



NATIONAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

HIS EXCELLENCY, BRIG. (RTD.) DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO, GCRSL,
President of The Republic and Commander-In-Chief of the Republic of
Sierra Leone Armed Forces

**On the Occasion of the Christmas Festive Season – December
25th 2023**

Freetown, Sierra Leone

DEAR FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

1. As we come together with our families and friends during this festive season, I send my warmest greetings and heartfelt wishes for a joyous Christmas to every one of you.

2. Christmas is a special time for gathering and setting aside our differences to honour the values of love, compassion and kindness.

3. This season serves as a beautiful reminder of how unity, understanding, and our shared humanity are the true essence of our community.

4. In this season of gratitude and festivity, we have much to be thankful for. As individuals, let us be thankful to the Almighty God for being alive and well on this Christmas Day.
5. I must acknowledge that this year has brought its share of challenges, marked by rising living costs and economic uncertainties.
6. Globally, policymakers are steering through these turbulent times, a task even more daunting in developing countries like Sierra Leone.
7. We grapple with the urgent need for development amidst limited financial means while facing

increased vulnerability to the ebb and flow of the global economy.

8. The lingering aftermath of the global pandemic, the ongoing disruptions of energy and food markets caused by the Russia-Ukraine crisis and the impact of tighter monetary policy to fight global inflation complicates the tough challenges at our doorsteps.

9. As your President, I bear the weight of these challenges, understanding that the mantle of navigating our nation through these turbulent waters rests firmly upon my shoulders.

10. In response to these unprecedented times, our Government has been unwavering in its pursuit to mitigate the impact of these global upheavals.

11. Over the past twelve months, we have diligently implemented policies and introduced programmes to shield our households from the harshest effects of the global economic downturn.

12. Our significant investments in Human Capital Development represent a commitment to our collective future. By nurturing a skilled, educated, and resilient workforce, we are preparing our nation to stride confidently into an increasingly complex world.

13. To support the most impoverished households, we have initiated pro-poor and social safety net programmes, including monthly cash transfers through the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA). These initiatives offer a vital lifeline, sustaining our people through these challenging times.

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

14. As your President, elected by your will and trust, I stand before you with a firm commitment to fulfilling the sacred mandate you have entrusted to me. My resolve is ironclad — to defend our country, our Constitution, and our cherished democracy against all adversaries, whether domestic or foreign.

15. As we bask in the joys of this festive season, we keep in mind that our cherished democracy is a beacon we have lit from the dark ashes of our past, a past marred by war and strife.

16. Our democracy faced grave threats when undemocratic elements sought to subvert the rule of law, leading to tremendous damage and unacceptable loss of lives less than a month ago.

17. As we stand united in the light of our hard-won democracy, we honour the brave warriors of our Security Forces who fell in its defence.

- 18.** During this Christmas period, let us carry their families in the deepest chambers of our hearts. Their loss, a sacrifice for the nation, is a debt that extends beyond measure.
- 19.** I once again thank every Sierra Leonean who stood firm for our hard-earned peace and democracy by refusing to join the few rogue elements and enemies of our nation on that fateful day of November 26th.
- 20.** In our sacred duty as law-abiding citizens, we must stand united, ever-vigilant and steady in our commitment to the principles of unity, freedom and justice.

MY FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

- 21.** In the midst of our unique challenges and triumphs, let us take this opportunity to reflect on the values that bind us as a nation.

- 22.** May the joy of the season inspire us to foster a spirit of cooperation, tolerance, and respect for one another.

- 23.** This season of gratitude calls us to appreciate even the smallest mercies. Please permit me to share my testimony of gratitude with you all.

- 24.** I am grateful for the Lord's enduring love, mercy, and compassion throughout this year.

- 25.** I am filled with gratitude for all of our public servants, from our diligent street cleaners to our dedicated administrators, who deserve our utmost respect and thanks. I thank you all for oiling the engine of Government and society and keeping our country running smoothly.
- 26.** I am grateful to the brave men and women in our Armed Forces and Security Services, who risk everything to ensure our safety and security.
- 27.** My heartfelt appreciation extends to each individual and entity contributing to the growth of our economy, from the small businesses and local entrepreneurs to our valued international partners.

- 28.** Your investments are the lifeblood of our nation's economic progress, fueling the journey towards a prosperous future for Sierra Leone.
- 29.** To the spirited youth of Sierra Leone, my gratitude for you is immense. Your resilience in the face of economic and societal challenges is a beacon of inspiration, radiating energy, creativity, and ambition.
- 30.** We stand committed to addressing the significant hurdles you face, particularly the escalating Kush crisis.

- 31.** Our dedication is unwavering in crafting enduring solutions, with a vision that every Sierra Leonean lives a life marked by dignity and rich with promise.
- 32.** I honour our traditional and religious leaders, the pillars of our society, who provide invaluable guidance and spiritual support. Your wisdom and prayers are the bedrock of our nation's moral and ethical framework.
- 33.** On this Christmas day, I celebrate our dear women — from the bustling streets of Freetown to the serene villages of our provinces — you are the unsung heroines who keep our families and our nation together.

- 34.** We honour your ceaseless dedication and reaffirm our commitment to empowering you, ensuring that your voices are heard, your rights are upheld, and your contributions are recognised.
- 35.** As we recognise the invaluable contributions of our women, it is equally important to express our deep gratitude to you, the men of our society.
- 36.** Your steadfast commitment and hard work are cornerstones upon which our community thrives, and for this, we owe you our heartfelt thanks.

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

- 37.** On this Christmas Day, I urge us all to remember those who may be less fortunate. The true meaning of Christmas lies in our ability to extend a helping hand to those in need.
- 38.** Let us extend our famed Sierra Leonean warmth to all around us, regardless of their beliefs or backgrounds.
- 39.** Many of our men and women will be working tirelessly during the holidays, ensuring our safety and well-being.

- 40.** Our service members, protecting our streets, communities and borders and our essential workers, maintaining crucial services, deserve our deepest gratitude. Let us keep them and their families in our prayers as they make these noble sacrifices.
- 41.** On behalf of my Government, I wish all residents in our country and Sierra Leoneans living outside of Mama Salone a joyous Christmas filled with love, laughter, and moments of togetherness.
- 42.** Together, we have faced challenges and triumphs, and together, we will continue to build a brighter future for Sierra Leone.

43. May this season renew our commitment to each other and our beloved nation.

44. GOD BLESS YOU, AND MERRY CHRISTMAS!