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UNGA 78: President Bio arrives New York, joins other leaders in rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity

By Mohamed Massaquoi, Information Attaché, SLMUN

His Excellency President Dr Julius Maada Bio and delegation have arrived in New York for the 78th Session of the UN General Assembly, joining colleague Heads of State and Government and other global leaders to rebuild trust in the 2030

Agenda.
The High-Level segment of the 78th UNGA will take place from the 18th - 26th, September 2023, at a time of unprecedented setbacks in global cooperation and solidarity.

Cont. Page 6



Convicted Dutch National in false claim



Edwin Huyzendveld is still posing a shareholder after his conviction in Sierra Leone

Finance Minister takes steps to digitalize excise tax



Minister of Finance, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura

ICPNC: Journalists should actively speak out against issues that incite violence



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VOX POP with Yusufu S. Bangura & Mohamed J. Kargbo

Planned protest: Traders report drops in businesses

On Monday 11th September, there was a planned protest, in which citizens were called upon to take to the streets of Freetown and other parts of the country.

Although the protest didn't hold as planned, but businesses were completely disrupted as people stayed home for fear of either being attacked by

angry protesters or sustain bullet wounds and eventual death from security personnel.

In this edition of Vox Pop, Concord Times' Yusufu S. Bangura & Mohamed Kargbo on Tuesday took to the streets of Freetown to gauge the views of traders about how the planned protest affected their daily business.

**Yeanoh Smart,
Trader at King Jimmy**

The planned protest really affected us as traders. I am a single parent and it's only when I come to do business I will be able to take good care of my family. But on Monday, I was unable to sell due to fear and even the customers were afraid to come out and buy foodstuffs.

I was even afraid to send my kids to school on Monday as they are little kids because they might fall into any kind of danger.

I am appealing to my fellow citizens and the government for us to have peace. I believe it's because there is no



peace and unity in the country that's why people went to protest. So, I am also calling on the government to foster peace and national cohesion in the country for us to live a happy life as we only have one country.

Abibatu Kamara, Trader



The planned protest on Monday disrupted my business and I felt bad because this is where I get my livelihood. I have a 7-year-old child who depends on me, and she was unable to go to school because I was covered with fear so I asked her to stay at home.

I am pleading with the government to hear our cries and lower the cost of living because this was one of the main factors that ignited the protest.

**Sheku Kabbie,
dealer in used clothes**

The faceless protest affected my business greatly because it is only when I come out to do my business that, I will be able to cater for my family. But, on Monday I was constrained to feed my children and I was even afraid to send my children to school because I can't afford to let something bad happen to them.

My final call is for the government to know the needs of the people and know that citizens are going through tough time and should address our needs.



Mauallah Kamara, Shop Owner



As a young man doing business, Monday was not a good day for me due to the planned protest. I was unable to take care of myself because I depend on daily survival which led me to involve in my business capital.

I will end by saying that the government put several measures in place and listens to the voices of the poor masses. I am confident that when the government tackles the rising issues in the country they can stop what happen on Monday.

**Ishmael Sherriff,
Shop Owner**

The planned protest affected me and my business because I was unable to access transportation to come to my shop. And I was even in fear for my shop not to be damaged because my shop is at the main street. Whenever they say there is protest, our area is a hot zone as there are always heavy security personnel patrolling in the streets.

Some of us are breadwinners of our families and if businesses are disrupted it also affects us too. We have other issues to attend to, like electricity bill, house rent, water rate and even shop rent. The landlord doesn't want to know if



made profit or not, all he need at the end is his rent. Also, business is difficult for us and the protest just worsens it.

My message to citizens of this country is for them not to allow anyone to incite them to protest, because we will be the ones affected and those asking them to protest will not be here to lead it.

**Jeneba Conteh,
Trader at Congo Market**

I was in fear when I heard that people will be protesting on Monday, so I decided not to come to my place of business. I suffered loss as some of my goods are perishable. On the day of the protest, I was not able to place food on my table, and today we have come again to do business, but yet there is fear in some of the customers to come and buy. But, as a citizen I am pleading with the government to have mercy on us the lame ones because we are plenty and we depend on this little business.



Florence Bull, Trader at Sander Street



I do little business to support my family and the planned protest interrupted everything on Monday as the markets were empty, no transportation and I couldn't

sell due to the protest. Even my kids didn't go to school because I was afraid as they are my only hope, so I can't afford to put them in harms-way.



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LOCAL NEWS **Convicted Dutch National in false claim**

While he has been convicted of fraud by the Criminal Division of the Magistrate Court of Sierra Leone, a fake Dutch Investor, Edwin Huyzenveld, is still posing as a shareholder of Tandem Liber Holdings, a Limited Liability Company registered in Sierra Leone. The man was tried in absentia by Magistrate Isata Sellu Tucker on July 19-2022 and the courts' decision was communicated to Interpol for his arrest and subsequent detention in Sierra Leone, but information is that he has been parading the streets of Europe still impersonating to be a shareholder of the company. "Huyzenveld, a convicted criminal, has falsely claimed to be a shareholder of Tandem Liber Holdings SL Ltd. He went as far as entering the company's Dropbox and falsifying documents to support his claim. It is important to note that Huyzenveld has no association with the company whatsoever. Given Huyzenveld's criminal history and his ongoing attempts to bribe, blackmail

and deceive people, it is crucial for the public to be aware of his actions. We strongly advise individuals and businesses to refrain from engaging in any form of business dealings with him."

After his conviction in Sierra Leone, Edwin Huyzenveld, has been making some false claims against the CEO of Tandem Liber Holdings SL Ltd, Edward Meijers, who is also a Dutch national.

Tandem Liber Holdings SL Ltd, which has been a target of the convict, has been active in Sierra Leone for over 15 years.

A statement in the possession of Concord Times indicates that, "The CEO of Tandem Liber Holdings, Edward Meijers, has unfortunately become the target of malicious acts made by this convicted Dutch national, Mr. Erwin Huyzenveld. We want to shed light on the unjust nature of the accusations and inform the public about the truth behind the situation," the statement reads.



Edwin Huyzenveld is still posing a shareholder after his conviction in Sierra Leone

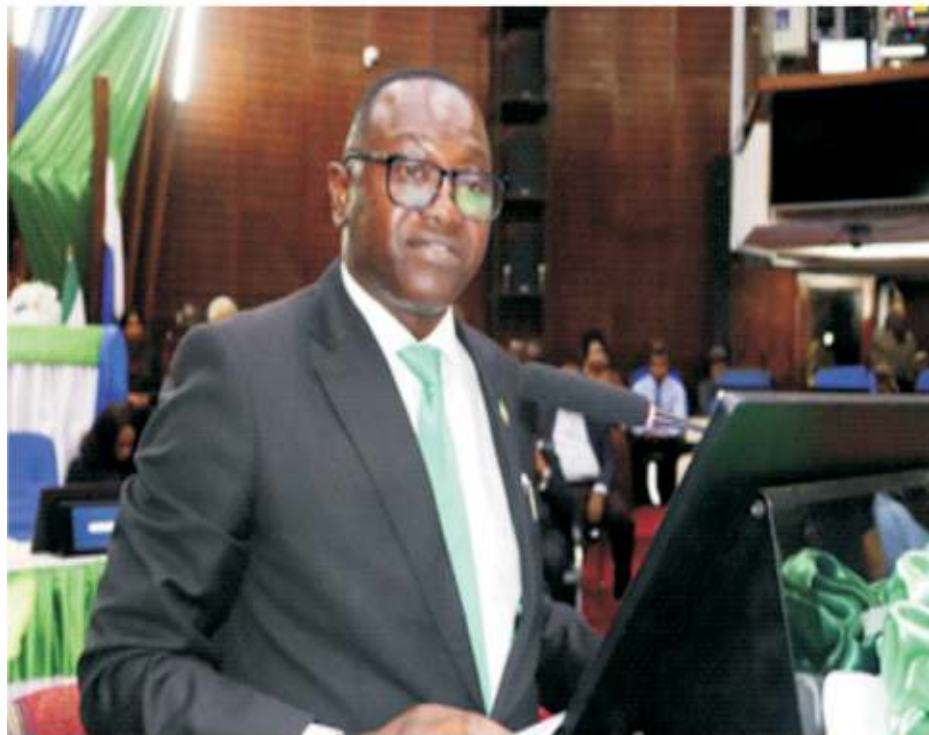
The CEO of the company, Edward Meijers, also known as Chief Kinnie Momoh III, has been recognised and honored for his exceptional contributions to the women of Nongowa Chieftdom in Kenema.

"Through the establishment of a microcredit scheme and the construction of a school, he has

positively impacted the lives of many. Not only has he supported the women of Nonogowa Kenema District through the microcredit scheme, but he has also contributed to the renovation of the Church of God School in Makeni. These acts of kindness and philanthropy demonstrate his genuine commitment to improving the lives of others," the statement reads.

The unjust accusations made against the CEO of Tandem Liber Holdings SL Ltd, Mr. Edward Meijers, by Edwin Huyzenveld are completely false, baseless and unfounded. It is important for the public to be aware of the truth behind this situation and to exercise caution when dealing with individuals who may attempt to mislead or deceive. Let us continue to appreciate and support the positive contributions of individuals like Mr. Meijers, who strive to make a difference in society and contribute to the prosperity of Salone and the people of our beautiful country.

Finance Minister takes steps to digitalize excise tax



Minister of Finance, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura

The Minister of Finance, in a press release, has informed all manufacturers, importers, distributors, and retailers of excisable goods, as well as the general public, that it is about to introduce mandatory Digital Excise Tax Stamps for tobacco products, wines, spirituous beverages and beers with effect from 1st October 2023.

In furtherance of this, the Ministry of Finance sources informed this press that it had been a long time coming to stop illicit trade, under-declaration, and inefficiencies in monitoring these products.

Our release indicates that due to the loss the government incurs in revenue collection and unfair competition for legitimate, law-abiding manufacturers and

importers, the Finance Ministry sees the introduction of this new process as the best way forward for better revenue collection in the excise goods area.

Reliable sources at the ministry informed this press that using a digital traceability solution to authenticate secure tax stamps will aid the government's tax administration in mitigating these revenue losses and protect compliant companies' products in the market.

According to our sources, the Digital Tax Stamps will take the form of either paper stamps or digital codes that are affixed or directly printed onto the excisable products or the packaging of such products.

"The stamps contain visible and

covert security features, which prevent counterfeiting and enable the stamps to be authenticated and traced to their origins," a senior Finance officer revealed.

The senior Finance Officer maintained that the introduction of Digital Excise Tax Stamps would further enable consumers, retailers, and distributors to verify the authenticity of stamps affixed on excisable products, adding that all persons handling excisable goods for which marking is mandatory, must verify the presence & authenticity of the secured marking before receiving, storing, and offering the products for sale.

This press learnt that for locally manufactured goods, affixation shall be done in the production facility immediately after packaging the product, whilst for imported goods, affixation shall be done in a place registered by the Commissioner General of the National Revenue Authority (NRA), within seven days upon clearance from Customs or at the production facility within the exporting country; subject to such conditions as the Commissioner General may specify.

However, the release states that all registered taxpayers shall have certain obligations in paying Excise Duty, as long as they are involved in the manufacturing and or importing prescribed excisable goods.

The release further informed all Excise Duty taxpayers to apply through the NRA to access and use the PTS platform and facilitate the installation and maintenance of the PTS system equipment on any

qualified, fully automated production lines in their production facilities.

The press release from the Ministry of Finance stated that the period 1st October 2023 to 31st December 2023 should be a transitional period during which every manufacturer, importer, distributor, agent, or trader of these gazetted products is required to dispose of any stock not bearing a Digital Tax Stamp.

However, the Ministry notes that where a person cannot dispose of stock not bearing a Digital Tax Stamp by 31st December 2023, such stock should be returned to the manufacturer or importer for stamping. At the end of the transition period, all excisable products sold on the market must carry a Digital Tax Stamp."

Digital Excise Tax stamp introduction is part of the Government revenue and tax policies outlined by the Minister of Finance, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura, in 2023 Supplementary Budget Statement in the Well of Parliament.

He noted that to achieve the projected increase in domestic revenues, the Government is implementing the tax policy measures contained in the Finance Act, 2023, as part of the Medium-term Revenue Strategy (MTRS).

"The excise stamps will assist in tracking excisable goods along the supply chain, providing accurate statistics on the production and importation for tax purposes and deterring counterfeiting and smuggling of these goods," said the Finance Minister, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura.

LOCAL NEWS

1 2 September is the International Day for South-South Cooperation and the theme for this year is "Solidarity, Equity and Partnership: Unlocking South-South Cooperation to Achieve the SDGs." On this important occasion, UNFPA in China celebrates the fruitful partnerships between China and other developing countries and pays tribute to all health workers upholding women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Freetown, Sierra Leone – "No matter how tough the situation is, there will be health workers right there fighting for women's health."

Dr. Zhang Pu, a Chinese gynaecologist from Hunan Provincial Maternal and Child Health Care Hospital, spoke to UNFPA as she finished a mission in Sierra Leone.

In July, a Chinese medical delegation consisting of three experts from the Hunan Provincial Maternal and Child Health Care Hospital travelled to Sierra Leone. They visited the Cervical Cancer Screening Center at the Sierra Leone-China Friendship Hospital in Jui, a town just outside the capital city of Freetown. Over two weeks, Dr. Zhang Pu and her colleagues worked with local health professionals to develop their capacity and attend to the needs of the women coming to the clinic.

In Sierra Leone, cervical cancer is the leading cause of deaths caused by cancer and is the second most common cancer among women. Every year, more than 500 new cases are detected in the country, and an estimated 400 women die because of it. Regular, high quality screening plays an

South-South Cooperation supports cervical cancer prevention and treatment in Sierra Leone

important role in reducing cervical cancer mortality rates by enabling health professionals to diagnose cervical cancer in its early stages.

To strengthen the prevention and treatment of cervical cancer for vulnerable women in Sierra Leone, UNFPA coordinated the exchange between the health professionals from Sierra Leone and China. The exchange is part of a broader project which supports the strengthening of women's reproductive health services in Sierra Leone with the support of the Government of China through its Global Development Fund.

Screening as many women as possible. Hunan Provincial Maternal and Child Health Care Hospital is well known in China for the quality of services in the areas of high-risk pregnancy and neonatal care, as well as other sexual and reproductive health services.

When Dr. Zhang Pu and her team arrived, they discovered that the doctors at the Cervical Screening Clinic were only able to check for cervical cancer in their patients using the naked eye or taking a picture on their cell phone and enlarging it to get a clearer image. The local doctors knew this was not the best approach but the vaginal colposcope was broken. The two groups of doctors agreed that for the hands-on training to take place, they had to find a way to repair the colposcope.

With the equipment repaired, the doctors

began to work together to provide the screening service. As news of the visiting medical team spread, more and more women arrived at the centre every day, coming early in the morning and waiting in long queues for screening.

Feeling motivated to meet the needs of the community, the teams worked late into the evening in order to see as many women as possible, even though intermittent power cuts meant the colposcope wasn't always working.

"I was really impressed by the dedication of local doctors. They work in such a challenging environment without advanced equipment or reliable power, but they are still optimistic and use whatever resources they have to save lives," said Professor Shu Chuqiang, a leading member of the Chinese medical mission.

During the screening sessions, the doctors worked together and identified two women aged 60 and 45 with late-stage cervical cancer that otherwise would have been missed.

In one case, a 21-year old woman was diagnosed with a highly suspected case of cervical cancer. Normally, a woman would be sent for a follow-up pathological examination and a second-time visit. However, the doctors at the Jui clinic realised that if she was sent home, she might not return for the follow-up exam and her cancer could progress. So, the team decided to take immediate action and provide treatment.

"Local doctors told us that she is living with HIV and has no money for future visits because it is a long way to travel here. We can only do what we can by providing some palliative care and treatment during the screening process," said Dr. Tian Qi, a member of the Chinese medical mission.

Accelerate HPV vaccination roll-out

The best and cost-effective defence is prevention. Screening is just one element for cervical cancer prevention and treatment.



As almost all cervical cancers are linked to infection with high-risk human papillomaviruses (HPV), an extremely common virus transmitted through sexual contact, the HPV vaccination has been recognised globally as an effective way to prevent cervical cancer at a very early stage.

In August, the Ministry of Health and the UNFPA team in Sierra Leone jointly launched the National Policy and Strategy for the Elimination of Cervical Cancer. As well as scaling up the national screening programme which this South-South collaboration between China and Sierra Leone is helping to advance with the support of UNFPA, the National Policy and Strategy also focuses on scaling up the HPV vaccination programme.

"Vaccination is key in preventing cervical cancer in the future. I hope this mission will promote more cooperation between China and Sierra Leone to address cervical cancer for women and girls in Sierra Leone, including by making the HPV vaccination more accessible," commented Mr. Peng Jiong, Assistant Representative of UNFPA in China. He facilitated the Chinese medical team's visit to Sierra Leone and is the manager of the South-South and partnerships projects of UNFPA China.

For the next stage of the project, UNFPA will facilitate more knowledge exchange between the China and Sierra Leone teams and a group of health workers from the Sierra Leone-China Friendship Hospital will visit Hunan Provincial Maternal and Child Health Care Hospital in October.

Culled from:

<https://china.unfpa.org/en/news/2023091201>

UNGA 78: President Bio arrives New York, joins other leaders in rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity

From Cover

Under the theme, "Rebuilding Trust and Reigniting Global Solidarity: Accelerating Action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability for All", the President is expected to proactively engage his colleague Heads of State, Government officials attending UNGA, Heads of International Financial Institutions, Philanthropic Organisations and the media. President Julius Maada Bio will showcase Sierra Leone's development strides and highlight his Government's vision for sustainable transformation for the next five years. He will also engage with key stakeholders before the commencement of Sierra Leone's tenure as a Non-Permanent member of the UN Security Council for the term 2024-2025.

Sierra Leone is expected to assume the UN Security Council Presidency in August 2024. The country, voted for by 188 countries out of 193 UN member states on 6 June 2022, is returning to the Council in that category after 53

years, a demonstration of respect for the small West African nation.

Sierra Leone is now among other countries like Algeria, Guyana, Republic of Korea and Slovenia to join the premier body for maintaining international peace and security.

President Bio's key high-level speaking engagements at UNGA78 will include: "The high-level observance of the fourth International Day to Protect Education from Attack co-organised by UNESCO, the state of Qatar, Education Above All Foundation, UNICEF and the United Nations Department of Global Communications.

"National address at the general debate of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

"The SDG summit acceleration day: high impact initiative on transforming education in his capacity as co-chair of the high-level steering committee for the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

"The high-level political forum on sustainable development in his capacity as chair of the group of seven plus (g7+) countries".

Accused remand for alleged Cybercrime

By Mohamed J Kargbo

2 2-year-old Safiatu Sesay has been remanded by Magistrate Mark Negba, who presides at the Pademba Road Court No. 1 in Freetown.

The accused is faced with one count charge of cyber bullying contrary to Section 44 (2) (b) of the Cyber Crime Act 2021.

Magistrate Negba remarked in the open court that cybercrime-related offences should not be treated with levity.

According to the information before the court, the accused person, in

Freetown, between the 4th of June and 3rd August, 2023, did send grossly offensive language through social media via Facebook with account name 'Sia Rose' to Major Amadu Ahmed Kargbo.

The complainant is represented by police prosecutor A. Turay, whilst the accused person has no legal representative in court and no bail application was made on her behalf. Magistrate Mark Neagba adjourned the matter to the 15th September for the complainant to take the witness box.



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LOCAL NEWS

By Ibrahim Kabba Turay

Chairman, Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC), Rev. Shodankeh Johnson, has urged journalists to actively speak out against issues that have the potential to incite violence in the country.

He made the above call during the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)'s just concluded 52nd Annual General Meeting in Kenema, Southern Sierra Leone. The AGM, which was held at the Dorwaila INN Suites with the theme "Role of Journalists in Promoting Dialogue, Reconciliation, Sustainable Peace and National Cohesion in Post-Election Sierra Leone," brought together journalists across the country.

Rev. Johnson encouraged the media to generate content and ideas while collaborating with government and civil society organisations to foster peace and social cohesion cross all levels. He expressed his appreciation for journalist's efforts in delivering accurate reporting during the

ICPNC: Journalists should actively speak out against issues that incite violence



The Chairman of (ICPNC), Rev. Shodankeh Johnson

recent elections period and commended SLAJ's I-verify team for their work in fact-checking stories to combat misinformation, disinformation, and fake news within the country. He continued that the pivotal role of journalists is to promoting

peace and national cohesion, adding that journalists must focus on peace and refrain from disseminating message that could incite chaos in society.

He said print media journalist should utilise their platform to mitigate ethnic and political tensions within the country, acknowledging the significant power that journalists possess individually and collectively.

President of SLAJ, Ahmed Nasralla, said journalists have a role to play in promoting peace by focusing on messages that

building and sustain harmony within the country.

Nasralla also underscored the importance of monitoring and fact-checking information on social media to combat the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

He urged journalists to facilitate discussions centered on peace, thereby contributing to stability in the nation.

"Let us fulfill our role as journalists in promoting discussions that lead to peace, stability, and a favorable judgment from posterity," he reiterated.

President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, Edwinia Michaela Swallow, notes the unique challenges posed during the elections period, emphasising the importance of journalists in promoting peaceful coexistence within the country.

She said media institutions provided a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, as it was fundamental for fostering peaceful coexistence.

She urged journalists to focus on producing positive stories that encourage cooperation and collaboration.

Man jailed 25 years for penetrated a minor

By Hassan Gbassay Koroma

Mohamed Turay, a 58-year-old man, was last Friday sentenced to a jail term of 25 years after he was found guilty of sexual penetration of a child age eight.

The sentence includes the three years he had already spent in custody during the trial.

Convict Turay, who is old enough to be a grandfather to the eight-year-old victim, was tried and convicted by Justice Jamestina King on one count charge of sexual penetration of a child contrary to Section 19 of the Sexual Offences Act of 2012.

The convict in March, 2020 in Freetown, sexually penetrated the eight-year-old victim.

According to Justice King, the victim told the court that the convict had stuffed a piece of cloth in her mouth and penetrated her.

The judge said the victim further testified that the convict had threatened to kill her should she have explained to anyone about what transpired between them.

Justice King said Dr. Olabisi Claudius-Cole, who medically examined the victim, had also told the court that, she observed yellowish discharge from the victim and also observed that, the victim's hymen was ruptured, which shows that she was penetrated.

According to Justice King, the third witness, Hannah Dauda, who is a local chief and also

landlady to both the victim and the convict, had also testified that at some time, she heard the victim crying bitterly and that she also observed that the victim was walking strangely.

She said when she enquired, the victim told her that her stomach was paining her and further told her that it was the convict that penetrated her.

She also stated that, when she called the convict and enquired the victim's allegation from him, he denied and stated that the eight-year old victim was suffering from gonorrhoea infection.

She further testified that she immediately called the victim's father, who had gone to work and explained the situation and condition of her daughter.

Justice King says at the closure of the prosecution's case, the convict opened his case and denied penetrating the victim.

The judge said the convict had admitted giving some drugs to the victim who had complained of stomach ache and that he had no malice against the victim.

Justice King says after careful examination of the evidence in the trial, she was satisfied that indeed the prosecution in the trial of sexual penetration, which includes, the age of the victim and that indeed there was penetration.

She said the behaviour of the

Court discharges alleged election fraudsters

By Ibrahim Kabba Turay

Justice Aiah Simeon Allieu, a resident High Court Judge of the Anti-Corruption Division, sitting in Freetown, has discharged Moses Bangura, Osman Koroma, Mohamed Kamara, Osman Limba Bangura, Adamsay Sesay and Musa Sesay on election related offenses.

The election offenses include forgery of voter registration cards contrary to the Public Elections Act No.7 of 2022.

The accused persons were arrested sometime in 2022 by police officers on allegations of forgery of voter registration cards for the concluded June 24th, 2023 public elections.

They were arrest at various

convict was evil and that he took advantage of the victim and penetrated her severally because he had access to her.

She notes that children need to live safe and happily in their

communities in Freetown, detained in police custody while investigation was ongoing.

At the end of the investigation, all six suspects were charged to Court, and arraigned as accused persons for trial at the High Court on a count indictment of forgery for which they pleaded not guilty.

The trial Judge, Justice Aiah Simeon Allieu also convicted Daniel Koroma of burglary and larceny, and sentenced him (convict) to a three-year jail term.

Daniel Koroma, the now convict was said to have on the 15th July, 2021 in Freetown, broke into the dwelling house of Alusine Koroma with the intention to steal and did steal therein property worth a total sum of Twelve Million three hundred and eighty five thousand Leones (Le12,385,000.00).

homes and community without such harm coming to them.

In his plea mitigation, the convict pleaded for mercy, stating that there is now way he can be able to fight such case against..

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NEWS AROUND AFRICA COMPILED BY GABRIEL BENJAMIN

EU Commission defends its migration partnership with Tunisia

The European Commission defended on Tuesday in the face of criticism from MEPs the migration partnership signed in July with Tunisia, saying that cooperation with this country had led to an increase this year in boat interceptions and rescues.

Tunisia is, along with Libya, the main departure point for thousands of migrants crossing the central Mediterranean to Europe, arriving in Italy.

The EU-Tunisia memorandum of understanding is criticized on the one hand by the left and the Greens, who denounce the authoritarianism of President Kais Saied and the abuses suffered by sub-Saharan migrants in this country. On the right and the far right, however, MEPs consider its implementation insufficient to reduce the number of migrant arrivals in Europe.

At a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, European Commissioner Oliver Varhelyi acknowledged that "a number of recent developments were worrying".

But "the difficult situation of migrants stuck in border regions (Tunisia with Libya and Algeria) or the high number of irregular arrivals (in the EU) illustrate the urgency of redoubled efforts and cooperation closely in this matter," he said.

"This is precisely one of the reasons why this new global and strategic partnership with Tunisia (...) is necessary," he continued.

He indicated that this year, "thanks to cooperation" with the EU, the Tunisian coast guard had carried out "nearly 24,000 interceptions of boats" carrying migrants, "compared to 9,376 in 2022".

"In 2022, 32,459 lives were saved by the Tunisian border guards and coast guards. This year, we are already close to 50,000 lives saved thanks to this



Kais Saied serre la main de Mark Rutte, d'Ursula von der Leyen et de Giorgia Meloni - coopération africaine AP/AP

The European Commissioner indicated that "the emphasis was placed on rapid implementation" of this partnership, also relating in particular to macro-economic stability, trade and investments.

"The socio-economic situation (in Tunisia) makes it all the more relevant for the European Union to engage strongly in the region," he said.

"This partnership is important in the long term, but it must also produce results in the short term," said Dutch MEP Jeroen Lenaers (EPP, right). "We are in September and already the number of arrivals in Europe via the central Mediterranean is at the same level as for the whole of last year," he said.

Frenchman Thierry Mariani (ID, far right) judged that there was an "urgent need to finalize" this partnership. Among the Greens, the Dutch Tineke Strik denounced a "dirty deal with the implacable dictator Saied", which "incites violence against black migrants".

"The EU cannot finance an authoritarian regime to outsource the management of migration with the sole aim of satisfying the right-wing forces in Europe," said Portuguese socialist MEP Pedro Marques.

Libya floods: 'the damage is huge, hard to describe' says Khalifa Haftar

The damage is huge, it's hard to describe or measure it" says the military strongman in Libya's eastern administration, Khalifa Haftar as thousands are feared dead or missing after huge flash floods devastated eastern regions. The devastation with a surge of muddy river water ripping away entire neighbourhoods in one coastal city, local authorities and international aid groups said.

Nearly 3000 people have been confirmed dead and up to 10,000 people are missing with twice as many displaced according to Libya's Red Crescent spokesman Taqfiq Shukri.

Massive destruction have been captured in images published online from the port city of Derna, home to 100,000 people, where multi-storey buildings on the river banks collapsed and houses vanished in the raging waters after two upstream dams broke.

The disaster in the country was caused by torrential rains from Storm Daniel, which made landfall in Libya on Sunday after earlier lashing other Mediterranean countries, especially Greece but also Bulgaria and Turkey.

The coastal city of Derna, 250 kilometres (150 miles) west of Benghazi, is ringed by hills and bisected by what is normally a dry riverbed in summer, but which has turned into a raging torrent that also swept away several major bridges.

"The death toll is huge and might reach thousands," warned Tamer Ramadan of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, echoing reports from local leaders who said 2,084 people had died.

"We confirm from our independent sources of information that the number of missing people is hitting 10,000 persons so far," Ramadan told reporters in Geneva via video link from Tunisia, which borders Libya.

Footage on Libyan TV showed dozens of bodies, wrapped in blankets or sheets, on Derna's main square, awaiting identification and burial, and more bodies in Martoubra, a village about 30 kilometres to the southeast.

More than 300 victims were buried Monday, many in mass graves -- but vastly greater numbers of people were feared lost in the waters of the river that empties into the Mediterranean Sea.

- 'Catastrophic' situation -

Libya, an oil-rich country in north Africa, is still recovering from the years of war and chaos that followed the 2011 NATO-backed popular uprising which toppled and killed longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

The country is now divided between two rival

governments -- the UN-brokered, internationally recognised administration based in the capital Tripoli in the west, and a separate administration in the eastern region impacted by the flood disaster.

Access to the eastern region is limited, and phone and online links have been largely severed, but the administration's prime minister Oussama Hamad has reported "more than 2,000 dead and thousands missing" in Derna alone.

The military strongman backing the eastern administration, Khalifa Haftar, issued a similar warning, though the toll had yet to be confirmed by emergency or medical services.

A Derna city council official described the situation as "catastrophic" and asked for a "national and international intervention", speaking to TV channel Libya al-Ahrar.

Rescue teams from Turkey have arrived in eastern Libya, according to authorities, and the UN and several countries offered to send aid, among them the United States, Italy, France, Qatar, Egypt and Tunisia.

- 'Harrowing images' -

The storm also hit Benghazi and the hill district of Jabal al-Akhdar, and flooding, mudslides and other major damage were reported from the wider region, with images showing overturned cars and trucks.

Libya's National Petroleum Company, which has its main fields and terminals in eastern Libya, declared "a state of maximum alert" and suspended flights between production sites where it said activity was drastically reduced.

Libya's UN-brokered government under Abdelhamid Dbeibah announced three days of national mourning on Monday and emphasised "the unity of all Libyans" in the face of the disaster.

Aid convoys from Tripoli were heading east and Dbeibah's government announced the dispatch of two ambulance planes and a helicopter, as well as rescue teams, canine search squads and 87 doctors, as well as technicians to restore power.

Alarm has spread globally, with many foreign leaders voicing their condolences.

European Council president Charles Michel, writing on X, formerly Twitter, noted the "harrowing images from Libya following deaths & destruction caused by floods, especially in the east ... EU stands ready to help those affected by this calamity."

US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller also offered "sympathies and condolences" to those affected and said Washington was working with the UN and Libyan authorities to help relief efforts.

Egypt ban on face veil in schools sparks debate



FILE- Yemeni girls listen to a teacher, unseen, in a class - Copyright © africanews Hani Mohammed/AP

Egypt's Ministry of Education has banned the wearing of full-face veils in public and public schools, a decision that sparked debate on Tuesday on social networks in the country's most populous Arab country.

On Monday, the government newspaper Akhbar al-Youm published the new decree on school uniforms, which bans primary and secondary school pupils from "covering their faces".

The decree states that the headscarf is "optional", depending on "the wishes of the pupil, without pressure or coercion from anyone other than the legal guardian, who must be informed of this choice". While the majority of Egyptian women wear the headscarf, the niqab remains in the minority in this overwhelmingly Muslim country.

"People are angry because the government has given no justification, it's a tyrannical decision that invades privacy", Mohammed reacted on X (ex-Twitter).

"No one is angry except supporters of the Taliban and the Islamic State (EI)," retorted al-Masri on the same network.

Ahmed Moussa, a talk-show host and fervent

supporter of Abdel Fattah al-Sissi's regime, hailed "an important first step towards destroying extremism and correcting the situation in education, which has become a hideout for Muslim Brotherhood terrorist groups".

Since Mr Sissi deposed President Mohamed Morsi - a member of the Muslim Brotherhood - in 2013, the Brotherhood, which has been declared a "terrorist" organisation, has been banned and its members and leaders have been killed in their hundreds and imprisoned in their thousands.

For Internet users, however, the problem of education in a country of 105 million inhabitants crushed by inflation and public debt lies elsewhere. "Is the niqab responsible for overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated equipment and teachers' difficulties?" asked another user ironically.

At the end of 2015, Cairo University, one of Egypt's oldest and most prestigious universities, banned its female lecturers from wearing the niqab, a decision upheld in 2020 by a Cairo administrative court.

The strictest form of the Islamic veil, the niqab is generally black, revealing only the eyes through a slit.

Zimbabwe president appoints son, nephew as deputy ministers

President Emmerson Mnangagwa faced criticism on Monday for appointing his son, David Kudakwashe Mnangagwa, as the deputy finance minister in a new cabinet following his re-election.

The move has raised concerns about nepotism within the government.

David Mnangagwa, 34, will serve as the deputy to Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube, while the president's nephew, Tongai Mafidhi Mnangagwa, was also named deputy minister of tourism and hospitality. This decision is part of the newly constituted cabinet consisting of 26 ministries, local media reported.

Fadzayi Mahere, a lawmaker from the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC), criticized President Mnangagwa's cabinet, describing it as "indefensible." She highlighted concerns about legitimacy, corruption, violence, nepotism, incompetence, and ethical issues within the government.

In another move that raised eyebrows, President Mnangagwa appointed a husband and wife team, Christopher and Monica Mutsvangwa, as ministers. Christopher Mutsvangwa will lead the new ministry of Veterans of Liberation, while Monica Mutsvangwa is the new minister of Women's Affairs and SMEs.

David Mnangagwa, who recently graduated with a law degree from the University of Zimbabwe, entered parliament through the youth quota system on the Zanu PF party list from Midlands province. He is one of President Mnangagwa's reported nearly two dozen children.

Tongai Mnangagwa is the Zanu PF Member of Parliament for Hunyani constituency. His late father, David Mnangagwa, was President Mnangagwa's younger brother.

Reports suggest that President Mnangagwa is also considering an official role in his office for another of his sons, Emmerson Junior. Sources indicate that Emmerson Junior has already participated in the



Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa attends the BRICS Summit in - Copyright © africanews Mike Hutchings/AP

president's meetings with foreign investors, and there are plans to formalize his role, possibly as an adviser or director.

This controversy comes on the heels of President Mnangagwa's re-election amid opposition claims of electoral irregularities. Critics argue that his actions are contributing to a perception of dynastic politics in Africa, following the footsteps of other leaders who have appointed family members to key government positions.

In Congo-Brazzaville, President Denis Sassou-Nguesso appointed his son Denis-Christel as a cabinet minister, fueling speculation about dynastic succession.

Equatorial Guinea's President Teodoro Obiang has had his son, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, serve as vice president, while in Gabon, President Ali Bongo Ondimba succeeded his father Omar Bongo, who ruled for decades.

Rwandan President Paul Kagame appointed his daughter, Ange Kagame, to a key role in his office, adding to the conversation about political dynasties on the continent.

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Invitation for Bids

Sierra Leone
September, 2023

Re: Construction of Fifteen Waterpoints (Boreholes for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)- SLE-2000001544-0018-W-NCB

The **Government of Sierra Leone** has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Adaption Fund (AF), OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) and Toni Blair Institute (TBI), the financing of which is being administered by IFAD towards the cost of **Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (AVDP)** and intends to apply part of the financing for the purchase of these goods. The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with the **Agricultural Value Chain Development Project**.

1. The goal of AVDP is livelihoods and climate change resilience of rural farming households in Sierra Leone improved, while the **project development objective (PDO)** is to promote agriculture as a business for enhanced incomes and reduced rural poverty, among 42,985 rural households. The AVDP will be implemented nationwide over a six-year period. A value chain development approach will drive the implementation process, supported by the application of a robust targeting strategy to ensure the inclusion of the rural poor in both the implementation of project activities and the sharing of the benefits and priority attention to enhancing climate resilience among the project beneficiaries.

2. The employer now invites sealed bids from eligible entities ("bidders") for the execution and completion of **Construction Waterpoints (Boreholes for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)**- which are being bid as a unit price contract based on the bill of quantities.

3. This IFB is open to all eligible bidders who wish to participate. Subject to the restrictions stipulated in the bidding document, eligible bidders may associate with other bidders to enhance their capacity to successfully carry out the works.

4. The works, and the contract/s expected to be awarded, are divided into three lots as follows:

Lot No	DISTRICT	CHIEFDOM	COMMUNITY	No of Site
1	BO	Njala Komboya	Talia 1	1
	BO	Njala Komboya	Njiekohun	1
	BO	Tikonko	Gelehun	1
	KENEMA	Gaura Chiefdom	Tanima Village	1
	KENEMA	Nongowa Chiefdom	Potehun	1
2	MOYAMBA	Kamajei	Taninahun	1
	MOYAMBA	Bumpeh	Kumrabai	1
	BONTHE	Najjeh	Sogbini	1
	PUJEHUN	Kpaka	Vaahun	1
	PUJEHUN	Sorogbeima	Tussor	1
3	KAILAHUN	Luawa Chiefdom	Tikonko.	1
	KAILAHUN	Luawa Chiefdom	Giema Gbayla	1
	KAILAHUN	Kissi Kama Chiefdom	Poluma Junction	1
	KAILAHUN	Kissi Teng Chiefdom	Yabaima	1
	KONO	Nimikoro Chiefdom	Buttau	1

Bidders have the option to bid for any one or more lots. The Purchaser retains the right to award not more than one lot to a bidder.

5. A contractor will be selected using the national competitive bidding (NCB) method in accordance with the IFAD Procurement Handbook accessible at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. The NCB process will include a review and verification of qualifications and past performance, including a reference check, prior to the contract award.

6. Please note that a pre-bid conference will be held as described in the Bid Data Sheet ("BDS"), Section III of the bidding document.

7. Bidders interested in submitting a bid shall purchase the bidding document against payment of a non-refundable fee of **SLE500**. Payment shall be made to the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project through Western Union Money Transfer, RIA, MoneyGram or in the following account:

Account Name: Agriculture Value Chain Development Project

Account No: 014-001-107-861-136-462

Bank: Commerce and Mortgage Bank

8. Bidding documents can be obtained by sending an e-mail with a copy of the payment slip, giving full contact details of the bidder and the subject of procurement, to avdppmu@gmail.com. This will also ensure that the bidders receive the bidding document by email or hard copy (at the following address), as well as any updates regarding the bidding document

Bids must be delivered electronically to the PMU via the following link and in the manner specified in the bid data sheet – instructions to bidders 23.2, no later than 9th October 2023 at 12:00 GMT. **Link:** <https://bit.ly/waterpointsubmission>

9. Bidders should be aware that late bids will not be accepted under any circumstance.

10. Bid security in the form of a Bank Guarantee. The amount and currency of the Bid Security shall be SLE85,000 per Lot and shall be expressed in lots. Bid Security from community and village banks and Bid Bond from insurance companies are not acceptable

11. There will be a virtual bid opening via ZOOM on 9th October, 2023 at 12:30 GMT.

Link to join Bid Opening: <https://bit.ly/Bidopeningwaterpoint>

1. For any further clarification, please contact the above email address:



Government of Sierra Leone

Ministry of Agriculture
and Food Security

RECRUITMENT OF AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Project Location/Duty Station: TORMA BUM

**Recruitment of Agribusiness Development Officer – SL
Regional Rice Value Chain Development Project (SL-RRVCP)**

The Government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security (MAFS) has obtained a Financing from the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) as partial funding for the implementation of the Regional Rice Value Chain Development Project (RRVCDP) under the National Agric. Transformation 2023 programme. Part of these funds are going towards supporting a Program Management Team to be located in Torma Bum, Bonthe District. The Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security now invites applications from suitable and qualified Sierra Leonean candidates to fill the following vacant position:

The overall goal of the Regional Rice Value Chain (RRVC) Program is to contribute to the respective countries' ambitions of becoming self-sufficient in rice given that most are currently importing significant amounts of rice at high cost. Achieving this goal requires supporting smallholder farmers that dominate the rice production systems in the targeted countries (Guinea, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and The Gambia). It is within this context that this program aims at improving the production and commercialization of the smallholder rice sector in these five countries. This is critical to the national self-sufficiency and import substitution goal of the country. Value chain approach is the main delivery mechanism of the regional program and its specific country projects. The approach will stimulate public-private partnership where the private sector plays a key role with the governments and development partners providing the required enabling environment. A key success factor of the program is increasing, in a sustainable manner, smallholder rice paddy yields to a range of 3-5 ton/ha, up from the prevailing 1-2 ton/ha.

For the implementation of this project MAFS is recruiting an Agribusiness Development Officer for the Project Management Unit.

How to apply:

For all information on how to apply and to view the job description please visit the MAFS website: <http://www.maf.gov.sl> under the About Us Page Section by going to the Jobs page

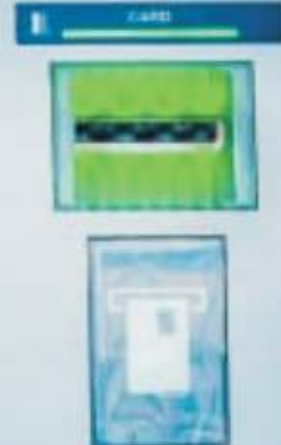
Women are particularly encouraged to apply

Deadline for submission is COB on Friday 22nd September 2023



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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Abt Associates, a major American business and government research, technical assistance, and consulting company, manages the USAID-funded VectorLink Project. VectorLink will support the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and USAID to plan and implement an integrated vector control approach with the overall goal of reducing the burden of malaria. Abt has implemented indoor residual spraying (IRS) for PMI since 2011, delivering high-quality IRS programs and gathering the most comprehensive vector control entomological data in the world. Under this contract, Abt will expand entomological monitoring to guide programs focused on insecticide-treated mosquito nets and IRS and continue to assist PMI in reducing the burden of malaria through IRS and capacity building in 24 African countries where malaria is endemic. Abt also will continue to support PMI in IRS monitoring and evaluation as well as environmental compliance.

Abt associates Inc., received funds from USAID, to implement the Programme: “**PMI Evolve**” in Five (5) different districts of Sierra Leone. Part of the funds has been allocated for the Procurement of various Services.

We hereby invite all legally constituted companies, or business or enterprises that can provide excellent services, to Request for the RFQ.

Schedule of RFQ:

Lot Number	Description of items
Lot 1	Transportation Services

Interested bidders must request the RFQ clearly stating their area of interest via email to: *PMI_EvolveSierra Leone@abtassoc.com*, between the hours of **8:00am** and **4:00pm** from 11th, September 2023 to **13th September 2023** and you may seek any clarification via email to: *Mohamed_fofanah@pmivectorlink.com*. Please note that all clarifications will be made to potential bidders latest **Wednesday 13th September 2023**.

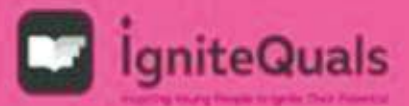
Bidders are required to submit their respective bids not later than **September 15th, 2023**, at **3:00pm**. And bids can be dropped in the bid box in our office at 41W1 Derrick Drive, Off Spur Road, or via email to *Mohamed_fofanah@pmivectorlink.com*. E-mail submissions must not be of file size above 2mbs in PDF format.

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Invitation for Bids Mott MacDonald SL Limited

Procurement Number: MMSL/SSEIP2/1088.25

Mott MacDonald Sierra Leone Limited, has allocated funds from FCDO for the procurement of 250 tablets and cases and now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders.

Mott MacDonald Limited trading as Cambridge Education has been appointed by UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to use UK aid to deliver the Sierra Leone Secondary Education Improvement Programme 2 (SSEIP 2). This programme supports the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education to improve primary and secondary schooling, make schools safer for girls, and target support to students with disabilities.

The nature of the programme requires tablets and cases to be used for monitoring and training purposes, with the following specifications:

Tablet

- 8" or greater screen
- Minimum 2GB RAM
- Storage 32GB or larger
- Wifi + 3G
- SD Card slot
- Quality Camera

Tablet case

- Built from durable PU (synthetic) leather with soft microfiber interior to prevent scratches.
- Cover contains flip capability to transform the case into a horizontal viewing stand. Interior pocket opens for easy insertion of device.
- Built-in magnetic strip to provide auto sleep/wake feature. Designed with a smart holder for stylus/pen.

Bidding is open to all suppliers who can demonstrate the capacity to deliver without advance payment and experience to deliver 250 tablets and cases.

Interested bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address below between 09.00 am and 5.00 pm from 4th - 29th September 2023. Bidding documents can be collected for free at the address below.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 2nd October 2023 at 9.00 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by:

- Valid business registration certificate
- Valid NASSIT clearance certificate
- Valid tax clearance certificate
- References, indicating the supplier's experience to deliver similar products to reputable organizations - corporations, INGOs and Government

Bid envelopes must be sealed and clearly marked "RFP 1088.25 – Tablets and Cases - Sierra Leone".

Bids will be opened on Monday 2nd October 2023 at 9:15 a.m. in the presence of bidders and/or representatives at the address below. Late bids will be rejected and returned unopened to bidders.

Mott MacDonald Sierra Leone Limited
24 Regent Road, Opposite Orange Office
Hill Station
Freetown -

Invitation for Bids Mott MacDonald SL Limited

Procurement Number: MMSL/SSEIP2/1088.26

Mott MacDonald Sierra Leone Limited, has allocated funds from FCDO for the procurement of 2 – Motor vehicles and now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders.

Mott MacDonald Limited trading as Cambridge Education has been appointed by UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to use UK aid to deliver the Sierra Leone Secondary Education Improvement Programme 2 (SSEIP 2). This programme supports the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education to improve primary and secondary schooling, make schools safer for girls, and target support to students with disabilities.

The nature of the programme requires frequent travels to remote parts of the country, in many cases using bad roads, to support schools. To enhance the team to travel to the project locations, MM is buying two (2) 4x4 motor vehicles, double cabin, on/off road, suitable for rough terrain.

Bidding is open to all suppliers who can demonstrate experience and the capacity to deliver 4 x 4 vehicles.

Interested bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address below between 09.00 am and 5.00 pm from 4th - 29th September 2023. Bidding documents can be collected for free at the address below.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 2nd October 2023 at 09.45 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by:

- Valid business registration certificate
- Valid NASSIT clearance certificate
- Valid tax clearance certificate
- References, indicating the supplier's experience to deliver similar products to reputable organizations - corporations, INGOs and Government

Bid envelopes must be sealed and clearly marked "RFP 1088.26 – 4 x 4 motor vehicles - Sierra Leone".

Bids will be opened on Monday 2nd October 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in the presence of bidders and/or representatives at the address below. Late bids will be rejected and returned unopened to bidders.

Mott MacDonald Sierra Leone Limited
24 Regent Road, Opposite Orange Office
Hill Station
Freetown

DoFA's

Miss Old is Gold Vol 3

Theme: Resilience of older persons in this changing world.



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Daphne Joya Pratt



Miss
Magazine Cot
Isatu Bangura



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Salamatou Conteh



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