

29th April 2020

The Attorney General and Minister of justice  
3rd Floor Guma Building  
Freetown  
Dear Hon. Minister

**The Civil Rights Defenders Request For The Abolition Of The Death Penalty System In Sierra Leone**

The Civil Rights Defenders put together “Letter of Request Seeking the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Sierra Leone” and submitted it to Dr. Priscilla Schwartz, the Minister of Justice, on May 2, 2020.

The CRD Main Point of Request:

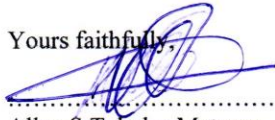
- . Enacting legislation to abolish the death penalty system
- . Placing a moratorium on executions until the death penalty system is abolished

**The CRD outline the reasons why the death penalty should be abolished:**

- **The risk of executing innocent people exists in any justice system**  
There have been and always will be cases of executions of innocent people. No matter how developed a justice system is, it will always remain susceptible to human failure. Unlike prison sentences, the death penalty is irreversible and irreparable.
- **The death penalty arbitrary application of death penalty can never ruled out**  
The death penalty is often used in a disproportional manner against the poor, minorities and members of racial, ethnic, political and religious group.
- **The death penalty is incompatible with human rights and human dignity**  
The death penalty violates the right to life which happens to be the most basic of all human rights. It also violates the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Furthermore, the death penalty undermines human dignity which is inherent to every human being.
- **The death penalty does not deter crime effectively**  
The death penalty lacks the deterrent effect which is commonly referred to by its advocates. As recently stated by the General Assembly of the United Nations, “there is no conclusive evidence of the deterrent value of the death penalty” (UNGA Resolutions 65/206). It is noteworthy that in many retentionists’ states, the effectiveness of the death penalty in order to prevent crime is being seriously questioned by continuously increasing number of law enforcement professionals.
- **Public opinion is not a major stumbling block for abolition**  
Public support for the death penalty does not necessarily mean that taking away the life of a human being by states is right. There are undisputed historical precedences where gross human rights violations had the support of a majority people, but which were condemned vigorously later on. It is the job of leading figures and politicians to underline the incompatibility of capital punishment with human rights and human dignity.  
Finally, the CRD will work with key stakeholders, partners and players to advocates for life imprisonment rather than the death penalty and further ensure enabling conducive environment for the sustainability and Protection of Human Rights.

Thanks for your timely consideration.

Yours faithfully,



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Allan S. Tuboku-Metzger  
Chairman

CC:

- The Speaker, Sierra Leone Parliament
- The Secretary to President
- The chief Justices
- The Human Rights Commission-SL
- The Sierra Leone Bar Association
- Amnesty international, sierra Leone