



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May, 17, 2018

JOINT STATEMENT BY HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF GIRLS IN SIERRA LEONE

In April 2015 the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology here in Sierra Leone issued a statement banning pregnant girls from mainstream education. Let it be noted here today that this ban was issued and implemented despite it being clear that many of the school girls were sexually violated during the dark days of the Ebola quarantine and that these girls were minors and statutorily incapable of consenting to sexual relations in the first instance.

Discrimination and violation of these girls did not end here, as in enforcing this ban, schools subjected many girls to degrading physical searches and tests humiliating them amongst their peers and their communities.

Despite numerous deliberations with different state actors in an attempt to have the ban lifted, this has not been done.

It has now been four (4) year since the issuance of this ban. Four years of young teenage girls being denied education, four years of their lives being robbed. Pregnant girls are being blamed and shamed and are being denied a chance to move forward with their lives, while the perpetrators walk scot free.

If there is no intervention, this will result in a lifetime of illiteracy, ignorance poverty and extreme violations for these girls.

We therefore , WAVES, DCI, CWS , EQUALITY NOW and IHRDA have filed a case today 17th May 2018 at the ECOWAS court of justice on behalf of these girls to seek justice for them. #LetGirlsLearn, #GalPikinforLan!

Thank you!

PROFILE OF ORGANIZATIONS

Equality Now- is an international human rights organization that works to protect the rights of women and girls around the world by raising international visibility of individual cases of abuse, mobilizing public support through our global membership, and wielding strategic political pressure to ensure that governments enact or enforce laws and policies that uphold the rights of women and girls.

Women Against Violence and Exploitation in Society (WAVES)- based in Bo-Sierra Leone, WAVES was established to address some of the gaps in provision of justice and social services for women survivors of violence in Sierra Leone following the civil war.

Defence for Children International – Sierra Leone (DCI-SL) - is a registered nongovernmental, non-profit organization that seeks to advance the protection of the rights and welfare of children in Sierra Leone by disseminating information on child rights, strengthening child protection systems at national and community levels, providing legal counsel and social support to children in conflict with the law and child victims of abuse and neglect in order to facilitate their access to justice, rehabilitation services and family reintegration.

The Women’s Partnership for Justice and Peace (WPJP) - is a women’s rights organization established in 2007 in Sierra Leone to empower women and girls to resist violence, protect their rights, and advocate for the transformation of oppressive structures. It also aims to strengthen women’s political participation at the local and national levels and promote women’s access to justice. It does this through Training, capacity-building, awareness campaigns on sexual and gender-based violence and partnerships with other entities in order to eradicate violence against women and gender-based violence. The vision of WPJP is a gender-just Sierra Leone where women’s human rights, economic security and political participation are guaranteed at all levels. WPJP works with local communities to design, execute, manage and evaluate participatory and community based initiatives that advance women and girls’ conditions in the deprived areas of southern Sierra Leone.

GRACELAND Sierra Leone (GSL) - is a non-governmental organization that provides psychosocial care and support services to traumatized and sexually exploited women and girls in Sierra Leone. GSL was founded in 1995 and works in collaboration with other NGOs in Sierra Leone to provide counselling services to communities and traumatized survivors of war and gender-based violence. The organization fills in a huge gap in services in Sierra Leone and has been influential in other organizations providing much-needed services as well. They also provide a range of life skills and work training as well as raising awareness in communities so people are aware of women's rights.

To learn more about the joint statement, please contact DCI-Sierra Leone at: info@dcisierraleone.org or on +232 88 818089