

## HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

### PRESS RELEASE

In accordance with its statutory mandate and responsibility of promoting and protecting Human Rights as provided for in section 7(1) of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone Act 2004, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL) wishes to draw attention to the human rights implications of the alleged assault on Mr. Tony Samuel Ojeh, Distribution Manager of Guma Valley Water Company Limited, by personnel of the National Fire Force leading to his death on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2007 while performing his official duties.

The HRCSL recalls that Section 15 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone provides that “Every person in Sierra Leone is entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, has the right... to each and all of the following.... [L]ife, liberty, security of person, the enjoyment of property and protection of law”.

In addition, Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights which has been signed by the Government of Sierra Leone states that “Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person.  
...”

Furthermore, in addition, Article 3 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”.

The HRCSL, condemns the alleged assault as it amounts to a human rights violation. It further condemns all acts of violence and lawlessness by individuals; in particular against public officials acting in the course of their employment.

Mindful of the fact that impunity is a growing concern nationwide because of its contribution to a sense of insecurity and lack of confidence in law enforcement agencies, the HRCSL calls on the Government and the Sierra Leone Police to ensure that the alleged perpetrators are brought to justice speedily.

At the same time, the HRCSL urges restraint on the part of all those directly affected by this ugly incident and appeals to everyone to allow the due process of the law to take its course.

It finally calls on the general public to be law abiding, to desist from all forms of violence and to respect the human rights of others at all times.

Dated 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2007