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On Corruption Allegation, Kenema Mayor Apologized to Parliament

The Mayor of Kenema City Council (KCC), Joseph Samba Kelfala has on Tuesday 24th November, 2015 apologized to Legislators in the Well of Parliament on the Le 20 Million bribery scandal allegation proven otherwise by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

Last year, the KCC Mayor publicly accused Legislators in a 98.1 radio interview that their budget was withheld because they refused to pay Le 20 Million bribe. However, after several interventions and investigations, the Parliament of Sierra Leone at the close of the year, considering the interests and concerns of the people of Kenema strenuously approved that budget for the development of Kenema. This matter was committed to and investigated by the ACC and the conclusion stated that Parliament was not guilty as alleged. Therefore, it was based on the outcome of ACC's investigations that Parliament demanded an open apology with which the Mayor of KCC complied and was released accordingly by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah.

In making his submission in Parliament, the Mayor said that he had consulted his lawyer for advice on the conclusion of that matter that was referred to the ACC on his alleged bribe scandal with Parliament. He said Parliament was not found guilty by ACC, the body which has the mandate to inquire into corruption and he later described it as "credible" and "independent", before he tendered his unreserved apologies on behalf of himself and the Kenema City Council to the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

In another development, the newly elected Member of Parliament for Constituency 107, Hon. Francis Emmanuel Kowa, has taken the oath of office for Members of Parliament in the Third Schedule of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. The oath was administered by the Clerk of Parliament, Mr. Ibrahim Sesay, whilst he was accompanied by MPs representing APC in Parliament. The Majority Whip in Parliament, Hon. Cluade Kamanda took him to his seat amidst applause. Hon. Kowa polled the highest votes and was returned as the winner in the bye –election that was recently conducted in Constituency 107, following the death of Hon. Dr. Bliss Osho-Williams.

Parliament has also enacted a bill entitled the "Sierra Leone Local Content Agency Act 2015", after it had been presented to the House by the Acting Minister of Trade and Industry, Madam Mabinty Daramy

The bill after it had gone through the first and seconding readings and was later committed to the Legislative Committee for further scrutiny; the bill was finally passed by Parliament with some amendments.

The object of the Bill is to establish the Sierra Leone Local Content Agency to provide for the development of Sierra Leonean content in a range of sectors of the economy such as industrial, manufacturing ,mining petroleum, marine resources, agriculture, transportation, maritime, aviation, hotel and tourism, procurement of goods and services; public works, construction and energy sectors; to promote the ownership and control of productive sectors in the economy by citizens of sierra Leone; and to provide for other related matters.