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PARLIAMENT PAYS GLOWING TRIBUTES TO HON. JO COX

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 23rd June, 2016 paid glowing tributes in respect of the late Hon. Jo Cox, an opposition MP of the Labour Party in England, who was murdered in cold blood whilst doing constituency surgeries, presumably for her belief and opinion in matters of State.

During the course of extending their condolences to the UK Government and the bereaved family, particularly her husband and children, they called on the UK Government to use all available investigative tools to bring the perpetrators to book, whilst calling for global security for MPs, whose jobs are critically important for democratic furtherance and sustainability.

In moving the motion, before it was carried by the House, Majority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Bundu said that “Jo Cox was a vibrant 42 year old opposition MP of the Labour Party in England that was stabbed thrice, whilst describing her gruesome death, this June as a sad day for democracy”.

Minority Leader of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai whilst seconding the motion on the tributes of late Hon. Cox “informed new MPs that came in 2012 that similar motions had been moved before in terms of showing solidarity to MPs in similar circumstances, whilst cautioning them that the tributes are not meant to support her position in the BREXIT”. She also said that “global security for MPs in the line of their constitutional duties should be given due consideration as an emerging issue”.

Contributing to the motion, Hon. Alhassan Kamara “said that the late Hon. Cox was born in 1974, elected to the UK Parliament in 2015, and murdered few months later in 2016, whilst noting that every MP should be worried, and that an attack on one MP should be seen as an attack on all, regardless of place, time, and region”.

Hon. Umu Dankay Bangura said “that Jo Cox was killed in the line of duty, whilst performing a job she was elected to do”. She also condemned what she termed as “political violence against women, which she thought is only existing in Africa”. She furthered that “women’s vulnerability regarding political violence should be prevented in the next general elections in Sierra Leone”.

Whilst expressing condolences to the bereaved family, Hon. Veronica K. Sesay also “spoke on women’s vulnerability in politics, noting the brutal death of Hon. Cox in her constituency in the UK, and called for the security of MPs, especially against intending aspirants who want to replace them in Parliament at all cost”.

Focal Person of the Parliament of Sierra Leone to the IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union) Hon. Jariatu K. Smith, whilst paying tributes to late Hon. Cox described her as “a graduate from Cambridge, an advocate for refugees, and a firebrand MP”. She also called “for global security for MPs, and referred to the incident as an eye-opener regarding the provision of security for MPs in Sierra Leone”.

Hon. Hassan Sesay expressed his condolences to her bereaved family, whilst describing “her murderer as wicked and referred to the incident as a test on democracy”.

Hon. Francis Kowa also “called for security of every MP, and described the death of Jo Cox as an emerging issue against democracy, whilst noting that divergent opinions should not result in the death of anyone”.

Hon. Alfred B. Katta described the late Hon. Cox as “a former NGO worker that had gained international reputation before she became a politician, whilst calling on MPs to come together and promote democracy”.

Hon. Mabinty H. Bangura said that “Hon. Cox had passion for refugees, whilst noting that in a democracy, people should not be reprimanded for expressing their opinions, be they positive or negative, and also called for the security of all MPs”.

Hon. Senesie Fawundu observed that “indiscriminate killings do take place in the UK, and that her death is yet to be proven is as a result of her position in the BREXIT”.

Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai recalled “when the Head of the opposition in UK referred to Hon. Cox as a rising star and a promising MP, and later described MPs as endangered species, who are most times scolded for doing their duties, particularly when exercising their inalienable right to freedom of expression”. She also noted that the “vulnerability of MPs both in and out of Parliament in Sierra Leone regarding security, and gave notice to the Inspector General of Police to explain why he is unable to provide security for each MP, cognizant of them providing security to businesses and premises of private individuals”.

Hon. Ibrahim Bundu requested the House to rise and a moment of silence was observed in respect of the death of Hon. Cox. He called on the “British Government to bring the perpetrators to book, whilst calling on the international community to provide security for the representatives of the people”.

The presiding Speaker, the Rt. Hon. Chernor R.M Bah put the motion and it was carried by the House. He later described the “incident as a test on democracy, whose reoccurrence should be forestalled and perpetrators punished”.