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PRESS RELEASE
10th September, 2015

PARLIAMENT COMMITS BLADE ISSUE TO IMC

The Parliament of Sierra Leone on the 10th September, 2015 after its initial proceedings on its summoned to Newspaper, in Committee Room 1 in Parliament, committed the matter to the IMC. Journalists Abdul Fonti and Bampia Bundu were summoned for a satirical article written on Parliament for the passage of the statutory instrument on the new cost to obtain a biometric Sierra Leonean passport.

A battery of journalists was in full attendance to show solidarity with their colleagues, Abdul Fonti and Bampia Bundu, including Dr. Sylvia O. Blyden, Kelvin Lewis, and Umaru Fofanah. The Chair of IMC and other Commissioners were in attendance.

MPs and staff were also in full attendance. The usual Parliamentary protocols were observed in Committee Room No 1 in Parliament as was done for public hearings.

The statement below was read by the Leader of the House, Hon. Ibrahim Bundu.



IMC Commissioners and Other Journalists in attendance at Committee Room One

ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTIONS OF PARLIAMENT

The Parliament of Sierra Leone as established by law under the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone is the supreme legislative body in the country. Members of Parliament as the law also provides, being the representatives of the people, are obliged to maintain the dignity and image of the House; cognizant of their acts in and out of Parliament.

AN OPEN PARLIAMENT AND THE MEDIA

Standing Order 80 of the Sierra Leone Parliament, through the general permission of the Hon. Speaker of Parliament, grants independent journalists access to cover and report the activities of the House of Representatives responsibly.

Section 11 of the same 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone obligates the mass media to highlight the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people.

Section 25 (1) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone guarantees freedom of expression and the press, having due regard for Section 25 (2) that the aforementioned freedom be enjoyed responsibly in the interests of public safety, public order, and the protection of reputations, rights, and freedoms of other persons.



Leadership of Parliament Presiding at the Hearing

Section 103 (a & b) of the same 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone provides for immunity of publication of the proceedings of Parliament, unless it is shown that that the publication was effected maliciously or otherwise in want of good faith.

The Parliament of Sierra Leone as part of our post-conflict recovery stride enacted the Independent Media Commission Act, 2000 to regulate the conduct of the press in the country.

The matter now rests in the court of the IMC.