

10th April 2025

The Learned Attorney-General & Minister of Justice
3rd Floor, Guma Building
Lamina Sankoh Street
Freetown

Dear Learned Attorney General,

Re: Follow-Up & Request For Action On The Margaret Davies Sexual Harassment Matter

I write to you on behalf of the Civil Rights Defenders, a human rights organization committed to promoting justice, rule of law, equality, and protection for vulnerable individuals, particularly survivors of gender-based violence.

We are deeply concerned about the prolonged inaction regarding a sexual harassment complaint filed in 2022 by Mrs. Margaret Davies “a former employee” of RCBank (a state-owned enterprise) against her former superior, (Walton E. Gilpin) who, to date, remains in his position and appears to be under the protection of the very system meant to protect human rights, promote justice and ensure accountability. We were informed that the matter was sent to your office during the tenure of your predecessor and recently, in November 2024, we saw a former senior government official who also received this complaint gave an account of the entire matter and informed the public during an interview on Liberty Online TV Show that the alleged perpetrator (Mr. Gilpin) received protection from the highest office.

Despite the significant time that has passed since the complaint was submitted, we are yet to receive any substantive update regarding the status of the investigation from your office or the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). As a human rights defender yourself, you will agree with us that the prolong silence on matters will not only bring distress to complainants but also leave other victims increasingly vulnerable, especially knowing that the individual in question continues to hold a position of authority and publicly attending government functions. Similarly, the continued lack of progress in this case not only undermines the confidence of survivors in the justice system but also raises serious concerns about the potential shielding of powerful individuals from consequences other ordinary Sierra Leoneans are facing. This has a chilling effect on other victims who may fear coming forward, believing their voices will not be heard or that they will lose their jobs, like Margaret Davies or that justice will not be served and that the accused will be protected.

As human rights defenders, we are alarmed by the implications of this delay and respectfully urge your office to look into this matter and request an immediate update on the status of the investigation from your office or the CID. We also request clarity on any steps being taken to ensure the victim’s safety and dignity, reinstatement of her job/livelihood and as well as the integrity of the process as this would go a long way in helping us deal with similar cases and help victims and survivors regain a sense of trust in the justice system.

We consider this not only a betrayal of justice but a direct threat to human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law. **We therefore call on the government through your office to urgently shift**

from rhetoric to action as protection must be for the victims/survivors and not for the perpetrators.

Learned Attorney General, we trust and have confidence in you (as a well-respected and recognized human rights lawyer who worked and served in different international human rights organizations and therefore respectfully demand through your office the following:

1. immediate enquiry into the Margaret Davies matter and update;
2. transparent investigations into all pending SGBV cases, regardless of the accused's position or influence.
3. timely, independent and survivor-centered investigations, as justice delayed is justice denied.
4. an end to the culture of silence, power and cover-ups in institutions meant to uphold justice.
5. legal and psychosocial support for victims and survivors, free from intimidation or retaliation.
6. accountability mechanisms that ensure consequences for both perpetrators and officials who enable them.

We want to state that every employee (regardless of gender, rank, or role) is entitled to a safe, respectful, and dignified working environment. An environment free from harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or any form of abuse. This is a fundamental human right and legal obligation that every organization, institution, and employer must uphold as safety at work is not a privilege but a right.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the fight for justice, dignity, and equality for all, including women and girls. We therefore stand with every survivor of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and we will not be silent in the face of continued injustice, power dynamics and institutional failure. **Too many victims have suffered, still suffering in silence and have waited too long while too many perpetrators continue to walk free, shielded by silence, power, or connections within systems that are meant to protect victims, not abusers.**

By copy of this letter, we are calling on other human rights and international organizations to follow up on the Margaret Davies matter as this is not only about Margaret Davies but a matter of public interest, which outcome will lay the foundation and set the stage for the change we crave. Most importantly, let us, as a matter of must, foster a culture where employees feel empowered to speak up, where complaints are taken seriously, and where accountability is enforced without fear or favor as creating safe workplaces is not just good practice but a moral and legal imperative.

We will continue to speak out. We will continue to defend the rights of all, and we will continue to demand that justice is not a privilege for the powerful, but a right for all. Justice for survivors is not negotiable and the time to act is now. We therefore remain hopeful that your office continues to prioritize the pursuit of justice in cases of such nature and that due diligence and fairness is being applied in this matter. We also trust that as a human rights activist yourself, you would use your expertise in continuing to uphold the principles of justice and accountability, especially in public interest cases.

We are available for any further dialogue and support in promoting fair and transparent outcomes in this matter and any other human rights matter. Please feel free to contact us should any further cooperation or support is required on our part as human rights defenders. We appreciate your attention to this sensitive and long overdue matter and look forward to your response.

Thanking you for your time and commitment to justice.

Allan S. Tuboku-Metzger

Chairman, Civil rights Defenders



Copy:

1. The Bank of Sierra Leone
2. The Office of the Ombudsman
3. Inspector General of Police
4. Family Support Unit
5. Criminal Investigation Department
6. Campaign for Human Rights & Development International
7. AdvocAid
8. The Lawyers' Society
9. Irish Aid, Sierra Leone
10. UN Women
11. US Embassy
12. British High Commission
13. Amnesty International
14. Human Rights Commission
15. The Chairman, Board of Directors Rokel Commercial Bank
16. UNFPA
17. UNDP
18. CCSL