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PRESS RELEASE

FREETOWN, 31 MARCH 2026: HRDN-SL Expresses Deep Concern over Police Non-Execution of Court Orders, Demands Accountability

The Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL) expresses grave concern over the increasing and persistent failure of law enforcement agencies to execute valid court orders, injunctions, and non-bailable warrants (NBWs). This trend represents a serious violation of the rule of law and undermines the authority of the judiciary.

Recent monitoring by HRDN-SL indicates that police officers, in many instances, fail or refuse to execute court directives. Our records show that over 25 court orders within the Western Area alone have been delayed or put on hold by the Sierra Leone Police since January 2025. Such failings are a violation of the Constitution and may constitute contempt of court, thereby eroding public trust in the justice system.

The failure to enforce court orders, particularly in civil and land disputes, sets a dangerous precedent. It creates legal uncertainty, encourages unlawful self-help measures—commonly referred to as ‘jungle justice’—and emboldens parties to disregard judicial decisions, which risks fostering a broader culture of impunity and non-compliance with the law.

HRDN-SL therefore calls on the Inspector General of Police to take immediate and decisive action to ensure that all outstanding court orders are executed without further delay.

MOTTO: “Defending the Defender”

HRDN-SL calls for the following actions:

The Police Council:

- Hold senior police leadership accountable for ensuring compliance with all court directives.
- Guarantee that police provide adequate support to bailiffs and court officials in enforcing injunctions and final judgments.

The Judicial Council:

- Initiate strict disciplinary proceedings against officers who refuse or fail to implement court orders.

The Donor and Diplomatic Community:

- Support civil society organisations in strengthening independent court monitoring initiatives.

The Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL) is a coalition of civil society organizations and individuals working to promote and protect human rights with a specific focus on defending human rights defenders.

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