



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



## Press Freedom in Sierra Leone - June to November 2021

Produced by Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG)

With support from

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

SUPPORTED BY:



National Endowment  
for Democracy

*Supporting freedom around the world*

MRCG comprises SLAJ, IRN, GoE,  
WIMSAL, SLRU, SWASAL, Mass Comm.,  
(FBC), MIC, IMC and SLBC.

# TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	3
<b>LIST OF ILLUSTRATION</b> .....	5
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	6
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	8
<b>2. THEMATIC ISSUES</b> .....	10
<b>2.1 Freedom of Expression and of the Press</b> .....	10
2.2 Right to Access Information .....	12
<b>2.3 Internet Freedom and Digital Rights</b> .....	12
2.4 Media and Good Governance .....	13
<b>3. PERFORMANCE OF INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF THE PRESS, INFORMATION, INTERNET FREEDOM AND DIGITAL RIGHTS</b> .....	15
<b>4. PERFORMANCE OF MEDIA INSTITUTIONS</b> .....	17
<b>5. POSITION OF THE SIERRA LEONE ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF THE PRESS, INFORMATION, INTERNET FREEDOM AND DIGITAL RIGHTS</b> .....	22
<b>6. GOVERNMENT’S POSITION ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND OF THE PRESS, INFORMATION, INTERNET FREEDOM AND DIGITAL RIGHTS</b> .....	24
<b>7. STATUS OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION LAWS IN SIERRA LEONE</b> .....	25
<b>8. CONCLUSION</b> .....	28
<b>9. RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	29
<b>10. REFERENCES</b> .....	30
<b>11. APPENDICES</b> .....	32
<b>11.1 Reported Cases in the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Edition Respectively of the Press Freedom Reports</b> .....	32

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms & Abbreviations	Meaning
AKA	Also Known As
APC	All Peoples Congress
AYV	Africa Young Voices
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAN	Citizens Advocacy Network
CARL	Centre for Accountability and the Rule of Law
CDIID	Complaint, Discipline and Internal Investigations Department
CGG	Campaign for Good Governance
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
CBD	Central Business District
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West Africa States
EU	European Union
FIFA	Federation International de Football Association
HRMO	Human Resource Management Office
IMC	Independent Media Commission
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
MIC	Ministry of Information and Communications
MRCG	Media Reform Coordinating Group
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic Senior Secondary Education
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NATCOM	National Telecommunications Commission
NCSIRT	National Computer Security and Incidence Response Team
NED	National Endowment for Democracy

ONS	Office of National Security
POA	Public Order Act
PPG	Parliamentary Press Gallery
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSC	Public Service Commission
RAIC	Right to Access Information Commission
RC	Reformation Committee
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
SLAJ	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
SLBC	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SLENA	Sierra Leone News Agency
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
USD	United State Dollars
USA	United State of America
WAPPC	West Africa Parliamentary Press Corps
WIMSAL	Women in the Media Sierra Leone

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATION**

**I. List of Figures**

FIG 2.1: Arrest and detention of journalists at Media One Centre, 5 October 2021.....11

Fig 4.1: MRCG joined Department of Mass Communication-FBC to review media/journalism and communications curriculum, 6 August 2021.....20

Fig 4.2: MRCG &MFWA train women on women’s rights online issues in Sierra Leone, 10 September 2021.....20

Fig. 4.3 SLAJ round table dialogue and signing of MoU with security sectors on International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists.....21

**II. List of Tables**

Table 7.1: Specific Acts containing Media Laws and Regulations still in Force.....25

Table 7.2: Other Statutes (Acts of Parliament) relating to Media Regulation still in Force.....26

Table 7.3: Codes Dealing with Media Regulation still in Force .....27

Table 11.1: Status of cases monitored by the MRCG from May 2018 to November 2021.....32

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report, which addresses issues on ‘Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Right to Access Information, and Internet Freedom and Digital Rights in Sierra Leone’ is the seventh 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 2021, 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 civil society activists; and also tracks media performance.

This edition is 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 civil society activists), Right to Access Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights and Media and Good Governance; Performance of Institutions Dealing with Freedom of Expression, Information, Internet and Digital Rights; Performance of Media Institutions; Position of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists on Freedom of Expression, Information, Internet and Digital Rights; Government’s Position on Freedom of Expression, Information, Internet and Digital Rights; 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, broadcasts on radio and television stations, and publications on newspapers and posts on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp relating to internet freedom and digital rights. 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/issues covered in this Report are:

1. The arrest and detention of journalist Osman Hardy Jalloh of *TV- News 24* on 10 June 2021 for the second time on orders of Magistrate Joseph Toby of Court Number 2 in Kenema, in connection with an article the journalist reportedly published on a matter between an Imam and a female chief in Blama.
2. The intimidation and verbal attack on *BBC sport reporter*, Mohamed Fajah Barrie on 13 June 2021 by the Adviser to Sierra Leone Sports Minister, Alie Kader in Conakry, Guinea for publishing a story on his Facebook timeline.
3. The dismissal of a *TV presenter of the African Young Voices (AYV)*, Mrs Phebean Swill-Randal on 12 August 2021, 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’ in relation to a post on her Facebook page relating to the increment in the pump price of petroleum products.

4. The raiding of *Star Radio's Media One Center* in Freetown and the arrest and detention of ten (10) journalists including the station manager on 5 October 2021, in connection with a complaint made by the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority (EDSA) on an alleged illegal electricity connection by Star Radio.
5. The intimidation of and death threat against Journalist Salieu Tejan Jalloh of *Times Newspaper* on 8 October 2021 as a result of his publications exposing perpetrators behind the 'alleged attempted ritual murder of the six virgins.'
6. The raiding of the Editor of *Voice of Salone Newspaper*, David Johnson on 22 November 2021 on the grounds of 'insulting statements' by the Sierra Leone Police.

The MRCG data show that out of the six cases/issues monitored, three have been concluded. The case on the alleged verbal attack on *BBC's* Sport Journalists, Mohamed Fajah Barrie has been concluded as the Sports Writers Association of Sierra Leone (SWASAL) and the Minister of Sports intervened and resolved the matter; the matter of the dismissal of Phebean Swill-Randall from the Board of Entertainment and Investment has ended as she accepted her dismissal and never deleted nor apologised for her post; and the matter of the online intimidation of journalist Sallieu Tejan Jalloh by anonymous callers has come to an end as the anonymous callers contacted him and apologized to him.

The matter on the arrest and detention of Osman Hardy Jalloh of *TV-News24* is still inconclusive as Mr Jalloh had forwarded a complaint to the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone regional office east for 'unlawful detention' which the Commission is looking into; the matter on the arrest of the ten (10) journalists of *Star Radio's Media One Center* is still inconclusive as the journalists were released on bail and the matter is still in court; and the matter of the Editor of *Voice of Salone Newspaper*, David Johnson is still in court.

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), and the sixth edition (December 2020 to May 2021). See details in the appendices.

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 general public to ensure the safety and security of journalists across the country at all times. The MRCG calls on the Government to also unconditionally discharge other criminal libel cases.

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

## INTRODUCTION

This seventh 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 USA. 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.

The report covers a six-month period, June to November 2021. 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.

A total of six major cases/issues have been addressed on freedom of expression and of the press in this report. In addition, this report follows up on cases from the first to the sixth editions, which span from June 2018 to May 2021 that were still inconclusive.

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. 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 seventh biannual report was written by Francis Sowa (Ph.D.) and Usman Bah.

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

## 2. THEMATIC ISSUES

### 2.1 Freedom of Expression and of the Press

Journalists and civil society activists in their line of duty have been faced with incidents of attacks, intimidations, assaults, arrests and detentions. The MRCG monthly media monitoring reports documented the following cases.

On 13 June 2021, *BBC sports journalist*, Mohamed Fajah Barrie, was allegedly intimidated and verbally attacked by the Adviser to Sierra Leone Sports Minister, Alie Kader in Conakry, Guinea for publishing a story on his Facebook timeline. The story was about 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. SWASAL in a press release condemned the attack and set up a three-man committee to investigate the issue for further actions. In July, the Minister of Sports intervened, mediated and settled the matter between both parties.

On 10 June 2021, *TV-News 24* journalist, Osman Hardy Jalloh, was allegedly arrested and detained for the second time on orders of Magistrate Joseph Toby of Court Number 2 in Kenema, Eastern Region of Sierra Leone. The journalist reportedly published an article on a matter between an Imam and a female chief in Blama. He spent five days at the Kenema Correctional Center. His first arrest and detention was on 28 April 2021, for an article he published, headlined, ‘Imam Granted Bail after Five Days in Jail’. The Magistrate said Mr Jalloh was remanded for contempt of court as he did not report the facts.

In an interview, Osman Hardy Jalloh told the MRCG that two police officers with a warrant of arrest from Magistrate Joseph Toby arrested him for a follow-up he did on an article he had published on TV-News24 and took him to Magistrate Court Number 2 in Kenema. Mr. Jalloh said Magistrate Toby then told him that the article he authored was not accurate; that the defendant was not an Imam as the article claimed; that the defendant was not jailed because he verbally abused the female chief, but was jailed because he failed to appear before the court when called upon; and that his photo was used in the article without his consent. Based on these reasons, he said the Magistrate ordered his detention.

On 24 July 2021, Osman Hardy Jalloh wrote an official complaint to the Human Rights Commission-Sierra Leone with concerns that the Magistrate did not ‘articulate any points of authority’ that he ‘relied on’ to ‘warrant the unlawful detention, arrest and jailing...’ of the journalist. In November 2021, Deputy Director, Regional Service East of the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone, Sylvester Kallon, said he was doing an ‘admissibility opinion’ on the matter to send to the Directorates of Complaint, Investigations and Legal Services of the Commission. The Magistrate said he had a case with no one.

On 12 August 2021, *African Young Voices (AYV) TV* presenter, Phebean Swill-Randall, was reportedly dismissed from the Sierra Leone Board of Entertainment and Investment as entertainment Board member 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.

According to Mrs Swill-Randall's post, Kao De Nero asked her to delete the post stating that 'things like these derail our joint effort in getting the support we are all yearning for'. She said she refused stating that she was entitled to freely express herself within the ambit of the law regardless of her status as entertainment Board Member and that her post had nothing to do with the Board. After that, she said she was dismissed from the Board by Ambassador Kao De Nero (<https://www.facebook.com/1310961414/posts/10219740706970761/>). Efforts to reach Kao De Nero proved futile.

On 5 October 2021, the Sierra Leone Police arrested and detained ten journalists, including the station manager, Abdurahman Kamara, of *Star Radio's Media One Center* in Freetown.

**FIG 2.1: Arrest and detention of journalists at Media One Centre, 5 October 2021**



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 which did not hold. The matter is still in court.

*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 (<https://www.facebook.com/100003649263583/posts/2309223199209300/?app=fbi->). Mr. Jalloh said the matter had been settled as the alleged anonymous callers contacted him and apologized to him.

On 22 November 2021, the Sierra Leone Police allegedly raided the office of the Editor of *Voice of Salone Newspaper*, David Johnson to arrest him on the grounds of 'insulting statements' via WhatsApp, a complaint filed by Sydney Campbell Esq. The attempted arrest was in connection with a story the editor had published on a land saga between the lawyer and Hassan Sankoh at Limba Corner- Rokel Community in Freetown. On 29 November 2021, the matter came up at the Ross Road Magistrate Court No. 3. The editor was charged with 5 counts charge which include: Threatening Language and Abusive Language contrary to Section 3(1) of the Public Order Act (POA) of 1965 as amended in 2020; Insulting Conduct, contrary to Section 3(4) and Section 3(5) of the POA of 1965; and Intimidation, contrary to Section 4(4) of the POA of 1965. The matter is still in court.

## **2.2 Right to Access Information**

For the reporting period under review, the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC), had not published cases/issues of complaints received in 2021. The Commission said it was working on finalizing its report which would be published in early 2022. However, in 2020, the Commission said a total of 144 requests for public information were recorded to which 132 of those requests were granted by the various institutions concerned.

## **2.3 Internet Freedom and Digital Rights**

With the increase in internet accessibility and affordability across the country and with more youth using social media, internet freedom and digital rights issues became a cause of concern in Sierra Leone. There were attacks and counterattacks on views and opinions that did not conform to their beliefs. Cyber bullying and stalking have been on the increase. On 23 June, 2021, the House of Parliament passed the bill entitled Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021 into law with the President assenting to it on 17 November 2021, making it a legal statutory instrument regulating the cyber space in the country. The Act, among other things, provides for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment of cybercrimes; and protection of privacy rights.

The year 2021 saw attacks and counterattacks against personalities especially civil society activists, journalists and officials (both ruling and opposition) for their views especially ones that had to do with politics. Cut across, there were 'social media vigilantes' on the go ready to attack and counter attack views that were not in favor of their interests or political parties.

The following internet freedom and digital rights cases were recorded.

On 30 June 2021, Abdul Karim Fonti Kabia's Facebook post on decrease in fuel prices attracted a lot of comments with some attacking his personality (<https://www.facebook.com/1061764340/posts/10223189774786995/?app=fbl>).

A post by Abdul Fonti Kabia, Communication Strategist at Office of the President, State House titled the "the Eagle Has Landed" on 22 August, 2021 received negative and insulting comments ([https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10223458680029458&id=1061764340](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10223458680029458&id=1061764340)).

On 22 October 2021, Thomas Joseph Dixon posted on his Facebook wall about the deportation of Sierra Leoneans in Germany. He was attacked for his post (<https://www.facebook.com/100000601537443/posts/5032919863404682/?app=fbl>).

On 2 November 2021, Thomas Dixon posted on his Facebook wall about President Bio's frequent travels. Under the comments session, comments attacking him were made by individuals (<https://www.facebook.com/100000601537443/posts/5070146549682013/?app=fbl>).

Thomas Joseph Dixon, a journalist on 17 November 2021 posted on his Facebook wall on the suspension of the Auditor General. Comments attacking him for the post were made (<https://www.facebook.com/100000601537443/posts/5120125564684111/?app=fbl>).

On 26 November 2021, Sierra Leone's Press Secretary, Yusuf Keketoma Sandi's Facebook post on SLPP First National Young Generation Conference in Moyamba received a barrel of insults under the comments section by pro and anti-individuals ([https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10223925599581290&substory\\_index=0&id=1035837491](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10223925599581290&substory_index=0&id=1035837491)).

A controversial post by Abdul Fonti Kabia, Communication Strategist at Office of the President, State House on 30 November 2021 on politics relating to APC received attacking comments demeaning and insulting ([https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10223947626772821&id=1061764340](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10223947626772821&id=1061764340)).

## 2.4 Media and Good Governance

The media in Sierra Leone, especially critical ones have played a significant impact in the governance system of the country by playing a monitoring role and as well by serving as checks and balance in holding governments-past and present- accountable and transparent in their work. Mostly, citizens find it difficult to understand the work and operations of established sectors hence the issues of transparency and accountability become a cause of concern. This was the case for local councils in Sierra Leone. There were concerns over locals' knowledge of and understanding on local governance policies, regulatory frameworks, and the functioning of their local councils. Again, councils were accused of not involving and informing local citizenry in the planning and implementation of development initiatives which served as an obstacle in local communities holding their respective local councils accountable in the implementation of various development initiatives and in their service delivery.

The MRCG, as an organization that 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; it undertook a local governance project with support from UNDP that supported and enhanced 12 local communities understanding on policies, programs and procedures of local councils and to hold councils accountable through the training of 12 journalists and 12 local CSO representatives in UNDP 8 operational districts (12 project locations) of Kambia, Port Loko, (Port Loko town and Lunsar), Falaba, Ward C, Moyamba, Bonthe (Matru Jong and Bonthe Island), Pujehun, (Pujehun town and Zimmi), and Kailahun (Kailahun town and Segbwema) who produced and presented radio programs titled "**Leh We Tok Bot Council**".

The radio programs helped in bridging the gap by encouraging transparency, accountability, visibility and credibility in the work of local councils. The program featured guests from the councils including their Chief Administrators (CA), Chairmen, IEC Officers, Councilors, Evaluation Officers, Finance Officers, among others, CSOs, community stakeholders and vox pop from locals of the communities.

Members of the public called and sent text messages during the live programs asking questions and seeking clarifications on issues discussed which the guests did.

Before the radio programs, the MRCG engaged 27 community stakeholders including heads of CSOs, chiefs, women leaders and groups, youths, teachers, religious leaders, among others, from the 8 districts project locations on local governance issues in Mile 91. The engagement unearthed that their understanding of and knowledge on the operations of local councils, interaction with and access to council members were very low. The engagement increased community stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of the operations of councils. They identified the issues affecting their communities and proffered solutions to them. They also learnt of their roles as community stakeholders in helping the council achieve its mandate.

Also, the MRCG produced a training manual that was used to train the journalists and CSOs which capacitated and increased their knowledge and understanding of local governance issues and served as a referential guide in reporting and producing programmes on local governance issues.

**At the end of the project, 72 editions of radio programs on the work of councils were produced and presented in the 12 locations.** In each of the 12 locations, a journalist and a CSO were paired together to produce **6 editions of radio programs. Four of the topics were generic- the operations of councils; resource mobilization and utilization; transparency and accountability; and information accessibility- and two specific which were unique to their locations.**

The impacts were that the radio programs increased the knowledge and understanding of locals of the various project locations on the operations of council as they learnt how councils mobilise and utilize resources; how they can access information from council; their roles as communities, and as well increased their capacity in holding councils accountable in their service delivery. The radio programs helped in bridging the communication gap between councils and their communities and helped in clarifying many misconceptions that strained their relationships. They also provided a platform for the journalists, CSOs, Council members and community stakeholders to continue to interact and discuss developmental issues. The journalists can now easily get in touch with the council unlike before now. Station managers committed themselves to continue with the programs and some of the councils agreed to offer support to the programs. The councils are now more open up and comfortable with the media as their fears of the media castigating and embarrassing them had been allayed. The capacity of the journalists and CSOs on local governance has been increased as they are now familiar with council issues and can effectively analyze and present on issues relating to the operations of the council.

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

**There is the Right to Access Information Commission established by an Act of Parliament in 2013.** The law 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 Chairman and Information Commissioner of RAIC, Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, told MRCG that the Commission facilitates and promotes the supply and demand of public information in the country with requests from an individual or a body. Upon request, he said public institutions are obliged by the Commission's Act to comply with the request of releasing information, hence the information requested doesn't jeopardise national security, citizens personal data and patients medical records.

The Commissioner said that mostly the information people request for borders on exposing corruption and mismanagement of public resources, of which journalists top the lists of persons who request for public information followed by CSOs.

“Some institutions would not want to release public information even though the information requested for doesn't fall under the exempt categories. So as a Commission, we play the role of a mediator to convince them to comply to ensure the free access of information,” explained Dr Shaw.

He said that compliance rate was huge, though they were yet to publish their data. He added that in 2020, out of 144 requests for public information, 132 were positively responded to and so they expect better in the 2021 report which would be published early 2022. He said in a case of continuous reluctance from any public institution to release information, the Commission would issue orders for compliance and refusal will lead to a fine which would be determined by the Commission. Dr Shaw said information accessibility has promoted press freedom and freedom of speech in a way that there is a huge progress in the demand and supply of public information. He said there is now an enormous trust in the Commission manifested by journalists and CSOs as they get most of the information they request for.

There is a **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. On 31 October 2021, SLAJ appointed Claudia AR Anthony as Chairperson of its reconstituted SLAJ Disciplinary Committee (SDC).

**The Cyber Security and Crime Act, 2021** is a law that provides for the effective, unified and comprehensive legal, regulatory and institutional framework for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment of 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 Computer Security Incident Response Coordination Centre** responsible for managing cyber security incidents in Sierra Leone is yet to be established.

President Bio in assenting to the **Cyber Security and Crime Act, 2021** pointed that: “As we embrace digital technologies and participate in that digital space, we must also invest in digital infrastructure and introduce the required legal and regulatory reforms to support that participation. We must tackle questions of access and inclusion but also deal with digital freedoms and rights. We must also prioritise the safe and secure uses of digital technologies so that digital technologies support inclusive national development.”

The National Coordinator for Chosen Generation, Joel Abdulai Kallon commenting on the essence of a Data Protection law to press freedom said: **“Data protection is fundamentally linked to press freedom. In the absence of a data protection law, as is currently the case in Sierra Leone, journalists, activists and ordinary citizens who are critical of the government can easily be targeted through sophisticated surveillance mechanisms that generally violate basic data privacy and protection conventions.”**

The Deputy Minister of Information and Communications, Solomon Jamiru Esq emphasized government’s commitment to ensuring every Sierra Leonean has their privacy rights guaranteed, adding that no person except with his consent shall be subjected to the search of his person or his premises and technological appliances stating thus: “The Ministry of Information and Communications is working with the National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) to have extensive consultation and validation meetings with stakeholders across the country on the draft Data Protection law. This process is to ensure fairness, transparency and confidence that the consent of the representative of every stakeholder group was sought.”

**The National Telecommunication Commission** was established by an Act of Parliament in 2006, as amended in 2009. The main function of the Commission is to license and regulate the activities of telecommunications operators so as 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.



#### 4. PERFORMANCE OF MEDIA INSTITUTIONS

The Independent Media Commission (IMC) is the regulatory body responsible for registering, licensing, and ensuring compliance with the Media Code of Practice. The IMC was created by an Act of Parliament in 2000 (as amended in 2006 and 2007) and repealed and replaced by the IMC Act 2020.

The SLAJ constituted Disciplinary Committee, established pursuant to Article 14 (3) of its constitution is responsible to adjudicate upon matters of indiscipline and professional misconduct of individual members of SLAJ.

There is significant improvement 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 11 August 2021, Yaya Sidi Turay on behalf of Vimetco SMHL filed a complaint with the Independent Media Commission (IMC) against the *Public Review Newspaper* in connection with publications dated 29 June and 6 July 2021 titled: “**For Sheer Negligence...Vimetco in Drowning Scandal...1 Confirmed Dead**” and “**Drowned Victim Found at Vimetco Site...After Days**”. The matter received two hearings- 31 August and 7 September 2021, attended by both parties. The Committee found that the publication was inaccurate as it failed to adequately publish Vimetco's response to their enquiry. The Board of the IMC at its meeting held on Wednesday 22 September 2021 fully endorsed the recommendations of the Complaints Committee that the Newspaper, for breach of the accuracy provision of the Media Code of Practice be fined Le 1,000,000 (One Million Leones equivalent to USD 100), publish a retraction with due regards to equal space and time, publish the ruling and Vimetco SMHL **be warned** to take their safety standards seriously.

On 30 August 2021, Head of Admin/HR, Saidu M. Conteh, on behalf of Dangote Cement Factory, filed a complaint to the Commission against *Voice of Salone Newspaper* in connection with a publication dated 27 August 2021 titled: “**With Over \$ 12m In Limbo.... Dangote Cement Factory to Fold Up**”. One hearing was conducted on this matter on Tuesday 14 September 2021, attended by both parties. The Committee found that the Newspaper could not provide any evidence to confirm the claim that the company intended to fold-up or that its productions were to be suspended and the Managing Editor admitted that all that was published was inaccurate. The Board of the IMC at its meeting held on Wednesday September 22, 2021 fully endorsed the recommendations of the Complaints Committee that the Newspaper publish a retraction with due regards to equal space and time rule.

On 31 August 2021, Jessie Olu John filed a complaint with the Commission against the *Salone Compass Newspaper* in connection with their publication dated 16 August 2021 titled: “**Land Conflict at Kerry Town community –Former Headman Implicated**”. The Committee's findings were that the article lacked balance as the publication failed to make reference to the documentary evidence forwarded to them and that the Newspaper did not provide any evidence, but instead relied on mere allegation. The Board of the IMC at its meeting held on Wednesday, 22 September 2021 fully endorsed the recommendations of the Complaints Committee that the Newspaper be fined le 1,000,000

(One Million Leones equivalent to USD 100) for breach of the accuracy provision of the IMC Media Code of Practice, retract its publication, presenting the facts with due regard to the equal time and space rule, and to publish the ruling of the IMC.

On 6 July 2021, the IMC received a complaint from UNDP against the *Standard Times Newspaper* in connection with its publication dated 13 July 2021 titled ‘**PUBLIC NOTICE...CONGO CROSS POLICE AGAIN**’. The matter received three hearings- 3, 10 and 17 August 2021 that were attended by both parties. The Committee found that the registration number of the vehicle involved was inaccurately published and that the public notice published failed to meet professional standards. The Board of the IMC at its meeting held on Wednesday 3 November 2021 fully endorsed the recommendations of the Complaints Committee that Standard Times should retract the public notice in like manner as the publication itself (i.e. obeying the equal space and time rules).

On 29 September 2021, the IMC received a complaint from Augustine Amara Kanneh, Public Relations Officer for the Eastern Polytechnic against the *Indigenes Newspaper* in connection with its publication dated 22 September 2021 titled “**Eastern Polytechnic Misappropriates Le 5.6 Billion on Revenue and Payroll Costs**”. It received one hearing. The Committee found out that the Newspaper did not substantiate the headline, that it was inaccurate and misleading and that the article was in breach of the accuracy principles of the Media Code of practice... The Board of the IMC at its meeting held on Wednesday 3 November 2021 fully endorsed the recommendations of the Complaints Committee that a fine of Le 1000,000 (One Million Leones equivalent to \$100) be imposed in line with Principle 3 of the Media Code of Practice dealing with accuracy and that the Newspaper should do a retraction with good prominence and apologies to the Eastern Polytechnic in its next publication upon receipt of its ruling.

On 29 September 2021, the IMC received a complaint from Dr. Sao-Kpato Hannah Isata Max-Kyne, Commissioner of the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) against *Times-SL Newspaper* in connection with publications dated 4 and 7 October 2021 titled “**As Ritual to Sacrifice the Virginity of 6 Virgins Exposed...3 Victims Suffer Profuse Bleeding**” and “**New Twist in Attempted Ritual Murder Case...SLPP Govt. Indicted...No Hiding Place for NaCSA Boss and Chief Minister**”. The matter received one hearing, attended by both parties. The Committee found out that...no reasonable effort was made to cross check the accuracy of the story, the Editor did not furnish the Committee with reasonable evidence to prove their allegation; therefore the publication was in breach of the accuracy principle of the Media Code of Practice. The Board of the IMC at its meeting held on Wednesday 3 November 2021 fully endorsed the recommendations of the Complaints Committee that a fine of Le 1000,000 (One Million Leones equivalent to \$100) be levied against *Times- SL Newspaper* in accordance with Principle 3 of the IMC Media Code of Practice dealing with accuracy and that the Newspaper publishes a retraction with the same prominence in the next publication immediately in receipt of the ruling.

On 27 July 2021, the Clerk of Parliament issued out a public notice reconstituting the Parliamentary Press Gallery (PPG) pursuant to Standing Order 80 of the House’s Rules of Procedures in the Parliament of Sierra Leone. The notice stated that 12 journalists from different media houses constitute the new interim executive. The President of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, Hassan Y. Koroma in a

release condemned the action of the Clerk of Parliament stating that the PPG is not a Parliamentary unit that takes instruction from the Clerk. He said they are only answerable to SLAJ.

“Let me take this opportunity to make it clear that Parliament has no leg/power to reconstitute neither conduct elections for the Parliamentary Press Gallery (PPG). The PPG is a mixture of print and electronic media practitioners nationwide with affiliation to the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ). It should be also known that the PPG is not a Parliamentary unit, preventing the body from taking instructions from the Clerk or Parliament. The current executive is still alive, working in the best interest of the membership and complementing the work of Parliament and MPs,” Hassan stated.

With that, SLAJ set up a Reformation Committee to look into the matter. On 18 August 2021, SLAJ received a report from the Reformation Committee on Parliament’s reconstituting the Parliamentary Press Gallery (PPG). SLAJ President, Ahmed S. Nasralla, said they would look into the report, consult with other media stakeholders and then inform the Committee about the next steps to take ([https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=217721137031462&id=100063807305798](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=217721137031462&id=100063807305798)).

On 9 September 2021, the West African Parliamentary Press Corps (WAPPC) wrote to the Clerk of Parliament of Sierra Leone, Hon. Paran Umar Tarawally, registering their dissatisfaction of Parliament’s interference into the activities and operations of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Press Gallery (SLPPG). The letter indicated that the involvement of Parliament in the reconstitution of the Press Gallery leadership in the absence of any election, violates Article 32 of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance entered into by Member States (<https://awokonewspaper.sl/reconstituting-parliamentary-press-gallery-without-election-speaks-poorly-of-the-integrity-of-parliament-wappc/>).

“In keeping with our responsibilities as a professional body charged with regulating the professional conduct of Parliamentary Journalists in the West African Sub-region, we express our interest to set in motion the necessary machineries that would lead to a final resolution of all pending issues between Parliament and the press Gallery, and immediately see to the conduct of a transparent election to produce a new executive for the latter, three months from now.”

On 5 and 6 August 2021, MRCG and Mass Communication, Fourah Bay College held a two-day session to review media/journalism/communication curriculum to be used by media and journalism schools across Sierra Leone.

**Fig 4.1: MRCG joined Department of Mass Communication-FBC to review media/journalism and communications curriculum, 6 August 2021**



The review was geared towards improving and advancing journalism and media, and training and producing professional journalists so as to promote democratic good governance. The curriculum review captured specialized areas of reporting for diploma and certificate levels including health, sport, business, environment, and mining and among others which would be helpful in capacitating journalists.

“The Secretariat supported the review as a means of improving and advancing journalism, media and communication across the country. MRCG yearns to see schools of journalism across the country training and producing professional journalists to help in the capacity building of media and journalism practitioners so as to promote democratic good governance,” explained the National Coordinator of the MRCG, Dr Francis Sowa.

On 10 September 2021, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) together with the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) and Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL) trained the second set of 45 female journalists, bloggers and activists on Women’s Rights Online Issues in Sierra Leone.

**Fig 4.2: MRCG &MFWA train women on women’s rights online issues in Sierra Leone, 10 September 2021**



They were trained on dealing with social media and online privacy, how to identify and deal with online abuse against women and digital rights with particular emphasis on protecting women’s right and privacy online.

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.

SLAJ and the national security sector signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 2 November 2021 in commemoration of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, during a round table dialogue at the Office of National Security (ONS) in Freetown on the theme “**Maintaining**

**Law and Order and the Safety and Security of Journalists.”** The peaceful dialogue and partnership was to ensure the safety and security of journalists in their line of duty across the country.

*Fig. 4.3 SLAJ round table dialogue and signing of MoU with security sectors on International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists*



“We are now seeing a decline in cases of arrest and detention of journalists from politicians and other influential individuals, even though there are growing concerns of attacks and intimidation on female journalists in the digital space,” said Mr. Nasralla.

MRCG commemorated the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists on 2 November 2021 by calling on the government, politicians, media organizations, media owners and managers, civil society organizations and members of the public to ensure the safety and security of journalists. “As we observe the ‘International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists’ today, the MRCG reminds the Hon. Minister of Information and Communication, Mohamed Rahman Swaray, of a petition sent to him by the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and MRCG to respectfully seek his intervention to end the ongoing prosecution of journalist, Fayia Amara Fayia of the Standard Times newspaper,” says Dr. Francis Sowa, National Coordinator of the MRCG. The MRCG notes that since the petition was sent to the Minister of Information, the matter had not been called in court. But the organization still calls for an official end to the matter (<https://mrcg-sl.blogspot.com/2021/11/MRCG%20intensifies%20calls%20for%20safety%20and%20security%20of%20journalists%20on%20International%20Day%20to%20End%20Impunity%20for%20Crimes%20against%20Journalists..html>).



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

The year 2021 has been a successful working year for SLAJ as with support from MRCG, it contributed immensely to the passing of the the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021 into law. SLAJ and MRCG brought together key media and legal stakeholders in Sierra Leone that discussed provisions of the Cybercrime Bill 2020, developed a media position paper on the bill, took part in pre-legislative processes, monitored, followed and contributed to Parliament's debate of the bill until it was passed into law.

SLAJ President at the launch of the State of Media Freedom in Sierra Leone Report by MRCG and MFWA on 2 July 2021 said in almost all of the press freedom cases covered in the report, his association intervened to secure the release of affected journalists.

“Freedom of speech is not a license to blackmail, assassinate people's character. It is a license for you to practice professionally, ethically and responsibly. I have repeatedly reminded colleagues that even though the criminal libel law is gone, we still have civil libel law,” he cautioned as he called on the Government to review and drop all pending libel cases against journalists since the criminal libel law has been repealed and urged them to ensure that cases on the assaults, attacks, intimidations and harassments of journalists be speedily investigated and concluded.

SLAJ on 3 November 2021 marking International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists held a round table discussion and signed an MOU with security agencies made up of the Police, the Military, the Fire Force, the Sierra Leone Correctional Services, and the Office of National security to enhance cooperation and mutual understanding in order to promote the safety of journalists.

“The security sector must guarantee safety and ensure the protection of journalists during political and other events especially before, during and after elections. That's why today we are holding this round table dialogue with the security sector to start working together to address these challenges. Engagements like these are essential for the responsible maintenance of the law and order on one hand and for ensuring the safety and security of journalists and media workers at all times. This dialogue gives us an opportunity to understand, respect, support, and strengthen each other's role in the functioning of our democracy,” SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla said.

He emphasized that attacks on journalists undermine democracy, the rule of law, and the fight against corruption. He said journalists must have a safe space to operate despite the dangers that come with the terrain. He added that they were looking to work with the Police and the Military to develop training for journalists covering conflicts, to protect themselves in situations of civil conflict/unrest and learn basic survival skills.

SLAJ was also concerned that there were still complaints against journalists 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. While it seeks opportunities for continuous professional training, SLAJ continued to appeal to its colleagues to maintain the highest

standards of professional and ethical practice by cross-checking, double-checking and even triple-checking depending on the criticality of a story.

SLAJ further urged media houses to adopt safety and security policies for their workers, and train journalists on the coverage of sensitive stories and national and international crises.

SLAJ also called on the courts to defend the rights of journalists to practice safely. SLAJ called for the security sector to be trained in International Law governing the protection and safety of journalists.

At the Annual Media/CSO Engagement 2021 organised by the Ministry of Information and Communications, SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla, said they were further working to host an investment forum for the media as an action point following the repeal of the criminal libel law and expressed that in the area of free expression and free media (and media pluralism) ‘as a country we are doing very well, and we want to commend the government for that.’ He raised a concern of government officials stonewalling and refusing to talk to journalists.

On the work of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC) and the Independent Media Commission (IMC), SLAJ President said they are institutions that are critical to the operation of the media and appealed to the MIC, the line ministry, to make a case for these institutions to be adequately funded to perform their functions efficiently.

The President of SLAJ welcomed the move by the Government of Sierra Leone to join the Media Freedom Coalition stating that it is a demonstration and commitment to uphold freedom of expression and of the press, and the safety of journalists.

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

The key highlight of the government’s position on Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Right to Access Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights is the passing of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021 into law by the House of Parliament of Sierra Leone on 23 June 2021. The Minister of Information and Communications, Mohamed Rahman Swaray assured the House of a speedy Data Protection Law stating that the draft bill had been tabled in cabinet for deliberations and will soon be taken to Parliament.

On 17 November 2021, President Julius Maada Bio assented to the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021 at Statehouse, Freetown making it a legal statutory instrument regulating the cyber space in the country. At the signing ceremony of the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021, President Bio expressed the importance of setting laws that guide the digital technologies and the internet systems, adding that digital reforms are also part of national development.

“This law is not for political gains but to compete with other developing countries across the world in tracking Cybersecurity defaulters and to send a signal to international partners which Sierra Leone is a signatory to. We will continue to work with our international partners to ensure the smooth implementation of this law,” the President said.

On 22 November 2021, President Julius Maada Bio signed the Global Pledge on Media Freedom as a commitment by his government to improve media freedom in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone became the 5<sup>th</sup> country in Africa to have committed to the principles and values of Media Freedom Coalition.

In his statement, the President stated that promoting and protecting free speech and media freedom were dear to his heart and central to his perception of good governance and participatory democracy.

The President furthered that his government had introduced progressive policies to support better working conditions for journalists, adding that they were also working closely with the leadership of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, the Human Rights Council of Sierra Leone, development partners, and civil society groups to ensure more improvement.

“A year on from signing the repeal, 130 registered newspapers, 165 registered radio stations, and 42 registered television stations continue to operate freely. There is no journalist in prison for the practice of journalism,” he assured adding that, “In a related legislation, the IMC Act of 2020, we have sought to support training and professionalism, reduce yellow journalism, regularize wages, and revise the media code of ethics.”

Sierra Leone in 2021 ranked 75 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index; moving 10 places forward (85/180 in 2020 to 75/180 in 2021).



## 7. STATUS OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION LAWS IN SIERRA LEONE

On 23 June 2021, Parliament passed the bill entitled, ‘Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021’, into law. The law seeks to provide for the prevention of the abusive use of computer systems, 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, to provide for facilitation of international cooperation in dealing with cybercrime matters and to provide for other related matters.

On 27 September 2021, the Independent Media Commission (IMC) with support from BBC Media Action, started the regional validation process of the reviewed 2007 Media Code of Practice in Kenema, Eastern Region, and continued in other regions across the country. The review of the Media Code of Practice 2007 was necessitated by the IMC Act of 2020.

### a. 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 & 2007	2020	In force
6	Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021	2021	In force

Source (Sowa & Kapuwa, 2015, but updated regularly)<sup>1</sup>

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

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

**b. Other Statutes (Acts of Parliament)/common law 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 Telecommunications Act	2006	In force
11	The Child Rights Act	2007	In force
12	The Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2008 (Act No 00 of 0000)	2008, as amended in 2019	In force
13	The Copyright Act, 2011 (Act No 00 of 2011)	2011	In force
14	The Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (Act No 00 of 2012)	2012 as amended in 2019	In force
15	The Right to Access Information Act, 2013 (Act No 00 of 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)<sup>2</sup>

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

**c. 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	In force, but under review.

Source (Sowa and Kapuwa, 2015; updated)<sup>3</sup>

Table 7.3: Codes Dealing with Media Regulation Still in Force

---

2 (ibid,2015)

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 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. The MRCG also looks forward to the smooth implementation of the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021 in a way that it does not hinder press freedom and freedom of speech and of the press.

The MRCG hopes that with the repeal, Government will review outstanding matters in the spirit of the repealed Criminal Libel Law as their existence still reminds of the obnoxious suffering journalists went through. The MRCG hopes that the security sector with the MoU signed with SLAJ ensures an atmosphere that is conducive for journalists to be safe and secured in their line of duties and to operate freely without fear, but rather fairly - objectively, responsibly, professionally and ethically. It is hoped that there will now be more investment in the media industry and one that can now attract more women to practice freely and fairly without fear of being imprisoned.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Government of Sierra Leone to review and discharge all seditious and/or criminal libel-related cases against journalists and other individuals since the law has been repealed.
- Government to ensure the proper implementation of the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021 and to also speedily enact the Data Protection Law.
- SLAJ to strengthen its Disciplinary Committee so as to promptly and effectively deal with issues of unprofessional practice and excesses of any journalist.
- SLAJ, MRCG and other partners to do more capacity building trainings for journalists to keep them up with international best practice and for the security forces to also understand the provisions in the new laws.
- The Sierra Leone Police should 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.
- The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone should speed up with the investigations of the matter involving journalist Osman Hardy Jalloh and Magistrate Joseph Toby.
- Government to ensure the safety and security of all journalists in their line of duties.
- Government and other organizations to provide scholarship programs for female journalists especially those in the regions.

## 10. REFERENCES


- Abdul Raman Kamara (12 October 2021) interviewed by Ishiaka Sannoh, Press Freedom Report. Media One Centre Mammah Street, Freetown
- Awoko Newspaper facebook post on the review of media/journalism and communication curriculum <https://awokonewspaper.sl/fbc-mass-communication-dept-to-become-a-faculty/> Accessed on 13 August 2021
- David Johnson (25 November 2021) interviewed by Augustine S James, Pres Freedom Report. Voice of Salone Newspaper, Freetown.
- Dr Ibrahim Seaga-Shaw (30 November 2021) interviewed by Augustine S James, Press Freedom Report. Rights to Access Information Commission, Kroo Town Road, Freetown.
- Julius Maada Bio 2018 Facebook post on the pledging to media freedom <https://www.facebook.com/263404117059657/posts/4736827683050589/?app=fbl> accessed on 23 November 2021
- MRCG intensifies calls for the safety and security of journalists <https://www.facebook.com/2226750424106118/posts/4501951669919304/>
- MRCG Facebook post on the Presidential assent to the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021 <https://www.facebook.com/2226750424106118/posts/4550234281757709/>
- MRCG Facebook post on the training of women on online issues and digital rights [https://touch.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/1057604135044827/?m\\_enstream\\_source=timeline&tn=-R&paipv=1](https://touch.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/1057604135044827/?m_enstream_source=timeline&tn=-R&paipv=1) Accessed on 13 September 2021
- Mrs Fatmata Kamara (3 November 2021) interviewed by Ishiaka Sannoh, Press Freedom Report. Independent Media Commission, Siaka Steven Street, Freetown
- Mrs. Fatmata Kamara (28 July 2021) interviewed by Ishiaka Sannoh, Press Freedom. Independent Media Commission, 54 Siaka Steven Street, Freetown.
- Phebean Swill-Randall Facebook post on her dismissal from the Board of Entertainment and Investment <https://www.facebook.com/1310961414/posts/10219740706970761/> Accessed on 12 August 2021
- Salieu Tejan Jalloh's Facebook post on his intimidation and threat- <https://www.facebook.com/100003649263583/posts/2309223199209300/?app=fbl> Accessed on 8 October 2021
- SLAJ Facebook post on the appointment of a new Disciplinary Committee Chairperson <https://www.facebook.com/100003649263583/posts/2309223199209300/?app=fbl> Accessed on 8 October 2021

- Sydney Campbell Esq (25 November 2021) interviewed by Augustine S James, Press Freedom Report. Private Lawyer, 98 Fourah Bay Road, Freetown
- SWASAL post on the verbal attack of Mohamed Fajah Barrie [http://owlpress-sl.com/swasal-condemns-verbal-violent-attack-on-bbc-reporter-by-sierra-leone-sports-official/?fbclid=IwAR32CjGv2osIFGI-FGvMiKi\\_A-IC8Pj1I3siJn7eWHSMmU5-TRtbGtWtQLc](http://owlpress-sl.com/swasal-condemns-verbal-violent-attack-on-bbc-reporter-by-sierra-leone-sports-official/?fbclid=IwAR32CjGv2osIFGI-FGvMiKi_A-IC8Pj1I3siJn7eWHSMmU5-TRtbGtWtQLc) accessed on 13 June 2021
- TV-News24 Facebook post on the Arrest and Detention on Osman Hardy Jalloh <https://www.facebook.com/361903161076410/posts/773178419948880/?app=fbl> accessed on 11 June 2021
- WAPPC, Letter to the clerk of parliament P. Tarawally about parliamentary press gallery- <https://awokonewspaper.sl/reconstituting-parliamentary-press-gallery-without-election-speaks-poorly-of-the-integrity-of-parliament-wappc/> Accessed on 15 September 2021


## 11. APPENDICES

### 11.1 Reported Cases in the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Edition 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 Seventh Edition of the Press Freedom Report, thirty nine cases were monitored. Twenty eight of them were concluded, settled, resolved, dropped or abandoned, because of lack of progress; five were in court; and six under police investigation/inconclusive/stalled.

Table 11.1: Status of cases monitored by the MRCG from May 2018 to November 2021

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 People’s 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 from former Freetown Mayor of the APC, Albert 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 increment 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’s 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 unto him but haven’t 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.	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.
<b>No</b>	<b>Cases Reported in the Second Edition</b>	<b>Date of Attack/Arrest</b>	<b>Status of the matter</b>
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 AYV journalists, Augusta Ethel Turay and Bockarie Samai, on the 16 January 2019, allegedly by supporters of the opposition All People's Congress Party (APC), while covering 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 Augustine 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 have not called us, neither discharged the matter nor charged it to court and so we stopped following the matter."

			The police called on the journalists to take their endorsed medical forms to the police headquarters and they can take it from that point.
<b>13</b>	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 urged Mr Fofana to continue with the matter and to make an official complaint against the police officers that disclosed his key witness.
<b>14</b>	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 governance challenges.	3 -6 May 2019	Matter ended after several press releases condemning the attack on her.
<b>15</b>	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.
<b>N</b>	<b>Cases Reported in Third Edition</b>	<b>Date of</b>	<b>Status of the matter</b>
<b>o</b>		<b>Attack/Arrest</b>	
<b>16</b>	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	28 June 2019	Journalists discharged.

	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-counts 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.		
17	Assault on two female sport journalists (Francess Bernard-Bundor and Estter 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 returned 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 SL Mining, which license had been cancelled by the state.	11 November 2019	Police said the matter had been closed because of the decriminalization of Part 5 of the Public Order Act of 1965.
<b>N</b>	<b>Cases Reported in Fourth Edition</b>	<b>Date of</b>	<b>Status of the matter</b>
<b>o</b>		<b>Attack/Arrest</b>	
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 District - in the Northern Region of Sierra Leone.	January 2020	Matter under police investigation as police said journalists were 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.
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 effected.
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 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. SLAJ, MRCG and MFWA signed a petition letter to His Excellency the President, Julius Maada Bio (through the Minister of Information and Communication) kindly urging him to intervene in 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.	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 had been closed.

			Mr Jimmy claimed the police were yet to call him to identify those that assaulted him nor had they been disciplined.
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 had been closed.
<b>N</b>	<b>Cases Reported in Fifth Edition</b>	<b>Date of</b>	<b>Status of the matter</b>
<b>o</b>		<b>Attack/Arrest</b>	
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 had 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 undertone and allegedly had the tendency to put the legal profession into disrepute as his post was rated as demeaning to the apex court of the land.	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 letter of apology in the front pages of

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	two widely read newspapers in Sierra Leone. Umaru Fofana said he had decided to move on as he receives such threats frequently. <b>“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.”</b>
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 had 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 had 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	6 May 2021	The matter had been closed.

	operation that is said to clean the CBD of commercial motor bikes.		
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 June 2021 for allegedly publishing a story relating to a matter between an Imam and a female chief in Blama.	10 June 2021	The matter is at the Human Rights Commission-Kenema for further investigation. The journalist had filed a complaint at the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone. The regional office east is doing an 'admissibility opinion' on the matter to send to the Directorates of Complaint, Investigations and Legal Services of the Commission. The Magistrate said he has a case with no one.
35	The alleged verbal attack on <i>BBC Sports</i> 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	On 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 increase 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 <i>Star Radio's</i> 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	The matter is in court



38	The intimidation of and death threat against Journalist Salieu Tejan Jalloh of <i>Times Newspaper</i> as a result of his publications exposing perpetrators behind the ‘alleged attempted ritual murder of the six virgins.’	On 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 count charges	On 22 November 2021	The matter is still in court.