

Sierra Leone's Judiciary holds the most events in the world!

Augustine Sorie-Sengbe Marrah Esq.
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Our nation is endowed with natural resources, far too many to enumerate in rush. A tiny nation, outclassed by the shimmering light of its resource reputation (both good and cursed). At least in the last decade, we have also overtaken all other nations of the earth in terms of the number of sundry events—workshops, trainings, launch ceremonies, conferences, etc.—that our judiciary holds in a calendar year. The judiciary is constitutionally established to administer and dispense justice but it has self-revised its TORs. It's now added “to hold workshops, trainings, conferences and launches”. No, this is not in itself wrong! What is unseemly is the frequency of these events and how disorienting it is to the machinery of justice. It seems the judiciary now holds event for virtually every issue/matter and every other week. Trainings are now in droves, to such an extent that the judiciary holds training on the last training. Not to say that every opportunity to hold an event is clutched and court proceedings in the entire country are halted. I don't think this happens anywhere else in the world! There is no annual calendar of events, the judiciary takes on anything and everything, like a ravenous child who grabs at everything.

These events apart from being annoyingly recurrent, disrupts court proceedings, obstructs justice and is transfiguring the judiciary into more of an NGO (this is not to impugn the place of NGOs in our society; it is to emphasize that the judicial character of the court system is under attack). When these events take place, usually—unless I'm mistaken—the entire court system is shut down. I don't get it; why should a workshop or training not be done over the weekend or during the judicial long vacation (from August to September) to obviate the need to interfere with court sittings. Many a time, even lawyers, get to learn about these events and the concomitant unavailability of judges and their supporting staff in the morning of the events. Litigants are usually left stranded without any courtesy paid to them. Some would have travelled from faraway to attend their court sittings only to be told when they get to the court premises that the magistrate or judge is attending a workshop, conference or training and so their matter is adjourned.

I certainly don't know what the perks of these many events are to the judiciary. I have not seen them in the last decade, maybe it's in their balance sheet but certainly not in their output. For the number of workshops, trainings, conferences and other events which the judiciary has held in the last decade, our judiciary should be atop in the sub-region or even in Africa. Sadly, the more events are held, the more gap there is between the judiciary and its sacred duty of justice. Perhaps, they need less distraction of these events and more attention on justice. Until then, our judiciary retains the trophy for holding the most events in a calendar year.