



MEDIA FREEDOM REVIEW- MAY 2026

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

In May 2026, MRCG followed up on the assault and detention of a journalist, the detention of musician Alhaji Amadu Bah (alias LAJ), the ongoing trial of the Secretary General of the Main Opposition All People's Congress (APC) party, the intimidation of journalist Lamarana Bah, the alleged threat to a journalist, 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 May 2026, Paul Kamara Esq., a media trainer and legal practitioner, told MRCG that he was working with the Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB) on the investigation into his matter and on presenting his witnesses. Vandy Bawoh, the Communication Program and Outreach Coordinator at IPCB, told MRCG that they were waiting for Paul Kamara to present his two witnesses, together with the medical report, before continuing the investigation. He also said that they had written to the Sierra Leone Police requesting certain documents and asking the police to present the officers involved in the alleged attack on the media trainer. Paul Kamara Esq. was reportedly assaulted on 4 April 2026 by some unknown officers of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) whilst investigating the death of his colleague at Adonkia Police Station, Western Rural District.

The matter between Thomas Baio vs Alhaji Amadu Bah (Alias LAJ) at the Bo Magistrate Court No 2 was resolved on 5 May 2026, and all charges against him and Prezo Koroma were dropped. LAJ and Prezo Koroma had reached an out-of-court settlement with the Mayor of Kenema, Thomas Baio. Madiou Sesay, the defence lawyer for LAJ, confirmed that both parties had met and settled the matter through an alternative dispute resolution, which had led to the discontinuance of the matter. Alhaji Amadu Bah was charged on 24 March 2026 by the Magistrate Court Holden at Bo Judicial District on three counts including cyber bullying contrary to section 44 (1) (b) of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021, Cyber Bullying Contrary to section 44 (2) (b) of the Cyber Security and Crime Act 2021, and insulting conduct contrary to section 3 (2) of the Public Order Act of 1965.

The matter of the National Secretary General of the All Peoples Congress (APC) Party, Lansana Dumbuya Esq, came before Pademba Road Magistrate Court No 1 in Freetown on 28 May 2026. The hearing was not held in open court but in the office of Magistrate Brima Jah, where the prosecution and defence teams were present. The matter was adjourned until 30 June 2026. On 12 February 2026, Lansana Dumbuya Esq was arraigned before Magistrate Brima Jah at Pademba Road Magistrate Court No 1 in Freetown on three counts of Incitement, Insulting Language, and behaving in an insulting manner, contrary to Section 12(a) of the Public Order Act of 1965 (Act No 46 of 1965), as amended by the Public Order (Amendments) Act No 2 of 1973. The offence alleged that the accused, on 31 January 2026, at the Brima Atouga Mini Stadium in

Freetown, committed an unlawful act by encouraging his supporters to refer to the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Dr Julius Maada Bio, as a thief.

In May 2026, there were no new developments on 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 attached to the Cyber Unit at CID and in charge of the investigation, told MRCG that the investigation was still ongoing.

There were still no new developments regarding Tejan Sheikh Rogers in May 2026. Tejan Sheikh 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, Sheikh 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.

There is no further progress regarding the matter of Melvin Tejan Mansaray, since the Chief Minister of Sierra Leone, Dr. David Moinina Sengeh, assured him of engaging the Speaker of Parliament regarding his ban. The journalist told MRCG that he had yet to receive an update from the Minister of Information, Chernor Bah, on efforts to persuade the Speaker to rescind the ban. Melvin Tejan Mansaray was a member of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Press Gallery, who was barred by the Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas was denied access to the precincts of parliament on 10 January 2025, based on allegations of "malicious criticism." The Journalist still maintained that the Privileges and Ethics Committee had yet to set a date to debate his matter.

Regarding the murder trial of Journalist Samuel Brima Mattia, former **Deputy Station Manager of Voice of Peace and Development (VOPAD)** radio FM 96.5, the matter had come up on 7, 21, and 28 May 2026. On 7 May 2026, Daniel Komba Momoh, a Detective Officer, testified that on the day the corpse of Samuel Mattia was discovered, they obtained several photographs of the condition of the deceased, printed them, and created a photo album of the deceased. He added that a post-mortem on the body was conducted. Led in by the State Council, Aisha Dusu, Esq., and Daniel Komba Momoh also tendered the photographs as exhibits to the court. The lawyers for the three accused were absent. On 21 May 2026, it was not heard and was further adjourned to 28 May 2026. On 28 May 2026, the lawyers for the three accused were absent from court to cross-examine the witness, Daniel Komba Momoh. The matter was adjourned until 11 June 2026. Journalist Samuel Mattia was allegedly murdered on 16 January 2025 by his Station Manager, Joseph M Lamin, and others in Waterloo.

Regarding the matter of Journalist Umu Thoronka, the Independent Media Commission (IMC), stated in its 25 February 2026 ruling that the **Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC)** should compensate Umu Thoronka with a negotiable sum, taking into account her period of service to the corporation. The President of WIMSAL, Eastina Taylor, in a statement published on Facebook on 11 March 2026, said that the ruling

was a clear affirmation that women in the media in Sierra Leone deserve fairness, dignity and respect in their workplaces. She called on the **SLBC** to swiftly honour its obligation and pay the rightful compensation due to its member, but told the MRCG that the SLBC had yet to comply with the IMC's ruling. The Deputy Director General of **SLBC**, Asmieu Bah, again told the MRCG that the Corporation's legal retainer was reviewing the ruling and would advise them accordingly. Umu Thoronka was dismissed from work and was allegedly attacked and harassed on social media over a TikTok [video](#) she posted about a contribution by a lady 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 African States (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 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).