



L.A.W.Y.E.R.S

LEGAL ACCESS THROUGH WOMEN
YEARNING FOR EQUALITY RIGHTS AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE

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LEGAL ACCESS THROUGH WOMEN YEARNING FOR EQUALITY, RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (L.A.W.Y.E.R.S)

COVID 19 – CORONA VIRUS – A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

MAINTAINING A SIERRA LEONE FREE FROM THE VIRUS

On the 25th day of March 2020, H.E. Brig. Rtd. President Julius Maada Bio declared a state of public emergency in Sierra Leone pursuant **to Section 29 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, Act No. 6 of 1991.**

The basis of the President's declaration is grounded on the Global Health Pandemic. So far, we are thankful that there are zero reported cases within our borders but are concerned that our immediate neighbours (Guinea & Liberia) have reported positive cases with a growing number in Liberia.

In light of the current Global Health Crisis, we are aware of Government's policies aimed at preventing the spread of this virus and the impact of these Policies on our Nation's Socio-economic outlook with a limit to social gatherings, temporary ban on flights to and from Sierra Leone and controlled hours of business operations.

There is no doubt that this is another extremely difficult time in the history of our Nation; we therefore commend Parliament for its swift ratification of the President's declaration of a State of Public Emergency in the best interest of the Citizens of this Nation.

A TIME FOR SOLIDARITY & NATIONAL ACTION

L.A.W.Y.E.R.S therefore calls on all Sierra Leoneans to cooperate with the Government of Sierra Leone to ensure we prevent this virus from pervading the Nation. We strongly urge all Sierra Leoneans to conduct themselves in the following manner:

- **FULLY COMPLY** with Government Policies currently in force;
- **OBSERVE** high standards of hygiene including regularly washing hands with soap and water;
- **MAINTAIN** and practise social distancing;
- **RESTRICT** the movement of persons within quarantined areas;

- **BECOME CONVERSANT** with the information in circulation on the signs and symptoms of the COVID-19 and how its spread can be prevented through literature disseminated by the World Health Organisation, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, UNICEF and all other relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies;
- **REPORT TO THE MEDICAL AUTHORITIES (Command Centre)** any person credibly suspected of having become infected with the virus;
- **DO NOT TOUCH OR PROVIDE CARE FOR** any person credibly suspected with or without visible signs and symptoms or proven to be infected with COVID -19 without the proper medical training, in designated locations/spaces and specialized protective clothing to do so;
- **SUSPEND** all social or cultural activities that will attract crowds;
- **REVIVE** the skills and protocols accumulated during our Nation's experience with the Ebola scourge; and finally;
- **REFRAIN** from hiking prices of essential goods and commodities or creating artificial shortages of the same.

THE LAW AND THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS DURING THIS PERIOD

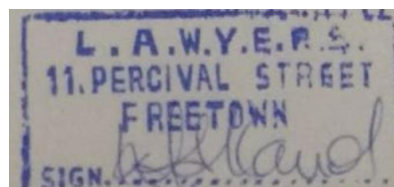
Additionally, L.A.W.Y.E.R.S wishes to remind all Sierra Leoneans that all laws enacted for the protection of the status of women and girls remain in force. These pieces of legislation include:

- **The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019**
- **The Sexual Offences Act 2012**
- **The Child Rights Act 2007**
- **The Domestic Violence Act 2007**
- **Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2005**

All acts of sexual and/or domestic violence against women and children are illegal and discouraged.

In these uncertain times, we urge all parents, guardians and responsible citizens to do their best to supervise their children so that they do not engage in underage and unprotected sexual activity which may result in sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

§ **END OF PRESS RELEASE** §



MS. WARA SERRY-KAMAL
SECRETARY