



ANNUAL REPORT 2008 - 09

Prison Watch Sierra Leone.



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Prison Watch Sierra Leone – Annual Report 2006.

FORWARD.

My dear fellow activist, concerned citizens of the world, defenders and detainees; another year to defend, protect and maximize the welfare of persons behind bars has come to an end. As we say bye-bye to this year with tears still in our eyes, may I on behalf of the Board, Staff and volunteers of Prison Watch Sierra Leone to extend my thanks and appreciation to all those who lend us a helping hand throughout the arduous struggles to liberate mankind from the misery of incarcerations and subsequent nightmare confronting hundreds of detainees in Sierra Leone's detention centers. This report is published with the aim of documenting the activities of Prison Watch Sierra Leone (PW-SL) during the years of 2006/2007. In this, great emphasis is placed on the way detainees are treated. In particular, the UN minimum standard for detention is examined in line with reality on the ground. The year 2006 had been a sad moment for detainees and their defenders in Sierra Leone. The local detention codes- the laws governing detainees in the state are still draconian and outdated. Towards this end we continued to advocate for a review of these codes throughout 2006.

In all these, our greatest stumbling block had been the non-cooperation of prison authorities. Top of the list and the frustrating aspect is the lack of political will. The government continues to pay lip service in public on government commitment to Justice System especially in bringing out reforms in our prison system. But the said reality is they are yet to match their words with action.

But amidst all this, we continue to advocate with renewed spirit and inspiration for reforms in our penal system.

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. Where we are
2. Who we are
3. Mission Statement
4. Our Vision
5. Our Mandate
6. Our Work
7. Detention monitoring
8. MOMO Programme
- 9. HUS Programme**
10. Education and Training Programme
11. Outreach Programme
12. Partnership
13. Funding
14. Project Funders
15. Project in 2006
16. Nationwide detention monitoring
17. Reviewing Sierra Leone prison Ordinance
18. Local court monitoring
19. Year in focus.
20. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

WHERE WE ARE



Prison Watch Sierra Leone – Annual Report 2006.

Currently, the head office of Prison watch Sierra Leone is located at:

No.37 Mend Street

Freetown

Sierra Leone

West Africa

WHO WE ARE



Prison Watch Sierra Leone's secretariat.

Prison Watch Sierra Leone is an indigenous Human rights NGO formed in 1996. It is non-profitable and non-political organization. It was formed to serve as a focal point relating to all issues of detainees/prisoners and detention in the country.

It was formed to monitor human rights violation and abuses in detention centers throughout the country. It is managed by a small team of staff inspired by their human right conviction, who have worked together for the protection of the right of people in detention.

Since its inception, PW-SL has monitored and reported on prisons and detention condition and provided training for detention officers and civil societies members on human rights.

The driving force behind our work is to ensure that people deprived of the liberty are held in safe custody and under humane condition.

Through monitoring PW-SL contribute to the maintenance and protection of a just, safe and humane society.



Prison Watch Sierra Leone – Annual Report 2006.

In the Sierra Leone situation generally, public perception about prisoners and detainees is a belief that one should not talk about prisoners. The public perceive prison/detention centers as a place where people should be sent to rot. Penal Institutions is a trend that we have observed does not meet international standard. People who attempt to advocate on their behalf do not receive public sympathy and support.

PW-SL however believes that people should be sent to prison as punishment and not for punishment. We view the deprivation or the restriction of individual either as a result of law or court order as punishment in itself.

MISSION STATEMENT.

PWSL is committed to defending the fundamental human rights of persons held in detention and to advocate for penal reforms. We recognize the fact that people held in detention have rights too.

OUR VISION.

It is our hope that people who go to prison or who are detained do not work out more dangerous than they entered but rather reformed.

MANDATE.

1. To provide a focal point relating to all issues of prisoners /detainees in Sierra Leone.
2. To monitor and report human rights violation/abuse in detention centers.
3. To provide a link between detainees and their relatives.
4. Advocate against ARBITRARY ARREST AND Unlawful detention.
5. Provide legal and physiological aid to victims of abuse
6. Advocate against the death penalty

OUR WORK

The work of PW-SL is aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of prisoners and detainees and to create a just humane and effective penal system in Sierra Leone. We do this through the following programme and activities.

Detention Monitoring Programme

PWSL believes that compliance to standards is developed and sustained through monitoring. Through this programme we undertake the following:

- i. Visit to prisons/detention centers.
- ii. Document and report human rights violations and abuses.
- iii. Link detainees with their relatives.

Moving Out and Moving On (MOMO) Program

The aim of this program is to help reintegrate prisoners and detainees into society.

We do this through the following:

- i. Social rehabilitation.*
- ii. Youth skills trainings for prisoners.*
- iii. Psychological counselling to detainees.*
- iv. Training and education programme.*

Focus Group Discussions

Workshops/Seminars

Conferences

Humanitarian Support Programme (HUSP)

Collection and distribution of used clothing, shoes and other items to prisoners.

Outreach Programme

- Research and newsletter publication on prison condition.
- Radio discussion.
- Awareness raising on the rights and responsibilities of detainees.
- Video screening.
- Vigils for dead prisoners.

Partnership Programmes

- Coalition Building.
- Networking.
- Collaboration.

FUNDING.

For the continuation and sustainability of our work, the organization operates on funds raised from:

- i. Membership subscription (Strategic Management Team)
- ii. Donation from well wishers and former prisoners.
- iii. Project Proposals.
- iv. Volunteer Generosity.



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PARTNERSHIP AND PROJECT FUNDERS.

To ensure that the right of prisoners are protected and that the work of PW-SL is sustained the organization relies on a national and global partnership and continued in-kind support from private and public sector. The following were the main funders for the following projects

NO	PROJECT	DONOR	YEAR
1.	Nationwide detention monitoring	Democracy and Human Right Fund (DHRF) – United States Embassy in Sierra Leone.	2006
2	Reviewing Sierra Leone prison ordinance of 1961	Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP)	2006
3.	Training of local court Administrators	Outreach Section of the special court	2006

PROJECT IN 2006

Detention Monitoring Project.

Monitoring prisons, police cells and other places of detention remains to be the main trust and traditional activity of PW-SL. We monitor to ensure compliance to standards and best practice.

The aim of this project is to ensure that people held in detention are treated humanely and that their dignities as human beings are recognized, respected and protected.

Strategies.

- ✚ Human right training in monitoring documentation and reporting violations and abuses for detention monitors.
- ✚ Monthly visit to all prisons and fortnight visit to police cells.

Achievements

- ✚ A two day training workshop organized in all district (11) and the western area for detention monitor.
- ✚ Monitoring of prison and police cells undertaken and report produced and distributed.
- ✚ Linking prisoners with their relatives who had been imprisoned without knowledge of their parents/relatives. This lead to facilitating the release of three prisoners imprisoned with less serious crimes with fine option.

Story of a Juvenile Released by Prison Watch Sierra Leone from Makeni Prisons.

A Juvenile Augustine recounted his story after securing his release from the Makeni Prisons. This is his Story.

I am a fourteen (14) year old class six (6) pupil. I was arrested in August 2006 in Makeni at my sister's residence. I was arrested by six Police Officer with eighteen others and charged with loitering. I was taken to a police station at fire corner. Statement was obtained from me and I was locked up with twenty-two others who were all adults.

The next day of my arrest, I was bailed ten thousand leones (Le 10,000) by my sister and was released. I was then rearrested the next day and charged to court. I pleaded guilty and I was fined Le, 50,000 or given an alternative sentence of two month.

My sister could not raise that amount of money. I spent twenty one days in prison where I was finally released by Prison Watch staff, who paid my fine and enrolled me at the St. Edwards primary school where I am currently attending. My father and mother are in Liberia.

REVIEW SIERRA LEONE PRISON ORDINANCE PROJECT.

Background

Our prison monitoring reports (December 2004/2005), highlights series concerns reflecting the status of prison ordinance. In earl report on a two day conference on reviewing of the Sierra Leone prisons ordinance (24-25 Feb 2005), organized by the Outreach Section of the Special Court in collaboration with Prison Watch Sierra Leone, it was reinforced that the Sierra Leone prison ordinance of 1961 is highly defective in the following ways:



Prison Watch Sierra Leone – Annual Report 2006.

- It is outdated and some of its provisions date back to colonial time.
- Seriously infringes and limits the right of detainees and staff.

In view of the above a two day conference was organized with the following objectives:

1. To draft a new code for the consideration of law reforms.
2. To Educate Prison Officers, Human Rights activists and student on the Sierra Leone prison ordinance of 1961 and the UN standard minimum rules.

Strategies

- i. Nationwide consultative trip.
- ii. Conference.
- iii. Conference held .
- iv. Draft recommendation forwarded to law reform commission.

TRAINING OF LOCAL COURT ADMINISTRATORS PROJECT

Background

One of the most troubling aspect of justice in Sierra Leone is a trend of miscarriage of justice by the inferior court of judicature.

The problem of miscarriage of justice and other injustices meted out by these inferior courts have been compounded further by the ignorance of the people (court chairman) on the procedures to adopt in instituting a suit, commencing litigation and appeal process. This coupled with lack of adequate information on the operations of the special court is also evident in rural communities especially where the road network is poor. This report primarily targets the training of local court administrator in the eleven chiefdom in the Port Loko district and to disseminate information about the special court through video screening and town hall meetings.

Strategies

- Town hall meetings and community sensitization on local court practices and procedures.
- Training of local court administrators and monitors.
- Video screening special court trial.

YEAR IN FOCUS 2007

Monitoring of detention centers remains to be the core activity of Prison Watch. An activity which is under taken every year.

The organization is currently reviewing the need for recruitment of more staff and office spaces in the provinces.

We continue to push for the adoption of alternative custodian sentenced especially for first offenders and person at the lower spectrum of the crime scale.

We continue to lobby government and human right organization for panel reform initiative through sustained advocacy drive.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The organization has participated in series of national workshops and seminars on human rights, detention and monitoring.

Mr. Umar Paran Tarawally programme Coordinator holds a Higher Teachers Certificate (HTC), Bachelor of Art (BA Degree) and Bachelor of law (student)

Mr. Mambu Feika the Programme Research Officer holds a Higher Teacher Certificate, Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree.

Mr. Yusuf K Sandy the Administrative Secretary is in is final year reading for a Bachelor of Arts degree in linguistic.



Prison Watch Sierra Leone – Annual Report 2006.

Mr. John Lansana Coker the Finance Officer holds a diploma in business studies and Bachelor of Science (BSC) Degree with honors in financial services.

Mr. Daniel Beresford Sao-Lamina Assistant Administrative Secretary is in his final year reading for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) Degree in political science and history.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

James Bangura the chief detention is currently pursuing a Bachelor Degree in Economics.

Ann-Marie Prudence Bangura the campaigner female detention Holds a Teacher's Certificate and currently pursuing a Higher Teachers Certificate.

Kumba Lebbie is currently pursuing a Degree in Economics.

Full project completion report on the above project will be available on demand.

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