



Media Reform Coordinating Group-Sierra Leone

3 May, 2026.

PRESS RELEASE

MRCG Joins Press Freedom Advocates across the World to Commemorate World Press Freedom Day, 2026.

(Freetown: 3rd May, 2026). The Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) today joins its constituent member organisation, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), and other press freedom institutions and advocates in Sierra Leone and across the world to observe 'World Press Freedom Day' on Sunday, 3rd May 2026, under the theme: ***“Shaping a Future at Peace: Promoting Press Freedom for Human Rights, Development and Security.”***

World Press Freedom Day, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993, commemorates the Declaration of Windhoek.

The MRCG notes with concern that this year's ranking comes at a time when the country's overall score has significantly declined, falling 23 places to 79th out of 180 nations in the Reporters Without Borders 2026 World Press Freedom Index. It is further concerned that, despite prior advances, Sierra Leone's press freedom situation in 2026 is best characterised as precarious and deteriorating, reflecting a combination of escalating practical difficulties and legal advances. This drop undoes gains made in 2024 and 2025, when the nation had advanced to 56th place, indicating a deteriorating media environment in a very short period of time.

The MRCG also notes that the report highlights that the media landscape in Sierra Leone retains some positive features, including a pluralistic media sector and the continued absence of widespread journalist detentions or killings, distinguishing it from more repressive environments. However, deeper structural issues continue to undermine press freedom. These include the economic fragility of media institutions, poor working conditions for journalists, and vulnerability to political influence, all of which weaken editorial independence.

The MRCG calls on the government, media institutions, and other stakeholders to reflect more deeply on this year's theme, which emphasises press freedom for human rights, development, and security, to help shape a future for people. It reminds the Government of Sierra Leone of its commitment to upholding the right to freedom of expression and to enhancing media freedom at all times. The MRCG also continues to call for sustainable support for independent media, including resources for the National Fund for Public Interest Media. It calls on the government to provide its promised support to the Fund.

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