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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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### **PARLIAMENT AMENDS THE 1991 CONSTITUTION FOR THE CONDUCT OF BYE-ELECTIONS**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2016 passed into law, with a slight amendment, the Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016, to allow for use of the existing voters' register for the conduct of bye-elections in Constituencies 001 and 050 respectively.

In piloting the Bill in Parliament, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Joseph F. Kamara said among other things that the Bill seeks to provide for the use of the existing voters' register, which should have been reviewed and revised at least once in every three years. "The amendment will warrant NEC to conduct the bye-elections in those Constituencies as established by law," he said. In responding to MPs' comments, he also said that "the amendment will necessitate the filling of the gaps, and affirmed that both the Legislature and the Executive do have a moral responsibility to the people of Sierra Leone".

During the course of the debate, Hon. Daniel Koroma described "the Bill as clear and non-controversial with the view of serving a nationalistic purpose". He also said that "laws are made with the view that they can be amended when necessary, noting that it is good for our legislative process". He said also that "the Bill will allow for the conduct of the respective bye-elections created by death or those in search of greener pastures". "Those people" he added, are "Sierra Leoneans who deserve representation in Parliament to articulate their views and aspirations in the governance of the State".

Hon. Umar Paran Tarawally also said that "laws are made by men to conform with the status quo, whilst saying that the existing voters' register should be used, devoid of police clearance in election administration, that creates room for suspicion and tension in case of missing identity cards". This he described as a "bad practice" and noted that "the police are neither an extension, nor an organ of the National Electoral Commission (NEC).

On the other hand, Hon. Alhassan Kamara saw the police as constitutionally mandated to provide security by protecting lives and property in the country, and noted that any act of controversy during the conduct of those bye-elections will be met head-on by the police.

Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai, Minority Leader of Parliament told MPs that "the last review of the voters' register should have been done by NEC in 2015, but ebola prevented that

from happening for all its attendant reasons at least once in every three years". She explained that "the amendment is aimed at allowing NEC to use the existing voters' register for the conduct of those by-elections, which she also challenged, would be won by the SLPP".

Hon. Ibrahim Bundu, Majority Leader of Parliament assured that "NEC is going to use the existing voters' register and not another register, for the conduct of those by-elections". He also noted that it is expedient to amend the law as and when necessary".