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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 provided, 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 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.

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 SUMMON: REFERENCE; “SHAMEFUL! RUBBER STAMP PARLIAMENT” PUBLISHED IN THE BLADE NEWSPAPER ON TUESDAY 01ST SEPTEMBER, 2015

Clause 1 of the IMC Code of Practice provides for accuracy that newspapers and periodicals must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted materials, without the exemption of pictures. Reasonable efforts are to be made to check and cross-check the accuracy of stories before publication.

Section 3 subsection 3 of the Public Order Act, 1965 frowns at anyone who insults by using offensive, obscene writing, print, or other representation such as innuendo or imputation aimed at discrediting the reputation of others.

Section 32 (1,2 & 3) of the 1965 Public Order Act, also frowns at any person who publishes false statement, rumour or report which is likely to injure the credit or reputation of Sierra Leone or the Government.

CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT

Section 95 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone provides for Contempt of Parliament cognizant of any act or omission which affronts the dignity of Parliament, or which tends to produce such result whether directly or indirectly.

CONCLUSION

On behalf of the Hon. Speaker, the Leadership, and the administration of Parliament, this matter is hereby committed to the IMC, being the professional arm and regulator of the media landscape created by an Act of Parliament to look into it and report to Parliament.

Hon. Ibrahim Bundu

Majority Leader of the House