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REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES

**FRATERNISATION POLICY**

By Command of the  
Defense Policy Committee

**12** April, 2023

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
TOWER HILL  
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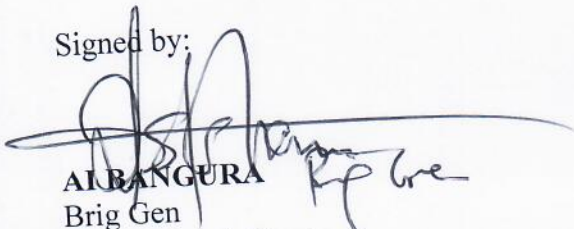
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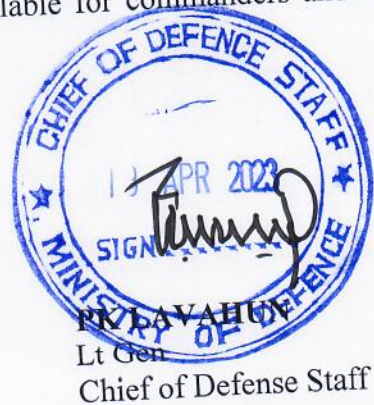
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Signed by:

  
ALBANGURA  
Brig Gen  
ACDS Ops & Plans



Authorized to sign on behalf of the Defence Council

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REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES  
POLICY ON FRATERNISATION

October 2022

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### THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES FRATERNISATION POLICY

#### GENERAL

1 Service Personnel of all ranks meet and associate with each other in many settings both on and off duty. These meetings and associations foster the trust and confidence necessary for mission accomplishment and build trust and respect within the force. Service Personnel associating with one another are governed in part by "rank" relationships which are basic requirements for maintaining good order and discipline. How these relationships impact authority, discipline and morale is central to evaluating relationships between service personnel. A relationship that diminishes or predictably will diminish a senior member of the armed forces in the discharge of their duties is unacceptable within the armed forces and has historically been regarded as fraternization. This policy seeks to regulate the manner of interactions between/among service personnel within the RSLAF.

#### DEFINITIONS

2. For the purpose of this policy, except as otherwise indicated, the term:
- a. "Appropriate superior authority" means the service personnel whom at any one time has the responsibility to maintain discipline in an RSLAF formation/unit/sub-unit.
  - b. "Officer" includes commissioned and warrant officers.
  - c. "Relationship" means the connection between serving personnel and how they relate with one another, especially as regard the way they behave towards and feel about one another, whether in an ordinary or emotional way, including but not limited to sexual activity.
  - d. "Service personnel" means all members of the RSLAF and include officer cadets and recruits.
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- e. 'Soldier' includes from recruit up to the rank of Staff Sergeant.
- f. 'Subordinate' has the same meaning as stated in the RSLAF Act 1961(as amended)
- g. 'Superior' has the same meaning as stated in the RSLAF Act 1961 (as amended).

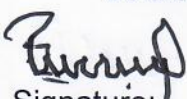
### FRATERNISATION

3. Certain types of personal relationship between officers and soldiers are prohibited. Prohibited relationship includes:

a. **Ongoing business relationship between officers and soldiers.** This prohibition does not apply to landlord/tenant relationship or to one-time transaction such as the sale of an automobile or house, but does apply to borrowing or lending money, commercial solicitation, and any other type of ongoing financial or business relationship. It does not apply to relationships that exist due to their civilian occupation or employment.

b. **Dating, intimate or sexual relationship between officers and soldiers.** There is no exception to this.

c. **Marriage between officers and soldiers.** This prohibition applies to all service personnel and includes a situation wherein a relationship that complies with this Policy would move into non-compliance due to a change in status of one of the members. In situations wherein for instance, two soldiers are married or dating and one is subsequently commissioned as a Specialist or Combatant Officer or promoted to a warrant officer). In relationships where one of the soldiers has entered into a program intended to result in a change in their status

  
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from soldier to a specialist or combatant officer, the couple must terminate the relationship permanently or one of them will have to resign within either one year of the actual start date of the program before the change in status occurs, or within one year of the publication date of this regulations, whichever occurs later.

d. **Shared living accommodations.** The only exceptions are those sharing that are authorized due to operational or administrative imperatives.

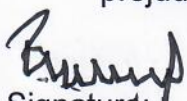
e. **Gambling between officers and soldiers.** There are no exceptions to this rule.

f. **Dating, Intimate or Sexual relationships between Service Personnel and the Spouse, Children and Dependants of other service personnel.** This prohibition does not include children and dependents of consenting age and living outside the auspices of the service personnel but include all those children and dependants living under the auspices of the service personnel even though they may be of consenting age (18 years).

g. **Dating, intimate or sexual relationship between a married service personnel and other service personnel including their children and dependants.** This is inappropriate even though these children or dependants may be of consenting age and living outside the auspices of the service personnel.

h. **Same Sex Relationship/Marriage.** There is no exception to this.

h. **Inappropriate interaction.** This prohibition does not include association between officers and other ranks that occur in the context of community organization, religious activities, sporting teams and event, unit based social functions. or family gatherings but includes all other forms of interaction that will prejudice military discipline.

  
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4. Other relationships between service personnel of different ranks are prohibited if they:
- a. Compromise, or appear to compromise, the integrity of supervisory authority of the chain of command.
  - b. Cause actual or perceived partiality or unfairness.
  - c. Involve, or appear to involve the improper use of rank or position for personal gain.
  - d. Are, or are perceived to be, exploitative or coercive in nature,
  - e. Create an actual or clearly predictable adverse impact on discipline, authority, morale or the ability of the superior to accomplish his/her mission.

**OTHER PROHIBITED RELATIONSHIP**

5. Other forms of relationship are prohibited between service personnel and include the following:
- a. **Trainee and Trainer.** Any sexual or intimate personal relationship between a trainer and trainees is prohibited.
  - b. **Recruiter and Recruit relationship.** Any sexual or intimate personal relationship between service personnel assigned or attached to the MoD/RSLAF Recruiting Teams and potential MoD\RSLAF entrants and applicants is prohibited.

  
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c. Dating, intimate and sexual relationships between senior and junior Other Ranks or between senior and junior officers when in a senior-subordinate relationship. It is also an offence of this Policy when there is a violation of the customs of the service and the conduct is prejudicial to good order and discipline, or will bring discredit to the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.

6. These prohibitions are not intended to preclude normal team building association that occur in the context of activities such as community organizations, religious activities, family gatherings, unit-based social functions, or athletic teams or events.

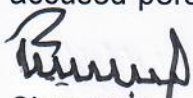
### **WHISTLEBLOWER**

7. Third parties should be encouraged to report cases of fraternization (herein known as whistleblower). This is because it is difficult if not impossible for persons in a sexual or platonic relation to voluntarily report their relationship unless things go bad. Personnel who observe and report incident of fraternization must be protected by the MOD/RSLAF and their identity should remain a closely guarded secret. All whistleblowers must benefit from the ethical norm of anonymity. Commanders and supervisors who having been informed by whistleblower about occurrences of fraternization and fail to protect the identity of the whistleblowers and provide them with the necessary protection will be considered to be a violation of this Policy and shall attract the necessary disciplinary action.

8. The Directorate will also take the necessary steps to protect whistleblowers from retaliation. It is a violation of this Policy to retaliate against whistleblowers who have reported a case of fraternization. However, if it is proven that the whistleblowing was as a result of malice, disciplinary action will be taken against that whistleblower.

### **INVESTIGATION**

9. An alleged case of fraternization may be investigated by the unit in which the accused person is/was organic at the time the said act of fraternization was committed.

  
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However, a superior headquarters may carry out such investigations if it is deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the institution. A service personnel accused of fraternization must immediately be suspended during the investigation process. The investigation may be carried out on request by JPU (where appropriate) or by an investigation committee set up by the Appropriate Superior Authority where the commander of the unit is the accused. Such investigations must be completed within two weeks.

10. The Head of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Office shall set up the rules of procedure for the investigating committee. The Gender and Equal Opportunities office has oversight over all investigations involving fraternization and should report quarterly to the RSLAF Chain of Command. Commanders at formation and unit levels should therefore report all cases of fraternization to the Directorate of GEO. Failure to report would be deemed a violation of this policy and would attract disciplinary and administrative action.

11. Commanders should seek to prevent inappropriate or unprofessional relationship through proper training and leadership by example. Should inappropriate relationship occur, commanders have available a wide range of responses. Commanders must carefully consider all the facts and circumstances in reaching a conclusion that is warranted, appropriate, and fair. Any commander or superior who reasonably believes or is aware that acts of fraternization are taking place within his command or jurisdiction and fails to take the necessary steps to ensure that the act is punished shall be guilty of dereliction of duty and will be held liable for his/her inaction under this policy.

12. Military personnel share the responsibility of maintaining professional relationships. However, in any relationship between service personnel of different grade or rank the senior member is generally in the best position to terminate or limit the extent of the relationship. Nevertheless, any members of the RSLAF may be held accountable for relationships that violate this policy.

  
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**SANCTIONS**

13. Where an act of fraternization has been proven on the balance of probabilities, the sanctions available to the appropriate superior are:

- a. Reprimand
- b. Severe reprimand
- c. Loss of Seniority
- d. Reduction of rank
- e. Administrative discharge

**STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

14. Not all contact or association between officers and soldiers is an offence. Whether the contact or association is an offence depends on the circumstances. Factors to be considered include whether the conduct has compromised the chain of command resulted in the appearance of partiality or otherwise undermined good order, discipliner authority or morale.

15. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces personnel must place loyalty to country, ethical principles and law above private gain and other personal interests. The performance of their duties should be in keeping with the highest traditions of military and civilian service to the government of Sierra Leone.

16. The highest standard of discipline and personal comportment is expected of every service personnel and they are expected to avoid conflicts of interests between their personal commercial or financial interest and their official duties.

  
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17. Notwithstanding the sanctions highlighted earlier, the highest level of discipline is expected of officers; hence the most stringent disciplinary actions should be levied on officers who commit fraternization which is of a sexual nature. Commanders, supervisors and superiors who fail to take adequate action to deal with issues of fraternization or punish offenders within their jurisdiction must be held culpable and face necessary disciplinary action.

### SCOPE OF APPLICATION

18. This policy applies to all service personnel including civilian personnel of the MOD/RSLAF.

### IMPLEMENTATION

19. The leadership of the MOD/RSLAF shall ensure that appropriate human and financial resources are allocated to facilitate the implementation of the provisions outlined in this Policy. Trainings shall be conducted for Gender Staff at the MoD, HQ JFC, Bde HQs and Units, commanders and supervisors in the MoD/RSLAF to ensure that the MOD/RSLAF service personnel and leadership are aware of the provisions of this Policy.

20. A Training of Trainers Programme will be put in place, and trainers will then conduct regular workshops to ensure that all service personnel are aware of the Policy.

21. An information campaign will be implemented to publicize the policy within the MOD/RSLAF, across government and the general public.

### ENFORCEMENT

22. The Head of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Office will establish a mechanism to monitor this Policy. The Head of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Office will be responsible for ensuring implementation of the Policy and will submit quarterly reports to the leadership who shall review and evaluate them with a view to improving performance.

  
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REVIEW OF THE POLICY

23. The policy will be reviewed from time to time; as the need arises, but within the period of three years, to ensure alignment with the dynamics within the RSLAF and the Sierra Leonean society at large.

  
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