



**Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL)**

...fostering human rights through accountability  
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**Press statement**

**One month before the ECOWAS Court hands down a judgment in the Ebola case, Survivors highlight Government's lack of commitment to their justice needs**

*Freetown, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2023:* The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) and its co-plaintiffs wish to remind the general public that the ECOWAS Court of Justice will on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 deliver a judgement in the case filed against the Government of Sierra Leone in respect of the mismanagement of Ebola response funds.

The public would recall from previous media engagements by CARL and other interested stakeholders, including the Sierra Leone Association of Ebola Survivors (SLAES), that strong efforts have been made in the last 5 years to resolve the matter through a negotiated settlement. Those efforts were initiated after The New Direction Government Transition Team (GTT) report recommended an urgent out-of-court settlement of the matter.

As a result of the Government of Sierra Leone's clear lack of firm commitment to a comprehensive out-of-court settlement, even after meeting with CARL, SLAES, and other stakeholders at Lakka, Freetown in August 2021, the ECOWAS Court of Justice was left with no option but to order that the matter be heard and determined on its merit. Accordingly, the matter was heard on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2023 and judgment was reserved for 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

As frustrating as it is, we remain committed to a just and fair resolution of this matter because it involves the lives and welfare of vulnerable, long-suffering Sierra Leoneans. For this reason, we have continued to draw public attention to our various efforts and how the Government of Sierra Leone has responded to this action since it was instituted in 2017.

As we await the decision of the ECOWAS Court of Justice, CARL and its partners want the Government of Sierra Leone to **recognise that Ebola survivors have suffered too much already and are vulnerable Sierra Leoneans**. We firmly believe that, irrespective of the nature of the ECOWAS Court decision scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2023, and conscious of the forthcoming elections, the Government of Sierra Leone should make a firm commitment to support all Ebola survivors to regain their health and dignity as well as opportunities for education, skills training and restoration of livelihoods.

*"I am very disappointed that successive governments have chosen to ignore and neglect we the Ebola survivors as if we were responsible for the calamity that befell us",* said an Ebola Survivor, after the hearing before the ECOWAS Court of Justice hearing on 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2023.

CARL, SLAES, and all their partners are still open to discussion and willing to settle the matter should the Government of Sierra Leone choose to engage before the Court hands down a decision on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

#THE END#