

Office of Adama Team Foundation-US-UK-SL

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June 24, 2025



POSITION PAPER AGAINST SIERRA LEONE SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER, MELROSE KARMINTY, MISLEADING THE GOVERNMENT TO UNFAIRLY VIOLATE THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2011.

As a concerned citizen, a psychologist, Disability and Human Rights Advocate, and disability financeer, I am compelled by the mess up of Sierra Leone's legal instruments that are slated to protect our vulnerable population living with disabilities. This letter is not only about the current embattled chairman of the National Commission for Persons with disabilities (NCPD), Dr. Vandy Konneh, but also the issues of violation of a major provision in the 2011 Disability Act that was enacted by the Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone and assented by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. If such a provision can be violated, what will be the situation of the rest of the 2011 persons with Disabilities Act? Yes, the President has the right to choose members who represent him and he can hire and fire at his own will, but such a right is within a stipulated authority of our Republic and in this context is the Persons with Disabilities Act 2011 sections 3 and 4.

This is to formally condemn the violation of the Sierra Leone Persons with Disabilities Act 2011. The 2011 Disability Act clearly outlines that the appointment of the chairman of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) is recommended by the Minister upon vacancy, but there is currently no vacancy in the NCPD for the chairman position. The minister of social welfare had recommended the appointment of a chairman, not following the provisions in the 2011 Disability Act. This situation is a constitutional abuse because the minister has misled the president about the position of the NCPD Chairman being vacant when there is a substantive Chairman appointed by the President on the 16th May 2024 and approved by the parliament in June 2024. The grave violations that have occurred against the substantive commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Dr. Vandy Konneh, are a gross violation of the 2011 Disability Act Sections 4 and 5. As a disability alliance/advocacy group, this incident is a serious concern, and immediate action is demanded to rectify the situation and prevent future violations.

Description of the Violation:

On June 5th, 2025, social media was inundated with a letter circulated by the Minister of Social Welfare, Mrs. Melrose Karminty, purporting the replacement of the substantive Chairman of the NCPD, Dr. Vandy Konneh.

The Sierra Leone 2011 Disability Act, approved by parliament, includes:

Section 3: Composition of Commission

The Chairman is appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Minister and subject to parliamentary approval.

Section 4: Tenure of office of members of the Commission

The Chairman and other members (excluding representatives from specific ministries and the Executive Secretary) hold office for a three-year term and are eligible for reappointment for another term only.

*** A person ceases to be a member if: their term expires, they resign, they fail to attend three consecutive meetings without cause, they die or become incapacitated, they become bankrupt/insolvent, or they are convicted of fraud/dishonesty.**

Section 5: Filling of vacancies

If the Chairman ceases to be a member under the circumstances specified in section 4(2), the members of the Commission elect one of their own to act as Chairman until a replacement is made.

In other cases, the Chairman arranges for a replacement to be made.

Based on these provisions, the Act specifies the process for appointing the Chairman, the term limits, and the conditions under which a member, including the Chairman, would cease to hold office.

Now, if the recent appointment doesn't align with these sections (for example, if the appointment wasn't made according to the process in Section 3 or if the removal didn't fall under the conditions in Section 4(2)), then it's not fair or is invalid.

The current movement that is being floated on social media about the replacement of the current chairman/commissioner of the NCPD violates the terms and conditions of the Persons with Disability Act 2011. This incident is a violation of the 2011 Persons with Disability Act, which prohibits the removal of a chairman/commissioner of the NCPD who did not fall under the conditions in Section 4(2).

To solve this violation,

On behalf of the National Alliance for Persons with Disabilities, and in support of the rights of individuals with disabilities, the following actions are demanded immediately:

- That the current Chairman/Commissioner of the NCPD be allowed to finish his three-year appointment as stated in the 2011 Act.
 - Prompt investigation into the actions leading to the want of replacement of the current chairman that did not fall within the bracket of the Persons with Disability Act 2011.
 - Modification of policies and procedures to ensure future compliance with the relevant sections of the Persons with Disability Act 2011.
 - Immediate retraction of the unlawful appointment letter making the rounds on social media about a replacement of the current

chairman/commissioner that did not fall within the brackets of the Country's legal instrument on disability.

Parliamentarians of the Republic of Sierra Leone also have sacred responsibilities to uphold the creatures of Parliament under oath, so I call upon all Parliamentarians and their respective political parties to do the right thing and uphold tenets of the rule their law and Human Rights.

I have attached the link to the Sierra Leone Laws for reference-<https://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2011-03.pdf>

Thank you for your attention to this matter!

Vr
Adama Bangura-United States of America



Doctor of Psychology

Disability Advocate/Human Rights Advocate

Member of State Commissions for People with Disabilities

State Vocational Rehabilitation Activists

Copy:
State House-Sierra Leone
The United Nations Disability Rapporteur
Honorary Consul of Canada
UN Resident Coordinator
The Executive Director, International Disability Alliance
Liberia Embassy
UN-HQ-New York
The United Nations Executive Representative to Sierra Leone
High Commission of the Federal Republic Nigeria, Freetown

British High Commission to Sierra Leone	
The US Ambassador to Sierra Leone	
Office of the Attorney General-SL	
Embassy of the United States- Sierra Leone	
The Civil Society Organizations	
Office of the Vice President-SL	The Press
Honorable Abdul Kargbo-APC Parliament Minority Leader	
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