

Network Movement For Democracy & Human Rights

148 Circular Road Freetown 87 Pendembu Road Kailahun District

Tel: +23276698279/+23276410137/+23277/543865

Email: nmdhr1@gmail.com www.nmdhr.org



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Your Ref:.....

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PRESS STATEMENT ON EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF POLITICAL INTOLERANCE, AND VIOLENCE IN SIERRA LEONE.

The Network Movement for Democracy and Human Rights (NMDHR) would like to draw special attention of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), International Development Partners, National Electoral Commission (NEC), Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), National Commission for Democracy (NCD), Office of National Security (ONS), Sierra Leone Police (SLP), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Heads of all Registered Political Parties, Supporters and Well Wishers to strongly condemn the act of political intolerance, violence and embrace each other in the Country in order to ensure a peaceful transition before, during and after the elections period in Sierra Leone.

The recent declaration of Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio to contest for flag bearer for the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) in the forthcoming multitier elections slated for March 7th 2018, in Sierra Leone was marred with violence in some part of the Western area of Freetown that led to the alleged brutal stabbing of one member of the fourth estate (Journalist), and attack on some supporters of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) while on a peaceful procession along the Old Railway Line axis where the Ruling All People Congress (APC) Party Headquarter is situated.

NMDHR strongly condemn this unprecedented political intolerance, and violence which has raised so many concerns within, and among members of all political parties, and senior citizens of the State to be very mindful of violence during political procession or rallies in the forthcoming multitier elections in Sierra Leone. We are recommending that security apparatus together with Election Management Bodies (EMB) must work towards designing a robust mechanism to control political party supporters from political violence across the country.

For more information, please contact the National Coordinator on +23276410137/77543865 and Ag. Programs Manager on +23276202104/30456641.

NMDHR would also like to make special reference to specific sections in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone that gives the following rights to the citizens of this country; Section 18, Chapter 3 of the 1991 constitution Sierra Leone which emphasized on the right of citizen to **Protection of freedom of movement.** (1) that No person shall be deprived of his freedom of movement, and for the purpose of this section, the said freedom means the right to move freely throughout Sierra Leone, the right to reside in any part of Sierra Leone, the right to enter or leave Sierra Leone, and immunity from expulsion form Sierra Leone, And Section 26 which emphasize on the right of citizens to **Protection of freedom of assembly and association.** (1) that Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of assembly and association, that is to say, his right to assemble freely and associate with other persons and in particular to form or belong to any political party, trade unions or other economic, social or professional associations, national or international, for the protection of his interests.

NMDHR has been closely observing the political activities of our sister country Liberia in its just concluded first round polls on Tuesday 10th October 2017 which was so interesting in terms of political tolerance. The people of Liberia clearly demonstrated the values of political tolerance throughout the campaign period which has so far determine the outcome of the people's reaction towards the elections result.

NMDHR is registered with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and has about fourteen year's track records service of existence in Sierra Leone. The organization has over the years played a key role in complimenting the efforts of Government and its Development Partners in ensuring that there is participatory democracy, free and fair elections, absence of gender base violence, women and youth advocacy among others.

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