



## Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law - Sierra Leone (CARL-SL)

....fostering human rights through accountability

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### PRESS STATEMENT

**CARL-SL urges the Government of Sierra Leone to pay backlog School Fee Subsidies, ahead of School Reopening, for this academic year**

Freetown, Sierra Leone

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The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law – Sierra Leone (CARL-SL) is deeply concerned by reports that school fee subsidies for third term, last academic year, have not been paid to schools, ahead of the reopening of schools, for this academic year.

The Sierra Leone Teachers Union (SLTU) has publicly raised concerns that while schools are expected to reopen, the delay in payment of subsidies, coupled with shortages of essential teaching and learning materials may significantly affect effective teaching and learning.

CARL-SL recognizes and welcomes the Government of Sierra Leone's investment in the **Free Quality School Education (FQSE)** programme, which has expanded access to education for thousands of children across the country. His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio has repeatedly reaffirmed his government's commitment to providing **free, inclusive, equitable and quality education** as a cornerstone of Sierra Leone's human capital development agenda.

However, **access to education must be accompanied by the resources necessary to make quality education a reality**. Therefore, delay in payment of school fee subsidies can render schools unable to meet essential operational needs and provide teachers with the materials and support required for effective service delivery.

CARL-SL is particularly concerned about the potential consequences for **pupils learning outcomes and instructional time**. If schools reopen without adequate resources, teachers may be physically present but unable to teach effectively. This could further widen existing learning gaps and disproportionately affect pupils from less privileged and vulnerable households who rely mainly on public schools.

CARL-SL therefore, calls on the **Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)** and all relevant authorities to:

1. **Urgently disburse all outstanding backlog school fee subsidies** to eligible schools.
2. Ensure that schools have the **essential teaching and learning materials** needed for effective service delivery.
3. Provide **clear and timely information** to schools, teachers, parents and the public on the status of the subsidies and steps being taken to resolve the delay.
4. Put in place a **predictable and timely subsidy disbursement mechanism** to prevent similar delay in the future.

CARL-SL reminds the Government that, **Free Quality Education must mean more than simply getting pupils into classrooms**, it must also ensure that they receive meaningful teaching in adequately resourced schools.

The Government's commitment to FQSE is a commitment to Sierra Leone's children and their future. **Every school day lost to avoidable administrative or funding delays, represents a loss to a child's education and to the country's human capital development.**

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