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CSOs demand reduction of PR threshold

WIMSAL gets new President



By Alfred Koroma

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are demanding that the PR threshold be reduced from 11.9 percent to 7 percent.

Last year, the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone declared that June election will be conducted on Proportional Representation (PR), an electoral system where a political party representation reflects its electoral support.

The Commission required parties to hit 11.9 percent of votes in a district to gain representation in the legislative house.

But four Civil Society Organizations - IGR, HALE, 50/50 Group and CARL warned that the threshold is too high and may undermine broad-based representation.



Mohamed Kenewul Konneh, Chief Electoral Commissioner, ECSL

PHOTO NEWS

SPPNA receives most supporting chapter award



Tuma Adama Gento Kamara delivers keynote address at Wintrade Global Summit in UK

AfriCaribbean festival organisers excited about 2nd year episode



SLP records 33,157 criminal, accident cases in 2022

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LOCAL NEWS

Tuma Adama Gento Kamara delivers keynote address at Wintrade Global Summit in UK



For the past 25 years, Wintrade Global Women in Business Network has assisted over 25,000 women and is dedicated to supporting, developing, and celebrating women in business across the globe. The summit is a platform for Women Entrepreneurs to drive prosperity through Inter- Continental trade and will hold from the 13th -15th March 2023 at the House of Commons, Lloyds of London, the House of Lloyds and the London Stock Exchange respectively across the UK.

The summit's theme, "From Ideation to Realization: Delivering Prosperity through Intercontinental Trade," aims to connect women globally to decision-makers for opportunities and to celebrate women in leadership. This Three-Day summit is the first in-person event since the start of the COVID pandemic and is dedicated to promoting Womenomics and the role of intercontinental trade to drive economic growth and prosperity.

In her keynote address, Tuma Adama Gento- Kamara noted that her story resonates with the struggle and pain of the African Woman on one hand, and the joy and triumph on the other hand. She said it does not matter what one is talking about within the context of women on the continent, the story of the African Woman is framed in resilience, ecstasy, beauty, culture, fashion, and spirituality. She therefore underscored the importance of supporting women owned business across the continent of Africa and Sierra Leone in particular. She pointed out that the Government of Sierra Leone is building the support structures for women to thrive in their field of endeavors. The recently enacted Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2022 which now ensures that one in three members of parliament, as well as local council is a woman. She said the law is a monumental advancement for gender equality in Sierra Leone, a country ranked 181 out of 191 countries in the UN Gender Inequality Index. The law enshrines improvements to women's access to finance, employment opportunities, equal pay, maternity leave, and—critically—political representation. The Act establishes a 30 percent quota for women's participation in government for both appointed positions, including cabinet, ministries, ambassadorial roles, and



elected positions, such as parliamentary and local council seats. Tuma reiterated that before the enactment of the law, women represented just 12 percent of parliamentary seats and four out of the 32 cabinet positions. The quota in this Act will go into effect ahead of Sierra Leone's upcoming presidential, parliamentary, mayoral, and local council elections on June 23, 2023, she said.

As Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Country's Revenue Authority, Tuma said they have ensured a leap in the representation of Women in the Senior management of that organization; something that was non-existent when we were appointed almost five years ago. She said they are doing this believing that men are very critical in the final analysis of things, so they approved a paternal leave for the men just as it would happen in the case of women.

Mrs. Gento-Kamara was speaking on the importance of supporting women led businesses; something herself and her Husband Mohamed Gento Kamara has been doing for a very long time. On the reasons they do what they do, Mrs. Gento-Kamara said, they are waging war against the deepening economic inequality against women in Sierra Leone.

Quoting a study done by the World Economic Forum, gender inequality is strongly associated with income inequality across time and countries of all income groups. According to her, the study reveals that women are more likely to work in the informal sector, in which earnings are lower, which widens the gender earnings gap and exacerbates income inequality. To bring that into perspective in our context, it requires as little as 20 British Pounds Sterling for that single mother to start petty trading so she can feed and perhaps provide lunch and uniforms for her children. When her Husband and

herself finance petty traders, they are helping to close the economic inequality gap thereby reducing gender inequality which we all fight for every day.

Mrs. Gento- Kamara said she came from a Country where opportunities are endless, especially when almost all professions are male dominated. One of the promising spaces for women to thrive and are doing their level best is in Business, she stressed. As an entrepreneur herself, she have supported very promising start-ups since business is an essential part of the economy. "I have always wanted to promote diversity in business". She said Women entrepreneurs bring unique perspective, experiences and ideas to the table which can lead to innovative solutions and new business opportunities. When we support women owned businesses, we help create a more inclusive and diverse business community.

She continued that Women owned businesses serve as role models for future generations of future entrepreneurs. When young girls see successful entrepreneurs, they are more likely to believe that they can achieve their dreams and start their own businesses, she continued. By supporting women owned businesses, we inspire the next generation.

Supporting Women owned Businesses is an excellent way to support women empowerment. Tuma said that Women Entrepreneurs are often under-represented in the Business world, they face unique challenges such as lack of access to funding and mentorship. By supporting women owned businesses we can help women overcome these challenges and gain the confidence and skills they need to succeed.

Other Speakers include top executives, entrepreneurs, and thought leaders from various industries, including finance, technology, healthcare, and education. They share their experiences and offer practical advice on overcoming obstacles and succeeding in the global business arena.

"We are thrilled to host this year's Women in Business Summit, which has brought together some of the most influential voices in the business world," said the Founder of Wintrade Global, Dr. Yvonne Thompson CBE. The Conference is expected to end on Wednesday 15th March, 2023.



LOCAL NEWS

By Jariatu S. Bangura

WIMSAL gets new President

Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL) has on Friday ended its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and elected new President, together with other executive members at the Atlantic Lumley Hotel in Freetown.

The team of this year's AGM was geared towards positioning female journalists to promote women in politics.

In attendance were key personalities from Rokel Commercial Bank, United Bank for African (UBA) and Leone Rock Metal Group as main sponsors. Parliamentary Female Caucus President, Hon. Veronica K. Sesay, representative of the All People's Women Congress, past and present executive members of WIMSAL, were also present at the AGM.

Newly executive members, who went unopposed, were announced by the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists Electoral Committee (SLAJEC).

Delivering her keynote address, Dr. Sylvia Olayinka Blyden urged that WIMSAL should support women with sound character and able to stand out and address issues that pertain women in society.

She said elections are around the

corner and that there might be women that would approach WIMSAL for support by making their voices be heard.

She said since WIMSAL was founded in the wakes of the 2007 general elections, and now having the 2023 elections just around the corner, it is but necessary to acknowledge that women have been left behind in terms of political representation and the need to support them.

She noted that gender equality means that both men and women are the same and can perform the same duties and described politics as a game of interest that sweeps one to follow the wrongs without realizing it. She noted that there are good and bad men as well as women in politics, but that female journalists should be careful in choosing women who are competent, patriotic and of substance.

The new unopposed President of WIMSAL, Eastina B. Taylor, commended the outgoing President and her team for a job well done, despite the challenges faced and promised to continue the fight for equality and maintains the unity of members of WIMSAL.



She said together with her executive, they will endeavour to empower other women in the media and also create space and inclusiveness for all members.

President of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, Ahmed Nasralla said WIMSAL should focus it fight in promoting women issues and women in politics and forget about the forgone challenges.

He said women are underrepresented in Sierra Leone, both in politics and the media landscape, even though women constitute about 50 percent of the country's population.

He said a survey conducted by Global Media Monitoring project shows that 54% of women are protagonist of domestic violence which highlights the need for a better representation of women.

He further states that women in the media also faced challenges as reported by the International Women's Media Foundation survey which shows the level at which they suffer from domestic violence, sexual harassment, physical assault and verbal abuse.

"These forms of violence deterred most women and get them shy away from the media landscape. The only way one could stop this is by having more women in politics and also the resources to train and widen the scope of their knowledge. Also, there is the need to create an open space for them and allow them to take their full potential of their breathing space and fight gender stereotypes," he said.

Outgoing President of WIMSAL, Femi Jarreth Coker said women need to brace up should they need to be in parliament or anywhere.

She noted that the hate is too much among women folks and that even though women consist of about 52%,

yet they are under-represented.

She urged all female colleagues to be focused and patient in doing their work diligently to compete with their male colleagues.

She commended all colleagues that have worked with her during her three years tenure and also sponsors that have helped along the way and promised to give her support always to WIMSAL and the new executive.

Chairman of Media Reform and Coordinating Group (MRCG), Dr. Isaac Sowa said studies after studies by MRCG, SLAJ and other organizations show that the number of women within the media is not at the level they want to be and when it comes to leadership and managerial positions, it is a different case.

He stated that the theme is within the arena of politics, considering the upcoming elections but that it should be noted that promoting those women should start with those in the media system.

He said the country is lagging behind when it comes to women taking higher positions as compared to other countries in the region.

Chairman of the Independent Media Commission, Dr. Victor Massaquoi said he has been a long standing supporting member of WIMSAL, thus commending the effort made so far.

He noted that despite all the challenges faced by WIMSAL, they have been able to pick out some admirable women in politics in the past years.

He said studies conducted by IMC and IAMDEV shows that women in politics are disproportionately disadvantaged on television, radio and newspaper, women in the media are poorer than compared to the men and less than 5% of women are running radio and television in Sierra Leone.

CSOs demand reduction of PR threshold

From Cover

The organizations say the high threshold only favour the two dominant political parties in the country and does not bode well for democracy and broad-based representation, noting it will lead to under-representation for minority groups or non-traditional political parties.

"This high threshold clearly undermines the increased inclusivity that the PR system promises," the civil society organizations wrote in a press release published 14th March, 2023.

However, speaking to Concord Times in an exclusive interview last year, 50/50 Group President, Haja Alimatu Abdullah hailed the electoral system, particularly saying "PR is advantageous for women." Other opposition parties also praised the electoral system for its potential to reduce electoral violence in the country.

The CSOs stressed on the need for broad-based participation in the selection or nomination of candidates, saying the present electoral laws do not clearly prescribe the process of selecting or nominating candidates for parliamentary and local council elections by political parties.

"There is no law that makes it mandatory for political parties to organize or ensure wider participation



of their members in selecting or nominating candidates for parliamentary or local council elections," the CSOs said. "This is clearly unhelpful both in terms of promoting internal party democracy as well as ensuring increased participation of citizens in determining candidates."

The CSOs also hit on the lack of legal guidance on the selection or nomination of candidates by political parties, demanding that the laws and regulations be reviewed to require political parties organize democratic processes for selecting or nominating candidates.

The civil society organizations also said they are gravely concerned that the votes of many Sierra Leoneans in the forthcoming elections may not count and the 30% women's representation in parliament will not be achieved, except political parties and election management bodies agree to ensure greater inclusivity and participation.



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LOCAL NEWS

By Fatmata BJ Samura

On Wednesday 22nd February 2023, Hon. Tennyson Hindolo Sandy representing Constituency 120 Moyiba Dubai Pipe Line Communities invited journalists to visit a road development construction he is doing in his constituency, which will lead to Gloucester, Leicester and Ferry Junction.

During the site visit, he explained to journalists that the reason he took up the adventure is to relieve his people of their suffering.

That the bad network of the road leads to other serious challenges such as accessing water, light, medical facility among others.

He pointed out that even to take the dead to their resting place is a challenge because of the poor road.

Hon. Tennyson continued that because of these challenges his people had to meet him and asked him to help them construct a road for them and that he took their plea very serious because their voices matter to him.

He maintained that the road in question which leads to Gloucester, Leicester and Ferry Junction is a major road as it links the Urban and Rural settings.

Hon. Sandy is developing the road leading to Gloucester, Leicester & Ferry Junction

He explained that Gloucester and Leicester which are at the top of the hill and the Moyiba, Dubai Community down the hills are connected by the road.

He disclosed that at first, they only wanted to make a foot path but now they want it to be accessible to all, moto vehicles and bikes etc. should be plying right through Gloucester, Leicester, Immat, Kort Right going round at the PWD axes.

He maintained that he and his communities want to decongest the city so that those who are working in the Eastern part of Freetown will now use the Regent, Gloucester, Leicester Road instead of going round to Model or Grafton.

Chairman for Con 120 Moyiba, Dubai, Pipe line Communities, Abdul Sesay who is also the Zonal Chairman for the SLPP said that the road being constructed is very important to their communities as there was no road but just a foot passage.

He noted that movement through Moyiba, Dubai and Pipe line with pregnant women for medical and delivery purposes were very difficult.

He continued that if they are having a



Hon. TENNYSON HINDOLO SANDI
CONST. 120

road today it is because of kindheartedness of Hon. Tennyson Hindolo Sandy, noting that since 2019 he has been supporting them to make sure their communities are improved.

He noted that 90% of the road is being done by Hon. Tennyson Hindolo Sandy and that 10% by the communities.

He said that the road will not only be

of benefit to them but also to other people, adding that it is going to be the shortest way to Ferry Junction.

Chairlady of Constituency 120 Moyiba, Dubai Pipe Line Communities, Esther Kargbo said they are happy with what Hon. Tennyson Hindolo Sandy is doing by constructing a road for them. Other people in the communities expressed similar sentiments.

President Bio admonishes North West Region ECSL Commissioner

By Ishmael Dumbuya

President Julius Maada Bio has called on the new commissioner for the Northwest region, Albert Samba Kanu to exercise fairness and transparency in the next election slated for June this year.

Administering the oath of office for the new commissioner, Northwest, President Bio explained that Northwest Region never had a commissioner and as a result that's why he was appealing to the newly appointed commissioner to be disinterested and fair in the conduct of the upcoming elections in that region, and to ensure that the elections be transparent and fair.

President Bio went on to state that the conduct of a fair and transparent elections hinges on the professionalism of the commissioners'.

"A country cannot be truly democratic until its citizens have the opportunity to choose their representatives through elections that are free and fair. Critical development efforts cannot succeed without a legitimate and democratically elected government that is responsive and



accountable to its citizens," he stated. In his own statement, the newly appointed Commissioner Northwest, Albert Samba Kanu applauded and appreciated President Bio for appointing him to serve, noting that he will do all he could to ensure that there is a credible and unbiased conduct of elections in that part of the country.

He ended on the note that a country cannot be truly democratic until its citizens have the opportunity to choose their representatives through elections that are free and fair. The Northwest region comprise of Port Loko, Karene etc.

\$400 million to be invested in poultry farming

By Ishmael Dumbuya

The Minister of Agriculture, Abubakarr Karim has disclosed in an interview with Radio Democracy 98.1 Gud Morning Salon programme that development partners have agreed to invest the sum of \$400 million in order to boost poultry production in Sierra Leone.

According to the minister the importance of poultry production cannot be overemphasized as it provides humans with companionship, food and fiber in the form of eggs, meat and feathers. Many people love to raise and show chickens and other poultry species at fairs and other poultry shows. Others just love to raise them for backyard pets and for fresh eggs every day. Poultry production is significant for Sierra Leoneans as it leads to commercial viability in the country.

Globally, poultry production provides high-quality, affordable animal protein, a high chance for investment, job opportunities, and a source of income for smallholders



worldwide. The minister furthered that Poultry farming is a significant source of revenue generation for small farmers in the country.

Poultry production improves the standard of living as well as the provision of jobs for people living in the farming area.

Minister Karim rounded off by highlighting that Poultry farming provides a high yield, much capital is not required to become a poultry farmer, the minister added. Lots of spaces are not required to begin poultry farming and Poultry farming might be immediately lucrative.



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LOCAL NEWS SLP records 33,157 criminal, accident cases in 2022

By Yusufu S. Bangura

Crime Statistician at the Sierra Leone Police, Inspector Smart Menjor, has told newsmen that in 2022 they recorded a total of 33,157 criminal and accident cases across the country.

The disclosure was made on Monday, 13th March, at the Sierra Leone Police Headquarters on George Street in Freetown, while launching the general crime statistics report.

He said in the 2022 crime year, 27,018 criminal activities were reported in all the six Police Command Regions in Sierra Leone.

He added that the Criminal Investigations Departments (CID) Headquarters in Freetown alone received and investigated 2,015 Criminal Cases, while the Traffic Department received and investigated 4,124 Road Traffic Accidents cases in 2022.

Inspector Menjor said in total, 33,157 Criminal and Accident cases were reported by the Sierra Leone police countrywide with an overall crime rate of 0.39%.

He further said in 2021, there were 41,459 criminal cases reported with a crime rate of 0.50% and according to him, there was a tremendous decrease in the rate of crimes by 11% in 2022, for the past years.

The Crime Statistician said there had been a sharp reduction in the number of crimes in Sierra Leone which has contributed to the stable environment in the country.

He attributed decrease in crime to the following, Strong security measures taken by police and the RSLAF, check points at strategic points at night, timely response to distress calls, community sensitizations on crime prevention, continuous stakeholder's engagement on crime prevention strategies among others.

In terms of the various regions, he disclosed that Western Area (Freetown East and West) recorded 21,222 criminal cases representing 1.18%, the Northern Region, (North West and East) received 4,795 criminal cases with a percentage of 0.20%, Eastern Region recorded 3,587 criminal cases which represent 0.18% and Southern Region recorded 3,533 criminal cases representing 0.16%.

He continued that from the Regional analysis above, there is a clear indication that Western Area is prone to more criminal activities than any other region in Sierra Leone, followed by Northern Region, Eastern Region and Southern Region, respectively.

Inspector Menjor cited late submission of monthly crime statistics to the Corporate Affairs Directorate by Commanders, lack of training for data analysts and data officers in the various regions as some of the challenges they are faced with.

He recommended that the police should intensify intelligence-gathering efforts to identify high-profile criminals and their hideouts, to deploy Community Safety Volunteer and Coordinate well with the Local Partnership Policing Board members.



Director of Corporate Affairs at SLP officially launch the report

He further recommends that the Family Support Unit (FSU), Ministry of Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs should team up and organize sensitization meetings to educate students/ pupils on Sexual Penetration and Rape and how to deal with them.

The SLP Crime Statistician further recommended that the political will to foster the reporting of rape incidents countrywide should be enhanced and the establishment of accessible roads on the hill top and seafront areas because most of the major crimes like armed robbery are committed in places where vehicles cannot access due to the poor road network.

While launching the Crime Statistics report, Director of Corporate Affairs at SLP, Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) Memunatu B. Konteh

Jalloh, disclosed that the annual crime statistics will help the police to predict the way crimes are being committed in different locations across the country.

She said the Corporate Affairs Directorate of the SLP is being tasked with the responsibility to analyze and produce the SLP Crime Statistics Report annually.

She added that the annual statistics will also help the force to put in place strategies that are informed by the statistics.

She furthered that the crime statistics provide information on how resource are allocated, as well as for the SLP's strategic development plans and it provides the frequencies at which various crimes were reported in each region for the period under review.

Sexual Penetration: Convict gets 10-year imprisonment

By Ibrahim Kabba Turay

Justice Alhaji Momoh Jah Stevens, JA has on Monday sentenced one Mohamed Mansaray to ten-year imprisonment after he was found guilty of penetrating a fourteen-year-old child.

The accused was charged with the offense of sexual penetration contrary to Section 4(a)(ii) of the Sexual Offences Act 2019, as amended, repealed and replaced by Section 4 of the Sexual (Amendment) Act of 2019 Act No.8 of 2019

M.P. Sesay for state alleged that the convict on 31st May 2022 in Freetown engaged in an act of sexual penetration with the victim

who was fourteen years.

The prosecution filed an instrument signed by the Attorney General dated the 6th day of July 2022 for the accused to be tried by a judge alone, instead of a judge and jury, in accordance with Section 144(2) of the Criminal Procedure Act 1965 as amended.

Justice Stevens in his ruling stated that, after the prosecution closed their case, an option was given to the convict to select whether he wanted to rely on his statement he made to the police, take the witness stand and call witness or testify in the dock. But he informed the court through his

lawyer from the Legal Aid Board that, he relied on the statement he made to the police.

Meanwhile, Justice Alhaji Momoh Jah Stevens immediately withdrew the file for judgment.

The judge recalled that the accused had pleaded not guilty to the offence as charged, adding that the prosecution brought four witnesses including the medical doctor.

He said the accused denied the allegation in its entirety, but didn't proffer any defence to corroborate the said denial.

"A substantiated defence by the accused will have been crucial for my consideration of his innocence,

but to mainly deny and rely on same, I submit it cannot project a strong defence of the accused," the Judge said.

He said according to the victim, the accused was his home teacher and that on the day of the incident he came to teach her when he asked her to undress and sexually penetrated her.

She said the accused threatened her not to tell anybody or else he will kill her

"I submit that the prosecution has proven it case beyond all reasonable doubt against the accused person. I therefore hold the accused guilty as charged of sexual penetration," he ruled.

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Sierra Leone Agribusiness & Rice Value Chain Support Project (SLARIS)
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) Building
Moyamba, Sierra Leone



Invitation for Bid (National Competitive Bidding - NCB)

1. **Requirement:** Supply & Delivery of Office Furniture and Related Items for SLeSCA, Mile 91

2. **Bid & Contract No:** MAF/SLARIS/FUR/NCB/001/2023

3. **Date of Issue:** 6th March 2023

4. The Sierra Leone Agribusiness and Rice value Chain Support Project of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has received a Grant from the African Development Fund (AfDB) towards the Sierra Leone Agribusiness and Rice Development Project (SLARIS) and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this grant will be utilized for the procurement of Office Furniture and related items for the Sierra Leone Seeds Certification Agency (SLeSCA) Seeds Laboratory at Mile 91 as summarized below:

5. Description of Goods:

No.	Description	Qty	Bid Security Amount (SLL)	Estimated Delivery Period After Award
1	Executive Table	Lot	15,000.00	Within two (2) weeks
2	Executive Swivel Chair			
3	Visitor's Chair			
4	Steel Cabinet			
5	Work Station			
6	Work Station chairs			
7	Lab Stool			
8	Receptionist Desk			

6. Bidding is open to all competent National Contractors with all valid business registration documents issued by the Government of Sierra Leone.

7. Interested bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the office of the Project Manager, Sierra Leone Agribusiness and Rice Value Chain Support Project (SLARIS), MoA Building, Moyamba, between 9.00AM and 3PM on week days (**Monday to Friday only - excluding public holidays**). Email: kakuaboy@gmail.com; chriskebbie84@gmail.com. Tel: +232 76 364800, +232 79 453004.

8. Bidding documents shall be purchased upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **SLL 800,000.00** (eight hundred thousand Leones). All payments for the purchase of the Bidding document should be made to the SLARIS Bank Account with details below:

Bank Name:	Rokel Commercial Bank
Account Name:	Sierra Leone Agribusiness and Rice value Chain Support Project (SLARIS)
Account No:	02-01-1011970
BBan No:	002001002101197079
Address:	25/27 Siaka Stevens Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone
Ref:	MAF/SLARIS/FUR/NCB/001/2023 - Office Furniture

9. SLARIS upon receipt of proof of payment, shall provide both printed and electronics copies to the purchaser as may be required.

10. **Every Bidders is required to quote for all items or none.**

11. Bids MUST be clearly marked and delivered to the address below on or before **12 Noon of Thursday, 13th April 2023 - Sierra Leone Time.**

The Project Manager

Sierra Leone Agribusiness and Rice Value Chain Support Project (SLARIS)
Ministry of Agriculture Building, Moyamba, Sierra Leone.
Ref: **Supply & Delivery of Office Furniture and Related Items for Seed Lab at Mile 91**
Tel: +232 76364800/+232 79 453004

12. The Bidder shall submit with its bid the following additional documents:

- Bid Security amount of SLL. 15,000.00
- Completed Bid Form and Price Schedule;
- Technical specification of each item offered to include, **brand name, make and country of origin** as may be applicable;
- Compliance with Delivery Schedule
- Evidence of at least two (2) same/similar contracts successfully completed in the last five (5) years in a form of copy of signed Contracts or certification letter from the Contracting institutions.
- Audited Financial Statement for the past three (3) previous years
- Business Registration Certificate;
- A Certified True Copy of Valid Tax Clearance Certificate from the National Revenue Authority (NRA)
- A Certified True Copy of National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) Clearance Certificate

13. Bids will be publicly opened on **Thursday, 13th April 2023 at 12:15 PM**, in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below. Please note, Late bid (s) will be rejected and returned unopened by SLARIS.

Sierra Leone Agribusiness and Rice Value Chain Support Project (SLARIS) Ministry of Agriculture Building, Moyamba, Sierra Leone. Tel: +232 76364800/+232 79 453004

National Cybersecurity Unit donates cyber equipment to SLP

By Yusufu S. Bangura



Brima Jah receiving the donated items from the Cyber Security Coordinator

In a bid to aid the fight against cyber-crimes in Sierra Leone, the National Cybersecurity Unit at the Ministry of Information and Communications, has donated cyber equipment to the Cyber Unit of the Sierra Leone Police.

The donated items were computers, hard drives, and Memory sticks. The donation ceremony took place on Monday 13th March 2023 at the Sierra Leone Police Headquarters on George Street in Freetown, during the usual police press briefing.

Minister of Information and Communications, Mohamed Rahman Swaray, who witnessed the ceremony, said that in 2018, Sierra Leone was one of the countries that were named and shamed for not implementing cybersecurity laws.

He noted that it was part of the conditions that precedent for the landing of the fibre cable here in Sierra Leone, adding that African leaders, including the former President of Sierra Leone had already signed up to the Malabo Accord which is the African Union blueprint for cybersecurity and data protection.

Minister Swaray said at that time, ECOWAS had also passed directives on cybersecurity and data protection.

"After the embarrassment, I was faced with challenges, I licked my wounds, but I made a passionate appeal to the global community that Sierra Leone wanted to be a respectable member of the global community, and therefore needs help to build the country's cybersecurity and resilience," he said.

He disclosed that many aids followed his plea which led to the formulation of a Cybersecurity Act, and a unit within the Ministry.

He said the formulation of the Act should not be part of politics, noting that anyone may be affected by cybersecurity crimes, hence the need to implement the law and protect the people of Sierra Leone.

He added that there was a need to invest in more training, capacity infrastructure, among other things. National Cyber Security Coordinator at the Ministry of Information and Communication, Mariama Yormah, started speaking on the difference between cybercrime and traditional crime, adding that there was a need to strengthen the law enforcement agencies to fight cybercrime.

"If we do not strengthen them, it will be difficult for the institutions charged with the responsibility to enforce the law to fight cybercrimes appropriate," she said.

Yormah disclosed that they have organized pieces of training for the Judiciary and the police, adding that those pieces of training took place in and out of the country.

She stressed on the need for more training for the force and the need for the provision of more equipment to aid their work.

She however assured the SLP of more support, just if the SLP utilize the donated equipment for its appropriate use.

Receiving the donated items, the Director of Operations, Sierra Leone Police (SLP), Mohamed Brima Jah, assured that the donated items will be used for their intended purpose.

AIG Jah acknowledged the support which the SLP has over the years received from the Government of Sierra Leone and he said they are looking forward to receive more support from Government and partners.



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Request for Proposal – Provision of Audio, Multimedia Packages, Media Impact Assessment and Media Engagement Services

1.0. Introduction

1.1 Population Services International (PSI) is a global health network of more than 48 local organizations (including PSI Sierra Leone) dedicated to improving the health of people in the developing world by focusing on serious challenges like a lack of family planning, barriers to maternal health, HIV and AIDS and the greatest threats to children under five, including malaria, diarrhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition.

1.2 Working in partnership within the public and private sectors, and harnessing the power of the markets, PSI focuses on achieving measurable health impact and for over 40 years, PSI has provided life-saving products, clinical services and behaviour change communications that empower the world's most vulnerable populations to lead healthier lives.

1.3 We commit ourselves to contributing to health systems transformation with the government partners and others. We believe in investing in Consumer-Powered Healthcare that keeps pace with the changing health needs of consumers, systematically addresses barriers to positive health behaviors and outcomes, and encourages the most efficient use of available resources.

2.0 Invitation to Submit Proposals

2.1 Now, PSI Sierra Leone invites submission of proposals for prequalification and award of framework agreements/Indefinite Order Quantity Contract for provision of Radio and TV media services.

2.1 The bidding will be conducted in accordance to the PSI Sierra Leone "Guidelines for Procurement of Goods and Services".

2.3 The Request for Proposals is for three Media Categories:

Ø Category A: Audio (jingles) and Multimedia (video ads) Production

Ø Category B: Media (Radio & TV) Engagement and Placement of Jingles and Ads.

Ø Category C: Media Monitoring Services

3.0 Instructions to Bidders

3.1 Bidders may submit a proposal for one category but they are also, however, allowed to submit proposals for all categories or for some categories all in one document as long as the categories are cleared spelt out and differentiated.

3.2 Interested Bidders should get a full set of the Request for Proposals (RFP) document by visiting the Procurement Unit, PSI Sierra Leone, 3 Fadika Drive, IMATT, Freetown during working hours from 9:30am to 17:00pm from Monday to Friday or by sending an email request to the following addresses: crosenior@psi-sl.org; hkoroma@psi-s.org; ejah@psi-sl.org by 24th March 2023 as the deadline for submission of proposals is the 31st of March 2023.

3.5 Should the bidders have any concerns related to fraud, waste, abuse or corruption under this Contract; either with their employees or anyone working for, or affiliated with PSI, they may report allegations and concerns through PSI's third-party whistleblower hotline, Ethics Point. The website for reporting is: www.psi.ethicspoint.com or call +1-888-238-1438 tollfree.

PSI SIERRA LEONE IS NOT BOUND TO ACCEPT THE LOWEST BID

AfriCaribbean festival organisers excited about 2nd year episode

History has recorded 1792 as being the year that former slaves founded Freetown.

Resting proudly as the capital of the West African country Sierra Leone, Freetown tells a story of resilience and pride.

Interestingly, Sierra Leone was one of the many ports of exit for the slave trade. As history continues to remind us, many slaves settled in various parts of the world, including the Caribbean which creates a clear cultural correlation.

The founders of the AfriCaribbean Festival have curated a multi-event festival that provides culturally diverse and unique experiences in Africa.

The first of its kind in Africa, the inaugural AfriCaribbean Festival which ran from December 28 2022 through January 2 2023 attracted hundreds of visitors.

Tasked with the challenge of facilitating easy access to Sierra Leone's capital, the festival organizers partnered with Air Senegal to create a flight to Freetown and Brussels Airlines to offer special discounts to festival travelers.

Co-Founder of the AfriCaribbean Festival, Sierra Leonean, Danna Labor attributes his experiences at various Caribbean and Caribbean-inspired carnivals as his motivation to curate the AfriCaribbean Festival in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Labor asserts, "There is a rich history and connection between Sierra Leone and the Caribbean and I am elated that

the inaugural hosting of our AfriCaribbean festival was a success." Labor describes the feedback from both visitors and Sierra Leoneans as "overwhelmingly positive."

He shares that the locals have expressed their excitement for year two; "they want the AfriCaribbean Festival to be a must-attend like Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival."

Labor added that some natives "were overwhelmed that this Caribbean Carnival that they've only seen on television or social media happened in Freetown."

The festival featured seven events; Welcome Party, Ankara Pool party, All white Beachfete, Pajama party, J'ouvert, Carnival Meets Lantern parade, Culture Clash Concert, and two tours; City Tour and Bunce Island.

Headlining the events were Trinbagonian Soca star Devon 'Lyrical' Martin, Ace Pannist Michael, Florida-based Soca artiste Sizwe C, Guyanese Trevon Vibes, Vincentian Fimba Jardine and Sierra Leonean talents Tigerman, Drizilik, Faze Ya-Alimamy and Dallas Bantan, among others.

This historical initiative as described by the team is "designed to bring together Africans, Caribbeans, African-Americans and Afro-Latinos through Soca Music, Arts, Culture and ancestry." Staying true to its mission, one of AfriCaribbean's visions is to support Sierra Leone's Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs Returnee Program.



Through recognition, it is their hope to assist AfriCaribbean patrons with determining if their lineage is that of Sierra Leonean.

As the organization continues preparation for year two which runs from December 28 2023 through January 2 2024, Labor hopes that "Different Caribbean countries will see the cultural exchange opportunities between the Caribbean and Sierra Leonean artistes and support our efforts."

AfriCaribbean is the ultimate two-for-one special as patrons can check Africa off their bucket list while enjoying the culture with tours to historical sites, and partying the Caribbean way. All relevant information pertaining to the

AfriCaribbean Festival can be found via the official website www.africaribbeanfestival.com.

The organizers wish to extend their sincerest gratitude to the persons listed below for their contributions to the success of the inaugural AfriCaribbean Festival. - Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs - Hon. Dr. Memunatu Pratt - General Manager National Tourist Board Sierra Leone - Fatmata Mida Hamid Carew - Mayor of City of Freetown - Her Lordship Yvonne Aki-Sawyer OBE - Ambassador to Senegal for Sierra Leone - His Excellency Alhaji Brima Elvis Koroma - High Commissioner of Sierra Leone to Kenya - Her Excellency Isatu Aminata Bundu.

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PHOTO NEWS

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NEWS AROUND AFRICA COMPILED BY GABRIEL BENJAMIN

Guinea opposition and government resume contact



Colonel Mamady Doumbouya leaves a meeting with high-level ECOWAS representatives ... - Copyright © africanews JOHN WESSELS/AFP or licensors

Guinea's opposition resumed contact with the military-dominated government on Monday after months of no dialogue raising fears of rising tensions, an AFP correspondent said. The meeting does not seem to have dispelled the opposition's deep suspicion of the ruling junta, further heightened by the arrest of one of its members on Saturday. Representatives of the Forces Vives, a coalition of the main parties, trade unions and non-governmental organisations, agreed to meet Prime Minister Bernard Goumou under the auspices of religious leaders. One of the intercessors, Jean Boston Bangoura, of the Anglican Church, admitted to reporters that it was a "contact". Guinea has been ruled since 2021 by a junta which took power in favor of one of the putsches that West Africa has experienced since August 2020. The soldiers agreed under international pressure to give way to civilians elected by the end of 2024, the time to carry out deep reforms, they say. The opposition has faced the arrest of a number of its leaders under the junta and the launching of legal proceedings against others. The junta has banned all demonstrations and has just threatened to ban parties.

The opposition refuses to dialogue under the conditions set by the junta, which it accuses of confiscating power. However, she agreed, after the intervention of the religious authorities, to postpone until next Wednesday a demonstration initially planned for last week. In a country accustomed to political violence, a previous day of mobilization in mid-February had led to clashes which left three dead. The opposition did not communicate after Monday's meeting on the maintenance or postponement of Wednesday's mobilization. Abdoulaye Barry, a union leader and member of the Forces Vives, however, told AFP that "if the junta took the approach of the clerics seriously, it would not arrest one of the major players in the Forces Vives". Abdoul Sacko, a member of the Forces Vives, was arrested by the gendarmes on Saturday apparently outside of any procedure and, according to his lawyer, without motivation. He was released but summoned again on Monday. Reached by AFP, he reported that the gendarmes had questioned him about his involvement in the organization of prohibited demonstrations. Released again, he must return to the gendarmes on Friday.

Nigeria's old currency can be used longer amid cash crisis



FILE - A money changer counts Nigerian naira currency at a bureau de change, in Lagos Nigeria, - Copyright © africanews Sunday Alamba/ Copyright 2016 The AP. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed

Nigeria's central bank has extended the timeline to swap out its old currency for redesigned notes after the change triggered a cash shortage, forcing businesses to close and leaving millions unable to withdraw their money. The Central Bank of Nigeria announced late Monday that the old notes of 200 naira (43 U.S. cents), 500 naira (\$1.08) and 1,000 naira (\$2.16) will remain legal tender until Dec. 31. Bank spokesman Isa Abdulmumin said the extension was meant to comply with a directive from the country's Supreme Court, which ruled that the program's implementation broke the law. On Tuesday, both old and redesigned notes were still not available for thousands queued at banks in Nigeria's capital of Abuja. There has been a cash shortage since early February because not enough redesigned notes have been printed to replace the old ones in the cash-reliant country. Analysts have accused authorities of poorly implementing the policy in Africa's largest economy, where digital payment services are usually not reliable and only 45% of adults have a bank account, according to the World Bank. The cash crisis has cost the Nigerian economy an estimated 20 trillion naira (\$43 billion) because of "the

crippling of trading activities, the stifling of the informal economy and contraction of the agricultural sector," the Lagos-based Center for the Promotion of Private Enterprises said in a statement. The organization said the situation has further squeezed people and businesses in the country where 63% of the population is poor and 33% is unemployed. The loss of a major payment method "affects business transactions; you cannot buy and you cannot sell, especially for the segments of the economy that are driven largely by cash," said Muda Yusuf, director of the centre. Policymakers said the currency changeover would curb inflation, fight money laundering and limit the use of cash to buy votes in Nigeria's general elections, which started last month. But most of the program's desired results have not been achieved because of how badly it was implemented, according to Tunde Ajilleye, a partner at Lagos-based SBM Intelligence firm. "The political goal is to attempt to stifle the flow of cash to make vote-buying more difficult. That was achieved. However, the political class moved from buying voters to influencing INEC (electoral body) officials," Ajilleye said. "The consequences have been dire ... so it is a lose-lose situation."

Soaring prices hits lantern market in Egypt ahead of Ramadan

One of the most popular buys for people marking Ramadan in Egypt is a locally manufactured ornate traditional metallic lantern. Their production begins at least two months before the start of the holy month, with the different workshops each known for making them in a specific shape or style. But with just over a week to go until the start of the holy month, traders in old Cairo's Sayeda Zelnab district say sales are slow. One workshop owner said that the huge rise in the cost of raw materials has meant that producers have had to pass on the increase to buyers. "Prices have doubled compared to last year. It is an overload on many people to buy both lanterns and other

Ramadan supplies," said lantern merchant, Feryal Sayed. With inflation spiking and food prices soaring, Egypt faces one of the most serious economic crises in its history. Many Egyptians have had to opt for lower-priced Chinese or plastic lanterns and cut back on food purchases and many of Ramadan's other special treats. "People are unable to buy [Ramadan necessities], and if they do decide to buy, it will not be the same amount as they usually purchase. Prices are a major factor in [deciding to] buy Ramadan necessities or not," said Kareem Sayed, a computer engineer. As the country prepares to enter the holy month, what is usually the peak season for lantern manufacturers looks set to be a dismal one.

Mali: Ras Bath imprisoned after his remarks on the death of Soumeylou Maiga

A well-known radio and television host in Mali was charged and imprisoned Monday in Bamako after declaring that a former prime minister who died in detention a year ago under the junta had been "murdered", we learned. Mohamed Youssouf Bathily, known as "Ras Bath", an activist, polemicist and animator with many sympathizers, said on Saturday that Soumeylou Boubèye Maiga "is not dead, he was assassinated, that's the right term". His indictment and his placement under a warrant of committal were confirmed to AFP by two judicial sources and by Sam Samabaly, a member of the Collective for the Defense of the Republic of which Mr Bathily is a spokesperson. The circumstances of the death of former head of government Soumeylou Boubèye Maiga have returned to the news as the first anniversary of his disappearance approaches on March 21, 2022. This heavyweight in national politics died in detention despite urgent calls by his relatives to the junta for his evacuation abroad due to the deterioration of his state of health. Mr Maiga had been between 2017 and 2019 the Prime Minister of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, overthrown in August 2020 by colonels still in power today. His memory was evoked on Saturday during a conference supposed to mark the return to politics of his party, the Alliance for Solidarity in Mali (Asma). This is where "Ras Bath" expressed himself. He did not directly accuse the junta. He especially criticized the allies of the former Prime Minister for their inaction when, for some, they participated in power. "No one called the authority," he said. The facilitator was summoned Monday by the police before being taken to court. Before being summoned, the Collective for the Defense of the Military (CDM) had asked the courts to take up these statements. The appeals of this organization, one of the most offensive supporters of the junta, are often followed



Malian activist Ras Bath addresses a crowd during a protest against outgoing Malian president... - Copyright © africanews MICHELE CATTANI/AFP or licensors

by effect. "Is Ras Bath a demon created for his people?", asked the collective in a press release. Before "Ras Bath", a senior magistrate, Mohamed Chérif Koné, had declared on the night of Thursday to Friday to the Joliba TV channel that Soumeylou Boubèye Maiga had "been targeted" because he demanded a rapid return of civilians to power then that junta supporters "wanted an endless transition". This former Advocate General at the Supreme Court was sacked in September 2021 after protesting against the arrest of the former Prime Minister who died in custody. Mohamed Chérif Koné accused the President and the Attorney General of the Supreme Court on Joliba TV of being "at the root of (the) legal tragedy" suffered by the former head of government. The latter had been imprisoned as part of an investigation into the purchase of military equipment and the acquisition of a presidential plane in 2014 when he was Minister of Defense. "Ras Bath" as well as several personalities had already spent nearly four months in detention in 2021 after being implicated for the preparation of a mysterious coup against the junta. The case had caused great perplexity at the time. The Supreme Court eventually ordered the charges dropped.

BioNTech mobile mRNA vaccine labs reach Rwanda



Employees in cleanroom suits test the procedures for the manufacturing of the messenger RNA (mRNA) for the Covid-19 vaccine at the new manufacturing site of German company Bio - Copyright © africanews THOMAS LOHNES/AFP or licensors

Six mobile vaccine production units by German pharma company BioNTech arrived in Rwanda on Monday, the first such shipments to Africa as the continent seeks to boost mRNA vaccine manufacturing. The units, made from recycled shipping containers, arrived in the capital Kigali, where they will be assembled to make a vaccine production hub for jabs against a variety of illnesses. "This is a historic moment," said BioNTech's chief operating officer Sierk Poetting. The Covid-19 pandemic exposed Africa's huge dependence on imported vaccines. Less than 50 percent of the continent's 1.2 billion people are fully inoculated against Covid-19, according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The facility in Kigali - capable of producing up to 100 million mRNA vaccines per year - will take at least 12 months before it starts producing doses. "The technology is scalable... It is also flexible so you can move it anywhere," said Poetting, without providing details

on the overall cost of the project. The containers, dubbed BioNTainer, will also pioneer treatments in the development phase against diseases like malaria, tuberculosis and HIV that are among the leading killers in Africa. "We are also thinking of cancer therapies that we are developing to be produced in these BioNTainers," said Poetting. BioNTech said it had employed nine local scientists, with a plan to increase staffing to at least 100 by next year and eventually have local employees run the facility. Rwanda will distribute the vaccines to the 55-member African Union bloc. "This shows the power of science, partnerships and humanity, what people can do to fight a terrifying pandemic," Health Minister Sabin Nsanzimana said. Rwanda's facility is the first of three slated for Africa with deliveries planned for South Africa and Senegal, according to BioNTech. Credit: africanews with AP

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Request For Proposal (RFP)

Reference	RFP/CHAI/CSt/SL/0123
Posting Date	14th March 2023
Closing date	4th April 2023

The Clinton Health Access Initiative, (CHAI) with funding from UNITAID, seeks interested and capable vendors to submit proposals for the construction of cylinder storage areas at the Central Medical Store in Freetown, Sierra Leone as detailed in the Product information (Annex A) of this RFP. When preparing your RFP, please be guided by the technical specifications, and details attached in Annex B and the CHAI code of conduct and ethics for suppliers in Annex C.

Any queries or clarifications on this RFP should be submitted via the email quoting RFP/CHAI/CSt/SL/0123 in the subject line by 12 midnight GMT on 28th March 2023. Responses will be shared via all RFP solicitation channels, as well as in email replies.

Bids must be submitted on or before 12 midnight GMT on 4th April 2023 via the email

SLprocurement@clintonhealthaccess.org quoting RFP/CHAI/CSt/SL/0123 in the subject line. Should your submission exceed 2Mb and cannot be sent by email, send an email to request an upload link with the subject 'Requesting upload link' to SLprocurement@clintonhealthaccess.org

Bids submitted after the deadline will not be considered. Vendors may submit for one lot, all lots, or any combination of lots described. All products must be assessed against CHAI's quality and procurement policy. Vendors may be requested to submit additional information and/or cooperate with a site visit from CHAI to the production site prior to finalizing a purchase order.

Terms and conditions

Delivery Terms INCOTERMS 2020	DPU preferred but other incoterms can be considered
Customs clearance and Duties, if needed, shall be done by:	CHAI
Exact Address/es of Delivery Location/s (identify all, if multiple)	Sierra Leone
Latest Expected Delivery Date and Time (if delivery time exceeds this, bid may be rejected by CHAI)	June 2023
Delivery Schedule	Specify in comments section of Annex A
Mode of Transport	SEA & ROAD
Preferred Currency of Quotation	United States Dollars
Warranty	Varies (see Annex B)
Deadline for the Submission of Bid	Closing date above
All documentations, including catalogs, instructions, and operating manuals, shall be in this language	English
Documents to be submitted.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed Annex A and Annex B 2. Legal Documentation (Business Registration and Tax Clearance) to operate in Home Country applicable to both local and international supplier, Business Registration, Tax Certificate (This is in addition to completed vendor details in Annex A) If documents are not in English, please provide translation.
Payment Terms	100 % after supply and inspection preferred but other terms can be negotiated
Liquidated Damages	1% of total contract amount for each day of delay and maximum of 30 days after which contract will be terminated.
Evaluation Criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical responsiveness/Full compliance to requirements and lowest evaluated price 2. Delivery period 3. Full acceptance of the PO/Contract General Terms and Conditions
Type of Contract to be Signed	Purchase Order
Special Conditions of Contract	Failure to comply with delivery date above shall be a basis for cancellation. Forfeiture of bid security if submitted with the bids if applicable. CHAI reserves the right to select any single or combination of supplier(s)
Proposal validity	90 days
Conditions for Release of Payment	Passing Inspection/Verification of Supplies Written Acceptance of Goods based on full compliance with RFP requirements by the end user
Annexes to this RFP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Product quantities and delivery location (Annex A) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technical specification (Annex B) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Code of conduct (Annex C)
Contact Person for Inquiries (Written inquiries only)	All queries must be sent to SLprocurement@clintonhealthaccess.org

Products information

Lots	Product	Qty	Country	Latest Expected Date of delivery
Lot 1	Cylinder storage room construction at the Central Medical store and materials	1	Freetown, Sierra Leone	June 2023
Lot 2	Construction works, inclusive of team travel, room, and board	1	Freetown, Sierra Leone	June 2023

The full solicitation is available online. Please type the following address in your browser to view: <https://www.clintonhealthaccess.org/rfp/request-for-proposals-for-the-construction-of-cylinder-storage-areas-at-central-medical-store-freetown-sierra-leone/>



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Sierra Leone gets another Uefa A licensed coach

Keister snubs Buya Turay, Kwame Quee for São Tomé Príncipe double-header



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DEFENDERS	FORWARDS
Steven Roy Caulker Saidu Mansaray Abubakar Samura John Kamara Emmanuel Samadja Edward I. Fomah Osman Kakay	Rodney Michael Sulaiman B. Kalkai Musa Noah Kamara Augustus Kargbo Ron Grand Williams Jonathan S. Morsey Abu Komoh Alhaji Kamara
Head Coach: John Edward Keister	

Sierra Leone national team, Leone Stars head coach, John Keister, has left out both Malmö FF striker, Mohamed Buya Turay and former Hapoel Haifa winger, Kwame Quee from his 25-man squad to face Sao Tome and Principe in a double-header 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier on March 22 and 26.

The duo, who had been regular called-ups in Coach Keister's squad were surprised omission as the coach seeks a must-win victory to keep Leone Stars' hopes alive of making a back-to-back Nations Cup qualifier.

Leone Stars will host the Falcons and True Parrots on match days three and four at the 45,000-seater Adrar Stadium in Morocco.

And in his 25-man squad, the Leone Stars coach named Fourteen foreign-based and eleven home-based players.

Wigan Athletic defender Steven Caulker will continue his role as skipper while there was room for Queens Park Rangers right-back Osman Kakay, a return for Randers striker Alhaji Kamara, Milton

Keynes Dons attacker Sullay Kaikai and John Kmaara for Egaleo in the Greek second tier.

Meanwhile, Mighty Blackpool forward, Ron Gandi Williams received his first senior called-up to the squad while controversial striker, Musa Noah Kamara is making his return to the squad.

However, Cambuur's skipper Alex Bangura missed out on the doubler header due to personal reasons while Shanghai Port's winger Issa Kallon asked to be left out as he is working on his recovery from injury.

John Keister's men are currently occupying the third spot in group A with just a single point from two matches and must win both ties against Sao Tome if they are to revive their hopes of qualifying.

This will be the sixth meeting between the two nations. Their last meeting was a goalless draw in Africa Cup of Nations 1st round 2nd leg Freetown 16 June 2012.

Sao Tome e Principe won the first leg 2-1 at home on 29 February 2012.

Just three years after former Inter Milan and Sierra Leonean forward, Mohamed Kallon made history by becoming the first person from the country to obtain the UEFA Pro Licence, another Ex-Sierra Leone player, Paul Augustine Kpaka, has completed his Uefa advanced diploma coaching course, otherwise known as Uefa A licence.

The former Beerschot AC and Sierra Leone forward joined other ex-players last Monday in a graduation ceremony that took place at the headquarters of the Belgian Football Association in Tubize to receive the second-highest coaching badge after two-year training.

The now 41-year-old who has always lived in Belgium after his professional career is now the assistant coach at the U14 of Antwerp.

And after completing his course and graduating, Kpaka said: "Challenges are meant to be confronted. And overcoming them makes the effort worthwhile. It's been two years of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. Another milestone reached."

The former striker expressed heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported him throughout the journey for the support, and inspiration in achieving this milestone.

He concluded by sending a special thanks and appreciation to Mohamed Kallon.

"You have always been an inspiration to many in more ways than one. You made me fall in love again with this part of the beautiful game, and for that, I will forever be grateful."

The UEFA A diploma-graduated players are now also officially allowed to manage teams up to the first amateur. It is the second-highest trainer's diploma in Belgium. After the UEFA A diploma, they can still obtain the



Pro License diploma which they need to coach a club at the highest level. If completed, Paul Kpaka will become the second UEFA Pro Licence coach after Mohamed Kallon who is currently the only Sierra Leonean with such a licence.

France President launches Paris 2024 countdown



(Picture by Hulton Archive & Getty)

French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday March 14 launches the countdown to the 2024 Paris Olympics with 500 Days to go.

The France President promised an "unforgettable" curtain-raiser, hosted the Olympics' organisers and business partners at the Élysée Palace to discuss preparations for the world's biggest sporting event.

"With 500 days to go, we are within reach of achieving one of the greatest legacies of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris," the French president wrote, referencing a hugely ambitious 1.4-billion-euro plan to clean up the heavily polluted

waterway in time for the Games.

The year 2024 will mark the third time that Paris has hosted the Olympic Games. The first was in 1900 and the last was almost a century ago in 1924. Since then, the world has changed dramatically. Technology has advanced, records have been broken and new champions have been crowned.

In the space of 100 years, some sports have ceased to be part of the Olympic program, while others have been incorporated into the Games. Nowadays, the facilities at the Games are tailor-made to allow athletes to maximise their performance while providing the best possible experience to the fans.