



MEDIA FREEDOM REVIEW- JULY 2025

The monthly '**Media Freedom Review**' is a publication of the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG). It is produced from the monitoring and reporting on freedom of expression and the press, internet freedom, digital and online rights, and the safety and security of journalists in Sierra Leone.

In July 2025, MRCG monitored the withdrawal of frequencies by the National Telecommunications Authority from two media outlets. MRCG also followed up on various issues, including an alleged physical assault of a journalist, verbal threats against a journalist, physical assault of a journalist, the invitation of Dr. Samura Kamara – the 2023 Presidential Flagbearer of the All People's Congress (APC), physical assault of a journalist in Makeni, the arrest and detention of a lecturer for a cybercrime offence, the murder of a journalist in Waterloo, the barring of a journalist from entering Sierra Leone's Parliament, the dismissal and subsequent harassment of a journalist in Makeni, and the verbal threats against a freelance journalist in Bo.

In July 2025, the National Telecommunications Authority (NatCA) withdrew frequencies from **Truth Media** and **G8 Media Group** just days before their planned launches. In a statement, Amadu Lamrana Bah, co-owner of **Truth Media**, expressed frustration over the withdrawal of their frequencies, stating that he felt he was being treated unfairly. Bah affirmed his willingness to cooperate in resolving the matter. The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), in meetings with the Minister of Information and Civic Education, Chernor Bah, and with the Director General of NatCA, Amara Brewah, raised concern over the recent licence withdrawal from **Truth Media** and the pending status of **G8 Media**, cautioning that such action, if not swiftly addressed, could undermine press freedom. Minister Bah and DG Brewah explained that the issue with **Truth Media** concerns license fees and renewal, while **G8 Media** was currently on a waiting list for spectrum allocation. The Minister and the Director General assured SLAJ that engagements with both media houses are ongoing and matters are close to resolution.

Concerning the matter of Prince Christopher Kamara, the Editor of **Open Space Newspaper**, who was allegedly beaten by staff of **the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC)** in Freetown on May 6, 2025, for an article that allegedly angered the staff of SLBC, the matter has been resolved. SLAJ intervened and the journalist was compensated.

On the alleged threat of journalist Kandeh Sesay, Managing Editor of **the Watch Newspaper**, from Anthony Vandy, a member of the First Lady of Sierra Leone, Mrs. Fatima Bio's media team, regarding the alleged corrupt property of the First Lady of Sierra Leone, Fatima Bio, in Gambia on 11 May 2025, the journalist told MRCG that he was planning to report the matter to the police.

Regarding the case of journalist Foday Fofanah, a camera operator for the **Africa Young Voices (AYV)**, who was allegedly assaulted by armed personnel of the Sierra Leone Police on 21 May 2025 at the Old Road Model Road Junction after intervening in a public incident involving police officers and a commercial motorbike rider during which female street vendors' goods were destroyed Fofanah expressed concern for the woman's loss, Aki Coker, Head of Television at the **AYV**, told MRCG that they had identified the officers who attacked the journalist and submitted two witnesses' statements to the police at Hastings Police Training

School in Freetown. Still, the police had yet to obtain statements from the witnesses. As such, no further progress has been made by the police on the matter. The Deputy Head of Media and Public Relations at the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), ASP Bobson Senu, stated that the journalist has refused to cooperate with the police in their investigation of the matter and denied that witnesses were ever presented to the police. He said, therefore, they cannot proceed further without a witness to prosecute the matter. The journalist was physically attacked by the officers and sustained multiple injuries. The matter is still under investigation.

Concerning the CID invitation of Dr Samura Kamara, the 2023 Presidential Flagbearer of the All Peoples Congress (APC) Party, for questioning, following an initial invitation by the Cyber Unit of the CID on 4 February 2025 for questioning, Amos Lansana, an officer attached to the Cybercrime Unit at the CID Headquarters, told MRCG that Dr Samura Kamara has responded to their invitation and that they are still investigating the matter. Dr. Samura is being questioned 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 the same.

Tejan Sheik Rogers, lecturer of Milton Margai Technology 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 Vice Chancellor and Principal. Dr. Philip Kanu. The Matter had come up on 11, 13, and 20 June 2025 at the Pademba Road Magistrate Court No.2. On 20 June 2025, Magistrate John Manso Fornah issued a bench warrant for the defendant, Sheik Tejan Rogers, for failing to appear before the court on 20 and 24 June 2025, respectively. On 1 July 2025, the accused appeared in court, and Magistrate John Manso Fornah committed the matter to the High Court for further hearing.

Regarding the matter of journalist Alusine Rehme Wilson, Northern Chairman of the Sport Writers Association (SWASAL), who was allegedly attacked and assaulted on 30 March 2025 by supporters of Wusum Stars FC whilst attempting to conduct post-match interviews with Bo Rangers football players, the matter is still under investigation, on 14 July 2025, SWASAL issued an indefinite news blackout on all premier league matches and strongly condemned the Sierra Leone Premier League Board (SLPLB) for its blatant disregard and lack of interest in addressing the violent attack on the journalist. After continuous engagement, the Premier League Board apologised to the journalist and SLAJ for the unfortunate situation. SWASAL and SLPLB jointly developed an action plan to reinforce journalists’ safety and have officially lifted the ban on Premier League matches.

On the matter of journalist Melvin Tejan Mansaray, a member of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Press Gallery (SLPPG), who was on 10 January 2025, barred by the Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas, from accessing the precincts of parliament based on allegations of “malicious criticism”, the journalist still maintained that the Privileges and Ethics Committee of Parliament has tabled the report regarding his hearing, but a date has not been set for debate.

On the matter of journalist Samuel Brima Mattia, Deputy Station Manager of *Voice of Peace and Development (VOPAD) radio FM 96.5*, who was, on 16 January 2025, reportedly murdered by the Station Manager, Joseph M Lamin, and others in Waterloo, Western Rural of Freetown, the primary suspect, Joseph M Lamin, who police said confessed to the crime, along with two others, was charged with two counts of

conspiracy to murder and murder. The matter had come up at the Pa Demba Magistrate Court No. 1 on 7, 8, 10, and 14 July 2025. Magistrate Mustapha Braima-Jah dismissed the no case submission by the defence counsels of the three accused and has committed the matter to the High Court.

Regarding journalist Umu Thoronka, who was dismissed from her job and allegedly attacked and harassed on social media after posting a TikTok [video](#) about a lady's contribution to the Presidential Town Hall Meeting in Freetown on 23 July 2024, there has been no further progress on the matter. The journalist informed MRCG that despite the long wait, she has received no response from IMC and SLAJ regarding her case. She added that she wants to return to the country to address the issue, but fears for her safety. The IMC still maintains that the matter is under investigation.



There is still no progress on the matter of Alie Badara, a freelance journalist, who reportedly received verbal assaults and threatening remarks in May 2024, through a phone call from an unknown individual for a Facebook post he had made on the excesses of the police in their fight against the drug called “Kush” in Bo, Southern Sierra Leone. The journalist informed MRCG that there is still no positive update on his case. He maintained that all his efforts to fight for justice have been futile, and that he believed the police and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) are the main obstacles delaying his case.

The MRCG’s initiative on freedom of expression and the press, internet freedom, digital and online rights, and the safety and security of journalists in Sierra Leone is funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in the United States of America. The MRCG seeks to strengthen democratic dialogue and accountability, consolidate peace, and ensure development through professional, independent, and sustainable media based on the right to freedom of expression and the press.

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