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## **LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT STATEMENT ON NEW VISION PUBLICATION OF 11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2015**

TO PLENARY OF 17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2015

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members

I wish to bring to your attention, a matter that is of interest to all of us and indeed impinges on the image of the House as a whole. This relates to our media relations and how events in the House are sometimes reported wrongly.

On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November – exactly a week ago, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Works, Housing and Infrastructure presented two reports to the House on oversight exercises, including notably, the OAU Villas at Hill Station, overseen by SALHOC.



*Hon. Ibrahim Bundu Making a Statement*

One of the key issues was the precarious position of SALHOC due to, among other things, heavy indebtedness by occupants of those villas. The crux of the matter, however, is that one of our friends – the New Vision newspaper on the next day, Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> unjustly and erroneously blamed MPs for the huge debt when in fact only few sitting MPs are in that category, owing an

infinitesimal amount as compared to the large total of Le 1.3 billion owed by so many others, including prominent businessmen and public officials. They now say, "MPs Owe SALHOC Le1.3 billion."

We took up the matter with the Publisher and the Editor then saw reason to recant. In the corrigenda of Friday 13<sup>th</sup> and Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November, they offered their apologies with deep regret. They ought to be partners in development and we hope it remains that way.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members

Before I take my seat, I wish to give two messages. A quick one to our few colleague MPs who need to even up the books at SALHOC and avoid being unnecessarily blackmailed; but also to our friends in the Parliamentary Press Gallery. We welcome your coverage of events in the House, but let those reports be factual and balanced. Remember you are also citizens of this country.

Thank you.