

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT
(NaCFoHRD)



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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.FREETOWN SIERRA LEONE

**NACFOHRD CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY RETIRED
BRIGADIER DR JULIUS MAADA BIO TO ALLOW THE AUDIT INTO COVID-19
FUNDS AND ALSO URGE CIVIL SOCIETY TO REMAIN NEUTRAL IMPARTIAL
AND INDEPENDENT IN THE COUNTRY**

The National Centre for Human Rights and Development is calling on the Government of his Excellency Brigadier Julius Maada Bio to allow the audit of the COVID-19 funds received by the Government of Sierra Leone.

NaCFoHRD wish to re-echoe the strategic importance of sound financial management, fiscal transparency and public accountability as key elements to national development. In view of the above; NaCFoHRD is calling for an audit of the extra budgetary fund which was established and dedicated to Covid-19 by the Government of Sierra Leone.

NaCFoHRD is particular concern about the letter from the office of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to the Auditor General of Sierra Leone stating that:

"Government Administration during this period of public Emergency is quite distinct and separate regime from the normal general administration of government. That the reason according to the office of the Attorney-General is that the president is empowered to take EXTRA ORDINARY MEASURES including making regulations that appear to him necessary and expedient to prevent and or control the pandemic for which the Emergency was declared"

While NaCFoHRD respect the views expressed by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice that His Excellency the president is empowered to take

EXTRA ORDINARY MEASURES including making regulations that appear to the president necessary and expedient... NaCfoHRD wishes to draw the attention of the Government of Sierra Leone that the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of which Sierra Leone is a signatory does not exonerate a state party to the aforementioned convention if the state fail to fulfill its obligation under state of public emergency. It presupposes that the government has no right to stop the auditing of the COVID-19 funds by the Audit Service Sierra Leone as it is allegedly circulated on social media and newspapers in the country.

It will be counterproductive and completely contradictory in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone by the Anti-Corruption Commission if the government stop the auditing of the COVID-19 funds by the Audit Service Sierra Leone!!

The fight against corruption should not been seen as a witch hunt or a mean of victimizing and or intimidation members from the opposition parties but a fight that should leave no stone on turn including members from the ruling party.

As a way of expressing it commitment in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone, NaCfoHRD is calling on the Government of Sierra Leone to allow an explicit, efficient and thorough audit of the use of the corona virus funds as was done with the Ebola funds in 2015.

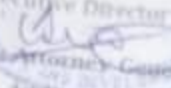
Government attempt to stop the audit of the corona virus funds will put the government in odds with the people of Sierra Leone in the fight against corruption in the country. Furthermore, the trivialization of the audit of the Covid-19 funds by the government may have the tendency to reduce the high degree of respect that the people of Sierra Leone have for the government and the unprecedented work that the ACC is doing in curbing the perennial, deep seated and entrenched corruption in the country.

Finally, NaCfoHRD want to call on all Civil Society Organizations in the country to demonstrate independency, neutrality and impartiality. According to the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights hand book for civil society it states that "A strong and autonomous civil society, able to operate freely, and knowledgeable and skilled with regards to human rights, is a key element in securing sustainable human rights protection at the national level" Civil Society actors are essential partners in national development and the United Nations.

Against that background NaCtoHRD is calling on all CSO actors to distance and disassociate themselves from politics and embark on effective and efficient monitoring and reporting of human rights violations in the country.

As a brief background, NaCtoHRD is a national non-political, non-profit and non-partisan human rights and development organization whose strategic focus is geared towards the promotion and protection of human rights in Sierra Leone. We are the coordinating body of the Sierra Leone Coalition for the International Criminal Court (SLICC). We work closely with the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, the Anti-Corruption Commission and Legal Aid Board to improve on the state of human rights and justice in Sierra Leone.

Signed: Dr James Mathews
Executive Director


Attorney General and Minister of Justice
Auditor-General

Minister of Finance

Chairman of Nacoverg

Head of Delegation European Union

The British High Commissioner

The Commissioner ACC

Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Transparency and Accountability

The Press

Civil Society Organization