

THE UNIFIER MAGAZINE

PEOPLE • ISSUES • IDEAS



64 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

WELCOME TO THE

THE UNIFIER MAGAZINE

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 4



Inspired by New, Big & Bold Ideas

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our special Independence Day edition of The Unifier Magazine. This issue is a tribute to the enduring spirit of Sierra Leone—a nation that has journeyed through 64 years of independence with resilience, hope, and unwavering determination. As we commemorate our rich history and look to the future, this edition encapsulates the multifaceted narrative of our nation.

Our cover story, **"64 Years of Independence: A Retrospective on Sierra Leone's Journey!"** invites you to revisit the milestones, challenges, and transformative moments that have defined our path since 1961. In **"April 20, 1960: The Shaky Foundation,"** we explore the early, turbulent days that laid the groundwork for our hard-won freedom. The subsequent article, **"Six Decades of Leadership Saga: The Leaders: Impact and Legacies,"** offers an in-depth look at the leaders who have steered our nation through times of change.

Looking forward, **"Innovating for Independence: Technology, Entrepreneurship, and the Road Ahead"** highlights how modern innovation is fueling the economic and social transformation necessary for a brighter future. **"Unity in Diversity: Building a Nation Together"** examines how our diverse cultural heritage continues to forge bonds among Sierra Leoneans, driving us toward a more inclusive society.

Additionally, our special column, **"Health Talk: with APRN Abioseh Pieh,"** provides essential insights into the pressing health issues, starting with Hypertension, reflecting our commitment to addressing the everyday challenges affecting our communities.

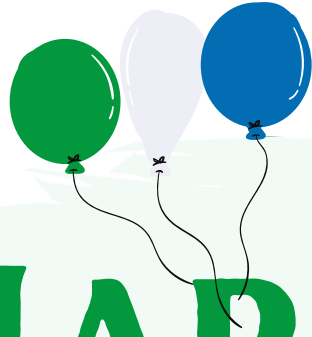
Finally, our feature on **"Economic Justice for Sierra Leone: A Unifying Fight Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Development"** challenges us to build a fairer economy that benefits every citizen, laying the foundation for lasting progress.

This edition is a celebration of our past and a call to action for our future. It is a reminder that true independence is achieved through remembering our history and forging ahead with innovation, unity, and economic justice.

We hope these articles stimulate thoughtful discussion, inspire actionable change, and provide insight and enjoyment.

Thank you for joining us on this reflective and forward-looking journey. Let us celebrate our shared legacy and work together towards a more prosperous and equitable Sierra Leone.

Editor



HAPPY **INDEPENDENCE** *Day* **SIERRA LEONE**

Nothing is as good as living in an
independent and self-sustaining nation.

APRIL 27TH



The Unifier Gala Dinner

DATE: June 28, 2025

TIME: 7:00 PM

VENUE: 1647 Delmer Drive, Folcroft, PA 19032

TICKETS

Regular: \$50

Single Patron: \$100

Double Patron: \$150

Make your reservation now!

+1 (731) 444-0866

+1 (732) 209-5755

**ADULTS
ONLY**



64 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

A RETROSPECTIVE ON SIERRA LEONE'S JOURNEY



The seeds of independence were sown in the burgeoning nationalist movements of the mid-20th century. Figures like Sir Milton Margai, a physician who transitioned into politics, played a pivotal role in uniting diverse ethnic groups under a common banner of self-governance. Many leading voices advocated for political autonomy.

Through constitutional negotiations and peaceful political mobilization, the path towards independence was paved, culminating in the momentous lowering of the Union Jack and the raising of the green, white, and blue flag on that historic day in 1961. The initial years were characterized by optimism and a focus on establishing democratic

institutions, developing infrastructure, and fostering national unity. Sierra Leone, rich in natural resources like diamonds and minerals, promised prosperity and a bright future for its diverse population.

However, the nascent democracy soon encountered significant challenges. The post-

continued on next page

independence era witnessed the rise of political polarization, economic disparities, and the weakening of democratic structures. From 1964 - 1967, the unpopular Sir Albert Margai resorted to increasingly authoritarian actions in response to protests, including enacting several laws against the opposition All People's Congress (APC) and an unsuccessful attempt to establish a one-party state. The latter part of Sir Albert Margai's tenure was characterized by political instability, culminating in the military coup d'état of 1967, which ushered in a period of military coups and governance in Sierra Leone.

The interruptions by military coups set the stage for a lengthy and authoritarian rule by President Siaka Stevens from 1971 to 1985.

The culmination of these underlying tensions, exacerbated by regional conflicts and the proliferation of small arms, tragically erupted in the brutal civil war that engulfed Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002. Triggered by incursions from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh, the conflict became notorious for its extreme violence, including widespread amputations, the use of child soldiers, and the systematic targeting of civilians.

The war decimated the country's infrastructure, shattered social cohesion, and left deep psychological scars on the population. Through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), the international community played a crucial role in peacekeeping and disarmament efforts, eventually paving the way for an end to the conflict.

The post-war period has been a long and arduous journey of reconstruction and reconciliation. Establishing lasting peace required addressing the root causes of the conflict, including poverty, inequality, and the lack of opportunities for youth. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) provided a platform for victims and perpetrators to share their stories, fostering national healing. Efforts were also undertaken to reform the security sector, strengthen democratic institutions, and rebuild the shattered economy.

Economically, Sierra Leone has grappled with its dependence on natural resources, particularly diamonds, which ironically fueled the civil war ("blood diamonds"). Diversifying the economy, promoting sustainable resource management, and attracting foreign investment in sectors like agriculture and tourism have been key priorities.

However, the country remains vulnerable to global commodity price fluctuations and external economic shocks. Furthermore, addressing widespread poverty and creating employment opportunities, especially for the large youth population, remains a critical challenge.

In terms of governance and democracy, Sierra Leone has made significant strides since the war's end. Regular multi-party elections have been held, although political tensions and allegations of irregularities have often accompanied them. Strengthening the rule of law, combating corruption, and ensuring the independence of the judiciary are ongoing processes vital for consolidating democratic gains. Civil society organizations and a vibrant media landscape are crucial in holding the government accountable and promoting transparency.

The social fabric of Sierra Leone, though deeply scarred by the war, has shown remarkable resilience. Community-based initiatives and traditional mechanisms have played a vital role in fostering reconciliation and rebuilding trust. However, addressing the long-term psychological trauma of the conflict and ensuring equitable access to education and healthcare remain significant

priorities. The Ebola outbreak in 2014-2016 further tested the nation's resilience and highlighted the fragility of its public health infrastructure, underscoring the urgent need for investment in this critical sector.

Looking ahead, Sierra Leone stands at a critical juncture. The lessons learned from its tumultuous past offer valuable insights for navigating the challenges and opportunities of the future. The focus must remain on strengthening democratic institutions, promoting inclusive economic growth, investing in human capital, and fostering national unity. Addressing issues of corruption, improving governance, and ensuring equitable distribution of resources are crucial for building a more just and prosperous society.

The resilience and spirit of the Sierra Leonean people are undeniable. Their ability to overcome immense adversity, from the horrors of civil war to the devastation of the Ebola epidemic, speaks volumes about their strength and determination. As Sierra Leone commemorates its 64th year of independence, it is essential to acknowledge the complexities of its journey – the triumphs and the setbacks, the moments of unity and the periods of division.

By understanding its past struggles, the nation can better shape its present and inspire a future where the promise of independence is fully realized for all its citizens. The path ahead will undoubtedly present its own set of challenges, but with a commitment to good governance, inclusive development, and the enduring spirit of its people, Sierra Leone can continue its journey towards a brighter and more prosperous future. This anniversary is not just a celebration of the past; it is a reaffirmation of the ongoing commitment to building a stronger, more resilient, and more unified Sierra Leone for generations to come.



WWW.AMAZON.COM



WWW.AMAZON.COM



WWW.AMAZON.COM

LEONE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY



Where Every Child Thrives, Learns, and Leads with
Excellence from Preschool to High School – Nurturing
Tomorrow's Leaders Today!

CAMPUSES AND LOCATIONS

1

3 Momoh Drive Off Kabasa Lodge,
Juba Hill, Freetown, Sierra Leone
Phone: +232-79-549080
Email: leoneintacademy@gmail.com

2

Masuba, Makeni City, Sierra Leone
Phone: +232-79-549080
Email: leoneintacademy@gmail.com



REGISTER NOW

+232-79-549080

HEALTH TALK

WITH APRN ABIOSEH PIEH



HYPERTENSION



WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Hypertension (HTN) is defined as systolic blood pressure (SBP) of 140 mm Hg or greater and/or a diastolic BP of 90 mm Hg or greater on two separate occasions (James et al., 2014).

The goal is to decrease mortality and kidney and cardiovascular morbidity. The World Health Organization (WHO) noted that

hypertension is one of the major risk factors accounting for 13% of mortality worldwide.

If left untreated, hypertension can result in transient ischemic attack, erectile dysfunction, aortic regurgitation, peripheral arterial disease (PAD), coronary artery disease (CAD), atrial fibrillation, myocardial infarction, heart failure (HF),

stroke, intracerebral hemorrhage, or kidney failure.

STAGES OF HTN

There are three stages of HTN; Prehypertension is a systolic BP of 120–139 mm Hg or a diastolic BP of 80–89 mm Hg.

Stage 1 HTN is a systolic BP of 140–159 mm Hg or a diastolic BP of 90–99 mm Hg.

continued on next page

Stage 2 HTN is a systolic BP $\geq$ 160 mm Hg or a diastolic BP $\geq$ 100 mm Hg.

TYPES OF HTN

There are three types of hypertension: primary hypertension, secondary hypertension and Pregnancy induced HTN.

Primary hypertension also known as essential hypertension can be defined as hypertension with an unknown etiology.

Secondary hypertension is defined as HTN caused by conditions known to elevate blood pressure.

Pregnancy induced HTN: is caused by increased production of hormones and enzymes during pregnancy.

RISK FACTORS OF HTN

Modifiable risk factors are things that can cause HTN that you can control or change. Examples are, Age, Family History, genetics, Sex and Race/ethnicity Age, Obesity, family history, race, and diet.

Non-Modifiable risk factors are lifestyle choices that can be changed. Examples are diet, physical activity, smoking, alcohol consumption, and stress levels, as well as conditions like obesity and diabetes.

HTN INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE IN SIERRA LEONE

In Sierra Leone, only 23% of hypertensive patients were diagnosed, 11% were treated and only 5% had their BP under control.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

The pathophysiology of hypertension is multifaceted. There are different ways in which an individual can develop hypertension. One mechanism in which an individual can develop hypertension is by increasing salt intake leading to expansion of volume.

Furthermore, patients can develop hypertension due to a decreased compliance of the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (RAAS) and a heightened stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system (Iqba & Jamal, 2020). These changes in the body system can result in increased total peripheral resistance and increased afterload, thus the development of hypertension.

TYPICAL CLINICAL PRESENTATION OF HYPERTENSION

Most individuals with hypertension often present with no symptoms and are diagnosed incidentally by blood pressure recording or measurement.

However, some patients present with headaches, blurry vision, and symptoms of end-organ damage such as stroke-like symptoms or hypertensive encephalopathy, chest pain, shortness of breath and acute pulmonary edema (Iqba & Jamal, 2020).

TREATMENT FOR HTN

Diet: As a healthcare provider, I always tell my patients, "*What you eat is who you are.*" If you eat healthily, you will be healthy; if you eat unhealthy food, it shows in your health. One method for treating HTN is Diet. A dietary approach to treating hypertension revolves around the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), which has been proven effective in lowering blood pressure. Here's a breakdown of its key principles. As a patient with HTN, your diet should be rich in fibres (fruits. Vegetables, whole grains) Potassium, magnesium and calcium (bananas, yogurts, almonds and spinach), Low salt to about 2,300mg/day (avoid processed food, canned soup and salty snacks).

Exercise is another way that blood pressure can be managed. Exercise is a powerful and natural way to lower blood pressure.

Here are some effective approaches:

continued on next page

The goal is to exercise 4 times a week for at least 45 minutes. No exercise is too little to help with blood pressure management. Walking, running, lifting weights or riding a bike increases blood flow to vital organs in the body.

Medication: It's hard to take daily medication; however, compliance is key in managing blood pressure. Therefore, if you are suffering from HTN, it's important to take your medication daily as prescribed to prevent further damage to your heart. Examples of HTN medications are. Amlodipine, HTCZ, Lisinopril, and many more.



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.

HEPHZIBAH

PSYCHIATRY & MEDICAL CENTER



Online Medical Clinic

contact info

(731) 444-0866

Hephzibahh.09@gmail.com

One-stop hassle-free services:

- General Checkups
- Weight management
- Sick visits
- FMLA
- Mental Health Evaluations
- Substance Use Treatment

HephzibahPsymed.com



Visiting Makeni City?

Stop by Makama Lodge



1 Konteh Drive, Makeni; Phone: +232 79 121651

Email: info@makamalodge.com; Website: www.makamalodge.com

RELAX REFRESH REPEAT



VISITING FREETOWN?

Check out



Sierra Guesthouse

Your Home Away From Home



UNWIND TO REVITALIZE

1 Kamara Drive
Freetown, Hill Station
Phone: +232-74-337-400

Email: hello@sierraguesthouse.com; Website: sierraguesthouse.com

APRIL 20, 1960

THE SHAKY FOUNDATION



The Constitutional and Independence Conferences at Lancaster House in London

1960 was a momentous year for Sierra Leone, a nation poised on the precipice of independence. It was a year marked by a tumultuous blend of anticipation, struggle, and the promise of a new dawn.

On April 20, 1960, Sir Milton Margai led the Sierra Leonean delegation in the negotiations for independence at the constitutional conferences held with Queen Elizabeth II and British Colonial Secretary Iain Macleod, at Lancaster House in London. The twenty-four members of the Sierra Leonean delegation were prominent and well-respected politicians,

including Sir Milton Margai, Sir Albert Margai, trade unionist Siaka Stevens, SLPP-strongman Lamina Sankoh, activist Isaac Wallace-Johnson, Paramount chief Ella Koblo Gulama, educationist Mohamed Sanusi Mustapha, Dr. John Karefa-Smart, Professor Kande Bureh, lawyer Sir Banja Tejan-Sie, former Freetown Mayor Eustace Henry Taylor Cummings, educationist Amadu Wurie, and diplomat Hector Reginald Sylvanus Boltman.

After the talks in London, Britain agreed to grant Sierra Leone Independence on April 27, 1961.

Siaka Stevens was the only delegate who refused to sign Sierra Leone's Declaration of Independence on the grounds that there had been a secret (non-disclosed) defence pact between Sierra Leone and Britain; another point Siaka Stevens contented was the Sierra Leonean government's position that there would be no elections held before independence which would effectively shut him out of Sierra Leone's political process.

Upon their return to Freetown on May 4, 1960, Siaka Stevens was promptly expelled from the People's National Party (PNP).

SIX DECADES OF LEADERSHIP SAGA

THE LEADERS: IMPACT AND LEGACIES



Sir Milton Margai
Prime Minister: 1961 - 1964

Sir Milton Augustus Strieby Margai played a crucial role in the formation of Sierra Leone's political landscape. He was instrumental in the negotiations leading to Sierra Leone's independence from British colonial rule on April 27, 1961. As the leader of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), he advocated for self-governance and worked tirelessly to establish a stable democratic system.

Following independence, Sir Milton Margai became the first Prime Minister of Sierra Leone,

serving from 1961 until his untimely death in 1964. His leadership was committed to democracy, good governance, and national unity. Under his tenure, Sierra Leone experienced relative political stability and economic growth.

Sir Milton Margai's legacy extends beyond his political achievements. Today, he is remembered as a statesman of integrity, humility, and dedication to public service. His leadership style was characterized by pragmatism, consensus-building, and a deep commitment to the welfare of the Sierra Leonean people. His example continues to inspire present and future generations of leaders in Sierra Leone and beyond.

Sir Milton Margai's leadership faced criticism for his failure to promote political pluralism, to address ethnic-regional biases, and to prioritize comprehensive social reforms to address issues such as gender inequality, human rights abuses, and access to basic services for marginalized populations.



Sir Milton Margai
Prime Minister: 1964 - 1967

Sir Albert Michael Margai, the younger brother of Sir Milton Margai, and a lawyer. He served as the second Prime Minister of Sierra Leone from 1964 to 1967. His political career, contributions and legacy in Sierra Leone are complex and multifaceted.

Sir Albert Margai's government prioritized economic development initiatives to foster growth and improve Sierra Leoneans' living standards. His administration implemented infrastructure projects, including road construction and rural

electrification, to enhance connectivity and facilitate economic activities.

Sir Albert Margai's government made efforts to improve educational standards and increase healthcare coverage, particularly in rural areas. Recognizing the importance of agriculture to Sierra Leone's economy, Sir Albert Margai's government implemented policies to support the agricultural sector.

Unlike his late brother, Sir Milton, Sir Albert Margai proved unpopular and resorted to increasingly authoritarian actions in response to protests, including the enactment of several laws against the opposition All People's Congress (APC) and an unsuccessful attempt to establish a one-party state.

Sir Albert Margai's tenure was marred by allegations of electoral irregularities and controversies, particularly surrounding the 1967 general elections. The conduct of the elections, including accusations of voter fraud and manipulation, cast doubt on the credibility of the democratic process under his leadership.

The latter part of Sir Albert Margai's tenure was characterized by political instability, culminating in the military coup d'état of 1967. The

coup ended his government's rule and ushered in a period of military governance in Sierra Leone.



Brigadier David Lansana
First coup d'état Leader
March 21 - 23, 1967

Brigadier Lansana was one of the most distinguished officers in the history of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces. Lansana was appointed army commander in 1964 by Sir Albert Margai. Lansana was a close ally of Sir Albert Margai.

In a closely contested general election on March 17, 1967, Sir Albert Michael Margai's SLPP was defeated by Siaka Stevens' APC. The All People's Congress narrowly won 32 parliamentary seats, while Margai's SLPP held on to just 28 seats. Siaka Stevens was sworn in as Prime Minister on March 21, 1967.

On March 21, 1967, Brigadier David Lansana staged Sierra Leone's first coup d'état.

Within hours of taking office, Siaka Stevens was ousted in a bloodless military coup led by Lansana. He placed Siaka Stevens under house arrest in Freetown and insisted the prime minister's office's determination should await the election of the tribal representatives to the house.

Lansana was later charged with treason, tried and found guilty. He was executed on July 19, 1975.



Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith
NRC: March 27, 1967 - April 1968

On March 23, 1967, a group of senior military officers in the Sierra Leone Army, including Major Charles Blake and Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith, seized control of the government, arrested Brigadier Lansana, and suspended the constitution. The group constituted itself as the National Reformation Council (NRC), with Juxon-Smith as its chairman and Governor-General.

continued on next page

Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith's brief tenure as the head of state in Sierra Leone from 1967 to 1968 was marked by controversial contributions, which shaped his legacy in the country.

His coup promised a new era of governance free from the previous administration's perceived flaws. In the immediate aftermath of assuming power, Brigadier Juxon-Smith initiated anti-corruption measures, signalling his commitment to addressing the rampant corruption that plagued Sierra Leone's political landscape.

However, his regime quickly descended into authoritarianism, characterized by suppression of political opposition, censorship of the press, and human rights abuses. His administration curtailed civil liberties and imposed restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, undermining democratic principles. The regime failed to implement meaningful changes or address the underlying issues plaguing Sierra Leone. His lack of a coherent vision for governance and development contributed to the country's stagnation and decline during his tenure.

On April 18, 1968, Brigadier Juxon-Smith's NRC junta was ousted by another junta, the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement (ACRM).



Brigadier John Amadu Bangura
ACRM: April 18-22, 1968

On April 18 1968, another group of senior military officers called themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement (ACRM), led by Brigadier General John Amadu Bangura, overthrew the Juxon-Smith's NRC junta. The ACRM junta arrested many senior NRC members.

A few days later, on April 22, 1968, Brigadier Bangura restored the democratic constitution and handed power back to Siaka Stevens, who assumed the prime minister's office.

Brigadier Bangura's decision to relinquish power and facilitate the return to civilian rule after a few days demonstrated a commitment to democratic principles and the rule of law. This move paved the way for the restoration of democratic governance in Sierra Leone.

In 1970, Prime Minister Siaka Stevens arrested Brigadier

John Bangura and charged him with conspiracy. Brigadier Bangura was sentenced to death by execution for treason against the state.



Christopher Okoro Cole
President: April 19-21, 1971

In 1970, Christopher Elnathan Okoro Cole became the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone. At this time, Sierra Leone embarked on a path towards becoming a republic. The decision to transition to a republic was formalized through a series of constitutional amendments and legislative processes.

On March 31 1971, Cole, was appointed interim Governor-General. In April 19, 1971, the Sierra Leone Parliament passed the Republican Constitution of Sierra Leone Act, officially declaring Sierra Leone a republic. The then interim Governor-General Christopher Cole had to serve as the acting president for two days. Cole swore in Prime Minister Siaka Stevens as the republic's first president.

continued on next page



Siaka Probyn Stevens

Prime Minister: 1968 - 1971

In the early 1950s, Siaka Stevens co-founded the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). After disagreements with the SLPP leadership, Stevens broke ties with the party and co-founded the People's National Party (PNP). In 1959 and 1960, Siaka Stevens represented the PNP and participated in the independence conferences in London. However, he was the only delegate who refused to sign the independence agreement on the grounds that there had been a secret defence pact between Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom. Another point of his contention was on the Sierra Leonean government's position that no elections would be held before independence, which would effectively shut him out of the political process. The PNP expelled Stevens upon his return from the conferences. Stevens later joined the All People's Congress (APC).

In elections held on March 17, 1967, the APC won by a narrow margin, and Siaka Stevens was appointed Prime Minister. However, Brigadier David Lansana's military coup d'état overthrew and arrested Prime Minister Stevens a few minutes after taking office.

Siaka Stevens' tenure as Prime Minister from 1968-1971 was interrupted by several military coup d'états. During his tenure, Stevens initiated various infrastructure projects aimed at modernizing Sierra Leone. These projects included road construction, building schools and hospitals, and expanding access to basic services, contributing to the country's development.

Stevens implemented social welfare initiatives including healthcare reforms, education programs, and efforts to alleviate poverty, aiming to uplift the standard of living for the populace.

Stevens was a vocal advocate for African unity and solidarity. He supported pan-African movements, and promoted cooperation among African nations.

However, the interruptions by military coups set the stage for his later, lengthy and more authoritarian rule as President from 1971 to 1985.



Siaka Probyn Stevens

President: 1971 - 1985

In 1973, the first elections under the new constitution were held. It was reported that the polls were marred by violence and were boycotted by the SLPP, which gave the APC all 85 seats in the House of Representatives. In March 1976, Stevens was re-elected as President, unopposed by the House.

President Stevens continued consolidating his power, culminating in a 1978 referendum on a new constitution that would create a one-party state with the APC as the only legally permitted party. Siaka Stevens billed the proposed one-party system as more African than Western-style democracy. However, Sierra Leone had been a de facto one-party state since it became a republic.

On becoming the Republic's first president, Siaka Stevens initially

fostered a sense of national unity. He appointed a cabinet that reflected Sierra Leone's diverse ethnicities, addressing longstanding regional grievances.

His authoritarian rule led to growing discontent, culminating in several attempted coups and a decline in national security.

Siaka Probyn Stevens' presidency of Sierra Leone from 1971 to 1985 is a story of contradictions and a mixed-bag legacy. His legacy is a cautionary tale for Sierra Leone and other nations navigating the path towards a more just and prosperous future.



Joseph Saidu Momoh

President: 1985 - 1992

In 1970, Siaka Stevens named Joseph Saidu Momoh, a junior officer at the time, as the head of the Sierra Leone Military after Brigadier John Amadu Bangura was arrested and charged with conspiracy and plotting to

commit a coup against the Stevens government. Major General Momoh was a close ally and a loyal Siaka Stevens friend.

In 1985, Momoh became secretary-general and head of the All People's Congress (APC). The same year, he succeeded President Siaka Stevens by becoming the only candidate in a one-party election in the form of a referendum on October 8, 1985. President Momoh became the second President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Joseph Saidu Momoh inherited a troubled legacy when he assumed the presidency of Sierra Leone in 1985.

President Momoh initially attempted to maintain stability by continuing some of Stevens' programs and promoting national unity.

He declared a state of economic emergency, aiming to address the mismanagement that had plagued the previous regime. In the face of growing discontent, Momoh ushered in a new constitution in 1991 that dismantled the one-party state and paved the way for multiparty democracy. This was seen as a positive step by the international community.

Momoh's economic reforms failed to reverse the downward trend.

In 1991, the Revolutionary

United Front (RUF) rebel group launched a brutal civil war. Momoh's government proved unable to quell the rebellion, leading to widespread suffering and instability.

It's important to remember that the outbreak of this brutal civil war by the RUF coinciding with Momoh's presidency, was a challenge that would have tested even the most capable leader.

Whatever your take on Joseph Saidu Momoh's presidential legacy, whether seen as a failure or a success, the underlying highlight is the fragility of peace and the importance of tackling underlying issues like poverty and corruption to prevent conflict. His time in office serves as a reminder of the devastating consequences of civil war and the need for strong leadership to navigate a nation through turbulent times.



WWW.AMAZON.COM

Brand by:
Kustom Kontri Apparel



Captain Valentine Strasser

NPRC Junta: 1992 – 1996

In April 1992, Captain Strasser led a group of junior military officers in a coup d'état that overthrew President Joseph Momoh's government. They called their regime the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). The coup was fueled by dissatisfaction with Momoh's administration, which they perceived as corrupt and ineffective.

Captain Strasser's junta regime embarked on an anti-corruption campaign to root out corruption and restore government transparency. Several high-profile officials were arrested and tried for corruption, signalling a commitment to accountability and good governance.

Under Strasser's leadership, NPRC initiated a transition process towards civilian rule. This included the establishment of a Constitutional Review

Committee to draft a new constitution and the scheduling of multi-party elections to return the country to democratic governance.

Despite initial promises of democratic reform, Captain Strasser's regime was characterized by authoritarianism and human rights abuses. The junta government cracked down harshly on dissent, censored the media, and suppressed political opposition, leading to a climate of fear and intimidation.

Strasser's government struggled to address the country's economic challenges, leading to worsening poverty and socio-economic hardship for the populace. The regime's policies failed to stimulate economic growth or improve living standards, exacerbating the country's already dire situation.

In 1994, Strasser exiled his deputy NPRC leader Solomon Musa to Guinea. Musa was a close ally and childhood friend of Strasser. Strasser promoted Captain Julius Maada Bio as deputy NPRC chairman and immediately promoted him to brigadier.

Captain Strasser's tenure ended abruptly in January 1996 when he was ousted in a coup led by his own deputy, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.



Brigadier Julius Maada Bio

NPRC Junta: 1996

In January 1996, Bio led a coup d'état that ousted and exiled his boss, Captain Valentine Strasser, from power. They purported that the coup was motivated by dissatisfaction with Strasser's leadership and a desire for change within the military establishment.

Bio pledged to oversee a swift transition to civilian rule after the coup. Multi-party elections were scheduled later that year.

Despite Bio's efforts to facilitate a transition to civilian rule, Sierra Leone experienced further instability in the years following his departure as junta leader. The country endured a prolonged civil war and subsequent military coups, highlighting the missed opportunity the NPRC had, and the fragility of the nation's democratic institutions.

GRACE ORGANIC

EGG

POULTRY FARM (SL) LIMITED

**MAKARI VILLAGE, MAKENI
BOMBALI DISTRICT**

+23278770746



GRACE ORGANIC
EGG POULTRY FARM (SL) LIMITED



grace organic egg poultry earm

graceorganiceggpoultryfarm@gmail.com



Ahmad Tejan Kabbah

President: 1996 – 2007

In early 1996, Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected leader of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and was the party's presidential candidate in the country's presidential election later that year.

Tejan Kabbah was elected the third President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

President Kabbah took power with a great promise of ending the civil war. He opened dialogues with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and invited the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh, for peace negotiations and signing the Abidjan Peace Accord on November 30, 1996.

In early 1997, under international pressure, President Kabbah's government ended its contract with Executive Outcomes, the private mercenaries firm the NPRC had

hired to help fight the RUF rebels. The RUF regrouped and renewed its military attacks. Meanwhile, RUF leader Sankoh was arrested in Nigeria, and by the end of March 1997, the peace accord had collapsed.

On May 25, 1997, President Kabbah's presidency was interrupted by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) military coup that sent President Kabbah into exile in Guinea.

After ten months in exile, President Kabbah's administration was reinstated in March 1998 by the ECOWAS Nigerian-led military intervention force, ECOMOG.

On his return, President Kabbah disbanded the Sierra Leone military and proposed a new military. On October 12, 1998, twenty-five soldiers were executed by firing squad after they were convicted by court-martial for orchestrating the 1997 coup.

A Lomé Peace Accord was signed on July 7, 1999, to end the civil war, granting amnesty for all combatants and controversially granting RUF leader Foday Sankoh the position of vice president and chairman of the commission that oversaw the diamond mines.

The Lomé Accord also called for establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

which provided a forum for both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations during the conflict to tell their stories and facilitate genuine reconciliation.

In October 1999, the United Nations established the UNAMSIL peacekeeping force to help restore order and disarm the RUF rebels.

President Kabbah was re-elected for a second five-year term in the May 2002 general elections.

President Kabbah's presidency was instrumental in restoring peace and stability to Sierra Leone after years of civil conflict. He played a key role in negotiating and implementing the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999, which brought an end to the brutal civil war that ravaged the country for nearly a decade.

Under his leadership, the country held free and fair elections, and efforts were made to improve transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

Despite efforts to rebuild the economy, Kabbah faced challenges in addressing poverty, unemployment, and inequality in Sierra Leone. Structural constraints, including limited resources, weak infrastructure, and dependence on external aid, hindered the country's economic recovery.



Major Johnny Paul Koroma

AFRC Junta: 1997 - 1998

On May 25, 1997, a group of seventeen soldiers in the Sierra Leone army led by Corporal Tamba Gborie freed and armed about 600 prisoners from the Pademba Road Prison in Freetown. One of those freed prisoners was Major Johnny Paul Koroma. Koroma had been arrested and sent to prison in August 1996 for alleged involvement in a coup plot against the southern civilian officials who were in control of the country.

Major Johnny Paul Koroma was named head of state and chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The junta sent President Kabbah into exile in Guinea. Koroma suspended the constitution, banned demonstrations, closed all private radio stations, and granted soldiers unlimited powers.

Johnny Paul Koroma invited the RUF rebels to join his coup. Koroma also appealed to Nigeria for the release of Foday Sankoh, the RUF rebel leader, and appointed him in absentia as deputy chairman of the AFRC. The joint AFRC/RUF coalition government then proclaimed the war was over and gave the soldiers and rebels unlimited powers in a great wave of looting and reprisals against civilians in Freetown (dubbed "Operation Pay Yourself" by some of its participants).

The international community did not recognize the AFRC Junta government. In contrast, President Kabbah's government in exile in Conakry, Guinea, was recognized by the United Nations, the African Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and ECOWAS as the legitimate government of Sierra Leone.

After 10 months in office, Johnny Paul Koroma's AFRC junta government was ousted by the Nigeria-led ECOMOG military intervention forces. The democratically elected government of President Kabbah was reinstated in March 1998. Koroma fled to the rebel strongholds in the east of the country.



THE SAD REALITY OF MILITARY JUNTAS IN SIERRA LEONE

The sad reality of military juntas in Sierra Leone is a harrowing tale marked by instability, violence, and widespread human rights abuses. Throughout the country's history, military coups have repeatedly disrupted democratic governance, plunging the nation into chaos and suffering.

Military juntas have often seized power through force, overthrowing democratically elected governments and imposing authoritarian rule. Basic civil liberties are curtailed, dissent is brutally suppressed, and the rule of law is undermined. Their grip on power is characterized by corruption, nepotism, and a disregard for the welfare of the populace.

In the aftermath of these juntas, Sierra Leone has faced immense challenges in rebuilding democratic institutions, promoting reconciliation, and fostering sustainable peace. The scars of past military juntas continue to linger, reminding us of the dangers of authoritarianism and the importance of upholding democratic values and principles.



Ernest Bai Koroma

President: 2007 - 2018

Ernest Bai Koroma was elected Leader and presidential candidate of the All People's Congress (APC) in early 2002 at the party's national convention ahead of the 2002 Sierra Leone Presidential and Parliamentary Elections. Ernest Koroma contested the 2002 general and presidential elections against incumbent President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP party, who ran for a second presidential term. President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah emerged as the winner of that contest.

Soon after the 2002 elections, internal party disputes and court cases challenged Ernest Koroma's APC leadership. On 22 June 2005, the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone eventually stripped him of his *de jure* leadership of the APC party.

Ahead of the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections, Ernest Koroma was

unanimously elected again as Leader and presidential candidate of the APC at the party's National Delegates Convention.

In the August 2007 general election, Ernest Koroma was elected the fourth president of the Republic of Sierra Leone after defeating his main rival, the incumbent Vice President of the SLPP.

President Ernest Bai Koroma's administration focused on promoting economic growth and development. The Agenda for Change and the Agenda for Prosperity initiatives aimed to stimulate investment, diversify the economy, and reduce poverty. His government invested in infrastructure, energy, and agriculture, laying the groundwork for long-term economic progress. He rebuilt the country's infrastructure after the decade-long brutal civil war that crippled the country's road infrastructure. The new road network construction across the country significantly opened up the country for private development.

President Koroma introduced several social welfare programs to improve ordinary Sierra Leoneans' lives. The Free Healthcare Initiative and the Free Quality Education program expanded access to healthcare and education, particularly for marginalized communities. In

April 2010, President Koroma signed into law the country's first free healthcare program for pregnant women, nursing mothers and children under the age of five.

To emphasize his commitment to fighting corruption, on September 4, 2008, President Koroma declared his assets to the Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission and signed into law the country's new Anti-Corruption Bill of 2008. Under the new law, the president and other government officials are required to declare their assets and update them annually.

Despite efforts to spur economic development, Sierra Leone faced significant economic challenges during Koroma's presidency. The country grappled with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment, exacerbated by the global financial crisis and fluctuating commodity prices.

President Koroma's government faced several crises during his tenure, including the Ebola outbreak in 2014-2015 and natural disasters such as flooding and mudslides. While efforts were made to address these emergencies, there were concerns about the effectiveness of the response and the government's capacity to manage such crises.

continued on next page



Julius Maada Bio

President: 2018 - Present

In 2005, retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio contested for the leadership of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) during the party's national convention. He lost that contest to then Vice President Solomon Berewa.

In 2011, in an unprecedented turn of events within the SLPP, some of Bio's loyalists forced their way during the party's convention and declared him leader and presidential candidate for the 2012 presidential elections. He eventually contested the elections against incumbent President Ernest Bai Koroma of the ruling APC. Bio lost to President Ernest Bai Koroma.

Maada Bio will again contest the 2018 presidential election, this time against Dr. Samura Kamara, the leader of the APC party. Following the highly contested election, Bio eventually emerged as the

winner and was sworn in as the fifth President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

President Julius Maada Bio campaigned on the platform of a New Direction. He promised the people of Sierra Leone a New Direction - a united, peaceful, progressive, dynamic, confident, enterprising and happy nation where the people have unlimited access to jobs, food, education and health services and where there is equal justice and equal opportunity for all. The President promised to transform Sierra Leone into a Middle Income Country of the 21st Century. The flagship of his strategic priorities was to focus on developing the country's human capital through free education.

In his first two months in office, President Bio sacked all of Sierra Leone's ambassadors and permanent representatives abroad appointed by his predecessor, President Ernest Bai Koroma.

In his first year, President Bio's government announced that more than two million primary and secondary school children will be exempt from paying fees. But, on the flip side, subsidies for university students will be scrapped.

President Bio's administration set up a commission of inquiry and indicted all members of the APC administration.

Also in his first year, President Bio cancelled a China-funded US\$400 million loan agreement with the previous government to build a new international airport around Freetown. But he later signed a contract with the Turkish company, Summa, to build a terminal for US\$270 million.

By the end of his first five-year term, there was a rapid shift in the public's opinion about President Bio and his New Direction agenda. Millions of Sierra Leoneans with high hopes for his New Direction now see his agenda as mere pipedreams. If there is any movement in the socio-economic status of Sierra Leoneans, so far, it is backward in the opposite direction. The high cost of living, hunger, poverty, hardship, injustice, nepotism, intimidation, political intolerance, and the inability to attract investors today defines President Bio's presidency.

Corruption remained pervasive in various sectors of government and society. Challenges persist in providing reliable electricity, clean water, and transportation networks. Inadequate infrastructure hampered economic growth, hindered access to essential services, and limited opportunities for socio-economic development.

The aftermath of the controversial June 2023 elections still looms over his legacy.

NEW WAVES —STUDIOS—

WHAT WE DO

WEDDINGS ● PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO ● PRINTING
GRAPHIC DESIGN ● ANIMATION GRAPHICS
BRANDING & MARKETING ● EVENT MANAGEMENT
LIVE STREAMING ● WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT
MEDIA & COMMUNICATION CONSULTANT

3 POINT STREET UP DUNDAS STREET
+232 79 359 640/+232 88 358 410

BOOK US NOW

 newwavesstudio81@gmail.com

 New Waves Studios

 New Waves Studios



NEW WAVES —STUDIOS—

WEDDINGS • EVENTS • PORTRAIT

3 POINT STREET UP DUNDAS STREET
+232 79 359 640/+232 88 358 410

 newwavesstudio81@gmail.com

 New Waves Studios

 New Waves Studios



INNOVATING FOR INDEPENDENCE

TECHNOLOGY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND THE ROAD AHEAD

The Unifier Magazine



As we celebrate Sierra Leone's 64th year of independence, the conversation naturally turns to the future and the strategies that will propel our nation toward greater prosperity and true self-reliance. In this 21st century, innovation and digital transformation have emerged as powerful catalysts for economic growth and societal advancement. For Sierra Leone, embracing technology and

fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem are not merely options but essential pathways to realizing the long-held vision of a truly independent and thriving nation.

The journey since 1961 has been marked by both remarkable progress and significant challenges. While independence brought political sovereignty, achieving

economic independence requires sustained effort and a willingness to adapt to the evolving global landscape. In an increasingly interconnected world, digital technologies offer unprecedented opportunities to leapfrog developmental hurdles, enhance productivity, improve service delivery, and create new avenues for economic participation for all Sierra Leoneans.

continued on next page

One of the most transformative impacts of technology is in the realm of communication and connectivity. The proliferation of mobile phones and the gradual expansion of internet access are breaking down geographical barriers, linking communities, and facilitating the flow of information. This increased connectivity is empowering citizens with access to knowledge, markets, and opportunities that were previously unimaginable. Mobile money platforms, for instance, are revolutionizing financial inclusion, allowing individuals in remote areas to conduct transactions safely and efficiently, fostering economic activity and reducing reliance on informal and often less secure methods.

The agricultural sector, a cornerstone of Sierra Leone's economy, stands to benefit immensely from technological innovation. Precision agriculture techniques, enabled by data analytics and mobile applications, can help farmers optimize resource use, improve crop yields, and access crucial information on weather patterns and market prices. Mobile-based platforms can also connect farmers directly with buyers, reducing intermediaries and increasing their profitability. Investing in digital literacy and providing access to these technologies for rural

communities is crucial for transforming the agricultural landscape and ensuring food security.

Entrepreneurship is another vital engine for economic growth and job creation. Technology plays a critical role in enabling and scaling entrepreneurial ventures. E-commerce platforms provide access to wider markets, while digital marketing tools allow small businesses to reach potential customers more effectively. Access to online resources, training programs, and digital financial services empowers aspiring entrepreneurs to launch and grow their businesses more efficiently. Fostering a supportive ecosystem for tech startups, including access to funding, mentorship, and incubation hubs, is essential for nurturing a culture of innovation and driving economic diversification.

The education and healthcare sectors should also transform significantly by adopting digital technologies. E-learning platforms and online educational resources can expand access to quality education, particularly in underserved areas. Telemedicine initiatives can connect patients in remote locations with healthcare professionals, improving access to medical advice and diagnosis. Digital health records can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. Investing in digital

infrastructure and training professionals to utilize these technologies is paramount for improving human capital development and overall well-being.

Furthermore, digital transformation will enhance governance and public service delivery. E-government initiatives can streamline administrative processes, reduce bureaucracy, and improve transparency. Online portals for accessing government services, digital identification systems, and electronic tax filing can enhance efficiency and reduce opportunities for corruption. Leveraging data analytics can also enable evidence-based policy-making and more effective resource allocation.

However, the road to a digitally empowered and prosperous Sierra Leone has its challenges. Bridging the digital divide, ensuring affordable and reliable internet access for all citizens, and building the necessary digital infrastructure are critical prerequisites. Addressing digital literacy issues and providing relevant training programs are essential to ensure that all segments of society can benefit from these advancements. Cybersecurity and data protection are also paramount concerns that must be addressed to foster trust and confidence in digital platforms.

continued on next page

To truly harness the power of innovation and digital transformation for national development, a concerted and collaborative effort is required from the government, the private sector, academia, and civil society organizations. The government plays a crucial role in creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment that fosters innovation, attracts investment in technology, and promotes digital inclusion. Investing in digital infrastructure, supporting research and development, and promoting STEM education are also vital government responsibilities.

The private sector has a key role to play in driving technological innovation and developing market-based solutions that address local needs. Encouraging entrepreneurship, fostering partnerships with technology providers, and investing in digital skills development within their workforce are crucial contributions.

Academia and research institutions are essential for building the local capacity for innovation and technological advancement. Strengthening science and technology programs, fostering collaborations with industry, and promoting research that addresses national priorities are vital for creating a pipeline of



Dr. Richard Konteh, APC Party Flagbearer Aspirant

skilled professionals and generating locally relevant solutions.

Civil society organizations must play a crucial role in advocating for digital inclusion, raising awareness about the benefits of technology, and empowering communities to utilize digital tools effectively. They must also serve as bridges between different stakeholders,

ensuring that the benefits of digital transformation reach all segments of society.

The road ahead for the next fifty (50) years is paved with potential, and by embracing the power of innovation, we, Sierra Leoneans can truly chart our own course toward greater independence in the 21st century.



DR. RICHARD KONTEH

The Unifier

The Fearless

The Defender

The Leader



THE UNIFIER HOUR

REAL TALK ABOUT SIERRA LEONE

EVERY SATURDAY

9:00 PM (Sierra Leone & UK Time)

5:00 PM (EST); 2:00 PM (PST) Canada & USA

TUNE IN LIVE ON



WWW.DUNIFIER.COM



HOST

VALDA KAIKAI



with

DR. RICHARD KONTEH

PANELISTS



JAMES
HALLOWELL



ABI
PIEH



OSMAN
MEGGEH

WWW.RICHARDKONTEH.COM



UNITY IN DIVERSITY: BUILDING A NATION TOGETHER

The Unifier Magazine

As we proudly commemorate our nation's 64th year of independence, the theme of national unity resonates with profound significance. In a nation blessed with a rich tapestry of ethnic, regional, and cultural diversity, the strength and progress of the country are inextricably linked to our ability as people to transcend differences and forge a shared sense of belonging and purpose. This article explores the vital importance of national unity in Sierra Leone, delving into the historical context, the challenges overcome, and the inspiring personal stories and community initiatives that actively weave together the diverse threads of the nation.

Sierra Leone's demographic landscape is characterized by a vibrant mosaic of ethnic groups, each with its unique language, traditions, and customs. The Mende and Temne are the two largest ethnic groups,



predominantly residing in the Southern and Northern provinces. The Limba, Kono, Krio, Mandingo, Loko, Susu, Fula, and several others are also significant ethnic communities, each contributing distinct cultural nuances to the national identity. This inherent diversity, while a source of immense cultural wealth, has also presented historical challenges in forging a cohesive national identity, particularly in the context of political mobilization and resource allocation.

The journey towards national unity has been marked by both moments of profound solidarity and periods of division.

The very struggle for independence in the mid-1950s and early 1960s witnessed a remarkable coming together of individuals from various ethnic backgrounds, united by the common aspiration for self-determination and liberation from colonial rule. Figures like Sir Milton Margai, representing the Southern Province, and others from across the country worked collaboratively to build a unified political front, recognizing that collective action was essential to achieving their shared goal. This early spirit of collaboration laid a crucial foundation for the nascent nation.

However, the post-independence era also saw the emergence of political

continued on next page

dynamics that often exacerbated ethnic and regional divisions. Competition for power and resources occasionally led to the exploitation of identity politics, creating rifts within the national fabric. The devastating civil war (1991-2002) tragically highlighted the destructive consequences of division, as conflict lines, though complex, often intersected with existing ethnic and regional grievances. The experience of the war served as a stark reminder of the imperative for national cohesion and the urgent need to build bridges across our communities.

In the aftermath of the war, the pursuit of national unity became a central pillar of the peacebuilding and reconciliation process. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recognized the importance of fostering a shared conflict narrative and promoting understanding across different groups. Civil society organizations, religious institutions, and the government launched initiatives to promote inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation, all striving to heal the wounds of the past and build a more inclusive future.

Today, the importance of our national unity is underscored by numerous challenges and opportunities. To achieve sustainable economic development, strengthen

democratic institutions, and address issues such as poverty and inequality, a cohesive national front is essential. When citizens feel a shared sense of belonging and are united by common goals, the nation is better equipped to overcome obstacles and harness its collective potential.

Inspiring examples of personal stories and community initiatives demonstrate the ongoing commitment to building unity in diversity across Sierra Leone:

- **Inter-ethnic Marriages and Families:** The increasing prevalence of inter-ethnic marriages serves as a powerful testament to the breaking down of traditional barriers and the forging of personal bonds that transcend ethnic lines. These families become microcosms of national unity, embodying the harmonious coexistence of different cultural backgrounds within a single household. Sharing of traditions, languages, and perspectives within these families enriches the broader social fabric.
- **Cultural Exchange Programs:** Initiatives that promote the sharing of cultural traditions, such as music, dance, storytelling, and cuisine, play a vital role in fostering appreciation and

- understanding of the diverse heritage of Sierra Leone. Cultural festivals and exchange programs provide platforms for different ethnic groups to learn about and celebrate each other's traditions, breaking down stereotypes and fostering a sense of shared national cultural pride.

- **Youth Engagement**

Initiatives: Recognizing that the youth are the future of the nation, many programs focus on bringing young people from different backgrounds together through education, sports, and civic engagement activities. These initiatives aim to cultivate a generation that values diversity, embraces inclusivity, and works collaboratively towards a united future for Sierra Leone.

- **National Service and Volunteer Programs:**

Programs that encourage individuals from different regions and ethnic groups to serve together in various capacities across the country can foster a deeper understanding of the diverse realities of Sierra Leone and build lasting relationships that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries.

- **Community Development Projects:** Numerous

- initiatives bring together people from different ethnic and regional backgrounds to work collaboratively on projects that benefit the entire community. These might include building schools, health clinics, or infrastructure or implementing agricultural development programs. The shared purpose of these endeavours fosters trust, understanding, and a sense of collective ownership in the progress of their local areas, irrespective of individual ethnic affiliations.

These examples, and countless others across the nation, illustrate the ongoing efforts to build a Sierra Leone where diversity is not seen as a source of division but as a strength to be celebrated and harnessed for collective progress. The journey towards national unity is a continuous process that requires ongoing dialogue, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the common good.

As we commemorate our nation's 64th year of independence, the focus on "Unity in Diversity" is a powerful reminder of the foundational principles upon which our nation was built and the enduring aspirations of our people. By continuing to foster

personal connections, supporting community-led initiatives, and celebrating the richness of its cultural tapestry, Sierra Leone can further strengthen its national unity and build a more inclusive, resilient, and prosperous future for all its citizens. The stories of collaboration and understanding emerging from communities across the nation offer a beacon of hope and a testament to the enduring power of unity in diversity.



LIMITED EDITION

AVAILABLE NOW



GET YOURS NOW

WWW.AMAZON.COM

Building a bright future for Our Youth

- EDUCATION
- MUSIC
- SPORTS



LEARN MORE

Email: info@rk7foundation.org
www.rk7foundation.org

DONATE



ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR SIERRA LEONE

A Unifying Fight Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Development

Sierra Leone, a nation rich in natural resources and human potential, faces significant challenges in achieving economic justice for its people. Despite progress in certain areas, the legacy of conflict and systemic issues like corruption and inequality continue to hinder the equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities. This article delves into the multifaceted dimensions of economic justice in Sierra Leone, exploring the obstacles, opportunities, and potential pathways toward a more sustainable and inclusive development model.

Understanding Economic Justice in the Sierra Leonean Context

Economic justice goes beyond mere economic growth. It encompasses the fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and burdens, ensuring that all members of society have access to basic necessities, decent work, and a voice in economic decision-making.



In Sierra Leone, achieving economic justice requires addressing historical injustices, tackling present-day inequalities, and building a foundation for future prosperity that benefits all citizens.

Challenges to Economic Justice

Several interconnected challenges impede economic justice in Sierra Leone:

- ***Inequality and Poverty:*** Sierra Leone grapples with stark income inequality, with a small elite

controlling a disproportionate share of wealth. This disparity perpetuates poverty, limiting access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for the majority of the population.

- ***Corruption and Weak Governance:*** Corruption remains a pervasive issue, diverting public resources, undermining trust in institutions, and hindering effective service delivery. Weak governance structures and a lack of accountability

continued on next page

further exacerbate these problems.

- **Resource Curse:** Despite abundant natural resources, particularly minerals, Sierra Leone has not fully benefited from them. The "resource curse" phenomenon, characterized by mismanagement, corruption, and a lack of transparency in the extractive sector, has hindered sustainable development and equitable resource wealth distribution.
- **Unemployment and Underemployment:** High rates of unemployment, especially among youth, and widespread underemployment contribute to economic insecurity and social instability. The lack of decent work opportunities limits individuals' ability to escape poverty and contribute to the nation's development.
- **Limited Access to Finance and Credit:** Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which have the potential to drive economic growth and job creation, often face significant barriers to accessing finance and credit. This constraint hampers their growth and limits their contribution to economic justice.

Opportunities for Promoting Economic Justice

Despite these challenges, Sierra Leone possesses opportunities to advance economic justice:

- **Diversification of the Economy:** Moving beyond reliance on the extractive sector and diversifying the economy into agriculture, manufacturing, and services can create more inclusive growth and reduce vulnerability to commodity price fluctuations.
- **Investing in Human Capital:** Prioritizing investments in education, healthcare, and skills development can empower individuals, enhance productivity, and create a more competitive workforce.
- **Strengthening Governance and Transparency:** Promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability in public institutions is crucial for combating corruption, improving service delivery, and building trust in government.
- **Empowering Local Communities:** Engaging local communities in decision-making processes related to resource management and development projects can

ensure their voices are heard and their needs are addressed.

- **Promoting Inclusive Finance:** Expanding access to financial services, including microfinance and credit for SMEs, can empower entrepreneurs, foster economic activity, and create opportunities for marginalized groups.

Pathways to a More Just Economy

Achieving economic justice in Sierra Leone requires a concerted and sustained effort from various stakeholders, including the government, civil society, the private sector, and international partners.

Key strategies include:

- **Implementing progressive taxation policies:** Ensuring that the tax system is fair and progressive, with those who have more contributing a greater share, can help redistribute wealth and fund social programs.
- **Strengthening social safety nets:** Expanding social protection programs, such as cash transfers and unemployment benefits, can provide a safety net for vulnerable populations and help reduce poverty.
- **Promoting responsible investment:** Encouraging responsible investment

- environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and respect for human rights can ensure that economic growth benefits all members of society.
- ***Enhancing access to justice:*** Strengthening the rule of law and improving access to justice mechanisms can help protect the rights of marginalized groups and ensure that everyone has equal opportunities.
- ***Fostering regional cooperation:*** Collaborating with neighbouring countries on issues such as trade, infrastructure development, and resource management can create regional economic opportunities and promote sustainable development.

Economic justice is not merely an aspiration but a fundamental right. In Sierra Leone, achieving this goal requires addressing deep-rooted challenges, capitalizing on existing opportunities, and implementing comprehensive strategies that promote inclusive and sustainable development. By working together, stakeholders can create a future where all Sierra Leoneans have the chance to thrive and contribute to their nation's prosperity.



WWW.AMAZON.COM

Brand by:
Kustom Kontri Apparel

LIMITED EDITION

AVAILABLE NOW



GET YOURS NOW

WWW.AMAZON.COM

Brand by:
Kustom Kontri Apparel

THE UNIFIER MAGAZINE

Email: hello@dunifier.com

Email: dunifierteam@gmail.com



+232 75 906143