



**NATIONAL BROADCAST BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO, ON OCCASION OF THE WELLINGTON 4FIRE DISASTER. 7<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

Fellow citizens:

- 1.** Last night, I returned to a nation in mourning. I went directly to visit the injured and the badly burned at Connaught and 34 Military hospitals. This morning, I also visited other victims at the Emergency and Choithrams hospitals and the site of the accident.
- 2.** I saw our brothers and sisters who are in extreme pain. They shared with me their anguish and I reassured them of my Government's commitment to continue supporting them during these difficult times. This national tragedy is heart-rending.
- 3.** Let us reserve a moment of reflection for the 99 brothers and sisters we have lost so far. May God/ Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala shower them

with His divine mercies. May He comfort grieving families and loved ones and heal the injured. May God Almighty/ Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala strengthen us to endure the pain of this catastrophe. We are all, indeed, deeply saddened as a nation.

- 4.** On behalf of all citizens of our beloved nation, I thank our healthcare workers who have worked tirelessly around the clock to care for the injured. We thank you for your selfless service to our fellow citizens of this great nation.
- 5.** Let me also thank the Honourable Vice President, cabinet ministers, the National Disaster Management Agency, the security forces, first responders, community leaders, and every citizen who has worked tirelessly to provide an effective and coordinated response to this tragedy.
- 6.** I thank Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad for your comforting messages and solidarity during these challenging times. This catastrophe has touched everyone. Your prayers and words of consolation are truly invaluable.
- 7.** I also thank foreign leaders and well-wishers who have condoled with us. Especially, I thank the World Health Organisation that is airlifting 6.6 tonnes of emergency medical supplies as their initial response to the severe burn cases.
- 8.** Moments like these bring us closer as a nation just as they have in the past. We will endure, pull through and persist as a nation.
- 9.** In solemn tribute to the faithful departed, I now declare three days of national mourning commencing Monday 08<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 throughout the Republic of Sierra Leone. Flags shall be flown at half-mast. Prayers shall be said for the deceased and the injured throughout Sierra Leone on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November respectively.
- 10.** The Ministry of Health and Sanitation will scale up responses and provide the best medical and psycho-social care for victims and their

families. A group of foreign medical specialists will soon join our hardworking medical staff to intensify treatment for the injured.

- 11.** The incident coordinating centre will continue its verification and identification exercises, at the same time effectively coordinate all responses to this disaster.
- 12.** Following the identification and verification exercises, we will engage family members to plan and ensure a dignified burial for the deceased.
- 13.** In the coming days, I will set up a Presidential Task Force that will comprehensively look into the incident and present its findings and recommendations to inform future actions.
- 14.** The demonstration of solidarity and selflessness by medical personnel and other first responders to this disaster shows our resolve to work together as a nation.
- 15.** Wherever you are today, say a quiet prayer for our brothers and sisters. We will weep; we will work hard to heal the injured; and we shall overcome.

I thank you and God bless The Republic of Sierra Leone.