



**NATIONAL ADDRESS BY HIS
EXCELLENCY DR JULIUS MAADA BIO,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE ON THE UPDATE ON
THE AGREEMENT FOR NATIONAL
UNITY, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE
– 14TH JUNE 2024**

MY FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

1. I bring you Eid greetings in advance and wish our Hajj pilgrims their successful final days in the Holy City of Makkah and a safe return home to their loved ones.

2. Today, I stand before you to address matters of utmost importance: continued national peace and cohesion. I am deeply grateful for your unwavering support and patience as we navigate these crucial times together.

3. Following the June 2023 Multi-tier elections, where I secured the popular vote for a second mandate, my Government, in collaboration with the main Opposition Party and other key stakeholders, embarked on a comprehensive review of our electoral process. This was a significant step towards institutionalising political dialogue and fostering inclusive governance.

4. We also demonstrated our commitment to deepening democracy with our unwavering support and work with all stakeholders through the Agreement for National Unity.

5. Since the signing of the Agreement for National Unity, my administration has ensured the establishment of the Tripartite Committee on Electoral Systems Review, operationalisation of the Inter-Party Dialogue, invited institutions for the formation of a team of Moral Guarantors and working on a framework to review legal cases. My administration will continue working on outstanding issues.

6. My administration continues to appeal to its International Partners, whose support is crucial and deeply valued, to continue accompanying the rollout of the Agreement for National Unity so that it delivers on prospects of facilitating systems and processes

supportive of a national climate for critical reforms, unity and national cohesion.

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS

7. Today, I stand before you not only as your President but as a fellow Sierra Leonean, deeply committed to the progress and prosperity of our beloved nation.

8. Our journey towards a united and cohesive Sierra Leone is not just a vision; it is a shared mission that includes everyone. Your role as citizens is integral to this mission, and your contributions are deeply valued.

9. Our history, rich with diverse cultures, traditions, and experiences, is a testament to our strength. However, we are also aware of the challenges we have faced and continue to face — challenges that have tested our unity and progress.

10. Elections everywhere are often critical moments of contention due to the obvious divides created by party affiliations, ideologies and opposing views. This is the beauty of democracy — the minority will have their say, but the majority will have their way.

11. Almost a year after the General Elections, my Government remains focused on the critical phase of nation-building as the time for politicking is firmly behind us.

12. Building Sierra Leone into a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous country requires our collective input.

13. I implore every citizen of our great nation not to be passive bystanders to nation-building but to engage in our national development efforts actively.

14. Your voice, ideas, and actions are not just important but vital to our progress. You are the backbone of our nation's development.

15. Your aspirations are at the heart of our Government's commitment, and we will continue to work tirelessly to fulfil them.

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

16. My Government has always prioritised inclusivity and participation for improved governance of our country.

17. I am pleased to inform you that the challenging task of developing a comprehensive Terms of Reference and other Operational Documents necessary for the functioning of the Tripartite Committee on Electoral Systems Review has been making steady progress on a weekly basis since January 8, 2024.

18. This consistent advancement clearly indicates our unwavering commitment to transparency and good governance, which we hold dear and will continue to uphold.

19. I am reliably informed that the bulk of the work has been undertaken. The Tripartite Committee is at the concluding stage of agreeing on the findings and recommendations following the substantive review. This will inform the drafting of a comprehensive Report for onward submission to my Office.

20. Once received, the Report will initiate actions for the other processes required to ensure effective roll-out and implementation of the Tripartite Committee's recommendations.

21. I recognise the challenges on the path to getting this far. However, I am encouraged by the efforts of the 14 well-meaning Members of the Tripartite Committee. I hope that the Committee will stay focused and maintain a commitment to completing the

Task by finalising the Report and submitting it by the due date of June 19, 2024.

22. We are well aware that while the Tripartite Committee is committed to reviewing and evolving workable solutions to strengthen electoral democracy, some ill-formed people, who are individuals with malicious intent and a disregard for our nation's peace and progress, are bent on exploiting the Committee's platform to foment trouble in the country. We would like to sound a note of warning to all involved to cease or be met with the full weight of the law.

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

23. As we eagerly await the Tripartite Committee's Report, which will help build the framework for efforts to enhance institutional reform of our Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and subject our electoral laws to the much-needed review and amendments, I urge us all to embrace unity and shun divisive rhetoric.

24. We must strive to put Sierra Leone first above partisan politics. Peace is the cornerstone of progress, and a nation divided cannot prosper.

25. It is imperative that we adopt the principle of "politics without bitterness," which entails engaging in political discussions and activities with respect, empathy, and a focus on the collective welfare rather than personal or party interests.

26. I call on every Sierra Leonean to commit to fostering peace in their daily lives. Let us resolve conflicts through constructive dialogue and understanding.

27. Let us teach our children the values of tolerance and respect so that they may grow up in a society free from hatred and division and love for our nation.

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

28. Reviewing our electoral systems is critical to strengthening our democracy. In that spirit, during my last address to the Parliament, I proposed the establishment of a National Elections System Review Committee as a first step to improving the electioneering process in Sierra Leone.

29. I thank our Diplomatic and Development Partners, who have wholeheartedly supported this pathway to peace and progress in our country.

30. I also thank the leadership of the APC and the SLPP for their continued support and commitment to peace in Sierra Leone.

31. Most importantly, I thank every Sierra Leonean citizen for your continued patience and unwavering hope in our continued efforts to build a stable democratic society.

32. In our collective journey towards national unity and cohesion, I call upon every citizen to embrace the values of tolerance, respect, and solidarity.

33. Let us work together to build a nation where every individual feels valued and included.

34. I re-echo my call for us all to resolutely unite, set aside our differences, and work towards a brighter future for Mama Salone.

35. We must remember that we are all stakeholders in Sierra Leone's progress and prosperity. Together, we can build a nation that is strong, peaceful, and prosperous.

36. As I stated during my address to the Sixth Parliament of the 2nd Republic in August last year, proactive engagement and

compromise are indispensable hallmarks of good governance and fostering national unity.

37. To that end, I urge the main opposition, the APC, to demonstrate leadership and, in clear conscience, speak out frankly to their supporters that we must embrace each other and ensure peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

38. My SLPP Government remains resolute in its commitment to promoting peace and stability in our nation. I reiterate my call to our supporters to embrace peace, unity and progress in Sierra Leone.

39. My Government is working tirelessly to address our citizens' concerns and aspirations. We will focus on fostering economic growth, improving education, healthcare, agriculture productivity, and infrastructure, and ensuring that all Sierra Leoneans feel the benefits of our national development efforts.

40. It is our collective responsibility to safeguard our democratic values and further strengthen national cohesion. We must eschew bitterness, political bickering, hate speech, and disunity.

41. We must work together, harnessing our energies, ideas, and collective will toward a national agenda that delivers Food Security, provides jobs for our youth, empowers our women, develops our infrastructure and propels our country into a Middle-Income Economy.

42. Together, our vision of an inclusive, peaceful and thriving Sierra Leone is possible. It is a vision we all deserve.

43. LONG LIVE THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.