THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

HRCSL HOSTS REFERRAL PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Irish Aid, hosted regional referral partnership meetings in Bo, Kenema, Port Loko, Makeni, and Waterloo, as well as at its headquarters in Freetown. The meetings were held from the 26th to 28th August 2026 and on the 1st and 16th September 2026 respectively.



The meetings brought together 118 participants, comprising 41 females and 77 males, drawn from Ministries, Departments and Agencies, District Human Rights Committees (DHRCs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and the Legal Aid Board, among others.

The meeting's objectives were to review the progress of cases referred to partner institutions, identify challenges encountered in handling such matters, and proffer possible solutions in addressing them.

The Referral Partnership Forum came into existence in 2016 with the aim of ensuring effective collaboration with partner institutions on issues of referrals. Since then, the platform has helped HRCSL to establish robust links with partners and has also developed a system for proper follow-ups and reporting mechanisms on matters referred.



At the various locations, Commissioners stated that the Referral Partnership Forum represents an important opportunity to strengthen the Commission's relationship with public institutions, establish clearer referral pathways, and improve institutional coordination in responding to complaints.



The Commission believes that when complaints are referred to an MDA, it is not merely transferring a file, but to facilitate access to institutions that are best placed to address the particular concern. The Commission encouraged partner institutions to view the forum not only as a mechanism for receiving referrals from the Commission but to also serve as an opportunity to strengthen their own internal complaints handling and accountability systems.



Representatives from partner institutions provided updates on matters referred to them by the Commission and promised to speed up investigations on the complaints referred.

The HRCSL Referral Partnership Forum serves as a redress platform for cases that are not within its mandate, as well as fostering better coordination and cooperation with partner institutions in addressing the complaints received.

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