



**Statement by His Excellency Atumanni Dainkeh,
Ambassador of The Republic of Sierra Leone to The Kingdom
of Morocco, on the occasion of the 61st Independence
anniversary of Sierra Leone.**

Rabat, Wednesday 4th May, 2022

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests
Fellow compatriots
Ladies and gentlemen.

Good evening, I feel honoured and privileged to welcome you all in celebrating our 61st Independence anniversary.

I express my profound gratitude and appreciation for your participation in this memorable occasion. Let me use this occasion from the outset to convey warm greetings and felicitations from my President, His Excellency Rtd. Brig. Julius Maada Bio to his brother, His Majesty King Mohamed VI (**May Allah help him**), the government and people of the Kingdom of Morocco on the successful completion of fasting in the Holy month of Ramadan; May Allah accept the prayers and supplications.

I would not be surprised, Excellencies and dear friends, if as we gather here what comes to your minds is about how this day came about to be Sierra Leone's National day.

I would not bore you with a detailed history but suffice it to know that Sierra Leone lies on the West Coast of Africa. It was discovered in 1462 by a Portuguese explorer who was fascinated by the beautiful hills that are naturally laid in the shape of lions as he approached this west coast along the Atlantic Ocean. He therefore named the country Serra Loa, in Portuguese meaning "**lions mountain**". The British Colonizers (presumably for convenience of pronunciation) later called the country Sierra Leone.

The capital Freetown was founded in 1787 as home for repatriated slaves from the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

Sierra Leone was colonized and governed from the United Kingdom until 27th April, 1961 when a group of Sierra Leoneans led a delegation to London in pursuit of their independence and right to govern themselves.

Thus, the significance of this day and this gathering today.



But for the Holy month of Ramadan, this event would have been last Wednesday 27th April.

In the wake of its independence, Sierra Leone has experienced its fair share of challenges: a number of military coups, an 11 year civil war that brought the country to its knees, an Ebola epidemic that distressed other Mano river countries such as Liberia and Guinea in 2014 to 2016, mudslide, the recent explosion of a petrol tanker in 2021 that claimed the lives of scores of our citizens and now the global Covid-19 pandemic. In all these challenges, the country and its people have demonstrated resilience with a focus to making things better at any given opportunity.

Multiple democratic elections have been held with smooth transition of power.

A sense of hope is palpable under the leadership of H.E Rtd. Brig. Julius Maada Bio whose administration has engaged, amongst others, in the fight against corruption which was pervasive and a hindrance to national development. This fight has been globally acclaimed and Sierra Leone stands high in the global stage of anti-corruption rankings.

A free quality education policy has led to a school enrolment of 2.6 million pupils, the government has abolished the death penalty, repealed an ancient libel law that was restraining the practice of journalism and freedom of speech.

Globally, Sierra Leone stands as one of the safest countries at present.

Excellencies and dear friends, should you be looking for some where to invest or go for holiday, look no further, Sierra Leone is the place for you. You will always be welcome to the Lion's Mountain.

The land that we love, our Sierra Leone.

Thank you very much

Merci Beacoup

Sukran Ghazeelan