electricity connection, a complaint made by the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority (EDSA)	On 5 October 2021	Station Manager of Star Radio, Abdul Rahman Kamara told the MRCG that the matter had been discharged from court and their meter returned to them.
38	The intimidation of and death threat against Journalist Salieu Tejan Jalloh of Times Newspaper as a result of his publications exposing perpetrators behind the ‘alleged attempted ritual murder of the six virgins.’	8 October 2021	The matter had been settled as the alleged anonymous callers contacted and apologized to the journalist.

39	The raiding of the Editor of <i>Voice of Salone Newspaper</i> , David Johnson on the grounds of ‘insulting statements’ via WhatsApp by the Sierra Leone Police, a complaint filed by Sydney Campbell Esq. On 29 November 2021, the matter came up at the Ross Road Magistrate Court No. 3. The editor was charged with 5 counts.	22 November 2021	The matter had ended as the journalist did a retraction and apologized to Sydney Campbell Esq.
No	Cases Reported in the Eighth Edition	Date of attack/arrest /Invitation	Status of Cases
40	The invitation of the National Chairman and Leader of the National Grand Coalition (NGC) Party, Dr. Dennis Bright to the Police Headquarters in Freetown by the Inspector General (IG) of Police due to an interview he granted Radio Democracy 98.1 FM in connection to the proposed 2021 Mid- term Census which the NGC and the Coalition of Progressive Political Parties (CoPP) objected to.	7 December 2021	He was released on the same day after a closed door interview in the presence of his lawyers for close to two hours.
41	The physical assault and detention of Ransford Wright, a journalist of the <i>AYV Media Empire</i> by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) in Freetown.	13 December 2021	The journalist said the police promised to call him for a dialogue and a peaceful resolution on the matter, which they were yet to do. The Police said the matter was partly resolved without further compliance with the remaining obligations.
42	The verbal attack and insult against Asmaa James, station manager of Radio Democracy 98.1 FM by Alhaji Amadu Bah, a popular artist known as LAJ in a Facebook live video circulated on social media platforms as a result of a report aired by Radio Democracy on a bench warrant ordered by a magistrate for LAJ.	13 December 2021	The matter had ended after LAJ apologized to Asmaa James and the women of Sierra Leone as he expressed regrets and took full responsibility for his actions. On 22 December 2021, Asmaa James in a Facebook post said she had forgiven LAJ and let go of the matter after some moments of prayers and fasting.
43	The arrest and detention of the 2018 presidential aspirant for the Unity Party, Femi Claudius-Cole at the CID for an alleged negative comment she made on <i>Radio Democracy 98.1 FM</i> in relation to the 2021 mid-term housing and population	13 December 2021	The matter had ended as she was later released.

	census.		
44	The Verbal attack and threat to the entire editorial team of <i>Salone Compass Newspaper</i> from unknown members of the general public through phone calls.	14 December 2021	The proprietor, Ibrahim Alusine Conteh told the MRCG that the police did nothing towards the issue. He said SLAJ has also not done anything about the official complaints made to them. Police said the matter has been kept in view.
45	The arrest and detention of Pastor Septimus Yambasu for allegedly using obscene and insulting words against President Julius Maada Bio. He was charged for insulting conduct contrary to section 3 (1) of the Public Order Act of 1965 at the Pademba Road Magistrate Court No 1 in Freetown.	14 December 2021	The matter had been resolved and discharged from court and Pastor Yambasu's vehicle returned to him.
46	The Sierra Leone Police arrested, and detained Ahmed Doyle Kamara popularly known as Tazmo Sliz, an entertainer in Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone for allegedly insulting and attacking the Fullah Ethnic group in a Facebook live video.	18 December 2021	On Monday 28 February 2022, Magistrate Sahr Kekura of Pademba Road Magistrate Court No 1 in Freetown discharged the matter from court after the complainant, Mohamed Salieu Jalloh on behalf of the Fullah Community accepted Tazmo's apology.
47	An official complaint by Hawanatu Konneh Fofanah at the CID in December 2021 against an anonymous individual who allegedly attacked her personality on Facebook	25 December 2021	Hawanatu said there was no headway on the matter. Police said it was still investigating the matter.
48	The intimidation and humiliation of Amadu Lamrana Bah, Head of Digital Media of the <i>Africa Young Voices (AYV)</i> and the President of the Sierra Leone Reporters Union (SLRU), by Airport officials allegedly acting on the orders of 'someone' at the Lungi International Airport as a result of a Facebook post by the journalist on series of difficulties they had encountered at the airport on their flight to Cameroon for the Africa Cup of Nations.	10 January 2022.	The matter had ended as the journalist later boarded the flight to Cameroon.
49	The arrest of Solomon Joe, a journalist working for <i>KISS 104 FM</i> in Bo by two officers from the	7 February 2022.	The journalist was released on 8 February 2022 with conditions

	Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Freetown. They went to Bo and ‘ordered the arrest’ of the journalist for a broadcast concerning a transaction between two businessmen in Bo. He spent one night in police custody.		that he retracted his story and apologized to the businessman. “I am not going to retract the story because I stand by my story,” said Solomon.
50	The invitation and detention of the Acting Spokesperson for the main opposition All Peoples Congress Party (APC), Sidi Yayah Tunis at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Freetown for alleged inciting utterances he made during an interview he granted on Radio Democracy 98.1 FM on Monday 7 February 2022.	8 February 2022	The matter had ended as he was released from the CID.
51	The alleged physical assault of Alusine Antha, a journalist working for <i>Eagle Africa FM 91.3</i> by some youths in the Waterloo community in connection with a land saga he had gone to cover.	17 February 2022.	The matter is still in court.
52	SLAJ 17 March 2022 press alert calling on the Judiciary of Sierra Leone to allow media access to cover the opening session of a tribunal set up to investigate the suspended Auditor-General, Mrs Lara Taylor-Pearce and her deputy after complaint from some journalists that they were denied entry to the proceedings.	17 March 2022	The matter had ended as both parties settled the issue.
53	The Independent Media Commission (IMC) in a press statement on 28 April 2022 stated that as part of its mandates temporarily shut down the operations of <i>Justice Radio</i> in Freetown for 10 hours connected to an alleged unprofessional conduct, proprietorship and management issues that posed serious confusion to the operations and activities of the radio station. On 27 April 2022, the IMC received a complaint from its Monitoring, Research and Projects Unit (MRPU) against <i>Justice FM Radio</i> in connection with its program, ‘Justice Show’ which was aired on 27 April 2022.	27 April 2022	The ban was lifted that same day. The IMC’s Complaints Committee recommended that a fine of Le1, 000,000 (One Million Leones) be levied on <i>Justice FM Radio</i> for breach of the accuracy, truth and impartiality provision in Section 3, Principle 6 of the IMC Media Code of Practice, and that the station should temporarily suspend the ‘Justice Show’ until IMC conducts a monitoring and inspection visit to assess their editorial and technical capacities to manage such a program professionally. The IMC Board

			at its meeting held on 4 May 2022 endorsed the recommendations.
54	The arrest and detention of Mr. Mohamed Khan, the Interim Chairman of Teachers Solidarity, by police just outside AYV's premise after Mr. Khan had appeared on their Wake Up Salone television program as a guest; and the arrest and detention of Lahai Jah and Joseph C Kailie at the Bo West Police Station by police after allegedly convening a protest without police clearance to convene a meeting of "The Teachers Solidarity Movement".	26 and 28 April 2022 respectively	The matter had ended as they were released on the same day of arrest.
55	The arrest and incarceration of Mohamed Mansaray popularly known as 'Blacker' who reportedly suffers from mental illness and roams the streets of Freetown, and Kadiatu Yankaday a trader, at the Freetown Correctional Centres on 28 April 2022 for allegedly insulting President Bio.	28 April 2022	Presiding Magistrate Rashid Jalloh had discharged the matter from the Pademba Road Magistrate Court No. 4 as no evidence was proffered against the accused. Legal Link, a human rights organisation, helped to secure the discharge verdict for 'Blacker'.

56	An alleged ‘assassination attempt’ on journalist Gibril Gottor and his family through a ‘suffocating smell of petrol’ in their house in Kambia, Northern Sierra Leone.	29 April 2022	<p>Gibril Gottor told MRCG that “I am ok and I have taken over my security myself.”</p> <p>In an interview with MRCG, the Police also maintained that they had not yet got a witness or evidence to substantiate the complaint made by Gibril to support their investigation into the matter, so the matter has been kept in view.</p>
57	Alleged Cyber Stalking and Bullying on the President Bio by former APC Minister of Transport and Aviation, Kemoh Sesay.	On 9 May 2022	<p>He was alleged to have ‘willfully and repeatedly’ communicated directly to President Bio in a manner that he knows to be false, for the purpose of causing danger, insult, injury, hatred, criminal intimidation or needless anxiety to the president. The matter was charged to the Pademba Road Magistrate Court on one count charge of Cyber Stalking and Bullying, contrary to Section 44 (2) (b) of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021. The matter was acquitted and discharged from court.</p>
58	The arrest and detention of journalist Sorie Saio Sesay of <i>Okentuhun Radio FM 94.0</i> by police in Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone for allegedly “publishing false information” on social media about an incident between the SLP and commercial bike riders in Makeni.	26 May 2022	<p>Sorie was released on bail on 31 May 2022 with the intervention of the SLAJ. He told the MRCG that even though the police had released him, the CID still has his phone.</p> <p>The Director of Crime Service at the CID headquarters in Freetown, AIG William Fayia Sellu, said that the Cyber Unit of the SLP was still investigating</p>

			the matter.
59	The allege physical assault of journalist Abdulia Gbla of <i>Gbla TV online</i> , by a Member of Parliament (MP), Hon. Abdul Muniru Lansana of Constituency 121, in the well of parliament	28 June 2022	According to Mr Gbla, since an investigation was instituted into the matter, he was yet to receive any update. SLAJ President Ahmed Sahid Nasralla told the MRCG that the leadership of SLAJ has contacted the Clerk of Parliament on the matter but he was yet to get an update from him on the status of the investigation.
60	The physical assault of journalist Maada Jesse Jengo, a journalist working for Voice of Peace and Development Radio FM 96.5 (VOPAD) in Waterloo, Western Area Rural by ‘four officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)’	2 July 2022	The officers who were involved in the matter have apologised to the journalist and his family, adding that the officers promised to refund the medical bills of the journalist, pay for the items that got missing during the incident and also do a public apology through the Radio.
61	The physical assault on the Managing Editor of Night Watch Newspaper, Emmanuel Christian Thorli by staff of Njala University, in Waterloo on 11 September 2022.	11 September 2022	The Police said the matter is under investigation and the journalist was supposed to go along with the officers to Njala Campus Mokonde for further their investigation
62	The arrest and detention of Ady Macauley Esq. former Anti-Corruption Commissioner at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).	6 October 2022	The matter is now at the Directorate of Public Prosecution awaiting legal advice