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....fostering human rights through accountability  
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## PRESS STATEMENT

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CARL WELCOMES ENACTMENT OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ACT, 2024; APPLAUDS LAUNCH OF THE JUSTICE SECTOR REFORM STRATEGY (2024- 2030)**

*Freetown: 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2024:*

The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) today welcomed the signing into law by His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio the Criminal Procedure Act, 2024, which introduces changes aimed at ensuring a more efficient, accountable and expeditious delivery of criminal justice in Sierra Leone. The law, which replaces the 59-year-old legislation on criminal procedure, was signed into law on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

In addition to removing trial by jury, which was partly blamed for delays in proceedings relating to serious criminal offences, the new law introduces alternative (to imprisonment and fine) sentences, significantly reduces the period of preliminary investigation (committal proceedings) and provides safeguards against arbitrary arrest and detention by the police.

“I am pleased for our partnership with the Office of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, development partners, especially the UNDP, and other non-state actors in passing such a critical law for the criminal justice system, said Ibrahim Tommy ESQ, Executive Director of Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law, adding that, “It is my sincere hope that the spirit of collaboration and bipartisanship that characterized the law-making process will continue into the implementation phase”.

We commend the Government of Sierra Leone, especially the President, the leadership of the Ministry of Justice, and the Judiciary, especially the Acting Chief Justice Nicholas Browne-Marke, for their collective commitment to the process. It is our sincere hope that the Government and its partners, including civil society, will provide the resources needed for effective implementation.

CARL also applauds the launch of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy (2024-2030), an essential initiative aimed at enhancing justice delivery in Sierra Leone. This strategy represents a significant commitment to enhancing the justice system in the country, ensuring it is fair, efficient, and accessible for all citizens.

The Justice Sector Reform Strategy promises to achieve several key objectives, including:

- *Increased Access to Justice*: Ensuring that all citizens, particularly marginalized groups, can access justice without barriers.
- *Improved Case Management*: Streamlining judicial processes to expedite the delivery of justice.
- *Enhanced Human Rights Protections*: Strengthening adherence to human rights and the rule of law across all justice institutions.
- *Capacity Building*: Empowering justice sector institutions to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

It is a bold and comprehensive strategy that requires resources and collaboration for effective implementation. Accordingly, we urge the Government of Sierra Leone and its development partners to provide the financial and technical support needed to effectively implement the strategy and improve the delivery of justice services for the citizens of Sierra Leone. CARL remains fully committed to supporting these efforts as well as collaborating with all stakeholders to ensure that the promises of the strategy are realized.

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