



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
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Parliament Adopts Recommendations on Kenema City Council's Budget

Parliament on Tuesday the 21st July 2015, unanimously adopted Kenema City Council's (KCC) budgetary estimates for the fiscal year, 2015. In this light, the House has finally released the budget for 2015 which was previously withheld.

It was withheld because they failed to submit and defend their budgetary estimates for 2015. Following this, the Mayor of KCC, Joseph Kelfala made an unsubstantiated claim of Le 20 Million bribe demand, in an interview with 98.1 fm, as the reason why the budget estimates of KCC were not approved by Parliament. Parliament then committed the matter to the ACC to investigate two of her MPs allegedly named in the bribery scandal. The KCC was subjected to rigorous scrutiny in which a lot of discrepancies were unearthed in the eyes of the public, also took oath before a certified Commissioner- of- Oath on the authenticity of their final documents, before the Finance Committee finally recommended to the House that their budget estimates for 2015 be released immediately in the interest of the people of Kenema.

Presenting the budget for Parliament's approval, Hon. Hassan B. Sheriff, Chairman of the Finance and Economic Development Committee in Parliament, explained to the House that the Kenema City Council's budget was before the House for the second time. He noted that the City Council was before the Committee for four times and failed to present proper financial records to the Committee.

During the debate on the budget, MPs from Kenema District appreciated the work of the Finance Committee, and noted the wrong doings of the City Council for failing to adhere to their responsibilities.

The Minority Leader, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai, welcomed the report from the Finance Committee and called for the Anti-Corruption Commission to deliver the report on their findings on the alleged bribery scandal which surrounded the Council and Parliament. The Leader of the House, Hon. Ibrahim Bundu while appreciating the work of the Finance Committee, touched on the role of the Internal Auditors in the Councils, which, he noted should be pivotal, but said unfortunately they were not being respected. On the ACC, Hon. Bundu, noted that Parliament is under obligation to do her work, whilst the ACC is expected to do her as the matter had been committed to them.

Speaker of the House, Hon. SBB Dumbuya welcomed the outcome of the debate and appreciated the Kenema MPs for not taking a partisan stance on the matter.

In another development, Parliament has also ratified the license agreement at the Queen Elizabeth II Quay by and among Sierra Leone Ports Authority and the Government of Sierra Leone, represented by the Minister of Transport and Aviation and the National Commission for Privatization and Nectar Group Limited, Nectar Sierra Leone Bulk Terminal Limited, dated 24th June, 2015.

Presenting the agreement to Parliament, the Minister of Transport and Aviation, Mr. Balogun Koroma dilated on the benefits government will be deriving from the agreement, whilst Members of Parliament welcomed the initiative and urged the Ministry to do more to improve key sectors in the country.