



Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL)

23 Rasmusson Street, Brookfields, Freetown,
Western Area, Sierra Leone.

Email: Hrdefenderssl@gmail.com

Website: www.hrdnsls.org

Tel: +232-78-213688/+232-34-775997/+232-76-680213

PRESS RELEASE

FREETOWN, 2 JULY 2026: HRDN-SL Condemns Alleged Torture of Civilians by Military Personnel in Moyamba District

Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL) expresses deep concern and condemnation following reports of the alleged torture and inhuman treatment of two civilians by members of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) in Senehun, Kamajei Chiefdom, Moyamba District.

According to information received from HRDN-SL's regional office in Moyamba, two men were reportedly apprehended after being accused of stealing fertiliser while working as casual labourers on a local farm. They were allegedly subjected to severe physical abuse, including beatings, chaining, intimidation, and coercion to confess to the alleged theft.

HRDN-SL has reviewed a video recording that appears to capture part of the incident. The footage appears to show the two men chained to a metal frame on the ground and repeatedly struck by uniformed military personnel with sticks and other objects, as they cry out in pain. The treatment depicted in the footage, if verified, bears no resemblance to any lawful arrest or detention procedure and appears to be consistent with allegations of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited under all circumstances. Sierra Leone's Constitution guarantees every person the right to dignity and protection from inhuman treatment. Sierra Leone is also a State Party to the Convention Against Torture and other international human rights instruments that prohibit this conduct without exception and require States to take active measures to prevent, prosecute and punish violations.

HRDN-SL acknowledges the prompt response of senior RSLAF leadership, including a public apology and condemnation of the alleged conduct, referral of the victims for medical treatment, and the reported commencement of an internal investigation. We also commend the efforts of community leaders to help maintain calm and facilitate constructive dialogue between the community and the RSLAF.

While these immediate steps are welcome, they cannot substitute for accountability. Public confidence in Sierra Leone's security institutions depends on transparent investigations and meaningful consequences where wrongdoing is established.

HRDN-SL therefore calls for:

- An immediate impartial and transparent investigation into the alleged torture, with the RSLAF publicly communicating the outcome of this investigation.
- Criminal and disciplinary action against those responsible if the allegations are substantiated.
- Appropriate compensation and reparations for the victims, including continued medical, psychosocial and other appropriate support.
- Strengthened human rights training and oversight mechanisms within the security sector to prevent similar incidents from occurring.

HRDN-SL urges the relevant authorities to ensure that those responsible are held accountable, both to secure justice for the victims and to maintain public confidence in Sierra Leone's security institutions. Torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment have no place in a democratic society.

**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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