



OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT BUILDING
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL
FREETOWN
Tel: 232-076-615187
E-mail: admin@parliament.gov.sl



PRESS RELEASE
25TH APRIL, 2016

PAC QUIZZES AUDITEES IN NORTH, EAST, AND SOUTHERN COUNCILS

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC), chaired by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah has returned from a week-long oversight engagement in partnership with Audit Service Sierra Leone (ASSL) with the Councils in the North, East, and Southern parts of the country in respect of the Auditor General's report of 2014.

The Deputy Chairman of PAC, Hon. Komba E. Kodoeyoma in his opening remarks informed auditees about the purpose of the public hearings, noting probity and judicious use of funds allocated for development. He furthered saying that they "needed staff that are capacitated enough to run the affairs of Councils in line with the expectations of our development partners". He also reminded them of the rights, privileges, and immunities of Parliament that are "equivalent to the High Court of Judicature". He also said that "PAC neither negotiates, nor compromises on any issue that relates to withholding taxes, a major source of revenue for the Government of Sierra Leone, through the National Revenue Authority". Whilst encouraging the Councils to improve on efficient service delivery, he however opined that "they are not capable to carry out the duties that had been assigned to them". He concluded by saying that "we are trying to ensure that Councils do not fail".

The Makeni City Council (MCC) has finally submitted documentation to ASSL for an outstanding Le 9.1 Million, subject to the verification of the audit team. The PAC has also given MCC six months to regularize and obtain documentations for all its landed property.

The PAC has ordered the Kailahun District Council to produce the necessary documents relating to the disposal of three vehicles that amount to Le 37 Million, which according to ASSL were disposed but the proceeds were not banked.

The PAC was unable to quiz the Koidu New Sembehun City Council because all their documents are currently in the hands of the ACC, and most of their officials are on suspension, pending an investigation. However, the PAC has also noted with concern that frequent transfer of core staff in councils is gravely inhibiting the work of Councils and ASSL.

The Deputy Auditor General, Mr. Tamba Momoh informed PAC that “Kenema City Council is not featured in the 2014 Auditor General’s report, because they had not received their Financial Statement for 2013”. He promised that they would be included in the next audit as ASSL has already received their financial statements for 2013, 2014 and 2015.

The PAC has also ordered Bonthe District Council to convey to Freetown, items such as motor bikes, photocopier, lister generators etc. that were not made available to ASSL for inspection.

Out of Le 74.4 Million withholding taxes, the PAC has recovered Le 57 Million, leaving a balance of 17.4 Million that would be paid at the end of May. The PAC again recovered Le 6.3 Million NASSIT deductions for staff working at the Council.

On the charge of payment without supporting documents by Moyamba District Council, the PAC has also recovered Le 13.4 Million, and given them two weeks to regularize withholding taxes to the tune of Le 3.3 Million.

The Bo City Council has paid an outstanding Le 23.3 Million withholding taxes, and the PAC has given them up to the 6th of May, 2016 to regularize the issue of school fees subsidy amounting to Le 245.5 Million.

All the funds recovered by the PAC in respect of the receipts and payment schedules submitted are subject to the authentication and verification of Audit Service Sierra Leone.