

Issa Belmond Thullah

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration (in progress) L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs Virginia Commonwealth University	2024 - 2028
Certificate in Public Management Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs Syracuse University, New York	2022
Master of Arts in Applied Security and Strategy Strategy and Security Institute University of Exeter (United Kingdom)	2020
Master of Development Management Department of Governance and Leadership University of Sierra Leone	2019
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science Department of Political Science University of Sierra Leone	2014

STATISTICAL AND COMPUTER SKILLS

- Microsoft Office Suite: MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint
- Stata (Data Entry & Analysis)
- GIS

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- i. Emergency Management
- ii. Public Policy Development
- iii. Homeland Security
- iv. Equity and Social Justice
- v. Administrative discretion

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATION

Kalokoh, A., **Thullah, I.B.**, & Louis-Charles, H. (accepted). To AI or Not to AI: A Snapshot of AI Policy among Emergency Management Journals. *Journal of Emergency Management*.

PAPER UNDER REVIEW

Thullah, I.B. (under review). Discretion and Inequity in Policing: A Decision-Theoretic Analysis of Street-Level Policing in the U.S. *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration*.

Thullah, I.B. (under review). Co-Producing Epidemic Response: How Institutional Preparedness and Community Health Knowledge Interacted During Sierra Leone's Ebola Outbreak. *International Journal of Social Science Research*.

Thullah, I.B. (under review). Border Porosity and National Security: Socio-economic Drivers and Consequences — The Sierra Leone Case. *Journal of Borderland Studies*.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

Worked as a research assistant on a study titled “Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emergency warning systems,” led by Dr. Hans Louis-Charles at the L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Fall 2025.

Worked with the Research Institute for Social Equity at Virginia Commonwealth University on a project examining how climate change and disasters affect historically marginalized communities near critical infrastructure in Emporia and Charles City County, Virginia, Summer 2025.

Worked as a research assistant on a utility-scale solar project led by Dr. Damian Pitt at the L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, in Fall 2024.

Assisted with research on a disaster recovery study led by Dr. Hans Louis-Charles at the L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Fall 2024.

THESIS PAPERS

| 2014-2020

Thullah, I.B. (2020). Socio-economic Consequences of Border Porosity on Sierra Leone National Security. MStrat thesis, Strategy and Security Institute, University of Exeter.

Thullah, I.B. (2014). Northwest vs. Southeast Divide in The Politics of Sierra Leone 1996-2007. Undergraduate Thesis Submitted to The Department of Political Science, University of Sierra Leone.

PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH PAPERS

| 2016-2022

Pollution of Key Rivers—A Threat to Socio-economic and Health Security. Security threat assessment paper, NSA 010/22, August 2022.

Challenges in quarantine homes could hinder the fight against COVID-19 in Sierra Leone. Security threat assessment paper, NSA 003/21, April 2021.

Challenges affecting health service delivery. Security threat assessment paper, NSA 004/19, June 2019.

The Spate of sexual assault at detention centers: A threat to human security. Security threat assessment paper, NSA 002/18, January 2018.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS | 2024-2025

HSEP-310-001, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, Undergraduate, L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Fall 2024 and Spring 2025.

HSEP-370-001, Disaster Response and Recovery, Undergraduate, L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2025.

URSP 350, Great Cities of the World, Undergraduate, L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2025.

GUEST LECTURES | 2024-2026

HSEP-370-001, Disaster Response and Recovery, Undergraduate, L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2026.

-**Topic:** Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023

-**Topic:** Disaster Recovery After the 2017 Mudslide and Floods in Freetown

HSEP-310-001, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, Undergraduate, L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Fall 2024 and Spring 2025.

-**Topic:** Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023

PADM 601, Social Equity and Public Policy Analysis, Graduate, L. Douglas Wilder School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2025.

-**Topic:** Discretionary Biases in Street-Level Bureaucracy: Decision-Theoretic Analysis
(A case study of street-level policing in the U.S.)

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

2021–2024 **Team Lead, Research and Assessment Directorate, ONS, Sierra Leone**

- Developed and implemented security policies on national development priorities
- Prepared security threat assessments to inform policy directives on disasters and other emergencies
- Conducted research and produced security updates on economic security, criminal justice, health, and environmental threats.
- Conducted research and developed an up-to-date tracker on security matters in the African region

2020–2024 **Manager, National Situation Room, ONS, Sierra Leone**

- Managed the National Situation Room’s response to disasters/emergencies
- Supervised the collation and analysis of reports on disasters/emergencies

- Coordinated personnel from the military, police, fire force, and correctional services for effective disaster response
- Produced daily security highlights and weekly national security situation reports on disasters/emergencies
- Conducted research on hazards that could undermine national security

COMMUNITY SERVICE

2024–date Chair, Programming Committee, ASPA Central Virginia Chapter

- Develop and organize programs related to the chapter’s purpose.
- Lead event planning and coordination, webinars, and conference participation.
- Work with the Communications and Outreach Committee for promotion and marketing or as appropriate.

2023 Center for Environmental Justice and Climate Change, Sierra Leone

- Organized community sensitization programs on harmful environmental practices
- Advocated for climate-sensitive government policies
- Conducted beach cleanups, tree planting, and established nature clubs in schools

2022 Syracuse Samaritan Center & Clear Path for Veterans, Syracuse, New York

- Assisted U.S. Army veterans at Clear Path for Veterans in Syracuse, New York
- Distributed hot meals to the homeless and needy at Syracuse’s Samaritan Center
- Participated in revitalizing Thornden Park as part of planning efforts in Syracuse

2020 to date – Race Equity Alumni Advisory Board, University of Exeter

- Assisted the University in achieving its goals related to the Race Equality Charter Mark and the accompanying action plan
- Provided guidance and support to the University regarding Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic scholarships as part of the Success for All Strategy Group

2014–2015 – National Ebola Response Center (117 Call Center), Sierra Leone

- Managed public calls and reports on Ebola Virus Disease
- Supervised the collation and analysis of data related to the Ebola Virus Disease
- Prepared health briefs for the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and its partners

2013–2015 – Political Science Society, University of Sierra Leone

- Served as President and teaching assistant
- Supervised students’ projects and dissertations
- Developed learning materials for students
- Designed activities to enhance the learning engagement of students

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Thullah, IB. (March 2026) ▪ “Medicaid Expansion and Immigrant Enrollment Coverage” – Graduate Research Talks, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Thullah, IB. (November 2025) ▪ “Medicaid Expansion and Immigrant Enrollment Coverage” – APPAM Conference, Seattle, Washington.

Thullah, IB. (June 2025) ▪ “Discretionary Biases in Service Delivery by Street-Level Bureaucrats” – Social Equity Leadership Conference, Rockville, Maryland.

Thullah, IB. (July 2022) ▪ “Collective Impact Approach to Environmental Protection and Climate Change” – Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit.

Thullah, IB. (January 2020) ▪ “Disaster mitigation, response, and adaptation” – Horton Command and Staff College, Leicester Square, Sierra Leone.

MAJOR TRAINING COMPLETED

Social Vulnerability and Disasters **January 2026**
William Averette Anderson Fund for Hazard and Disaster Mitigation, Education, and Research (Bill Anderson Fellowship)

Cyber Security Fundamentals **March 2024**
Milestone Technology College, Institute of Commercial Management, England, United Kingdom.

Public Management **June 2022**
Mandela Washington Fellowship, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University

Senior Strategic Leadership Program (SSLP) **July 2021**
Defense Academy of the United Kingdom

Understanding Development Impacts **June 2020**
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and global challenges, by the Commonwealth Commission.

MAJOR AWARDS, HONORS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND/OR SCHOLARSHIPS

2026 – Outstanding Doctoral Student Award, L. Douglas Wilder School, VCU.

2025 – Dominion Justice in Society Scholarship Award, L. Douglas Wilder School, VCU.

2025 – William Averette Anderson Fund for Hazard and Disaster Mitigation, Education, and Research (Bill Anderson Fellowship)

2023 – Certificate of Competent Instructor, Peace Mission Training Center, National Youth Service, Sierra Leone

2022 – Mandela Washington Fellowship, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University

2019 – Commonwealth Scholarship Award, University of Exeter, United Kingdom

SELECTED MEMBERSHIPS

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)
American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)
William Averette Anderson Fund for Hazard and Disaster Mitigation, Education, and Research (BAF)
Graduate Student Association, Virginia Commonwealth University
Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)
Political Science Society Sierra Leone
Commonwealth Alumni Association
Sierra Leone-United States Alumni Association
Center for Environmental Justice and Climate Change, Sierra Leone

REFERENCES

Dr. Harper-Anderson
Academic Director, PPAD
Virginia Commonwealth University
Phone: 804-828-7390
Email: elharperande@vcu.edu

Dr. Martin Robson
Academic Director, Strategy and Security
University of Exeter
Phone: +44 1392 725076
Email: M.Robson@exeter.ac.uk