



FIAT JUSTITIA

Email: barassociationsl@gmail.com

1ST Floor
Coffee Nicol House
49 Siaka Stevens Street
Sierra Leone
(+232)79601556
(+232)76606509
(+232)76757677

19th June, 2022.

PRESS STATEMENT

THE ARREST AND DETENTION OF ALHAJI AMADU BAH (ALIAS LAJ)

The Sierra Leone Bar Association (**hereinafter known as "the SLBA"**) has followed with keen interest the incidents surrounding the arrest of Alhaji Amadu Bah (alias LAJ) and his subsequent detention which took place on 12th June, 2022. We note with grave concern the allegations of torture and degrading treatment of Alhaji Amadu Bah and the refusal to allow his family members or his Solicitors have access to him whilst in Police custody as contained in an open letter dated 17th June 2022, addressed to the Inspector General of Police.

These allegations of inhumane treatment have been bolstered by the admission of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) in a Press Release dated 18th June 2022 stating that: "Alhaji Amadu Bah who was and still in that custody, had his dreadlocks shaved off..." Such action by the Sierra Leone Police amounts to degrading and serious mistreatment and in blatant violation of section 20(1) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 Act No. 6 of 1991.

The SLBA views the reasons proffered by the SLP for such action equally untenable, as the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in the said facility is in stark variance with the provision of section 20(1) Supra and a flagrant disregard of the several International Treaty Instruments that Sierra Leone has ratified which provide for, among other things the respect for the inherent dignity of the human person and protection against torture, other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment whilst in custody.

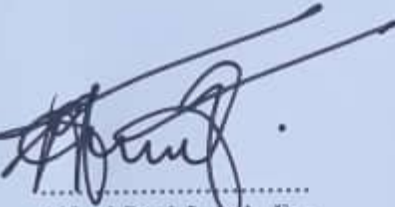
While SLBA recognises that the general duties of the Sierra Leone Police are, inter alia, for the detection of crimes, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order and the protection of lives and property, these duties do not derogate the Sierra Leone Police from its adherence to presumption of innocence of a detainee and the provision of section 17(2)(a) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act of 6 1991 which provides for, amongst other things, the right of a detained person to access a legal practitioner and to communicate with him confidentially.

The SLBA as a moral guarantor of the Constitution of Sierra Leone and all other International instruments binding on us as a people and as a country feels deeply perturbed by this state of affairs. The violator of the laws and values that we hold dear to our hearts and minds should certainly not be the SLP that vowed to enforce the laws as enshrined in the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991.

Accordingly, SLBA hereby calls for the following:

1. That the Independent Police Complaints Board conducts an immediate investigation into all allegations of torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment of Alhaji Amadu Bah and other detainees relating to his arrest.
2. That the Police Council suspends the operation of all SOPs in Police Custody Facilities pending a thorough review of the said SOPs to ensure they are compliant with the provisions of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 1991 and International Treaty Instruments which guarantee rights to humane treatment in detention.
3. That the retained Solicitors of Alhaji Amadu Bah, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone and Family Members be granted an immediate and unconditional access to Alhaji Amadu Bah while in Police Custody Facility.
4. That Alhaji Amadu Bah MUST be brought before a court of law within ten days from the date of his arrest, which is Sunday 12th June 2022, pursuant to the provision of section 17(3)(a) of Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No.6 of 1991.

“FIAT JUSTITIA”



.....
Alfred Paul Juwah, Esq.
General Secretary – SLBA