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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONDUCTS OVERSIGHT VISIT TO CORRECTIONAL CENTERS

In line with its constitutional mandate to ensure the protection of inmates' rights and assess prison conditions, the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, chaired by Hon. Dr. Unpha Sorie Koroma embarked on an oversight visit to three correctional centres in Northern Sierra Leone, Mafanta, Makeni, and Port Loko respectively. The visits, which took place on August 26th and 27th, 2025, aimed to evaluate progress and uncover challenges affecting these institutions.

The committee began its inspection at the Mafanta Correctional Centre in Magburaka, Tonkolili District which was established in 1958 on land donated by a nearby village, the facility currently houses inmates involved in various rehabilitative activities.

The Acting Regional Commander, Momoh Fatorma, highlighted the active agricultural program involving 96 inmates who receive a daily stipend of sixty new leones. Officer-in-Charge, Momodu Sillah, also reported on vocational training initiatives in carpentry, tailoring, and shoemaking.

The committee noted positive developments such as the availability of Tuck shop, a mini-mart, and an onsite clinic staffed by Community Health Nurse Alpha Sesay. However, there are some challenges which include the facility lack of electricity infrastructure and many inmates lack access to tertiary or vocational education opportunities, which the committee found.

At the Makeni Correctional Centre, Officer-in-Charge Kenneth A.K. Kelly highlighted the centre's collaboration with the University of Makeni (UniMak). As a result of this partnership, 25 inmates graduated in disciplines such as Development Studies and Entrepreneurship in the previous year, with 75 expected to graduate in 2025, marking a significant step forward in inmate rehabilitation through education.

During the committee's final visit to the Port Loko Correctional Centre, Hon. Dr. Unpha Koroma led an assessment of the facility's health services. The clinic is managed by Public Health Specialist Memunatu Dumbuya, who assured the committee of the clinic's adherence to professional standards, including confidential treatment for HIV-positive inmates to prevent stigma and discrimination.

Commendations were given for the organization of medical supplies and professional conduct of health staff. However, concerns were raised regarding the detention of minors. Hon. Lawyer Alpha Bah emphasized the need to fast-track juvenile cases and clarified that the responsibility lies with the police and judiciary, not the correctional service. The case of a minor, Alusine Samura, currently held on direct indictment, was flagged for close monitoring.

In a visit to the female wing, Hon. Mariama Bangura observed poor ventilation and lack of mosquito protection. Inmates reported frequent malaria cases due to mosquito bites. The Officer-in-Charge assured the committee that mosquito nets would be installed in September.

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