



PRESS RELEASE

Hospital Ship *Global Mercy*[™] to Stay in Sierra Leone until June 2026

Mercy Ships and Sierra Leone Ministry of Health Extend Partnership to Transform Surgical Healthcare

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE, 30 JANUARY: The Ministry of Health of Sierra Leone and international charity Mercy Ships have reaffirmed their partnership, announcing that the *Global Mercy*[™] hospital ship will remain in Freetown through June 2026.

This marks the charity's third consecutive field service in Sierra Leone and its eighth visit to the country since 1992, underscoring a shared commitment between the two parties in ensuring access to life-changing surgical healthcare for those who need it most.

In addition, an extension to the protocol agreement has also been signed reflecting a deepened collaboration between Mercy Ships and the Sierra Leonean government to support lasting change in the country's healthcare system through 2030—long after the ship is due to depart in 2026.

Since its arrival in Freetown in August 2023, the *Global Mercy* – the world's largest purpose-built civilian hospital ship – has provided over 2,470 free surgeries and trained more than

230 healthcare professionals. These efforts align with Sierra Leone's national healthcare priorities to improve access to essential surgical care and build capacity within the healthcare workforce.

The protocol addendum was signed by Dr. Austin Demby, Minister of Health, and Mr. Timothy Musa Kabba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, both of whom emphasised the trust and collaboration underpinning this partnership.

Dr. Demby said: "I think what Mercy Ships has demonstrated is what empathy does for you in the service of people. You see it in the smiles, not just of the patients, but of the patients' families and relatives who come to witness the transformation in their loved ones."

Mr. Kabba, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, added: "Over the next five years, we are hopeful that the number of beneficiaries will increase, and that Sierra Leoneans will be made wholesome to pursue their God-given opportunities."

Dr. Sandra Lako, Mercy Ships Sierra Leone Country Director, said: "We are delighted to continue providing life-changing surgeries and training on board the ship for a further 10 months. In addition, our 5-year agreement with the government of Sierra Leone affirms our joint commitment to make a long-lasting impact on the surgical care system, and we look forward to seeing the ripple effect this sustained partnership brings."

Mercy Ships partners with the Ministry of Health and the University of Sierra Leone to foster long-term developments for the country's surgical care system. Educational initiatives include sponsoring Sierra Leonean dental students at the Université Gamal Abdel Nasser de Conakry in Guinea, with graduates committed to bolstering Sierra Leone's limited dental workforce. Training programs for nurses have focused on perioperative care, anaesthesia, and sterile processing.

In 2024, Mercy Ships received accreditation from the West African College of Surgeons, allowing surgical and anesthesia residents to undertake placements aboard the *Global Mercy* to complement their in-country training programs.

Visit www.mercyships.ca for more information.

Sierra Leone Ministry of Health:

Abdul S. Brima/James T. Kallay

Email: communications@mohs.gov.sl Website: <https://mohs.gov.sl/>

Mercy Ships Canada:

Darryl Anderson, Managing Director

Email: Darryl.Anderson@mercyships.ca Website: mercyships.ca