

More political arrests in Sierra Leone as human rights lawyer Ady Macauley is locked up for interpreting the law on national TV



Sierra Leone Telegraph: 7 October 2022:

Veteran human rights and constitutional lawyer – Barrister Ady Macauley (**Photo above**) spent last night behind bars in Freetown, after he was arrested by police following his appearance weeks ago on AYV TV, where he gave his legal interpretation of the country's freedom of assembly laws to the anger of government officials and the ruling SLPP.

Lawyer Macauley's arrest comes on the heels of the Mayor of Freetown Yvonne Aki-Sawyer appearing at the police headquarters on Monday, for an eight-hour questioning, for alleged "obstruction of police duties and disorderly behaviour" at a police station where her fellow elected local councillor was being detained.

Aki-Sawyer arrived at the police station for questioning on Monday at 10am and was released at about 6pm.

Macauley, who is a former head of the country's Anti-Corruption Commission under the Ernest Bai Koroma led APC government, was banned from travelling

by the incoming SLPP government in 2018, a decision that had since been revoked.

And in May 2020, Macauley was arrested for questioning following protests over the killing in cold blood of over 40 unarmed prisoners in Freetown by presidential guards.

But the political harassment, intimidation, wrongful arrests and incarceration of politicians with whom the SLPP government disagrees continue, raising worrying questions about the fast approaching general and presidential elections next June.

Reactions to Macauley's arrest have been swift

Sierra Leone's Legal Link Director- Rashid Dumbuya, said: "I have been reliably informed that Ady Macaulay Esq. may spend the night in detention at the Criminal Investigations Department. This is a worrying trend indeed and the Sierra Leone Bar Association must not be silenced on this. No government, SLPP, NGC, C4C, or APC must be allowed to treat a lawyer in this way for expressing his opinion on the law."

Other prominent political commentators have also expressed strong comments about Macauley's arrest and detention, and are calling for his immediate release:



Augustine Sorie-Sengbe Marrah



@SoeMarrah

Former ACC Cmr [@AdyMacauley](#) detained pending investigations for his legal opinion shared on [@ayvnews](#) You can disagree with a lawyer's opinion like you would with a doctor's diagnosis but you cannot criminalize honest & free expression. Sadly, a dangerous precedent is being set!

**Basita Michael**

Just now · 🌐

Locking up a lawyer in a detention cell and denying him bail for his opinion and interpretation of the law on a national TV discussion program goes to show how far the government is ready to go to silence critical thinking and citizens who will not toe the line. Until something is done to salvage this sinking image of our democracy hopelessness will continue to prevail in our country. Those behind the detention of Ady Macaulay must remember that when the table turns such a bad precedent can be used to extinguish their own democratic rights. Is that what we really want for ourselves and our country? I add my voice to members of the bar association and the public to demand the immediate release of Lawyer Ade Macaulay. #WEAREALLADYMACAULAY.

**Ibrahim Tommy**

2h · 🌐

I'll wait to hear the official reason for the arrest and detention of Lawyer Ady Macauley, but I hope it isn't connected with his comments on the "AYV on Sunday" show relating to citizens' right to peaceful assembly. It is simply wrong and high-handed to arrest him for such comments. I shared the AYV panel with him that evening and I believe he basically shared his honest appreciation of the law on that occasion. To link his comments to events that happened weeks later would be a stretch. I urge the Sierra Leone Police to release him on bail without delay. #ReleaseAdyMacauley.

As Police Intimidation, Unlawful Arrests continue. Freedom of Speech Goes Extinct!



Augustine Sorie-Sengbe Marrah
@SoeMarrah

Former ACC Cmr @AdyMacauley detained pending investigations for his legal opinion shared on @ayvnews You can disagree with a lawyer's opinion like you would with a doctor's diagnosis but you cannot criminalize honest & free expression. Sadly, a dangerous precedent is being set!

By Francis Kamara
Over four years ago since the Bio administration took office, Sierra Leoneans have witnessed a dark cloud of political intimidation, unlawful arrests and a police force that's far from independence. The past years have created a society that suppress anyone with the urge and will to speak up against bad governance, corruption, political intimidation, and abuse of power. The political intimidation and unlawful arrests by the Sierra Leone police have caused an extinction of the freedom of speech, a vibrant fabric on which our constitution and democracy stands - dozens of arrests have been made, violent protests have erupted, due to such calamity and abuse of power. However, we still have strong and patriotic Sierra Leoneans that have refused to bend to the will of the Bio administration, they have been speaking and are still speaking against bad governance and corruption, as well as educating Sierra Leoneans, especially the youth on the powers that they possess. But the unlawful arrests and political intimidation still continue to destroy the

hope and kill the voice of Sierra Leoneans. In the evening hours of Thursday 6th October 2022, the former Anti Corruption Commissioner and strong voice of the opposition party - Lawyer Ady Macauley, was detained pending investigations for his legal opinion shared on AYV television.

Ibrahim Tommy
2h · 🌐

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A request for bail by his Lawyers was denied by the police. Police say they are investigating him for alleged inciteful statements he made during an interview on AYV Television on July 10th, 2022. Ady Macauley has been considered as a powerful voice in Sierra Leone, he is

also considered by many Sierra Leoneans as a strict interpretationist, a highly respected legal practitioner, and a figure of hope. Arresting a legal practitioner for merely forming a legal opinion or for interpreting a section of the country's constitution is beyond hilarious - disagreeing with a lawyer's

opinion is one thing, but to criminalize his honest and free expression is trampling on his fundamental human rights to freedom of expression. There's no iota of doubt that a bad and dangerous precedent is being set by the Bio administration. Sierra Leoneans are tired

and have lost faith in the system. Some people are of the belief that the Bio administration has lost the capacity and intelligence to make concrete arguments, therefore they have decided to lay siege on anyone who can point out the flaws and abuse of power by the Bio administration. Our democracy is under serious threat by the Bio



Minkailu Koroma
@MinkailuKoroma2

A strict interpretationist, a highly respected legal practitioner, the former ACC boss and a senior member of the main opposition APC is passing the night in police cell for merely forming a legal opinion or for interpreting a section of the country's constitution! Very sad!!



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Many Sierra Leoneans now believe that President Maada Bio is a political trojan horse and a dangerous wolf in sheep's clothing that cannot be allowed to continue in power for another term of office next year. The former head of a military junta that deposed the APC government in 1992, killing dozens of people is seen by critics as a danger to Sierra Leone's liberal democracy.

