



## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN TONKOLILI DISTRICT ON TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE (TJ) ISSUES IN THE DISTRICT**

### **OUTCOME DOCUMENT**

#### **PREAMBLE**

The Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG), with funding support from the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF), on 16 November 2024, held a community engagement meeting with stakeholders of Mile 91, Tonkolili District on Transitional Justice (TJ) issues in the district. The meeting was part of an ongoing project implemented by the MRCG entitled “Engaging Media and Communities to Change the Narrative on TJ Issues in Sierra Leone.”

TJ is “that collection of procedures, systems, and issues that emerge after a time of conflict, civil unrest, or repression and specifically intended to address and confront previous human rights and humanitarian law violations.” It refers to a type of justice encompassing a variety of legal and non-legal actions a community takes to address historical abuses and breaches of human rights and help it regain confidence and make amends.

The initiative is a rapid response intervention to ensure the implementation of specific recommendations of the district’s Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) report. Tonkolili, regarded as a conflict-prone district, is one of the significant places where the MRCG is implementing the project. It could be recalled that in 2022, the MRCG implemented a similar project with support from the same ATJLF. In the project implementation, three major community meetings were held, and a ‘TJ Committee’ was established, comprising members of the district, before the end of the 2022 grant.

The recent meeting comprised the TJ Committee and representatives from various other stakeholder groups in the district. The participants brainstormed about what the Committee has been doing regarding TJ issues. They also highlighted several recent incidents that would tend to bring conflict to the district if proper action is not taken. Finally, they gave recommendations and appealed to the government and other stakeholders to investigate them immediately.

#### **OBSERVATIONS**

During the discussion, the MRCG observed that the participants lamented various issues relating to injustice, corruption, land grabbing, youth violence, nepotism, the safety of journalists and media workers, lack of key governance institutions, deprivation of youths to per take in developmental activities, no access to the political authorities, and among others. Most of these issues were mentioned in the TRC report as significant causes of the 11-year war between 1991 and 2002 in Sierra Leone. Noting the discussions and points made at the meeting, including the timeliness and necessity of the engagement, we, the stakeholders, made the following recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The government assigns a residential magistrate to Mile 91 through the office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice of Sierra Leone.
2. Through the Ministry of Health, the Government assigns a residential medical doctor to Mile 91.
3. The police in Mile 91 to investigate cases with fairness and ensure justice for all.
4. The TJ Committee to incorporate new and committed members to foster the TJ processes in the district.
5. The religious leaders in the district to help spread peace among residents in the district.
6. Stakeholders in the Mile 91 community to stop using the youths to perpetrate violence against their opponents in the Mile 91 community.
7. The Paramount Chief of Mile 91 to start holding quarterly meetings with community stakeholders to stay abreast of community-related challenges.
8. The Government, through the Ministry of Youths Affairs to establish vocational institutions for the youths in Mile 91.
9. The MRCG to continue holding quarterly community meetings with stakeholders of the Mile 91 community on TJ issues.

Dated 19 November 2024.