



**INTER-FAITH FUNERAL SERVICE FOR THE FALLEN
SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES AND POLICE
OFFICERS**

**FORECOURT OF COCKERILL MILITARY BARRACKS,
WILKINSON ROAD, FREETOWN**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6TH, 2023

1. **FELLOW MOURNERS**, we gather here today, under the weight of immense grief, to honour our brave Military and Police Officers who lost their lives defending our democracy against the forces of darkness during the failed attempted coup of November 26th 2023.

2. On that dark Sunday, cowardice struck at the heart of our nation, callousness tore at the fabric of our society, and a blatant disregard for the rule of law, human dignity, and sanctity of our Constitution was displayed.

- 3.** Today, we stand united in grief. We stand not just as mourners but as bearers of a sacred duty, a solemn responsibility, to honour our fallen comrades.
- 4.** These fallen heroes stood steadfast in the face of treachery. They paid the ultimate sacrifice by standing fearlessly against the forces of anarchy and tyranny that threatened to engulf The Land That We Love as it had done before.

- 5.** Each one of these gallant officers had pledged to defend our Constitution and nation. Their unwavering commitment to their duty, loyalty to our country, and steadfast courage in the face of danger will forever be etched in our hearts.
- 6.** They were not just our Military and Police Officers. They were guardians of our peace, defenders of our democracy, protectors of our freedom, and embodiments of our unwavering spirit.

7. Their courage, dedication, and selflessness will forever be written in the annals of our history.
8. Their attackers, in their cowardly and selfish acts, sought not only to subvert our democracy but to shatter the trust of our people, the trust in our Military and Police Officers, and the trust in our nation.
9. To harm those sworn to protect and serve our people is a betrayal of the highest order.

10. As a retired Brigadier General who has led men to battle, the pain of losing even one comrade in battle is indescribable.

11. As your Commander-In-Chief, I feel the weight, the burden and the sorrow of this tragedy. These Officers were my responsibility, my brothers in arms, my family in service.

12. The pain of losing these brave Officers is our collective pain as a nation. It is the pain of a mother losing her son, a sibling losing a brother, a child losing a father, a wife losing a husband and a friend losing a dear friend.

13. Our nation grieves, our hearts bleed, our memories cling to these heroes. **We will not forget; we cannot forget.** And I vow that their sacrifice will not be in vain.

14. Let me be clear: As your Commander-In-Chief, I make a solemn pledge to you today that the death of your comrades and your continued service and loyalty to Sierra Leone will not be in vain.

15. I assure you that everyone who has a hand in the cowardly act of November 26th that led to the death of these men will not escape the full weight of the law.

16. Our resolve stands unshakable and fierce. We will pursue justice for each of them with relentless determination, irrespective of the power or position of their cowardly assailants.

17. No matter how high these perpetrators may rank, no matter how low they may stoop, regardless of the shadows in which they lurk or the corners of the country or world they flee to, our pursuit of justice will be tireless and unyielding. This, I vow with every ounce of my being.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

18. As President of the Republic and Father of the Nation, my faith in the Sierra Leone Armed Forces and Police remains unbroken, unwavering, and unyielding.

19. In every institution, there may be those who falter, but our trust is in the many who stand firm and hold true to their oath to serve, protect and defend our country.

20. The enemies of our nation seek more than power. They aim to sow discord to undermine our democracy through violence and fear. But they will not succeed. They will not drag us back to the dark days of war.

21. To the bereaved families of our fallen heroes, I offer my deepest condolences. Your loss is our loss, your pain is our pain, and your quest for justice is our mission.

22. We vow to honour your loved ones posthumously not just in words, but through our actions, through our unwavering pursuit of justice within the framework of our laws and Constitution.

23. As we mourn their passing, let us also celebrate their lives. Let us remember their unwavering dedication, their unwavering selflessness and their unwavering love for their family and Sierra Leone.

24. They were the embodiment of all that is good and noble in our nation. Their memory will forever inspire us to uphold the values of democracy, the rule of law, and the unwavering pursuit of peace.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

25. As a Sierra Leonean, I am not just saddened; I am outraged and incensed by the pain inflicted upon us. Yet, we stand united, stronger together, committed to justice, democracy, and the rule of law.

26. This is not a time for petty politics or short-sightedness. This is about the lives of our people and the preservation of our democracy against those who wish us harm.

27. Let us honour the memory of our fallen heroes by being united in continuing to build a nation that is strong, prosperous, and peaceful.

28. In the words of **Ecclesiastes**, which we have just read: **“TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A TIME.”**

29. TODAY, WE MOURN. TODAY, WE STAND TOGETHER IN OUR GRIEF. BUT TODAY, TOO, WE DECLARE THAT THE TIME FOR SILENCE IS OVER. WE SPEAK NOW FOR DEMOCRACY, FOR OUR FALLEN DEFENDERS, FOR THE FAMILIES LEFT BEHIND, AND FOR OUR NATION'S FUTURE.

30. FELLOW MOURNERS, please let us all stand as a mark of great honour as we have a moment of silence for our 18 gallant fallen compatriots:

- 1) Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Samai
- 2) Major John Robert Mbomah
- 3) Staff Sergeant Kerifa Kellie Marah
- 4) Staff Sergeant Nabieu Marah
- 5) Staff Sergeant Thomas Rogers
- 6) Sergeant Alpha Conteh
- 7) Sergeant James Gbessay Mbayoh
- 8) Corporal Simeon Sannoh
- 9) Corporal Sam Kabba
- 10) Corporal Edward Conteh
- 11) Corporal Kai Mondeh
- 12) Corporal Alimamy Alfred Kamara
- 13) Lance Corporal Nabie Bangura
- 14) Lance Corporal Abubakar Koroma

15) Private Chernor Suleiman Bah

16) Corporal Claude Roberts

17) PC Sheik-Man Kamara

18) SLC Obed Johnson

(PAUSE FOR A MINUTE SILENCE)

31. As we honour these brave souls, let us remember their sacrifice. Greater love has no man than a serving military or police officer who lays down his life for his country defending democracy and peace.

32. These comrades have fought a good fight; they held steadfast to their sacred oath to defend our country and the Constitution, and they have finished their course.

33. May the brave souls of our gallant officers find eternal peace. May their sacrifice echo through the ages as a testament to their unyielding courage and our nation's relentless pursuit of justice and peace.

34. THANK YOU, AND MAY GOD BLESS AND PROTECT US ALL.