

August Edition

Volume 2

Issue 5

THE UNIFIER MAGAZINE

PEOPLE • ISSUES • IDEAS

De-Polarizing Sierra Leone

Dr. Richard Konteh's Pathway to National Harmony,
Opportunity and Transformation

*"Bringing harmony, opportunity and transformation to a polarized nation
begins with the courage to listen and the humility to understand."*

— Dr. Richard Konteh

OPEN LETTERS TO THE PRESIDENT

Our Common Enemy

A Deeper Look at Poverty in Sierra Leone

STRENGTHENING WEST AFRICA'S DEFENSE LINE

A Closer Look at Security, Immigration & Drug Enforcement in Sierra Leone and
Liberia

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THE HOPE AND UNITY TOUR

Dr. Richard Konteh's Tour Inspires a National Movement



Dr. Richard Konteh met with community members during his Nationwide "Hope and Unity" Campaign Tour in Kabala, Koinadugu District.

Beginning in April 2025, Dr. Richard Konteh embarked on a "Hope and Unity" National Tour, traversing Sierra Leone from north to south, east to west, to connect directly with ordinary Sierra Leoneans in their communities across the nation. Each stop reinforced a message that resonates beyond politics — that sustainable transformation is only possible when grounded in heartfelt unity.

- **Binkolo, Kamabai & Fadugu:** The Hope and Unity tour's launch drew thousands who embraced Dr. Konteh's call for collective action, young and old rallying behind a vision of a Sierra Leone where hope is shared and progress is inclusive.
- **Koidu, Kono District:** In a region known for its economic potential, Dr. Konteh urged locals to reclaim their place in national progress, promising leadership that prioritizes rural development and accountability.
- **Magburaka, Kenema, Kailahun:** Each leg garnered widespread support, underscoring a growing desire for governance that listens, empowers, and elevates every region.

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In **Bo City** and **Makeni City**, two pivotal cultural hubs, Dr. Konteh called for unity across tribal and regional lines, bringing renewed hope to communities feeling overlooked. His message blended national aspiration with local solidarity, anchored on job creation, infrastructure improvement, and social inclusion.



Dr. Richard Konteh met with community members during his Nationwide "Hope and Unity" Campaign Tour in Koidu, Kono District.



Dr. Richard Konteh met with community members during his Nationwide "Hope and Unity" Campaign Tour in Magburaka, Tonkolili District.

Hope and Unity Beyond Borders — Diaspora Engagement

In June/July 2025, Dr. Konteh carried this same vision abroad to engage Sierra Leoneans in the Diaspora. In Glasgow, Scotland, Dr. Konteh met with the Minister of Finance and hosted a roundtable with the Sierra Leonean diaspora community. The discussion emphasized Sierra Leone's historical journey from colonial rule to independence and the shared responsibility of building a better, inclusive future. He spoke passionately about economic reform, youth empowerment, and strengthening institutional accountability.



Dr. Richard Konteh met with the Scottish Finance Minister and Sierra Leonean Diaspora in Glasgow during his Nationwide "Hope and Unity" Campaign Tour.

"The journey ahead for Sierra Leone is not only for those within our borders. Our people abroad are part of the change we seek," Dr. Konteh reminded attendees.

In the United States, Dr. Konteh embarked on a dynamic engagement tour, visiting Sierra Leonean communities in Virginia, Philadelphia, Delaware, and New York. These town hall meetings were platforms for open dialogue, centred on constitutional reform, electoral justice, and civic participation.



Dr. Richard Konteh met with Unifiers and Sierra Leonean communities in Philadelphia and New York during his Nationwide "Hope and Unity" Campaign Tour.

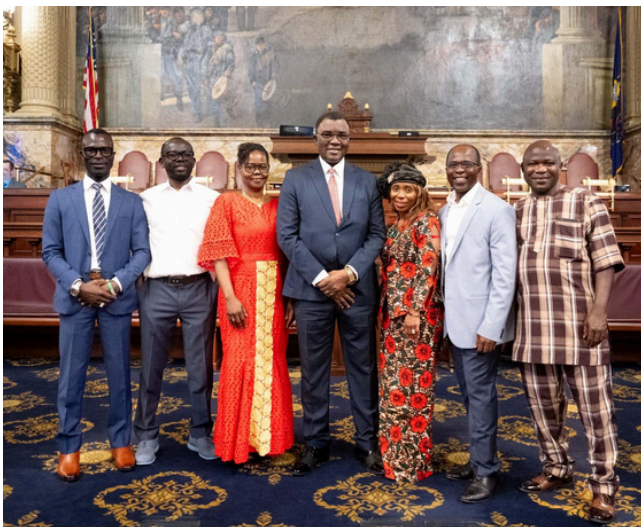
But it was his visit to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, that underscored his growing stature as a statesman.

Dr. Richard Konteh Engages U.S. Lawmakers in Harrisburg, PA

On Tuesday, June 23, 2025, Dr. Konteh was hosted at the Pennsylvania State Legislative House for an official session with state lawmakers. The discussions explored shared democratic values, policy collaboration, and pathways for deeper diplomatic ties between Sierra Leone and U.S. state institutions.

"International diplomacy must begin at every level—from community leaders to lawmakers," he said. "Our vision for Sierra Leone is one that is globally connected and locally accountable."

The engagement not only bolstered his credibility abroad but sent a powerful message of political maturity, readiness, and reform-minded leadership back home.



Dr. Richard Konteh along with some members of the Unifier team, visited had an official engagement with the Pennsylvania State Legislative House in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA.

Ghana: A New Chapter Begins with Unifier Ghana

From the corridors of Pennsylvania to the cultural capital of West Africa, Dr. Konteh capped off his diaspora outreach with a significant milestone—the official launch of Unifier Ghana.

Held in Accra, the event marked the birth of a new chapter in the Unifier Movement. Hosted by Madam Evelyn and a dedicated team of volunteers, the launch celebrated Sierra Leonean unity abroad and the strengthening of Pan-African solidarity.

The Unifier Ghana launch represents more than just a new branch—it signals the growing momentum of a movement that seeks to transcend political rhetoric with meaningful connection, empowerment, and service.



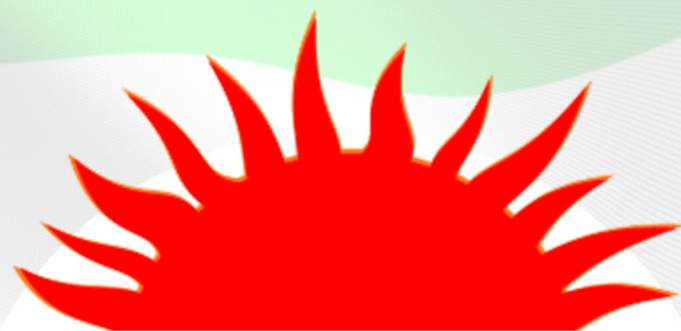
Dr. Richard Konteh attends the official launch of the Unifier team in Accra Ghana.

A Movement Without Borders

Dr. Richard Konteh's 2025 Diaspora Tour has proven one thing: Sierra Leone's destiny cannot be written in isolation. Whether through engaging global policymakers, energizing the Diaspora, or planting new seeds of hope, his campaign is shifting from aspiration to action.

As Sierra Leone prepares for the 2028 elections, The Unifier's vision is being forged not only in the streets of Freetown but in the halls of foreign parliaments and the hearts of Sierra Leoneans around the world.

Hope and Unity are not just campaign slogans—they are building blocks of a new national identity.



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OUR COMMON ENEMY

A Deeper Look at Poverty in Sierra Leone

While political landscapes, cultural identities, and individual aspirations may vary among Sierra Leoneans, one undeniable truth unites them in a shared struggle: the pervasive grip of poverty. Far from being a mere statistic, poverty in Sierra Leone is a deeply



entrenched reality that impacts lives across generations and hinders the nation's progress. Recent data paints a stark picture, underscoring the urgency of a collective, concerted effort to uplift the majority of the population from destitution.

The assertion that 60% of Sierra Leone's population is "poor" remains a grim baseline as reported on the 2019 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report, which highlighted the alarming levels of poverty among children and the elderly. More recent insights in the 2023 MPI data reinforce these critical vulnerabilities. The report indicates that 59.2% of the population is multidimensionally poor, with an additional 21.3% classified as vulnerable to multidimensional poverty. This means that a significant majority of Sierra Leoneans face overlapping deprivations across key indicators such as health, education, and living standards.

The Face of Poverty: Children, the Elderly, and Rural Communities

The burden of poverty falls disproportionately on the most vulnerable segments of society. The African Child Policy Forum's 2023 Country Brief reveals that an estimated 63% of children in Sierra Leone, or approximately three million, are multidimensionally poor. This is a chilling

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figure, with inadequate nutrition, lack of basic sanitation, and limited access to drinking water being major contributors. Furthermore, around one million children are living in severe poverty, and another million are at risk of falling into it. These statistics represent lost potential, hindering the very future of the nation.

While specific recent data for the elderly population is less readily available, the persistently high levels of multidimensional poverty reported in 2023 for those above 65 years of age likely remain a significant concern, given the overall poverty trends.

Rural areas continue to bear the brunt of extreme poverty. According to OPHI's 2023 Country Brief, a staggering 77.5% of the rural population is multidimensionally poor, compared to 33.3% in urban areas. This stark disparity underscores the critical need for targeted interventions in rural communities, where access to essential services, infrastructure, and economic opportunities remains severely limited. The World Bank's 2022 Poverty Assessment further noted that while poverty declined in urban areas between 2011 and 2018, the rural population remained impoverished, with extreme poverty in rural areas rising from 9% to 13% during that period.

Hunger: A Symptom of Deep-Rooted Poverty

The severe impact of poverty is palpably felt in the realm of food security. The 2024 Global Hunger Index (GHI) provides a sobering confirmation of Sierra Leone's struggle. Ranking 117th out of 127 countries with sufficient data, Sierra Leone holds a GHI score of 31.2, indicating a serious level of hunger. This reflects chronic undernutrition, child stunting and wasting, and high child mortality rates. The World Food Programme's 2024 Annual Country Report highlights that approximately 1.1 million people (14% of the population) required urgent food assistance between March and May 2024, a number projected to rise to 1.57 million (20% of the population) during the lean season (July-October 2024). The 26% stunting rate among children under five years of age further emphasizes the devastating long-term effects of food insecurity.

The Cycle of Poverty: Causes and Consequences

Poverty in Sierra Leone is a complex issue, exacerbated by a confluence of factors. Persistent economic challenges, including high inflation and limited job opportunities, continue to erode purchasing power. While the country possesses significant mineral wealth, the benefits of this resource often fail to trickle down to the wider population, contributing to inequality. Poor infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, hampers economic activity and access to markets, limiting opportunities for income generation.

Furthermore, inadequate access to quality education and healthcare perpetuates the cycle of poverty. The African Child Policy Forum's 2023 brief notes that social protection expenditure in Sierra Leone stands at only 2.5% of GDP, far below the average for Africa. This lack of a robust social safety net leaves vulnerable populations exposed to shocks and unable to break free from destitution.

The consequences of widespread poverty are dire:

- **Limited Human Capital Development:** Malnutrition, poor health, and lack of education directly impact the physical and cognitive development of individuals, limiting their future potential and the nation's overall productivity.
- **Reduced Economic Growth:** A large impoverished population with limited skills and purchasing power constrains domestic markets and discourages investment, hindering sustained economic growth.
- **Increased Vulnerability to Shocks:** Poverty leaves communities highly susceptible to the impacts of climate change, health epidemics, and economic downturns, pushing more people into extreme destitution.
- **Social Instability:** Widespread inequality and a lack of opportunities can fuel social unrest and instability, further deterring investment and development.

A Unified Path Forward

The data from the MPI, GHI, WFP, and the World Bank clearly illustrate that poverty is not a partisan issue, nor is it a problem confined to specific groups. It is a national crisis that demands a unified response. Overcoming this common enemy requires moving beyond political loyalties and individual agendas to foster a collective vision for a more prosperous Sierra Leone. This entails:

- **Investing in Human Capital:** Prioritizing education, healthcare, and nutrition, especially for children and mothers, to build a healthy and skilled workforce.
- **Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth:** Diversifying the economy beyond mining, supporting small and medium-sized



enterprises, and creating sustainable job opportunities, particularly in rural areas.

- **Strengthening Social Protection Programs:** Implementing robust social safety nets to protect the most vulnerable and provide a buffer against economic shocks.
- **Improving Governance and Fighting Corruption:** Ensuring that national resources are managed transparently and equitably for the benefit of all citizens.
- **Building Resilient Infrastructure:** Investing in roads, energy, and water and sanitation systems to connect communities, facilitate trade, and improve living standards.

The fight against poverty is a long and arduous one, but it is a fight that Sierra Leone cannot afford to lose. By acknowledging poverty as the common enemy and uniting in purpose, Sierra Leoneans can forge a path towards a future where prosperity is not just a dream but a shared reality.

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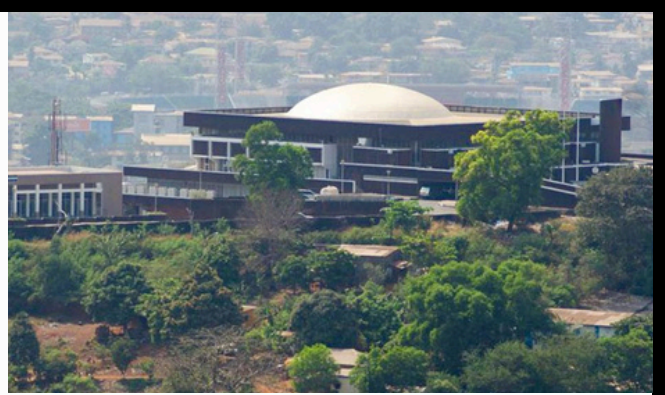
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TIME FOR SIERRA LEONE POLITICS TO EMBRACE BIG IDEAS



Bad politics is destroying Sierra Leone. Big names, big money and big egos should no longer be allowed to take the front seat over big ideas

The last several years of Sierra Leone politics have seen far too much focus on division. Big, bold ideas have been left out in the cold, along with the hopes of so many voters. A huge amount of time and energy is being spent dividing people over petty issues, digging up dirt, and relitigating past crappy policies.

No serious thought is being given to finding real solutions to the challenges and

opportunities of the quickly changing 21st-century economy. Where will the jobs of tomorrow come from? How can we ensure people have the skills needed for those jobs? And how can we move our people out of poverty? Instead, people are consumed with trivial issues, such as Party versus Party, north versus south, east against west, and tribe against tribe, etc. These are the issues greedy politicians care about, so they can divide and get votes. Absolute nonsense!

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Observing current events in Sierra Leone, you would be forgiven for not realizing that poverty, hardship, climate change, disruptive technologies, and the political and economic implications of a shifting geopolitical landscape are far more pressing, and have far more impact on people than a race to the bottom on divisive issues and personal missteps.

It's no wonder people are disenchanted and tuning out of politics. Especially the young, they are fed up!

To meet these challenges, we need to choose a politics of inclusion and big ideas, focused not on the issues that tear us apart but on those that build bridges across geography, identity, and ideology. Big names, big money and big egos should no longer be allowed to take the front seat over big ideas.

APC, SLPP, NGC, PDMC, PDP (if they still exist), etc., are not enemies, and politics is not war. Politics belongs to family dinner tables across Sierra Leone, between friends across tribal lines, or even co-workers, not just to the benefiting government officers and their friends. We are all one people with issues and ideas, and we can do better if we choose to.

Political party leadership conventions are just around the corner, an opportunity to turn a very important corner both for Party politics and for Sierra Leone. What we've seen so far in the SLPP lower-level elections leaves a very bad feeling of the same backward politics. Crooked delegates are bent on filling their pockets with bribes to elect the highest bidder.

As for the APC party, in the 2018 and 2023

elections, voters sent a loud and clear signal that they want the APC Party to renew and modernize; to humble itself, rebuild its accessibility and accountability to the grassroots; and demonstrate servant leadership. So far, we are not sure if the party has learned anything. But we will see in the upcoming national delegate convention.

To APC Party leaders, you can't fake change, and you can't fake renewal. You need actual change and actual political renewal to re-engage with Sierra Leoneans and reflect their priorities and needs for the future.

How can we help more than 60% of Sierra Leoneans living in extreme poverty transition to the middle class? How do we evolve government for the 21st century? How do we create a digital-first approach that creates thousands of jobs, and everyday government services people rely on?

Hijacking leadership, knee-jerking policies, or deregulation isn't the solution. It creates more chaos. We need a "common sense audit" that leads to smart, balanced ideas and solutions that respect citizens, investors, workers and job creators.

We must create stronger policy and political capacity to effectively and compassionately respond to skills-biased technology change. These changes, which are coming whether we like them or not, will create huge opportunities for some, but potentially disrupt the livelihoods of many.

Free education – getting many kids in schools is important, but what about the quality of the education? And, we will also need to plan and

respond to extreme poverty, hardship, unreliable institutions, lawlessness, national security issues, and inadequate infrastructure. We should be spending all our energy discussing these issues; it's a crisis, for goodness' sake!

All Sierra Leoneans, regardless of how they vote, need the APC and SLPP Parties to be looking forward. It is essential for national security, peace, unity, and development, both for us today and for our children and grandchildren.

No one is born with a birthright to govern. Political power should not be taken for granted – and it must not be bought, but it should be earned.

That starts with ideas. Let's start discussing ideas for the future we envision: making Sierra Leone a better place for all, ending poverty, and inspiring quality education, among others.

So far, Dr. Richard Konteh (D-Unifier) is doing just that. He has been bold and courageous with his ideas and message. The other APC and SLPP flagbearer aspirants need to step up as well and be bold, like Dr. Richard Konteh.



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WITH APRN ABIOSEH PIEH



HYPERTENSION



WHAT IS HYPERTENSION?

Hypertension (HTN) is defined as systolic blood pressure (SBP) of 140 mm Hg or greater and/or a diastolic BP of 90 mm Hg or greater on two separate occasions (James et al., 2014).

The goal is to decrease mortality and kidney and cardiovascular morbidity. The World Health Organization (WHO) noted that

hypertension is one of the major risk factors accounting for 13% of mortality worldwide.

If left untreated, hypertension can result in transient ischemic attack, erectile dysfunction, aortic regurgitation, peripheral arterial disease (PAD), coronary artery disease (CAD), atrial fibrillation, myocardial infarction, heart failure (HF),

stroke, intracerebral hemorrhage, or kidney failure.

STAGES OF HTN

There are three stages of HTN; Prehypertension is a systolic BP of 120–139 mm Hg or a diastolic BP of 80–89 mm Hg.

Stage 1 HTN is a systolic BP of 140–159 mm Hg or a diastolic BP of 90–99 mm Hg.

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Stage 2 HTN is a systolic BP \geq 160 mm Hg or a diastolic BP \geq 100 mm Hg.

TYPES OF HTN

There are three types of hypertension: primary hypertension, secondary hypertension and Pregnancy induced HTN.

Primary hypertension also known as essential hypertension can be defined as hypertension with an unknown etiology.

Secondary hypertension is defined as HTN caused by conditions known to elevate blood pressure.

Pregnancy induced HTN: is caused by increased production of hormones and enzymes during pregnancy.

RISK FACTORS OF HTN

Modifiable risk factors are things that can cause HTN that you can control or change. Examples are, Age, Family History, genetics, Sex and Race/ethnicity Age, Obesity, family history, race, and diet.

Non-Modifiable risk factors are lifestyle choices that can be changed. Examples are diet, physical activity, smoking, alcohol consumption, and stress levels, as well as conditions like obesity and diabetes.

HTN INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE IN SIERRA LEONE

In Sierra Leone, only 23% of hypertensive patients were diagnosed, 11% were treated and only 5% had their BP under control.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

The pathophysiology of hypertension is multifaceted. There are different ways in which an individual can develop hypertension. One mechanism in which an individual can develop hypertension is by increasing salt intake leading to expansion of volume.

Furthermore, patients can develop hypertension due to a decreased compliance of the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (RAAS) and a heightened stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system (Iqba & Jamal, 2020). These changes in the body system can result in increased total peripheral resistance and increased afterload, thus the development of hypertension.

TYPICAL CLINICAL PRESENTATION OF HYPERTENSION

Most individuals with hypertension often present with no symptoms and are diagnosed incidentally by blood pressure recording or measurement.

However, some patients present with headaches, blurry vision, and symptoms of end-organ damage such as stroke-like symptoms or hypertensive encephalopathy, chest pain, shortness of breath and acute pulmonary edema (Iqba & Jamal, 2020).

TREATMENT FOR HTN

Diet: As a healthcare provider, I always tell my patients, "*What you eat is who you are.*" If you eat healthily, you will be healthy; if you eat unhealthy food, it shows in your health. One method for treating HTN is Diet. A dietary approach to treating hypertension revolves around the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), which has been proven effective in lowering blood pressure. Here's a breakdown of its key principles. As a patient with HTN, your diet should be rich in fibres (fruits. Vegetables, whole grains) Potassium, magnesium and calcium (bananas, yogurts, almonds and spinach), Low salt to about 2,300mg/day (avoid processed food, canned soup and salty snacks).

Exercise is another way that blood pressure can be managed. Exercise is a powerful and natural way to lower blood pressure.

Here are some effective approaches:

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The goal is to exercise 4 times a week for at least 45 minutes. No exercise is too little to help with blood pressure management. Walking, running, lifting weights or riding a bike increases blood flow to vital organs in the body.

Medication: It's hard to take daily medication; however, compliance is key in managing blood pressure. Therefore, if you are suffering from HTN, it's important to take your medication daily as prescribed to prevent further damage to your heart. Examples of HTN medications are. Amlodipine, HTCZ, Lisinopril, and many more.



Abie Pieh (MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC)

Abioseh Kamara-Pieh is a Board-Certified Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP-BC) and Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) with a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN). She is passionate about delivering compassionate, holistic, and evidence-based care to individuals navigating mental health and primary care challenges.

With extensive experience in psychiatric care, Abioseh specializes in medication management, therapeutic interventions, and supportive counseling to address a wide range of mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, PTSD, addiction, and mood disorders. Her approach to care is grounded in empathy, cultural sensitivity, and a deep commitment to helping people heal, grow, and thrive.

Whether working with children, adolescents, or adults, Abioseh's mission is to create a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment where each patient feels heard, respected, and supported. She believes that mental and physical health go hand-in-hand, and she strives to integrate both in her practice to promote long-term wellness and quality of life.

As the co-founder of Hephzibah Psychiatry Medical Center LLC, Abioseh is honored to be part of a growing movement to redefine mental health care—making it more accessible, compassionate, and patient-centered for communities across Delaware, Sierra Leone and beyond.

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STRENGTHENING WEST AFRICA'S DEFENSE LINE

A Closer Look At Security, Immigration & Drug Enforcement In Sierra Leone And Liberia

Foday James Kabia



Despite official security and immigration protocols at key crossings like Bo Waterside, the Sierra Leone–Liberia border remains porous and vulnerable to smuggling, drug trafficking, and corruption. Inconsistent enforcement and under-resourced drug control efforts continue to pose serious threats to regional stability and public safety.

The nations of Sierra Leone and Liberia, both anchored in the Mano River Union and members of the ECOWAS bloc, have long strived to stabilize their internal structures following years of conflict and transition. Yet, as the region enters a new era of democratic consolidation and cross-border cooperation, critical questions emerge: Are their security, immigration, and anti-drug enforcement systems fit for purpose in today's fast-evolving threat environment?

This article examines the current landscape of these sectors in both countries and the urgent need for robust reform, modernization, and regional collaboration.

Sierra Leone: Promising Frameworks, Pressing Challenges

Sierra Leone has made notable efforts to strengthen institutional frameworks, including the Office of National Security (ONS), the Immigration Department and the National

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Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). However, these agencies continue to face structural and operational limitations.

Sierra Leone's porous borders remain a major concern, allowing illicit migration and trafficking to thrive. While national security agencies demonstrate commitment, their work is often hampered by inadequate funding, outdated surveillance infrastructure, and limited inter-agency data integration.

Furthermore, the rising infiltration of drugs such as kush, tramadol, and cocaine—fueled by organized transnational networks—has exposed weaknesses in enforcement capacity. The NDLEA lacks the technical and logistical resources necessary to respond to this growing crisis.

The country needs a technologically equipped, intelligence-led response that includes drone surveillance at key entry points, biometric systems at border crossings, and targeted rehabilitation programs for at-risk youth.

Liberia: Reform Amid Rising Risk

Across the border, Liberia's Joint Security Task Force, Liberia Immigration Service (LIS), and Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA) have made commendable progress in recent years. The LIS has launched campaigns against irregular migration and passport fraud, while the LDEA has conducted nationwide crackdowns on drug trafficking.

However, Liberia is not immune to the challenges that plague the subregion. Drug abuse among youth is rising at alarming rates, and the country's vast and largely unpatrolled coastline remains a vulnerable entry point for smugglers.

The current administration, led by President Joseph Boakai, has demonstrated a strong interest in institutional reform; however, real progress will depend on consistent funding, the depoliticization of law enforcement, and strengthened international partnerships.

Regional Threats Demand Regional Responses

It is now abundantly clear that security, immigration control, and drug enforcement are no longer purely national responsibilities. The threats these agencies face are transnational, requiring joint strategies, real-time intelligence sharing, and unified law enforcement operations.

The Mano River Union, along with ECOWAS, should prioritize:

- A Regional Immigration Data System
- Standardized Border Patrol Training Modules
- A Joint Anti-Narcotics Task Force with cross-border authority
- Public education campaigns across West Africa's youth demographics.

Investing in the Future of Regional Security

Sierra Leone and Liberia stand at a defining moment. The need for modernization, inter-agency coordination, and regional solidarity has never been more urgent. If neglected, the consequences could reverberate not only within national borders but across the entire West African region.

As a journalist and media voice observing the pulse of West Africa's evolving challenges, I believe that the future of these nations—and their ability to protect citizens from the

dangers of organized crime, drug dependency, and irregular migration—will depend on bold leadership, strategic partnerships, and sustained investment in security infrastructure.

It is time to move from reaction to prevention, from fragmentation to integration, and from rhetoric to results.

About the Author



Foday James Kabia is a political journalist, media personality, and regional affairs analyst affiliated with KASH Multimedia Radio & TV. He covers governance, diaspora affairs, and West African security from a nonpartisan and Pan-African perspective.



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FROM THE HILLS OF GBENDEMBU TO THE HALLS OF NATIONAL PROGRESS

An Independent Portrait of Vision, Integrity, and Public Impact in Sierra Leone

Mallay Baminhoma



Bad politics is destroying Sierra Leone. Big names, big money and big egos should no longer be allowed to take the front seat over big ideas.

In a country often defined by the cycles of hope and hardship, Sierra Leone has produced few public figures as quietly influential and persistently principled as Dr. Richard Konteh. From his humble beginnings in Gbendembu Ngowahun Chiefdom to high-level service in the government and civil society, his journey defies political noise and instead echoes with the sound of genuine public purpose.

A Technocrat in a Political World

Born in Sierra Leone's Northern Province, Richard Konteh's early life was shaped by discipline, community values, and a relentless pursuit of education. His academic path began with local schooling and ultimately led to advanced degrees, including a PhD in Spatial Planning and

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Development Coordination, awarded through a collaboration between the University of Dortmund and African institutions. But more than the letters after his name, it is how he applied this learning that has defined his legacy.

Konteh's entrance into public service came during a crucial phase in Sierra Leone's post-war recovery. As Deputy Minister of Finance, he worked on stabilizing public finance and creating a more transparent budgetary system. Later, as Minister of Trade and Industry, his imprint became even more visible. He played a pivotal role in institutionalizing the Local Content Policy, which empowered Sierra Leonean entrepreneurs and ensured local ownership in key industries. Under his watch, the country's business climate improved dramatically, receiving recognition from international observers as a "top reformer" in Africa.

Equally important was his support for small and medium-sized enterprises. Through innovative funding mechanisms and accessible loan programs, Konteh enabled a generation of grassroots entrepreneurs to launch businesses in agriculture, manufacturing, and retail — a cornerstone for inclusive economic growth.

A Servant-Leader, Not a Power Seeker

Konteh's approach to leadership has always leaned toward service over spotlight. As Chief of Staff to the President, he was a behind-the-scenes architect of policy frameworks like the "Agenda for Prosperity" — a national vision that placed human development, infrastructure, and transparency at its core. He supported initiatives that expanded access to education, improved public accountability, and promoted investor confidence.

Yet, perhaps what most distinguishes Konteh is what he didn't do: exploit power. Despite holding one of the highest unelected offices in the country, he remained accessible, accountable, and deeply connected to his roots.



Even when political opponents sought to stain his reputation with allegations that were later dismissed by both the judiciary and the Anti-Corruption Commission, Konteh faced the scrutiny with composure and transparency — and emerged with his integrity intact.

A Champion for Equity and Inclusion

Far from the dusty corridors of government, Konteh has quietly but consistently championed social justice and inclusive development. His advocacy for women's empowerment, disability inclusion, and youth employment has influenced both policy and practice. As an active participant in regional civil society networks, including leadership in the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF), he has helped shape a more participatory democracy across ECOWAS countries.

In 2022, he coordinated community-led efforts to support vulnerable children and families, personally ensuring food, educational materials, and safe shelter reached those most in need. For Konteh, empowerment isn't a political strategy — it's a moral imperative.

Looking Ahead: A Statesman in Waiting?

Today, as Sierra Leone faces new global challenges — from climate vulnerability to shifting economies — voices like Dr. Richard Konteh's are more vital than ever. Thoughtful, deliberate, and steeped in both academic insight and lived experience, he represents a model of leadership rarely seen in contemporary African politics: the informed servant, rather than the ambitious careerist.

He continues to advocate for long-term development anchored in education reform, corporate accountability, and cross-sector partnerships. Whether or not he returns to public office, the values he embodies — integrity, inclusion, and innovation — will remain a lodestar for the country's next chapter.

Conclusion

Dr. Richard Konteh is not merely a technocrat or a former official. He is a symbol of what is possible when leadership is grounded in service and driven by purpose. In a time when trust in institutions is fragile, he offers something rare: a reputation earned, not imposed — and a legacy still in motion.



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DE-POLARIZING SIERRA LEONE

DR. RICHARD KONTEH'S PATHWAY TO NATIONAL HEALING



Sierra Leone, long shaped by deep political polarization, identity-driven divisions, and fragile trust between citizens and the state, now stands at a crossroads—inviting us to turn the page and write a new chapter defined not by past bitterness, but by bridge-building, dialogue, and national restoration. This moral reawakening is the foundation upon which our shared future must rise.

Sierra Leone, a country rich in culture, resilience, and natural beauty, continues to wrestle with the lingering effects of a brutal civil war and a fractured political landscape. While democracy has taken root, the nation remains deeply divided by political polarization, identity-based divisions, and a fragile trust between citizens and their government. In this context, the concept of de-

polarization—the process of reducing division and restoring empathy, trust, and shared identity—is not just a theoretical aspiration, but a national necessity.

Dr. Richard Konteh's Unifier Vision offers a bold, timely, and emotionally intelligent approach to healing the nation's political wounds. At the heart of this vision is what we

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call the Emotional and Intellectual Transformation of De-Polarization—a framework for rewiring how Sierra Leoneans think and feel about politics, power, and each other.

Understanding De-Polarization: Beyond Political Rhetoric

Polarization is not merely a disagreement of ideas. It's an emotional entrenchment in identity politics—us vs. them, tribe vs. tribe, party vs. party. It thrives on suspicion, scapegoating, and the rewriting of narratives to exclude “the other.”

De-polarization, therefore, requires more than logical debate or political compromise. It demands an emotional shift—a transformation of hearts—and an intellectual reawakening that allows citizens to see complexity, nuance, and shared humanity across political divides.

This transformation unfolds in two parallel dimensions:

1. Emotional Transformation: Healing the Heart of the Nation

- **Empathy over Enmity:** Sierra Leone's recovery requires leaders and citizens to see each other not as adversaries but as partners in a shared national project.
- **Civic Forgiveness:** As a post-conflict society, forgiveness must become a civic virtue. Not forgetting—but forgiving to free ourselves from bitterness.
- **Symbolic Reconciliation:** Emotional healing is also advanced through national rituals, symbolic gestures,

public apologies, and inclusive celebrations that affirm belonging for all Sierra Leoneans.

2. Intellectual Transformation: Reframing the National Conversation

- **Political Literacy:** We must teach citizens to question dogma, challenge propaganda, and embrace democratic values over partisanship.
- **Shared Narrative Building:** A unifying national story must be told—one that centers on common values like justice, dignity, and progress, rather than historical grievances or ethnic supremacy.
- **Dialogue and Deliberation:** Spaces for multi-party dialogue, town halls, and youth engagement must be normalized, not politicized.

The Unifier Vision: Dr. Richard Konteh's Pathway to National Healing

Dr. Richard Konteh's Unifier Campaign is more than a political movement—it is a call to the collective conscience. With his deep roots in both public service and grassroots advocacy, Dr. Konteh understands that true leadership is not about winning votes but about rebuilding trust and confidence.

His campaign prioritizes:

- **Inclusive Governance:** Bringing all regions, tribes, and political ideologies to the decision-making table.
- **Restorative Leadership:** Acknowledging past wrongs and using governance to restore faith in democratic institutions.



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- **Transformational Politics:** Moving away from patronage and political revenge, and toward vision-driven development, citizen empowerment, and peacebuilding.

In his speeches and public engagements, Dr. Konteh consistently calls for an end to the politics of exclusion. He affirms the idea that every Sierra Leonean matters, regardless of their political affiliation or background. His Unifier Vision is rooted in servant leadership, moral courage, and a belief in the power of reconciliation.

De-Polarization in Practice: What Can Citizens Do?

De-polarization is not only a job for politicians—it is the responsibility of every Sierra Leonean. Here are practical actions that ordinary citizens can take to support the Unifier Movement:

1. **Refuse to Dehumanize:** Avoid language that labels or demonizes others based on political differences.
2. **Engage Across Divides:** Talk to someone from another political party or region. Listen without trying to win an argument.
3. **Promote Truth, Not Tribalism:** Share verified information. Challenge stereotypes, even within your own community.
4. **Support Reconciliation Efforts:** Participate in community dialogues, truth-telling forums, and national celebrations that include all voices.
5. **Vote for Character and Vision:** Demand integrity and unifying values from those who seek power.

Building a New Sierra Leone, Together

Sierra Leone's next chapter must not be defined by who wins the next election, but by how we choose to treat one another afterward. The Emotional and Intellectual Transformation of De-Polarization is not a luxury—it is the moral infrastructure upon which our future depends.

Dr. Richard Konteh's Unifier Campaign is a rare chance to reimagine leadership, recenter patriotism, and renew the social contract between government and governed. The time has come to move from bitterness to bridge-building, from division to dialogue, from rivalry to restoration.



“Let us choose nationhood over narrowness, and unity over uniformity. Sierra Leone is big enough for all of us—and the future is ours to shape.” — Dr. Richard Konteh.

For more about Dr. Richard Konteh and his nationwide unifier campaign, and to his campaign, visit
www.dunifier.com or
www.richardkonteh.com



DR. RICHARD KONTEH

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OPEN LETTERS TO THE PRESIDENT



LETTER 1

Fuel Price Reduction and Transportation Costs

Dear Mr. President,

First, allow me to extend my sincerest congratulations on your election as the new ECOWAS Chairman. Your appointment is a testament to your leadership and a reflection of the balanced and equitable representation we strive for across West African nations.

Mr. President, while the recent reduction in fuel prices – from NLe 27.3 to NLe 25 for petrol and NLe 24 for diesel – is a welcome development, it has created a confusing situation for the average citizen. What remains unclear is why the Ministry of Transport and Aviation has not yet publicly announced the official transportation costs for commuters.

Many citizens are concerned that the decision to reduce prices by individual fuel dealers doesn't

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align with a clear directive from the government or the National Petroleum Authority. If this assertion holds true, it suggests an unfair burden on the very citizens who elected you in June 2023.

Consider, for example, commuters traveling from Makeni to Freetown. They are still paying a staggering NLe 120, the same fare charged when fuel cost NLe 27.3. This discrepancy is unacceptable, especially given Sierra Leone's current inflation rate of 12.95%, which already makes daily life challenging for businesses and causes the prices of goods and services to skyrocket.

Mr. President, as the father of our nation, we implore you to ensure that transportation costs genuinely reflect the recent fuel price reduction. A clear directive to the responsible ministry would go a long way in bringing positive change to the lives of all Sierra Leonean citizens. It's important to remember that while your government collects over NLe 6 per liter in taxes, citizens are still being financially strained.

What is good for the goose, Mr. President, should also be good for the gander.

Humbly,

Emmanuel Jim
A Concerned Citizen



continued on next page

LETTER 2

An Urgent Appeal: Reconstruct the Matenhu Bridge

Dear Mr. President,

I extend greetings to you from the people of Bombali and Karene Districts.

The photograph accompanying this letter vividly illustrates the severe disconnect between the neighboring Bombali and Karene Districts. This isn't just a story; it's the harsh reality for the residents of Karene, who face immense difficulties traveling to Makeni.

For nearly two years, the bridge connecting these two districts has been cut off, with no discernible action taken to remedy the situation.

The current predicament forces vehicles from Makeni and Kamakwei to stop on either side of the divide. Commuters are then compelled to pay for alternative means to cross, just to complete their journeys. Even those opting for motorbikes, while faster, incur additional costs, as both passengers and riders must pay to have themselves and their bikes ferried across.

This critical infrastructure failure has severely hampered business in Karene District, leading to stagnation and a sharp increase in the prices of goods available in the district headquarters.

Mr. President, the bridge in question marks the boundary between Kalangba and Gbendenbu towns, along the vital highway to Kamakwei. This situation is deeply disheartening for the very people who entrusted you with their votes in the 2023 general elections.



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The Sierra Leone Road Authority (SLRA) has, in the public eye, demonstrated a lack of efficiency, effectiveness, proactivity, and fitness for purpose. Their attempt to use a coainer as a temporary bridge was widely condemned as a "death trap."

To rectify this dire situation, Mr. President, I urge you to revisit the Makeni-Kamakwei road contract. This review should explicitly include authorization for the immediate construction of a new bridge at Matenhu.

In closing, it is imperative to note that there are other critical bridges along the Makeni-Kamakwei highway, similar to Matenhu, that also require urgent attention. Failure to authorize the completion of this vital road network will inevitably lead to a complete and utter disconnect between these two essential districts.

Mr. President, the people of Karene are not strangers; they are citizens of Sierra Leone who deserve safe and reliable infrastructure. Please, act now.

Humbly,

Emmanuel Jim
A Concerned Citizen



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