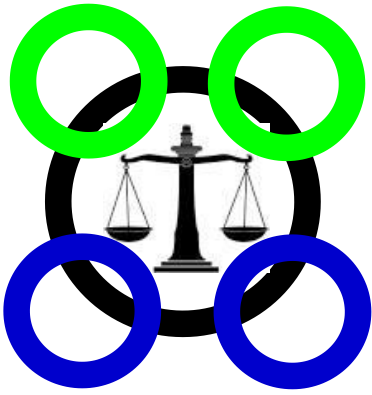


Human Rights Defenders Network



Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FREETOWN 20th JUNE 2022: HRDN-SL CONDEMNS DELIBERATE AND CALCULATED ACT OF LAWLESSNESS AND INDISCIPLINE BY THE SIERRA LEONE POLICE

The Human Rights Defenders Network-SL recognizes the duty of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) in preserving law and order. HRDN-SL believes that the police in the exercise of their public duty must only do so in conformity with best practice and within the ambit of national and international laws.

HRDN-SL observed that on Sunday 12th June 2022, Alhaji Amadu Bah, also known as LAJ a popular music artist was arrested by a group of police officers who took him to an unknown location without communicating to him the nature of the Offence (s) for which he was arrested as provided for under Section 23 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.

Alhaji Amadu Bah alleged that he was taken to the OSD headquarters (a place called Benghazi) where over 7 police officers grabbed him and forcefully cut off his hair without his permission. This allegation was initially denied by the Sierra Leone Police.

However, in a press release published by Sierra Leone Police dated 18th June 2022, the SLP acknowledged that they unconventionally shaved the head of Alhaji Amadu Bah in line with Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) as expressed in paragraphs C, D, and E of the said press release.

HRDN-SL believes that the conduct of the Sierra Leone Police is not only a calculated and deliberate act of lawlessness and indiscipline but also a gross violation of the rights of Alhaji Amadu Bah a suspects in police custody.

MOTTO: "Defending the Defender"

The network believes that the alleged report against Alhaji Amadu Bah by fuel pump attendants of LEONCO Filling Station situated along Main Motor Road Congo Cross and his detention does not amount to disfiguring the physical appearance of Alhaji Amadu Bah nor does the SLP has the legal authority to alter the physical identity and brand image of a popular music artist

The network therefore calls for the following actions:

THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE:

1. Investigate all police officers involved in the act of shaving the head of Alhaji Amadu Bah;
2. Investigate the existence of Benghazi Detention Center and the so called Standard Operational Procedure (SOP);
3. Sierra Leone Police compensate Alhaji Amadu Bah for damages on his physical identity and brand image;
4. Sierra Leone Police issue a public apology for misleading the state and citizens on the unconventional shaving of the head of Alhaji Amadu Bah (aka LAJ).

THE UNITED NATIONS:

1. Review Sierra Leone Police participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations

The Human Rights Defenders Network Sierra Leone (HRDN-SL) is a coalition of civil society organizations and individuals working to promote and protect human rights with specific focus on defending human rights defenders.

END

MOTTO: "Defending the Defender"