



International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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Human Rights Committee

List of issues prior to submission of the second periodic report of Sierra Leone*

A. General information on the national human rights situation, including new measures and developments relating to the implementation of the Covenant

1. Please report on any significant developments in the legal and institutional framework within which the human rights enshrined in the Covenant are promoted and protected that have taken place since the adoption of the Committee's concluding observations on the initial report of the State party,¹ including examples of cases in which the provisions of the Covenant have been referred to by national courts. Please report on any other measures taken to implement the recommendations contained in the Committee's concluding observations and information on the mechanisms in place to review the process of implementation of recommendations emanating from human rights treaty monitoring bodies. Please indicate what procedures are in place for the implementation of the Committee's Views under the Optional Protocol and provide information on measures taken to ensure full compliance with each of the Views adopted in respect of the State party.

B. Specific information on the implementation of articles 1 to 27 of the Covenant, including with regard to the previous recommendations of the Committee

Constitutional and legal framework within which the Covenant is implemented (art. 2)

2. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 7),² please provide information regarding the measures taken to give full effect to the provisions of the Covenant in legislation, including by incorporating the rights enshrined in the Covenant into the new constitution bill. Please provide information on the measures taken to raise awareness of the Covenant among judges, lawyers and prosecutors, in both national and traditional courts, and to widely disseminate the Covenant to the public.

3. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 6), please provide information on the measures taken by the State party to enable the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone to fully discharge its functions in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), including by: (a) providing the Commission with sufficient human and financial resources; (b) ensuring its independence through an objective appointment and

* Adopted by the Committee at its 141st session (1–23 July 2024).

¹ [CCPR/C/SLE/CO/1](#).

² Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers in parentheses refer to the Committee's concluding observations on the initial report of the State party ([CCPR/C/SLE/CO/1](#)).



dismissal process for its members; and (c) providing the Commission with a mandate and mechanisms enabling it to engage in a broad range of human rights issues, namely, relating to the provisions of the Covenant.

Fight against impunity and human rights violations (arts. 2, 6, 7 and 17)

4. Please indicate all measures taken to combat impunity, in particular with respect to the serious human rights violations that occurred during the civil war. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 8), please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that the Sierra Leone Reparations Programme has the necessary resources to carry out its functions, but also to ensure that it provides rehabilitation measures, fair and adequate compensation and access to social programmes to all victims throughout the territory of the State party.

5. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 17), please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that amnesty provisions, including the Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, are not applicable to the most serious human rights violations that amount to crimes against humanity or war crimes. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that such human rights violations are thoroughly investigated, that the perpetrators held accountable and that adequate reparation is provided to the victims and their families.

Anti-corruption measures (arts. 2 and 25)

6. Please report on the legal and institutional frameworks in place and the measures taken to prevent and combat corruption effectively, including by reinforcing the work of the Anti-Corruption Commission. Please describe the steps taken to ensure the effective implementation of anti-corruption measures with a view to combating impunity effectively and of awareness-raising programmes for parliamentarians, judges, prosecutors and other public officials, as well as for the general public. Please also provide statistical information on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions relating to cases of corruption over the past five years, in particular information about cases involving politicians and political parties, high-level public officials, members of the judiciary and of the prosecution and law enforcement officials.

Non-discrimination (arts. 2, 19, 20 and 26)

7. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 10), please provide information on measures taken to repeal the discriminatory constitutional provisions on the acquisition and transmission of nationality through the mother for children born outside the country. Please provide information on the measures taken to prevent discrimination against vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, with albinism and with HIV and AIDS.

8. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 11), please provide information on steps taken to repeal provisions that criminalize homosexuality and other consensual sexual activities among adults. Please provide information on all legislative measures taken to prohibit discrimination on all grounds, including sexual orientation and gender identity. Please indicate all measures that have been taken to ensure respect for the principle of non-discrimination, aiming to combat and prevent acts of discrimination, stigmatization and violence, in particular against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, and to protect their lives and integrity.

Gender equality (arts. 3, 25 and 26)

9. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 10), please report on the measures taken to achieve the equitable representation of women in public and political life, especially in decision-making positions. Please provide information on the measures taken to fight the persistence of deeply rooted and negative patriarchal stereotypes on the roles of men and women. Please provide information on the legislative framework on equal salary and equal pay for men and women, as well as on the current gender pay gap.

Please provide information on the measures taken to address inequalities based on gender, in both common law and customary law, such as in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance and property rights.

Violence against women (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7, 23 and 26)

10. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 15), please provide information on measures adopted to prevent and combat violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence. Please indicate in particular the steps taken: (a) to adopt a comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing gender-based violence; (b) to strengthen family support units, legal aid facilities and prosecutorial staff; (c) to conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the negative effects of domestic violence; (d) to inform women of their rights and the existing mechanisms for reporting and protection; (e) to provide mandatory training courses with a gender perspective to judges, prosecutors, legal and law enforcement officials and health and social care service personnel; (f) to thoroughly investigate and prosecute all cases of domestic violence and spousal rape and ensure that, if convicted, perpetrators are punished with appropriate sanctions; (g) to provide free medical examinations to all victims following reports of sexual abuse; and (h) to provide effective access to remedies and means of protection for victims.

Harmful practices (arts. 2, 3, 6, 7 and 26)

11. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 12), please provide information on all the measures adopted to prohibit female genital mutilation, including specific legislation prohibiting and sanctioning female genital mutilation. Please provide information on the measures taken to investigate and prosecute those acts, punish the perpetrators and ensure reparations to the victims. Please provide information on the measures taken to raise awareness among women's organizations and traditional leaders on the harmful effects of female genital mutilation. Please provide updated statistics on the prevalence of female genital mutilation, including: (a) the prevalence in various regions across the country and within various communities; (b) the number of cases that have been reported to criminal justice actors, including police officers and chiefs; (c) the number of women and girls who have received medical care after undergoing female genital mutilation; (d) the number of cases that have been prosecuted; (e) the number of prosecuted cases that have resulted in convictions; and (f) the number of women and girls who have died as a result of female genital mutilation and its complications.

Voluntary termination of pregnancy and sexual and reproductive rights (arts. 6, 7, 8 and 23)

12. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 14), please report on the measures taken: (a) to review the State party's legislation on abortion and provide for additional exceptions in cases of pregnancy resulting from rape or incest or for therapeutic reasons; (b) to provide access to reproductive health services to all, in particular women and adolescents, including in rural areas; and (c) to impart education and implement awareness-raising programmes, both formal and informal, on the importance of using contraceptives and on sexual and reproductive health rights.

Death penalty (art. 6)

13. Please inform the Committee on the progress made towards the formal commutation of pending death sentences following the abolition of death penalty in 2021. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 18), please inform the Committee whether the State party plans to accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the Covenant, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

Prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment (art. 7)

14. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 16), please report on the measures taken to adopt in legislation a definition of torture that is in compliance with the definition provided for in international human rights instruments. Please provide

information on the training of judges, prosecutors, law enforcement personnel and lawyers on the investigation of torture and ill-treatment. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that allegations of torture and ill-treatment are investigated and prosecuted effectively, that perpetrators, if convicted, are punished with appropriate sanctions and that victims are adequately compensated.

Liberty and security of the person (art. 9)

15. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 20), please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that no one under the State party's jurisdiction is subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention and that detained persons enjoy all legal guarantees, including regular judicial control of their detention. Please report on the measures taken to reduce the number of persons in pretrial detention and the impact of such measures. Please report on the efforts made: (a) to separate convicted prisoners and pretrial detainees; and (b) to increase the use of non-custodial measures and penalties, in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules). Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure regular monitoring of places of detention by an independent body.

Treatment of persons deprived of their liberty (arts. 10 and 24)

16. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 21), please report on progress made in: (a) addressing overcrowding in places of detention; (b) improving living conditions and treatment of detainees, in line with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules); and (c) developing alternatives to incarceration for light offences and encouraging the release of suspects on bail. Please inform the Committee of the steps taken to pass a new correctional bill prohibiting harsh disciplinary measures, such as lashes, food manipulation and prolonged solitary confinement, and establishing a confidential complaint mechanism for detainees. Please also inform the Committee of the measures taken: (a) to ensure that women prisoners are protected from male guards; (b) to ensure the separation of juvenile and adult detainees; (c) to ensure that no juvenile is sentenced to life imprisonment without parole and ensure the review of the situation of persons already serving such a sentence.

Trafficking in persons (arts. 2, 7, 8 and 26)

17. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 24), please provide information on measures taken: (a) to conduct awareness-raising campaigns to prevent trafficking in persons, including child trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labour; (b) to provide training to judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and border patrol personnel, including personnel of the Office of National Security, on applying the Anti-Human Trafficking Act; (c) to ensure that all perpetrators are brought to justice and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sentences; and (d) to provide protection, rehabilitation, reparation and reintegration services for victims, including the number of shelters available in the country. Please provide statistics for the past three years on the number of complaints of trafficking in persons received, the investigations conducted and their outcome, including the sentences handed down to the perpetrators and the means of reparation provided to the victims.

Refugees (arts. 7, 9, 12, 13 and 24)

18. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 23), please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that the three administrative bodies, namely, the National Refugee Authority and its Secretariat, the National Commission for Social Action and the Refugee Status Appeal Board, receive adequate funding to support their sustainability. Please inform the Committee of the measures taken to ensure that all persons applying for international protection have access to efficient asylum procedures, including through the provision of legal and social basic services. Please report on the progress made in protecting stateless persons, especially stateless children, and include statistical information in this regard. In this respect, please indicate the measures taken to ensure the birth registration of all children born in the State party.

Access to justice, independence of the judiciary and fair trial (arts. 2 and 14)

19. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 22), please report and provide data, as applicable, on the measures adopted in the reporting period: (a) to enhance judicial capacity; (b) to ensure equal access to justice; (c) to improve legal representation; (d) to address corruption in the judiciary and prosecution; and (e) to reinforce the independence of the judiciary and of the prosecution throughout their career.

Freedom of expression (arts. 2, 7, 9, 14 and 19)

20. Please comment on reports of restrictions of the freedom of the press since the 2023 elections, given that the State party fell 28 places in the ranking on freedom of expression undertaken by Reporters Without Borders. Please provide information on the report of the arrest and investigation under the Cybersecurity and Crime Act of an entrepreneur after publishing a video criticizing the Government.

Right of peaceful assembly and excessive use of force (arts. 6, 7, 9, 19 and 21)

21. Please comment on information received on the prohibition of street rallies and campaign events by political parties in the lead up to the 2023 elections. Please also respond to the consistent reports of excessive use of force to disperse peaceful assemblies, resulting in serious injuries and killings, including during the August 2022 and June and September 2023 protests. In this respect, please report on: (a) the State party's legal framework on the use of force and firearms and its compatibility with the Covenant and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials; and (b) the number of complaints received during the past 10 years concerning excessive use of force in the context of demonstrations, and on their outcomes, including through disciplinary proceedings, criminal prosecutions and punishment of perpetrators and any forms of redress provided to victims.

Rights of the child (arts. 7, 9, 10, 14, 23, 24 and 26)

22. Please report on the measures taken for the implementation of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, adopted in July 2024. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 13), please inform the Committee of the measures taken to carry out awareness-raising campaigns to inform girls, their parents and community leaders of the harmful effects of early and forced marriage.

23. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 19) and following the prohibition of corporal punishment in schools by the Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act of 2023, please indicate the measures taken to prohibit the use of corporal punishment against children in all settings and to encourage non-violent forms of discipline through public information campaigns.

Participation in public affairs (arts. 25 and 26)

24. Please respond to reports of inconsistencies in the process of the 2023 general elections, including: (a) the alleged lack of independence and capacity of the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone; (b) the switch from a first past the post electoral system to a proportional representation system less than six months before the election and without holding consultations with political parties; (c) the use of State resources to campaign; and (d) irregularities during the tabulation process. Please provide information on the financing and the monitoring of political parties and campaigns. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure participation in public affairs for persons deprived of their liberty and persons with disabilities.

Dissemination of information relating to the Covenant (art. 2)

25. Please describe steps taken to disseminate information on the Covenant, the present list of issues prior to reporting, the periodic report of the State party and its forthcoming examination by the Committee. Please provide detailed information on the participation of representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations in the preparation of the State party's report.