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# CONCORD TIMES

## NEWSPAPER

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# 2023 elections projection: Runoff is highly unlikely



Minister of Information and Communications, Mohamed Rahman Swaray and CEO OF SADA, Lacina Kone, signing the MOU

## SADA signs MOU with Information Ministry



Bio SLPP

By Alhaji Haruna Sani



Samura APC

With less than eighty days to the June 24 polls, the improbability for a runoff is increasingly disappearing. Some political observers will tend to agree or disagree with me because of obvious reasons. But I stand firm on my

position.

Since Sierra Leone returned to multiparty democracy in 1996 and the country has conducted five presidential elections. With two outgoing presidents, each of them had won their re-election with landslide victory.

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## Father on the run after dumping child in hot water

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## PERSONAL GLIMPSES

By: Winstanley, R Bankole, Johnson

I listened to a recent social media voice note by my friend and brother the Minister of Defense Brig. (Rtd.) Kelly Conteh admonishing serving military personnel to stay away from politics with rapt attention. To this day I cannot fathom what the influencing factors were that prompted him to do so in our relatively tranquil political environment, but with the benefits of hindsight however, I consider his admonitions ominous. Ominous because the last two occasions that come to mind when senior military officers have had to remind their serving personnel to stay away from politics, military take overs ensued. That was prior to 1992 and just before the Johnny Paul coup. The only assuaging factor is that his same concerns were re-echoed by our President and Commander-in-Chief Brig. Gen. (Rtd.) Julius Maada Bio not too long after. I say assuaging because even though the President's wife and Consort had once reminded us that her husband holds a "PhD Certificate" in "Coup Plotting", it is very unlikely that he will ever overthrow himself with less than 90 days to our next Presidential elections.

So to me, the possibility of the President's specialization to stage coups between now and then ever getting the better of him, or that the antics of the security sector to attempt to intimidate voters with sporadic gun fire like they did in 1996 will be repeated will never arise.

Whatever betide, I feel compelled to remind my fellow citizens at this point in time that the very last thing we will entertain – no matter how degenerate our political polarization and even on pain of influencing a self-inflicted holocaust – is a Military Coup. My personal reason for such abhorrence is because President Bio – in his own words – has done so much for this country in the last five years (and even far in excess of his manifesto commitments), that he is not afraid to account for his stewardship. So I would hate for any sinister individual or group of sinister persons to attempt to stage a Coup that would deprive him of the once in a lifetime opportunity of luxuriating in the experience of handing over power to Dr. Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara come June 24<sup>th</sup>. After conducting five (5) consecutive term elections and witnessing multiple peaceful changes of political dispensations, we are more than ready to defend our democracy.

### "PEPs"

My immediate reaction on social media to the Defense Minister's admonitions to serving military personnel was spontaneous and in this terse quote: "Defense Minister urging serving military personnel to abstain from politics? Let him start with removing soldiers from the security detail of politicians" – Unquote.

And it was apt, because the proximity of serving military personnel to politicians automatically transforms them into "Politically Exposed Personnel/Persons" (PEP), in exactly the same way that all civilians with a proximity to Politicians (including all their Banking assets and liabilities) qualify them for automatic characterization as "Politically Exposed Persons" (PEP) – Ref. The Hon. Messrs. Justices Biobelle Goodwill, John R Bankole Thompson (Decd.) and Attuguda, during the

# BETWEEN PROFESSIONALISM AND PARTISANSHIP WITHIN THE SECURITY SECTOR

calumnious Commissions of Inquiries (COIs) of the SLPP in 2018/19, that were deliberately concocted to intimidate functionaries of the former Ernest Bai Koroma APC-Led government into permanent silence through the threatened implementation of some phantom "White Paper Recommendations" that would now appear to have developed clay legs.

And among the dangers of keeping military officers too close to politicians is that based on past experiences they are prone to developing a proclivity to disturbing the peace and good order of society through coups, by wanting to assume and enjoy themselves the same standard of living as those they are supposed to be safeguarding. And there are clear precedents to this to wit: Most of the guys who were involved in the coup bringing Johnny Paul to power on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1997 were bodyguards to the now infamous NPRC officers. They even included a "Batman" like Lance Corporal Gborie and other bodyguards. This is how dangerous proximity of serving state security personnel to politicians and political affluence can be. And it starts from their appearances. Close protection Officers to politicians are undeniably neater, fresher, cleaner and reek of more expensive fragrances – almost like their bosses – than those confined to barracks deployments. And that is not because of any physical impairments, but simply because they lack the correct political connections to have been so deployed.

### Commonplace

Though I suspect Brig. (Rtd.) Kelly Conteh's admonitions were anchored in good faith and in the main intended to protecting their career prospects, I wonder why it took him this long to have spoken out, as in reality and with abounding supporting concrete evidences of same on social media, there would seem to be a very thin divide between professionalism and political partisanship within the security sector. Thus the involvement of serving military personnel in active politics is now commonplace, and a few of which I will list below for the Defense Minister's kind attention:

1. The fracas arising out of the Thermal Generator Plant removal from Makeni that resulted in the loss of uncountable lives and properties. I distinctly heard the Energy Minister Kanja Sesay (a Civilian) on the airwaves confirming that he (and I quote): "...gave the orders". To this day the report of the Public Inquiry set up by this government to investigate that Makeni saga hasn't been published, so no one can ascertain the extent of those "Orders" that he gave and whether they included direct "Orders" to the Police and Military jointly or separately to fire live rounds of ammunition, and on what basis/authority his "orders" were given.
2. From testimonies of Fatmatta Sawanneh the former Chairlady of the SLPPP who is in fact a civilian, she informed the public about the involvement of the Chief of Defense Staff of the RSLAF, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Lahai Lawrence Leema and some members of the Presidential Guard from as early as early as 02:00 hours on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020 in activities leading up to what we now know as "The Pademba Road Massacre" which also resulted in loss of

uncountable lives.

3. A few of our APC Comrades returning from our last APC National Delegates' Convention in Makeni that chose to use the Grafton/Regent Hillside Road were allegedly accosted by military personnel deployed at a checkpoint close to the Presidential Lodge and they roundly molested without provocation. Our Party Secretary General Lansana Dumbuya Esq, Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyer and a former APC Deputy Minister of Education Mahmoud Tarawally allegedly either had their vehicles and Lap Tops extensively searched and or seized and their personal assistants roughed up without reasonable causes.
4. Two separate video clips of men in military uniforms and fully armed within the President's Lodge either threatening to deal with "any Tolongbo" or seen alone (describing himself as Hungry Lion) narrating his exploits in the days leading up to the last Bye-Elections at Constituency No.110.

When one considers that all of the instances detailed above involved men in military gears who wore "...the same Green" that some senior officers also had on as they betrayed their oaths of loyalty to their Commander-in-Chief in 1996 by secretly supporting their respective political parties, then will one be able to appreciate the admonitions of the Defense Minister to serving military personnel to stay away from politics, and also to understand that a very thin divide has always existed between professionalism and partisanship within the security sector.

### Council

As a matter of fact I am sure many can vividly recall an incident as far back as 2005/6 when I was Mayor of Freetown. A very senior military personnel accompanied by two civilians (all three of them are still alive) were dispatched from State House with "Orders" to seize my Civilian-led Political Council administration and supervise an Emergency Cleaning of the City. At a time when the highest monthly subvention to the Council for Solid Waste Management was Le30Million Old Leones, they came with over Le100Million (Old Leones) to pay into the Council's account for the purpose. Simply put, the offer was rejected, but they proceeded all the same to conduct the said "Cleaning" independent of the Council and as usual made a huge mess of the city streets thereafter. If that wasn't a clear involvement or interference of "the military" in politics then I wonder what else it was.

### Assassination

From developments last Sunday at the "Mile 38" Checkpoint I would imagine it is about time that those same admonitions by the Defense Minister to serving military personnel are cascaded the Head of the Sierra Leone Police as well so as to remind them that their services should be to Country, and not only the sitting government and/or political party of the day "to the latter". With all guns blazing in the direction of the APC Flagbearer and most popular Presidential candidate Dr. Samura Kamara, the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans read deeply into the incident as an assassination attempt on his life. That was clearly politics Mr. Defense Minister. Otherwise it wouldn't have warranted the personal interventions of both the Police IG Fayia Sella and the Deputy Chief of Defense

Staff, not forgetting to mention a "Tweet" from the German Embassy, Freetown for restraints.

### Ominous

The security sector knew full well in advance of Dr. Samura Kamara's return last Sunday and as Leader of the largest political party in the country, the turn out to welcome him back could not have been unexpected. So here was a golden opportunity for them to have won the hearts and minds of both the citizenry and the wider international community by according him the same level of security coverage as they do his counterpart political leader President Bio but which they frittered, leading to an unnecessary standoff.

As the elections loom it will be unthinkable for the SLPP government - whether directly or through sustained remote manipulation and indifference of Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL), Political Parties Regulations Commission (PPRC) or any of the Security Forces - to ever expect that in a multi-party democratic environment guaranteed by the National Constitution, and under the watchful eyes of a putative "Father of Democracy" they are claiming the President to be, an opposition party as savvy as the APC would ever allow themselves to be muzzled and cowed into silence as to allow only the ruling SLPP functionaries and politicians continue to be overly protected as they flaunt their party candidates, colours and banners unfettered in the enjoyment of constitutional rights and privileges regarding electioneering campaigns. This is not a One Party State and the sooner personnel of the security sector are reined in on their obligations in that regard, the better for our collective peace, political stability and national cohesion. Otherwise I suspect ominous portents ahead.

### Pari-Passu

Thankfully developments arising from the incidents at the "Mile 38" checkpoint reveal clear pointers:

1. That our security sector can always measure up to the task (if they really want to) because by their joint interventions, the Security Chiefs were able to restore and accord relative security protection to Dr. Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara to proceed on his "Dress Rehearsals" for the ultimate "Triumphant Entry" into Freetown.
2. Unless unfettered campaign accesses and security of protection are accorded to the opposition parties in the same way the SLPP are accorded them to demonstrate their impartiality and professionalism, then the admonition of the Defense Minister for serving security personnel to stay away from politics will be a travesty and a recipe for chaos in the days ahead. It should be borne in mind that between the dissolution of Parliament and conduct of elections on 24<sup>th</sup> June in accordance with Sec. 85 and Sec.87 of the 1991 Constitution respectively, the stakes of both Dr. Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara and Brig. Gen (Rtd.) Bio under the Constitution for the Presidency rank pari-passu and the latter should under no circumstances be accorded any preferential security coverage as would make the playing field uneven.

Lonta!!!



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## LOCAL NEWS

From Cover

This time around the chances of a runoff are more unlikely not because of the 'tradition' of second term success by incumbents, but because of the "circumstances" around.

The chances of winning the June 24 elections in the first polls lies in the hands of incumbent President Julius Maada Bio of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and Dr. Samura Mathew Wilson Kamara of the main opposition, All People's Congress (APC) party.

**Why there may be no runoff?** Arguably, this is the first time, since 1996 that citizens are going to polls with just two political parties in mind—straight fight between the ruling SLPP and the main opposition APC. Over 97% of the over three million potential voters will either vote for President Bio or Dr. Samura Kamara. So, the chances for a runoff are highly unlikely. One of the two contenders will more likely clinch victory on first ballot.

**The reality on ground:** Unlike President Bio, late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba and former President Ernest Bai Koroma got strong pointers



to back their campaign bid for a second term Presidency. For President Kabba, he was largely acclaimed for bringing an end to a brutal civil war that lasted for 11 years. Therefore, Pa Kabba, as he was commonly called, had a simple campaign message; (I have ended the 11 years brutal rebel war, it is now time to develop this nation, so give me a second term). Former President Koroma was also hailed for his massive infrastructural development especially on road and electricity. Therefore, his campaign message was backed by empirical evidence; infrastructural development, hence, his campaign message was (If you know I have worked for you, vote me in for a second term, and if you think I have not worked



for you, don't vote for me.

Although President Bio's performance has been faced with constant criticism by his opponents and some of his very own supporters for not performing to their expectations, his reign has been faced with global crisis including the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. This twin crisis plus what critics has described as poor economic management of President Bio, have clouded all other efforts of his regime. Consequently, campaign message for his second term bid could be challenging.

**Politics of confidence:** Both APC and SLPP supporters are confident of winning the June 24 elections. Of course, the two candidates had contested against each other in 2018. From the result announced by the

National Electoral Commission (NEC), President Bio emerged as the winner but with a slight margin of about 1%. It is on that basis that President Bio recently literally told his supporters that he is going to give his opponent two 'upper cuts' with a knock out in the first ballot. Having defeated Dr. Samura in the 2018 elections, President Bio is very confident of winning his same challenger in a first poll of the 2023 elections.

Dr. Samura Kamara on the other hand believes that with the abysmal performance of the Bio administration especially in terms of economic reforms, he and his APC members and supporters are with a strong conviction that Sierra Leoneans will vote against President Bio and the SLPP this time around because he had not met their expectations.

Of the two candidates, one is definitely going to win the contest and it is most likely that the winner emerge during the first poll of the elections.

**What more?** Will either of the two accept the outcome of the elections result without creating chaos or going to the court? What are the chances of them accepting the outcome of the result especially in the first ballot? Political observers are keen on what happens after elections.

## One in six people worldwide is affected by infertility

By Alfred Koroma

-WHO

One in six people worldwide is affected by infertility, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Tuesday, in a new report. The Agency also warned that access to affordable care is insufficient, the UN World Health Organization.

Studies compiled by the Agency on infertility from 1990 to 2021 shows that 17.5 percent of the adult population experience infertility in their lifetime and that the rates are comparable for high, middle and low-income countries.

People in the poorest countries spend a greater proportion of their income on fertility care than those in wealthier countries, the report says.

Also, data from a separate new research quoted by the health Agency shows that a single round of IVF, can cost more than the average annual income.

According to UN, Infertility, which affects men and women, is a reproductive condition defined by the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse.

"The report reveals an important truth - infertility does not discriminate," WHO Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus is quoted by UN News, saying: "The sheer proportion of people affected shows the need to widen access to fertility care and ensure this issue is no longer sidelined in health research and policy, so that safe, effective and affordable ways to attain parenthood are available."

WHO report that despite the prevalence of infertility, diagnosis and treatment remain underfunded and patients find themselves priced out. Many have no choice but to cover the costs out of pocket, often with devastating consequences.

According to Dr Pascale Allotey, WHO's Director of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, millions of people face catastrophic healthcare costs after treatment for infertility and all too often, a "medical poverty trap".

Dr Allotey advocated for the condition to become a priority for universal health coverage, saying better policies and public financing can significantly improve access to treatment and protect poorer households from falling into poverty as a result.

"Apart from financial hardship," UN News report that WHO stressed infertility is also linked to distress and stigma, as well as an increased risk of intimate partner violence.

"Fertility care is a core part of sexual and reproductive health and responding to infertility can mitigate gender inequality," WHO's report.

Not only are services insufficiently available, but so is adequate research. WHO highlights a persistent lack of data related to infertility in many countries.

To remedy this, WHO has called for better national infertility statistics which be "disaggregated by age and by cause" in order to target interventions and support prevention.

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## LOCAL NEWS SADA signs MOU with Information Ministry

By Ishmael Dumbuya

Smart Africa Digital Academy, SADA, has yesterday, 4th April 2023, officially launched its national digital academy and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Information and Communications at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, Tower Hill, in order to boost digital skills on the African Continent. The launch of SADA in Sierra Leone follows launches in other countries including Rwanda, Ghana, Congo, Sierra Leone and the creation and rollout of this initiative across the continent come against the backdrop of an immense gap in digital skills amid an ever-evolving digital world.

In his submission to the MOU and launch, the Chief Executive Officer and Director General of SADA, Lacina Kone, said that SADA is a direct response to digital skills shortage with which Sierra Leone and Africa in general are confronted.

He added that they are extremely pleased to implement SADA in Sierra Leone and advance the nation digital skills, in close collaboration with the government of Sierra Leone through the Information Ministry.

He went on to state that SADA will be an essential backing to the country's digital sector strategy, which is to transform Sierra Leone into West Africa's digital services platform through the means including human resources with the necessary capacities to drive the country's development, noting that SADA in Sierra Leone will encompass a range of initiatives such as advanced trainings in ICT through a training of trainer approach, executive training and teacher's skills.

The Minister of Information and Communications, Abdul Rahman Swarray, said SADA is an instrument that will allow the country to take new initiatives that have already been taken by Sierra Leone within the framework



of its action program and to open perspectives in other areas of cooperation and capacity building.

"This MOU signature is for me, a very important step to scale up," he said.

He explained that SADA aims to improve digital skills qualifications, and employability, and meet the emerging talent needs of African citizens.

He said the national digital academy will support the uniquely identified digital skills priority needs at the national level and that SADA is embarking on two programs to provide digital skills for African youth, entrepreneurs, and citizens in general,

for them to thrive in the global technology ecosystem.

"The SADA for youth and entrepreneur will help increase digital technology competence, reduce unemployment and increase the digital entrepreneurship capabilities for youth in Africa; while the SADA Digital Literacy will help all African citizens to be digitally literate." Solomon Jamiru, Deputy Minister of Information and Communications stated that since 2019, SADA started its operations in Sierra Leone, focusing on capacity building for decision makers.

"SADA has trained about 3,000 policy and decision makers across 26 countries in trending digital transformation and emerging technology-related topics including Artificial Intelligence Use Cases, Digital Economy, Data Protection and Privacy Rural Broadband Policies, Security Technologies, Regulatory and Innovative Sandboxing environments, Data Centres and Cloud," he said.

## New Statistician General takes over office



Andrew Bob Johnny taking over from Professor Osman Sankoh ( Malam O)

Stats SL is now under the leadership of Andrew Bob Johnny who is the newly appointed Statistician General and CEO of Stats SL.

Andrew Bob Johnny who has worked for Stats SL for 29+ years and garnered a lot of institutional memory, took over office in an official handing over ceremony from his predecessor Prof. Osman Sankoh (Mallam O) at a two days staff reflection retreat, awards and Leadership Transition ceremony in Kenema.

Chairman of event and master of ceremony who also doubles as Director of Communication and PR at Stats SL, Samuel Ansumana, underscored the importance of the epoch making event in the annals of the institution.

Giving a talk on the purpose of the event, Mahawa Kondeh, Senior Human Resources manager, said that this event brought staff together to reflect on the last 5 years, recognise deserving staff for long service as well as transition the reigns of leadership of Stats SL.

Succinctly presenting on timelines, key

achievements and work plans, Directors from all divisions and heads of departments presented on how far they have come, where they are, and what's the way forward with their strategic work plans for the year 2023. Each presentation started with a showcase of their teams and various units that comprised their division and their heads of units and sections.

Speaking on his tenure, outgoing SG, Prof. Osman Sankoh said that during the last 5 years, his administration with support of the incoming SG, Andrew Bob Johnny, reinvigorated the National Statistical office of Sierra Leone.

Prof Sankoh pointed out that his leadership has increased the institution's credibility by building strong foundations for digital data collection, analysis, and reporting and has developed a clear trajectory for its future. He continued that his leadership has achieved this by focusing on 6 major areas: 1. Strengthening stakeholder engagement across Sierra Leone; 2. Building strong relationships with International partners chief of which was being elected as the only NSO on the UN Statistical Commission for 3 years; 3. Establishing Sierra Leone as the leader in statistical capability in Africa by delivering transparent data to support progress towards the SDGs; 4. Significantly developing the capacity and infrastructure of Stats SL to modernise and digitize the statistical system and enhance the ability of its staff to utilise digital data; 5. Spearheading a variety of initiatives ranging from new, small-scale focused

studies such as CHES and ; 6. Breaking new grounds for Stats SL as a research platform working with credible and leading research institutions in Africa producing innovative and forward-thinking statistics to put the organisation at the forefront of national research institutions.

He ended by thanking God, Stats SL Council, Management and staff for their support during his tenure.

Aesthetically speaking to the general staff of Stats SL, the new Statistician General and CEO of Stats SL, Andrew Bob Johnny sincerely expressed his appreciation to the President of Sierra Leone, HE Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for the opportunity accorded him to serve as SG/CEO. He thanked Stats SL Council for their unflinching support throughout his tenure as Deputy Statistician General.

He also expressed indebtedness to his predecessor Prof. Osman Sankoh, for his mentorship and guidance and for paving his way to becoming the Statistician General/CEO of an institution he has served for a very long time. To his colleagues, he smiled and said "patience is a virtue, I have been through the good, the bad and the ugly but with hard work and dedication am now the Statistician General and CEO of Stats SL. I am ready to work with you irrespective of your color, gender, tribe or region and I promise that I will be a leader that will listen to your cries and work towards them. Now is the time for us to come together and work as one for the betterment of Stats SL and the

country as a whole".

He concluded by saying that though his leadership will be a continuation of the good deeds from the previous, he will however strive to better it and raise standards even higher. He encouraged everyone to do his or her best as Stats SL starts a new dawn.

Making a brief statement, Chairman of Stats SL Council, Moses Williams, said he is happy to witness a smooth transition that has never happened in the history of Stats SL. He also encouraged staff to work hard and make the institution proud. He re-echoed the clarion call to support the new leadership of Andrew Bob Johnny as the Statistician General and CEO of Stats SL so that the institution will keep on making tremendous gains. He concluded by thanking other members of council for successfully guiding Stats SL management throughout the years which has impacted on the development of the institution.

The program was climaxed with an awards ceremony for long serving staff from 15 years and above and this was followed by the official handing over from the outgoing Statistician General Mallam O, to the newly appointed Statistician General and CEO of Stats SL Andrew Bob Johnny.

Magistrate Ngegba ordered the defense to serve the court and the prosecution the no case submission not later than the 17 April, and that the prosecution should reply to the no case submission not later than the 28th April, 2023.

The matter was adjourned to the 2nd May, 2023.



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## LOCAL NEWS

# Maternal deaths has significantly reduced in Sierra Leone

*-Health Minister*

The Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr. Austin Demby has said maternal deaths has significantly reduced in Sierra Leone by over 70%

Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr. Austin Demby, congratulated his Deputy Mrs. Princess Dugba for her steadfast commitment to maternal health. He also acknowledged the sacrifice and commitment of doctors, nurses, mid-wives, health development partners and everyone, who have in their respective positions, contributed to reaching that milestone.

He announced a new target of achieving ZERO preventable death by 2030 and challenged the health workforce and partners to still keep their feet on the gas in accomplishing that target.

The Ministry of Health of Health Sanitation remains vigilant, steadfast and dedicated to saving the lives of millions of our women and children. This includes tackling teenage pregnancy,

strengthening primary health care and referral systems, construction/rehabilitation of secondary and tertiary health facilities and generating accurate and timely data.

He said over the years MoHs, garnered renewed dedication towards combating maternal mortality in the country and has worked collaboratively to do so.

He added that Sierra Leone was considered as the worst place for a mother to give birth, adding that according to a Borgen Project Report an international advocacy institution in February 2022,



around 1 in every 17 pregnancies end in the death of a mother in Sierra Leone.

He said with support from health development partners, the country has succeeded in reshaping the narrative by significantly reducing maternal mortality from 717 per 100,000 deaths (DHS 2019) to 443 live births, according to United Nations and World Bank Group estimates.

He continued that MoHs, has assembled health workers and development partners, media and civil society organizations to an

appreciation meeting at Sierra Bay Hotel, Freetown to discuss more in roads to the project of reducing mortality death

The purpose of the maternal mortality reduction meeting was to remind stakeholders in health to recommit efforts towards reducing the numbers

The Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Sartie Kenneh, who chaired the meeting, noted that despite the previously grim picture, there is

now evidence that the country can make significant gains in reducing maternal deaths, in few years to come.

## Father on the run after dumping child in hot water

By Alfred Koroma

Father of one-year-three-month-old boy is on the run after dumping the feet and hands of his son in hot water, according to ASP Alie Jalloh, Spokesman, Waterloo Police Division.

He said the child is presently in Waterloo government hospital receiving medical treatment and called on the members of the public in Waterloo to support the police by giving vital information that will lead to the arrest of Alhaji Sankoh, father of the young victim who went on the run after committing the cruelty against the innocent child.

According to ASP Jalloh, the mother of the victim took the matter to the police, saying Alhaji Sankoh, the true father of her son took their child's feet and hands and immersed them into hot

water, causing a scald on them.

Over the years, Waterloo has been a hotspot for violence, gross human rights abuse and other criminalities.

Speaking to SLBC Moring Coffee Program, ASP Jalloh called on the people of Waterloo to help the police with vital information leading to the arrest of criminals in communities within Waterloo in other to reduce crimes within the area.

He also disclosed a separate event, informing the public about the arrest of a notorious criminal, hired to kill and torture people. ASP Jalloh said Alimamy Sesay who is also known as White Boy was arrested in Waterloo with human parts and guns in his possession after being on the run for three years. He said the criminal was arrested along with his gang members.

## Defense closes case in Mayor Aki-sawyerr's matter

By Jeneba A. Conteh

The Lead defense counsel, Joseph Fitzgerald Kamara, in the alleged obstruction matter against Mayor Aki-Sawyerr, on Monday, 3rd April, 2023, before Magistrate Mark Ngeba, closed his defense in favour of the accused.

The accused, Aki Sawyerr, has been under trial before Magistrate Mark Ngeba of the Pademba Road Court No.1 for the offence of obstruction of police duty and

disorderly behavior.

Shortly after the matter was mentioned, Lead Defense Counsel, Joseph Fitzgerald Kamara, informed the court that they as defense, had closed their case, noting that they relied on the evidence they have presented before the court.

Lawyer Kamara pleaded with the Magistrate for a three-week adjournment for him to submit a written no case submission.



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**NEWS AROUND AFRICA COMPILED BY GABRIEL BENJAMIN**

**5 records Davido set with his fourth album 'Timeless'**



Davido performs during the Hot 107.9 Birthday Bash 2019 at State Farm Arena on ... - Copyright © africanews Robb Cohen/2019 Invision

On the 31st of March 2023, fans from Nigeria and beyond were treated to one of the most highly anticipated projects from an Afrobeats artist, as Davido released his fourth studio album titled "Timeless". The release of the album, which followed months of silence after a tragic occurrence in 2022, has set a new standard in the music industry, with the singer breaking and setting different records.

Davido's "Timeless" album was a collaborative effort with some of the biggest names in the industry, and the result was a project that resonated with fans worldwide, reflecting in the impressive figures and numbers achieved with the album.

The first record set by Davido with the release of "Timeless" was the highest number of album pre-orders by an African artist. The album broke the previous record set by another Nigerian artist, Burna Boy, with his Grammy-winning album "Twice as Tall."

"Timeless" also set the record for the most streams in a single day by an African artist, with over 50 million streams on various music platforms. This feat surpassed the previous record held by Wizkid's "Made in Lagos" album.

Another record broken by Davido with "Timeless" was the highest number of first-day album sales by an African artist. The album sold over 1 million copies on its first day of release, breaking the previous record held by Burna Boy.

Davido's "Timeless" also set the record for the most simultaneous tracks on the Top 100 chart on various music platforms, with all 17 tracks from the album occupying the top 100 charts at the same time.

Other records set by Davido with "Timeless" include the most Shazamed album by an African artist, the highest number of entries on the Billboard Global 200 chart by an

African artist, and the most-watched album trailer on YouTube by an African artist.

With these impressive records broken and set, Davido has cemented his position as one of the biggest African artists in the world today, and his "Timeless" album is sure to remain a defining moment in the history of Afrobeats.

**Biggest First-Day Streams For An African Album On Spotify**  
"Timeless" recorded 8.4 million streams on the first full day of tracking. With this total number of streams, it became the first African album to record that huge number of streams on the first day after its release.

**Biggest Streams For A Song On Spotify Nigeria Chart**  
Davido occupied the top 16 position for the biggest first-day streams for a song on the Spotify Nigeria chart. "Over Dem" took the number one spot with over 460,000 streams on the first day of tracking. See the full list below:

**Boomplay Album Record**  
"Timeless" by Davido became the fastest album in Boomplay's history to surpass 10 million streams. The hit album surpassed 10 million streams on the 1st of April 2023, it also holds the record for the fastest album to surpass 1 million streams in barely 24 hours of tracking after its release.

**Apple Music UK Top Albums Record**  
"Timeless" peaked at number one on the Apple Music Top albums chart for the UK and it became only the second afrobeats album to ever achieve this feat.

**Apple Music Top Songs Chart Record**  
Davido's "Timeless" became the first and only afrobeats album to debut all tracks in the top 100 of the Apple Music top songs chart for the UK. The singer also became the first afrobeats artist to debut 10 tracks in the top 200 of the Apple music top songs chart for the US as well.

**Senegal's President 'open to dialogue' after tensions**

In a speech broadcast Monday night on state TV, Senegalese President Macky Sall said he was open to dialogue in the interest of "peace and national cohesion".

Sall was speaking on the eve of Senegal's 63rd independence anniversary on Tuesday. He made no mention of the 2024 presidential elections or if he would seek to play any role.

"In this spirit, I remain open to dialogue and consultation with all the living forces of the nation, in respect of the rule of law and the institutions of the Republic, for a united Senegal, a Senegal of peace, stability and national cohesion," Sall said.

Speculation is rife that Macky Sall will seek a third term, a

move the opposition has warned would jolt the political climate in one of west Africa's most stable countries.

Tensions have risen in recent weeks and months with the opposition organising rallies denouncing corruption and the high cost of living.

Legal proceedings against opposition figure Ousmane Sonko have also made the atmosphere more tense.

Sonko, who has already declared he'll run for president in 2024 was last week found guilty of defaming a government minister.

He is battling rape charges.

Sonko's supporters view the charges as the latest attempt to cut short his political career, including his likely presidential candidacy in 2024.

**Africanews' journalist honoured by Forty Under 40 Africa**



FortyUnder40Africa Awards - Copyright © africanews FortyUnder40Africa-FortyUnder40Africa

Jerry Fisayo-Bambi, a Nigerian news anchor and journalist with Africanews, has been awarded a medal at the FortyUnder40Africa Awards, which recognises influential young leaders in various fields from 24

countries.

He was nominated in the Journalism category along with three other candidates, from a total of 3000 entries received in total for 40 categories in the awards.

**Libya: HRW asks to repeal a law on cybercrime**



A video of the Libyan House of Representatives shows the parliament in session in the ... - Copyright © africanews -AFP

Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on Monday to "repeal" a cybercrime law recently enacted in Libya and to release people detained under it, which undermines freedom of expression, according to a report by the NGO.

"The Libyan House of Representatives should repeal the anti-cybercrime law passed in September 2022 which restricts the freedoms of speech and expression," the human rights organization said in a statement.

"Libyans must be able to enjoy the freedom of expression, whether online or not," said Hanan Saleh, HRW researcher on Libya, quoted in the statement. "It is not a good thing to trample on this right in the name of the fight against cybercrime," she said.

On February 17, authorities in eastern Libya arrested a singer and social media influencer for allegedly violating this law and undermining "public integrity and morals", according to HRW. The NGO called for the "immediate release of those detained under this law for speaking out peacefully".

Article 2 of the new legislation stipulates as one of the objectives of the text the defence of public order and

morals, without defining them while Libya remains very conservative, particularly on the place of women in society.

In October 2021, the House of Representatives, the country's sole legislative authority since its election in 2014, approved the text but only adopted it a year later, "without consulting civic groups, experts in technologies or in cybercrime," HRW pointed out.

The new law was enacted recently, without being officially published.

According to HRW, as early as March 2022, four United Nations experts criticized the law in particular "as undermining the rights to freedom of expression and (the protection of) privacy", saying "it should be revoked".

Since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011, in the wake of the Arab Spring, Libya has been plunged into chaos and division.

Two governments are vying for power, one based in Tripoli (west) and recognized by the UN, and the other based in the east and supported by Marshal Haftar 's camp and the House of Representatives.

**Tunisia: twenty Senegalese migrants still missing**



Tunisian migrants gesture as they sail on a wooden boat, helped by crew members... - Copyright © africanews Francisco Seco/Copyright 2022 The AP

Dakar is seeking to identify the remains of "about twenty" Senegalese who drowned at the end of March in the sinking of their boat off Tunisia, said an official statement on Monday.

A Senegalese mission went to Sfax, the starting point in central-eastern Tunisia of the shipwrecked boat, for a mission to identify the bodies, according to a press release from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For the moment, "none of the remains recovered by the Tunisian coast guard corresponds to our compatriots" missing in this shipwreck which occurred "on the night of March 23 to 24 off the Mediterranean", indicates the ministry, which does not indicate the number of bodies.

The Senegalese embassy in Tunis "will remain in permanent contact with the (Tunisian) authorities and the Tunisian Red Crescent to monitor the recovery and identification of victims", the statement added.

Several dozen migrants have died in a series of shipwrecks and others have been missing since President Kais Saied's violent speech on February 21 on illegal immigration.

After this speech, a significant part of the 21,000 nationals of sub-Saharan Africa officially registered in Tunisia, most of them in an irregular situation, lost their jobs, which are generally informal, and their housing overnight, as a result of the campaign against the illegals.

Most African migrants arrive in Tunisia to then attempt to illegally immigrate from Europe by sea, with some stretches of Tunisia's coastline being within 150 kilometers of the Italian island of Lampedusa.

In mid-March, Dakar had repatriated 76 compatriots from Tunisia and neighbouring Libya after the words of the Tunisian leader.

Credit: africanews with AP

According to the organizers, Xodus Communications, the FortyUnder40Africa Awards now includes a journalism category and Fisayo-Bambi is among the first nominees recognized for his impactful work. The awards assess career, innovation, creativity, community inclusion, and work-life balance across industry leaders in Africa.

The aim is to recognize 40 emerging leaders under 40 who demonstrate exceptional leadership.

Fisayo-Bambi, a recognized journalist who anchors news in simple voice-over on image format and presents TV shows is part of an award-winning team of journalists at Africanews, whose work is being quoted in research papers and setting best practices on developing and presenting short feature stories on innovation.

The africanews journalist started in radio in Nigeria before moving on to television news anchoring and production. He

currently hosts and produces 'Inspire Africa', a program showcasing impactful stories of innovation and change in Africa.

He finished with the popular vote in his category "Journalism" at the Forty Under 40 Africa and was decorated with a medal by the South African Minister of Women, Youth and Disability, Dr. Nkosasana Dlamini-Zuma, who presided over the award ceremony in Sandton, Johannesburg.

Fisayo-Bambi, dedicated the recognition to his beloved parents and credited the 'Inspire Africa' team at Africanews TV for enabling him fulfill in part one of his childhood dreams of showcasing a more nuanced perception of Africa through ethical journalism.

Jerry Fisayo Bambi joined the editorial staff of Africanews in 2017.



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## ANNEX TO THE CONTRACT FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES

### Background

International IDEA is implementing an EU-funded programme to support the electoral process in Sierra Leone. To achieve the objective of the project, International IDEA has agreed to provide support to electoral management bodies and democratic institutions in Sierra Leone to establish a youth professional programme where young Sierra Leoneans graduates from higher institutions of learning would work with the various institutions to further boost and promote youth and young women's participation in technical aspects of the electoral process. The program will annually provide for trainees to be mentored by a selected democracy promotion institution for a 6-month period. In the first year of the youth trainee programme, following the request from the Political Parties Regulation Commission, the trainees will be deployed to the PPRC.

IDEA seeks candidates who will transform, inspire, and deliver high-impact and sustained results, and exceptional in managing the resources entrusted to them, and commit to excellence in programme results. International IDEA is therefore recruiting 20 Trainees for the PPRC ahead of the June 24, 2023 election.

**Title:** 20 Youth Trainees for Political Parties Regulation Commission of Sierra Leone

**Location:** in-person work within the districts of Sierra Leone

### Terms of Reference

#### Scope of work

- Serve as district focal point for the PPRC in the districts;
- Ensure effective monitoring and supervision of political parties in the districts;
- Monitor and report on the youth and young women's participation in politics in the districts;
- Timely reporting of political incidents to their line supervisors, deputy directors, or designate in the respective regions;
- Submission of weekly report to the regional deputy directors or designate;
- Holding regular meetings with political leaders in the districts/ regions; and
- The youth trainees' outputs must comply with the procedures and other requirements of International IDEA and the PPRC.

### Reporting

The trainee will prepare monthly reports to the Commission and International IDEA through the Regional Deputy Directors or Designate.

### Deliverables

- Attend a training/induction
- Attend monthly review meetings
- Attend final close out event and prepare written testimonial of lessons learnt.
- Provide monthly report
- Provide a final report and testimonial of learning.

### Duty Station

Successful applicants must be willing to serve at any assigned districts within Sierra Leone

### Timelines

The trainee programme is for six months, starting in May 2023 to October 2023

### Qualifications

- University degree in law, political science, management science, conflict studies, or any other relevant social science degree
- Some experience in working with development agencies, including in a volunteer capacity
- Fluency in English. Knowledge of other Sierra Leone local languages is an asset
- Strong analytical and writing skills
- Initiative, sound judgment, and demonstrated ability to work harmoniously with staff members from different national and cultural backgrounds

### Personal profile

- Not older than 35 years old;
- Must be a graduate; and
- Not affiliated with a political party

### How to Apply

All Application Letter should be hand delivered or sent via email on [pprcsierraleone@yahoo.com](mailto:pprcsierraleone@yahoo.com) along all academic and supporting documents to the Office of the Director, Admin/ Human Resources, Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC) on OAU Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown on or before **11<sup>th</sup> April, 2023** by 4:45pm. Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Due to the volume of applications received, only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview.

## WHO report sheds light on extent of infertility worldwide



A student of the Juba branch of the Kajo Keji Health Sciences Institute with a baby - Copyright © africanews ALEX MCBRIDE/AFP or licensors

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a new report on the extent of infertility in the world, published on Tuesday.

Described as a "major health problem", about 17.5% of the adult population is affected, or one in six people worldwide.

The report does not look at the causes of infertility but provides an overview of its prevalence by analysing all relevant studies from 1990 to 2021.

All countries and regions of the world share similar problems, the organisation points out, but it believes that the subject is still in need of attention.

"Infertility has not received much attention globally, largely because there has been in the population discussions, there has been much more of a focus on contraception rather than infertility. It has therefore not been seen as a priority", said Pascale Allotey, Director of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization.

Solutions, such as assisted reproduction, remain under-funded and inaccessible to many due to high costs and social stigma, the report also says.

The report also highlights a lack of data in many countries, particularly in Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean and South East Asia.

## Liberia's political parties pledge peaceful elections in 2023

MARGIBI, Liberia – As Liberia prepares for its presidential and legislative elections in October 2023, the nation's political parties have united to pledge their commitment to peaceful, transparent, and credible elections. They have agreed to resolve any disputes through legal means.

On 4 April, at the Farmington Hotel in Margibi, Liberia, leaders from 27 of 31 political parties signed the Farmington River Declaration 2023, an enhanced and comprehensive declaration designed to ensure a nonviolent electoral process. This builds on the foundation of the initial pledge signed in 2017.

Today's signing ceremony was organized under the auspices of Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the United Nations (UN). President George Weah attended and signed as a political leader and standard-bearer. Representatives from the government, civil society groups, the diplomatic community and international organizations were also present at the high-level event.

The UN and ECOWAS signed the agreement as witnesses. On behalf of the United Nations, Ms. Giovane Biha,

Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Acting Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), signed the agreement. Dr. Omar Alieu Touray, President of the ECOWAS Commission, signed on behalf of ECOWAS.

The Farmington Peace Pledge obliges signatories and their supporters to uphold the principles of peaceful elections and respect the rule of law. The UN, ECOWAS, and international partners continue to reiterate the importance and centrality of peaceful elections to Liberia's stability and prosperity.

The upcoming elections in October, the fourth in the country since 2003, coincide with Liberia commemorating 20 years of peace. This pivotal moment serves to reinforce progress towards sustainable peace and democracy. The Farmington River Declaration 2023 is a strong commitment to prevent potential instances of violence, including violence against women, during the electoral process.

By signing this Declaration, the nation's political parties have displayed their resolve to ensure peaceful elections in 2023, with the international community fully committed to supporting their efforts.



## Guild of Editors - Sierra Leone

C/O MRCG 145 Circular Road, Freetown.  
Email: [editorsguild94@gmail.com](mailto:editorsguild94@gmail.com) Mob: +23276653596

### Public Notice Increase in Advert Pricing for Newspapers

24<sup>th</sup> March, 2023.

The general public is hereby informed that the Guild of Newspaper Editors - Sierra Leone (GoNE-SL) has reviewed the advert pricing for newspapers as follows:

#### Black & White

No.	Description	Old Price (NLe)	New Price (NLe)
1	Quarter Page (¼)	700	800
2	Half (½)	800	1,200
3	Full Page	1,000	1,500
4	Centre Spread	2,000	3,000

#### Coloured

No.	Description	Old Price (NLe)	New Price (NLe)
1	Full Page	2,500	3,000
2	Centre Spread	5,000	6,000

The cover price remains the same.

Please note that the new pricing takes effect on Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2023.

Your cooperation is highly solicited.

Signed:  
Donald Theo-Harding  
Chairman, GoNE-SL.

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#### PRESS RELEASE INCREASE IN COST OF RADIO COMMERCIALS Mile 91 Town, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2023

The National Executive and General Membership of the Sierra Leone Broadcasters Association (SiLBA) wish to inform the public that the Association has unanimously resolved to increase the cost of radio commercials.

The decision was reached at a national consultation meeting held at Mile 91 Town, Tonkolili District, on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2023, as part of the efforts to meet the current inflation rates and other statutory obligations in the country.

This decision will enhance quality in service delivery and sustainability in the operations of radio stations across the country.

It should be recalled that this is the only increment in commercials announced by radio stations in 12 years.

The Association therefore craves the understanding and patronage of the public.

The new commercial quotation which will take effect on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2023 shall be as follows:

#### FREETOWN

1. Jingle - Jingle slot - NLe 35.00 per minute
2. Public notice - NLe 30.00 per 50 words
3. (a) Cost for 30 minutes airtime, between NLe 750,00 and NLe 1,250 (Depending on the coverage of the Radio station)  
(b) Cost for 1hr airtime, between NLe 1,500, 00. and NLe 2,500.00 (Depending on the coverage of the Radio station)

#### PROVINCIAL

1. Jingle - Jingle slot - NLe 20.00 per minute
2. Public notice - NLe 20.00 per 50 words
3. (a) Cost for 30 minute airtime: between NLe 500.00 and NLe 750.00 (Depending on the coverage of the particular Radio station)  
(b) Cost for 1hr airtime: between NLe 1,000.00 and NLe 1,500.00 (Depending on the coverage of the particular Radio station)

SiLBA regrets any inconvenience this may cause.

END

Signed:

Daniel M. Amara  
Secretary General

Approved By:

Stanley Bangura Jr  
Chairman



Independent Procurement Review Panel  
3 Wellington Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone  
Email: [www.IPRP.gov.sl](http://www.IPRP.gov.sl)

4<sup>th</sup> April, 2023.

### PRESS RELEASE INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED PROCUREMENT IRREGULARITIES AGAINST THE MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Independent Procurement Review Panel (IPRP), on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2023, commenced investigation into complaint filed by HARRIS Construction AND ENGINEERING SERVICES on 62 Main, Sewa Road Bo (the Appellant) against the MINISTRY OF BASIC AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION (Respondent) on allegations of procurement irregularities bordering on the CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF THE BO AND KENEMA GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL (LOT 2).

The IPRP is a creature of section 65(1) of the Public Procurement Act No. 10 of 2016. The IPRP is charged with the responsibility to review complaints/ appeals from dissatisfied bidders, private contractors about decisions of a procuring entity in procurement process.

Furthermore, the procurement process of Sierra Leone is governed by the Public Procurement Act No.10 2016 and the Regulations Statutory Instrument No .15 of 2020.

The proceedings of the IPRP is underway and outcome will be made public.

For further enquires on this and other IPRP matters, please contact the Public Relations officer, on 23275166461 / 232/080-855375 or via email [iprpanel219@gmail.com](mailto:iprpanel219@gmail.com)

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## INT'L SPORT

# Lionel Messi whistles slammed by Christophe Galtier as under-fire PSG boss highlights team issues

Christophe Galtier has hit out at fans who whistled Lionel Messi after the loss against Lyon in Ligue 1 on Sunday.

The Argentine superstar was whistled by the PSG faithful and was also booed after the club went down 1-0 against Lyon. Under-fire manager Christophe Galtier slammed the fans for whistling while defending Messi's performance, as he suggested that other players in the team need to function better on the pitch.

Speaking to reporters after the game, Galtier said, "Whistles against Leo Messi are very harsh. Leo is a player who gives a lot. He also gave a lot in the first part of the season but it is also up to other players to have more functions."

The 35-year-old star's current

contract with PSG expires at the end of the current season and he has been linked with a move away from the club with a possibility of making a comeback to Barcelona. He has also been linked with a move to the USA with Major League Soccer clubs showing interest in the star.

The Ligue 1 giants are also doing their best to convince the Argentina skipper to extend his stay at the club, but as uncertainty grows it seems the fans' patience is wearing increasingly thin.

Christophe Galtier's men will next take on Nice in a Ligue 1 clash on Saturday.

<https://www.goal.com/en/news>



## Erik ten Hag 'is becoming increasingly impatient with Jadon Sancho'



Erik ten Hag is 'planning a ruthless squad clear-out' this summer as the next phase of his Manchester United project.

United currently sit fourth in the Premier League after losing 2-0 to Newcastle, with their season beginning to falter after a solid few months.

The Magpies scored twice in the second half through Joe Willock and Callum Wilson, but dominated the game as United recorded just one shot on target.

It was an especially damaging result for the Red Devils, as Newcastle have now leapfrogged them into third place. Tottenham can push United down to fifth with a draw against Everton on Monday, although they will have played two extra games.

Ten Hag's solution to his side's recent struggles appears to be refreshing the squad, with the Manchester Evening News claiming that the likes of Alex Telles, Harry Maguire, Brandon Williams, Dean Henderson and Anthony Martial also set to be made available for transfer.

The manager has also reportedly 'become increasingly impatient' with

Jadon Sancho amid his struggles with fitness, and may be willing to lose the England international.

Sancho did make an appearance off the bench against Newcastle at the weekend, but he failed to make much of an impact as United recorded just one shot on target.

Ten Hag made his feelings clear after the game and perhaps underlined his reasons for wanting dramatic squad changes, as he said: [Newcastle] were more determined, had more aggression and more desire.

'I was surprised that we couldn't match the determination and passion of the opponent. If you want to win big games, you have to be mature, and I didn't see that.'

Despite the gloom currently surrounding Old Trafford, the Red Devils could still be on for an unlikely treble this season.

With one trophy already in the bag, they have reached the last eight of the Europa League and will face Sevilla in a quarter final next week, while also advancing to the FA Cup semi-finals.

The real concern is league form. United have now gone seven weeks without scoring a Premier League goal, and while they could still cling on to fourth place, they are being outplayed by the teams around them.

The Red Devils are next in action when they face Brentford on Wednesday, a fixture not without its trauma after United lost 4-0 to the Bees in ten Hag's second game in charge, before finishing a hectic six days with a game against Everton on Saturday.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football>

## Jack Wilshere relishing leading second Arsenal bid for FA Youth Cup glory

Jack Wilshere is relishing replicating Arsenal's first-team success in the FA Youth Cup.

The 31-year-old former Arsenal midfielder turned youth team coach guided the club's U18 side into a semi-final against Manchester City in the competition he won as a player in 2009.

With Mikel Arteta's senior side in pole position to clinch a first Premier League title since 2003/04, Wilshere hopes his players can draw inspiration from their first-team counterparts, particularly their ability to handle the pressure of the title race.

"It's inspiring," Wilshere told Sky Sports, "but it puts us under a bit of pressure, which I say to the boys. If the first team keep doing raising the bar, we have to go with them otherwise that gap becomes too big. So it's challenging."

Wilshere continued: "When I was back last year, people would ask me what it was like being back at Arsenal and it's completely different. It's like a different place and they would say it's results dependent."

"But what Mikel, Edu and people around the club have done have filtered that down through the women's team, through the academy and now it's at our level to feed it down to the younger age groups."

"That's how a successful club is run, and you can see that with the first team and that's our job to support the first team and give them the next Bukayo [Saka] and the next Emile [Smith Rowe]. We have to keep raising the level as well."

Arteta's revival of Arsenal has not been confined to first-team affairs.

The philosophy, the culture of the football club has been changed, trickling from the top down throughout the age groups, with Wilshere joining his players in looking upwards for guidance at the early stages of his transition to coaching.

"I always thought about being a coach," he added. "But coming back [to Arsenal], seeing Mikel and his staff, the way they coach, the detail they go into, it inspired me."

"Mikel's brilliant, especially last year when I was deciding whether to go back to Denmark to play or stop and start



coaching.

"Mikel hasn't got much experience as a coach when you think about it, but his detail and his level of thinking... when he says something to you, he's right and you know that straight away. He's feeling you and knows what you're feeling."

"That's a special part of a character when he knows what someone is feeling and tries to help them. You see he does it with the players."

"He has great advice and he helped me last year, told me to go and see if I could do it and there would always be a place here for me. I did that and then came back."

"To come back and be in this role and be around these people like Mikel, Albert Stuivenberg, Steve Round, but also in the academy as well, we have some great coaches. For me to be around that every day, for my learning, I'm in the best place."

Arsenal's 2008/09 FA Youth Cup campaign provided Wilshere, one of the most-gifted English players of his generation, with the springboard to launch his playing career.

Fourteen years on, the recently-retired former international returns to the competition looking to fuel his managerial aspirations, and the similarities don't end there.

Arsenal's class of 2009 famously overcame Manchester City in the semi-finals - a task they replicate this week - and the memories remain as vivid to Wilshere now as they did back then.

<https://www.skysports.com/football/news>





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**GTB** SIERRA LEONE RED CROSS **NASSIT** SIERRA LEONE POLICE **SLRA**  
EPA SIERRA LEONE BREWERY SLTC  
**RMF** MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS **NJALA UNIVERSITY**  
SOS CHILDREN VILLAGE **ACC** MINISTRY OF DEFENCE **MMCET CHAI**  
**TRANSFAPAY** **STAR TIMES**  
**CRS** ACTION AGAINST HUNGER **WORLD VISION** **UBA**  
MINISTRY OF FINANCE **ADB** **DSTV** AUDIT SERVICES  
**SEI** MINISTRY OF ENERGY **NRA** **SLAJ**  
SIERRA BAY HOTEL MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE **NEMMS**  
MARIE STOPES **SEA COACH EXPRESS** **GIZ**  
**SLRSA** NATCOM OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT **WATERAID**  
**SALCAB** ECOBANK LAPO MICRO FINANCE (SL) LTD  
**HRC** **NPPA** **BSL** **SOLTHIS** OXFARM **AHF**  
**MIC** **UTB** **SLCB** **RCB**  
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT **ORANGE**  
**MERCURY SL** **UNDP** **WHO** **M.R. DISTILLERIES** **IGR**  
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**NMA** **ZENITH BANK** MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
KENEMA CITY COUNCIL EUROPEAN UNION **SMEDA**  
NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD **PPRC** **CHASL** STANDARD BUREAU  
STATISTIC SIERRA LEONE WORLD BANK **AFRIGAS** RADISSON BLU HOTEL  
**MARITIME** NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES **PLAN INTERNATIONAL**  
**PRA** FAWAZ BUILDING MATERIALS **ECOMED** PARTNERS IN HEALTH  
**PEE CEE & SONS** SMALL ARMS **SLWREC**  
KINGHO MINING COMPANY **PPRC** **MOTT MACDONALDS**  
**NEC** NATIONAL TOURIST BOARD **NPPA** **EBK UNIVERSITY** JUDICIARY OF SIERRA LEONE

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