



**BROADCAST STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR.
JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SIERRA LEONE ON THE EASING OF
RESTRICTIONS ON HOUSES OF WORSHIP AND
OTHER MEASURES, Freetown. – 9 July 2020**

In our fight to protect against and curtail COVID-19, we have taken well-considered measures to protect lives and also sustain livelihoods through an inclusive and rigorous consultative process with stakeholders and experts. Throughout, we have also urged strict compliance with all public health directives.

Citizens must take personal responsibility for protecting themselves and their loved ones from COVID-19. Persons who are refusing to comply with health directives are exposing themselves, their loved ones, and their communities to the grave risk of infection and possible death. I have strongly urged the leadership of the National COVID-19 Emergency Response Centre (NACOVERC) to take all necessary actions to enforce full compliance with all public health directives.

Based on expert advice on the aerosol transmission of COVID-19 and the possible risk of rapid community infection among congregations, we advisedly closed all places of worship. I have since then held multiple consultations with the Inter-Religious Council, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health officials, NACOVERC officials, experts, and other stakeholders.

The leadership of the Interreligious Council drafted proposals covering infection prevention protocols, capacity management,

social distancing, and social mobilisation, among other things. Experts have closely examined the proposed measures and advised no objections to those proposals.

I am therefore pleased to announce that effective Monday, 13th of July 2020, all mosques, churches, and other places of worship shall be open for congregation and worship. Additionally, starting Monday, 13th of July, curfew hours will be eased to 2300hrs to 0500hrs (or 11PM to 5AM).

NACOVERC will announce a comprehensive list of enforceable measures as proposed by the Interreligious Council. Congregation leaders are expected to help enforce full compliance with all measures at their places of worship.

Ministry of Transport and Aviation officials, Ministry of Health officials, experts, and engaged stakeholder groups have audited proposed new processes and simulated all possible scenarios for arrivals and departures at Lungi International Airport.

I am pleased to announce that Lungi International Airport will be re-opened for all scheduled commercial flights on Wednesday, 22nd July 2020. NACOVERC will soon announce a comprehensive list of guidelines and protocols for air travel to and from Sierra Leone

The easing of restrictions does not mean an easing of the threat of COVID-19. COVID-19 is still highly infectious and deadly. I urge every Sierra Leonean to continue to strictly adhere to all healthcare directives and to continue to play his or her part in protecting against and curtailing the spread of COVID-19.

I thank you and God bless Sierra Leone