



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

....fostering human rights through accountability

19 Pultney Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Tel: +232 76 672841, Email: info@carl.org.sl / simbojeremy@yahoo.com

Website: www.carl.org.sl

PRESS STATEMENT

For Immediate Release

CARL-SL Calls on President Bio for Urgent Resolution of Lecturers' Strike, to Protect Students and Sierra Leone's Higher Education System

Freetown, Sierra Leone 13th October, 2026

The Centre for Accountability and the Rule of Law – Sierra Leone (CARL-SL) expresses grave concern over the ongoing industrial dispute between the Government and the Union of Academic Staff Associations (UASA), which has disrupted academic activities in public tertiary institutions and created uncertainty for university students.

CARL-SL recognises the importance of fair remuneration, decent working conditions and professional dignity for lecturers. However, the continuing dispute raises serious concerns about the educational, social and economic consequences for students and the future of higher education in Sierra Leone.

Students are bearing the consequences of a dispute they did not create. Interruptions to lectures can leave students behind on course content, disrupt preparation for examinations, delay research and practical work, and create uncertainty around graduation dates. Students approaching the end of their programmes may face delayed entry into employment, postgraduate studies or other professional trainings.

The disruption also places additional pressure on parents who have invested huge resources in tuition, accommodation, transportation and other educational expenses. Where academic calendars are extended or revised, some students may incur additional costs and face difficulties adjusting their personal, family and work commitments. Prolonged uncertainty can also affect students' motivation, emotional well-being and confidence in the reliability of the university system.

The consequences extend beyond individual students. Repeated interruptions to teaching and learning can place pressure on universities to compress academic programmes, reschedule examinations and reorganise teaching periods. If lost instructional time is not properly recovered, students may struggle to master essential knowledge and skills. Disruptions to research, supervision and practical training may also affect academic output and the quality of graduates entering the workforce.

Over time, persistent instability in public tertiary education risks weakening public confidence in universities and undermining Sierra Leone's efforts to develop the skilled workforce needed in education, health, law, science, technology and other critical sectors. The protection of academic staff welfare and the continuity of students' education must therefore be treated as interconnected priorities.

In its statement of 9th October, 2026, the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education maintained that negotiations were ongoing when the strike began, and questioned the legal basis of the industrial action. In its response of 10th October, 2026 UASA argued that negotiations had not produced a concrete salary offer, and called for substantive engagement. CARL-SL urges both parties to move beyond public exchanges and commit to meaningful negotiations aimed at achieving a timely and sustainable resolution.

CARL-SL respectfully calls on **His Excellency the President** to provide urgent leadership, facilitate constructive negotiations and ensure that clear proposals and timelines are agreed upon. UASA and the relevant academic staff associations must also remain committed to good-faith engagement and a resolution that recognises lecturers' legitimate concerns while protecting students' interests.

CARL-SL further urges university administrations to communicate clearly with students about the status of academic activities and examination schedules, and to develop practical plans to recover lost teaching time. Such plans should protect academic standards and minimise avoidable academic or financial penalties for students affected by the disruption.

CARL-SL calls on all parties to place the national interest above prolonged confrontation. **Lecturers' welfare matters, students' education matters, and Sierra Leone's future depends on a stable and effective higher education system.** The Government and UASA must act urgently to resolve the dispute, restore academic activities and prevent further harm to students and the country's education sector.

END