



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



## Press Freedom in Sierra Leone December 2022 to May 2023

### Tenth Edition

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| Acronyms & Abbreviations | Meaning  |
|--------------------------|--|
| APC                      | All Peoples Congress                             |
| AYV                      | Africa Young Voices                              |
| BBC                      | British Broadcasting Corporations                |
| CARL                     | Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law        |
| CBD                      | Central Business District                        |
| CGG                      | Campaign for Good Governance                     |
| CID                      | Criminal Investigations Department               |
| CoPPP                    | Coalition of Progressive Political Parties       |
| CSOs                     | Civil Society Organizations                      |
| DC                       | Disciplinary Committee                           |
| DISEC                    | District Security Committee                      |
| ECSL                     | Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone            |
| GOE                      | Guild of Editors                                 |
| IDEA                     | Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance |
| IFPIM                    | International Funds for Public Interest Media    |
| IGP                      | Inspector General Police                         |
| IMC                      | Independent Media Commission                     |
| IRN                      | Independent Radio Network                        |
| LUC                      | Local Unit Commander                             |
| MDAs                     | Ministries Departments and Agencies              |
| MFC                      | Media Freedom Coalition                          |
| 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                    |
| MSB    | Multi Stakeholder Board                     |
| NCSCC  | National Cyber-Security Coordination Centre |
| NatCA  | National Telecommunications Authority       |
| NATCOM | National Telecommunication Commission       |
| NED    | National Endowment for Democracy            |
| OB     | Outside Broadcast                           |
| 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                |
| SLP    | Sierra Leone Police                         |
| SLPP   | Sierra Leone People's Party                 |
| SWASAL | Sport Writers Association of Sierra Leone   |
| TRC    | Truth and Reconciliation Commission         |
| 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 tenth 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 December 2022 to May 2023 is the outcome of the monitoring of the exercise and legal guarantees of freedom of expression and of the press, 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 online harassment of Amadu Lamarana Bah, a journalist working for the *Africa Young Voices television (AYV)*, who also doubles as the President of the Sierra Leone Reporters Union (SLRU), by the State House Communications Director, Myk Brewa on 19 December 2022.
2. The arrest and detention of the Executive Director of Native Consortium and Research Centre, Edmond Abu Jnr., for twenty-one (21) days at the Pademba Road Correctional Centre, in relation to social media publications and utterances he made on a radio programme regarding the court matter between his organization and Mobile Network Operators and the National Telecommunications Authority (NatCA).
3. The increase in mobile data tariff across the country by mobile operators in Sierra Leone on 13 January 2023 and its impact on freedom of expression.
4. The alleged ‘verbal threat’ on journalist Gibril Gottor, a freelance journalist in Kambia by a police officer on 18 January 2023 at Malal Police Checkpoint in Magbema Chiefdom, Kambia District, Northern Sierra Leone.
5. The laying of the Right to Access Information Regulations 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 9 of 2022), Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2022) and the Independent Media Commission Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 17 of 2022) in Parliament on 26 January 2023.
6. The media and elections, including the MRCG training of 220 journalists from across the country on Promoting Professional Media Coverage and Conflict Sensitive Reporting of the 2023 general

elections in Sierra Leone.

7. The official launch of SLAJ's project to combat disinformation around Sierra Leone's 2023 general elections.
8. The IMC's launch of the Print and Electronic Regulation 2022 and IMC Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations 2022 on 27 March 2023, and Print and Electronic Media Regulation 2022 in April 2023.
9. The alleged attack and assault of Alie Tokowa, the Station Manager of *Fountain of Peace Radio (FOP)* in Moyamba District, on 28 March 2023 at the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) office in Moyamba.
10. The complaint from William Fayia Sellu, Inspector General of Police, against Alex Lawrence Koroma, Producer, and *Radio Democracy 98.1 FM* for a radio broadcast against his person on 'Good Morning Salone' Show on 22 May 2023.

The MRCG data showed that for this reporting period, four (4) cases were monitored and six (6) issues were covered. Out of the four cases, three are inconclusive. They are the matters of Gibril Gottor, a freelance journalist in Kambia, Alie Tokowa, the station manager of *Fountain of Peace Radio (FOP) radio* in Moyamba District and the Inspector General of Police, Radio Democracy and Alex Lawrence Koroma.

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), ninth edition (June to November 2022) and tenth edition (December 2022 to May 2023). From the First to the Tenth Edition of the Press Freedom Report, sixty-six cases were monitored. Forty-seven of them were concluded, settled, resolved, dropped or abandoned, because of lack of progress; four were in court; and fifteen 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 organizations, 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), Faculty of Communication, Media and Information Studies (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 tenth 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; December 2022 to May 2023. 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.

Ten 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 ninth edition, from June 2018 to November 2022 that were still inconclusive. From the First to the Tenth Edition of the Press Freedom Report, sixty-six cases were monitored. Forty-seven of them were concluded, settled, resolved, dropped or abandoned, because of lack of progress; four were in court; and fifteen 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 Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022. 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, and the Right to Access Information Regulations 2022, which enhances the work of the Commission. 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 supervisor, Augustine S. James. This tenth 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 December 2022 to May 2023 documented the following cases.

On 19 December 2022, Amadu Lamarana Bah, a journalist working for the Africa Young Voices television (AYV), who also doubles as the President of the Sierra Leone Reporters Union (SLRU), posted on his Facebook page that he was abused and harassed online for reporting on the outcome of the U.S. Africa Leadership Summit in Washington DC. According to him, his report did not go down well with the State House Communications Director, Myk Brewa. [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid0vjvy51p1vPAvEJqaqWKYgW21P7CNjpL9dBHkU67ybzP8F3xNeLvF4XhGCQcshFfyl&id=747117522&mibextid=Nif5oz](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0vjvy51p1vPAvEJqaqWKYgW21P7CNjpL9dBHkU67ybzP8F3xNeLvF4XhGCQcshFfyl&id=747117522&mibextid=Nif5oz). In January 2023, the journalist told MRCG that he had not made any formal complaint to the Sierra Leone Police and had no intention to do so.

On 10 January 2023, the Executive Director of Native Consortium and Research Centre, Edmond Abu Jnr., was arrested and detained for twenty one (21) days at the Pademba Road Correctional Centre, in relation to social media publications and utterances he made on a radio regarding the court matter between his organization and Mobile Network Operators and the National Telecommunications Authority. The Judiciary of Sierra Leone's press release dated 18 January 2023 stated that Edmond Abu Jnr. was arrested for contempt of Court in accordance with provisions of Section 120 (5) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991. The release further stated that the court, on 26 February 2021 had earlier granted an Order, restraining Mr. Abu from publication and comments on the case as it was 'sub judice' [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid0274dzSgVefYSK8EF6Czp8MzBD8nDEGtMVzz8Z19uqLzEnhvPAFDfrSATswVkJpFd7l&id=100069130663237&mibextid=Nif5oz](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0274dzSgVefYSK8EF6Czp8MzBD8nDEGtMVzz8Z19uqLzEnhvPAFDfrSATswVkJpFd7l&id=100069130663237&mibextid=Nif5oz).

On 18 January 2023, journalist Gibril Gottor, a freelance journalist in Kambia reported to MRCG, alleging that a police officer made a verbal threat against him while covering a story at Malal Police Checkpoint in Magbema Chiefdom, Kambia District. "I reported the said officer to the Local Unit Commander (LUC) of Kambia Police Division, Chief Superintendent Abu Bakar Magona, but nothing has been done about it", he added. The LUC told MRCG that he did not receive any report from Gibril in relation to the said matter. He added that "my officers at the checkpoint had informed me that Gibril wanted to cause obstruction to their work at the checkpoint. In subsequent follow ups on the matter, there had been no progress relating to the verbal threat made by a police officer on Gibril Gottor. The Police also maintained that they had not yet got a witness or evidence to substantiate the complaint made by Gibril to aid their investigation of the matter.

On 28 March 2023, the MRCG monitored the alleged attack and assault of the Station Manager of Fountain of Peace Radio (FOP) in Moyamba District, Alie Tokowa, at the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) office in Moyamba by its supporters on the instruction of the outgoing District Council Chairman Mr. Joseph Gbogba. In an interview, Tokowa said that he was invited by one Haja Simbo, to do an Outdoor Broadcast (OB) of the party's nomination event at the SLPP party office. He said while at the SLPP Office on the assignment arguments ensued during the deliberation among supporters of the aspirants. He continued that the former District Council Chairman, Mr. Gbogba spotted him taking a video of the argument and instructed his boys to beat him and take his phone from him. In an interview, the former District Council Chairman, Joseph Gbagbo, denied instructing anyone to attack the station manager of FOP Radio. The Head of Media and Public Relations of the SLP, ASP Brima Kamara, told MRCG that the Sierra Leone Police

(SLP) was waiting for the victim to return from the hospital in Freetown to file in a complaint and an investigation would be instituted into the matter. SLAJ in a press release dated 31 March 2023, condemned the attack on the journalist and called on local authorities to protect journalists and their media houses from intimidation, threats, and attacks by politicians and members of the public who feel aggrieved about their work. SLAJ also called on the Police to impartially investigate the matter and bring to book the alleged perpetrators. In a follow up on the matter, the Chairman of Civil Societies in Moyamba, Gerald Foday, told MRCG that they had filed a formal complaint of the matter to the Sierra Leone Police in Moyamba and that four suspects were arrested, but later released on bail. The Local Unit Commander (LUC) of Moyamba Police station, Assistant Superintendent Franklyn Bawoh, confirmed receipt of the complaint and had sent the matter to the State Counsel for legal advice. “The next line of action will be taken after the advice”, he said.

## **2.2 Right to Access Information**

In an interview, the Chairman and Information Commissioner of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC), Dr. Ibrahim Seaga- Shaw, told MRCG that rapid popularization of the Commission’s new Regulations had commenced since it was passed in Parliament in February 2023, adding that the Commission has held a symposium for journalists, Civil Society Organizations and members of the public on the new Regulations and the work of the Commission in enhancing the flow of information during electoral processes. “Overall, there is progress in the compliance rate. Since we held a workshop with heads of public institutions in September 2022, there is now high compliance rate in the Proactive Disclosure of Information (PDI),” he said. Dr. Seaga-Shaw further stated that from December 2022 to May 2023, the Commission has been copied in 640 information requests and only 45 were pending, but the rest were successful.

He continued that information requests have improved from CSOs and journalists to even members of the public, noting that the Commission’s data show that more requests come from the northern and western regions of the country.

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 Digital Rights and Internet Freedom**

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 that detrimentally affects other people. <https://sierraloaded.sl/news/slaj-raises-concern-implementation-cyber-law/>

On 13 January 2023, there was an increase in mobile data tariff across the country by mobile operators in Sierra Leone. MRCG in a press alert on 13 January 2023 expressed concerns on the increment, stating that such may negatively hinder information access and dissemination in the country. <https://www.facebook.com/2226750424106118/posts/pfbid02SKrAxoMsR6TWxsadUL4PeHAsYmQNfkHreiwyJT1ERigKH8kgMz7AwBsezdyEM7Ril/>

## 2.4 Media and Good Governance

The MRCG with the renewed support from NED, in March and April 2023 on diverse dates, trained 220 journalists including station managers and editors on ‘Promoting Professional Media Coverage and Conflict Sensitive Reporting of the 2023 general elections in Sierra Leone.’ The objectives of the training was geared towards training journalists, editors and station managers on elections and conflict sensitive reporting; enabling journalists, appreciate the need to engage in conflict sensitive reporting during elections, increasing the knowledge and capacity of journalists in reporting on electoral processes including nominations, manifesto readings, campaigns, voting, counting and announcement of elections results, enabling journalists fight election-based disinformation and misinformation, increasing accurate information for digitally connected and unconnected audiences, pre, and post-elections, enabling journalists fact check their news to prevent mis/disinformation, increasing their knowledge on the safety and security of journalists, enabling participants avoid publishing and broadcasting hate messages and fake news, and exposing the participants to the ethical guidelines on reporting elections in the Independent Media Commission Elections Regulations, 2022.

The MRCG, as part of the project established the **Media Situation Room** at its secretariat at 145 Circular Road, Freetown. The **Media Situation Room** was to monitor the media’s performance during the 2023 multi-tier elections in Sierra Leone. The Situation Room relied mainly on raw information from print and broadcast media contents from around the country by the MRCG media monitors (4 in the regions and 5 at the Secretariat in Freetown). This raw data were processed and analyzed to provide real-time information on the performance of the media in dealing with conflict sensitive issues. The data collected showed the media coverage on the electoral process, their adherence to ethical standards and provided possible actions against those who breached the ethical standards set out in the Independent Media Commission Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 17 of 2022).

Also, as a way of fostering and strengthening democratic dialogue, consolidating peace and ensuring professional media in the country, SLAJ ahead of the June 24, 2023 general elections in Sierra Leone, put together the ‘Media Manifesto,’ a document highlighting critical developmental steps to be taken by any successful political party that wins the presidential elections. The Manifesto was launched and presented to all aspiring political parties. In the Manifesto, media owners, stakeholders, journalists, and affiliate bodies of the media agreed on the priorities and development framework they want to see in the media. The Manifesto has recommendations targeting eight (8) key thematic areas including: promoting and guaranteeing media/press freedom; promoting and ensuring access to information, promoting women’s empowerment in the media, promoting media professionalism and capacity building, promoting media sustainability and viability, promoting media literacy, guaranteeing the safety and security of journalists, and prioritizing the welfare of journalists in Sierra Leone.

### **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.

The Chairman and Information Commissioner of RAIC, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga-Shaw, told the MRCG that upon request, the said public institutions are obliged by the Commission's Act to comply with the request of releasing information, hence the information requested does not endanger national security, citizens personal data and patients' medical records. "We will continue to encourage public institutions to regularly update their websites and to have proper records management systems, to ease the demand and supply of information," said the Chairman and Information Commissioner, Dr. Ibrahim Seaga-Shaw.

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. The National Cybersecurity Coordination Centre (NCCC) in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes together with the United States Embassy, on 17 January 2023 organized a four-day training session for investigators and prosecutors on the proper implementation of the Cybersecurity and Crimes Act, 2021 at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Freetown. [Cyber... - The Ministry of Information and Communication | Facebook](#)

The NCCC on 27 and 28 February 2023 held a 2-day National cyber security symposium at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Freetown to foster a common understanding of Sierra Leone's Cybersecurity and Crime Act, 2021. As social media users increased in Sierra Leone from 360,000 in 2018 to 2.68 million in 2022, it is imperative for the nation to protect the privacy and security of citizens on the cyber space. [Facebook](#).

The National Telecommunications Commission was established by an Act of Parliament in 2006. It has been replaced by the National Telecommunications Authority. The Authority regulates 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.

#### 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 5 December 2022, MRCG with funding support from NED launched its 2018-2021 State of the Media Report. MRCG's National Coordinator, Dr. Francis Sowa, said that the report covered a four-year period from 2018 to 2021, and examined the media ecosystem in Sierra Leone. (<https://www.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/705655057451113/?app=fbl>)

On 7 December 2022, the President of SLAJ, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla at the Presidential Media Cocktail organized by the office of the President, spoke about the successes, challenges, opportunities of the Sierra Leone media in 2022. He called on President Bio and his government to fulfil their commitments to the media and provide a safe space for the media so journalists could practice safely. <https://www.facebook.com/100001182651239/posts/pfbid0bhuxgRePgmVNEBKBCeKnGGeWUL6gG3tffIAnsgFKNRbTKkWqDAYkh1W5HYUCRcul/?app=fbl>.

On 19 December 2022, the Independent Media Commission (IMC) engaged editors as well as station managers from both the print and electronic media, about key findings of a recent research conducted as well as some of the successes that the institution had achieved in the past 10 months amidst varying challenges faced.

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=pfbid0fvfHwbt3S63T9o6nokSR9SxxyTTdfJ3T3g4Lr6rCfS73dwufQhBjG4r3Ddm22drBl&id=100044389155390&mibextid=Nif5oz](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0fvfHwbt3S63T9o6nokSR9SxxyTTdfJ3T3g4Lr6rCfS73dwufQhBjG4r3Ddm22drBl&id=100044389155390&mibextid=Nif5oz).

On 26 January 2023 MRCG monitored the laying of papers in Parliament by the Deputy Minister of Information and Communications, Solomon Jamiru Esq. They were the Right to Access Information Regulations 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 9 of 2022), Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2022) and the Independent Media Commission Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 17 of 2022). The proposed pieces of legislations were to introduce new regulations on the right to access information, media ethics and coverage and reporting of elections respectively.

In March 2023, the MRCG with the renewed support from the NED trained over 100 journalists from the Western Region, the North and Northwest Regions on Promoting Professional Media Coverage and Conflict Sensitive Reporting in Freetown and Makeni respectively. The training workshop specifically targeted editors and station managers from different media institutions in a bid to improving the capacity of editors and station managers on how to professionally do media coverage and conflict sensitive reporting of the 2023 general elections in Sierra Leone.

<https://www.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/1025546688832695/?mibextid=j8LeHn>

On 24 March 2023, SLAJ officially launched a project to combat disinformation around Sierra Leone's 2023 public elections at the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone (ECSL) conference hall, Tower Hill, Freetown. The project, which was supported by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), was aimed at ensuring the integrity of the information landscape during the electoral cycle and promoting free, fair, and non-violent elections. "The project will monitor, identify, pre-bunk, and debunk disinformation and its engendered forms, including hate speech. It will also build SLAJ's capacity to counter disinformation, increase citizens' awareness of disinformation trends, and improve access to credible information on national

political processes,” said SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla. ([SLAJ and NDI Partner to Combat... - Slaj Sierra Leone | Facebook](#))

On 27 March 2023, IMC with funding support from the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) launched the Print and Electronic Regulation 2022 and IMC Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations 2022, at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Freetown. <https://www.facebook.com/100067197161961/posts/pfbid02jVLgSFg89LMQL9sN3GMpqXnL7D7twynw dWdFukA4CdamqnGphoVuDsy4oVAsFViwl/>

On diverse dates in April 2023, MRCG with the renewed support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) trained over 70 journalists from the Eastern and Southern Regions on Promoting Professional Media Coverage and Conflict Sensitive Reporting in Kenema and Bo. The training workshop specifically targeted editors and station managers from different media institutions in a bid to improving the capacity of editors and station managers on how to professionally do media coverage and conflict sensitive reporting of the 2023 general elections in Sierra Leone. [#MRCG concludes the training in the Eastern Region of Sierra Leone on #Promoting Professional Media #Coverage and #Conflict Sensitive #Reporting of the... | By Media Reform Coordinating Group-Sierra Leone | Facebook.](#)

On 27 and 28 April 2023, MRCG and Africa Check with support from National Endowment for Democracy, conducted a two-day Media Literacy workshop for 15 selected journalists across the country to strengthen their capacity to fight election-based dis- and misinformation and to increase accurate information for digitally connected and unconnected audiences, before and after the June 2023 elections in Sierra Leone (<https://www.facebook.com/MRCGinSL/videos/1200435140627766/?app=fbl>).

On May 3 2023, MRCG and its constituent member organizations joined other press freedom groups around the world to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Press Freedom. As this year’s theme is “Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of expression as a driver for all other human rights,” MRCG continues to call on the Government of Sierra Leone and other sector players to at all times guarantee the safety of journalists and to ensure a conducive environment for freedom of expression and of the press to thrive, especially as the country approaches its 24<sup>th</sup> June general elections. <https://www.facebook.com/2226750424106118/posts/pfbid02vhqCQLFMsj6VJMKgdeEgmkDstYThyfA44rJNmWXJv2PCSHfxt9zgSn8J5UcXeGrpl/?mibextid=afzh1R>

On 19 May 2023, the MRCG and Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) organised a Forum on Media Professionalism and Safety of Journalists in Sierra Leone. The Forum catered for journalists, representatives of media associations, the judiciary, the security sector, political parties and civil society organisations. The initiative of the forum was to highlight safety and security issues relating to journalists particularly as the country approaches its general elections in June 2023 and to increase awareness among stakeholders on the safety and protection of journalists in their line of duty. <https://www.facebook.com/100068664878685/posts/pfbid02jEWxq9opeyVGST2gbYMMzpwSfKLAJzzMw5K4wJgXc7m3AhZgmvr8FRcq9LxJk4Bl/?d=w&mibextid=qC1gEa>

On 24 May 2023 IMC Complaints Committee conducted hearing on a complaint by the Inspector General of Police, William F Sellu against Alex Lawrence Koroma, Producer **Radio Democracy 98.1 FM**, on a radio broadcast against his person on ‘Good Morning Salone’ Show Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023. Restating the complaint on behalf of Mr. William F Sellu, Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Brima Kamara said that on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2023, Alex Lawrence Koroma on “Good Morning Salone Show” on **Radio Democracy 98.1**, smeared the character and person of Mr. William F Sellu without getting his own side of the story. Responding to the complainant, Alex Lawrence Koroma said the broadcast was never meant to

destroy the good image of Mr. William F Sellu, and that it was a mistake. He pleaded with the Complaints Committee to give him time to do a retraction with equal prominence as soon as possible

On 31 May 2023, SLAJ validated and endorsed the Media Manifesto titled 'The Media We Want'. The media manifesto identified eight priorities within the media industry which included; promoting and protecting media freedoms, safety and security of journalists, access to information, gender equality and women's empowerment, professionalism and capacity building, media sustainability and viability, media literacy and welfare of journalists

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

December 2022 to May 2023 was a very busy period for SLAJ, with the Association embarking on several projects and activities ahead of the 24 June 2023 general elections in Sierra Leone. The thematic issue under the reporting period was SLAJ's intervention in combatting disinformation ahead of Sierra Leone's public elections.

The economic situation of the media is becoming unbearable day by day as prices of raw materials used by the print media especially continue to spike unchecked, and advertising which is the life-blood of the media is hard to come by these days as the small private sector continues to shrink. These issues affect media freedom. The Coronavirus pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war have had a huge toll on the economy of the country and by extension every sector including the media. Media houses are literally struggling to survive; some have downsized operations and laid off some staff. If not for the sustained advert support from Mercury International, Africell and Orange, and some banks, most of the media houses would have closed down.

In the area of the welfare of journalists, salary and conditions of service are still unsatisfactory for most journalists and media workers. The truth is the media houses cannot give what they don't have. However, with the passing of the new Independent Media Commission (IMC) Act in 2020 it is now a statutory obligation for media employers to pay their staff above the minimum wage, and their social security contributions. If media houses fail to comply their annual licenses will not be renewed by the IMC. SLAJ is continuing to engage with the Sierra Leone Reporters Union to address their welfare concerns.

SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla, noted that social media continues to threaten the existence of legacy media as well as the peace and stability of the country. Assessment studies of the information landscape show that the spread of disinformation, fake news, and hate speech on social media and offline to local communities by word of mouth through influencers, trusted voices, and amplifiers was largely responsible for violent incidents in the country in the last two to three years, including the infamous August 10th violent protests that claimed the lives of innocent civilians and police officers. Citizens are becoming increasingly exposed to problematic content influencing them to make wrong decisions and actions.

Because of the repeal of the criminal and seditious libel in 2020 also, Sierra Leone scored progressively in the World Press Freedom Index of 2021 and 2022 moving about 29 places up the world rankings. However, the country dropped 28 places down from 46 in 2022 to 74 in the 2023 global ranking. This drop may have to do with the passing the following year of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021, which many people including journalists perceived as taking back most of the freedom gained through the repeal of the criminal libel law. This year's ranking shows a drop in almost all the indicators including security, legislative, and economic.

In the area of safety and security, SLAJ has made some remarkable progress, but there is still a lot more to be done. Following the repeal of the criminal libel law, SLAJ signed an MoU with the security sector under the umbrella of the Office of National Security (ONS). The MoU seeks to promote mutual understanding, respect, collaboration, and support between the media and the security sector to minimize incidents of physical assault of journalists in the line of duty. Beyond that, SLAJ and the MRCG have conducted several training and workshops on the safety and security of journalists in the country. These have led to the formulation of a national framework/policy and the establishment of a National Coordination Committee for the Safety and Security of Journalists in Sierra Leone, comprising representatives from media stakeholders,



civil society organizations, the security sector, religious and traditional leaders, and the Judiciary of Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, there are still concerns around physical assaults, destruction of equipment of journalists in the line of duty, intimidation, online attacks, and death threats, according to a study by the MRCG. The main perpetrators, according to the study, are the police, political party supporters, and traditional authorities.

The media in Sierra Leone are largely independent, but mostly polarized along the two main political parties—the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the main opposition party All People's Congress (APC). Politicians are by law not allowed to own media houses, but they bankroll many of the media houses and are the actual beneficial owners. This is due mainly to the poverty of the media. The majority of the media in Sierra Leone are owned by journalists themselves and they are mostly one-man businesses even though they are registered as companies limited by guarantee with the Corporate Affairs Commission. They lack financial resources and adequate management systems which make them difficult, if not impossible to sustain or grow. Thus, they become vulnerable to politicians and big businesses that have the resources. In addition, there is a worrying trend with many journalists openly identifying with political parties and their top candidates in the hope that when these parties assume power they will be compensated with lucrative appointments. This trend is undermining independent and public interest journalism which a struggling country like Sierra Leone is in dire need of. While SLAJ does not condemn any journalist for supporting a political party, because they have the right to do so, the Association continues to encourage journalists to do so with responsibility and professionalism, and to be aware of the great personal risk that comes with that.

The Parliament of Sierra Leone recently passed two regulations to strengthen the IMC and one for the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC). The two IMC regulations are: Regulations on Print and Electronic Media and the Regulations on Elections Reporting. SLAJ believes that these regulations are meant to promote responsible, professional, and ethical reporting by journalists and media houses at all times. Nevertheless, online platforms operated by Sierra Leoneans in the Diaspora, and publishing to audiences in the country, are largely outside of the regulatory fence of the IMC.

## **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 recommendation six from the two-day Media Viability and Investment Conference in Freetown which was held in April 2022.

In an interview with the Director of Information, Ministry of Information and Communications, Emmanuel AB Turay, he explained that as part of the implementation of the recommendations from the Viability and Investment Conference, there is now the Multi-Stakeholder Board (MSB), in-charge of the pilot phase for the National Fund for Public Interest Media for Sierra Leone (Fund), together with MRCG.

He noted that the International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM) has already remitted funding for an initial one-year pilot, with the Government of Sierra Leone pledging future support to the Fund.

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 with the repeal of Part 5 of the Public Order Act of 1965, and with several trainings organized by MRCG and other media organizations on professionalism, there are less reported cases of arrest and detention of journalists and media workers in Sierra Leone in recent times. He noted that SLAJ on the other hand has also been playing its part in ensuring professionalism prevails in the media landscape of the country.

Sierra Leone, on 1 May 2023 participated in the New York Conference on Media Freedom and committed itself to the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC) in the world to enhance media freedom and freedom of expression in the country.

The Bill on Data Protection is at its final stage and hopefully it would be debated and enacted by the next Parliamentary session.

He said that media institutions and journalists should work within all the laws and regulation, especially the new regulations which are the Right to Access Information Regulations 2022, Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022 and the Independent Media Commission Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations, 2022, and that SLAJ should regulate its membership to practice professionally. He called on SLAJ to reinforce their Disciplinary Committee to be handling complaints from members of the public against journalists who default professionalism.

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

On 26 January 2023, the Deputy Minister of Information and Communications, Solomon Jamiru Esq, laid three media regulations in the house of Parliament. They are the Right to Access Information Regulations 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 9 of 2022), Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2022) and the Independent Media Commission Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 17 of 2022). These pieces of legislations have introduced new regulations on the right to access information, media ethics and coverage and reporting of elections respectively. They have been passed and in force The IMC and RAIC have recently embarked on a nationwide popularization of the Regulations.

**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<sup>1</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> 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**

| <b>No.</b> | <b>Other Statutes (Acts of Parliament) with laws relating to media regulation</b>  | <b>Year</b>              | <b>Status of the law</b>   |
|------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 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. 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 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 regularly)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> (Ibid,2015)

**Table 7.3: Codes Dealing with Media Regulation Still in Force**

| <b>No.</b> | <b>Codes</b>  | <b>Year</b>                          | <b>Status of the law</b>  |
|------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1.         | Code of Conduct of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists  | 2000 (reviewed 2014/2015)            | In force.   |
| 2.         | The Independent Media Commission (IMC) Media Code of Practice   | 2007 (reviewed and largely replaced) | IMC regulations are now in a Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2022. |
| 3.         | Right to Access Information Regulations 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 9 of 2022)                                       | 2022                                 | In force.   |
| 4.         | Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2022)       | 2022                                 | In force.   |
| 5.         | Independent Media Commission Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 17 of 2022) | 2022                                 | In force.   |

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

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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 monitor the passing of the legislations: Right to Access Information Regulations 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 9 of 2022); Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 11 of 2022); and the Independent Media Commission Elections (Coverage and Reporting) Regulations, 2022 (Statutory Instrument No. 17 of 2022). These pieces of legislations have introduced new regulations on the right to access information, media ethics and coverage and reporting of elections respectively.

The MRCG still 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 with safety of journalists still being an issue, SLAJ will continue to engage the security sector to address issues of press freedom and forge a good working relationship with the security sector especially the police and the military as the country prepares for its general elections. Safety and Security of journalists is at the heart of MRCG; the organization therefore hopes that the government, media owners and security sector will guarantee the safety of journalists in their line of duty.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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.
- The Government to look into the Media Manifesto and implement the recommendations for the development of the media landscape of the country.
- Government, SLAJ and partners to continue to implement the other recommendations from the Media Viability and Investment Conference.
- 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 officials should stop stone-walling and be willing and ready to respond to requests from journalists to cross-check their information.
- 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.
- 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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## 11. APPENDICES

### 11.1 Reported Cases in the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth 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 Tenth Edition of the Press Freedom Report, **sixty-six** cases were monitored. **Forty-seven** of them were concluded, settled, resolved, dropped or abandoned, because of lack of progress; **four** were in court; and **fifteen** under police investigation/inconclusive/stalled.

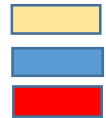


Table 11.1: Status of cases monitored by MRCG from March 2018 to November 2022

| 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 apologize. 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 criticizing the new regime of President Julius Maada Bio.  | 10 September 2018                       | Matter is still at the Kenema High Court. Nimalty told MRCG that there was no progress on the matter.  |
| 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.   |
| <b>No</b> | <b>Cases Reported in the Second Edition</b>   | <b>Date of Attack/Arrest/Invitation</b> | <b>Status of the matter</b>  |

|    |   |                 |   |
|----|---|-----------------|---|
| 11 | Arrest and detention of Alpha Thorley, Managing Editor of <i>the Night Watch 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 repeal 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.  |                                   |  |
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| 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 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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 /Invitation | 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 (Francess Bernard-Bundor and Esther Marie Samura) of <i>SLBC</i> 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 Miatta 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.   |

| No | Cases Reported in Fourth Edition  | Date of Attack/Arrest /Invitation | Status of the matter  |
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|    | SL Mining, which license had been cancelled by the state.   |                                   |   |
| 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 Cherner 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 officially discharge the matter |

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| 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 has been closed.<br>Mr Jimmy still claimed that 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.  |
| <b>No</b> | <b>Cases Reported in Fifth Edition</b>   | <b>Date of Attack/Arrest /Invitation</b> | <b>Status of the matter</b>  |
| 27        | The arrest and detention of Dr. Slyvia 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.  |
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| No | Cases Reported in the Sixth Edition   | Date of Attack/Arrest /Invitation | Status of Cases  |
| 30 | The verbal attack, insult and intimidation of <b>BBC</b> 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 <b>Night Watch Newspaper</b> 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 <b>Public Review Newspaper</b> , 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 <b>Concord Time Newspaper</b> 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 /Invitation | Status of Cases  |
| 34 | The arrest and detention of Osman Hardy Jalloh of <b>TV-News24</b> 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   |

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|    | <p>June 2021 for allegedly publishing a story relating to a matter between an Imam and a female chief in Blama.</p>   |              | <p>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.”</p> <p>Al Mansaray, in March 2023 posted on his channel that he had filed a legal paper against the United State Government through the U.S. State Department for failing to take appropriate action when he alerted them about the abuse of power and unprofessional conduct of Magistrate Toby. However, there has been no new development on the said matter.</p> |
| 35 | <p>The alleged verbal attack on <b>BBC</b> 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</p> | 13 June 2021 | <p>The Minister of Sports intervened, mediated and settled the matter between both parties.</p>  |



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| 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 August 12 2021 | Phebean Swill-Randall accepted her dismissal and 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 October 5 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 <i>Times Newspaper</i> 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  |
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| 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. |

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| 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 told MRCG that he received the sum of one million Leones (NLe one thousand Leones) from the police as compensation and he, through the advice from family members moved on. The Police said the matter had been resolved.   |
| 42 | The verbal attack and insult against Asmaa James, station manager of <i>Radio Democracy 98.1 FM</i> 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 <i>Radio Democracy</i> 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 census.   | 13 December 2021 | The matter had ended as she was later released.  |

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| 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.  |

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| 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 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.   | 7 February 2022. | The journalist was released on 8 February 2022 with conditions. That he retracted his story and apologized to the businessman. " <b>I am not going to retract the story because I stand by my story,</b> " 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.  |

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| 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 FM 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 <i>AYV's</i> 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.  |

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| 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 Centers 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 organization, 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 | Gibril Gottor told MRCG that “I am ok and I have taken over my security myself.”<br><br>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.   |
| 57 | Alleged Cyber Stalking and Bullying on President Julius Maada Bio by former APC Minister of Transport and Aviation, Kemoh Sesay.  | On 9 May 2022 | 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. |
| 58 | The arrest and detention of journalist Sorie Saio Sesay of Okentuhun <i>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   | 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. 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 the matter.  |

| No | Cases Reported in the Ninth Edition  | Date of Attack/Arrest/Invitation | Status  |
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| 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 <i>Voice of Peace and Development Radio FM 96.5 (VOPAD)</i> 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 had apologized to the journalist and his family, and 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, but were yet to do so  |
| 61 | The physical assault on the Managing Editor of <i>Night Watch Newspaper</i> , 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 to further their investigation. The matter is still under 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 still at the Directorate of Public Prosecution awaiting legal advice.   |
| No | Cases Reported in the Tenth Edition  | Date of Attack/Arrest/Invitation | Status  |
| 63 | The online harassment of Amadu Lamarana Bah, a journalist working for the <i>Africa Young Voices television (AYV)</i> who also doubles as the President of the Sierra Leone Reporters Union (SLRU), by the State House Communications Director, Myk Brewa. | 19 December 2022                 | The matter had ended as the journalist moved on with his work and did not make any formal complaint to the police.  |

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| 64 | The arrest and detention of the Executive Director of Native Consortium and Research Centre, Edmond Abu Jr., for twenty one (21) days at the Pademba Road Correctional Centre, in relation to social media publications and utterances he made on a radio regarding the court matter between his organization and Mobile Network Operators and the National Telecommunications Authority (NatCA). | 10 January 2023 | The matter had ended as the activist was later released from the Pademba Road Correctional Centre in Freetown.   |
| 65 | The alleged ‘verbal threat’ on journalist Gibril Gottor, a freelance journalist in Kambia by a police officer at Malal Police Checkpoint in Magbema Chiefdom, Kambia District, Northern Sierra Leone.   | 18 January 2023 | The matter is yet to be concluded as the police still maintained that they have not yet got a witness or evidence to substantiate the complaint made by Gibril to aid their investigation of the matter. |
| 66 | The alleged attack and assault on Alie Tokowa, the Station Manager of <i>Fountain of Peace Radio (FOP)</i> in Moyamba District, Alie Tokowa, on 28 March 2023 at the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) office in Moyamba district by its supporters.  | 28 March 2023   | Police confirmed that the matter is still under investigation.   |