

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARL LAUNCHES ELECTORAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY PROJECT TO SUPPORT PEACEFUL AND VIOLENCE-FREE ELECTIONS IN SIERRA LEONE

6th February, 2023: Ahead of the 2023 elections, the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law - Sierra Leone (CARL-SL) today launched two projects that seek to support electoral justice and accountability for human rights violations and electoral offences during the elections. Essentially, the projects seek to advance efforts towards a peaceful and accountable electoral process. Funded by the Government of Ireland and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), respectively, the projects seek to support speedy and fair resolution of election-related complaints, ensure accountability for human rights violations during the electoral process, and strengthen the capacity of law enforcement officers and alternative electoral dispute resolution bodies.

“When laws regulating public elections are deemed to have been breached or violated, it is critically important that those charged with the responsibility of enforcing and/or interpreting the law do so with fairness, professionalism and reasonable speed. That’s the only way we can reduce violence in elections and enhance public trust in the process,” said Ibrahim Tommy, Executive Director of CARL, adding that “these projects provide an opportunity for effective collaboration between CARL, its partners and state actors to address any issues that arise.

Specifically, Irish Aid-funded project, which is part of a broader project coordinated by the Institute for Governance Reforms, will support the documentation of electoral complaints, and calls for the speedy resolution of such complaints by the courts and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms. CARL will also raise awareness about electoral laws and processes, and undertake advocacy for the protection of civic space, including the right to freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. OSIWA’s funding will support the implementation of a project titled “Promoting a safe and peaceful electoral process through an accountable security sector”. As part of this project, CARL will document and produce reports on incidents of police brutality and politically-motivated violence, monitor proceedings before accountability mechanisms relating to incidents of police brutality, undertake advocacy for increased funding to oversight and law enforcement institutions, and contribute to empowering the capacity of law enforcement agencies.

A recent report by CARL on the administration of electoral justice concluded that elections in Sierra Leone are often characterized by incidents of politically-motivated violence, an inadequate and highhanded response by law enforcement officers, and delays in addressing electoral complaints and holding perpetrators to account. These projects will build on the gains made over the past two years as part of the Irish Aid funded projects implemented by CARL, the Institute of Governance Reform, and the Office of National Security. #THE END# For more information, contact **Jeremy Simbo** at +23276 672 841 or simbojeremy@yahoo.com