



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

....fostering human rights through accountability

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PRESS STATEMENT

CARL-SL CONDEMNS THE VIOLENT INCIDENT AT KROO TOWN ROAD- KROO BAY, CALLS FOR A SPEEDY AND INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION

Freetown, Sierra Leone

16th September, 2026

The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law, Sierra Leone (CARL-SL) is concerned by reports and circulating accounts regarding an incident at Kroo Town Road - Kroo Bay, Freetown, involving some members of the public and the Sierra Leone Police.

In the absence of a completed and credible investigation, CARL-SL considers it premature to draw definitive conclusions or make findings of fact about the incident. We, however recognize the seriousness of the reports and the potential implications of the incident for public safety, human rights and community-police relations.

CARL-SL unequivocally condemns violence, riotous conduct, destruction of life and property, attacks against persons and obstruction of lawful public duties. It is our view that the exercise of constitutional rights and freedom does not extend to a conduct that places the life, safety or property of others at risk. Citizens have a responsibility to express grievances peacefully and to pursue disputes through lawful channels. Community grievances must not be resolved through violence or intimidation.

At the same time, we note that maintaining public order is a responsibility of government, and the exercise of that responsibility must remain firmly within the law. However, the existence of public disorder does not give law enforcement personnel an unlimited mandate to use force. Whenever force becomes necessary, it must be lawful, reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances and level of threat or resistance encountered. This principle is particularly important in situations involving public gatherings, disturbances and confrontations between civilians and law enforcement personnel. Policing a public disturbance requires officers to assess the nature of the threat and respond accordingly. The presence of individuals at or around a disturbance should not, in itself, make them legitimate targets of force. Where practicable, law enforcement responses should distinguish between persons actively threatening life, safety, or property and persons who are merely present at the scene.

The objective of policing should ultimately be to restore public order, protect life and property, de-escalate tensions and prevent further harm. Given the competing accounts surrounding the incident, CARLSL calls for a prompt, independent and credible investigation which should, at a minimum, seek to establish the sequence of events, the circumstances that led to the confrontation, conduct of civilians and law enforcement personnel, nature of force used and to determine whether or not the said force is what led to the alleged demise of two residents of the community.

Furthermore, the investigation should provide an opportunity for affected persons and witnesses to give accounts of what occurred and should be conducted in a manner that inspires public confidence. CARLSL emphasizes that accountability cannot be selective, where members of the public are found to have engaged in violence, assault, destruction of property or other unlawful conduct, the law should be applied fairly and appropriately. Equally, where law enforcement personnel are found to have acted unlawfully, used excessive or disproportionate force, or otherwise violated the rights of members of the public, appropriate disciplinary, administrative or legal action should follow.

We therefore call on:

1. Members of the public to remain peaceful, refrain from violence and pursue grievances through lawful channels
2. The Sierra Leone Police to exercise maximum restraint and ensure that any force employed is strictly necessary, lawful and proportionate to the circumstances
3. Community and Political leaders to discourage inflammatory statements that could heighten tensions or encourage confrontations
4. The press and social media users to exercise responsibility in reporting on the incident and avoid circulating unverified information that could further inflame an already sensitive situation.

CARLSL continues to call on all stakeholders to exercise restraint, reject violence and contribute to a peaceful resolution of the incident. We remain committed to the promotion of human rights, rule of law, accountable policing and peaceful democratic participation.

THE END!!!