



Sierra Leone – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 18 March 2010

Information on whether English is commonly spoken in Makani, Sierra Leone.

Specific information on languages spoken in the town of Makani (Makeni) in Sierra Leone was not available to sources consulted by the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints.

An entry headed “Major languages” in the *BBC News* country profile for Sierra Leone lists:

“English, Krio (Creole language derived from English) and a range of African languages.” (BBC News (28 January 2010) *Country profile: Sierra Leone*)

A paragraph headed “Languages” in the *CIA World Factbook* entry for Sierra Leone states:

“English (official, regular use limited to literate minority), Mende (principal vernacular in the south), Temne (principal vernacular in the north), Krio (English-based Creole, spoken by the descendants of freed Jamaican slaves who were settled in the Freetown area, a lingua franca and a first language for 10% of the population but understood by 95%)” (Central Intelligence Agency (4 March 2010) *The World Factbook – Sierra Leone*)

In *Language and National Identity in Africa*, in a chapter titled “The Languages of Sierra Leone” (paragraph 7.3.1 “Overview”), authors Akíntúndé B. Oyètádé and Victor Fashole-Luke state:

“Sierra Leone is a multilingual country and most of the population is either bilingual or multilingual. English is the official language of the country and is the primary, dominant language in education, government administration, law, written communication, and all other formal domains of life. It is also the language of status and prestige, being a symbol of high education. In addition to English, and though the country is witnessing a gradual dying out of certain of its less spoken languages, no less than sixteen Sierra Leonean languages are regularly used by their L1 (i.e. mother tongue/first language) speakers.” (Oyètádé, B. Akíntúndé and Fashole-Luke, Victor (31 August 2007) *Sierra Leone: Krio and the Quest for National Integration*. In: Simpson, Andrew, (ed.), *Language and National Identity in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.125)

In paragraph 7.3.3 the authors state:

“Krio, by way of considerable contrast, is a language which is the mother tongue of just 10 per cent of the population (World Bank data, 2004), largely confined to the comparatively small, (though economically very important) Western Area, but which has developed dramatically into the lingua

franca of the whole country, known by members of every ethnic group in Sierra Leone and used for inter-ethnic communication by as much as 95 per cent of the population, in trading, local business, and a wide variety of other, informal contexts in everyday life. Krio has now become so popular and commands such importance and significance in Sierra Leone that even foreign nationals regularly attempt to learn it.” (Ibid, pp.127-128)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

References:

BBC News (28 January 2010) *Country profile: Sierra Leone*
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Sources Consulted:

BBC News
CIA
Ethnologue
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Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database