

October Edition

Volume 2

Issue 7

THE UNIFIER MAGAZINE

PEOPLE • ISSUES • IDEAS

NOW, MORE THAN EVER.

PRAY

FOR SIERRA LEONE

LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP:
SIERRA LEONE'S DEMOCRATIC
TRANSFORMATION UNDER
ERNEST BAI KOROMA



HEALTH TALK
WITH APRN ABIOSEH PIEH

MEANWHILE

SIERRA LEONE'S ECONOMIC
HEADWINDS: A WORLD BANK
PERSPECTIVE

Email: hello@dunifier.com / Website: www.dunifier.com / Phone: +232 75 906143

INBOX



YOUR COMMENTS

The Right Message at the Right Time!

"Dr. Konteh, I'm fully behind your campaign—not just because I've known you for over forty years, but more importantly because of the message of hope you're bringing to the people of Sierra Leone. Truth is, many Sierra Leoneans have lost all hope in this country, mostly because of dishonest politicians. I've spoken with young people recently who say they won't register or vote in the next election. They just don't believe any politician can bring real, positive change. But I believe your message can change that. It's the kind of message that can give people hope again and encourage them to get involved in politics and fight for a better Sierra Leone." — *Sorie T.*

We The Youth Have a Role!

"As a young person in Sierra Leone, I found the August edition of The Unifier both eye-opening and empowering. The article on de-polarization made me think differently about politics and unity. We youths often feel ignored, but this magazine speaks directly to us. The message is clear: we have a role to play in changing our nation."
— *Alusine K., F/Town*

Dear Lord, Bless Your Son!

"Dear Lord, bless your son, Dr. Richard Konteh, and make him the favorite of the party people for the flag bearership and the people of Sierra Leone for the presidency in Jesus' name. Anoint him with abundant grace and wisdom for the task ahead in Jesus' name." — *Alie C., London, UK*

It's Reassuring!

"Reading the August edition from abroad brought me home in spirit. The coverage of Dr. Konteh's engagement with Sierra Leoneans in the U.S. was uplifting. It's reassuring to see leaders reaching out to the diaspora not just for support, but for shared vision and contribution. I applaud The Unifier Magazine for keeping us connected and informed."
— *Mariama B., USA*

More Spotlight!

"Your article on cross-border security and drug enforcement was timely and critical. Our nation's fight against kush, corruption, and trafficking needs more spotlight. Thank you."
— *Haja Fatmata S., Freetown*

Raising The Bar!

"The open letters to the President were honest, respectful, and filled with urgency. It's not common to find political discourse this balanced and solutions-focused. The Unifier continues to raise the bar for political journalism in Sierra Leone by calling attention to real issues like security, poverty, and leadership accountability."
— *Samuel C., Political Analyst*

I'm Inspired!

"This August edition of The Unifier Magazine is one of the most timely issues. The article on de-polarizing Sierra Leone was deeply moving and thought-provoking. It is a necessary call to national healing and honest reflection. I was especially inspired by the 'Hope and Unity' Tour coverage and the open letters to the President. They are bold, respectful, and full of purpose. The spotlight on poverty as our real common enemy reminds us all where the fight truly lies. Thank you for continuing to be a voice of conscience, clarity, and courage in Sierra Leone's media landscape."
— *Fatmata K., Bo District*

Beyond The Capital!

"Thank you for publishing content that is relevant beyond the capital. The story 'From the Hills of Gbendembu to the Halls of National Progress' truly touched my heart. We need more stories that show rural Sierra Leoneans making a difference. Keep inspiring us."
— *James K., Bombali District*



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PRAY

FOR SIERRA LEONE

A Prayer for Dr. Richard Konteh and the Unifier Campaign

Almighty God, Creator of the universe. You are sovereign over us. You are the King of kings, and Lord of lords. In Your hands there is power and might. Your wisdom is infinite.

Lord, with grateful hearts, we acknowledge that “there is no authority except that which You have established” (Romans 13:1). We thank You for the life of Dr. Richard Konteh. We thank you for his family. We thank you for the vision You have placed in his heart, and for his desire to serve Sierra Leone as a unifier and a servant leader.

Lord, Your Word says, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,...” (Psalm 33:12). We ask that You bless Sierra Leone with peace, justice, and prosperity. Let our nation rise above division, and let our people be bound together in unity and love.

Father God, we ask that you direct Dr. Richard Konteh’s heart, his thoughts, and his steps. Guard him from every scheme of the enemy, from lies, division, and discouragement. Surround him with wise counsel, trustworthy allies, and people who will stand for truth and integrity.

Lord, we declare Your word in Isaiah 54:17 over his life, his family, and his campaign: that “No weapon forged against him will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses him.”

O God, we pray that his message of unity be louder than the voices of hate, that his vision be clearer than the noise of politics, and his actions be a reflection of Your wisdom and grace.

Lord, we pray for the APC party, that You will guide them to choose leaders who will prioritize the people over personal gain, and for Sierra Leone, that every citizen will see hope in the Unifier’s message of Harmony, Opportunity, and Transformation.

Father, we commit Dr. Konteh and his unifier vision into Your hands, for “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain” (Psalm 127:1). Build this vision, Lord. Open doors for Dr. Konteh that no one can close, and let Your will be done in his life, in his campaign for the APC leadership, and in Sierra Leone. We ask all this in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

PRAY

FOR SIERRA LEONE

A Prayer for Dr. Richard Konteh and the Unifier Campaign

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ لِلدُّكْتُورِ رِيْتَشَارْدِ كُونْتِيهِ الْهُدَى وَالتَّقَى وَالْعَقَاةَ وَالْعِنَى، وَنَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ خَمَلَتَهُ وَقِيَادَتَهُ لِلْوَطَنِ سَبِيلًا لِلْوَحْدَةِ وَالْعَدْلِ وَالرِّفْعَةِ.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ قَائِدًا يَسِيرُ عَلَى نُورِ قَوْلِكَ:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ (النحل: 90)
وَجْعَلْهُ يَعْمَلُ بِصَالِحِ الْبِلَادِ وَالْعِبَادِ.

اللَّهُمَّ وَفِّقْهُ لِمَا تُحِبُّ وَتَرْضَى، وَافْتَحْ لَهُ أَبْوَابَ النَّجَاحِ وَالنَّصْرِ، وَاحْفَظْهُ مِنْ كُلِّ سُوءٍ، وَاجْعَلْ سِيرَتَيْهِ فِي عَهْدِهِ بَلَدًا آمِنًا مُزْدَهَرًا.

آمين يا رب العالمين

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

O Allah, we ask You for Dr. Richard Konteh to be granted guidance, piety, chastity, and self-sufficiency. We ask You to make his campaign and leadership for the nation a path to unity, justice, and progress.

O Allah, make him a leader who walks in the light of Your words:

"Indeed, Allah commands justice and good conduct" (Qur'an 16:90)
and let him work for the benefit of the country and its people.

O Allah, grant him success in what You love and are pleased with. Open for him the doors of victory and success. Protect him from all harm, and make Sierra Leone under his leadership a safe and prosperous land.

Ameen, Lord of the worlds.

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NOW, MORE THAN EVER SIERRA LEONE NEEDS A CAPABLE LEADER

Sierra Leone is in a confluence of profound economic hardship, deep political division, and widespread public suffering. The nation, endowed with vast natural resources, is paradoxically plagued by poverty, high unemployment, and a cost-of-living crisis that renders daily necessities unaffordable for many.

The economy is in a precarious state. And this economic fragility is a direct result of several intertwined factors, with its over-reliance on mineral extraction and persistent macroeconomic instability at the forefront. While mining, particularly of iron ore and diamonds, has been a significant driver of economic growth in recent years, this dependence makes the country highly susceptible to volatile global commodity prices.

For example, a sharp fall in iron ore prices in 2014, coupled with the Ebola outbreak, led to a significant decline in foreign investment and exports, highlighting the vulnerability of the nation's finances. This "stop-start" cycle of mining operations creates an unstable fiscal environment, as government revenue heavily fluctuates with the whims of the international market.

Inflation has been a persistent and devastating problem for the average Sierra Leonean. In recent years, the country has experienced a dramatic surge in consumer prices, with inflation peaking at over 50% in late 2023. This was driven by a combination of global shocks—like the war in Ukraine affecting food and fuel prices—and domestic issues, including the government's efforts to reduce subsidies.

The impact of this high inflation is made worse by the devaluation of the Leone by the SLPP government. Since the redenomination of the Leone in 2022, its value against major currencies like the US dollar has continued to fall. This has a direct and painful effect on citizens, as Sierra Leone is a net importer of essential goods. When the Leone weakens, the cost of imported goods—from rice, the country's staple food, to fuel and medicine—skyrockets. This means that a person's salary, which may have been enough to buy a bag of rice a few years ago, can now barely afford a few cups. For many, monthly salaries are spent within a week just on basic food items.

The economic realities of high inflation and currency devaluation are not abstract concepts; they are daily struggles for the poor.

- **Food Insecurity:** Food prices have surged to unbearable levels. In some parts of the country, a single cup of rice can cost a significant portion of a daily wage. Other staples like palm oil, cassava leaves, and onions have also become a luxury for many. The World Food Program has estimated that a high percentage of households face severe food insecurity.
- **Low Wages and Underemployment:** The crisis is compounded by low wages and high underemployment, especially among the youth. The average public sector worker, such as a teacher or nurse, earns a salary that is completely inadequate to cover basic living expenses. For those in the informal sector, daily wages can be as low as a few cents, making survival an almost impossible task.
- **The Vicious Cycle:** The struggle for survival creates a vicious cycle. Families, unable to afford nutritious food, suffer from malnutrition, leading to health

problems, especially in children. The high cost of living also means that parents are often unable to pay for school fees or other educational expenses, trapping the next generation in a cycle of poverty. The social unrest and protests seen in recent years are a direct manifestation of this widespread frustration and despair.

In essence, Sierra Leone's economy is a perfect storm of external vulnerability and internal challenges. The suffering of its citizens is a clear signal that the nation needs a new economic blueprint—one that prioritizes diversification, strengthens the local currency, and creates a more equitable distribution of wealth to lift the poor out of their dire circumstances.

The political landscape in Sierra Leone is deeply polarized, largely along ethnic and regional lines. The two major parties, the All People's Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), have historically drawn their support from different parts of the country, a divide that has been a source of significant tension and, at times, conflict. The APC party, in particular, finds itself in a challenging position. After a contentious election, the party's unity have been fragile. Their initial boycott of parliamentary proceedings highlighted the deep-seated grievances over the electoral process. It highlights the fundamental issues of mistrust and division remain between the APC and the SLPP. The APC's dilemma is to not only challenge the SLPP effectively but also to heal internally and present a unified, credible alternative to the Sierra Leonean people.

continued on next page

Now, more than ever, Sierra Leone needs a unifier —a leader capable of mending the deep-seated political and ethnic divisions that have historically hindered its progress. The current climate, marked by a contentious political landscape and widespread economic hardship, demands a figure who can bridge the gap between the ruling party and the opposition, and more importantly, between the different regions and ethnic groups. A unifier must be able to restore faith in the democratic process, ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their background, feel represented and valued. This is not merely a political necessity but a fundamental requirement for social cohesion and sustainable development. This country cannot move forward if it remains a house divided, and the task of the next leader must be to heal the nation and forge a shared vision for a prosperous future.

In this context of economic despair and political fragmentation, Dr. Richard Konteh presents a compelling vision for a better future. As an aspirant for the APC leadership, he stands out for his professional background and his emphasis on unity. Unlike many politicians who rely on ethnic and regional appeals, Dr. Konteh's campaign has been centred on the platform of "D-Unifier," aiming to bridge the divides that have held the country back for so long.

His vision is rooted in a pragmatic and experienced understanding of governance. Having served in various high-level positions, including Minister of Trade and Industry and Chief of Staff to the President, he possesses a deep understanding of the government's

machinery and the economic challenges facing the nation. He is not just a career politician but a professional who has worked in development and peacebuilding, giving him a unique perspective on the country's social fabric.

Dr. Konteh's platform is built on a tripod of the core principles of **Harmony, Opportunity, and Transformation:**

This is a vision that seeks to address the foundational issues plaguing Sierra Leone.

Harmony is about national unity, a commitment to bridging the deep-seated political and ethnic divides that have long hindered progress. Konteh's vision is to foster a cohesive society where every citizen feels a sense of belonging and inclusion, regardless of their background or political affiliation.

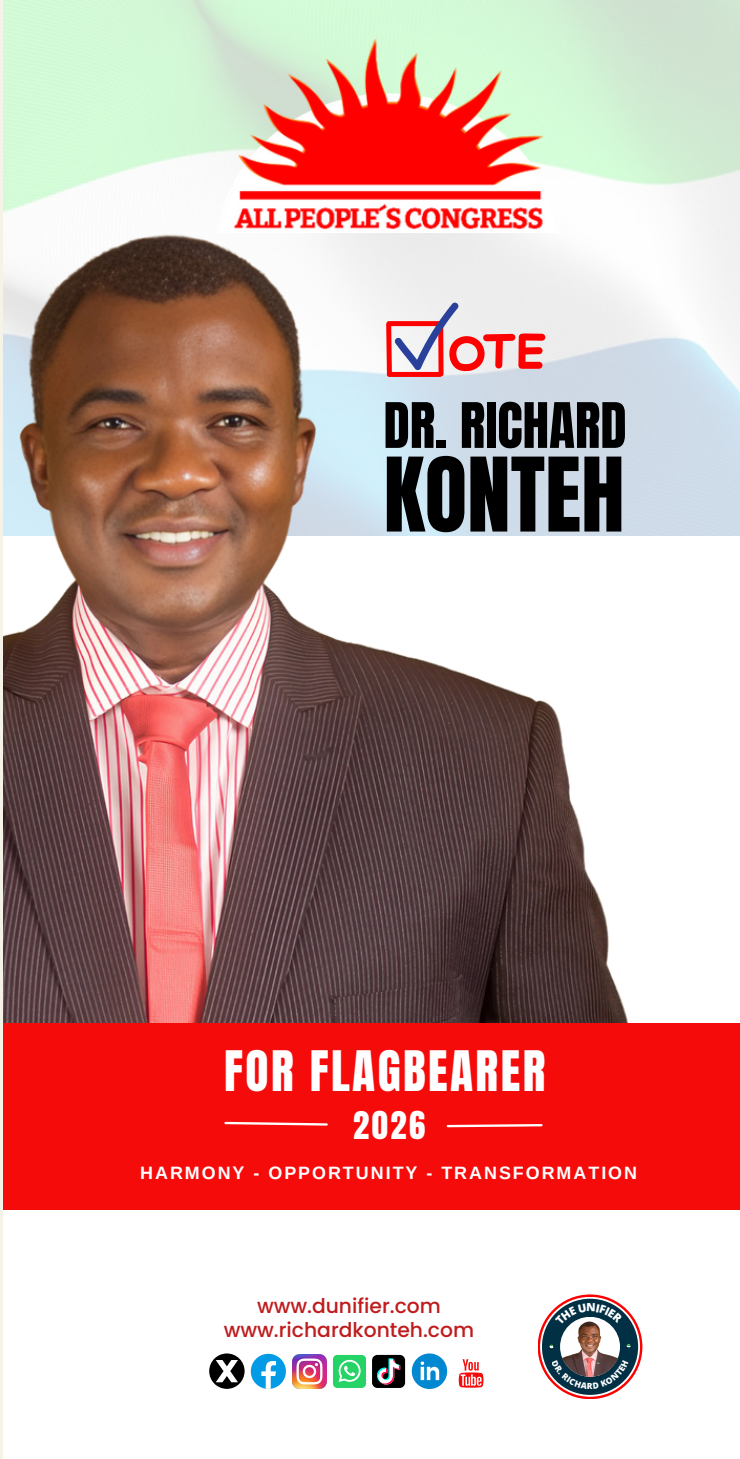
Opportunity focuses on creating an environment that enables economic growth and individual prosperity. This includes a strategic plan for economic diversification, job creation, and empowering youth and women to be active participants in the economy. The goal is to move beyond a dependency on natural resources and build a resilient economy that provides real opportunities for all.

Transformation is about a holistic change in governance and public life. It involves a commitment to good governance, accountability, and the fight against corruption. This principle also encompasses a vision for transforming Sierra Leone's infrastructure, education, and healthcare systems to meet the needs of a modern, prosperous nation.

The road to change in Sierra Leone is a long and difficult one. It requires a leader who can not only address the economic suffering but also mend the deep political wounds that have defined the nation's recent history. Dr. Richard Konteh offers a vision that is both experienced and unifying, providing hope that a more prosperous and cohesive future is possible for Sierra Leone.

May his message of unity be louder than the voices of hate. And may his vision be clearer than the noise of politics.

For more about Dr. Richard Konteh and his vision for the APC Party and Sierra Leone, visit
www.dunifier.com or
www.richardkonteh.com



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DR. RICHARD KONTEH

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MEANWHILE 🔥

The news feature highlighting lesser-known and often absurd stories from around Sierra Leone



Meanwhile, a World Bank report states that it supported a Skills Development Project of \$20 million in Sierra Leone.

The project aimed to increase access to demand-led skills training and helped lay the foundations for a demand-led skills development system. A total of 18,277 students benefited from the training, of whom 7,565 are currently enrolled and 10,712 have completed the training as of August 2022. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Management Information System (TVET MIS) is the main data platform for evidence-based policy and decision-making planning in the TVET sector. The project has further supported the development of the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) curriculum in the TVET, with curricula and standards developed for 25 occupations in various sectors, including agriculture, construction, fisheries, mining, and tourism.

I have a question: is this happening in Sierra Leone?

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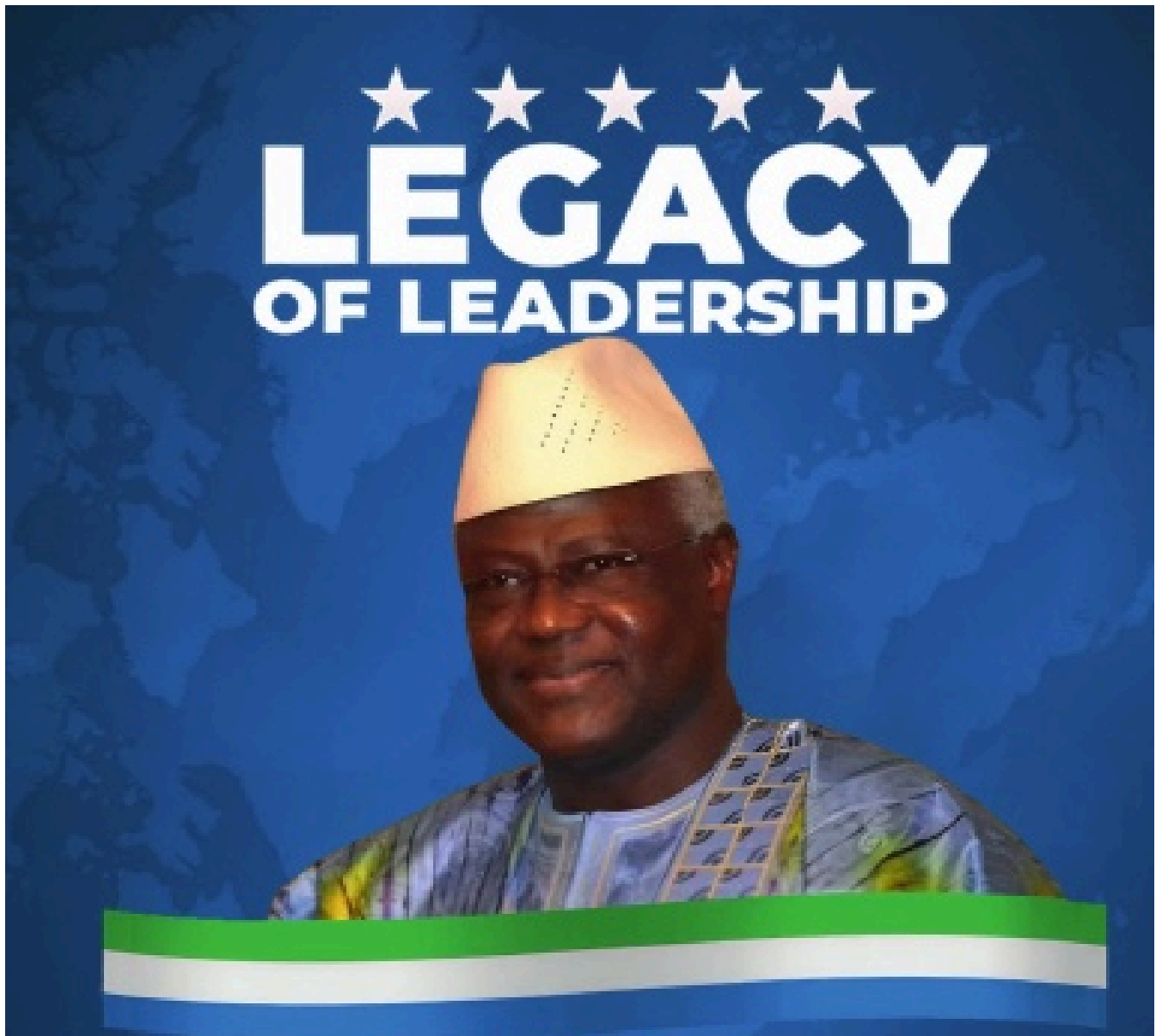
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Sierra Leone's Democratic Transformation Under Former President Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma

This weekend, on October 3, 2025, marks the official launch of the book "Legacy of Leadership," which summarizes the presidency of Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, who served as President of Sierra Leone from 2007 to 2018. The book, often credited to the Council of Progressives, focuses on the democratic transformation and post-conflict recovery of Sierra Leone under his tenure, emphasizing his administration's major policy initiatives, achievements, and commitment to democracy and good governance.

Core Themes and Policy Frameworks

The book frames President Koroma's governance through successive national development

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blueprints, beginning with the Agenda for Change (2008-2012) and followed by the Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2018). These agendas served as roadmaps for prioritizing national development in key sectors.

Key themes and policy pillars highlighted in the book include:

- **Infrastructure Development:** A massive push to rebuild the nation's infrastructure, which had been severely damaged during the civil war. This included a focus on constructing and rehabilitating roads, pipe-borne water systems, and energy infrastructure (especially the priority of electricity supply).
- **Economic Reform and Growth:** Drawing on his private sector background, President Koroma enacted policies of economic openness, aiming to attract Foreign Direct Investment and foster a robust private sector. This resulted in Sierra Leone becoming one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa by 2014, prior to the Ebola epidemic.
- **Democratic Consolidation and Good Governance:** The book details efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, fight corruption, and promote political tolerance. Notable steps include granting greater powers to the Anti-Corruption Commission and promoting an Open Government Initiative for public scrutiny and consultation on policy.
- **Peace and Stability:** It emphasizes President Koroma's role in consolidating peace following the civil war, maintaining stability, and conducting two peaceful, internationally commended multi-tier elections, culminating in a smooth and democratic handover of power to the opposition in 2018.

Achievements and Challenges

The book records significant achievements of the Koroma presidency, positioning them as evidence of his leadership legacy:

- **Post-Conflict Recovery:** Rapid progress in stabilizing the nation and moving it from the lowest ranks of the UN Human Development Index.
- **Economic Milestones:** Achieving substantial GDP growth, improving the business climate, and diversifying the economy, with a focus on commercializing agriculture.
- **Social Services:** Launching major social programs, such as the free health care initiative for pregnant and lactating women and children under five.
- **International Role:** Highlighting his diplomatic engagement, including chairing the African Union Committee of Ten for the Reform of the United Nations and participating in regional peace-brokering missions.

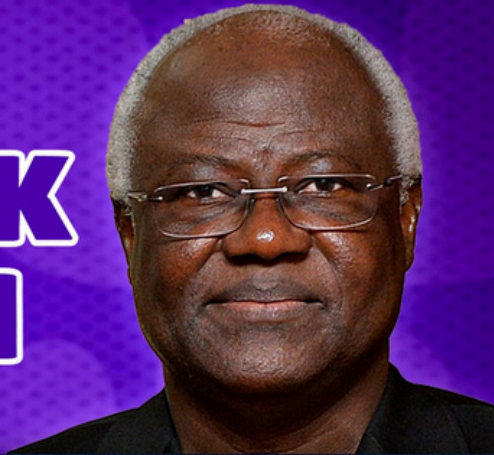
The narrative also addresses the significant challenges faced, notably the 2014 Ebola epidemic and the resulting economic downturn. The book likely portrays his leadership during the crisis as strong and unifying, mobilizing both national and international responses.

Leadership Style

The work ultimately portrays Dr. Koroma's leadership as one defined by vision, commitment to excellence, and service. It credits his private sector experience for the adoption of result-oriented governance, establishing clear deliverables and timelines for his development agendas, and fostering a spirit of continuous improvement and national resilience. The emphasis on his peaceful democratic transition serves as a final testament to his commitment to democracy in a region often characterized by political instability.

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MEANWHILE

Poda-Poda Overload



Meanwhile...

A Poda-Poda is already packed with at least 25 people where 15 should fit, plus several bags of rice, live goats tied to the roof, and a large basket of dried fish blocking the emergency exit.

The driver stops and shouts out the window, "Bo Kenema! Bo Kenema! Three more seats available! Hurry up!"

A potential passenger looks at the apprentice, who is practically hanging out the door, and says, "My brother, where are the seats? There is no space even for a mosquito to sneeze!"

The apprentice, completely serious, shouts back: "Hurry up! We are not going to carry your shadow! Just squeeze small! We have space for one person on the roof, one on the dashboard, and one to hold the goats!"



RICHARD KONTEH

—THE UNIFIER—

For Flagbearer



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HEALTH TALK

WITH APRN ABIOSEH PIEH



UNDERSTANDING STROKE: A RACE AGAINST TIME



Stroke, often called a "brain attack," is a critical medical emergency that affects the brain's blood supply. It's a leading cause of death and disability worldwide, but understanding its causes, symptoms, and treatments can make all the difference. While it may seem daunting, up to 80% of strokes are potentially preventable, according to the **American Stroke Association (ASA)**.

What Is a Stroke?

Simply put, a stroke occurs when a vessel supplying blood to the brain is either blocked or ruptured. When brain cells are deprived of oxygen-rich blood, they begin to die within minutes. This can lead to a range of severe and lasting effects, from physical impairments to cognitive challenges.

Types of Strokes

There are three main types of strokes, each with a different cause and treatment:

- **Ischemic Stroke:** This is the most common type, accounting for about 87% of all cases. It happens when a blood clot obstructs a vessel in the brain, preventing blood flow. The primary culprit is often

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atherosclerosis, where fatty deposits called plaque build up on artery walls. Urgent treatment for an ischemic stroke often involves clot-busting medications like Alteplase or mechanical clot removal procedures.

- **Hemorrhagic Stroke:** Making up about 13% of strokes, this type occurs when a weakened blood vessel ruptures and bleeds into the brain. The accumulated blood puts pressure on the surrounding brain tissue, causing damage. The most frequent cause of hemorrhagic strokes is uncontrolled high blood pressure.

- **Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA):** Often called a "mini-stroke," a TIA is a temporary event caused by a brief blockage of blood flow to the brain. While the symptoms are short-lived, a TIA is a powerful warning sign that a person is at higher risk for a full-blown stroke.

Know the Symptoms:

F.A.S.T.

Recognizing the signs of a stroke and acting quickly is crucial. The acronym F.A.S.T. is an easy way to remember the key symptoms:

- **Face Drooping:** Is one side of the face numb? Ask the person to smile—is their smile uneven?
- **Arm Weakness:** Is one arm weak or numb? Ask them to raise both arms—does one drift downward?
- **Speech Difficulty:** Is their speech slurred, or are they having trouble speaking or understanding?
- **Time to call 911:** Stroke is an emergency. Immediately call for help and note the time the symptoms first appeared.

Other symptoms can include sudden confusion, trouble walking, or a severe headache.

Who Is at Risk?

Stroke risk factors fall into two categories:

- **Modifiable Risk Factors:** These are behaviours and conditions you can change to lower your risk. They include high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, obesity, lack of exercise, and heart disease.
- **Non-Modifiable Risk Factors:** These factors cannot be changed, such as age, gender, family history, a previous stroke, and race. For instance, African American adults have a higher risk of stroke compared to white adults.

In fact, Black Americans are twice as likely to have a first-time stroke and are more likely to die from one. This disparity is often linked to a higher prevalence of risk factors like high blood pressure, diabetes, and sickle cell anemia.

The Road to Recovery

The effects of a stroke are unique to each individual. Physical challenges like difficulty walking or using hands and arms are common. However, the brain has an incredible capacity for recovery through plasticity and redundancy. With time, treatment, and a commitment to rehabilitation, many stroke survivors can regain lost skills and make significant progress.

A stroke is a serious medical event, but awareness and timely action are powerful tools. By understanding the risks and recognizing the signs, you can protect yourself and your loved ones.



Abie Pieh (MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC)

Abioseh Kamara-Pieh is a Board-Certified Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP-BC) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) with a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). She is passionate about delivering compassionate, holistic, and evidence-based care to individuals navigating mental health and primary care challenges.

With extensive experience in psychiatric care, Abioseh specializes in medication management, therapeutic interventions, and supportive counseling to address a wide range of mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, addiction, and mood disorders. Her approach to care is grounded in empathy, cultural sensitivity, and a deep commitment to helping people heal, grow, and thrive.

Whether working with children, adolescents, or adults, Abioseh's mission is to create a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment where each patient feels heard, respected, and supported. She believes that mental and physical health go hand-in-hand, and she strives to integrate both in her practice to promote long-term wellness and quality of life.

As the co-founder of Hephzibah Psychiatry Medical Center LLC, Abioseh is honored to be part of a growing movement to redefine mental health care—making it more accessible, compassionate, and patient-centered for communities across Delaware, Sierra Leone and beyond.

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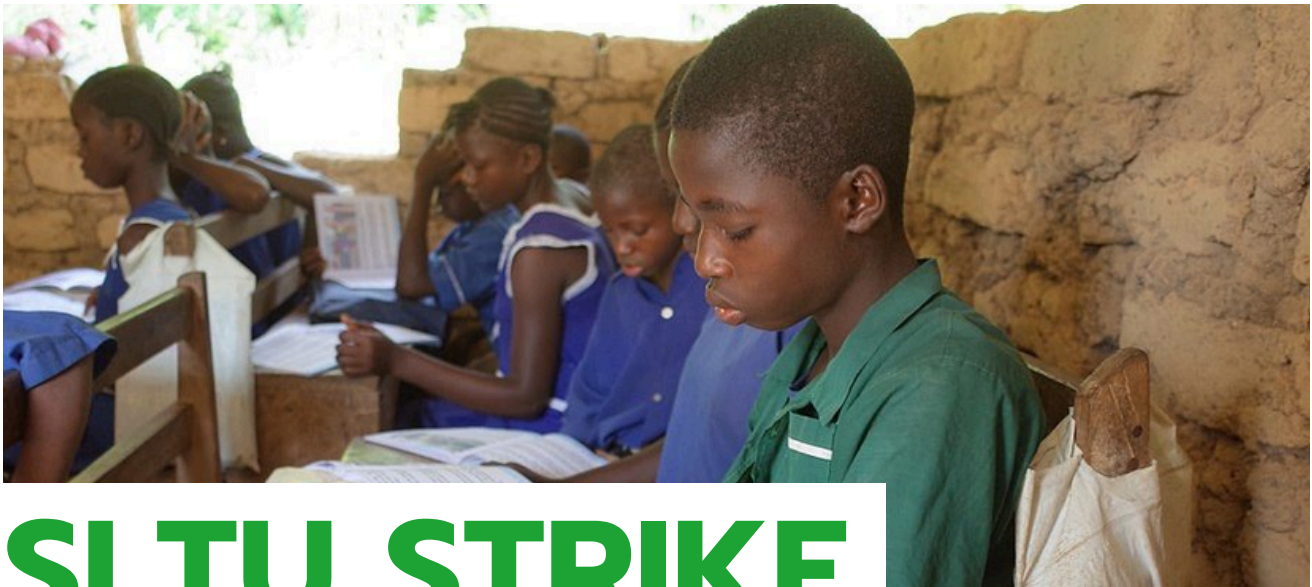
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SLTU STRIKE

The recent nationwide sit down strike by the Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) is a much bigger problem caused by the SLPP Government's Failed Free Quality School Education (FQSE) Program!

The recent Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) nationwide strike was a painful but necessary action that exposes the deep cracks in the SLPP government's flagship "Free Quality School Education" (FQSE) program. Implementing this so-called FQSE has become a story of unfulfilled promises and chronic underfunding.

The FQSE, in its current state, is failing due to a failure in execution. The SLTU's primary claim—that the government has not paid essential school subsidies for the past two academic terms—goes to the very heart of the problem. Without these funds, schools are crippled, unable to cover basic running costs, purchase learning materials, or even conduct essential maintenance.

The reality on the ground is consistent payment delays. Since 2018, there's been

chronic underfunding and delayed payments. The promised subsidies are not reaching schools in a timely manner, creating a cycle of financial hardship that directly impacts the quality of education.

The promise was for "Free Quality School Education." While student enrollment has surged, the government has failed to match this growth with adequate resources. This has led to overcrowded classrooms, a severe shortage of teaching and learning materials, and a demoralized teaching force.

Teachers are the backbone of the FQSE program, yet their welfare has been consistently neglected. The SLTU's grievances extend beyond subsidies to include issues of low salaries, unpaid arrears, and unfair practices such as the recent, alarming suspension of thousands of teachers from the

payroll. These issues undermine teacher morale and have led to a mass exodus of qualified educators from the public sector.

The system for disbursing funds is fraught with challenges. The SLTU has highlighted administrative hurdles and a lack of transparency that have prevented subsidies from reaching their intended recipients, even when the government claims payments have been made.

The nationwide sit-down strike by the SLTU is a crisis with far-reaching implications for Sierra Leone's future. It brought schooling to a complete halt, jeopardizing the academic year for millions of students. This is a devastating blow, particularly to vulnerable children who rely on public education as their only pathway to a better future.

The SLPP government's failure to address the teachers' legitimate concerns erodes public trust in the FQSE program and in its ability to deliver on its promises. It sends a message that the welfare of teachers and the quality of education are not true priorities.

The SLTU's call for a nationwide sit-down strike was a last resort—a cry for help from a profession that has been pushed to the brink for far too long.



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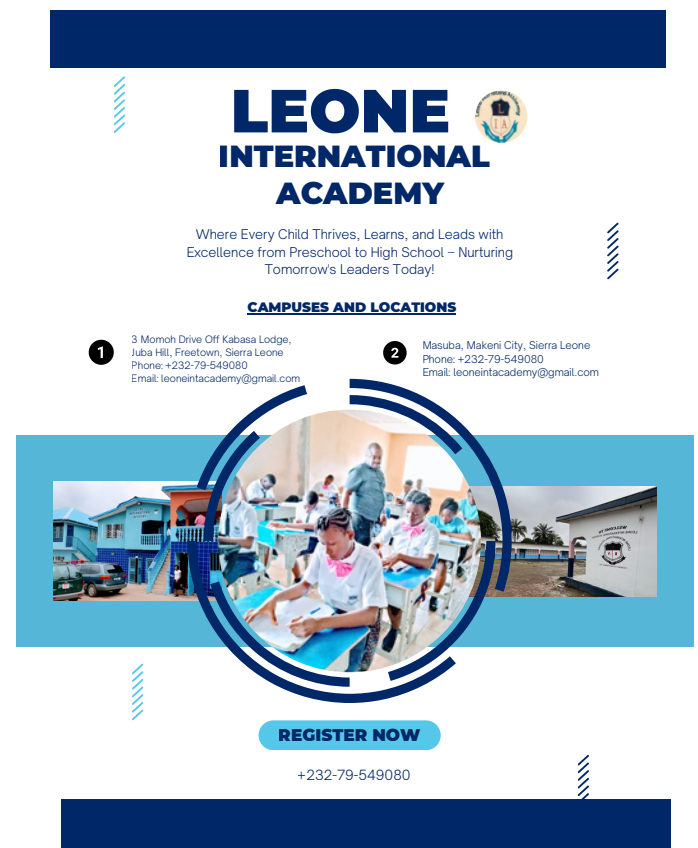
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MEANWHILE

The news feature highlighting lesser-known and often absurd stories from around Sierra Leone



A teacher and pupils at a school in Sierra Leone's Pujehun district. Photograph: Ahmed Jallanzo/EPA

Meanwhile, a World Bank report states that the SLPP's Free Education Project has received \$50 million and an additional financing of \$35 million.

But quality education is not quality. Teachers are striking. Students are failing. The World Bank said the project aims to improve the management of the education system, teaching practices, and learning conditions in primary and secondary education. The second additional financing adds \$35 million for further strengthening outcomes, including the provision of services to out-of-school children and the implementation of the Zero Learning Poverty Plan. These funds should have provided a nationwide foundational learning program for about 800,000 pupils and helped enroll 120,000 out-of-school children into formal and non-formal learning programs. A total of 1.8 million students, 56,000 teachers, and school management committee members in 7,900 primary and secondary schools have benefited from the project. **Are we daydreaming?**

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WORDS IN ACTION

The Unifier Movement Leads Cleanup Efforts in Makeni

Dr. Richard Konteh, a leading flagbearer aspirant for the All Peoples Congress (APC) party, has demonstrated his commitment to the people of Makeni and his party by sponsoring a cleanup of the Makeni Central Cemetery and the APC Regional Party Office.

Through his Unifier Movement, Dr. Konteh donated essential cleaning tools worth thousands of Leones to the APC Bombali District Protocols to facilitate the project.

The donation, presented by Unifier's Bombali District Chairman, John Kalawa Conteh, was described as a gesture of respect for the citizens of Makeni, both living and deceased, as well as for the APC party. Kalawa Conteh emphasized the importance of the cleanup, stating that this initiative is a small but significant step toward the movement's goals.

He assured the protocols that the Unifier Movement, under the leadership of Dr. Richard Konteh, plans to undertake more projects in the future.

Receiving the tools on behalf of the protocols was Bankolay Bright Conteh, who expressed gratitude to Dr. Konteh and the Unifier Movement. He highlighted that Dr. Konteh is the first flagbearer aspirant to provide them with such tools, a gesture that he believes will significantly boost their efforts.

Bright also noted that this action sets a positive example for other aspiring candidates to follow.

The presentation ceremony was also attended by Mariatu Kargbo, representing the District Protocols' chairlady, and Foday K. Sesay, also known as Tecno, the Organizing Secretary of the District Protocols. Both expressed their thanks and appreciation for Dr. Konteh's generous and thoughtful contribution.

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RELAX REFRESH REPEAT





COMPASSION IN ACTION

Dr. Konteh Visits A Sick APC Member in Pujehun District

In a heartwarming display of compassion and empathy, Dr. Richard Konteh, popularly known as D-Unifier, stopped at Comah, Pujehun District, to visit Madam Bintu Sheriff, an APC member who is currently very ill and in serious need of medical help.

Madam Bintu Sheriff is the APC Coordinator for the Liberia Branch. She is currently receiving medical attention in her hometown, Comah. Dr. Konteh and his team, on their way back from a campaign stop in Monrovia, Liberia, took time out to visit her, demonstrating his commitment to the well-being of party members.

This act of kindness and compassion speaks volumes about Dr. Konteh's character and leadership style. As a leader, he understands the importance of showing empathy and care to his members, particularly during a time of need. It is a testament to his dedication to the APC party and its members – showing he values the well-being of party members and he is committed to building a strong and supportive community.

True leadership is not just about policy and politics, but also about people and compassion. His visit to Madam Sheriff is a shining example of the kind of leader he aspires to be – one who is caring, empathetic, and genuinely invested in the well-being of his members.

Ms. Sheriff described Dr. Konteh's gesture as a sigh of relief and a demonstration of empathy from a true leader who cares for the grassroots in the APC Party. The PC party should be as a caring mother who passionately nurtures her children.

Dr. Konteh is gradually but firmly establishing the idea or attitude that, working for the APC party with sincerity yields honourable rewards, highlighting the party's commitment to valuing and supporting its members.



**DR. RICHARD
KONTEH**

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SIERRA LEONE'S ECONOMIC HEADWINDS:

A World Bank Perspective

The World Bank's latest outlook report on Sierra Leone paints a challenging picture of the nation's economic and fiscal stability in 2024. The country is grappling with a slowdown in economic growth, ballooning fiscal deficits, and a persistent high risk of debt distress, all of which threaten to undermine long-term macroeconomic stability.

Economic Slowdown and Trade Imbalances

The report estimates that growth in Sierra Leone slowed to 4.0% in 2024, a deceleration from the previous year. This slowdown is primarily attributed to a mixed performance in the key external sectors of the economy.

Slower Mineral Export Growth: As a resource-dependent economy, Sierra Leone relies heavily on mineral exports (like iron ore) for foreign exchange earnings and government revenue. The subdued performance of this sector, likely due to fluctuations in global commodity prices and slower production, has been a significant drag on overall economic expansion.

High Import Growth: Compounding the issue of slower exports is a surge in imports, particularly mineral oil and lubricants. This increase suggests a growing need for energy and industrial inputs, which, while necessary for economic activity, requires more foreign currency. When import growth outpaces export growth, it widens the trade deficit and puts pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserves and local currency.

Exceeded Fiscal Deficit and Weak Public Finance Management

The country's fiscal position has significantly worsened, with the fiscal deficit reaching 4.8% of GDP in 2024, a figure that exceeds the government's budget target. This substantial gap between revenue and expenditure highlights critical weaknesses in public financial governance.

Inefficient Budget Execution: The report points directly to weaknesses in commitment control and oversight institutions as key contributors to this overrun. This includes vital bodies like the supreme audit institutions and the parliament, which are meant to provide checks and balances on public spending.

Legislative Deficiencies: Furthermore, legislative deficiencies in public finance management suggest that the current legal framework may not be robust enough to enforce fiscal discipline and prevent inefficient budget execution. This combination of institutional and legal shortcomings means that public resources are not being utilized effectively, leading to recurrent budgetary overruns that strain national finances.

Soaring Debt Costs and High Distress Risk

Sierra Leone continues to face a high risk of debt distress under the SLPP government, a precarious situation indicating the country may struggle to meet its debt obligations. The cost of borrowing domestically has reached alarming levels.

Domestic Debt Interest Rate at 40%: The report notes that the cost of domestic debt has surged to an average annual interest rate of 40%. This exceptionally high rate signifies extreme market risk perception and makes it prohibitively expensive for the government to borrow from domestic sources. It also suggests an environment of high domestic inflation and tight liquidity, as high interest rates are often used as a tool to combat rising prices.

Fiscal Dominance and Monetary Policy Hindrance: The government's significant borrowing (fiscal dominance) has two major side effects. Firstly, it limits private sector credit by crowding out private borrowers in the domestic financial market, which starves businesses of the capital needed for investment and job creation. Secondly, the Bank of Sierra Leone's (BSL) purchases of government securities to help finance the deficit hinder the central bank's ability to conduct independent and effective monetary policy, as it becomes subservient to the government's fiscal needs.

Dwindling International Reserves

The country's buffer against external shocks has weakened, raising concerns about its ability to finance essential imports.

Gross International Reserves Decline: Gross international reserves fell to cover only two months of imports in 2024, down from 2.6 months in 2023. A level below three months is generally considered inadequate to comfortably manage unforeseen external payments or sudden changes in trade. This low coverage makes the economy highly vulnerable to shocks like oil price spikes or a decrease in foreign aid.

Risks to Macroeconomic Stability

The combination of the fiscal and external vulnerabilities presents significant risks to the country's overall economic stability.

Jeopardizing Sustainability: The World Bank warns that persistent fiscal overruns could undermine both fiscal and debt sustainability. Unchecked spending leads to higher deficits, which are financed by more debt, creating a vicious cycle that ultimately jeopardizes macroeconomic stability.

External and Climate Risks: The outlook is further complicated by external factors beyond the country's control:

- *Fluctuations in global commodity prices* could further depress mineral export earnings.
- *Global demand* for exports could soften.
- *Higher imported inflation*—driven by global price increases for goods like fuel and food—will continue to erode the purchasing power of citizens.

Weather Shocks: Domestically, weather shocks, such as unexpected droughts or floods, pose a serious threat, as they can hinder agricultural growth and poverty reduction in a country where a significant portion of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. This highlights the urgent need for climate adaptation strategies and greater diversification of the economy.

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OPEN LETTERS TO THE PRESIDENT



LETTER 1

We Are Troubled By The Growing Economic Hardship

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you today not as a political analyst or an economist, but as a concerned citizen deeply troubled by the growing economic hardship that our fellow Sierra Leoneans face on a daily basis. While recent data from sources such as the World Bank and the IMF indicate some macroeconomic improvements, the reality on the ground for the ordinary person tells a different, more painful story.

The numbers are stark: a significant portion of our population is food insecure, and basic necessities have become a luxury. The value of our currency continues to be a source of constant worry, eroding the purchasing power of meagre salaries and daily wages. Our farmers, who form the backbone of our economy, struggle with the rising costs of fuel and fertilizer,

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which in turn drives up the price of locally grown food. This paradox—where local products are often more expensive than imports—highlights a deep-seated vulnerability in our supply chains and agricultural sector.

For many families, the simple act of buying a bag of rice, a staple of our diet, has become a source of immense stress. Parents are forced to make heartbreaking choices between feeding their children, paying school fees, or seeking medical care. The cost of transportation has skyrocketed, making it increasingly difficult for people to commute to work or for goods to reach the market. These challenges are not merely abstract economic figures; they are the lived experience of our people, from the streets of Freetown to the remote villages of Bonthe.

Your government has made efforts to stabilize the economy, and the reported decline in inflation from its peak is a step in the right direction. However, these improvements have yet to translate into meaningful relief for the majority of the population. The perception of a disconnect between national-level economic plans and the struggles of everyday life is a major source of frustration and anxiety.

We implore you, Your Excellency, to prioritize and accelerate the implementation of measures that will bring tangible relief. We ask for a greater focus on:

- ***Agricultural Support:*** Investing in our local farmers to reduce our dependence on costly food imports.
- ***Salary and Wage Reform:*** Ensuring that the incomes of public and private sector workers are adjusted to reflect the true cost of living.
- ***Infrastructure Development:*** Improving roads and transportation networks to lower the cost of moving goods and people.
- ***Transparency and Accountability:*** Tackling corruption, which siphons away resources that could be used to uplift our communities.

The people of Sierra Leone are resilient, but their resilience is being tested to its limits. This is a moment that calls for bold, decisive, and compassionate leadership. The time for promises is over; the time for action that can be felt in every household is now.

With sincere respect and hope for a better future,

Ibrahim M.

A Concerned Citizen of Sierra Leone

LETTER 2

Stop Monopoly, Allow Free Market System

Dear Mr. President,

Let me first extend my greetings to you in the name of national unity.

Mr. President, a disturbing event unfolded on Saturday, August 23, 2025. News broke that the Sierra Leone Police halted the official launch of a proposed motorbike and "keke" assembly plant in Masiaka, an initiative spearheaded by Mohamed Omodu Kamara, a flagbearer aspirant for the All Peoples Congress. Reports indicate this is the second time such an interruption has occurred, the first being on August 16, reportedly due to a lack of clearance. The second time, however, police allegedly interrupted the event without providing any clear justification.

This development is particularly concerning given your frequent emphasis on job creation for the citizens of Sierra Leone. This investment could have created jobs for hundreds, if not thousands, of young people, providing a positive path away from drug involvement.

The question on many people's minds is, why was this event stopped? Was the discontinuation of this project based on who was behind it, rather than its economic merit?

The Economic Impact of Monopoly vs. a Free Market System

Mr. President, this situation appears to be a clear example of the harmful effects of a monopoly—a market structure in which a single company or group has exclusive control over a particular good or service, and a lack of competition. When a monopoly exists, the controlling entity can dictate prices and production without fear of being undercut by rivals. This often leads to higher prices, lower quality, and a lack of innovation because there's no incentive to improve.

Many people believe the police's actions were intended to protect an existing business, Shalema, an Indian company, from competition. If this is true, it is an injustice to our nation's youth and their families, who would have benefited from new employment opportunities. Protecting a monopoly at the expense of new investment is unpatriotic and detrimental to our country's economic growth.

In contrast, a free market economy thrives on competition. In this system, businesses compete openly, which drives companies to offer better products at lower prices to attract consumers. It encourages innovation, efficiency, and a wider variety of goods and services. Allowing this new assembly plant to operate would not only create jobs but also introduce healthy competition

continued on next page

into the market for motorbikes and kekes. This would likely result in more affordable prices and better products for consumers across the country.

Mr. President, you are known to be a listening leader, and I urge you to intervene and ensure the successful establishment of this assembly plant in Masiaka. A truly patriotic government fosters a free market system that empowers its citizens and creates a level playing field for all.

While I await your prompt action on this matter, I would also like to remind you not to overlook the request for the construction of the Makama Road.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel Jim

A Concerned Citizen



LETTER 3

An Urgent Appeal: Reconstruct the Matenhu Bridge

Dear Mr. President,

I extend greetings to you from the people of Bombali and Karene Districts.

The photograph accompanying this letter vividly illustrates the severe disconnect between the neighboring Bombali and Karene Districts. This isn't just a story; it's the harsh reality for the residents of Karene, who face immense difficulties traveling to Makeni.

For nearly two years, the bridge connecting these two districts has been cut off, with no discernible action taken to remedy the situation.

The current predicament forces vehicles from Makeni and Kamakwei to stop on either side of the divide. Commuters are then compelled to pay for alternative means to cross, just to complete their journeys. Even those opting for motorbikes, while faster, incur additional costs, as both passengers and riders must pay to have themselves and their bikes ferried across.

This critical infrastructure failure has severely hampered business in Karene District, leading to stagnation and a sharp increase in the prices of goods available in the district headquarters.

Mr. President, the bridge in question marks the boundary between Kalangba and Gbendenbu towns, along the vital highway to Kamakwei. This situation is deeply disheartening for the very people who entrusted you with their votes in the 2023 general elections.



continued on next page

The Sierra Leone Road Authority (SLRA) has, in the public eye, demonstrated a lack of efficiency, effectiveness, proactivity, and fitness for purpose. Their attempt to use a coainer as a temporary bridge was widely condemned as a "death trap."

To rectify this dire situation, Mr. President, I urge you to revisit the Makeni-Kamakwei road contract. This review should explicitly include authorization for the immediate construction of a new bridge at Matenhu.

In closing, it is imperative to note that there are other critical bridges along the Makeni-Kamakwei highway, similar to Matenhu, that also require urgent attention. Failure to authorize the completion of this vital road network will inevitably lead to a complete and utter disconnect between these two essential districts.

Mr. President, the people of Karene are not strangers; they are citizens of Sierra Leone who deserve safe and reliable infrastructure. Please, act now.

Humbly,

Emmanuel Jim

A Concerned Citizen





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