



Sierra Leone
Joint Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review:
The Death Penalty

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996

The Society for Human Rights and Development Organisation (SHRDO)

and

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty

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The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. Established in 1983, The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and organized a death penalty project to provide pro bono assistance on post-conviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently holds a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

The **Society for Human Rights and Development Organisation (SHRDO)**, formerly MRU youth parliament, was founded in 2004. Its purpose is to promote peace and development across Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea & Ivory Coast through the efforts of youth leaders working for regional reintegration, cooperation, and political and economic stability in the sub-region. SHDRO worked with the Special Court for Sierra Leone to help ensure that its mandate did not provide for the imposition of the death penalty.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty is a membership-based global network committed to strengthening the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Established in 2002, its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report addresses Sierra Leone's compliance with human rights obligations regarding the death penalty, detention conditions, access to justice, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, and detention conditions for women. In October 2021, Sierra Leone formally abolished the death penalty.
2. Sierra Leone's justice sector is weak, with people in conflict with the law experiencing court delays, lack of access to counsel, and corruption. Detention conditions remain poor, with detained individuals experiencing corporal punishment, overcrowding, unhygienic conditions, lack of adequate food, and lack of sufficient medical care. Authorities sometimes carry out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, and violence against women in official custody.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

Acceptance of international norms

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not implemented

3. In its third-cycle UPR in 2021, Sierra Leone supported nine recommendations to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.¹ Sierra Leone has not signed or ratified the Second Optional Protocol, nor have authorities taken any meaningful steps toward doing so.

Death penalty

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Implemented

4. In its third-cycle UPR, Sierra Leone supported all 22 recommendations it received to abolish the death penalty.² It formally abolished the death penalty effective April 21, 2022.³
5. On July 23, 2021, Sierra Leone's parliament voted unanimously to abolish the death penalty and enacted the Abolition of the Death Penalty Act of 2022, which President Maada Bio signed into law on October 8, 2021,⁴ and which became effective April 21, 2022.⁵ The Act provided that no person will be sentenced to death for any offence committed in Sierra Leone and replaced the death penalty with life imprisonment,⁶ defined as imprisonment of not less than 30 years.⁷ The Act also commuted the death sentences of 99 people to life imprisonment.⁸
6. Prior to these legislative changes, Sierra Leone's laws called for a mandatory death penalty for murder, aggravated robbery, treason, and mutiny. Hence, even though Sierra Leone had observed a moratorium on executions since 1998, courts still imposed the death penalty because in some cases they had no discretion to impose an alternate sentence.⁹ Under the 2022 legislative changes, judges may consider mitigating factors.¹⁰

Administration of justice and fair trial

Status of Implementation: Partially accepted, Not implemented

7. In its third-cycle UPR, Sierra Leone accepted five of eight recommendations regarding the administration of justice and the right to a fair trial.¹¹ Sierra Leone has yet to implement these recommendations.
8. Sierra Leoneans in conflict with the law cannot always exercise their right to a fair trial.¹² They face long trial delays, and attorneys in the criminal legal system are often overworked.¹³ The criminal legal system has insufficient prosecutors and public defenders. These staffing shortages result in longer trials and prolonged pre-trial detention.¹⁴ The shortage of public defenders impedes the ability of people in conflict with the law to know their rights and prepare for their own defense before trial.¹⁵ For example, indigent defendants are not always informed of the charges against them, have limited access to interpreters, and experience additional lengthy delays during the appeals process.¹⁶ Many indigent defendants do not receive any legal aid during or prior to trial.¹⁷ High court fees pose another obstacle to accessing justice.¹⁸
9. In 2024, the government published its Justice Sector Reform Strategy.¹⁹ The report emphasizes the need to increase the number of legal aid lawyers and paralegals throughout the country, to decongest the court system by means of Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms, and to digitize court records and communications.²⁰
10. To address limited access to justice, Sierra Leone passed into law the Criminal Procedure Act 2024 and lawmakers are considering the Mediation Bill 2023. The Criminal Procedure Act 2024 introduces time limits for pretrial detention, mandates legal representation for all criminal defendants, and eliminates jury trials.²¹ The Mediation Bill would reduce court backlog by establishing a mediation framework for disputes.²²
11. Local chieftaincy courts in rural areas use customary law with lay judges, often resulting in charges outside the judge's jurisdictional powers and violations of the accused person's rights to fair trial and due process.²³

Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

12. In its third-cycle UPR, Sierra Leone did not receive any recommendations regarding extrajudicial killings.
13. In August 2022, police shot and killed 30 protesters—primarily unarmed youth—after protesters killed six police officers.²⁴ There are credible reports that these shootings constituted extrajudicial killings.²⁵
14. Reports claim that officers working for the Criminal Investigation Department have used excessive force towards suspected criminals.²⁶ Firsthand reports allege that excessive force has occasionally led to extrajudicial killings.²⁷

Good governance

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially implemented

15. In its third-cycle UPR, Sierra Leone accepted all eight recommendations it received regarding good governance and corruption.²⁸ Sierra Leone has taken steps to enhance the

capacity of its Anti-Corruption Commission and to improve transparency in public administration. Despite these efforts, governance challenges persist, including limited enforcement of accountability mechanisms, political interference, and continued reports of misuse of public funds.

16. The country's score on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index improved only marginally from 34/100 in 2022 to 35/100 in 2023, ranking 108th out of 180 countries assessed.²⁹ Public perception of corruption remains high. According to Afrobarometer's 2025 findings, over 70% of citizens believe that most or all police officials are corrupt, and fewer than one-third feel safe reporting corruption.³⁰
17. The Anti-Corruption Commission has increased public outreach and prosecutions in recent years, but people have questioned its credibility due to perceived selective enforcement and lack of institutional independence.³¹
18. The World Bank's 2025 Country Economic Memorandum identifies weak governance and institutional fragility as key barriers to inclusive growth, citing persistent fiscal mismanagement, limited budgetary oversight, and inadequate public financial controls.³² These deficits have contributed to economic instability and have limited the government's ability to deliver basic services.

Conditions of detention

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially implemented

19. In its third-cycle UPR, Sierra Leone accepted all six recommendations it received related to detention conditions.³³ Detention conditions have not significantly improved since 2021. People in detention experience corporal punishment, overcrowding, unhygienic conditions, inadequate food, and insufficient access to medical care.
20. Prison officers are known to engage in corporal punishment of detained persons, including flogging, in violation of the Nelson Mandela Rules.³⁴ Firsthand reports describe people being flogged for failing to accurately recite their prison identification number or for failing to respond to prison officer questions.³⁵
21. Insecure and unsanitary detention conditions persist, in violation of the Nelson Mandela Rules.³⁶ Facilities lack sufficient security personnel and medical care, resulting in a pervasive lack of security that endangers the safety of people in detention.³⁷ Detention centers and prisons are unsanitary, and facilities lack adequate ventilation and lighting, sanitary toilets, protection from infectious diseases and mosquitos, and occasionally access to potable water.³⁸
22. Poor detention conditions result in large part from overcrowding. The official capacity of the prison system is 2,495.³⁹ As of February 2024, however, authorities held 4,453 individuals at those facilities.⁴⁰ Overcrowding is particularly acute at the Freetown Male Correctional Facility; designed to hold 324 people, as of 2023 the facility held 1,820 people.⁴¹
23. Excessive pre-trial detention exacerbates overcrowding. As of 2024, pre-trial detainees comprised 51% of the total prison population.⁴²
24. Authorities have taken some steps to address detention conditions. For example, authorities allow civil society observers continued access to its prisons and detention

centers.⁴³ The 2023 “Access to Justice through Judicial Week” processed 802 cases nationwide over two weeks, resulting in some reduction in overcrowding.⁴⁴

Arbitrary arrest and detention

Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not implemented

25. In its third-cycle UPR, Sierra Leone supported France’s recommendation to “[g]uarantee fundamental freedoms, and put an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions of journalists, civil society actors and human rights defenders.”⁴⁵ Sierra Leone also supported recommendations to reduce the length of pretrial detention.⁴⁶ Sierra Leone has not implemented these recommendations.
26. Sierra Leone has detained people without a hearing for periods of time exceeding the constitutional limit. Sierra Leone’s constitution requires law enforcement to inform detainees of the reason for their arrest within 24 hours and charge them within a timeframe determined by the alleged crime (72 hours for misdemeanors and 10 days for felonies).⁴⁷ Reports show that authorities fail to promptly inform detainees of charges brought against them.⁴⁸ Further, non-governmental organizations report that “pretrial and remand detainees spent an average of two to three years in pretrial detention before courts examined their cases or filed formal charges, frequently exceeding the maximum sentence for the alleged crimes.”⁴⁹
27. Authorities arrest and hold some people in pretrial detention for engaging in political protests or other forms of political expression.⁵⁰ In a high-profile example, law enforcement arrested television personality Hawa Hunt for criticizing President Bio and his wife.⁵¹ Law enforcement detained Hunt for over a month before charging her in court, far exceeding the 72-hour limit.⁵² In the context of the 2023 elections, law enforcement arbitrarily arrested political opponents.⁵³ The European Union sent a delegation to monitor the 2023 election.⁵⁴ They noted that authorities arrested 150 people, even though those people had not engaged in any large-scale protest or confrontation with authorities.⁵⁵ People notified the EU delegation that law enforcement had arrested supporters of the All People’s Conference (an opposition political party) for “allegedly disorderly behaviour during celebrations that followed the nomination of an APC local council candidate” and for “carrying placards containing election-related slogans.”⁵⁶
28. There are credible reports that police officers make arrests based on dubious grounds, leading to extortion and bribery. Members of law enforcement at checkpoints demand bribes from commercial vehicle drivers, a tactic called “booking.”⁵⁷ Drivers that fail to pay can face arrest and harassment.⁵⁸

Gender-based violence, Domestic violence, and Violence against women

Status of Implementation: Partially accepted, Partially implemented

29. In its third-cycle UPR, Sierra Leone supported 16 recommendations to address gender-based violence⁵⁹ but noted 10 additional recommendations, particularly to the extent they mentioned female genital mutilation as well as other forms of gender-based violence.⁶⁰ Regarding women in conflict with the law, Sierra Leone has made minimal progress in implementing these recommendations.

30. As a result of overcrowding, improper hygiene, lack of drinking water, inadequate gender-appropriate health services, and infrequent counseling, women in detention face poor mental health⁶¹ and are at heightened risk of self-harm, including suicide.⁶²
31. Law enforcement officers leverage petty offenses to arrest women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.⁶³ Women who engage in sex work are sometimes compelled to “self-bail” from police custody; after a police officer arrests a sex worker for a petty offense, like loitering, the sex worker engages in sexual acts with the officer in order to be released from custody.⁶⁴
32. Women in detention lack access to gynecological care, cancer screenings, and menstrual hygiene products.⁶⁵ Few women in detention receive support, counseling, or other treatment to address mental health issues.⁶⁶ Many women in detention lose contact with their children, and this separation can have a negative effect on their mental health and may increase the likelihood of recidivism.⁶⁷ Women also face a heightened risk of recidivism because detention facilities for women lack of robust educational or training programs to facilitate reintegration. Reintegration is especially difficult for women due to the stigma around their imprisonment, which increases the chance that they will lose their social support networks during detention and reenter society with little social support.⁶⁸
33. Research suggests that women face excessive pre-trial detention,⁶⁹ contrary to the Bangkok Rules and the Tokyo Rules, which state that authorities should use pre-trial detention only be used as a last resort.⁷⁰
34. In general, courts may consider mitigating circumstances when sentencing women. But women face automatic sentencing for crimes such as murder, meaning that judges cannot consider the facts and circumstances surrounding their offense. On a global scale, women are often convicted of murder in the context of protracted gender-based violence or a coercive control relationship.⁷¹ But the mandatory life sentence for murder precludes courts from taking such circumstances into account.⁷²

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

35. The coauthors of this report suggest the following recommendations for the Government of Sierra Leone:
 - Sign and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
 - Expand funding for public defenders and legal aid.
 - Ensure that every person subject to arrest receives prompt notification of the charges against them and has access to legal aid to request pretrial release.
 - Step up efforts to reduce court delays, prioritizing criminal proceedings.
 - Direct courts and detention facilities to facilitate the immediate release of any person who has been held in pretrial detention for a period longer than the maximum sentence for which the person is eligible to be sentenced if found guilty.
 - Seek technical support from the international community for implementation of the 2024 Justice Sector Reform Strategy.

- Monitor compliance with provisions in the Criminal Procedure Act of 2024 relating to bail and limits on pretrial detention.
- In collaboration with civil society, provide training to judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and legal aid providers on the implementation of provisions in the Criminal Procedure Act of 2024 related to pretrial bail, including surety and/or bond requirements.
- Consider expanding access to pretrial bail under the Criminal Procedure Act of 2024 to include all people charged with non-violent offenses and to reduce or eliminate bail for indigent offenders.
- Ensure that lay judges presiding over local chieftaincy courts receive training regarding the limits on their jurisdictional powers and regarding fair trial and due process rights.
- Commission a thorough, impartial investigation into police use of lethal force against protesters in August 2022.
- Enhance the institutional independence of the Anti-Corruption Commission.
- Dedicate additional funding to bringing detention conditions into alignment with the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules, prioritizing health and sanitation.
- Eliminate all forms of corporal punishment at all detention centers and prisons and create independent reporting and investigation mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable.
- Investigate allegations of arbitrary arrest and detention of supporters of political opposition parties in the lead-up to the 2023 elections.
- Direct the Anti-Corruption Commission to undertake a public awareness-raising campaign regarding its mandate, with a view to facilitating reports of corruption by law enforcement.
- Implement a truly independent internal investigative unit to reduce police extortion and violations of the law.
- In collaboration with civil society, provide training to law enforcement officers about the rights of women in conflict with the law and gender-appropriate arrest and detention practices.
- Promote and expand gender-appropriate mental health services for women in detention.
- Ensure that all women serving criminal sentences receive meaningful educational and training programs to facilitate reintegration.

¹ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Sierra Leone*, (21 May 2021), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/48/17 ¶ 143.8 Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Latvia) ; Make progress towards ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Chile); ¶ 143.9 Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on

Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Belgium) (Czechia) (Rwanda); Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Ukraine); ¶ 143.10 Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and abolish the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, and as a first step adopt an official moratorium on the use of the death penalty (Finland); Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and, in any case, and urgently, establish a moratorium that prevents the application of the death penalty (Spain); ¶ 143.61 Proceed with the abolition of the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Australia); ¶ 143.62 Abolish the death penalty for all crimes and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (France); ¶ 143.63 Fully abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Iceland); ¶143.64 Abolish the death penalty and commute death sentences to custodial sentences for those currently on death row (Mexico); ¶ 143.65 Consider de jure abolition of the death penalty and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Italy); ¶ 143.66 Abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Portugal); ¶143.67 Take measures to implement the presidential decree to abolish the death penalty in law (Albania); ¶143.68 Take all the necessary measures to abolish the death penalty (Côte d'Ivoire); ¶ 143.69 Abolish the death penalty (Germany); ¶ 143.70 Enact legislation as soon as possible to abolish the death penalty (Ireland); ¶ 143.71 Implement its public ambition to abolish the death penalty as soon as possible via promoting relevant legislation through Parliament this year (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); ¶ 143.72 Adopt all necessary actions to abolish the death penalty, including the establishment of a moratorium on capital punishment (Brazil); ¶ 143.73 Establish a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its abolition, and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Costa Rica); ¶ 143.74 Instate a de facto moratorium on the death penalty and move towards complete abolition (Denmark); ¶ 143.75 Retain the moratorium on the death penalty in all circumstances and work towards its complete abolition (Latvia); ¶ 143.76 Undertake all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty and to guarantee living conditions in detention that respect international standards and human dignity (Holy See); ¶ 143.77 Continue the de facto moratorium on the death penalty and further take steps towards its legal abolition (Nepal); ¶ 143.78 Prioritize the acceleration of parliamentary processes to enshrine the abolition of the death penalty in law and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Uruguay); ¶ 143.79 Make progress towards definitive abolition of the death penalty, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Paraguay).

² Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Sierra Leone*, (21 May 2021), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/48/17 ¶ 143.8 Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Latvia) ; Make progress towards ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Chile); ¶ 143.9 Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Belgium) (Czechia) (Rwanda); Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Ukraine); ¶ 143.10 Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and abolish the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, and as a first step adopt an official moratorium on the use of the death penalty (Finland); Accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, and, in any case, and urgently, establish a moratorium that prevents the application of the death penalty (Spain); ¶ 143.61 Proceed with the abolition of the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Australia); ¶ 143.62 Abolish the death penalty for all crimes and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (France); ¶ 143.63 Fully abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Iceland); ¶143.64 Abolish the death penalty and commute death sentences to custodial sentences for those currently on death row (Mexico); ¶ 143.65 Consider de jure abolition of the death penalty and accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Italy); ¶ 143.66 Abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Portugal); ¶143.67 Take measures to implement the presidential decree to abolish the death penalty in law (Albania); ¶143.68 Take all the necessary measures to abolish the death penalty (Côte d’Ivoire); ¶ 143.69 Abolish the death penalty (Germany); ¶ 143.70 Enact legislation as soon as possible to abolish the death penalty (Ireland); ¶ 143.71 Implement its public ambition to abolish the death penalty as soon as possible via promoting relevant legislation through Parliament this year (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); ¶ 143.72 Adopt all necessary actions to abolish the death penalty, including the establishment of a moratorium on capital punishment (Brazil); ¶ 143.73 Establish a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its abolition, and ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Costa Rica); ¶ 143.74 Instate a de facto moratorium on the death penalty and move towards complete abolition (Denmark); ¶ 143.75 Retain the moratorium on the death penalty in all circumstances and work towards its complete abolition (Latvia); ¶ 143.76 Undertake all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty and to guarantee living conditions in detention that respect international standards and human dignity (Holy See); ¶ 143.77 Continue the de facto moratorium on the death penalty and further take steps towards its legal abolition (Nepal); ¶ 143.78 Prioritize the acceleration of parliamentary processes to enshrine the abolition of the death penalty in law and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (Uruguay); ¶ 143.79 Make progress towards definitive abolition of the death penalty, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Paraguay).

³ Abolition of the Death Penalty Act, 2022

⁴ Equal Justice Initiative, *Sierra Leone Abolishes the Death Penalty*, (October 15, 2021).

⁵ Abolition of the Death Penalty Act, 2022

⁶ The Death Penalty Project, *Dismantle the gallows! Sierra Leone becomes the latest country to abolish the death penalty*, (July 21, 2021).

⁷ OHCR: *Sierra Leone: UN Human Rights recommendations help lead to end of death penalty*, (July 21, 2022).

⁸ Death Penalty Information Center, *Sierra Leone Becomes 23rd African Country to Abolish the Death Penalty*, (July 26, 2021, updated March 14, 2025).

⁹ Kamara, Makmid & Sabrina Mahtani, *How Sierra Leone abolished the death penalty and what others could learn*, (November 2, 2021).

¹⁰ Death Penalty Information Center, *Sierra Leone Becomes 23rd African Country to Abolish the Death Penalty*, (July 26, 2021, updated March 14, 2025).

¹¹ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Sierra Leone*, (21 May 2021., U.N. Doc. A/HRC/48/17 ¶ 143.83 Advance the human rights -based training for police and military officers to further prevent the practice of torture (Indonesia); ¶ 143.88 Pass the Criminal Procedure Bill into law in order to reduce prolonged pretrial detention periods (Malawi); ¶ 143.89 Continue to support the independence of the judiciary and combat impunity (Bahrain); ¶ 143.91 Evaluate the possibility of strengthening the allocation of available resources to implement the law on local courts and to strengthen the oversight mechanisms of the local courts (Peru); ¶ 143.93 Implement all possible measures to expedite the processing of judicial cases, especially those related to children detained without charges (Ecuador); ¶ 143.95 Ensure fair trials by limiting recourse to local tribal courts (Lebanon); ¶ 143.97 Continue progress achieved on the independence of the judiciary and the strengthening of the rule of law (Mauritania); ¶ 143.98 Further promote access to justice through the appropriate policies and programmes (Sri Lanka).

¹² Confidential Source, 2023, at 8, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Id.* at 7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Id.* at 8.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 7.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 7, 16.

¹⁹ Justice Sector Coordination Office, *Sierra Leone's Justice Sector Reform Strategy (2024-2030)*, at p. 19, 2024, [https://sierralii.gov.sl/articles/2024-09-12/leroy/sierra-leones-justice-sector-reform-strategy-2024-2030/attachment/45/REVISED%20Strategic%20Plan%20Final%20Minister%20\(1\).pdf](https://sierralii.gov.sl/articles/2024-09-12/leroy/sierra-leones-justice-sector-reform-strategy-2024-2030/attachment/45/REVISED%20Strategic%20Plan%20Final%20Minister%20(1).pdf), (1) Increased equal access to justice for all through a people-centered approach; (2) Improved case management and expedited justice delivery; (3) Enhanced adherence to Human Rights and the Rule of Law; (4) Strengthened capacity for improved service delivery of sector institutions.

²⁰ Justice Sector Coordination Office, *Sierra Leone's Justice Sector Reform Strategy (2024-2030)*, at p. 23-26, 2024, [https://sierralii.gov.sl/articles/2024-09-12/leroy/sierra-leones-justice-sector-reform-strategy-2024-2030/attachment/45/REVISED%20Strategic%20Plan%20Final%20Minister%20\(1\).pdf](https://sierralii.gov.sl/articles/2024-09-12/leroy/sierra-leones-justice-sector-reform-strategy-2024-2030/attachment/45/REVISED%20Strategic%20Plan%20Final%20Minister%20(1).pdf)

²¹ The Criminal Procedure Act 2024 (Sierra Leone)

²² The Institute for Legal Research and Advocacy for Justice, *Promoting Justice Through Mediation Position Paper on the Mediation Bill of 2023*, at p. 2, (June 2024) <https://www.ilraj.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Position-Paper-on-Mediation-Bill-2023.pdf>

²³ Confidential Source, 2023, at 7, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.

²⁴ *Id.* at 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Sierra Leone: Seven Months After August's Protests Which Turned Violent in Some Locations, No Justice Yet for Those Injured or the Families of Those Killed, Amnesty Int'l (Mar. 20, 2023), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/sierra-leone-seven-months-after-augusts-protests-which-turned-violent-in-some-locations-no-justice-yet-for-those-injured-or-the-families-of-those-killed/>.

²⁷ Interview with confidential source, 11 June 2025, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.

²⁸ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Sierra Leone*, (21 May 2021., U.N. Doc. A/HRC/48/17 ¶ 143.100 Continue efforts to combat corruption and strengthen the principles of transparency and the rule of law within the frameworks of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for the period 2019-2023 (Tunisia); ¶ 143.101 Investigate and hold corrupt officials involved in corrupt practices, while improving transparent governance (United States of America); ¶ 143.102 Consider reforms to strengthen the financial, institutional and operational independence of the commission to combat corruption (Peru); ¶ 143.103 Intensify its efforts combating corruption and impunity, and ensure effective legal representation, especially for the most vulnerable (Somalia); ¶ 143.104 Continue efforts to fight against corruption, and strengthen institutional capacities to effectively detect and investigate cases of corruption, including through implementation the amended Anti-Corruption Act (Sudan); ¶ 143.105 Strengthen measures to combat corruption, and reinforce institutional capacities to effectively detect and investigate cases of corruption (Rwanda).

²⁹ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2023: Sierra Leone*, Transparency Int'l (2023), <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/index/sle>.

³⁰ Afrobarometer, *Government performance, including handling of corruption, draws criticism from Sierra Leoneans*, News Release, Round 10, 20 June 2025, available at <https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/R10-News-release-Government-performance-and-corruption-draw-criticism-from-Sierra-Leoneans-Afrobarometer-20jun25-final.pdf>.

³¹ Anti-Corruption Commission Sierra Leone, *Sierra Leone Again Sets New High Record Score and Rank in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2023*, Anti-Corruption Comm'n (Jan. 30, 2024), <https://www.anticorruption.gov.sl/blog/anti-corruption-commission-sl-news-room-1/post/sierra-leone-again-sets-new-high-record-score-and-rank-in-transparency-internationals-corruption-perception-index-cpi-2023-1217>

³² World Bank, *Sierra Leone Country Economic Memorandum: From Potential to Progress – Structural Transformation and Job Creation on the Road to Middle-Income Status*, World Bank Grp. (June 2025), <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099061225111042666>.

³³ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Sierra Leone*, (21 May

2021., U.N. Doc. A/HRC/48/17 ¶ 143.76 Undertake all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty and to guarantee living conditions in detention that respect international standards and human dignity (Holy See); ¶ 143.84 Continue efforts to reform and develop the prison system, reduce prison overcrowding in line with international human rights standards, and take all necessary measures to restore justice and combat impunity (Libya); ¶ 143.85 Allocate increased budget resources to address harsh and life threatening conditions, including overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and lack of clean water and health care (United States of America); ¶ 143.86 Adopt measures to prevent overcrowding in penitentiary centers and improve the conditions of persons deprived of their liberty (Mexico); ¶ 143.87 Continue to make efforts to reduce the length of pretrial detention (Uganda); ¶ 143.88 Pass the Criminal Procedure Bill into law in order to reduce prolonged pretrial detention periods (Malawi).

³⁴ Interview with confidential source, 11 June 2025, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights; United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Rules 1, 3, 41, 43, 77, and 82, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/NelsonMandelaRules.pdf>

³⁵ Interview with confidential source, 11 June 2025, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.

³⁶ United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Rules 13-15, 17, 24 and 42, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/NelsonMandelaRules.pdf>

³⁷ Confidential Source, 2023, at 4-5, on file with The Advocates for Human Rights.

³⁸ *Id.* at 3-4.

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