



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

....fostering human rights through accountability

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PRESS STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

CARL-SL Calls for National Unity, Constitutional Integrity and Respect for the Rule of Law in Supreme Court Proceedings on Constitutional Amendment

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The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law, Sierra Leone (CARL-SL) expresses its concern over the increasingly polarised public discourse surrounding the ongoing Supreme Court proceedings on the Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2025. CARL-SL urges all stakeholders to rise above partisan considerations and approach this matter first and foremost as a question of constitutional integrity, the rule of law and the long-term interest of the people of Sierra Leone.

The Constitution is the supreme legal framework governing our nation. It establishes the principles, procedures and institutional safeguards through which public authority is exercised. Any question concerning its amendment must therefore be approached with the seriousness, impartiality and respect that its fundamental importance demands.

CARL-SL recognises that political parties, public officials, lawyers, civil society organisations and citizens may hold differing views on the proposed constitutional amendments and the circumstances surrounding its passage. However, these differences must not overshadow the fundamental question before the Court, which is whether the applicable constitutional requirements and procedures have been followed.

CARL-SL calls on all parties to place Sierra Leone and its Constitution above partisan interests.

We respectfully call on the Honourable Chief Justice and the other Justices of the Supreme Court to continue discharging their constitutional responsibilities independently, impartially and without fear or favour. The Court must be afforded the space and respect necessary to examine the issues before it and reach its determination in accordance with the applicable laws. Public confidence in the administration of justice depends on the independence of the judiciary and the public's ability to trust that constitutional questions, when they arise, will ultimately be determined through lawful judicial processes.

CARL-SL further urges all counsel appearing before the Court to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct, restraint and respect for the rule of law and authority of the court. Vigorous legal argument is an essential part of Sierra Leonean's adversarial system, however, it must remain focused on the law, the evidence and the constitutional questions at issue. Personal exchanges, partisan rhetoric and conduct that may distract from the substantive issues should give way to principled advocacy and professional responsibility.

We also call on political parties, political leaders and public officials to exercise restraint in their public statements. The constitutional questions before the Court should not be reduced to a contest between political parties or individuals. No political interest should take precedence over the constitutional order, and no individual or institution should be regarded as above the Constitution.

CARL-SL encourages the media, civil society organisations and members of the public to engage responsibly with the proceedings. Citizens have every right to follow the case, seek information, express views and hold public institutions accountable. That engagement, however, should be informed by verified information, respect for due process and an appreciation of the distinction between legal arguments presented by parties and

decisions ultimately made by the Court. Public discussion should contribute to understanding, not deepen division or undermine confidence in constitutional institutions before the legal questions have been resolved.

This is a moment for constitutional reflection, not partisan escalation.

The Supreme Court has an important responsibility to interpret the constitutional questions placed before it. The parties have a responsibility to present their arguments through lawful and professional means. Political leaders have a responsibility to demonstrate restraint, and citizens have a responsibility to remain engaged, informed and committed to peaceful democratic participation.

CARL-SL reaffirms its commitment to accountability, democratic governance, and the rule of law. Whatever the outcome of the proceedings, Sierra Leone must emerge with renewed respect for constitutional governance, the rule of law and the institutions entrusted with safeguarding our democracy. Accordingly, CARL-SL urges the Supreme Court and all the parties appearing before it to work cooperatively so as to expeditiously resolve the questions before the Court.

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