

## Famous people from Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has produced many famous people. Here are some:

A

### Joseph Akar

**Joseph Akar** (1927–1975) was a [Sierra Leonean entertainer](#), [writer](#), and [diplomat](#). He served as Sierra Leonean [Ambassador](#) to the United States. Today, he is probably best known for **writing the music for the National Anthem**.

Akar was born in the small town of [Rotifunk](#), [Moyamba District](#) in the [Southern Province](#) of Sierra Leone, to an ethnic [Sherbro](#) mother and to a [Lebanese](#) father. Akar attended the E.U.B. primary school in Rotifunk, and proceeded to [Albert Academy](#) secondary school in [Freetown](#). After he completed his secondary education, he moved to the [United States](#) to study [commercial radio](#) and [television](#)

In 1960, Akar became the first non-[Creole](#) and the first Sherbro to be appointed Director of Broadcasting of the [Sierra Leone Broadcasting Services](#) (SLBS).

In 1963, Akar founded the National Dance Troupe to encourage Sierra Leoneans to have pride in their cultural heritage. In 1964, he and the National Dance Troupe were invited to the United States to perform at [New York World's Fair](#). They were presented with a [plaque](#) won for giving the best performance of the fair.

In late 1964, they performed at the art festival in [London](#).

In 1965 they performed at the [Negro Arts Festival](#) in [Dakar](#), [Senegal](#). In 1966, they went on a four-month [tour](#) of Europe, including performances in [Germany](#), [Sweden](#) and [France](#)

**Alimamy Pallo Bangura** is a politician in [Sierra Leone](#). Over the past 12 years, he was a member of the [Revolutionary United Front Party](#), where he replaced rebel leader [Foday Sankoh](#) following Sankoh's May 2000 arrest and 2002 electoral disqualification. His posts have included: [Ambassador](#) to the [United Nations](#) from Sierra Leone (1994-1996); [Foreign Minister](#) (1997-1998); Minister of [Energy](#) and [Power](#) (1999-2001); and Secretary General of the Revolutionary United Front Party (2002-2007). He also ran for [president](#) in 2002 alongside former cabinet minister [Peter Vandy](#), but the pair only received 1.7% of the presidential vote, while the RUF received only 2.2% of the [parliamentary](#) vote. He holds a master's degree from the [School of Oriental and African Studies](#), [University of London](#).

**Hawanatu Bangura** (born 2 January 1988) is a female sprinter from Sierra Leone. She is listed at 4'8 tall and 115 lbs. Bangura represented her country at the 2004 Summer Olympics in the 100m dash in Athens, Greece. In Athens she finished 7th in her individual heat with a time of 12.11, .97 of a second off heat winner Vida Anim of Ghana.

**Haja Zainab Hawa Bangura** (born 18 December 1959 in Yonibana) is a Sierra Leonean politician and social activist.

In 2007, Bangura became Sierra Leone's foreign minister in the government of President Ernest Bai Koroma of the All People's Congress (APC) Party. She was the second woman to serve in that post, following Shirley Gbujama who held that position from 1996 to 1997. Mrs. Bangura also served as Sierra Leone's Minister of Health and Sanitation from 2010 to 2012.

As a devoted Muslim, Mrs. Bangura took time off politics in 2009 to travel to the Holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia to participate in the 2009 Hajj pilgrimage ceremony. She was the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict from June 2012 to April 2017.

She comes from the Temne ethnic group. She was born into a family of limited means, and she attended secondary school on a scholarship that was awarded to her by the Mathora Girls Secondary School near Magburaka. She later

attended the Annie Walsh Girls Secondary School in the capital city of Freetown. Then, after graduating from Sierra Leone's Fourah Bay College, she studied in the United Kingdom for advanced diplomas in insurance. While in her early 30's, she became vice-president of one of her country's largest insurance companies. She speaks three languages: Temne, Krio, and English.

She became a social activist during the difficult period when Sierra Leone was ruled by the NPRC military junta. She began with consciousness-raising efforts among urban market women, reminding her followers that her own mother was a market woman. In 1994 she founded Women Organized for a Morally Enlightened Nation (W.O.M.E.N.), the first non-partisan women's rights group in the country. The following year she co-founded the Campaign for Good Governance (CGG). Then, using CGG as her platform, she campaigned for the holding of national elections that finally drove the NPRC from power in 1996 and restored democratic government. This was Sierra Leone's first democratic election in 25 years, and the Sierra Leonean media and the general public attributed that success largely to her efforts.

During Sierra Leone's civil war (1991–2002) Bangura spoke out forcefully against the atrocities committed against the civilian population by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and was targeted for assassination several times by that group. She also spoke against the corruption in the civilian government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the atrocities committed against civilians by government soldiers.

In 2002 she ran against Kabbah for the presidency of Sierra Leone, departing for the first time from her accustomed role as a non-partisan civil society activist. She won less than one percent of the vote, and her Movement for Progress (MOP) party failed to gain any seats in Sierra Leone's parliament. Mrs. Bangura claimed that her party's low vote count resulted from corruption in the voting system.

After the 2002 elections Bangura founded the National Accountability Group (NAG) whose mission was to fight against official corruption and to promote transparency and accountability in government. In 2006 she left Sierra Leone for neighbouring Liberia where she was appointed Director of the Civil Affairs Office in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and given responsibility for the reconstruction of 16 Liberian ministries and 30 government agencies following that country's devastating civil war. She was the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict from June 2012 to April 2017.

**Herbert Christian Bankole-Bright** (23 August 1883 – 14 December 1958) was a well-known [politician](#) in [Sierra Leone](#).

#### **Early life**

Herbert Bankole-Bright was born in [Okrika](#), [Nigeria](#), on 23 August 1883, the son of Jacob Galba Bright and his wife Letitia (née Williams), descendants of [Sierra Leone Liberated Africans](#). Bright's paternal grandfather, John Bright, was an ex-slave who had been liberated from a slave ship with his mother in 1823.

Bright was educated at the Wesleyan Boys' High School in [Freetown](#) (1898–1904), and then studied [medicine](#) at [Edinburgh University](#) (1905–10), before starting a practice in Freetown. At Edinburgh, he became "politically awake" and was involved in a number of student activist debates and policies. In November 1911 he married Addah Maude, daughter of former legislative council member T. Colenso Bishop, and they eventually had four children.

In 1918, Bright set up the Aurora newspaper, which he edited until 1925. In 1920, he was a founder member of the [National Congress of British West Africa](#), and was [elected](#) to the [Legislative Council](#) in 1924. In 1925 he inspired [Ladipo Solanke](#)'s formation of the [West African Students' Union](#), becoming a founder member. With [Ernest Beoku-Betts](#), he campaigned for increased [suffrage](#) and against [racism](#), without success.

In 1939, following a feud with [Isaac Wallace-Johnson](#), Bright supported government measures to limit the activities of Johnson's Youth Leagues. This alienated many of Bright's supporters, and he temporarily stepped down from politics.

In the 1940s, Bright founded the [National Council of Sierra Leone](#), and it became the main opposition at the [Sierra Leonean general election, 1951](#). After spending the next six years attempting to obstruct all government activities, the National Council lost all its seats at the [1957 election](#).

**Eunice Barber** (born November 17, 1974 in Freetown, Sierra Leone) is a Sierra Leonean athlete competing in heptathlon and long jump. Barber initially competed for Sierra Leone and then for France from 1999 onwards. She won the heptathlon at the World Championships in Athletics in 1999, the long jump in 2003 and finished second in heptathlon in 2003 and 2005.

**Ishmael Beah**, was born in Mogbwemo, located in the Southern Province in 1980 and is a best-selling author and human rights spokesperson, was appointed UNICEF's first Advocate for Children Affected by War on 20 November 2007.

In accepting the position Mr. Beah said, "... for me it's just a way to give me more strength to continue doing what I've already embarked on, what I've dedicated my life to doing – which is to make sure that what happened to me doesn't continue to happen to other children around the world." He pledged to give a voice and hope to children whose lives have been scarred by violence.

In 1991, the outbreak of a brutal civil war in Sierra Leone upended the lives of millions. Ishmael Beah's parents and two brothers were killed and he was forcibly recruited into the war at age 13. After two years, with UNICEF help, he was removed from the army and placed in a rehabilitation home in Freetown.

At the 1996 United Nations presentation of the Machel Report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, Mr. Beah spoke about the devastating effects of war on children in his country. In May 2000, at the UN Special Session on Children he served on a panel entitled 'Reclaiming Our Children: The UN Responds to the Plight of the Child Soldier'. The panel included then Secretary General Kofi Annan and UN agency heads.

Mr. Beah continues his advocacy to help change the course for the thousands of children still trapped in wars. He is a member of the Human Rights Watch Children's Rights Division Advisory Committee and has testified before the United States Congress.

In 2007, he founded the Ishmael Beah foundation dedicated to helping children affected by war reintegrate into society and improve their lives. By 2009, 50 student from different regions in Sierra Leone, West Africa received grants to continue and improve on their education. In 2011, the Ishmael Beah Foundation opened its first college chapter at Oberlin College. To date, the Ishmael Beah Foundation has helped more than 150 children.

In 2008, he co-founded the Network of Young People Affected by War (NYPAW) with a mission to raise awareness of the plight of children in conflict zones, advocate for an end to hostilities and provide role models for children who are currently struggling to recover from war.

Ishmael Beah is also the Vice-Chair of Narrative 4, a global organization headed up by some of the world's most renowned and influential authors, artists and community leaders who have come together to promote empathy through the exchange of stories.

**Solomon Ekuma Dominic Berewa** (born 6 August 1938) was [Vice-President of Sierra Leone](#) from May 2002 to September 2007. Standing as the candidate of the [Sierra Leone People's Party](#) (SLPP), he was defeated in the second round of the [2007 presidential election](#) by [Ernest Bai Koroma](#) of the [All People's Congress](#) (APC).

Berewa was born in 1938 in [Bumpe Chiefdom, Bo District](#).

Under President [Ahmed Tejan Kabbah](#), Berewa was [Attorney-General](#) and [Minister of Justice](#) from 1996 to 1997, when the government was ousted in a coup. After Kabbah was restored to power, Berewa was Attorney-General and Minister of Justice again from 1998 to May 2002. He then became Vice-President.

At the SLPP's national convention in [Makeni](#) on September 3–4, 2005, Berewa was selected by the SLPP as its leader and its 2007 presidential candidate. He received 291 votes, while [Charles Margai](#) received 34, [Julius Maada Bio](#) received 33, and [J. B. Dauda](#) received 28.

In the first round of the 2007 presidential election, held on August 11, Berewa took second place with 38.3% of the vote, behind Koroma, the candidate of the opposition APC, who won 44.3%. A second round between Berewa and Koroma was held on September 8, and on September 17 Koroma was declared the winner, with 54.6% of the vote

against 45.4% for Berewa. Berewa promptly conceded defeat, and Koroma was sworn in later on the same day at a ceremony at which Berewa was present.<sup>[9]</sup>

In keeping with the SLPP constitution, which requires its leader to resign if the party loses a national election under his leadership, Berewa resigned as party leader on October 17, 2007.

**Nabih Berri** (Arabic: نبيه بري; born 28 January 1938) is a Lebanese politician who has been the Speaker of the Parliament of Lebanon since 1992. He heads the Amal Movement

He was born in Bo, Sierra Leone to Lebanese Shia parents on 28 January 1938.

Berri went to school in Tebnine and Ain Ebel in southern Lebanon, then continued his education in Bint Jbeil and Jaafariya supplementary schools in southern Lebanon and later studied at the Makassed and the Ecole de la Sagesse in Beirut. He graduated with a Law degree from the Lebanese University in 1963, where he had served as the student body president, and became a lawyer at the Court of Appeals.

Brigadier (Ret.) **Julius Maada Wonie Bio** (born May 12, 1964) is a Sierra Leonean politician who was the military Head of State of Sierra Leone from January 16, 1996 to March 29, 1996 under the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) military junta government.

Bio led a military coup in Sierra Leone on January 16, 1996, ousting his close friend and the leader of the NPRC junta government, Captain Valentine Strasser, following a division within senior members of the NPRC junta. In his first public broadcast to the nation following the 1996 coup, Brigadier General Bio stated that his support for returning Sierra Leone to a democratically elected civilian government and his commitment to ending the Sierra Leone civil war were his motivations for the coup..

Bio fulfilled his promise to return Sierra Leone to democracy and handed power to Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP following the latter's victory in the 1996 presidential election. After retiring from the military in 1996, Bio moved to the United States to continue his education. Bio is a graduate of American University in Washington, D.C. with a Master's Degree in International Affairs. Bio had served as the president of International Systems Science Corporation, a consulting and investment management firm based in the United States. He is currently married and has four children.

He was born on May 12, 1964 in Tihun, a village in Sogbini Chiefdom, Bonthe District, just a few distance from the main commercial town of Matru Jong, in the Southern Province of Sierra Leone. Bio is one of 35 children born to Mende Paramount Chief Charlie Bio II of Sogbini Chiefdom Bio's father had nine wives. Bio is named after his paternal grandfather, who was also a paramount chief of Sogbini Chiefdom.

Bio began his primary education at the Roman Catholic Primary School in Tihun. After finishing his early years in primary school, Bio was sent to the town of Pujehun to live with his older sister Agnes, who was a primary school teacher in Pujehun. Bio completed his primary education at the Holy Family Primary School in Pujehun. At the completion of his primary education, Bio's older sister, Agnes, enrolled him at the Bo Government Secondary School in Bo (commonly known as Bo School), a famous boarding school and one of Sierra Leone's most widely recognised secondary schools. Bio spent seven years at Bo School, rising to become school Prefect. Bio graduated from Bo School in 1984 with A-level at age 20

**Aluspah Brewah** (born August 24, 1983 in Freetown, Sierra Leone) is an international football player. He is a striker for Hanoi F.C. in the Vietnamese Super League and also for the Sierra Leone national football team.

At 14 years of age he was a member of the Sierra Leone Athletics team. He played with Ajax Academy in Ghana and [Ashanti Gold SC](#) West Africa before departing for Europe at the age of 17 years for [Royal Antwerp FC](#) of the [Jupiler League](#). After playing in the Jupiler League for almost three seasons, Brewah moved to [Flamengo](#) in Brazil's [Campeonato Brasileiro](#) League. He stayed there for just one season, moving next to Sweden with [Hammarby IF Allsvenskan](#). He next went back to Brazil's Campeonato Brasileiro League to play for [Fortaleza EC](#) where he sign for only one season. He was given the option to extend his term, but choose to go to the Russian Premier League with [FC Mashuk-KMV Pyatigorsk](#) for one season. Next he returned to Sweden to play for [Assyriska FF](#). Brewah joined [Jiangsu Sainty](#) on a free transfer in July 2010.

**Bai Bureh** was the great ruler and military strategist who led the Temne uprising against the British in 1898.

His father was an important Loko war-chief, and his mother probably a Temne woman from the region around modern Makeni. He was sent as a young man to Gbendembu, a training school for warriors where he earned the nickname "Kebalai", meaning "one whose basket is never full" or "one who never tires of war". Kebalai became a famous war leader in the 1860s and 1870s, serving under a Soso ruler in a long Jihad to establish correct Islamic practices. In 1886, Kebalai was crowned ruler of Kasseh, a small kingdom near Port Loko, and given the royal title of Bai Bureh.



The new ruler soon gained a reputation for stubborn independence that annoyed the British administration in Freetown. On one occasion, Bai Bureh refused to recognise a peace treaty the British had negotiated with the Limba without his participation, and on another occasion, he led warriors on a raid across the border into French Guinea. When the British declared their Protectorate in 1896, they quickly issued a warrant for Bai Bureh's arrest, fearing that he would foment resistance to the new "hut tax". But the British could not capture him, and so began a long war of aggression to which Bai Bureh valiantly responded by organising a large-scale guerilla revolt that lasted for ten months. He brought warriors from several Temne states under his command, as well as some Loko, Soso, and Limba fighters and he held the initiative over the vastly more powerful British for the first four months. Bai Bureh's forces surprised the British troops time and again, subjecting them to punishing fire from behind concealed war fences, before slipping away unseen into the bush. Bai Bureh acquired a reputation for supernatural power, and was believed to be bullet-proof and to have the ability to become invisible or stay for long periods under water. The British offered a reward of £100 for information leading to Bai Bureh's capture, but no one would come forward and a colonial official wrote that Bai Bureh's men "loved their chief, and remained loyal to him to the very last".

Bai Bureh was finally captured on November 11, 1898 and taken under guard to Freetown, where crowds gathered around his quarters day and night to gain a glimpse of the great man. The British sent Bai Bureh in exile to the Gold Coast (Ghana), but brought him back in 1905, reinstating him as a Chief of Kasseh. Sierra Leone's greatest hero died in 1908.