



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



**Press Freedom in Sierra Leone
December 2024 – May 2025**

Fourteenth Edition

**Produced by the Media Reform Coordinating Group
(MRCG) with support from**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms & Abbreviations	Meaning
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
APC	All Peoples Congress
AYV	Africa Young Voices
BBC-MA SL	BBC Media Action Sierra Leone
CID	Criminal Investigations Department
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IMC	Independent Media Commission
MDAs	Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MoICE	Ministry of Information and Civic Education
MRCG	Media Reform Coordinating Group
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NaTCA	National Tele Communications Authority
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
RAIC	Rights 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
SWASAL	Sport Writers Association of Sierra Leone
WIMSAL	Women in the Media Sierra Leone

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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 **fourteenth** in a series produced by the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) through a component of a project titled “**Enhancing Press Freedom and Media Reforms in Sierra Leone**,” supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the United States of America. The report, covering the period December 2024 to May 2025, reflects the monitoring of the exercise and legal guarantees of freedom of expression, the press, internet freedom, and digital rights in Sierra Leone. It includes issues such as invitations, intimidation, attacks, assaults, arrests, detentions, and prosecutions of journalists and other citizens, as well as monitoring media performance.

This edition is organised around the following areas: Thematic Issues-freedom of Expression and the Press (mainly focusing 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 these issues; Status of Media and Communication Laws in Sierra Leone; Conclusion; Recommendations; References; and Appendices.

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

The cases and issues covered in this report are:

1. The threat of arrest of Thomas Dixon, Managing Editor of the *Salone Times Newspaper*, by the Inspector General (IG) of Police, William Fayia Sellu, following a Facebook post criticizing the IG on 28 December 2024.
2. The arrest and subsequent court trial of Reality TV star Hawa Madiana Hunt for allegedly sending insulting messages via the computer system against President Julius Maada Bio and First Lady Fatima Bio on social media, contrary to the Cyber Security and Crime Act No. 7 of 2021.
3. The barring of journalist Melvin Tejan Mansaray from accessing the precincts of parliament by the Speaker of Sierra Leone’s Parliament, Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas, on allegations of ‘malicious criticism’ on 10 January 2025.
4. The alleged murder of Journalist Samuel Brima Mattia, Deputy Station Manager of *Voice of Peace and Development (VOPAD) radio FM 96.5*, by the Station Manager, Joseph M Lamin, and others in Waterloo, Western Rural of Freetown on 16 January 2025.
5. The verbal threat against journalist Tamba Steven Ngauja by the Chairman of the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) in Kono District, Sahrfea Moiwa, after a comment he made about the unfulfilled promises by the ruling SLPP to provide basic amenities to the people of Kono during the 2023 general elections campaign on 26 January 2025.
6. The invitation of the 2023 Presidential Flagbearer of the All Peoples Congress (APC) Party, Dr. Samura Mathew Wilson Kamara, by the Cyber Unit of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID)

for an interview in February 2025.

7. The arrest of **RTL Nieuws Africa** Correspondent journalist Sophie Van Leeuwen in Freetown by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) on suspicion of possible espionage and for allegedly conducting documentary work without permission from the Government of Sierra Leone on 13 February 2025.
8. The court matter of Mr Tejan Sheikh Rogers, a lecturer at Milton Margai Technical University, for an alleged cyberstalking under section 44 (2) b of the Cyber Security and Crime Act of 2021.
9. The attack and assault of Journalist Alusine Rehme Wilson, Northern Chairman of the Sierra Leone Sport Writers Association (SWASAL), by supporters of Wusum Stars Football Club whilst conducting post-match interviews with Bo Rangers football players on 30 March 2025.
10. The alleged invitation of Thomas Pa Alie Babadie, the Executive Director of the Forum for Sierra Leone Youth Network, by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Freetown for expressing an opinion on the *African Young Voices TV* on 16 April 2025.
11. The alleged physical assault of Prince Christopher Kamara, the Editor of *Open Space Newspaper*, by staff members of the *Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC)* due to an article that had upset them on 6 May 2025.
12. The alleged threat of Kandeh Sesay, the Managing Editor of the *Watch Newspaper*, by Anthony Vandy, a member of the media team for the First Lady of Sierra Leone, Mrs. Fatima Bio, on 11 May 2025.
13. The alleged assault of Foday Fofanah, a journalist working for the *Africa Young Voices (AYV) Media*, by armed Officers of the Sierra Leone Police Force at the Model Old Road Junction on 21 May 2025.

The MRCG data showed that three of the ten cases are still inconclusive.

The MRCG notes that there were still inconclusive cases 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 to 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), tenth edition (December 2022 to May 2023), eleventh edition (June to November 2023), the twelfth edition (December 2023 to May 2024), the thirteenth edition (June to November 2024) and the Fourteenth edition (December 2024 to May 2025). **Ninety-eight** cases were monitored from the Press Freedom Report's First to the Fourteenth Edition. **Sixty-six** were concluded, settled, resolved, or dropped because of lack of progress; **eight** were still in court, **twenty-four** were still under police investigation, and **nine** were abandoned due to lack of progress. **See details in the appendices.**

While the MRCG urges media practitioners to abide by the ethical and legal standards of the journalism profession, it also calls on the Government, media organisations, civil society, and the public to ensure the safety and security of journalists across the country at all times. The MRCG also notes with concern that issues relating to the safety and security of journalists extend beyond politicians and the police, as there have been reports of attacks on journalists by local authorities, youth, and members of the public. The MRCG reminds media owners and managers that one of its reports indicates that most media houses lack a safety and security policy, and there are concerns about addressing the welfare of journalists.

The MRCG, on World Press Freedom Day, joined media organizations and other press freedom advocates across the world to observe 'World Press Freedom Day' on the theme: ***"Reporting in the Brave New World –***

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Press Freedom and the Media.”

World Press Freedom Day, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993, commemorates the Declaration of Windhoek. On this day, the MRCG joined one of its constituent member organisations, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and other press freedom advocates in Sierra Leone and across the world to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom and reminded the Government of Sierra Leone of its commitment to upholding the right to freedom of expression and enhancing media freedom at all times.

This year’s global commemoration explored how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming journalism and media. The MRCG, with support from its donors, had commenced discussions and capacity-building programs on AI’s potential in enhancing investigative reporting, content creation, and fact-checking while also considering risks such as AI-generated misinformation, deepfakes, biased content moderation, and threats to journalistic independence.

The MRCG also welcomed Sierra Leone’s 8-step improvement in the World Press Freedom Index, released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF). Out of **180 countries**, Sierra Leone moved from **64th in 2024 (score: 64.27)** to **56th in 2025 (score: 66.36)**. The assessment utilises political, economic, legislative, social, and security indicators.

The MRCG noted that this improvement results from the commitment and support of the Government of Sierra Leone and other stakeholders for media reforms in the country. The government’s repeal of the criminal libel law, along with other support and collaborations with the media, is creating changes in the media ecosystem.

The MRCG is a Coordinating Secretariat comprising the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), the Faculty of Communication, Media and Information Studies (Fourah Bay College), the Independent Media Commission (IMC), the Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MoICE), the 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 **Fourteenth** report, produced by the MRCG, is part of the project titled “**Enhancing Press Freedom and Media Reforms,**” which is supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the USA. This initiative continues to assess media performance and oversee the enforcement of press freedom and freedom of expression in Sierra Leone, including incidents of attacks, intimidation, assaults, arrests, detentions, and prosecutions involving journalists and civil society activists, as well as issues related to the internet and digital rights.

The report spans a period of six months, from December 2024 to May 2025. It is divided into the following areas: Thematic Issues focusing mainly on the cases/issues of Freedom of Expression and of the Press; the Right to Access Information; Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; Media and Good Governance; the Performance of Institutions Dealing with Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; the Performance of Media Institutions; the Position of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists on Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; the Government’s Position on Freedom of Expression and of the Press, Information, Internet Freedom and Digital Rights; the Status of Media and Communication Laws in Sierra Leone; Conclusion; Recommendation; References; and Appendices.

Thirteen cases and issues related to freedom of expression and the press were covered in this edition’s report. In addition, this report follows up on cases from the first to the fourteenth editions, from June 2018 to May 2025, that were still inconclusive. **Ninety-eight** cases were monitored from the Press Freedom Report’s First to the Fourteenth Edition. **Sixty-six** were concluded, settled, resolved, or dropped because of lack of progress; **eight** were still in court; **twenty-four** still under police investigation/inconclusive; and **nine** were abandoned due to lack of progress. **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 significant laws used to regulate the media are the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 (Sections 25 (1) and 11); the Independent Media Commission Act, 2020; the Defamation Ordinance, 1961; and the Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022. In terms of professional aspects, there is the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) Code of Ethics.

The Right to Access Information Act of 2013 allows individuals to obtain specific information from public bodies. Moreover, the Right to Access Information Regulations of 2022 enhance the effectiveness of the Commission's operations. Additionally, the Cyber Security and Crime Act of 2021 seeks to prevent, detect, prosecute, and penalize cybercrimes while safeguarding personal privacy rights.

The report was produced by monitoring issues related to freedom of expression and press freedom. Two monitors of the MRCG took daily records of significant matters relating to freedom of expression and of the media, 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, X, and WhatsApp. Interviews were conducted where necessary, with some individuals who were reportedly attacked, intimidated, or arrested. Officials of institutions named in some issues were also interviewed—the MRCG thanks NED for funding the project. Special thanks also go to the authors of the monthly reports, Saidu Kamara and Florence Bernard, as well as their supervisor, Ishiaka Sannoh. This fourteenth biannual report was written by Francis Sowa (Ph.D., Esq.) and Augustine S. James.

2. THEMATIC ISSUES

2.1 Freedom of Expression and the Press

The MRCG's monthly media monitoring reports, from December 2024 to May 2025, documented the following.

On 28 December 2024, the editor of *Salone Times Newspaper*, Thomas Dickson, allegedly received [threatening arrest](#) from the Inspector General (IG) of Police, William Fayia Sellu, following a Facebook post criticizing the IG for allegedly revoking a court bail which the journalist described as the unnecessary use of "orders from above" to keep people in detention. The IG, in an interview, denied all social media reports that the police were looking out for or harassing journalist Dickson. He stated that he had not given instructions to any officer to either invite, arrest, or harass Thomas Dixon, adding that some senior journalists had advised him to file a formal complaint against the journalist with the IMC if he felt offended by his post. The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) issued a [press statement](#) on the matter, explaining its role as an intermediary to ease the tension at the time. In some press releases, SLAJ, MRCG, and the Guild of Editors condemned the alleged threat and called on the SLP to address the issue amicably and ensure the safety of the journalist and his family. In the same effort, SLAJ met with the IG **on 31 December 2024** to resolve the matter. During the meeting, the alleged threats involving the IG and Dixon were reviewed, and the matter was amicably resolved. The Inspector General assured SLAJ that there was never any threat to the safety and security of Thomas Dixon, who had since returned home with his family after they went into hiding following concerns about his safety. Dixon, in turn, agreed to voluntarily remove his Facebook post referring to the IG as "arrogant." between the journalist and the IG.

On 8 January 2025, a reality TV star, Hawa Madiana Hunt, was arrested and charged in court with two counts under the Cyber Security and Crime Act No. 7 of 2021, for allegedly sending insulting messages via a computer system against President Julius Maada Bio and First Lady Fatima Bio on social media. She was on diverse dates in January 2025 and denied bail by Magistrate Santigie Bangura of Court No. 2 at the Pademba Road Magistrate's Court in Freetown. **On 1 March 2025**, First Lady Madam Fatima Bio, in a live Facebook session, called for the release of Hawa Hunt, emphasising that she had no involvement in Hunt's arrest or subsequent charges. She urged those responsible for her detention to reconsider and allow her to reunite with her children. The Judiciary of Sierra Leone on **4 March 2025** posted on X that the Court of Appeal Judge, Hon. Justice Tonia Barnett has discontinued the matter between the STATE VS HAWA HUNT, adding that the Director of Public Persecutions, through his state counsel Yusuf I Sesay, applied for a discontinuance of the matter citing Section 66 (4) (c) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone.

On 10 January 2025, the Speaker of Sierra Leone's Parliament, Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas barred journalist Melvin Tejan Mansaray, a member of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Press Gallery (SLPPG), from accessing the precincts of parliament on allegations of 'malicious criticism.' The Hon. Speaker Thomas stated that his ruling barring the journalist will remain in force until Parliament takes the necessary actions against the journalist for engaging in insulting conduct against Members of Parliament (MPs). According to the journalist, he was barred from the precincts of parliament due to his [criticism](#) of a program regarding the procedure by which the former Auditor-General, Lara Taylor Pearce, was removed. The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Press Gallery (SLPPG), in their press releases dated 10 January 2025, called on Parliament to reconsider its decision. SLAJ, in a subsequent engagement with the Speaker of Parliament over the journalist's ban, agreed upon the following resolutions: Parliament to consider SLAJ's proposal to revoke the ban on the journalist, Parliament to submit a formal complaint to the Independent Media Commission (IMC) outlining their grievances against journalist Melvin Tejan, SLAJ to collaborate with Parliament to facilitate the election of an executive to manage the affairs of the SLPPG and provide regular training and capacity-building initiatives for journalists reporting on parliamentary activities. **In February 2025**, the journalist informed MRCG that he had received a summon letter from the Clerk of the Privileges and Ethics Committee in Parliament, notifying him of a hearing regarding his matter scheduled for 4 March 2025. The journalist informed MRCG that

the Privileges and Ethics Committee of Parliament summoned him on **4 March 2025** regarding his matter. During the summons, he apologised and withdrew the statements he had made against the members of Parliament, and the matter was adjourned to a later date. The journalist stated that he was awaiting the report and outcome of the hearing by the Privileges and Ethics Committee. **In May 2025**, the journalist informed MRCG that the Privileges and Ethics Committee of Parliament had tabled the report regarding his hearing. Two SLPP Members of Parliament subsequently moved a motion for the report to be debated, but noted that a date for the debate had not been set.

On 16 January 2025, Journalist Samuel Brima Mattia, Deputy Station Manager of Voice of Peace and Development (VOPAD) radio FM 96.5, was reportedly murdered by the Station Manager, Joseph M Lamin, and others in Waterloo, Western Rural of Freetown. In a press release dated 16 January 2025, SLAJ condemned the killing of the journalist and called for a swift police investigation, urging the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) to undertake a comprehensive and prompt investigation surrounding the murder. The police received a report of the remains of a person whose family and community members subsequently identified as journalist Samuel Brima Mattia. Upon police investigation and further inquiries, the Station Manager, Joseph M Lamin, confessed to orchestrating the killing of his deputy, Samuel Brima Mattia, because of disputes between them. Police have arrested the alleged hired killers and are helping with further investigation. **In February 2025**, the primary suspect, Joseph M Lamin, whom police claimed confessed to the crime, along with two others, were charged in court on two counts of Conspiracy to murder and Murder. The matter had been raised on various dates in February, March, April, and May 2025, but was still unresolved as of the time of this report.

On 26 January 2025, journalist Tamba Steven Ngauja, allegedly received a verbal threat from the Chairman of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) in Kono District, Sahrfea Moiwa, following a comment he made regarding the unfulfilled promises by the ruling SLPP to provide basic amenities to the people of Kono during the 2023 general elections campaign in Kono. The journalist told MRCG that after he had commented on an event attended by First Lady Fatima Bio, the Chairman threatened to hire thugs to physically beat him, saying that the journalists in Kono were in the habit of disrespecting His Excellency, the President, Julius Maada Bio. The journalist said he and his colleagues were preparing to file a report to the police concerning the threat. Chairman Sahrfea Moiwa denied threatening to hire thugs to assault any journalist, including Ngauja. **In February 2025**, the journalist told MRCG that the situation had been resolved and that he felt safe afterwards, as various stakeholders and institutions in Kono condemned the Chairman's actions. He stated that there was a public retraction and assurances regarding journalists' safety in Kono from the Chairman and other stakeholders. He also mentioned that he and his colleagues had decided not to report the threat to the police, as they believed the matter was resolved.

On 4 February 2025, the Cyber Unit of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), in a letter dated 4 February 2025, invited the 2023 Presidential Flagbearer of the All Peoples Congress (APC) Party, Dr. Samura Mathew Wilson Kamara for an interview concerning an alleged social media video in which he was seen referred to as the president elect of the Republic of Sierra Leone, awaiting to assume the seat of power. He was also seen making statements endorsing the same. The National Publicity Secretary of the APC Party, Sidi Yayah Tunis, told MRCG that neither the police nor Dr Samura Kamara had informed the party. As such, the Party at the time had no information regarding the matter. He continued that the APC party had distanced itself from any group purporting to be an electoral justice organisation on political issues related to the APC. At the time of writing this report, the MRCG made every effort to reach out to the Police but was unable to receive a response from them. **In April 2025**, the CID invited Dr Samura Kamara, the 2023 Presidential Flagbearer of the All Peoples Congress (APC) Party, for questioning, but he did not attend. This follows an initial invitation by the Cyber Unit of the CID on 4 February 2025 for questioning concerning an alleged social media video in which he was seen referred to as the president elect of the Republic of Sierra Leone, awaiting to assume the seat of power and where he was also reportedly seen making statements endorsing same. Amos Lansana, an officer attached to the Cybercrime Unit at

the CID Headquarters, told MRCG that Dr Samura Kamara had yet to respond to their invitation but that they were expecting him to do so. He said they would take another action if he did not report to the CID. **In May 2025**, Amos Lansana, an officer attached to the Cybercrime Unit at the CID Headquarters, informed MRCG that Dr Samura Kamara had responded to their invitation and that they were still investigating the matter.

On 13 February 2025, SLAJ, in a press alert, stated that the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) had arrested RTL Nieuws Africa Correspondent and journalist Sophie Van Leeuwen in Freetown on suspicion of possible espionage and for allegedly conducting documentary work without permission from the Government of Sierra Leone. In its press release on the same date, the SLP stated that journalist Sophie was questioned for allegedly conducting documentary work without the required permissions. However, she was later released to continue her work “following her compliance with the interrogation.” SLAJ later confirmed that the personal items belonging to the Dutch journalist Sophie Van Leeuwen—her passport, mobile phone, and camera—remain in police custody, despite her release to continue her work. According to Joseph Turay, a local journalist who assisted Sophie on the day of her arrest, Sophie got accreditation from the Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MoICE) as a foreign journalist. The police, upon completion of their investigation, released journalist Sophie on the same day of her arrest to carry on her work, but her personal belongings remained in police custody. The journalist later departed Sierra Leone on 17 February 2025, after her belongings, which the police had initially seized, were returned to her. Following this incident, SLAJ called on all foreign journalists planning to work in Sierra Leone to obtain the necessary clearance from government authorities and to notify the journalists’ union, SLAJ, of their presence and the nature of their work.

On 17 March 2025, Mr Tejan Sheikh Rogers, a lecturer at the Milton Margai Technical University, appeared in court on one count charge for cyber stalking, under section 44 (2) b of the Cyber Security and Crime Act of 2021, for allegedly using his WhatsApp number to create and post recorded audios and text messages in a WhatsApp group called “Maada must stay Campaign,” deemed to have damaged the reputation of the university’s Vice Chancellor and Principal Dr. Philip Kanu. The Matter had come up on various dates in March, April, and May 2025 at the Pademba Road Magistrate Court No. 2, but was still not concluded as of the time of this report.

On 30 March 2025, Journalist Alusine Rehme Wilson, Northern Chairman of the Sierra Leone Sport Writers Association (SWASAL), was allegedly attacked and assaulted by supporters of Wusum Stars Football Club whilst conducting post-match interviews with Bo Rangers football players. The journalist told MRCG that he was currently receiving medical treatment for injuries sustained during the alleged attack. He added that he was in the process of filing a police report against the individuals responsible for the incident. SWASAL issued a press release on **31 March 2025**, condemning the alleged attack against the journalist and calling on the relevant authorities to thoroughly investigate the incident. **In April 2025**, the journalist informed MRCG that he had reported the matter to the Rogbaneh Police Station in Makeni, but stated that his two witnesses had not appeared at the police station to make statements. The President of the SWASSAL, Sahr Morris Junior, informed MRCG that he had filed a complaint with the Sierra Leone Premier League Board but had yet to receive a response from them. **In May 2025**, Sahr Morris Junior told MRCG that he was called to a meeting with the leadership of the Premier League, and the Board promised to investigate the matter.

On 16 April 2025, Thomas Pa Alie Babadie, the Executive Director for Forum for Sierra Leone Youth Network, was invited by CID in Freetown after expressing an opinion at the *African Young Voices TV* regarding the ‘incompetence’ of the Inspector General of Police (IGP), William Fayia Sellu in managing the office. In a social media claim, it was alleged that shortly after sharing his views on the *AYV* Program about the IG, Mr. Babadie received calls from the CID requesting that he report for questioning about his statements concerning the IG. The Deputy Head of Media, ASP, Bobson Senu, told the MRCG that the allegation that Mr. Babadie was invited for questioning was false.

On May 6 2025, Prince Christopher Kamara, Editor of *Open Space Newspaper*, was allegedly assaulted by staff members of the *Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC)*, due to an article that had upset them. The journalist reported to the MRCG that he had gone to the SLBC Broadcasting House to interview the Deputy Director General, Asmieu Bah, after receiving information about a possible strike at the *SLBC* compound. During his visit, a group of *SLBC* staff confronted and physically attacked him, ultimately throwing him out of the compound because of the critical story he had published about the current Director General. He told MRCG that he sustained multiple injuries during the assault. Kamara formally reported the incident to the following institutions, including the New England Village Police Station, the Director General of the SLBC, and the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ). In a [report](#) dated 15 May 2025, SLAJ condemned the physical attack on the journalist during the protest, asserting that there is no justification for violence against any journalist, regardless of the circumstances, and called for a peaceful resolution. The Guild of Newspaper Editors (GoE) also issued a press release on 7 May 2025, denouncing the violent assault on Kamara and urging the SLBC leadership to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation. The MRCG also issued a [press release](#) on the issue, calling on relevant authorities to thoroughly investigate the matter. In a dialogue facilitated by SLAJ, the journalist, his employer, and the SLBC Director General expressed concern for Kamara's health and agreed to work together to resolve the matter amicably.

On May 11, 2025, Kandeh Sesay, Managing Editor of *The Watch Newspaper*, received a threat from Anthony Vandy, allegedly a member of the media team of the First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Mrs. Fatima Bio. Sesay reported to MRCG that the threat was communicated through a WhatsApp group called 'Miracle Media Network (MMN),' following his publication of an analysis related to a report by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). This report investigated allegations of corruption related to a property in The Gambia, linked to the First Lady, Fatima Bio. According to Sesay, Vandy threatened to take legal action against him and claimed he would ensure that Sesay faced a jail term. Although Sesay has not yet reported the incident to the police, he told MRCG that he plans to do so. At the time this report was prepared, Anthony Vandy had not responded to the MRCG's inquiries.

On 21 May 2025, Foday Fofanah, a journalist working for the *Africa Young Voices Media Empire*, was allegedly assaulted by armed Officers of the Sierra Leone Police Force on 21 May 2025, at the Model Old Road Junction in Freetown. An Initial report on social media indicated that the altercation began when the journalist intervened in a public incident involving police officers and a commercial motorbike rider, during which a female street vendor's goods were destroyed. In expressing concern for the woman's loss, the officers physically attacked the journalist. According to a [video](#) that circulated on social media, the journalist was physically assaulted, pepper-sprayed, and threatened with a firearm, sustaining injuries and a swollen eye during the assault by the officers. In their press releases dated 22 May 2025, the [MRCG](#), [SLAJ](#), [AYV](#), and [SLRU](#) condemned the attack on the journalist and called on the authorities to swiftly investigate the matter. The Deputy Head of Media of the SLP, ASP Bobson Senu, told MRCG that the journalist had reported the matter to the CDID and that they were investigating the matter.

2.2 Right to Access Information

The Chairman and Information Commissioner of the Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC), Dr Ibrahim Seaga-Shaw, told MRCG that the monitoring and evaluation processes for the current year have followed the standard practice of reviewing data from the previous year, noting that this involves issuing formal memos to public authorities and Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), requesting them to provide data relevant to access to information compliance. He continued that the compiled information typically includes data submitted through official compliance templates and records of requests in which the office has been directly involved. All of this data is consolidated into a single reporting structure to track national trends and compliance progress.

As of December 2024, to May 2025, he said that data has been collected from all regions. From January to May 2025, the Western Region reportedly submitted **37** requests, with approximately 80 per cent receiving positive responses. In the Southern Region, **16** requests were received, with only one denial, while the remaining requests were approved and fulfilled. The Eastern Region recorded **25** cases, with two still pending, and approximately 90 per cent of the requests received satisfactory responses. The Northern region received **15** requests, with 10 being successful.

In total, he told MRCG that **92** information requests have been recorded nationwide, with direct involvement from the office. However, it was noted that this figure does not include requests managed independently by public institutions. By legal mandate, data is not collected until the end of the calendar year, making these **92** cases only a portion of the actual volume of requests made nationwide.

“The data shows that the Eastern and Western Regions recorded the highest number of requests this year, a shift from the previous year when the Northern Region led in volume. Once the data from the Northern Region, covering seven districts, is received, the national total is expected to increase significantly, likely exceeding current figures. There has been a notable improvement in public engagement and compliance compared to the same period last year. At this time last year, the total number of cases nationwide had not reached 40, while today, the Western Region alone accounts for 37 cases. This significant growth reflects the positive impact of the Commission’s ongoing public sensitization efforts and rising public awareness of the right to access information,” he noted.

He continued that the popularisation campaigns are yielding results, with active use of media platforms to educate the public, including a biweekly television program titled ‘RAIC Hour’ aired on **SLBC TV**. Regular public notices and press statements are issued to ensure that both print and electronic media widely cover activities. Appearances on various media outlets, such as **AYV**, have been made, with plans to extend this outreach further. These efforts aim to expand public understanding of the law and the right to information.

Recently, regional outreach visits were conducted to promote the use of digital platforms and encourage compliance reporting and proactive disclosure. Feedback from participants indicated a strong interest in exercising the right to access public information. To build on this momentum, plans are underway to launch a series of public lectures nationwide, with a particular focus on institutions of higher education, including universities and colleges. The goal is to educate students who will become future public sector employees about the principles of transparency and accountability, ensuring they enter the workforce with a solid understanding of the law and a commitment to openness.

On the digital front, last year we launched an online platform that allows individuals to submit information requests electronically. This initiative was part of a broader effort to improve capacity building and streamline access. Currently, the platform features a dropdown list of 50 MDAs. When a user selects an institution and submits a request through the system, both the MDA and our Commission receive a copy. The system is working well, and we intend to expand it to include all MDAs, ensuring comprehensive national coverage. This initiative has significantly increased the visibility of the Commission and made it easier for the public to engage with public authorities.

The collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Civic Education remained strong, highlighting the ministry’s leading role in amending the Right to Access Information law and introducing the Data Protection Bill. The Ministry is responsible for advancing these legislative efforts through the Cabinet and ultimately to Parliament, indicating that their support has been crucial for reform initiatives.

Additionally, the Commission had a significant engagement with the Chief Justice regarding the longstanding legal matter related to the RAIC and the Bank of Sierra Leone, specifically concerning the Martha Kargbo case. The Commission pointed out that this unresolved case stemmed from the Bank's appeal against a decision made by the Commission. The Chief Justice had recommended that a formal letter be submitted to request expedited handling, which had been done, and the commission is now awaiting feedback. The commission is hopeful that the matter will be resolved soon, as it has frequently arisen during media engagements and remains a public concern.

Despite these achievements, the Commission acknowledged significant challenges, particularly the persistent culture of secrecy within public institutions. The commission notes that many public servants remained reluctant to disclose information and often reacted with suspicion or hesitation when approached. There were also issues related to internal communication within MDAs, with some information officers being completely unaware of requests submitted to their institutions, either due to a lack of sharing or poor coordination. This issue hampered timely responses and complicated monitoring efforts.

The Commission further highlighted the low level of proactive disclosure by public authorities, revealing that out of 79 institutions identified with at least partial engagement in proactive disclosure last year, only slightly more than 50 had fully complied with the requirements.

Many institutions still lacked websites or digital platforms to share basic public information, resulting in unnecessary delays in handling requests for simple information. Numerous complaints from information officers were mentioned during interviews, many of whom stated they lacked support from senior management, underscoring the need for institutional reform. The Commission had made several recommendations, including the urgent need to engage political and administrative heads of public institutions, stressing the importance of routing information requests promptly through designated officers to ensure proper handling and tracking.

The Commission is grateful to MRCG for their support in promoting transparency and raising awareness about access to information. We believed that greater collaboration between the Commission and the MRCG could further advance transparency, particularly through the media's involvement, which offered opportunities to incorporate stronger references to the Access to Information Act in journalistic practices. The commission is open to partnerships that include training journalists on effectively using and citing the law in their reporting to enhance public understanding and utilization of the right to information.

While acknowledging ongoing challenges, the Commission remained encouraged by the progress made in public awareness, institutional engagement, and technological advancement, reaffirming our commitment to strengthening transparency, improving compliance, and fostering a culture of openness across all levels of government and public service.

2.3 Internet Freedom and Digital Rights

Since the enactment of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021, arrests have been made for breaches of its provisions. The Act, among other things, provides for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution, and punishment of cybercrimes, as well as the protection of privacy rights. Sierra Leoneans who use social media and mobile phones to communicate may risk being criminally prosecuted for cyberstalking and cyberbullying, as per Section 44 of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021, if they share information or opinions perceived to be abusive, harassing, insulting, or that detrimentally affect others.

2.4 Media and Good Governance

The establishment of the National Fund for Public Interest Media (NaFPIM) is a crucial investment in democratic governance. It reflects a collective recognition that independent, well-resourced media are essential for transparency, civic engagement, and holding power to account. Beyond merely reporting news, the media must inform, investigate, and empower, roles that are only possible when the media sector is structurally supported and economically viable. Good governance cannot flourish without a free and functioning press; therefore, sustained funding and policy commitment to public interest media must remain a national priority.

The launch of the grant-making phase of NaFPIM in Sierra Leone on **20 March 2025** marked a transformative milestone in the country's ongoing efforts to strengthen democratic governance through independent journalism. Spearheaded by MRCG, in collaboration with BBC Media Action and the International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM), this initiative is a direct outcome of the 2022 Media Viability and Investment Conference and the National Action Plan (NAP), as continuous collaboration and commitment from stakeholders have resulted in tangible progress.

The fund is not coincidental but rather the culmination of years of advocacy, facilitated by the repeal of restrictive media laws and government support for structural reform. With a governing board and an operational framework established, this represents a shift from token initiatives to substantial institutional reform aimed at empowering journalists to perform investigative reporting that holds power accountable, particularly in underserved communities. This change enables media outlets to withstand political and corporate pressures while preserving editorial integrity.

While the media faces increasing threats, including violence, disinformation, and financial instability, initiatives like NaFPIM are vital to preserving press freedom and upholding democratic values.

The MRCG is also reminding the Government of Sierra Leone and other development partners to commit to the **National Fund for Public Interest Media (NaFPIM)** initiative, which was one of the recommendations of the Media Viability and Investment Conference in April 2022.

At the time of this report, the Fund was at an advanced stage of awarding the first set of grants to deserving applicants, following a thorough review of the applications received.

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

On 29 November 2024, the IMC Complaint Committee presided over the matter of Honourable Dickson Momoh Rogers, Member of Parliament for Pujehun District, against Alie Badara of ***One Man Media Network*** regarding a broadcast from 27 October 2024, which alleged that Honourable Dickson Rogers impregnated an underage girl. After thorough deliberations, the IMC Complaint Committee found the following: the respondent did not take reasonable steps to verify the facts of his claims, third parties accessed the publication/broadcast (audio-visual news package) that the respondent claimed he only shared with Hon. Rogers, the respondent failed to provide evidence to support his assertion of an alleged surreptitious alteration of the victim's age, the Commission did not have any evidence that the news package was published in several WhatsApp groups and on social media platforms, and the publication and broadcast of the audio-visual news package were inaccurate and therefore in breach of Sec 19 (1) of The IMC (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations, 2022, Statutory Instrument No 1, 2022. The IMC Complaint Committee fully endorsed the following recommendations: The Respondent shall pay a fine of two thousand Leone (Le 2,000) within 30 days of service of this ruling for breaching Sec 19(1) of The Independent Media Commission (Print and Electronic Media) Regulations regarding smear campaign stories, by section 19 (2). Upon receipt of the ruling, the respondent shall publish a retraction of equal prominence.

On 29 November 2024, the IMC Complaint Committee presided over the case filed by Ahmed G. Kallon, Station Manager of ***Eastern Community Radio FM 89.7*** Daru, against the manager and CEO of ***Jawei Delight Radio FM 96.1*** Daru for seizing a mast and using derogatory remarks. The IMC Complaint Committee found that Mr. Kamara admitted to receiving the mast from the paramount chief, which belonged to ***Eastern Community Radio***. Mr. Kamara initially misled the Committee regarding the mast's status but later acknowledged his actions. Mr. Kamara agreed to return or replace the mast within one week, demonstrating intent to resolve the issue. The IMC Complaint Committee fully endorsed the following recommendations: Mr. Kamara is to pay a fine of 1,000 new Leones for providing misleading information to the Complaints Committee, within 30 days of receiving this ruling. Mr. Kamara must return the mast to Mr. Ahmed G Kallon, Station Manager of ***Eastern Community Radio FM89.7***, within one month of receiving this ruling. The Committee underscores the importance of adhering to this resolution to maintain harmonious relations between media institutions in Daru and uphold the rights of all parties involved.

4. PERFORMANCE OF MEDIA HOUSE AND SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Improvements in the outputs of media institutions are reflected in their content and programming. However, there were concerns that several media institutions continued to publish and broadcast content that breached ethical standards or contravened the country's media laws, the IMC Act, and its Regulations.

On 4 December 2024, the West African ICT Action Network and the Sierra Leone Association of Women in Journalism (SLAWIJ) hosted the second edition of the [roundtable dialogue](#) on digital and financial inclusion in Sierra Leone. The initiative brought together key stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities in bridging the nation's digital divide under the theme "Accelerating Digital Transformation for Inclusive Growth." The event highlighted the importance of leveraging technology to promote economic equity and social progress.

On 10 December 2024, Women in the Media launched the Comic Relief Gender Justice Project in conjunction with the [16 Days of Activism](#) Against Gender-Based Violence.

On 10 December 2024, at the [Presidential Media Cocktail](#), the President of SLAJ, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla, in his remarks, stated the achievements of SLAJ over the years ranging from the Repeal of the Criminal Libel Law, welfare of journalists, World Press Freedom Index rating since 2019, Government's Annual subvention to SLAJ, National Blue Print for the media, NaFPIM, Safety and Security of journalists, Media Manifesto 2023, the launch of the Gender Equality Policy, Training and Capacity building and the Revised Constitution of SLAJ.

On 12 December 2024, staff from the MRCG, with support from the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF), visited Kumrabai Village in Tonkolili District to attend the [annual peace festival](#).

On 8 January 2025, the SLAJ President attended Limkokwing University's [End-of-semester exhibition](#), where he witnessed the incredible display of creativity, talent, and hard work by the students. He noted that the showcase was a testament to the dedication of both the students and the various faculty members in fostering innovation and excellence.

On 9 January 2025, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) [received a delegation](#) from Africa Global Logistics to express gratitude for the media's support over the past years. SLAJ President thanked the AGL team and encouraged them to foster a strategic partnership with the media.

On 15 January 2025, SLAJ President Ahmed Sahid Nasralla, in a [historic remark](#) on Liberty TV Online broadcast, expressed concern over recent high-level threats to press freedom, highlighting their chilling effects on journalism and the broader civic space. He emphasized the need for a dedicated orientation program for public officials to enhance their understanding of media engagement and equip them to respond constructively to perceived shortcomings of journalists.

On 20 January 2025, SLAJ signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) with Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, marking a significant step in fostering collaboration between the two institutions. Freetown.

On 11 February 2025, the Sierra Association of Journalists engaged Attorney General and Minister of Justice Alpha Sesay, Esq, to discuss the inclusion of a standalone chapter on media freedom and freedom of expression in the ongoing constitutional review process on the Media Freedom Charter.

On 13 February 2025, in Commemoration of World Radio Day, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists paid tribute to Radio Democracy 98.1 FM for its unwavering role in restoring and sustaining democracy in Sierra Leone. SLAJ recognizes the immense sacrifices made by the journalists and staff of Radio Democracy,

particularly the three pioneers who fearlessly manned the station during the most difficult times,” said SLAJ President Ahmed Sahid Nasralla.

On 21 February 2025, the MRCG engaged students at the Mass Communication Department at the University of Makeni (UNIMAK) on media freedom, reforms, and capacity building in Sierra Leone.

On 21 and 22 February 2025, Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL) hosted its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the theme “The Role of Women in Media and Gender Equality: The Future of Women in Media Sierra Leone” at the University of Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone. The gathering brought together female media professionals from across the country to discuss challenges, opportunities, and strategies for advancing gender equality within the media industry. The AGM featured panel discussions, keynote speeches, and networking sessions designed to empower women in the profession.

On 25 February 2025, the Sierra Leone Reporters Union (SLRU) and the Institute for Development trained 25 journalists in research for better reporting. The training held at the Bintumani Hotel Conference in Freetown aimed to enhance the capacity of journalists in analyzing and interpreting data to improve the quality of news reporting in Sierra Leone.

On 11 March 2025, SLAJ submitted a [position paper](#) to Parliament on the Counter Terrorism Bill 2025, highlighting concerns regarding its potential impact on freedom of expression and press freedom in Sierra Leone. SLAJ emphasizes that the broad and vague provisions in the proposed Bill could be misused to criminalize legitimate journalistic work and restrict public discourse.

On 18 March 2025, the President of SLAJ, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla, joined other media stakeholders to [launch](#) the Media Empowerment for Democracy, Inclusion, and Accountability (EU MEDIA) Project. The President of SLAJ stated that the project is a strategic investment in strengthening press freedom, media professionalism, and public interest journalism in Sierra Leone, aligning seamlessly with ongoing efforts to ensure a free, independent, and responsible media sector that fosters transparency, accountability, and inclusive democratic participation.

On 20 March 2025, MRCG, the International Fund for Public Interest Media (IFPIM), and the BBC Media Action launched NaFPIM on the theme ‘Public Interest Media as a Pillar of Good Governance, Democracy and Accountability’. The launch of this fund aims to support public interest journalism that produces high-quality media content, empowering citizens to make informed decisions and engage in inclusive discussions on issues that directly impact their lives.

On 21 March 2025, SLAJ [organized](#) its annual Iftar program on the theme “Ramadan in the Digital Age: The Positive and Negative Impacts of Digital Technology on Ramadan.” The Secretary General of SLAJ, Alhaji Manika Kamara, said that while technology offers immense opportunities for learning, connection, and engagement with Islamic teachings, it also presents distractions and challenges that can affect the essence of Ramadan. He added that journalists must be conscious of their role in the digital space, using technology responsibly to share credible and uplifting messages, counter misinformation, and promote unity in the country.

On 26 March 2025, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) [engaged](#) the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) in a capacity audit aimed at strategic growth and strengthening its capacity to defend press freedom and reinforce its independence, as part of the EU-funded MEDIA project. The President of SLAJ, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla, stated that the collaboration with IFJ will enable the association to critically assess its strengths and weaknesses, chart a clear path for the future, and make SLAJ more effective in promoting press freedom, supporting journalists, and advocating for a better media environment in Sierra Leone.

On 17 April 2025, MRCG, with support from the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF), held the second community engagement [meeting](#) on transitional justice issues with stakeholders from different backgrounds across the Tonkolili district.

On 19 April 2025, the Guild of Newspaper Editors held an election marking a pivotal moment in the tenure of the outgoing Chairman, Donald Theo Harding, and the coming of Thomas Dixon as the new Chairman for the association. During the election, several other important positions were filled within the organization.

On 24 April 2025, SLAJ held an emergency [meeting](#) with the leadership of the National Revenue Authority (NRA) following intelligence of planned enforcement actions against media houses that had not paid their 2025 license fees.

On 6 May 2025, SLAJ organized its Annual National Media Award at the Bintumani Hotel, Aberdeen, Freetown. During the award night, journalists were awarded in different competitive categories.

On 24 May 2025, the Sierra Leone [Reporters Union](#) (SLRU) East concluded a vibrant [Health Workshop](#) in Kenema, under the theme 'Stay Safe, Stay Informed: Pox Prevention Starts with You.' The event brought together media practitioners, healthcare workers, and the general public in a collaborative effort to raise awareness about the prevention of Monkeypox (M-pox) in Kenema.

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

Between December 2024 and May 2025, SLAJ undertook several significant initiatives to advance media freedom, enhance journalistic standards, and promote professional development within the media sector.

From December 2024 to May 2025, SLAJ made notable progress in various areas. During the Presidential Media Cocktail, President Bio was described as the Champion of Free Speech, a title we bestowed upon him for fulfilling his promise to repeal the obnoxious criminal libel law. That law had shackled the media for five decades. Our veteran colleagues suffered under it. For 50 years, we fought, protested, demonstrated, and went to court. It was not until President Bio took office that we achieved this significant milestone. The meeting celebrated the association's accomplishments, which included the Repeal of Criminal Libel, the introduction of the Welfare (IMC Act 2020) minimum wage, the World Press Freedom Index rating since 2019, the Media Viability and Investment Conference for the Media, the National Blueprint and NaFPIM, the Safety and Security of Journalists, and the Media Manifesto 2023. Our approach in achieving these gains included recognizing the legitimacy of the government as well as its role as a critical partner, establishing mutual trust through respect and understanding of each other's roles in our democracy, holding the government to account fairly and responsibly, collaborating with other media stakeholders and CSOs, choosing our battles and prioritizing achievable goals, and addressing issues through dialogue, consultation, and engagement.

On 16 December 2024, colleagues from the journalism sector received training on C40 Cities and Climate Change Reporting. That event marks the beginning of a vital partnership focused on learning, collaboration, and advocacy in addressing the climate crisis, particularly in Sierra Leone's vulnerability to climate threats such as rising sea levels, deforestation, and erratic weather patterns. We acknowledged the technical challenges of climate reporting, but through compelling storytelling, public engagement, and accurate reporting, media practitioners can play a transformative role in driving solutions. We therefore see our role not just as reporters but as change agents committed to a sustainable future for Sierra Leone.

SLAJ expressed concern regarding the decision by the Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas, to ban journalist Melvin Tejan Mansaray from accessing Parliament on 10 January 2025. This decision, reportedly based on allegations of "malicious criticism," poses a serious threat to press freedom and undermines democratic accountability. While we respect and understand the Speaker's concerns regarding journalistic standards, we firmly believe that such matters should be resolved through dialogue and appropriate channels rather than through punitive actions. In light of this, SLAJ strongly urges Parliament to reconsider the ban and to refer instead any issues related to journalistic conduct to the SLAJ and the Independent Media Commission (IMC).

In a proactive step, SLAJ engaged in discussions with the Speaker of Parliament on 20 January 2025. This meeting yielded several constructive resolutions, including the Speaker's willingness to consider revoking the ban, submitting a formal complaint to the IMC, collaborating on reorganising the Parliament Press Gallery, and initiating capacity-building initiatives for parliamentary reporters.

SLAJ remained committed to fostering ethical journalism and protecting media freedoms. We believe that a strong partnership between the media and Parliament is essential for a vibrant democracy. We will continue to advocate for the rights of journalists and uphold the principles of accountability and transparency in our nation.

The brutal killing of journalist Samuel Brima Mattia, a former reporter with VOPAD Radio and a member of the Sports Writers Association of Sierra Leone (SWASAL), has brought deep sorrow to the media fraternity.

Samuel was reportedly killed under unclear and violent circumstances in Waterloo. We strongly condemned the act and called on the Sierra Leone Police to conduct a swift and thorough investigation to bring the perpetrators to justice. SLAJ extends condolences to Samuel's family and colleagues, reaffirming our commitment to press freedom and the safety of journalists across the country.

SLAJ had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Limkokwing University of Creative Technology on 21 January 2025. The agreement aims to strengthen collaboration in training, mentorship, internships, and capacity building for media professionals. This is a significant milestone in enhancing journalism education and professional standards, as it has the potential to empower students with practical skills and knowledge. The three-year agreement lays the foundation for joint efforts to promote media freedom, ethical journalism, and academic excellence in Sierra Leone.

SLAJ firmly advocated for the inclusion of a standalone chapter on media freedom and freedom of expression in the ongoing constitutional review process. On 21 January 2025, the leadership engaged in a strategic meeting with the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Alpha Sesay Esq, to present our Proposed Charter. This charter emphasises essential protections, including safeguarding against government interference, prohibiting media censorship, ensuring the legal independence of media regulatory bodies, and enhancing the safety of journalists. While we appreciate the Attorney General's recognition of our proposal and the historical context of the constitutional review, we seek more than just verbal assurances. We call for concrete commitments that prioritise the voices of journalists and the media landscape in Sierra Leone. We remain steadfast in our mission to champion press freedom and are dedicated to actively engaging with government stakeholders to secure stronger legal safeguards for media professionals. We believe that a robust legal framework is crucial for a democratic society and the empowerment of citizens through free and independent media.

On World Radio Day, 13 February 2025, we proudly acknowledged the invaluable contributions of Radio Democracy 98.1 FM in the restoration and ongoing maintenance of democracy in Sierra Leone. We honour the critical work of pioneers such as Dr. Julius Spencer, Ambassador Alie Bangura, and Hannah Foullah, whose unwavering courage during the nation's most daunting times laid the foundation for press freedom and community engagement. SLAJ emphasizes the crucial role that community radio plays in fostering a democratic society and advocates for increased support from both government and partners to ensure the sustainability of such impactful stations. Furthermore, we collaborate with the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) to formally request access to the final version of the Counter Terrorism Act before its presidential assent. We emphasize the importance of transparency in legislative processes to ensure that laws serve both national security interests and the protection of press freedom and expression.

We urged stakeholders to recognize the necessity of a free and independent press, which is essential for the continued progress of our democracy. The National Communications Authority (NatCA) has rightfully warned against frequency violations, while the Independent Media Commission (IMC) has called for enhancements in managing these vital platforms.

SLAJ commended the Sierra Leone Court Reporters Association (SLCRA) for successfully convening its first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in 17 years. The significant event underscored the vital role of court reporters in promoting judicial transparency and accountability, highlighting the necessity for professional training, adherence to legal reporting standards, and reinforced collaboration between SLCRA, SLAJ, the Judiciary, and development partners to enhance the capacity of court reporting. SLAJ's leadership expresses gratitude to the Judiciary for its unwavering support and encourages court reporters to formalize their membership with SLAJ.

SLAJ also recognized the ongoing divisions within the legal profession and called on the Lawyers' Society and the Sierra Leone Bar Association (SLBA) to actively pursue genuine reconciliation. The integrity of our

democracy, justice, and the rule of law relies heavily on the roles that lawyers and journalists play in society. Fragmentation within the legal community risks politicizing the justice system and eroding public trust, which is detrimental to the very foundation of our democratic governance. We draw attention to the media's struggles for independence and the vital need for collaboration between legal bodies and the press. Together, we must protect press freedom, promote human rights, and ensure transparency in all sectors of society. This partnership is essential not only for the protection of freedoms but also for ensuring accountability within our institutions. We urge legal professionals to engage in constructive dialogue and active collaboration with authorities rather than merely criticizing the status quo. Such engagement is crucial to achieving meaningful reforms that benefit all Sierra Leoneans.

At the Annual General Meeting of Women In the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL) on 22 February 2025, SLAJ emphasized the critical role of WIMSAL in the ongoing struggle for gender equality in Sierra Leone's journalism sector. Highlighting persistent challenges such as underrepresentation, discrimination, harassment, and unequal pay, we have increased female membership from 15% to 35%, secured key leadership roles for women, established the SLAJ Gender Advisory Panel, and launched the Gender Equality Policy for the Media with support from the EU and International IDEA. We continued to pledge our collaboration in creating safer and more equitable workplaces. We urge our female colleagues to be fearless and lead with integrity, drawing inspiration from the legacies of pioneers Bernadette Cole and Daisy Bona. SLAJ expressed gratitude for the support received from WIMSAL over the years and called for renewed commitment to gender equality, underscoring that an inclusive media landscape strengthens journalism and democracy in Sierra Leone.

On 22 February 2025, SLAJ submitted a position paper to Parliament expressing our concerns about the proposed Counter-Terrorism Act of 2025. We warned that its vague provisions could criminalize legitimate journalism and threaten press freedom. While we support national security, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) called for clearer definitions, exemptions for journalists, reduced penalties, and proper oversight to prevent misuse. Similar to the cyber law, this legislation could be selectively enforced to silence dissent. We urged Parliament to carefully consider SLAJ's recommendations. In collaboration with the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), we appealed to President Julius Maada Bio not to sign the proposed Counter-Terrorism Act into law until lawmakers amend the sections that are detrimental to media rights. The bill contains provisions that could undermine press freedom and freedom of expression.

SLAJ gloriously appreciated the National Fund for Public Interest Media, an initiative that aims to strengthen independent journalism and uphold press freedom in Sierra Leone. This initiative is a result of our ongoing commitment to enhancing media sustainability and independence, focusing on supporting investigative and public interest journalism. We believe that a well-resourced media sector is critical to ensuring accountability, truthfulness, and integrity in reporting, which are foundational to a thriving democracy. We are proud to announce the official launch of NaFPIM and encourage all media organisations dedicated to producing public interest journalism to apply. It is vital that we collectively pursue financial viability and editorial independence, ensuring that our media landscape remains impactful and reflective of the diverse voices within our society. The recent launch of the EU-funded Media Empowerment for Democracy, Inclusion, and Accountability (MEDIA) Project on 18 March represents a significant milestone in our collective journey toward a more informed society. We are optimistic about the positive impact this initiative will have in bolstering the capacities of young and female journalists, promoting responsible journalism, and advancing our advocacy for essential media reforms. We express our gratitude to our international partners for their unwavering support.

Through the EU-funded MEDIA Project, SLAJ initiated a capacity audit to enhance the association's ability to defend press freedom and improve media advocacy. This initiative is focused on SLAJ's governance, resources, and engagement strategies. The audit's results will help shape a strategic plan to guide SLAJ's future growth and effectiveness in supporting journalists and promoting an independent media in Sierra Leone. We urge all

stakeholders to continue collaborating to foster a vibrant media ecosystem that supports transparency, accountability, and responsible journalism.

SLAJ is firmly committed to advancing press freedom, promoting ethical journalism, and fostering democratic values in our nation. Recent developments underscore our commitment to enhancing the media landscape in Sierra Leone and addressing the ongoing challenges faced by the sector.

SLAJ also convened a meeting with the National Revenue Authority (NRA) on 24 April 2025 to address concerns over the enforcement of license fee defaults by media houses. With over 180 FM and TV stations reported to be in arrears, we appealed for understanding during these financially challenging times, especially in light of the upcoming SLAJ elections. While we appreciate the one-week grace period granted by the NRA, we urge all media entities to engage swiftly with the authority to resolve outstanding obligations.

SLAJ was pleased to acknowledge Sierra Leone's rise in the 2025 World Press Freedom Index, moving up eight places to 56th out of 180 countries. This achievement is a testament to the collective efforts made in repealing criminal libel laws and enhancing media capacity. However, we emphasise the continued need to address issues affecting journalist welfare and combat disinformation to consolidate our gains in media freedom further.

In light of recent staff protests at the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), SLAJ intervened to facilitate dialogue between management and employees. We urge all parties to engage in peaceful discussions to address grievances constructively. Furthermore, we advocate for long-term institutional reforms to uphold SLBC's status as a professional and independent public broadcaster.

As part of its commitment to recognizing excellence within the society, SLAJ celebrated the SLAJ Presidential Distinction Awards on 9 May 2025. This event honoured individuals who have made significant contributions to national development. Each awardee exemplifies the ethical leadership and civic responsibility that SLAJ seeks to promote in our community.

In conclusion, SLAJ remained steadfast in our mission to support and improve the media landscape in Sierra Leone, advocating for press freedom, accountability, and the protection of journalists' rights. We invite our stakeholders, government representatives, and the public to join us in these efforts to foster a robust and vibrant media environment that serves the interests of all Sierra Leoneans.

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

The Government of Sierra Leone acknowledges the crucial role that freedom of expression, press freedom, and access to information play in fostering democracy and good governance. In this context, the government is dedicated to fostering an environment where media professionals, including journalists, can operate freely, safely, and without fear of retaliation. The government has made notable progress in enhancing press freedom and digital rights, while also recognizing the challenges that remain.

In an interview with Emmanuel A.B. Turay, the Director of Information at the Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MoICE), he described the significant steps the government has taken to improve freedom of expression and press freedom, ensuring these fundamental rights are protected within national frameworks through various interventions.

He highlighted that in 2020, the Government of Sierra Leone made a landmark decision by repealing the criminal libel laws under the Public Order Act of 1965. Before this repeal, journalists faced the threat of imprisonment for publishing critical content about government officials or public institutions. The repeal of these laws signifies a commitment to allowing journalists to report without fear of criminal charges. Turay indicated that this was a significant achievement in promoting an open and free press environment in the country.

Additionally, the establishment of the Independent Media Commission (IMC) as an autonomous regulatory body aims to oversee the media sector, which includes licensing media outlets and addressing complaints against media professionals. This initiative is intended to promote ethical media practices and regulate content. However, concerns have been raised regarding the IMC's independence and the need to avoid any political influence.

Various government officials, including the Deputy Minister of Information, have consistently expressed the government's commitment to promoting press freedom and ensuring access to information. These statements reflect the government's intention to create a media landscape where critical voices can be heard and where the public has access to information that enables them to make informed decisions about their lives. Ensuring the safety of journalists is a fundamental aspect of press freedom. The government has initiated several measures to create a secure working environment for journalists.

In collaboration with MRCG, the government has adopted a National Framework on Journalists' Safety. This framework aims to protect journalists from physical harm, harassment, and threats while promoting a better relationship between media professionals and law enforcement agencies. It provides clear guidelines on how journalists should be treated by security forces, ensuring their protection at all times during their work, especially in conflict or protest situations.

In 2021, the government facilitated the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the security sector and media organizations. This MOU focuses on improving cooperation between law enforcement and the media. It establishes protocols for interaction during press coverage of events, aiming to reduce confrontations and violence. Additionally, the MOU outlines mechanisms for addressing conflicts or disputes between the media and security agencies, thus contributing to the safety of journalists in the field.

The MOU has fostered better communication between journalists and the police, leading to improved relationships and reduced hostility during coverage of protests, events, or sensitive security operations. This has created a more conducive environment for journalists to report without fear of intimidation. Under the MOU, security agencies have pledged to respect the rights of journalists and to protect them while they are at work. This is particularly important in situations where journalists cover protests or demonstrations, where tensions between the media and security forces may otherwise escalate. The MOU also includes provisions for providing

journalists with access to non-sensitive information about security operations. This fosters transparency, enabling the media to report accurately on matters affecting national security without compromising public safety.

The repeal of the criminal libel laws in 2020 was a critical step toward ensuring that journalists are no longer threatened with imprisonment for their reporting. This legal change protects journalists from legal harassment and allows them to conduct investigative journalism without fear of retribution.

The Cyber Security and Crime Act of 2021 aims to protect citizens, including journalists, from online threats, but it requires careful consideration to avoid curbing press freedom. The Act establishes a legal framework to safeguard online platforms from cyberattacks, hacking, and other threats, which is essential for protecting journalists from cyber harassment and ensuring their ability to operate safely in the digital space. Given the rise of online threats against journalists, this law represents a crucial step in safeguarding their work and ensuring the safety of their online platforms.

While the Act addresses issues such as cyberstalking, unauthorised data access, and misinformation, concerns have been raised that it could be misused to restrict investigative journalism. The Act outlines procedures for the search and seizure of digital evidence, which can be relevant in cases involving journalists. However, the application of these provisions must be carried out with caution to prevent misuse that could interfere with press freedom, especially in cases where journalists are investigating sensitive topics that might involve digital evidence.

The Government's draft National Media and Information Policy is set to be a cornerstone for future media regulation in Sierra Leone. Although it is still awaiting cabinet approval, this policy will serve as a significant instrument for promoting press freedom and ensuring a healthy media landscape.

The policy aims at strengthening freedom of expression and access to information in line with international human rights standards. It reaffirms Sierra Leone's commitment to a free and independent press, aligning the country's media laws with global standards on press freedom. The policy will apply to both traditional media (such as print and broadcast) and digital platforms (including social media). It will ensure that all forms of media operate in an ethical, transparent, and accountable manner. This regulatory approach is necessary to address the rapidly evolving digital media landscape and to ensure fairness across all platforms.

One of the key objectives of the policy is to address digital challenges, including misinformation, disinformation, and the dissemination of fake news. It aims to protect public trust in the media while safeguarding the right to free expression. The policy will promote responsible media practices and address the negative impacts of false information, particularly in the context of elections or political discourse.

Additionally, the policy will encourage investments in the media sector to ensure that independent journalism remains sustainable. It will also facilitate greater interaction between the government and citizens by encouraging media outlets to engage with the public in a timely and accurate manner.

Sierra Leone's active participation in international media forums is essential for advancing the national media freedom agenda as a member of the Media Freedom Coalition (MFC). Sierra Leone benefits from global advocacy efforts aimed at protecting journalists from harassment, violence, and legal threats, especially in conflict zones. This collaboration enhances the country's ability to advocate for press freedom on the international stage.

Through the International Media Freedom Coalition (MFC), Sierra Leone actively participates in global campaigns to challenge legal frameworks that restrict press freedom, such as controversial 'fake news' laws. By collaborating with other MFC member states, Sierra Leone contributes to the global effort to protect independent journalism.

The Government has committed to supporting the National Fund for Public Interest Media (NaFPIM). This fund aims to strengthen the media sector by providing financial assistance to public interest media projects,

particularly those that promote investigative journalism, media diversity, and freedom of expression. Furthermore, Sierra Leone collaborates with international organizations to provide funding and support for independent media outlets. This collaboration is vital for ensuring that media in Sierra Leone can operate independently of political influence and financial dependence on government or party funding.

Recognizing the need for greater media sustainability, particularly in rural and underserved areas, the government has initiated several programs to address this issue. One key strategy focuses on enhancing digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. This initiative will improve access to both digital and traditional media platforms, enabling rural communities to engage with a broader range of information and become active participants in the media landscape.

7. STATUS OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION LAWS IN SIERRA LEONE

Under the reporting period, there was the introduction of the Counter Terrorism Bill, with provisions that would unintentionally restrict press freedom and freedom of expression, particularly the framing of terrorism-related offences and the potential impact on journalistic work and civil liberties. SLAJ and MRCG wrote an official letter to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, expressing concerns over the said provisions and requesting for access to the final Act before printing and presidential assent. Other media and communication laws and codes remain the same. The Data Protection and Privacy Bill, developed by the Ministry of Information and Communication (now the Ministry of Information and Civic Education), has yet to be enacted.

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

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

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

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

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

No.	Other Statutes (Acts of Parliament) with laws relating to media regulation	Year	Status of the law
1.	The Treason and State Offences Act, 1963	1963	In force
2.	Criminal Libel - The Public Order Act, 1965 (Act No 46 of 1965)	1965	Repealed
3.	Publication of False News - The Public Order Act	1965	Repealed
4.	Seditious Libel - The Public Order Act	1965	Repealed
5.	Constitution of Sierra Leone - Freedom of Expression and of the Press	1991	In force
6.	Constitution of Sierra Leone - Public Emergency Law	1991	In force, but under review
7.	Constitution of Sierra Leone - Law of Contempt of Parliament	1991	In force
8.	The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	1995	In force
9.	Pharmacy and Drugs Act	2001	In force
10.	The National Electronic Communication Act, 2022 (Act. No. 16 of 2022) repealed and replaced the Telecommunications Act 2006 as amended	2021	In force
11.	The Child Rights Act 2007 (No. 7 2007)	2007	In force
12.	The Anti-Corruption Act, 2008 (Act No No. 12 of 2008) as amended in the Anti-Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2019 (Act No. 9 of 2019).	2008, as amended in 2019	In force
13.	The Copyright Act, 2011 (No. 7 of 2007)	2011	In force
14.	The Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (Act No 00 of 2012) as amended	2012 as amended in 2019	In force
15.	The Right to Access Information Act, 2013 (Act No No. 2 2013)	2013	In force
16.	Public Order (Amendment) Act, 2020 (Act. No 4 of 2020)	2020	In force
17.	The Law on Contempt of Court	Common Law	In force
18.	The Counter Terrorism Bill	2025	Under review

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

Table 7.3: Codes Dealing with Media Regulation Still in Force

No.	Codes	Year	Status of the law
1.	Code of Conduct of the Sierra Leone the Association of Journalists	2000 (reviewed 2014/2015)	In force.
2.	The Independent Media Commission (IMC) Media Code of Practice	2007	The section on Advertising is still applicable.
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)³

8. CONCLUSION

The issues addressed in this report pertain to freedom of expression, press freedom, access to information, internet freedom, digital rights, and the safety and security of journalists in Sierra Leone. The Media Reform Coordination Group (MRCG) reiterates a key provision from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report: “Freedom of expression is the lifeblood of democracy. A culture of public debate and tolerance for differing ideas signifies a vibrant and healthy democracy. Restrictions on freedom of expression indicate a fearful state; they reflect a government that lacks confidence in its ability to promote and disseminate its doctrines in the marketplace of ideas.”

The MRCG continues to monitor the implementation and promotion of several legislative measures, including 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 laws establish new guidelines for information access, media ethics, and the coverage and reporting of elections.

The MRCG also advocates for the prompt enactment of the Data Protection Law, which will ensure the privacy and safety of citizens’ data both online and offline. It calls for the effective implementation of the Cybersecurity and Crime Act 2021 without impeding freedom of expression and press freedoms, along with careful consideration of the SLAJ position paper regarding the proposed Counter-Terrorism Bill of 2025.

The safety of journalists remains a central concern for the MRCG. The organization urges the government, media owners, and security sectors to ensure the safety of journalists while they perform their duties. Furthermore, the MRCG urges the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) to expedite investigations into all reported cases, emphasizing that delays in the delivery of justice constitute a denial of justice.

The MRCG commends the government, particularly through the Ministry of Information and Civic Education, for the significant steps taken to complete various consultation and validation processes for the National Media and Information Policy. If approved, this policy aims to create a free, safe, proactive, progressive, and participatory media and information environment that supports the nation’s development and transformation. It would encourage a free, independent, forward-thinking, and innovative media landscape that provides timely and accurate information and commentary. The Ministry of Information and Civic Education would facilitate coordinated distribution of government information, promote access to information, and establish forums for public discourse on national issues. Additionally, the policy would ensure broad representation of women, individuals with disabilities, and people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, regions, political parties, and religions within the media.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government to review and remove any provisions in the proposed Counter Terrorism Bill that threaten freedom of expression and press freedom.
- The government, along with SLAJ and other partners, to continue to implement the recommendations from the Media Viability and Investment Conference.
- Media stakeholders to collaborate with the Constitutional Review Committee to include a standalone chapter on media development in the National Constitution.
- The government and relevant stakeholders to establish mechanisms to address online attacks.
- The government must expedite the enactment of the Data Protection Law to fully promote citizens' digital rights, protect personal data, and ensure consumer protection, while also closing potential loopholes in data exploitation by private entities and government agencies.
- It is essential for the government to guarantee that journalists and citizens continue to enjoy their rights to freedom of expression, press freedom, and assembly without the fear of intimidation, harassment, assault, arrest, detention, or prosecution.
- Media owners and employers should ensure that their reporters are paid at least the minimum wage and that staff receive improved working conditions.
- The Sierra Leone Police should expedite the investigation and resolution of all cases involving journalists and civil society activists, particularly those who have been assaulted, threatened, or detained without charge.
- Media owners and managers should develop in-house safety policies based on the national safety policy for journalists established by the MRCG to ensure the safety of journalists.
- The MRCG, SLAJ, and other media organizations should continue to provide training and capacity-building for journalists to align with international best practices, supported by non-governmental organizations through mentorship and fellowship programs.
- The judiciary should hasten rulings on all pending cases involving journalists from 2018 to the present.

10. REFERENCES

- Link to Thomas Dixon's [threatening arrest](#) (Accessed 28 December 2024)
- Link to SLAJ's [press release](#) on the arrest of RTL Nieuws Africa Correspondent Journalist Sophie Van Leeuwen. (Accessed on 14 February 2025)
- Link to SLAJ [report](#) on the physical attack on the Open Space Newspaper journalist by **SLBC** staff (Accessed on 15 May 2025)
- Link to SWASSAL [press release](#) on the assault of journalist Alusine Rehmi Wilson. (Accessed on 31 March 2025)
- Link to a special media [video](#) on the physical assault and threat of an **AYV** journalist by Officers of the Sierra Leone Police Force (Accessed on 21 May 2025)
- Link to journalist Melvin Tejan Mansaray's ban on accessing the premises of parliament for [criticism](#) (Accessed on 10 January 2025)
- Link to social media post on the alleged invitation of the Executive Director for Forum for Sierra Leone Youth Network, Thomas Pa Alie Babadie, for expressing his [opinion](#). (Accessed on 16 April 2025)
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- Seaga-Shaw, I. (2025). Chairman and Information Commissioner RAIC [Interview] Interviewed by Ishiaka Sannoh, 27 May 2025.
- Turay, E A B. (2025) Director of Information-MoICE [Interview] Interviewed by Patricia Sankoh, 28 May 2025.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Reported Cases in the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Editions of the Press Freedom Reports.

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

The ‘gold columns’ cases 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, or stalled.



Those in the ‘brown columns’ are abandoned cases.



From the First to the Fourteenth Edition of the Press Freedom Report, **ninety-nine** cases and issues were monitored. **Sixty-six** were concluded, settled, resolved, or dropped because of lack of progress; **eight** were in court, **twenty-four** were under police investigation/inconclusive, and nine were abandoned.

Table 11.1: Status of cases monitored by MRCG from March 2018 to May 2025

No	Completed Cases Monitored by the MRCG since 2018	Date of Attack/Arrest/Invitation	Status of Cases as at the time of reporting
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 a 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 and the 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 <i>AYV</i> Director of News and Current Affairs, 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 <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 <i>AYV</i> management accepted the apology of the perpetrators.
7	Arrest of Fayia Amara Fayia of <i>Star Radio and Standard Times Newspaper</i> by CID officers outside the <i>AYV</i> 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.
8	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.
9	Arrest and detention of Emmanuel C Thorli, 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.

10	Attacks on and intimidation of civil society leaders, including the Executive Director of Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), Madam Marcella Samba-Sesay, who had publicly expressed critical views on the media about the governance challenges.	3-6 May 2019	Matter ended after several press releases condemning the attack on her.
11	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 May 2019.	2 May 2019	Mr. Conteh said his moves to further the case were fruitless; so he decided to drop it.
12	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 and matter closed.
13	Assault on two female sport journalists (Frances Bernard-Bundor and Easter 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.
14	The arrest and detention of the Managing Editor of the <i>Times Newspaper</i> Sallieu Tejan Jalloh (Sal Tee) on 11 November 2019 in Freetown, by plainclothes police officers in connection with an SMS text message that he sent to the Chief Minister of Sierra Leone, Prof. David Francis enquiring about an alleged payment of US\$ 1.5 million into his private ECOBANK account by SL Mining, which license had been cancelled by the state.	11 November 2019	Police said the matter has been closed because of the decriminalization of Part 5 of the Public Order Act of 1965.

15	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.
16	Arrest and detention of Chernor Jalloh, Reporter, <i>Radio Democracy</i> , Yusuf Bangura, reporter, <i>Concord Times</i> , and a civil society activist, Thomas Moore Conteh, Executive Director of Citizens Advocacy Network (CAN) by police during a Limkokwing University protest over fee subsidies by the Government of Sierra Leone.	5 March 2020	The two journalists were released, while the matter of Mr. Moore was dismissed by the Court.
17	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.
18	Assault on Stanley Sahr Jimmy, Station Manager, <i>Wusum Radio FM 88.5</i> in Makeni, allegedly by five police officers at the Mena Police Station.	April 2020.	The police said four of the officers were seriously reprimanded in the presence of the complainant and that there was no case against one of the officers. The police said the matter had been closed. Mr. Jimmy confirmed to MRCG that the matter had been settled out of police.
19	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.	1 May 2020	Police said the matter had been closed.
20	The arrest and detention of Dr. Sylvia Blyden and Hussain Muckson Sesay by CID in Freetown, because of her alleged critical and controversial publications and postings on social media. She was later charged with 10 counts of various offences, ranging from seditious libel, to publication of false news, and defamatory libel, among others.	June 2020	The matter rendered, "Nolle Prosequi," as the Government of Sierra Leone dropped all charges against them on the 16 November 2020.

21	On the Police harassing and intimidating the Manager of Lunsar Radio , Mr. Alhaji Foday Labay to produce a recording of a radio program he hosted Prof Sheikh Umaru Kamara, the Community Relations Officer of Sierra Leone Mining Company in Lunsar on 23 April 2020 which led to a strike action calling for the Resignation or replacement of their Paramount Chief.	12 June 2020	The matter had been dismissed.
22	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 rated as demeaning to the apex court of the land.	28 October 2020	The matter ended when he complied with the Supreme Court ordering him to do a retraction of the said post in an article and write a letter of apology to the judiciary and the presiding judges; and also publish the said letter of apology in the front pages of two widely read newspapers in Sierra Leone.
23	The verbal attack, insult and intimidation of BBC reporter, and Former President of SLAJ Umaru Fofana in December 2020, from social media for his alleged “biased reports on political events in Sierra Leone” from people claiming to be members of the main opposition All Peoples Congress (APC) party.	December 2020	Umaru Fofana said he has decided to move on as he receives such threats frequently. “I find it very harassing and sort of bullying that they can dedicate so much time to attacking and seeking to intimidate me. And the fact that APC party doesn’t distance itself from it, let alone condone, it is irksome. Failing to condemn it is akin to condoning it.”
24	The arrest and detention of Emmanuel C. Thorli, a reporter for the Night Watch Newspaper on 7 February 2021, by the Sierra Leone Police for allegedly taking snapshots of the 7 February 2021, Jui demolition exercise carried out by the police at Jui Junction, Western Area Rural.	7 February 2021	Police said the matter had been closed.
25	The invitation and detention of the Editor-in- Chief and Proprietor, Joseph Turay and Ezekiel Dumbuya, News Editor of the Public Review Newspaper , 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.

26	The arrest and detention of Hassan Gbessay Koroma, a <i>Concord Time Newspaper</i> journalist on 6 May 2021 by the Sierra Leone police for allegedly taking pictures of the Minister of Internal Affairs, David Panda Noah at the Siaka Stevens Street during an operation of him and police chasing commercial bike riders off the Central Business District (CBD) area, an operation that is said to clean the CBD of commercial motor bikes.	6 May 2021	The matter has been closed.
27	The alleged verbal attack on <i>BBC</i> Sports Journalist Mohamed Fajah Barrie by the Adviser to Sierra Leone's Sports Minister, Alie Kadar for publishing a story on his Facebook timeline relating to Leone Stars players spending several hours at the Sierra Leone-Guinea border crossing point after they were refused entry into Guinea by the Guinean Immigration Authorities for lack of COVID-19 test results.	13 June 2021	The Minister of Sports intervened, mediated and settled the matter between both parties.
28	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.	12 August 2021	Phebian Swill-Randall accepted her dismissal and did not apologize to be reinstated.
29	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).	5 October 2021	Station Manager of Star Radio, Abdul Rahman Kamara told the MRCG that the matter had been discharged from court and their meter returned to them.
30	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.
31	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.

32	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.
33	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.
34	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.
35	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.
36	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.

37	The arrest and detention of 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.
38	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.
39	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. " I am not going to retract the story because I stand by my story, " said Solomon.
40	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 <i>Radio Democracy 98.1 FM</i> on Monday 7 February 2022.	8 February 2022	The matter had ended as he was released from the CID.
41	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.
42	A complaint from IMC's 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 IMC 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.
43	The arrest and detention of Mr. Mohamed Khan, the Interim Chairman of Teachers Solidarity, by police just outside <i>AYV</i> 's premises 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.
44	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'
45	Alleged Cyber Stalking and Bullying on President Julius Maada Bio by former APC Minister of Transport and Aviation, Kemoh Sesay. 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. He was charged with one count charge of Cyber Stalking and Bullying, contrary to Section 44 (2) (b) of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021.	9 May 2022	The matter was acquitted and discharged from court.
46	The arrest and detention of journalist Sorie Saio Sesay of <i>Okentuhun Radio FM 94.0</i> by police in Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone for allegedly "publishing false information" on social media about an incident between the SLP and commercial bike riders in Makeni.	26 May 2022	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 but had ended the matter and returned the journalist's

			phone.
47	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 Station Manager for <i>VOPAD radio</i> , Joseph Lamin, in an interview, told MRCG on 30 October 2023, that the matter had been resolved. Journalist Jengo also confirmed that with the intervention of his Station Manager, Joseph Lamin and other community stakeholders, they had resolved the matter. The officers had apologised to the journalist and his family. In a press release issued on 8 July 2022, the Office of the Directorate of Defence, Public Relations and Information, Ministry of Defence (MOD) stated that “the MOD regrets the unfortunate occurrence which does not represent the RSLAF core values of good discipline and selfless service.”
48	The suspension of the Station Manager of <i>Radio Bintumani 93.1</i> FM by the Office of National Security (ONS) District Coordinator of Koinadugu, Mr Lawrence Kpangu, after a District Security Committee (DiSeC) meeting.	November 2022	IMC’s Complaints Committee Secretary, Fatmata Kamara, told MRCG that they have concluded their ruling on the matter and their findings showed that all allegations against the Station Manager were false and baseless. The Station Manager was reinstated again but he later resigned.
49	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.
50	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 regarding the court matter between his organization and Mobile Network Operators and	10 January 2023	The activist was later released from the Pademba Road Correctional Centre in Freetown. On 26 February 2021, the Court granted an Order, restraining Mr. Abu from publication and comments on the case as it

	the National Telecommunications Authority (NatCA).		was ' <i>sub judice</i> '
51	The complaint by the Inspector General of Police, William F Sellu against Alex Lawrence Koroma, Producer <i>Radio Democracy 98.1 FM</i> , on a radio broadcast against his person on 'Good Morning Salone' Show Monday 22nd May 2023 to the Independent Media Commission (IMC).	May 2023	The radio station's producer did a retraction and the matter was resolved.
52	Civil libel action by the Inspector General of Police, William F. Sellu, through his Lawyer, Demba Barrie, instituted against <i>Radio Democracy FM 98.1</i> (First Defendant) and Producer Alex Lawrence Koroma (Second Defendant) on the 2nd June, 2023.	13 June 2023	The High Court in July 2023 ordered damages against the radio and Mr. Koroma, retraction of the broadcast, and apology to the Inspector General. The Court ordered the lawyer for the Inspector General "to file a separate Notice of Motion for assessment of damages. Demba Barrie, lawyer who represented the Inspector General of Police, told MRCG that <i>Radio Democracy FM 98.1</i> and the other parties involved had in March 2024 apologized to the plaintiff and confirmed that the matter had been dropped.
53	The attack on the <i>BBC</i> Correspondent in Sierra Leone, Umaru Fofana, by supporters of the All People's Congress (APC) party during the party's press conference at the New Brookfields Hotel in Freetown.	14 June 2023	Mr. Fofana told MRCG that he wished there was a line of action for him to take, "but it's an exercise in futility. I don't think the attackers acted alone. So the party won't take any action against them. Sadly, not even to publicly condemn the action. And I don't trust the police either so I am dropping the matter." The Secretary General of the APC, Lansana Dumbuya Esq., told MRCG that the matter was still being investigated.
54	The matter of the Organizing Secretary of the opposition, APC Party in Bonthe District, Robert Kamara, was arraigned before Principal Magistrate Lyoud Jusu of Court Number One in Bo, for allegedly insulting Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President	October 2023	Magistrate Jusu of Court Number One in Bo on 14 December 2023 found the accused guilty and sentenced him to eight (8) months in prison for three counts charge

	of the Republic of Sierra Leone.		ranging from Cyber Bulling, contrary to Section 44 (1) (a) of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021, to send False Message by Means of a Computer System, contrary to section 44(2) (a) of the Cyber Security Act 2021, and Sending Insulting Message by Means of Computer System, contrary to Section 44 (2) (b) of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021.
55	The ruling delivered by Justice Momoh Jah Stevens on a matter between Kutubu Koroma, a resident in Maryland, USA and John Akar Foundation and Yada Williams Esq.	21 November 2023	Justice Momoh Jah Stevens ordered Kutubu Koroma, a resident in Maryland, USA to pay NLe 1,500,000 (approximately US\$D 63,291.14) as compensation to John Akar Foundation and Yada Williams Esq. and to apologize for his libelous and defamatory publications on social media.
56	The invitation for questioning of Alie Bai Kamara, the Station Manager of <i>Citizen Radio 103.7 FM</i> by the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Freetown, who was later detained at the CID.	8 February 2024	<p>The Deputy Station Manager, Ibrahim Kalokoh (DJ Kalux), told MRCG that the invitation and detention of Alie Bai Kamara was related to a broadcast the radio did on the incident of the 26 November 2023 ‘attempted coup.’</p> <p>Police confirmed the invitation and detention and said that the matter was investigated for some time. In subsequent follow-ups, police and the journalist confirmed that the matter was resolved in the same month at the CID.</p>
57	The online harassment and intimidation of Amadu Lamrana 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) for a post on his Facebook and X accounts titled ‘Guess who has added to his fleet of brand-new SUVs...’ where he also asked the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) about the various	March 2024	In an interview, Mr. Bah told MRCG that he had no intention to report the matter to the police for investigation. The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) was deeply concerned about the insults, intimidation, attacks, and threats and stood in solidarity with

	asset declaration categories the Commission had for government officials.		journalist Bah, who was in March 2024 recognized as ‘Journalist of the Year 2023’ by SLAJ, and all journalists in Sierra Leone who face threats, intimidation, harassment, and attacks for their commitment to truth and transparency.
58	The online attack, harassment, and intimidation of the Managing Editor of <i>Salone Times Newspaper</i> , Thomas Dixon, by one Anthony Vandy.	5 June 2024	The journalist told MRCG that he was not reporting the online attacks to the police because the attacks were not something new to him. SLAJ, in a press release, condemned the online intimidation and called for authorities to ensure the safety of journalists both online and offline.
59	The alleged attack and assault on Munya Bawoh, a journalist working for <i>All Out Radio</i> in Kenema, by some police officers in Kenema while investigating a story at the Kenema East Police Station.	7 June 2024	The Divisional Crime Officer and some other police officers reportedly slapped and molested him for allegedly doing a video recording of the visually impaired persons. He continued that with the intervention of SLAJ , he was later released on bail. The Regional Coordinator of the Complaint Discipline Internal Investigations Department (CDIID) of the Kenema East Police Division, Osman Sesay, told MRCG that they have received the complaint of Bawoh and his two witnesses together with his medical report and have started investigating the matter. He continued that they resolved at the following: that the journalist would be under medical observation for ninety days, with his health being taken care of by the police, and that the police in Kenema must apologize for their wrongdoing to the journalist and compensate him for all property lost and destroyed during the incident. The police in charge of the matter, Regional Coordinator,

			<p>CDIID, Osman Sesay, told MRCG that they were still on the matter with a possibility for it to end soon, after the journalist would have made a withdrawal statement. In August 2024, the journalist told MRCG that he had made the withdrawal statement and the matter had been resolved. The Regional Coordinator for Complaint Discipline and Internal Investigations Department (CDIID), Osman Sesay in Kenema, confirmed that the matter had been resolved.</p>
60	The arrest and detention of lawyer Joy Bayoh Esq at the CID in Freetown, for allegedly cyberstalking the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.	18 June 2024	<p>The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) arrested and detained lawyer Joy Bayoh Esq at the CID in Freetown, for allegedly cyberstalking the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. After a Facebook post by the lawyer, she told MRCG that she was arrested and detained at the CID because of her tweet on the rule of law and democratic principles. The Police said the lawyer was arrested on an alleged crime of cyberstalking but had been released on bail, and the matter was dismissed.</p>
61	The defamation matter between two former Leone Stars players, Ibrahim Koroma and Samuel Barley, vs. the Sierra Leone Football Association (SLFA).	June 2024	<p>MRCG monitored the defamation matter between two former Leone Stars players, Ibrahim Koroma and Samuel Barley, vs. the Sierra Leone Football Association (SLFA). The High Court of Sierra Leone ruled in favour of the plaintiffs, Ibrahim Koroma and Samuel Barley, and ordered the defendant, SLFA, to pay damages worth 3 million dollars (1.5 million dollars each). Hassan Kamara Esq, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, told MRCG that his clients took SLFA to court for defamation of character and damage to their reputations.</p>

62	The threatening arrest of the Editor of Salone Times Newspaper, Thomas Dickson by the Inspector General (IG) of Police, William Fayia Sellsu, following a Facebook post criticizing the IG for allegedly revoking a court bail which the journalist described as the unnecessary use of “orders from above” to keep people in detention.	December 2024	The IG in an interview denied all social media reports that the police were looking out for or harassing journalist Dixon. He said he had not given instructions to any officer to either invite, arrest, or harass Thomas Dixon, adding that he had been advised by some senior journalists to make a formal complaint against the journalist to the IMC if he felt offended by his post. In the same effort, SLAJ met with the IG on 31 December 2024 and amicably resolved the matter between the journalist and the IG.
63	The verbal threat of Journalist Tamba Steven Ngauja, from the Chairman of the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) in Kono District, Sahrfea Moiwa, following a comment he made regarding the unfulfilled promises by the ruling SLPP to provide basic amenities to the people of Kono during the 2023 general elections campaign in Kono.	January 2025	MRCG monitored the matter involving the verbal threat against journalist Tamba Steven Ngauja by the Chairman of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party, Sahrfea Moiwa, following a comment he made regarding the unfulfilled promises by the ruling SLPP to provide basic amenities to the people of Kono during the 2023 general elections campaign in Kono. After an event he attended by First Lady Fatima Bio, the Chairman threatened to hire thugs to physically beat him, saying that the journalists in Kono are in the habit of disrespecting His Excellency, the President, Julius Maada Bio. The journalist said he and his colleagues were preparing to file a report to the police concerning the threat. Chairman Sahrfea Moiwa denied threatening to hire thugs to assault any journalist, including Ngauja. The Chairman apologized and made a public retraction. The matter has been resolved.
64	The arrest of <i>RTL Nieuws Africa</i> Correspondent, journalist Sophie Van Leeuwen, in Freetown on suspicion of possible espionage and for allegedly conducting documentary work without permission from the Government of Sierra Leone.	February 2025	In a press release, the SLP stated that journalist Sophie was questioned for allegedly conducting documentary work without the required permissions.

			<p>However, she was later released to continue her work “following her compliance with the interrogation.” SLAJ later confirmed that the personal items belonging to the Dutch journalist Sophie Van Leeuwen—her passport, mobile phone, and camera—remain in police custody, despite her release to continue her work. The police, upon completion of their investigation, released journalist Sophie on the same day of her arrest to carry on her work, but her personal belongings remained in police custody. The journalist later departed Sierra Leone on 17 February 2025 after her belongings, which were initially seized by police, were returned to her.</p>
65	<p>The arrest and detention of Hawa Madiana Hunt, a reality TV star who was charged in court on two-count charges for allegedly sending insulting messages via the computer system against President Julius Maada Bio and First Lady Fatima Bio on social media contrary to the Cyber Security and Crime Act No. 7 of 2021</p>	January 2025	<p>Hawa Hunt was on diverse dates in January 2025, denied bail by Magistrate Santigie Bangura of Court No. 2 at the Pademba Road Magistrate Court in Freetown. 2021on 1 March 2025, First Lady Madam Fatima Bio, in a live Facebook session, called for the release of Hawa Hunt, emphasising that she had no involvement in Hunt’s arrest or subsequent charges. She urged those responsible for her detention to reconsider and allow her to reunite with her children. The Judiciary of Sierra Leone on 4 March 2025 posted on X that the Court of Appeal Judge, Hon. Justice Tonia Barnett has discontinued the matter between the STATE VS HAWA HUNT, adding that the Director of Public Persecutions, through his state counsel Yusuf I Sesay, applied for a discontinuance of the matter citing Section 66 (4) (c) of the</p>

			Constitution of Sierra Leone. The matter was resolved.
66	The invitation of Thomas Pa Alie Babadie, the Executive Director of the Forum for Sierra Leone Youth Network, by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) after expressing an opinion at the <i>AYV</i> regarding the ‘incompetence’ of the Inspector General of Police (IGP), William Fayia Sellu in managing the office	April 2025	In a social media claim, it was alleged that shortly after sharing his views on the <i>AYV</i> Program about the IG, Mr. Babadie received calls from the CID requesting that he report for questioning about his statements concerning the IG. The Deputy Head of Media, ASP, Bobson Senu, told the MRCCG that the allegation that Mr. Babadie was invited for questioning was false.

	Cases monitored by the MRCG that have still in Court since 2018	Date of Attack/ Arrest/ Invitation	Status of Cases as at the time of reporting
1	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	The matter is still pending at the Kenema High Court. Nimalty told MRCG that there was no progress on the matter.
2	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, the matter was still in Court.
3	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 the 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, and I have not been called in connection with the matter," he said.
4	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 was still in court, with no progress.
5	Alimamay N'Jai Sesay, on 17 October 2022, appeared before Magistrate Mark Ngegba of Pademba Road Magistrate Court No.1 in Freetown for allegedly sharing Abdul Will Kamara alias Adebayor's audios on social media. He is charged with five counts of various offences in the Cyber Security and Crime Act No. 7 of 2021.	17 October 2022	Police alleged that the accused person between 1 July 2022 and 10 October 2022, through social media, sent insulting messages created by Abdul Will Kamara alias 'Adebayor' against the Government of Sierra Leone by means of computer system and network with the intent to provoke the

			breach of peace. The matter is ongoing at the High Court.
6	The attack on the office and staff of Hope FM 93.3 in Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone, by a group of thugs allegedly sent by the landlord of the premises housing the radio.	23 October 2023.	Mr. Stanley Bangura, proprietor of the radio, told MRCG that the matter was in court, adding that the defendants pleaded with him, Ahmed Sahid Nasrallah, Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) President, and Umaru Fofana, for an out-of-court settlement of the matter. He continued that he agreed on one condition, which is for the defendants to reinstate the radio's tenancy and pay for the damaged pieces of office property.
7	The Murder of journalist Samuel Brima Mattia, Deputy Station Manager of Voice of Peace and Development (VOPAD) radio FM 96.5 , by the Station Manager, Joseph M Lamin, and others in Waterloo, Western Rural of Freetown.	January 2025	The police received a report of the remains of a person whose family and community members subsequently identified as journalist Samuel Brima Mattia. Upon police investigation and further inquiries, the Station Manager, Joseph M Lamin, confessed to orchestrating the killing of his deputy, Samuel Brima Mattia, because of disputes between them. The primary suspect, Joseph M Lamin, along with two others, was brought to court on two counts charges on Conspiracy to murder and Murder. The matter had come up in court on diverse dates in January, February, March, April, and May 2025. The matter was still in court.
8	Mr Tejan Sheikh Rogers, a lecturer at the Milton Margai Technical University, appeared in court on 17 March 2025 on one count charge for cyber stalking, under section 44 (2) b of the Cyber Security and Crime Act of 2021, for allegedly using his WhatsApp number to create and post recorded audios and text messages in a WhatsApp group called "Maada must stay Campaign," deemed to have damaged the reputation of the university's Vice Chancellor and Principal Dr. Philip Kanu.	March 2025	The Matter had come up on diverse dates in March, April, and May 2025 at the Pademba Road Magistrate Court No.2. The matter was still in court.

	Cases monitored by MRCG that are still under Police Investigation since 2018	Date of Attack/ Arrest/ Invitation	Status of Cases as at the time of reporting
1	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 who attacked him, and as such, they were constrained to arrest any suspect. They, however, said that the matter had been kept in view.
2	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), while covering the visit of officials of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to the home of former President Ernest Koroma in Makeni, Bombali District.	16 January 2019	Matter stalled as police claim complainants were yet to return with their endorsed medical reports; hence, they could not take any further action. But 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, nor did they discharge the matter nor charge 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.
3	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 had been kept in view.
4	Attack on three local journalists – Ibrahim Manasaray, aka ‘Hebro’ of SLBC , Makeni, Abdul M. Jalloh of Amzas Radio , Makeni, and Foday Moriba Conteh of Calabash Newspaper , Tonkolili Districts – in the Northern Region of Sierra Leone.	January 2020	The matter was 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 had been kept in view for lack of evidence and witnesses.
5	The arrest and detention of Osman Hardy Jalloh of TV-News24 for the second time by the Magistrate Joseph Toby of Court No.2 in Kenema on 10 June 2021 for allegedly publishing a story relating to a matter between an Imam and a female chief in Blama.	10 June 2021	<p>The matter is still at the Human Rights Commission-Kenema for further investigation. The new Deputy Director, HRCSL Regional Service East, Tom Sandi, said the complainant had 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 finances 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 had been no new development on the said matter.</p>

6	The verbal attack and threat to the entire editorial team of Salone Compass Newspaper from unknown members of the general public through phone calls.	14 December 2021	The proprietor, Ibrahim Alusine Conteh told MRCG that the police did nothing towards the issue. He said SLAJ had also not done anything about the official complaints made to them. Police said the matter had been kept in view.
7	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 and that she decided to move on with her life. Police said the matter had been kept in view.
8	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.” 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.
9	The alleged physical assault of journalist Abdulai Gbla of Gbla TV online by a Member of Parliament (MP), Hon. Abdul Muniru Lansana of Constituency 121, in the well of parliament.	28 June 2022	There is still no new development on the matter between journalist Abdulai Gbla of Gbla TV Online and former Honorable Muniru Lansana. Mr. Gbla told MRCG that till date, he had neither received any update from SLAJ nor from Parliament on the matter. SLAJ President, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla said that SLAJ had contacted the Clerk of Parliament on the matter, but he was also yet to get any update from him on the status of the investigation.
10	The physical assault on the Managing Editor of Night Watch Newspaper , Emmanuel Christian Thorli, by staff of Njala University, in Waterloo on 11 September 2022.	11 September 2022	Mr Thorli, in October 2023, told MRCG that the matter was still at the police station for investigation, even though he had not honored the police invitation. The Acting Public Relations Officer for Njala University, Ayuba Koroma, still maintained that they had resolved the matter. Police said they were still investigating the matter, although the journalist was yet to honor their invitation.

11	The arrest and detention of Ady Macauley Esq, former Anti-Corruption Commissioner at the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).	6 October 2022	The matter was still at the Directorate of Public Prosecution awaiting legal advice.
12	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. Gibril told MRCG that he had left Sierra Leone because he feels his life is no longer safe in the country.
13	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	Journalist Alie Tokowa maintained that the State had withdrawn the matter from the police, with no progress. He said he had recently reached out to some human rights organizations to solicit help to take legal action against his attackers, but had not received any positive response from them. Police had investigated the matter. State Counsel had withdrawn the file from the police and the matter was now with State Counsel.
14	The complaint from Ibrahim Alusine Kamara, Managing Editor of <i>Salone Compass Newspaper</i> , stated that security officials assaulted him, endangered his life, and vandalized his vehicle during an incident at the APC’s press conference on 25 June 2023 at the party’s headquarters in Freetown.	25 June 2023	<p>Mr. Kamara told MRCG that he had not yet received any update from the Independent Police Complaint Board (IPCB) on the matter.</p> <p>The investigating officer at IPCB, Hawalyn Kamara, again told MRCG that a joint force ‘wearing balaclava’ was deployed to the scene on the day the incident occurred and, therefore, their investigation into the matter had stalled due to a lack of identification of the exact security officials that assaulted the journalist.</p> <p>The journalist told MRCG that he is still preparing to, through his lawyers, take the leadership of both the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) to court.</p>

15	The online ‘death threat’ against journalist Musa S. Kamara, working for Radio <i>Democracy 98.1 FM</i> , from anonymous individuals.	20 August 2023	Musa told MRCG that he was yet to receive any update from the police regarding the investigation. Police said they were investigating the matter.
16	The arrest and detention of Emmanuel C Thorli, Managing Editor of <i>Night Watch Newspaper</i> , at the CID in Freetown, allegedly for his news article titled ‘We Cannot Wait For Bio To Continue In Power Until 2028’, which was published on 21 February 2024.	21 February 2024,	Mr. Thorli told MRCG that police detained him because of the news article he published, noting that the police claimed that it was ‘inciting.’ He continued that after spending three days in detention, he was released with the condition that he report to the CID every day, until otherwise instructed by the police. Police confirmed the arrest and detention of the journalist and told MRCG that the matter was still under investigation, but the journalist had stopped reporting at the police station.
17	The invitation for questioning of Patrick Kai, a journalist working for <i>Calabash Newspaper</i> , at the Kenema Police Division concerning an alleged cybercrime committed against Eastern Technical University (ETU) in Sierra Leone.	16 April 2024	The journalist denied the allegation and told MRCG that ETU accused him of being an administrator and informant of a Facebook page known as “Kenema Kotuku,” a page that had been critical of the institution. He was detained for four hours and released on bail pending investigation. ASP Detective Tamba David Alpha told MRCG that the journalist was invited to the cyber unit of the Police Division for an alleged cybercrime reported by the Registrar of ETU and confirmed that Patrick was released on the same day, but the matter was under police investigation.
18	The warrant of arrest issued by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for Justice Boima, CEO of <i>Justice FM and TV</i> , for alleged offences relating to cyber stalking and bullying.	23 May 2024	The journalist told MRCG that his warrant of arrest was in connection with his online publication on an alleged land grabbing by the Deputy Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources, Napoleon Koroma, and the Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Richard P.G. Robert, Head of the Criminal Investigations Department. In an interview with the Deputy Minister, he denied all allegations made by the journalist,

			including the journalist’s several audio recordings accusing him of land grabbing, and assured MRCG that he was taking legal action against the journalist. ASP Amos Lansana, an officer attached to the Cybercrime Unit at the CID Headquarters and in charge of the matter, confirmed the warrant of arrest for the journalist and said that they were still searching for him to start the proper investigation of the matter.
19	The alleged verbal assaults and threatening remarks against Alie Badara, a freelance journalist in Bo, through a phone call from an unknown individual for a Facebook post he made on the excesses of the police in their fight against the synthetic drug called “Kush” and other illegal substances in Bo, Southern Sierra Leone.	28 May 2024,	The journalist told MRCG that he had been investigating the allegations that the drugs which were being seized by the police officers in their raids, marked as exhibits, were being sold by some of the same officers. He stated that his Facebook publications (post one and post two) regarding the matter irritated a group of individuals who planned to physically attack him and set his house ablaze. Inspector Tommy Ganda, a police officer attached to the Cyber Unit at the Bo East Police Division, told MRCG that they had received the complaint from the journalist and had started investigations.
20	The dismissal and alleged attack and harassment of Umu Thoronka, a journalist working for the SLBC , for a video she posted about a contribution of a lady at the Presidential Town Hall Meeting in Freetown.	23 July 2024	In a press release dated 12 August 2024, Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL) condemned the summary dismissal of the journalist and the subsequent threats to her life. The release further stated that the dismissal occurred without any prior warning letter, discussion, or written explanation, contrary to the provisions of the Employee Act of 2023, which mandates a fair and transparent termination process. The SLBC , in a press release dated 20 August 2024, responded that the journalist was not a reporter for SLBC Makeni, noting that she initially worked as a freelance contractor for SLBC in 2015 for three months, followed by a subsequent

			<p>contract that extended until 2018 when she ceased serving the Corporation. The release further stated that Ms Thoronka flouted the SLBC's policies by taking SLBC's footage without permission, unduly utilising SLBC-branded content on her personal social media platforms, and running commentary on the SLBC-branded content, bringing the institution's name into disrepute. In September 2024, the journalist told MRCG that since she reported the matter to SLAJ, she had not yet received a response from them. SLAJ told MRCG that investigations on the matter were ongoing. The matter was also extensively discussed at SLAJ's Annual General Meeting in Bo with suggestions for possible solutions. In October and November 2024, there was no new development on the matter, however, SLAJ's National Secretary General, Alhaji Manika Kamara, told MRCG that investigations on the matter were still ongoing.</p>
21	The invitation of the 2023 Presidential Flagbearer of the All Peoples Congress (APC) Party, Dr. Samura Mathew Wilson Kamara by the Cyber Unit of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), concerning an alleged social media video in which he was seen referred to as the president elect of the Republic of Sierra Leone, awaiting to assume the seat of power.	February 2025	Amos Lansana, an officer attached to the Cybercrime Unit at the CID Headquarters, told MRCG that Dr Samura Kamara had yet to respond to their invitation but that they were expecting him to do so. He said they would take another action if he did not report to the CID.
22	The alleged physical assault of Foday Fofanah, a journalist working for the AYV , by armed Officers of the Sierra Leone Police Force at the Model Old Road Junction.	May 2025	An Initial report on social media indicated that the altercation began when the journalist intervened in a public incident involving police officers and a commercial motorbike rider, during which a female street vendor's goods were destroyed. In expressing concern for the woman's loss, the officers physically attacked the journalist. According to a video circulating on social media, the journalist was physically assaulted,

			pepper-sprayed, and threatened with a firearm arm sustaining injuries and a swollen eye during the assault by the officers. In their press releases dated 22 May 2025, MRCG, SLAJ, AYV, and SLRU condemned the attack on the journalist and called on authorities to swiftly investigate the matter. The Deputy Head of Media of the SLP, ASP Bobson Senu, told MRCG that the journalist had reported the matter to the CDID and that they were investigating it.
23	The alleged physical assault of Prince Christopher Kamara, the Editor of <i>Open Space Newspaper</i> , by staff members of the <i>SLBC</i> was due to an article that had upset them.	May 2025	The journalist reported to the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) that he had gone to the SLBC Broadcasting House to interview the Deputy Director General, Asmieu Bah, after receiving information about a possible strike at the SLBC compound. During his visit, a group of SLBC staff confronted and physically attacked him, ultimately throwing him out of the compound because of the critical story he had published. He sustained multiple injuries during the assault. Kamara formally reported the incident to the New England Ville Police Station, the SLBC Director General, and the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ). In a report dated 15 May 2025, SLAJ condemned the physical attack on the journalist during the protest, asserting that there is no justification for violence against any journalist, regardless of the circumstances, and called for a peaceful resolution to the situation. The Guild of Newspaper Editors Sierra Leone, also issued a press release on 7 May 2025, denouncing the violent assault on Kamara and urging SLBC leadership to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation. In a dialogue facilitated by SLAJ, the journalist, his employer, and the SLBC Director General expressed concern for Kamara's health

			and agreed to work together to amicably resolve the matter. The matter is under police investigation.
24	Kandeh Sesay, the Managing Editor of <i>The Watch Newspaper</i> , received a threat on 11 May 2025 from Anthony Vandy, a member of the media team for the First Lady of Sierra Leone, Mrs. Fatima Bio.	May 2025	Sesay reported to the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) that the threat was communicated through a WhatsApp group called Miracle Media Network (MMN), following his publication of an analysis related to a report by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP). This report dealt with allegations of corruption concerning a property linked to First Lady Fatima Bio in Gambia. According to Sesay, Vandy threatened that he would take legal action against him and claimed he would ensure that Sesay faced jail time. Although Sesay has not yet reported the incident to the police, he does plan to do so. At the time this report was prepared, Anthony Vandy had not responded to the MRCG's inquiries. The matter is kept in view.

Table 11.2: Abandoned cases monitored by MRCG from March 2018 to May 2025

The cases in this table are also found in the ‘cases under police investigation’ and ‘cases in court tables.’ While the court says the cases are still on trial and the police also say they have been ‘Kept In View,’ the affected journalists have abandoned the cases, citing a lack of progress on their matters.

Cases that have been abandoned by the journalists at the Police and the Court because of a lack of progress since 2018	Date of Attack/ Arrest/ Invitation	Status of Cases as at the time of reporting
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. The court is yet to discharge the matter.
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 has gradually forgotten the matter. The police said that Koroma had not been able to identify those who attacked him, and as such, they were constrained from arresting any suspect. They, however, said that the matter had been kept in view.
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), while covering the visit of officials of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to the home of former President Ernest Koroma in Makeni, Bombali District.	16 January 2019	<p>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.</p> <p>“We submitted the medical reports at the Mena Police Station in Makeni as requested, but up to date, the police did not call us, nor did they discharge the matter nor charge 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.</p>

		Police said the matter is being kept in view.
Arrest and detention of Mahmud Tim Kargbo 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	<p>Granted bail after tendering an apology letter to Hon Justice Miatta Samba, the matter was still in Court.</p> <p>The journalist had moved on with his life and has abandoned the matter, but the matter was not officially discharged from court.</p>
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 the 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, and I have not been called in connection with the matter,” he said.
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 was still in court, with no progress. The journalist had moved on long ago. Police said that the matter had been kept in view.
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 had also not done anything about the official complaints made to them. Police said the matter had been kept in view.
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 and that she decided to move on with her life. Police said the matter had been kept in view.
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.” In an interview with MRCG, the Police also maintained that they had not yet obtained a witness or evidence to substantiate the complaint made by Gibril to support their investigation into

		the matter, so the matter had been kept in view.
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