



MEDIA FREEDOM REVIEW- JANUARY 2026

The monthly '**Media Freedom Review**' is published by the Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG). It is produced through 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 January 2026, MRCG followed up on the intimidation of journalist Lamarana Bah, the alleged threat to journalist Yusuff Moseray Suma, the withdrawal of frequency by the National Telecommunications Authority from **G8 Media Group**, the alleged physical assault of a journalist, the verbal threat against a journalist, the physical assault of a journalist, the murder of a journalist in Waterloo, and the barring of a journalist from entering Sierra Leone's Parliament.

In January 2026, there were no new developments in the matter of the alleged intimidation of journalist Amadu Lamrana Bah, presenter of the 'Morning Devotion' programme on **Truth Radio**, by Admire Bio on 14 October 2025, following public comments on the devastating impact of "Kush" on Sierra Leone's youth. Kabbah Lavalie, an officer with the CID Cyber Unit and in charge of the investigation, told MRCG that the investigation was ongoing.

Yusuf Moseray Suma, former News Editor at **Unity Broadcasting Online TV** in Freetown, maintained that he did not intend to report the online threat he received to the police and had only wanted to inform the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and the public about it. On 22 October 2025, Suma received an online threat from an unknown individual during a live broadcast. The broadcast concerned the Sierra Leone People's Party's (SLPP) threat to democracy and the SLPP Chairman's statement of political suppression at the party's inaugural ceremony for the new executive.

There was still no new development on the withdrawal of frequencies from **G8 Media Group** by the National Telecommunications Authority (NaTCA). The Co-Owner of **G8 Media**, Thomas Dixon, told MRCG that, after engaging with stakeholders, including NaTCA, the Minister of Information and Civic Education, and the Chief Minister, there has been no positive response. The President of SLAJ, Alhaji Manika Kamara, maintained that they were still in discussions with NaTCA to resolve the pending status of **G8 Media Group**. It could be recalled that on 30 July 2025, just days before their planned launch, the National Telecommunications Authority (NatCA) withdrew frequencies from **Truth Media** and **G8 Media Group**.

There were still no new developments regarding Tejan Sheik Rogers in January 2026. Tejan Sheik Rogers, a lecturer at Milton Margai Technology University, had appeared in court on 17 March 2025 on one count charge of cyberstalking 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 audio and text messages in a WhatsApp group called "Maada Must Stay Campaign", which was deemed to have damaged the reputation of the university's 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.

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 issue of journalist Melvin Tejan Mansaray, in a press statement dated 10 January 2026, marking the first anniversary of his ban from entering the premises of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, he expressed disappointment at the lack of progress in securing his delayed justice, despite numerous pleas from organisations and private individuals. The journalist noted that the ban has been detrimental not only to him but also to other parliamentary reporters. “It is serving as an impediment to the practice of independent and critical journalists’ upholding the democratic principles of robust reporting and critical analysis on parliamentary affairs, and it is undermining transparency and the public’s right to information and a free press.” Melvin is a member of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Press Gallery (SLPPG), who, on 10 January 2025, was 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 maintained that the Privileges and Ethics Committee of Parliament had yet to set a date to debate his matter.

There has been no progress on the hearing for journalist Samuel Brima Mattia, former Deputy Station Manager of *VOPAD radio FM 96.5*, which was initially scheduled for 15 January 2026 but did not proceed. On 22 January 2026, the court heard the matter, and the State Prosecutor, Aisha Dusu Kargbo Esq., told the court that she had two remaining witnesses to present, and she applied for an adjournment. Justice Mark Ngaba of High Court No 8 adjourned the matter until 29 January 2026. On the adjourned date, no sitting was held on the matter, and it was further adjourned to 5 February 2026. Journalist Samuel Mattia was on 16 January 2025, allegedly murdered by his Station Manager, Joseph M Lamin, and others in Waterloo.

Regarding Umu Thoronka, the President of Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL), Estina Taylor, told the MRCG that the Court of Justice of ECOWAS was awaiting the Attorney General's response on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone to their petition. The Secretary to the Complaint Committee of the Independent Media Commission (IMC), Mrs. Fatmata Kamara, confirmed to the MRCG that the IMC had ruled on the matter and would soon publish the findings. Umu Thoronka was a staff member at the SLBC who was dismissed and allegedly faced attacks and harassment on social media following a TikTok [video](#) she posted about a contribution by a woman at the Presidential Town Hall Meeting in Freetown on 23 July 2024. RFK Human Rights and WIMSAL had submitted a [petition](#) to the Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) on behalf of Umu Thoronka regarding the sexual harassment she received and her illegal dismissal at the SLBC.

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 forms part of its ongoing efforts to reform Sierra Leone's media sector. The MRCG seeks to strengthen democratic dialogue and accountability, consolidate peace, and ensure development through professional, independent, and sustainable media grounded in the rights 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).