



One Year of Inaction: Sierra Leone Fails to Implement ECOWAS Court Judgment on Police Accountability

Freetown, 3 March 2025 – One year after the landmark ruling by the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice (the Court) in the case of **Mohamed Morlu v. Republic of Sierra Leone**, AdvocAid and the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) express deep concern over the Government of Sierra Leone's failure to comply with the **Court's orders**. The judgment, delivered on **28 February 2024**, found Sierra Leone responsible for multiple human rights violations and ordered the State to compensate Mr. Morlu. However, despite repeated attempts to engage the government, there has been no action taken to implement the judgment.

The case, filed in August 2022 with the support of AdvocAid and IHRDA, stemmed from police brutality during a peaceful student protest in Bo, sometime in March 2017, where law enforcement officers shot Mr. Morlu in the abdomen. The Court ruled that Sierra Leone had violated the complainant's right to security of the person and his right to be free from torture, as guaranteed by the **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention Against Torture**. The ruling also reaffirmed the Government's obligation to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the shooting.

One year later, Mr. Morlu is yet to receive the compensation awarded to him, and no known steps have been taken to hold the perpetrators accountable. Despite repeated demands for meetings from AdvocAid and IHRDA, the Government of Sierra Leone has remained unresponsive.

"This continued inaction is a grave disregard of the rule of law and Sierra Leone's commitment to human rights," said Alison French, Executive Director at AdvocAid. "The judgment was not just about compensation for Mr. Morlu—it was a call for police accountability and systemic reform. The government's failure to act is an injustice to all victims of police violence."

Dr. Musa Kika, Executive Director of IHRDA, added, "Sierra Leone's refusal to implement this judgment sets a dangerous precedent for impunity in the region. If governments can ignore binding decisions from the ECOWAS Court without consequence, then justice becomes an illusion for victims of state violence."

The Government of Sierra Leone has an obligation under international law to comply with decisions of the ECOWAS Court. AdvocAid and IHRDA therefore continues to urge the government to take immediate steps to implement the ruling, to ensure:

- Prompt payment of the compensation awarded to Mr. Morlu.
- A full and transparent investigation into the police officers responsible for the shooting.
- Concrete steps toward broader police accountability and security sector reforms are taken to prevent future rights violations.

As Sierra Leone continues to position itself as a democratic Nation committed to human rights, its credibility is at stake. AdvocAid and IHRDA will continue their work in pursuing justice for Mr. Morlu and ensure accountability for police violence in Sierra Leone.

For more information or media inquiries, please contact:

For AdvocAid: Alison French | Executive Director
Email: executive.director@advocaidsl.org

For IHRDA: Dr. Chipu Irene Rushwaya | Senior Legal Officer
Email: crushwaya@ihrda.org

About AdvocAid

AdvocAid is a feminist organisation led by women for women. We are the only human rights organisation in Sierra Leone providing holistic access to justice and support post-incarceration, to women and girls who come into contact with the law. We operate across eight towns in Sierra Leone from established offices in Freetown, Makeni, Kenema. Our team of dedicated paralegals, social workers and lawyers work with women in contact with the law, to ensure they are supported



and represented throughout the justice system - from police stations to court to correctional centres - with legal empowerment and psycho-social / welfare support, as well as support once released from incarceration. We use all of the insights and lessons from these important short-term interventions to inform our policy work, advocating for law reform that is focused on changing the system that disproportionately traps women and girls in poverty and brings them into contact with the justice system.

About IHRDA

IHRDA is a Pan-African non-governmental organisation established in 1998 in The Gambia. IHRDA works to promote human rights and development in Africa and to improve the effectiveness of the African human rights system. IHRDA envisages an African continent where all have access to justice via national, African and international human rights mechanisms. IHRDA's work can be summarised in three words: defend, educate, and inform. IHRDA engages in legal advocacy through pro-bono strategic litigation and has extensive experience litigating before regional human rights mechanisms. It diversifies the scope of its efforts to ensure the effective implementation of decisions and recommendations. IHRDA also plays a lead role in skills development for State and non-State actors on the use of international legal instruments and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights and development in Africa.