



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR.  
JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE PRESENTATION OF  
THE REPORT ON AUGUST 8TH – 10TH  
2022 PROTESTS BY THE SPECIAL  
INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE  
- FREETOWN, 13 APRIL 2023**

The Secretary to the President  
The Chairman and members of the Special Investigation Committee  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen  
Good afternoon,

1. Today, I receive this report with great sadness as once again our nation was aghast with the brutal murder of ASP Matthew Moiwah Gbanya, the Operational Support Division Regional Coordinator in the North-East Regional Headquarter Town of Makeni. This is barely eight months since six police officers were violently killed in the August insurrection.

2. We cannot live in a society where police officers who have the responsibility to protect lives and property become the objects of targeted killings. This is unacceptable and my Government will spare no effort to ensure those responsible for the death of ASP Matthew Moiwah Gbanya are held accountable.

3. On behalf of the Government and our grieving nation, let me use this opportunity to express our sincere condolences to his family and the entire Sierra Leone Police. May God almighty grant him merciful judgement.

4. Ladies and Gentlemen, following the bloody and violent insurrection of August 10th 2022, I assured the nation that a full-scale investigation would be instituted to examine both the immediate and underlying causes, sources of financing, execution and consequences of the August insurrection, as well as the response of security forces.

5. Because I believe that such an investigation must be independent and professional, I appointed various stakeholders, institutions and organisations which are critical in our national peace consolidation efforts to constitute a Special Investigation Committee.

6. Therefore, let me thank each of you for your dedication and invaluable service during this investigation. Despite the challenges and sometimes personal attacks, you braved the roads, held public hearings, engaged community leaders, interviewed many people, engaged the national security infrastructure, embarked on field visits and engaged with professional institutions to produce a credible Report.

7. I note that the Executive Summary of the Report states: "The insurrection was well-planned, financed, well-orchestrated, timed and

geared towards destroying public property and undermining the peace and stability of the state by removing the legitimate and democratically elected President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Brigadier (Rtd.) Dr. Julius Maada Bio, from political power.”

8. There can be no justification to remove a democratically elected government through illegitimate means. This is because despite in 2018 we inherited a government which had mismanaged the economy and imposed austerity, coupled with the twin global crises of covid-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war, my government has taken actions to cushion the hardship on Sierra Leoneans through various subsidies, salary increments, tax reduction and waivers on essential commodities, provision of special facilities to support the importation of essential commodities and provision of cash transfers to thousands of vulnerable people.

9. In just five years, we have also mobilized and provided funds to increase access to education, access to electricity, access to water supply, increase performance in rice self-sufficiency metric, constructed more roads and bridges, constructed more purposeful infrastructure and ensure mining communities receive more benefits. In fact, in healthcare, we have not only increased access to healthcare but also reduced maternal and infant mortality rates by impressive scores.

10. I also note that the Executive Summary of the Report states: “The claims of extra-judicial killings following the August 10th protests could not be ascertained based on evidence collected from engagements with various stakeholders, including the security sector in all areas visited by the Special Investigation Committee. There was no information provided on either missing persons or summary executions despite repeated enquiries.”

11. Let me state my government remains committed to upholding universal principles of Human Rights and adhering to national and international Human Rights standards. In just five years, the Human Rights Commission has received its certificate of reaccreditation as a “Grade A” national human rights institution from the United Nations and my Government has enacted more progressive legislations than any other government such as the enactment of the Gender Equality and Empowerment Act, the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law and the abolition of the death penalty.

12. Ladies and gentlemen, since 2018, my government has also made significant progress not only in rebranding Sierra Leone but also positioning our country as the right destination for foreign direct investment and tourism. Unfortunately, the August 10th insurrection left a stain on the image of our country. Collectively, this is a stain we must remove and showcase Sierra Leone as the champion for peace, press freedom, women's rights, human capital development, religious tolerance and transparency and accountability.

13. I also note that the Investigation Report has made a number of recommendations across various sectors and interests to prevent the recurrence of the events of August 8th – 10th 2022. Let me assure the Committee that my government will carefully study these recommendations and take the necessary actions. Simply, the Report will be acted on!

14. As we approach the June 24th multi-tier elections, let me encourage all Sierra Leoneans to be law-abiding and remain peaceful. To those who engage in hate speeches, incitement to violence and incendiary rhetoric, you have no place in our elections and wherever you are the long arm of the law will catch you. To leaders of political parties, please remember that no political ambition is worth the blood of any citizen.

15. Once again, let me conclude by thanking all of you members of the Special Investigation Committee for your professionalism and commitment to completing this herculean task.

16. Therefore, I receive this Investigation Report on the August 8th – 10th 2022 protests with great delight.

I thank you.