



PRESIDENTIAL NATIONAL ADDRESS

BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

AND CHAIRMAN, ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS

OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

SIXTY-FIFTH INDEPENDENCE DAY ANNIVERSARY

OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

MONDAY, 27TH APRIL 2026

MY FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

- 1.** Sixty-five years ago, the Green, White and Blue flag rose over Freetown for the first time.
- 2.** It rose because courageous men and women believed that this land should belong to its own people.
- 3.** They believed Sierra Leone could govern itself, shape its destiny, and stand with dignity among the nations of the world.
- 4.** Some paid everything for that belief.

5. We honour them today by proving equal to the task they placed in our hands.
6. Sixty-five years on, we know this truth: in 1961, we were not handed a finished nation.
7. We were placed at the starting blocks of nation-building.
8. And the work of shaping a more mature nation remains ours to do.
9. A mature nation does not hide from difficulty. It does not confuse ceremony with progress.

10. So today, we mark this anniversary not with sentiment alone, but with measurable and undeniable evidence.

11. In that spirit, I would like to speak clearly about the pressures our people are carrying, about the country we are building, and about the democratic duty we all share in securing Sierra Leone's future.

A. OUR REALITIES IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

12. The world around us remains unstable.

13. Global conflicts, disrupted supply chains, and rising fuel prices continue to increase the cost of food, transport, fertiliser, and other essentials.

14. Sierra Leone feels these shocks sharply because we still import too much of what we consume.

- 15.** When the world becomes more expensive, life here becomes more difficult.
- 16.** Families feel it in the market. Drivers feel it at the petrol station. Traders feel it in the cost of moving goods.
- 17.** Households feel it in their rent and electricity bills. And they feel it in the daily strain of stretching limited incomes across ever-rising needs.
- 18.** I will not pretend otherwise. These pressures are real and felt in every district, town, and home across our country.

- 19.** For many families, even the most basic purchases now require careful calculation.
- 20.** There is also the reality of unreliable electricity that affects households and businesses alike.
- 21.** A serious Government must be honest about this. But honesty is not enough. A serious Government must also act.

B. STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

22. Since 2018, my Government has worked to strengthen the foundations of our economy.

23. We are stabilising the Leone, improving fiscal discipline, strengthening domestic revenue mobilisation, narrowing the deficit, and managing inflation with greater seriousness and consistency.

24. Our programme with the **International Monetary Fund** remains on track, and our partnerships with the **World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Union**, and others continue to support stability and social protection.

25. We have also taken immediate steps to cushion citizens from the worst of the current shocks.

- 26.** This includes temporary support on fuel, the building of strategic reserves of essential commodities, and expanded support for vulnerable households.
- 27.** That support has reached citizens through cash transfer and cash-for-work programmes in communities where the pressure is greatest.
- 28.** We remain dedicated to shielding our citizens more effectively from the external shocks that are beyond our control.

29. These measures matter, and they provide relief. But relief is not the same as transformation.

30. The deeper response is to build an economy that produces more of what it consumes, powers itself more reliably, creates jobs at scale, and trades from a position of strength.

31. The lasting response is production. That is the Sierra Leone we are building.

32. And that is why, for my Government, **2026 is a YEAR OF ACTION and accelerated execution.**

C. FEEDING OURSELVES

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

33. Over the past twelve months, **we have advanced our Feed Salone flagship programme with urgency and direction.**

34. Agriculture is steadily becoming an engine of growth.

35. Farmers are gaining greater access to improved seeds, financing, and markets.

36. Investment in agribusiness is expanding. Our rice import bill is easing. Exports such as cocoa are strengthening our reserves.

37. This progress is the result of deliberate action to **shift Sierra Leone from consumption to production.**

38. This year, we will complete critical bridges and feeder roads that connect farmers to markets.

39. We will advance the rice clusters in Tormabum and Gbondapi as well as establish the Agricultural Development Bank to unlock financing for farmers and agribusinesses at scale.

40. Our objective is clear: Sierra Leonean farmers will be able to use our fertile land to feed Sierra Leonean families at prices our people can afford.

41. Because **food security is national security**. A nation that cannot feed itself cannot truly call itself free.

D. INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

42. Our greatest resource is our people.

43. Through the **Free Quality Education programme**, more children are in school today than at any point in our national history.

44. We have backed that expansion with improved teacher training and a renewed focus on girls' education.

45. Because access without quality is not enough, and no country can move forward while leaving half its talent behind.

46. In health, we have expanded primary healthcare facilities, trained and deployed more health workers, and strengthened our capacity for epidemic preparedness.

47. Government hospitals are now equipped with **CT scan facilities. Modern ultrasound services** are enhancing maternal care, and the new **Burns and Reconstructive Unit at Connaught Hospital** is restoring hope and healing.

48. For my Government, **access to healthcare will always be a right.**

E. POWERING OUR FUTURE

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

49. No issue captures the strain on our people more clearly than energy access.

50. Global instability, including the conflict in the Middle East, has driven up petroleum prices, increasing the cost of keeping the lights on for households and businesses.

51. For too many Sierra Leoneans, unreliable electricity impedes day-to-day life.

52. A student without light loses hours of study. A clinic that relies on a generator operates under constant pressure. A small business weighed down by diesel costs cannot grow as it should.

53. A country that cannot guarantee power cannot industrialise as it must do.

54. That is why energy remains central to our national transformation.

55. As recently as 2018, reliable electricity was largely limited to Freetown, Makeni, and Port Loko.

56. Today, we are on a determined path toward universal energy access.

57. We are making the largest investment in energy in our nation's history.

58. The 2.2 billion US dollars Mission 300 Energy

Compact will significantly expand electricity access, increase generation capacity, and connect hundreds of thousands of households across the country.

59. We are strengthening and extending our national grid, improving regional power supply, and accelerating renewable energy solutions to reach underserved communities.

60. Our goal is to reduce our dependence on volatile global fuel markets and build an energy system that serves households, schools, clinics, farms, and industry with greater reliability.

61. Every new connection changes what is possible.

62. It lengthens the working day. It strengthens healthcare. It improves learning. It gives enterprises room to grow.

63. Indeed, **energy security is economic security.**

F. YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

64. Let me now speak directly to the amazing
young people of Sierra Leone.

65. You remain the cornerstone of our society.

66. I am aware of how the realities of our time
affect you.

67. The frustration of finishing school and not
finding work quickly enough is real.

- 68.** The frustration of carrying ambition in an economy that has not yet created enough room for it is real.
- 69.** The temptation to believe that your future lies somewhere else is real.
- 70.** You deserve honesty from your Government.
You also deserve effort from your Government.
- 71.** Everything we are building in agriculture, education, energy, enterprise, and skills will open wider pathways for you.

72. The purpose of our policies is to improve the life opportunities of citizens.

73. As Government does its duty, I ask of you discipline, courage, and belief in your own abilities.

74. I ask you to reject drugs, substance abuse, and crime, because Sierra Leone needs your strength whole, your judgement clear, and your talent fully alive.

75. I also ask you to hold us accountable.

Demand seriousness. Demand results.

Demand a country that makes better use of your gifts.

76. Sierra Leone needs your energy, your ideas,

and your determination to demand more from this country.

77. We are building with you — not for you, and

not without you.

G. OUR POLITICS — A MOMENT OF TRUTH

MY FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

78. At sixty-five, a nation must also speak plainly about its democracy.

79. Democracy requires a strong and active opposition. That is not in question.

80. A healthy Republic depends on contest, scrutiny, disagreement, and debate.

81. But it also depends on presence, participation, and duty.

- 82.** When a person is elected to Parliament, they hold that seat in trust for the citizens who stood in the heat or the rain to put them there.
- 83.** When Mayors or Councillors accept office, they carry a continuing obligation to the community that chose them.
- 84.** That duty and trust do not pause or disappear in moments of political disagreement.
- 85.** The people must continue to be served.

86. This Government has acted within the law in all matters concerning our electoral institutions.

87. We have done so carefully, constitutionally, and with full confidence in the integrity and capacity of those entrusted with helping to steward the democratic process.

88. The further entrenchment of free, fair, and credible elections is a national objective, not a partisan one.

89. It is an objective my Government remains committed to.

90. We remain equally committed to the **Agreement for National Unity** and to advancing electoral reforms through the **Tripartite Steering Committee.**

91. As we move toward the **2028 General Elections**, we must do so with seriousness, restraint, and good faith.

92. For my Government, the door to constructive dialogue is always open.

93. But even as we engage in dialogue, the work of governance must continue.

94. I am encouraged by the return of elected officials to their duties, and I welcome that step, in the interest of the nation.

95. Thank you for affirming an important democratic principle: **political disagreement must never suspend public service.**

96. The citizens who elect us are the reason our institutions exist.

97. They must remain at the centre of our conduct, our decisions, and even our disagreements.

98. Let us therefore continue to engage through lawful institutions, with seriousness, restraint, and respect.

99. That is how confidence is built. That is how the Republic is strengthened.

H. ONE NATION — OUR MOMENT

MY FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

100. Our ethnic, regional, and religious diversity is not a weakness.

101. It is **one of the enduring strengths of this country.**

102. Our people are also more connected today through roads, bridges, and infrastructure.

103. This binds communities more closely together.

104. In an increasingly divided world, Sierra Leone continues to show that Muslim and Christian, Northerner and Southerner, Temne and Mende, Krio and Fullah, can live not merely side by side, but as neighbours, as family, and as one people.

105. That unity is a choice we make every day —
in how we speak, how we lead, how we treat one another, even in how we disagree.

106. And it is a choice worth protecting with everything we have.

107. I stand before you as President for every single Sierra Leonean at home and abroad.

108. And I believe our democracy will be strongest when political competition is real, institutions are respected, and our common nation remains larger than any Party or any moment of disagreement.

I. THOSE WHO SERVE IN SILENCE

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

109. As we mark this sixty-fifth anniversary, I
**acknowledge those whose service sustains
our Republic every day.**

110. The **men and women of our Armed Forces,
Police, and Security Services.**

111. Your professionalism and quiet dedication
safeguard our peace and make our progress
possible.

112. Our Paramount Chiefs, Traditional Rulers, Community Elders, and Local Council Leaders. Our Imams, Pastors, and all people of faith who steady the moral life of this nation.

113. Our teachers and health workers, our civil servants, and those who keep our institutions running with discipline and integrity.

114. Our **essential workers** — sanitation workers, energy and water service providers, transport operators, Kekeh and Okada Riders, and our market women — who keep this nation moving every single day.

115. Our **farmers and fisherfolk**, whose labour feeds this nation and sustains our future.

116. **Sierra Leone is stronger because of your service.**

117. We are one nation under God, not as a formality, but as a truth. So, we must continue to live together peacefully.

J. CONCLUDING REMARKS

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

118. Our motto — **UNITY, FREEDOM, JUSTICE** — is a standard of accountability.

119. **UNITY** calls us beyond tribe, region, party and religion to a shared national identity.

120. **FREEDOM** demands that the dignity and rights of every citizen are upheld.

121. **JUSTICE** requires institutions that are fair, credible, and accountable to all.

- 122.** These are the standards by which we should be judged. And by which we will judge ourselves.
- 123.** They are the measure of our national seriousness. They are the obligations of Government.
- 124. Sixty-five years from now, Sierra Leoneans will ask: What did this generation do with the country they inherited?**

125. Let the answer be this: that we faced difficulty with maturity; that we strengthened the foundations of the nation; that we fed more of our people from our own soil; that we widened opportunity; that we protected democracy; that we chose to hold Sierra Leone together and move it forward.

**126. So today, I ask every Sierra Leonean:
CHOOSE SIERRA LEONE.**

127. Choose it in your work. Choose it in your conduct. Choose it in the way you speak to one another.

128. Choose Sierra Leone in the way you raise your children to understand this country and their duty to it.

129. Let us build with purpose. Let us govern with integrity.

130. Let us speak with honesty. Let us differ with dignity. And let us hold each other up.

131. May God bless you.

**132. May God bless the Republic of Sierra Leone,
the Land That We Love.**

133. Happy Independence Day.