

*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**(HANSARD)**

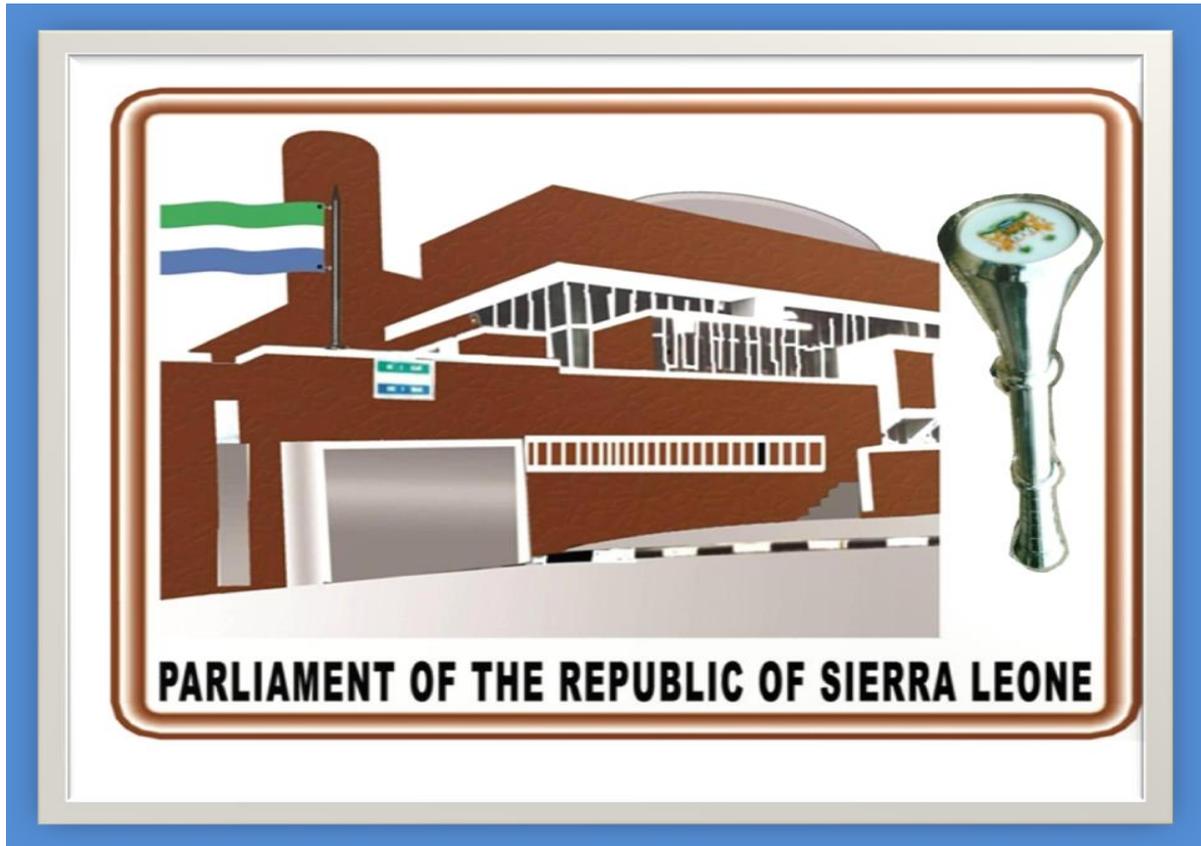
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2014**

*SESSION – 2013/2014*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

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**VOLUME: II**

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Second Meeting of the Second Session of the Fourth Parliament  
Of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.

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## **C O N T E N T S**

### **I. PRAYERS**

### **II. PROCLAMATION-THE MAJORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

PURSUANT TO SECTION 29(3) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE, ACT NO. 6 OF 1991, I MOVE THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE DECLARATION OF A STATE OF PUBLIC EMERGENCY MADE BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, AND PUBLISHED IN THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE SIERRA LEONE GAZETTE, VOLUME CXLV, NO. 41, DATED 31<sup>ST</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2014.



*THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE*

**Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House**

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**SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING  
OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT  
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.**

*The House met at 10:00 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.*

**I. PRAYERS**

*[The Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Sulaiman Sesay, Read the Prayers].*

*[The Speaker, Hon. Sheku Badara Basiru Dumbuya, in the Chair].*

The House was called to Order

### **III. PROCLAMATION**

THE MAJORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS  
PURSUANT TO SECTION 29(3) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE, ACT  
NO.6 OF 1991,

**HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you  
the Proclamation made by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma:

WHEREAS by subsection (1) of Section 29 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, (Act  
No.6) of 1991, it is provided that whenever, in the opinion of the President a state of  
public emergency has commenced, the President may at any time, by Proclamation  
which shall be published in the Gazette, declare that a situation exists which, if  
allowed to continue, may lead to a state of emergency in any part or the whole of  
Sierra Leone.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DR ERNEST BAI KOROMA, President of the Republic of Sierra  
Leone, Supreme Head of State, Grand Commander of the Order of the Republic and  
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone, having regard to the  
Ebola epidemic that currently afflicts parts of the country, DO HEREBY by this  
Proclamation declare that a State of Public Emergency exists in the whole of the  
Republic of Sierra Leone with effect from the 30<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2014.

In consequence, therefore, be it resolved that pursuant to Section 29(3) of the  
Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6 of 1991, I move that this Honourable House  
ratify the declaration of a state of public emergency made by His Excellency the  
President and published in the supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette, volume  
CXLV NO.41, dated 31<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2014.

*(Question Proposed)*

**HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA (Chief Whip):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr  
Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand with heavy heart to contribute to the motion  
before this House. I stand with heavy heart, in the sense that our country is going  
through a health war, a war with an invisible bullet-the virus. As a nation and as a  
people, we are mourning the death of a front line fighter, Dr Umar Khan. There are

other health workers who have lost their lives in the fight against the Ebola Virus. As a Parliament, we have done our best and we will continue to do our best to contain this deadly virus. The motion before this Parliament this morning is not strange to us at all. This is because we called for the declaration of a state of public health emergency during the debate on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2014. Honourable Members could recalled that during the debate on the Ebola on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2014, Members of this Honourable House did call that a state of Public Health Emergency was eminent; therefore, it is not a surprise to us at all. What we have here this morning is a clear indication that His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has listened to our call. I believe this is not anything that is controversial for this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must refer Honourable Members to Section 29(5) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. As we go through this exercise, and as we will be given the mandate to do so, we want to caution that we make the necessary regulations that would be put in place in the best interest of Sierra Leoneans. As we go through this, absolute power would be vested in His Excellency the President, for implementation. Comparatively, during the civil war, we were opportuned to see our enemies and we were hearing the gunshots somewhere. Also, during the civil conflict in this country, people travelled from one country to the other to seek refuge. The Ebola war is very different from the civil war. We want to call on every Sierra Leonean, both within and without to know that this is not a political war. This is a war for every Sierra Leonean. We need to come together as a people and as a nation and put every effort together in order to get rid of this deadly virus. Now, our children are not going to school and the colleges are still closed. We do not know when they will be reopened.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to call on each and every Member of Parliament to provide leadership in his/ her constituency. We also want to call on the Ministry of Health and the parliamentary Committee on Health to see how best they can come together to empower Members of Parliament, so that they can provide robust leadership in the fight against the Ebola in our various constituencies. We are prepared for it as a nation, because we are the people's representatives. We are

prepared for it and we have started it. We will continue to do our good work for our people. So, the motion before us is not strange to us at all. Every Member of Parliament should support the ratification of the motion before the House. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before I call on the next contributor, let me make this clarification. Certain Members of Parliament have been asking a question and the question is not irrelevant. It is perfectly in place. Normally, when motions are put, they must be seconded, but according to our Standing Orders and the Constitution of Sierra Leone, there are certain motions that do not need a seconder. The motion before us today is one of such motions that does not need a seconder.

**HON. PATRICK FOYAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand before this Honourable House to lend my voice on the President's proclamation of a State of Public Emergency. I am doing this on behalf of the people of Constituency 001, Kailahun District. Mr Speaker, when I was in primary school, my teacher used to say, "*A stitch in time saves nine.*" This House could recall that I was in Liberia when the Ebola disease broke out in Liberia. Upon my return to Sierra Leone, I stood in front of this House and made mention of the situation in Liberia. I told this Honourable House that Ebola was a serious disease and the President of Liberia, Madam Helen Johnson-Sirleaf, had declared a state of public emergency in order to contain the disease. The reason why I mentioned that to this House was because I had the firm belief that Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea are interrelated and we have common destinies. Whatever affects Liberia will affect Sierra Leone and Guinea. Regrettably, two months later, we had our first case of Ebola in Constituency 003, Kissy Teng. Again, the issue came up in this Parliament, mostly by those of us who are directly affected in the district. If my memory could serve me right, when my colleague, Honourable Mustapha Braima was telling the story to this Honourable House, tears stood in his eyes. He asked for the timely intervention of this government, but nobody listened. We must keep in mind that Freetown is not Sierra Leone. Freetown is part of Sierra Leone, just like Kailahun is part of Sierra Leone. We should again keep in mind that all the districts are interrelated. If anything affects somebody in Koinadugu, it will affect Kailahun.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, after two and half months since this disease broke out in this country, the President has thought it fit to declare a State of Public Emergency. Yesterday, we went to the President as a district, we thanked him for his visit to Kailahun. He went there to sympathise with us and to commend us for the hard work we have done since the outbreak of this disease in our district. He also told us the plans his government had in place to end this deadly virus.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the consequences of this disease have been very grave. The battle commander, Dr Umar Khan of blessed memory, who was at the fore-front of this fight lost his life. Many nurses have also lost their lives. Hundreds of other people in this country have lost their lives. Our country's image is at stake. Aircrafts have stopped coming to Sierra Leone. If you leave here today to another country, you will be quarantined. The gains that have been made since the end of the rebel war in this country are about to be reversed. As parliamentarians, since the President has called on us to provide leadership in our respective constituencies, we had pledged our support to the President to take up the challenge. However, we all know that no one can win a battle, especially if you are a leader of that battle without being properly armed. We need to be armed as parliamentarians to go out there and lead this fight. It is a fight we are going to win. We have resolved that Ebola is real and deadly. If we do not employ every means necessary, it will be a disaster in our country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as far as the people of Kailahun District are concerned, we have been fighting this war since it started. We are still resolute to fight this virus to the end. With these few words, Mr Speaker, I want to lend my voice to ratify the President's proclamation for a State of Public Emergency. I thank you very much (*Applause*).

**HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, we are here as people's representatives to help His Excellency the President, to ensure that we get rid of this disease from this nation. The President has made a proclamation and we are here to ratify it as people's representatives. People of this country have confidence in us we must do our best to

make them happy. Mr Speaker, in as much as these people have reposed their confidence in us, there are others who are insulting Members of Parliament. People are claiming that we have been given millions of Leones for sensitisation in our different constituencies and these moneys have been personalised. The President of this nation has given us the assignment to take the leadership of our constituents. How are we going to do that when a fraction of the population of this country is bent on misinforming our constituents?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have three major functions, as Members of Parliament. We make laws, represent and provide Oversight to the Executive. We do not have enough time to perform our Oversight functions in the midst of this Ebola epidemic. Can the various MDAs go to the air and bestow confidence into the minds of Sierra Leoneans that we have not been given money? Can they take that responsibility, Mr Speaker? Mr Speaker, let me give you a scenario. One day, the Minister of Health and Sanitation provided some moneys as transport fare to go and sensitise the people in Bo. When we got there, every member, with the exception of those who were living in the city, contributed Le550, 000 to make a rally, so that the people in the Bo District and those in the city would see us matching and sensitising them about this Ebola. We went to our different constituencies and we held series of meetings. Mr Speaker, when we returned to Bo, people said we were given Le10mln each. That was very embarrassing and that same message has been spreading throughout this country. People are still claiming that we have embezzled the Ebola money. Is that true, Mr Speaker? Where is the Public Relations Department of Parliament? Where is the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation (SLBC) and the Anti-Corruption Commission? The Minister of Information must clarify this to the people of this country if these claims are correct.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Jusufu B. Mansaray, let it be said and let it be known publicly that Parliament, as an institution, was never given any money. However, it must be said that certain individuals or Members of Parliament were given some amount of money. So, in the process of the debate, let this clarification come out clearly.

**HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY:** Honourable Members, it is good that we have a Speaker who has served this House as a Member of Parliament. It is also good that we have a leader that is ready to defend the integrity of this House and Members of Parliament. Clarification has been made by the Speaker of the Sierra Leone Parliament, who is the third in command in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 29, Sub-section 6 (a-e) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone says:

*(a) "make provision for the detention of persons, the restriction of movement of persons within defined localities, and the deportation and exclusion of persons other than citizens of Sierra Leone from Sierra Leone or any part thereof;*

*(b) take possession or control on behalf of the Government of any property or undertaking; it goes on to say acquisition on behalf of the Government of any property other than land;*

*(c) authorise the entering and searching of any premises;*

*(d) amend any law, suspend the operation of any law, with or without modification: provided that such amendment, suspension or modification shall not apply to this Constitution; and*

*(e) provide for charging, in respect of the grant of issue of any license, permit, certificate or other document for the purpose of the regulations, such fees as may be prescribed by or under the regulations."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has made a proclamation, but there are laws Members of Parliament need to look at carefully. My major worry is that, authorities have been given to the security apparatus, like the military, the police and the prison officers. Are these security forces going to manage this situation properly? I am happy that the Minister of Defence is here. The Inspector General of Police is also here. The Minister of Political Affairs, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Attorney-General are all here. These personalities are going to make further regulations. The question is that, are those regulations going to be properly put in place? Are our brothers and sisters not going to be harassed?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when everybody was at home praying, I have a younger sister who wanted to travel to Bo, because she was due to face an interview. She left Murray Town and I was at Collegiate School around 10:00 a.m. Mr Speaker, after the instruction from the President for people to stay home for the whole of Monday, she wanted to travel to go for an interview. She went to me for her travelling fare. That poor lady was beaten to nonsense by some alleged military officers at Murray Town Junction. The question is, don't you think that this will be extended to our constituents. We have to make sure that we manage the good intentions of the President. We have known that the Ebola disease is real and we will continue to tell this nation about it. In as much as the disease is real, we equally want people to live a peaceful life. We want our citizens to feel that we are fighting this deadly disease together. We should stop harassing innocent people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice to come up with byelaws. In as much as we want to save Sierra Leone from the scotches of this deadly disease, let us look at the integrity of Sierra Leoneans in this country. The President has given us the responsibility to go to our constituencies and sensitise our people about this disease.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Inspector-General of Police and the Minister of Defence to make sure that they put their men under control. Let them understand that we are citizens of this nation. We are aware of the fact that Ebola is real and it is with us, but Sierra Leoneans should feel free and their rights should not be misused. I want to assure the Minister of Health and Sanitation that we will continue to give her our unflinching support. We will continue to stand by her in whatever capacity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with these few words, I want to thank all those who have listened to me. I support the ratification of the proclamation of the President. Thank you very much.

**HON. MABINTY FUNNA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start my intervention by expressing my deepest sympathy to the family of Dr Sheik Umar Khan and all the brave health workers that have lost their lives in the fight against

Ebola in this country. I want to commend the Government of Sierra Leone and our Development Partners for their effort in the fight against this fatal disease.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a government, the decision taken by the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, to declare a State of Public Emergency is relevant and necessary. The content of his statement clearly addresses the appropriate action and extraordinary measures that are needed in this fight. Mr Speaker, it is now left with us, as patriotic Sierra Leoneans, to comply with the State of Public Emergency to enable us take a more robust approach to deal with the Ebola outbreak.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to acknowledge the excellent effort made by our health workers, who are working in this challenging circumstance. As Sierra Leoneans or as a nation, we cannot fight the battle alone. Sierra Leone alone cannot fight this crisis. This is a global concern; therefore, we need international support in three main areas: financial, technical and logistical supports. Mr Speaker, we will not succeed in the fight against Ebola, if we fail to embrace effective governance and minimise corruption.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Development Partners have continued to deploy resources into this country. Therefore, it behooves all of us to ensure transparency, accountability and appropriate use of those resources. I firmly believe that more need to be done before we get the situation under control. As a government, we must continue to ensure the safety of our medical workers. We should try to put a comprehensive insurance policy for our health workers (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to report to this Honourable House that more than sixty medical workers have lost their lives in the fight against the Ebola disease. I am sure, as you are all aware that two international aid workers have contacted the Ebola virus. Most of our health workers are now living in perpetual fear. This is a very sad situation, Mr Speaker. It is regrettable, because they believe that the chances of them contacting the virus is very high, if adequate preventive measures are not put in place by the government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a government, we must continue to improve on the incentives and facilities of our health workers. The reason is because we will

be encouraging them to remain committed in their job. If we fail, as a government to improve on the facilities and incentives for our health workers, majority of them will abandon our health centres. We may not see them when they are most needed.

Mr Speaker, according to the World Health Organisation Director-General, she stated that Ebola is moving faster than our effort to control it. With your leave, Mr Speaker, she further mentioned that: *"If the situation continues to deteriorate, the consequences can be catastrophic in terms of loss of lives, but also severe socio-economic interruption and a huge risk of it spread to other countries."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ebola disease has become the main topical issue in government institutions, social media, homes and on the streets of Sierra Leone. Wherever you go, you will hear people talking about Ebola. I am pleased that Sierra Leoneans are now accepting the fact that Ebola is real; Ebola is a killer disease; and Ebola is not a respecter of any person. In fact, when Monday was declared as a day of reflection by the President of this nation, every Sierra Leonean, irrespective of political sentiment, tribe or region was in full compliance. This clearly shows that Sierra Leoneans are peaceful people and they are well prepared to fight the Ebola virus (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Sierra Leoneans have gone through many challenges over the years; ranging from the civil war to cholera and presently, we are talking about the deadly Ebola Virus. I want to use this opportunity to encourage all Sierra Leoneans to practice good hygiene. Of course, there is no doubt that people will be panicking, but we must work together, speak with one voice and fight this virus that is threatening our nation.

Mr Speaker, as a Christian, I believe in prayers. I also believe that God answers prayers. Therefore, I am calling on all Sierra Leoneans to continue to pray to the Almighty God for protection. With these few words, I therefore, urge Members of Parliament to ratify this proclamation declared by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. I thank you very much.

**HON. P.C V.B.S KEBBIE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand to contribute to the State of Public Emergency, declared by His

Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. This may be the first time for the whole country to come together. This is a national issue and it has even attracted international attention. It will not be good to point fingers at people who do not believe that Ebola exists in this country. He has love for his country and for the people of this country. If I were an adviser to his Excellency the President, he would have sacked me long since, because by the time he was ready to go to Kailahun and Kenema, I would have stopped him from going there. I would have told him to stay in Freetown and he would have insisted because I know the type of man he is.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happier than ever, because at the initial time this disease was pronounced, it was almost politicised. There are still some people who are saying that Ebola is not real. Some are sending text messages to us, saying that the government has received a huge sum of money, in exchange for the lives of the people they have sworn to protect. This is the time we should be very cautious and put politics aside. Even an illiterate man in his village, is a politician. It does not mean that when you are in Parliament, you are the best and only politician. You can stay in your village as an illiterate man and be a very good politician. In fact, these are the very people we rush to during elections, in terms of seeking their mandate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the virus is real and deadly. For me, much has been done to contain this virus; but maybe, we are still in the preparatory stage. I want to say that the preparation should not take us long. When somebody dies, you should make sure you report the death of the person to those concerned. It will take a very long time to travel with a victim from Freetown to Kenema or from my village to Kenema. I would suggest that we create examination centers in strategic places in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Sierra Leoneans like to take advantage of certain situations. During the war, some people made money out of it. Today, there are people who are determined to make money out of this disease. Some people are now selling a simple bucket at a very high price. In other words, buckets that people used to buy at Le10, 000 are now sold at Le50, 000. Equally so, the price of the

chlorine has skyrocketed. People are now manufacturing fake chemicals as chlorine to sell it to the illiterate people. We want to ask people to stop this 419 business in this crisis. As His Excellency rightly said, this is the best time Members of Parliament should take leadership role. You must go to the war front. As Members of Parliament, we are bound to visit every village in our respective constituencies. If you fail to do this, then you will get the consequence. This is not the time to neglect our people. This is the time we have to show our people that we care for them. We should share their agony with them. Again, as I said earlier, some people would like to take advantage of a situation. We want the government to ensure that prices of goods do not increase, because some people have started selling their commodities at high prices. Even the transport fare, people are thinking of increasing prices. Most of these commercial drivers are saying that they are risking their lives; therefore, they should increase prices.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would urge this government to be very vigilant in the implementation of the State of Emergency. There should be no exception, as far as implementing the declaration of the President is concerned. Sierra Leoneans like to put situations into test to see the after effect. Some of us have been Paramount Chiefs for so long. If I were the head of state, I would have even behaved like the President of Liberia. That is, if our economy is very strong, everybody should stay indoors for a period of one month. The reason is because within a period of one month, we would be able to detect the infected people. If the incubation period is twenty-one days, modalities should be put in place to stop the movement of people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this virus has invaded other countries; but today, it is a thing of the past. The virus has invaded Cameroon, Uganda, and even the DR Congo. If we joke with this disease, it will affect all of us. I am glad to say that government has declared a State of Public Emergency and we should abide by it. I know it will affect those who are socially inclined. This is going to cost them a lot. Proprietors and Proprietresses of hotels and guest houses are going to run at a loss. Also, those who go to the beach at night will no longer enjoy that facility. Mr

Speaker, even the commercial sex workers are going to run at a loss, because it is from there that they get their livelihood. Men are going to be afraid of them.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Chief Kebbie, do you realise that the Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai is an Alhaji?

**HON. P.C VICTOR KEBBIE:** Mr Speaker, I know that Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai is an Alhaji, but I know so much about him (*Laughter*).

**HON. ANSUMAN J. KAIKIA:** Mr Speaker, I want the Honourable Paramount Chief to know that in 1996, when he and I entered this House, we used to hang out together with Honourable Charles Caulker, but since then, about 10 years ago, I had not been hanging out with him (*Laughter*).

**HON. P.C VICTOR S. KEBBIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure we are very serious about the intention of His Excellency the President. Mr Speaker, whether we accept it or not, he is just a man of a difference. Maybe, if it were some leaders, they will just keep quiet and look up to the Members of Parliament and other government officials. We the Paramount Chiefs must come up with byelaws to ensure the safety of our people. That is why the spread of this virus is a bit low in our district. We are educating our people about this disease.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want this government to ensure that the medical staff are in every chiefdom in this country. The most interesting thing about this is that, when a victim dies and somebody touches the corpse, you too will be infected. We do not want corpses to be littered in our homes or in the streets. The government should put mechanism in place, in terms of employing and training people who can be burying these corpses in the respective chiefdoms. Also, our doctors are not coming out to educate the public, maybe they are afraid to do so. It is only journalists who are not afraid of talking about this issue. I am saying this because if you tune to different radio stations, you will hear the voices of journalists being interviewed. You will hear such questions as, what are the medical doctors doing? Are they afraid? Do they have any idea about this Ebola?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all of us should come together and support the State of Public Emergency for the sake of peace and harmony. The whole country is looking forward to us, Members of Parliament. Let the schools and colleges be closed. You can only go to school or college when you have life; but if you are dead, you will not go to school. I understand that some colleges are still taking exams. The international community is very much concerned. The schools and colleges should be closed down until further notice.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ebola disease has become a threat to this nation. We need to thank the Ministry of Health and Sanitation for their effort. We need proper planning within the shortest possible time. People with good knowledge and expertise should be around His Excellency the President. The President is ready to do his very best to ensure that we are comfortable enough to go about our daily activities. Let us make sure that everyone of us is out of Freetown to our respective constituencies. Those of us in the provinces should go to the provinces and provide the necessary leadership for our people. Mr Speaker, according to the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ died for us. In the same vain, if it causes you to die for others, you should die for them. Do not stay in Freetown and forget about the people who voted for you.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I support the motion for a State of Public Emergency, declared by His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. It is in place and we support it whole heartedly. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, a few minutes ago, I did see John Oponjo Benjamin taking a seat in the gallery. I directed that he should be invited to join other dignitaries, because John Oponjo Benjamin is a dignitary in his own right *(Applause)*.

**HON. AUGUSTINE B. TORTO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to start my contribution by expressing my sincere thanks to His Excellency the President, for declaring a State of Public Health Emergency. Mr Speaker, Members of Parliament have already declared war on Ebola.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me use this opportunity to say thanks to the donor agencies that have provided the necessary support in the fight against Ebola. It is very glaring that the President has performed his constitutional role by declaring a State of Public Emergency. It is now left with us, as Members of Parliament, to ratify what the President has declared. Mr Speaker, when we shall be going to our various constituencies, we have to be sensitising our people. Some of our problems in this country are purely based on hygiene. When I go to my constituency, Constituency 025 in the Kono District, I am going to visit every village to make sure that I provide the necessary education on the Ebola Virus.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the disease this country is suffering from was called the 'Black Disease in England that led to the death of many people. As patriotic Sierra Leoneans, we need to help the government by educating the people of this country about this Ebola ailment. Mr Speaker, I want to inform this Honourable House and the general public that the image of this country has been tarnished by this dreadful disease. Therefore, we have to work together, irrespective of political affiliation, to rebrand the image of this country. We have to come together to support this government, so that we can get rid of the Ebola Virus within the shortest possible time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there should be a time frame within which this horrible disease could be chased out of this country. Within two months from now, we want to see a drastic reduction in the number of deaths and new cases of Ebola patients. Today, when you travel to other countries, people will look at you as if you are an outcast. Let us continue to pray for His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. He is a saviour and a messiah for Sierra Leone. He does not want to know which political party you belong.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, donations, by the International Community, have started coming into this country. As the representatives of the people, we should monitor those donations coming into this country in the form of human, logistical and financial assistance, so that they are properly utilised. This is because we have to give account of whatever assistance we have received as a nation. On that note,

Mr Speaker, I am asking this Honourable House to ratify the motion before us. I thank you very much.

**HON. EMMA J. KOWA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to commend the President for declaring a State of Public Emergency. This is necessary for the safety of every Sierra Leonean. Sierra Leone is facing a difficult time. This is not an issue of Kailahun or Kenema, but the entire country. As patriotic Sierra Leoneans, a day of reflection has made us more united in our different ways to drive Ebola out of Sierra Leone. We might have been a little bit slow to react, but the reality is that, we have accepted and we are aware of the dangers, especially with the death of our health workers. I can say without any scintilla of doubt that the deaths of our health workers have helped to raise the awareness among our people. The declaration has also helped those who had been in denial to accept the fact that this disease is real.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about sensitisation in Bo District. The Paramount Chiefs, teachers and health workers have thought it fit to declare a day of no schooling, because we want the students to be aware of what is happening in Sierra Leone, especially in the district. It was very successful, because the awareness was there. For the Bo District, there are still constraints and I would like the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, the EOC and other teams that have been formed to look into some of these constraints. For example, the entire Bo District has only one ambulance. Two days ago, there was a suspected case in which the service of the ambulance was needed. The ambulance went to pick up the suspect and a relative of the suspect accompanied him to the isolation centre. On their way, the dash board of the ambulance went off. Mr Speaker, by the time the ambulance entered Bo, there was another suspected case, waiting for the same ambulance to be collected. Mr Speaker, if one of the two suspected cases had the Ebola Virus, then there was every tendency for the other suspected Ebola patient to be infected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the health workers are in the forefront in this fight. Honourable Members should support them in whatever capacity necessary. We should partake in sensitising our people. The people should be told that the

Ebola disease is not a political ploy. In my constituency, somebody asked me when I went on a sensitisation programme whether Ebola kills only people who are 18 years and above. They thought that people who have reached the voting age are the only victims.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is our duty, as Members of Parliament, to go and sensitise our people, so that they will be aware of this deadly disease. Now, my concern with this Public Health Emergency that has been declared by the President is that, we know that the security forces will be there to cushion the health workers. I am pleading to the security forces not to go out there with fearful guns. People are already afraid of what is happening. People are hiding their own relatives, thinking that when I surrender my relative to go for testing, he/she will never come back alive. That has been said to me. We have to be educated about those who have survived and discharged from these epicenters. People should know that if the virus is caught at an early stage and is reported, you will be cured.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am also concerned about people who were on transport to Kenema today. The bus was stopped from entering Kenema. My concern is that, if Kenema has been quarantined, I am not against it, but stakeholders like the Members of Parliament should be allowed to leave or enter Kenema District. Members of Parliament are expected to go to their constituencies to sensitise their people. This is my concern, Mr Speaker. A week ago, I went to Kenema to visit my constituents. I visited Kenema purposely to see what is happening. Mr Speaker, entering Kenema is not a problem, but leaving Kenema is very difficult. There is a makeshift tent where people are taken to wash their hands and there is also a thermometer meant to take people's temperature.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know that Bo has already got cases of death caused by the Ebola disease. I think modalities should be put in place to prevent it from spreading. We should not only focus on areas that have been badly affected. The resources are probably minimal and scarce, but the fact remains that we must use those that are available wisely. We must make sure that everybody that is suspected of having the Ebola disease is tested. I want to suggest that Non-

Governmental Organisations (NGOs), such as World Vision, Red Cross and UNFPA should have stores where they could keep some of these logistics that are necessary for emergency cases. I am saying this because I don't think whether hospitals have enough spaces to keep some of these logistics. The reason is that, when somebody is infected in Bo, he/she has to be transported from Bo to Kenema. In most cases, they had to wait for the EPI to attend to them. I will want to recommend that these people are brought on board, so that they can give some pieces of advice. Mr Speaker, I in particular, would like to know if there are provisions being made for people in quarantined homes. I want to know if food and other basic social services will be provided to them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe if we come together as Sierra Leoneans, we will be able to get rid of this disease once and for all. We should put our differences and mobilise our efforts against the Ebola Virus. This disease is going to affect our economic, social and political arrangements. Prices of basic commodities are escalating every day. Mr Speaker, the price for a single bucket has risen to Le75, 000. A neighbour of mine bought hers at Le50, 000; and two days later, the price for one bucket rose up to Le75, 000. These are some of the issues we will be encountering, if we do not fight this deadly disease. The reality is that, Ebola is real.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to end my contribution by appealing to the government to empower Bo District, the DMO and the medical staff. They should be empowered to deal with all suspected cases on time, so that peoples' fear will be allayed. I thank you very much.

**HON. ISATA KABIA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, first, I want to thank His Excellency the President, for the proclamation of a State of Public Emergency. I would also like to thank him for declaring a day of reflection on Monday. It was a day that prepared the ground for the battle we are currently fighting. The attack on this nation is more than an attack by the Ebola epidemic. Currently, we are fighting a war, not just with a deadly virus, but a war on ignorance. We are also fighting a war on misunderstanding, fear and self-interest. These four evils are just as deadly as the Ebola virus itself.

Mr Speaker, I listened to the Honourable Member from Bo and all the questions asked by her constituents. These are the issues we should have addressed before the attack on our health. We need to address these issues, if we are to move forward as a nation. We should make it quite clear, as politicians and as the people's representatives, that the President of this nation is the President of Kailahun, Bo Kenema, Kambia, Port Loko, Makeni and the entire country. If this is true, the President of Kailahun or Kenema cannot, in any way possible want to kill his people (*Applause*). We have to be honest with ourselves. The current Speaker of this House used to say, 'to thyself be true.' I will say, let your conscience be your guide. I hope all of us will always allow our conscience to be our guide. We should take the lead in correcting the misinformation that has been disseminated. We should be paramount in ensuring that the fear of the Ebola disease is not the fear for each other. Let us come together, so that Ebola epidemic will stop killing our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, two confirmed cases have been flown out of this Sub-region. In other words, only two cases of Ebola have been flown out by private plane to other country. I know that if there is natural disaster in America, there would be no private plane going there to bring our people home. The two people that were flown out is a pointer to the fact that we only have one Sierra Leone. It is our duty to preserve and protect the lives of Sierra Leoneans. Once Ebola is eradicated from this country, what do you think will be left behind? We have to decide, as a nation, whether we are to move forward and in what direction. We should define the direction in which we will head. We should not allow the World to define us. We have seen the remnants of blood diamonds that floated around Sierra Leone and other countries. When the Ebola disease shall have been eradicated, what will be left behind?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the tragedy that is unfolding today has shown that our health system is over-stretched. It has reminded us that we lack proper healthcare system to take care of mundane illnesses. The Ebola strategy should be used as a stepping stone to ensure that if we are attacked again, we will be more prepared. Nigeria took a swift step after one confirmed case was reported. We must learn to be proactive in order to protect the lives of our citizens. This State of Public

Emergency is not too late, but it will only succeed if we make sure that we educate and inform our constituents properly. That is why the Members of Parliament are being recalled to be on the front line, alongside the Health Workers and the Police. When the President made the Proclamation for the State of Public Emergency, I do not think we expected him to sit for three hours in front of the television. Mr Speaker, I think that is the reason why he has appointed people to help him in such circumstance. After the President has made his declaration, we expected the Ministry of Internal Affairs to explain the actions expected (*Applause*). If we are in a state of electioneering, the elections would have been cancelled. I do not see any reason why the cinemas and other public gatherings should not be suspended. That has to be clearly stated. I am sure, within the core of our Police, you have members who have experience about the State of Public Emergency. We expect the Inspector-General of Police to clearly instruct his men that the State is in their hands.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, those who are refusing medical treatment should be declared as criminals, especially the Ebola patients. We are not going to allow a virus walking around to contaminate our people.

Mr Speaker, when Monday was declared as a day of reflection, the streets were empty, especially in Freetown. If we want to eradicate this disease within the shortest possible time, I will join the Paramount Chief in recommending an extension of a stay at home policy. The President's has stated that we quarantine all epicenters. So, if we are quarantining Kenema, we must ensure that we pay the prices. This should have been done a day it was declared. We have to apply stringent measures to save the lives of our people. When you move to your people, they will understand that our actions and statements are coming from a place of love and protection. In this way, there will be least resistance. When the Police are instructed to quarantine a house, they must do so diligently, so that they will not endanger their lives.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we speak, I have a situation in Lunsar. In June, 2014, I recommended that Lunsar should also be an epicenter, because we have a hospital in that region and we have visitors from Guinea coming to that

hospital. I think this is one of the problems we are facing in Lunsar. They stole money from a Guinean and he has gone home and cursed all those who stole his money. The message is as important as the messenger. Mr Speaker, if you understand your people, you will understand their culture. We can inform and liberate them from whatever problem they are encountering. Therefore, Members of Parliament should be empowered since they know the culture of their people. The Public Order Act is self-sufficient and the Public Order Act is complete in terms of criminalising those who are not complying with the law. We must make sure that the people listen to the instructions and directives for their own safety.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the index case in West Africa has not yet been identified. There are index cases in Lunsar. The nurses that have died and their families are currently under observation. If they do not comply, we do not have the means to transport them to an isolation centre, because there is no vehicle. We cannot be using the same ambulance to transport confirmed cases of Ebola patients and suspected cases. We have one ambulance that we share with Kambia District. Mr Speaker, this is a disastrous situation. If something happens elsewhere, we must be proactive in addressing such issues.

Mr Speaker, we have requested for protective gears in the whole District, because the meeting that I witnessed in the last couple of days in our District showed that the initial request for the short-term measure, the District Medical Officer has requested 1,035 sets of disposal aprons and they only had thirty-seven (37) available. They had also requested face masks of the same number 1,035 and they only had 21 available. They have no single pair of boots at all for the protective gear. We have to make sure that we take care of those on the front line of this battle.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President said that the sovereignty of our nation is under attack. We have to decide what this sovereignty is, so that we build on it and strengthen it. The Ebola disease is now a global issue, because it is fast moving beyond our borders. There are Aircrafts flying every day, both within and without this country. It is very difficult to restrict Aircrafts from coming into this

country. We are very much encouraged by the survival rate within Sierra Leone. We must thank God for what he is doing for us. We must also give praise to our doctors and nurses.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I want to read a portion of this documents. It says: "Sierra Leoneans working for the United Nations in nine countries have raised among themselves the sum of \$41,000 towards the fight against the Ebola epidemic. The contributors were Civilians, Military and Prison Officers. The staff who are in Liberia, Sudan, South Sudan, DR Congo, Somalia, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Kenya and the United States decided to send the money through UNICEF, after this Agency had told them about the items needed for the intervention. When Ebola is gone, we have to decide to be more united than before.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to implore this Honourable House to speedily ratify the State of Public Emergency. I thank you.

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. BRAIMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start with a voice of commendation. I want to first of all start with Members of Parliament. I want to commend all Members of Parliament for the unity in the fight against the Ebola epidemic (*Applause*). When the Ebola disease broke out in this country, we all stood firm to get rid of it. In one of my speeches, I went very unconsciously and I could not imagine the number of Members of Parliament who came around to console me. Some body even told me that during the time I lost my son couple of years ago, I did not shed tears. This statement created a very serious impression to my mind that we are all ready to fight the Ebola disease. Mr Speaker, I must say that I am very grateful and I want to thank everybody. Mr Speaker, some people have been saying that the civil war started in the same region where the Ebola epidemic has started. We have realised that this Parliament is a united Parliament. This is also suggesting that all of us should look at critical state matters like what we have in our hands and handle them objectively. We should not allow ourselves to be distracted.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business was on a radio programme yesterday and thousands of texters were not happy with the amount of effort Members of Parliament are putting towards the fight against the Ebola disease. They do not know the kind of effort we are putting towards this fight. This Ebola has overburdened Members of Parliament. Mr Speaker, structures have been put in place towards this fight by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. We now have Contact Tracers, Social Mobilisers and Burial Teams. However, the first point of call for any commitment or request is not those who are sending text messages on radios and televisions, but Members of Parliament. I told my colleagues yesterday that I had to leave my vehicle in Pendembu to disburse the sum of one million, five hundred thousand Leones to the 'Contact Tracers.' They needed the money to purchase logistics. I did this in order to encourage them to do more for our people. These are youth who are working very hard in Kailahun District. In fact, the President commended us when we were with him for our resilience and hard work. These are the people who are risking their lives to go into the communities to pick out Ebola suspected cases. Mr Speaker, these people are under-resourced and they usually ask the Members of Parliament for assistance. So, for those who think that Members of Parliament have money, they should also realise that Members of Parliament are working very hard to get things done in the right way. We are at the disadvantaged end. If you do not do it, you risk your position in terms of coming back to this Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Mustapha Braima, you also have to tell them that Members of Parliament are even using their own money to get things done.

**HON. MUSTAPHA BRAIMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. That is exactly what I am saying here. I had to use my money I kept to buy fuel to come to Freetown (*Laughter*). Mr Speaker, the reason we are using the little resources we have is because we are disadvantaged. If we do not do this, we will not survive for reelection in 2018. So, we are doing it and we are doing this from the bottom of our hearts. We don't need unnecessary distraction at this time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on a proclamation like this, we have learnt in this country that delay is dangerous. We have to take an immediate decision when something is about to happen, we have to do it immediately. When we were with the President yesterday, I saw on his face a man who is committed; and a man who is worried about the health condition of his people (*Applause*). When he was talking, I looked into his eyes to see how worried and committed he was. In fact, when he was speaking, he highlighted most of the challenges. He also gave words of commendation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Kailahun has set up a Committee to fight this deadly disease. He said that he was impressed with the Committee and implored other Districts to emulate the good example of Kailahun District. The President said that he was impressed with coordination in the district. He learnt that everybody was on board, including the Paramount Chiefs, Members of Parliament and the Medical Officers. Mr Speaker, I want to report to this Honourable House that the Ebola cases in the Kailahun District are dwindling. The problem we have now is the transportation system in the District. We want to assure you that there is a commitment, but what is missing in this situation is the timely intervention.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a former President of this nation, His Excellency Joseph Saidu Momoh of blessed memory, I was on my way to Pendembu when he said at the outbreak of the Rebel War in 1991 that if we cannot defeat the rebels, let us contain them in that corner. I was very infuriated by that statement, but there is always wisdom in leadership. In other words, he knew that instead of allowing the rebels to come to Freetown, this country should do everything possible to contain the rebels in that corner. When this disease broke out in the same region, we have not learnt anything from our past mistakes. That is, we did not bother to contain this disease in Koindu. We could have quarantined the whole Koindu region (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our health situation is so serious that the President, in his wisdom, has proclaimed a State of Public Health Emergency. Sincerely, Mr Speaker, this is going to create some problems within the quarantine areas. There is a very serious confusion in Kenema District because of the size of the

place. It could have been easily contained in the area where it started. A colleague Honourable Member made mention of the bold steps the Nigerian Government took to curb this disease in Nigeria. The steps Nigeria took were wonderful and decisive. I was asking myself the question, why didn't we do this in the first instance? We were waiting for the disease to spread far and wide in order to create more confusion. There are implications in this situation. Though the President tried very hard, in terms of providing food to those who are quarantined, we still have more work to do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President allayed our fears that it behooves on the Government of Sierra Leone to look at a broader picture, in terms of providing food for the people. The question is that, how do we take care of people of bigger population when they are quarantined? If you tell the people not to move about, they will stay, but who will feed them? That was the question we asked the President and our fears were allayed. Mr Speaker, the mistake we made was that, we allowed this disease to gain dominance in this country. Now, there is confusion in Kenema District, as to how we will be able to provide food for the people. My Paramount Chief told me that vehicles are no longer allowed to enter Kenema District by the Police. The Paramount Chief asked me if we have ratified the State of Public Health Emergency. I told him that the date for the ratification should be on the 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. He told me that the police are now 'ruthless' with the people. That was the word he used in describing the attitudes of the police. I told him that I will find out.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are happy to see the Inspector-General of Police in this Well this morning. He is here to listen to what is happening around the country. I also want to advise him to make sure that his men are very careful in handling this situation. Our people are scared and they should not be scared by anybody. When I was in Pendembu, the Paramount Chief announced that the soldiers were going to be stationed in various junctions. The soldiers are going to be stationed in Pendembu and all the people shouted. They did that to express their unwillingness to accept the soldiers. The people knew what these military men could

do. Mr Speaker, you and I know what these uniform boys can do. So, I want the Minister of Defence to encourage his boys to treat our people with caution. This is a very critical moment and they should respect the people they are dealing with. Their ways of handling situations are not pleasing at all, Mr Speaker. Therefore, I want the Inspector-General of Police and the Minister of Defence to caution their men.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another lesson we have learnt is that, we can never fake our preparedness for anything. Initially, we faked our preparedness to fight against this disease in this country. When you treat important things with levity, that levity will continue to escalate and result to unprecedented impact. That is the situation we have found ourselves.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want this country to know that we should not only focus on our notes, we have to go out and do research in the libraries or read other text books. Sierra Leoneans just focus on the notes other people are giving us. Whether you are in Parliament or not, we are only reading our notes. We do not go the extra mile to do more research and this has led to this problem. We should be seen reading books and doing more research. If we had done this, we would have had enough literature and researched materials on what happened in 1976, about forty years ago in other countries. This would have given us more education on how to fight this disease. Mr Speaker, like what a colleague Honourable Member has asked, what next, after the Ebola Disease? We should take ourselves out of the notes now and look at cases around the world, so that when an issue is coming, we don't fake our preparedness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said about this Ebola. I am here to express my gratitude to you. In summary, we should try to follow some of the good practices we are seeing and hearing in other countries. This is a critical moment and I want to commend the President and this Parliament for everything we have done without disregard to our detractors. I want to thank the Speaker for this opportunity. I therefore encourage all of us to ratify this proclamation.

**HON. HELEN KUYEMBEH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, tragedy has once more hit this nation. In the midst of our deliberation in this Well, we are taking time to smile and laugh, but behind those smiles and laughter, are grief, worry, agony and fear. These vices should serve as unifiers for all of us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some years ago, the eleven year rebel war ravaged this country and put us in this horrible condition. In the midst of all that, we pulled together as a nation. We did not allow politics, tribalism and sectionalism to pull us apart. We pulled ourselves together as a nation and fought the rebel war. This is why we are here today. I am asking this nation, not just Members of Parliament in this Well, but the entire nation of Sierra Leone to pull ourselves together once more, so that we mobilise our efforts to fight this disease as we did to the civil war. In doing so, I know a lot have been said about what is to be done or what was not done, and what is supposed to be done. In life, there is never a strait jacket. Sometimes the road can be crooked; and sometimes it can be straight.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should be grateful that some of us are still alive. I am saying this because we have lost loved ones and no life is less important than the other. Everybody's life is equally important as our lives in this Well (*Applause*). This is the reason why we need to work together as a nation. In Management, it is said that when you have a problem, look for the solution. You should stop figuring out why it happened. Let us pull ourselves together and work harder in order to take care of this menace.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to proffer some recommendations that may be of help to those in authority. In the first place, we need to look at the Health Sector critically. This means that we need to look at our Health Workers. We have heard and we have been hearing that health workers are pulling away from the profession. They are doing this out of fear. They don't want to lose their lives and their families. In fact, their families are equally scared. What may be important for us to look at this time is that, we are getting support and assistance from donor agencies around the world. One of my colleagues said that incentives are very

important. What could be one of these incentives, Mr Speaker? We need to create an Insurance Policy for our health workers, so that they feel more secured. Mr Speaker, let an Insurance Policy be put in place, so that it gives health workers the guarantee they need. We should do this so that their families will also feel more secured and safe.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another area we need to look at is the touching of dead bodies. Probably, Government needs to work with the Paramount Chiefs in all the Chiefdoms, in terms of creating a burial procedure. We all know that we are a loving people. When we lose a family member, we would be wailing to the point that we have to touch the corpse to express our love and sentiments. This tradition has to stop, Mr Speaker. Government should put in place burial processes and procedures, in which the health workers should be involved to manage the burial process in all the Chiefdoms. I am not suggesting that family members should be excluded. It should be made clear that family members are allowed to see the carcass, but they could do so from afar. The health workers should be moved into the Chiefdom, so that they monitor the burial process. I will urge my Paramount Chief to put modalities in place for the health workers to be involved. Mr Speaker, if we do this, it will minimise the way people are touching corpses and patients. We have minimised the operations of the 'Lumas' on Fridays in my Chiefdom.

*[Suspension of S. O. 5(2), being 12:00 noon]*

**HON. HELEN KUYEMBEH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to urge the Government to focus on the security sector. I am pretty sure that the Inspector-General of Police and the Minister of Defence are together in this fight. So, this is not a chaotic situation at all. It is an issue that concerns every Sierra Leonean. We have to work together as a nation and we should be looking at civil partnership. The police and the soldiers should realise that our people are mourning. It is not necessary to add more pains to their grief. It is their responsibility, as well as everybody else, to put those families together, so that the worst does not happen. What I am trying to say here, Mr Inspector-General and Minister of Defence, is that you have to educate your men, so that they understand the situation on the ground.

I am saying this because, in most cases, we assume that people know their roles in society, but honestly, most people do not know what they are supposed to be doing at all. This is why when the situation becomes very chaotic, people get out of hand. The heads of the Police and the Army have to work together for the benefit of every Sierra Leonean. They need to coddle our people and stop hurting them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to urge the Government to pay special attention to areas that have been quarantined. I told some Members of Parliament that this will only be possible if we think about it better and put mechanisms in place that will make it work effectively. For instance, most of us have been following what is happening in the Gaza Strip. Israel and Palestine have been bombing each other and later agreed to observe a three-day cease fire. Mr Speaker, that cease fire was meant to make people get back to the streets to gather food stuffs and other things they will take to their dungeons to sustain their lives until the next cease-fire. Now, some people will say that we are not Gaza people and above all, the Gaza people have money. I do agree that we do not have that amount of money that would give us the comfort we need, but we should plan properly and talk about the resources we have. Mr Speaker, before a Government quarantines an area, certain things must be put in place, like providing food for the people. The question is, what mechanism have we put in place for this exercise? We have many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in this country, like the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and World Vision that are responsible for supporting programmes. The aforementioned NGOs provided emergency support during the civil war in this country. They provided food and other things to affected people. Honestly, if we have to be decisive in handling this situation, if the best solution to this menace is to quarantine certain areas, we just have to do that, Mr Speaker. We have to work harder, so that certain mechanisms and measures are put in place that will support those that are going to be quarantined. They should not allow our people to suffer and die of hunger.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another thing we should think about is the 'Epicenters' we have established in various parts of this country. Some of my

colleagues were talking about moving people from one place to the other, which is the same as touching them. For instance, if we establish Epicenters in all district headquarter towns in this country, it may cost us a little bit. As such, since this is what the supports are meant for, we have to provide those facilities for the people. Mr Speaker, with the establishment of these Epicenters, in all district headquarter towns, it would be easier for the people in the interiors to move an Ebola case to Bo District. Mr Speaker, during the process of moving suspected patients, a whole lot of touching would occur and the disease will continue to spread (*Applause*). That needs to be given a serious thought, in terms of constructing Epicentres in all district headquarter towns.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this has been a very touchy issue for parliamentarians and the general public. The Leader of this House and Leader of Government Business has done justice as far as this issue is concerned on radios. People have been saying that Members of Parliament have been given the opportunity to handle this crisis in their various constituencies across the country. In his proclamation, the President said that he has already asked parliamentarians to go back to their constituencies to provide leadership, in terms of making this proclamation works. The President said this because he wants to ensure that this epidemic is eradicated once and for all. When we talk about providing Leadership, it means participating fully in the fight against Ebola.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the things we have failed to realise is that, a parliamentarian is also an average Sierra Leonean. In other words, the same blood that flows through every Sierra Leonean across this nation is the same blood that flows through every parliamentarian of this country. It is possible that the same parliamentarian will get hurt, in terms of contracting the Ebola disease. Mr Speaker, anything could happen to Members of Parliament, just as it is happening now. So, if you are talking about going out and providing leadership to our various constituencies, let me put it biblically that, 'being the disciples of all' means go out and provide the necessary leadership required of every Member of Parliament. Let

us remember that we have got families; we have got friends and we have got loved ones. And if anything happens to us, they are going to suffer equally (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is necessary for Members of Parliament to be sent to their constituencies to provide leadership, as the President has said. Mr Speaker, Members of Parliament will agree with me that when we go to our constituencies, our constituents always bring their families to us. This will continue to happen until you leave. In fact, even after you have left, they will follow you to Parliament. That is not supposed to be an issue, because this is what people have been saying that we have signed to serve this country. Well, that is very true, Mr Speaker. However, in a crisis situation, where we are expected to do more than what is being done, I think justice should be our focal point. That is, if we are to provide the kind of leadership that is needed to fight this disease, there should be justice in the health sector, security sector and any other sectors concerned (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our people listen to their politicians more than any other person. Nevertheless, even though they cry down these politicians, but when they tell them about what is happening in the country, they listen to them. This is because these are the people they have been sharing their problems with from time to time. Mr Speaker, there are some parliamentarians that are doing very well in their constituencies and their people listen to them (*Applause*). So, if Members of Parliament have been asked by the President to go to their constituencies and provide the necessary leadership, I think it is, but fair for the President and the people of this nation to also think that the same blood that is running through their veins is the same blood running through the veins of parliamentarians.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as the saying goes: "You should give with one hand and take with the other hand." This means as parliamentarians, we should leave up to expectations. This means that if you have been crowned king, you should not shake your head so that the crown will not fall down. You have to stand tall and walk with the crown. You have to show the people that you deserve it.

When responsibility is given to us as parliamentarians, I should not go behind closed doors to say what I have to say, but I will say it in this Well, so that the critics out there will know that we are conscious of the fact that we hold people accountable and we too should be accountable to them. If trust is being reposed in us to manage these resources, we should live up to the expectation. We have to prove to our detractors (who are saying that Members of Parliament are always running after money), that we are working hard, and we can be relied on.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the fact that this epidemic is touching everybody in this country and majority of our people have lost their lives, I want to urge this Honourable House to speedily ratify the President's proclamation, so that modalities could be put in place by the authorities concerned to get rid of this menace. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**HON. AJIBOLA E. MANLY-SPAIN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we have heard a glut of contributions from Members of Parliament. I believe that this is one of the best days I have spent in this Parliament. I wish to note the emotions expressed by my colleague Honourable members that we are all affected and the questions they have raised are in place. I believe it is my duty at this stage to direct this House to the nucleus of this debate. We all know that the topic under discussion is Ebola, and we are here to ratify a Motion, the Public Emergency. Mr Speaker, we ought to know what is meant by the State of Public Emergency. I believe that Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone answers the questions that have been raised.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me to refer you to the proclamation made by the President of this country. The President said: *"It is hereby by this proclamation declared that a State of Public Emergency exists."* In this Well and out of Parliament, people have been talking about a State of Public Emergency. I want Honourable Members and the general public to note that what has been declared is not a State of Public Health Emergency, but a state of Public Emergency. This is what is in the proclamation. So, we should not misinform the general public at all, Mr Speaker. This morning, I heard somebody on the radio talking about the

proclamation of the state of Public Health Emergency. What was declared, under Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, is a State of Public Emergency, which is beyond a State of Public Health Emergency. A State of Public Health Emergency is limited only to Section 29, Sub-section 2(e) of the 1991 Constitution of this country. The difference is that, a state of Public Emergency is wider in scope. For example, if you look at 29, Sub-section 2(e) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, you will see the various circumstances under which the President can declare a state of Public Emergency. Section 29 (2e) talks about the occurrence of imminent danger or any disaster or natural calamity affecting the community or a section of the community in Sierra Leone. This is where calamity takes us to health workers.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Ajibola Manly-Spain, I do not know what you think of that, but according to 2€ there is an occurrence of imminent danger or disaster or natural calamity. Strictly speaking, it should have been more logical and grammatically correct to say natural disaster and calamity.

**HON. AJIBOLA MANLY-SPAIN:** I know that Mr Speaker and we have debated this before, but I do not want to raise that point again. I think the writer should have easily said 'natural disaster and calamity,' not disaster and natural calamity. A calamity cannot be natural. Mr Speaker, this brings me to the question as to why the public emergency is only declared now. This has been raised and it is being answered by Section 29(5). My colleague said that the Constitution has been suspended, but where is the basis of that statement? If you look at 29(5), it says: *"During the period of public emergency, the President may make such regulations and take such measures as appear to him to be necessary or expedient for the purpose of maintaining and securing peace, order and good government in Sierra Leone or any part thereof."* So, it gives the President the power to rule, despite the other provisions in the Constitution. We ought to go further under this Section, like what my colleague Honourable Member from Bo mentioned under Sub-Section 6.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we are told to go and provide the necessary leadership, it is not limited to go and discuss Ebola issue alone, but we should know what is in the Constitution. We should know the state of affairs we are entering in and the powers given to the President to do certain things. For example,

there is provision in the Constitution to detain certain individuals and to restrict the movement of people from one place to another. We should be in a position to know, as Members of Parliament, some of these constitutional provisions, so that we can go and educate our people on areas they should comply with and also tell our people the powers of the President under such circumstance. So, as parliamentarians, we should know these constitutional provisions, so that we will go and educate our people. For example, when I was listening to the radio this morning, a journalist was reporting that Kenema District has been quarantined. I think we should educate our constituents that we are not in a normal state of affairs. We have to accept our present state of affairs, so that together we will conquer this disease. We have been asking why the state of public emergency was not declared before now. Well, Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution is very clear on such issue. This is because before you restrict people's freedom of movement, you have to go through certain procedures. The government or the Head of State has to weigh all aspect of the event surrounding the disaster before he can make or declare a state of public emergency. Like what the Speaker has said, natural disaster is completely different from a health calamity. For example, if there is tsunami off the shores of Sierra Leone and affects the country, then the effect is immediately seen and the state of emergency could be declared in that area. However, if we are ignorant of a disease that has attacked us, you do not have to declare a state of public emergency immediately. You have to first of all try to ascertain what is going on and the measures you are going to take. For example, in my constituency, Constituency 106, there are two Ebola cases. Mr Speaker, if you decide to quarantine that Constituency, it will have adverse effect. My colleagues have mentioned areas in which the country is being affected because of the state of emergency. This is why you cannot just declare the state of emergency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to implore all of us to read Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, so that we know the extent of the state of public emergency, which we will use to advise our constituents. I am also urging Honourable Members to go and provide the necessary leadership to their

constituents. We know that this proclamation is in place and we should ratify it. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH (*Deputy Speaker of the House*):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is a very important day and I want to appreciate the turnout of Members of Parliament to this very important sitting.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot have been said on Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. I would want to lay specific emphasis on Section 29(1b) and 29(5) of the 1991 Constitution. It is good for us to know the law, so that it would be easier for us to translate this very important information to the very people we represent in this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot have been said about security and the implementation of the state of public emergency. As the Honourable Member from Bo said, the police have been doing very well and we believe that with the Inspector General of Police at the helm of affairs, they will do better in ensuring that the state of public emergency is applied legally. We are not here to cast blames or aspersions on each other, but to support the President in realising the dream of combating the Ebola disease once and for all for the people of this country. It was on the 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 when the President made his statement to this nation. With the permission of Mr Speaker, I want to read: "*The disease is beyond the scope of any one country or community to defeat. It's social, economic, psychological and security implications required scaling up measures at national and international inter-agency and community levels.*" This was the President acknowledging the truth and saying it to the people of this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, at no point in time has the President or this Parliament not treated Ebola with the seriousness it deserves (*Applause*). So, the misconceptions that have been going around are just figments of imaginations and not what this Parliament has been doing and serving the people of this country. The Honourable Member from Kailahun confirmed that this Parliament has been supportive in the fight against Ebola since the first Ebola case in Kailahun District.

The Leader of this House, in one of his statements in this Well, called on members of the fourth estate, particularly those on the parliamentary press gallery to look at the attendance of Members of Parliament. He also said that most of our colleagues are in their constituencies, fighting this deadly disease. Nevertheless, Members of Parliament are still being accused of not putting enough efforts to combat this deadly disease. We should not be blaming people, Mr Speaker. I would encourage all of us, not just Members of Parliament, but all Sierra Leoneans, particularly those in government institutions to come together in the fight against this Ebola. We must be united and we should avoid confrontations. We should collectively focus on confronting this deadly disease, instead of spending time confronting one another. We have very little time to confront the disease itself. This is not the time to cast blames on each other, but this is the time to come out and confer solutions to the problem.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to use this opportunity to re-echo the words of the Honourable Member from Lunsar, when she specifically mentioned those who have contributed money to the tune of 41,000 United State Dollars. We have had more critics than people coming out to proffer solutions, particularly those from the diaspora. They will tell you that a pair of gloves is being used to treat 50 Ebola patients, but none of them is yet to confirm what he/she has contributed towards assisting Sierra Leoneans to fight this deadly virus. When we levy criticisms, we must also be prepared to proffer solutions. The Lawyers always talk about 'Nemodat.' People keep saying things which they cannot defend. You cannot give what you do not have. Members of Parliament have been sacrificing their time and resources, but yet, we have not appreciated at all. Those who have failed to give support are the ones criticizing Members of Parliament. I would also want to use this opportunity to encourage the members of the fourth estate... - (*Interruption*).

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you said the Lawyers always talk about 'Nemodat.' Members of Parliament would want to know about 'Nemodat.'

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, the word means you cannot give what is not yours. Mr Speaker, as I said, I want to use this opportunity in encouraging the

fourth estate to continue doing the good work they are doing. Also, I want to use this opportunity to encourage those who are not journalists and are not expert in this field to stop making statements that are not true, particularly statements that have the tendency to ignite violence. This is not the time to encourage incitement, but this is the time for us to muster our efforts and direct them towards the fight against this deadly disease. The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists has coordinated the media effectively, but some of the statements we are getting from some of these media houses are not true. If you are not an expert in an area, do not venture to even give an advice. It is like going to a lawyer for medication. I am not a medical doctor, and so, I will not pretend to be one. If I am not a journalist, I should not pretend to be a journalist. I think this is very important because if you tune to the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation, (SLBC) and other radio stations in the country, you will hear people misinforming the public. This is causing more trouble and it is accelerating the spread of the virus itself.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to be very careful with the way we disseminate information to the public. The doctors are available and they have been using the media to educate the people. The politicians are being asked to take the lead in this fight. We will take the political lead as has been requested of us. We will not take the medical lead, because we are not medical professionals. We will take the political lead and we want to encourage those who are going to the radios or using the television to be very careful with the way they give out information, particularly to the illiterate people. Majority of them cannot read and write, instead, they rely on us to give them information. As the Honourable Member from Bo said, they rely on our information and they listen to what we tell them. We want people who will assist us in spreading the correct information, rather than those bent on destroying the image of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, as the Honourable Member from Constituency 106 said, this is not a public health emergency, but a State of Public Emergency. We did not expect the President to be coming out with papers every hour. With your permission, Mr Speaker, Section 29(5) reads: *"During a period of public emergency, the President may make such regulation and take such measures as appear to him to*

*be necessary or expedient for the purpose of maintaining and securing peace, order and good government in Sierra Leone or any part thereof."* Few weeks ago, we heard that people attempted to go on a strike action. This must be discourage, Mr Speaker. Members of Parliament have turned out in their number to show our commitment in supporting the President's proclamation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in relation to our international partners, we have heard about the millions of dollars they have allocated towards the fight against the Ebola disease. However, we should not lose sight of the bureaucracy involved in accessing these funds. Mr Speaker, this is an emergency situation that does not require too much bureaucracy in accessing these funds. If they want to help us, it has to be now and it has to be done speedily. Parliament has been recalled and we are here to answer that call. The World Health Organisation (WHO) is presently meeting in Geneva for two days. As somebody said on CNN yesterday, they must make sure that action is swiftly taken to ameliorate the suffering of our people. The figures allocated to the countries affected by this disease are too huge, but the question is, where are the ambulances? They have airplanes to pick up their citizens. If the money is meant to fight this disease, let the funds be utilised prudently. We should not be hiding behind our fingers. If the gears are manufactured somewhere, let them go there and pay for them. Let them airlift them and bring them to us, because we need them urgently in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. We belong to a global village and above all, we are signatories to many international treaties. Therefore, these treaties must be respected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these donations have been made to people or areas that have been affected by this disease. They have pledged to help us and the help should be now. As signatories to many international treaties, we have time to beg, plead and time to demand. It was less than a week ago when we ratified the Arms Trade Treaty in order to protect other people. This is the time for them to pay us back. Therefore, I am calling on all Members of Parliament and by extension, our constituents to support the security of this country. It is our responsibility to support them in whatever capacity we deem necessary. As my colleague from Bo said, Members of Parliament are humans and the same blood that runs through our

constituents is the same blood that runs through us. We must support our security forces in whatever capacity we can. In areas where they make mistakes, we should come forward to give our candid advice and provide solutions. We should not be seen to be confrontational with the security apparatus at this point in time. As I said, our confrontation should be against the Ebola virus, and not against ourselves. Our responsibility is to proffer solutions to this problem. We appreciate the efforts of the President and people of Sierra Leone. So, it is in that vein I would urge my colleagues to ratify this proclamation. I thank you very much.

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI (*Deputy Minority Leader of the House*):** I thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to add my voice to the debate that is going on in this House. We are here this morning to ratify the proclamation for a State of Public Emergency pronounced by the President. Mr Speaker, the fact of the matter is that, Members of Parliament had earlier on requested the President to declare a State of Public Emergency. We said it here and President may have heard it from us about two weeks ago. We said it because we are closer to those communities more than the President. Therefore, he listened to us attentively. He recognised the fact that Members of Parliament are psychologically suffering alongside with the families of those that have been infected with Ebola, especially those that we have lost. In that regard, this state of emergency is ours because we have asked for it. I thank him for listening to us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is an old ordinance in this country, 'the Public Health Ordinance' that was enacted in 1960. I want this House to know that whatever action government is taking now in Kailahun, Bo and other parts of this country is actually coming out of the pages of that ordinance. I also thank him for that because even though that law was enacted in this country during colonial times, it is still effective today as it was effective yesterday. In that regard, I want to inform this House that those measures that are inscribed in that Act that have been used in this country are the ones we are about to endorse today. One of them is the issue of quarantining an area and other has to do with heads of families who are hiding family members that are sick with diseases that are threatening public order or the health of the general public. They must be punished because they are not in

conformity with the rule of law. In that regard, we should agree with the Executive branch of government that that ordinance be instituted. The only thing about it is that, some of the punishments in them are not appropriate, because some of them are asking for 5 pounds. The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice should take note of this, so that he will come to this House with an amendment that should make that ordinance more effective.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have no problem with anybody and all patriotic Sierra Leoneans should have no problem with any action of government that has to reinforce the rule of law and public order. We must make sure that those of us who are agents of government and those of us whom the people of this country listen to, are effectively supported to carry out our duties. Like I said, we are very close to our people because we represent them. So, we make laws that govern and protect them. When the disease broke out in Kenema District, the Kenema Members of Parliament were the first people who suggested that Kenema District should be quarantined. In fact, I want to believe that our Members of Parliament are now part of the quarantined area. They cannot leave Kenema town now. So, if they are listening to me, we are ready to work with them from there. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the process that all of this is happening, we should take cognizance of the fact that Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution of this country is a stripping section. It is so enormous that for those who were victims of the excesses of Section 29 in this country are watching carefully because they have called on us to let the President know that the law enforcement agents must tread with caution. That is the only section that ceases the civil liberties of the citizens of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to call on all of us, including the President to caution the law enforcement agencies, in terms of making sure that they work together with the press, so that freedom of speech and freedom of the press is not trampled upon. Also, they should not be violent on innocent people. We have innocent people who do not even understand the state of affairs of this country. I am in sympathy with our colleague Honourable Members from Kenema District. This is because when three cases of Ebola were reported in Pujehun District, I became very much afraid, Mr Speaker. I thank God that we had reported cases that had not

been more than four. All of those cases came from Kailahun and Kenema axis. So, my sympathy goes to our people in Kenema and Kailahun Districts. I want to assure them that we are with them. I want them to be courageous in whatever they are undergoing right now. If the measures employed would be the antidote to this problem, I want them to be strong and courageous. This is a necessary antidote that may not be so convenient for our people, but in the long run, it will help this country and the sub-region.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not yet time for us to ask as to whether this epidemic is a natural disease or manmade. We may come to that later and for those of us who are in pursuit of scientific research, I urge them to be useful to us in the future. There are lots of doubts, but let us get rid of the doubts and focus on getting rid of the Ebola virus. In this regard, I urge the Inspector General of Police, the CDS, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Defence to caution their men and women in khaki uniforms to be cautious of the civil liberties of the people in the areas they are operating. Those are my concerns and I am sure those are the concerns of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice. On that note, Mr Speaker, I urge my colleagues to ratify this proclamation for the safety of our people.

**HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU (*Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business*):** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a preface to my intervention, I want to crave the indulgence of Mr Speaker to ask this House to observe a minute of silence for all our heroes, especially the health providers, who have lost their lives during the course of this fight. I would also crave the indulgence of this House to ask the listening public, both radio and television to join us in observing a minute of silence (A minute silence was observed). With the leave of Mr Speaker, may the souls of the departed rest in perfect peace. Amen.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this state of public emergency has come as a result of the emergence of the Ebola disease. This is a disease that we have never experienced in West Africa. This is why the Health Ordinance Law of 1960, did not capture this disease. We have diseases such as cholera, typhoid, malaria, small pox

and other communicable diseases. There is nothing like Ebola in our laws, simply because this is a new disease to us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me hasten to mention the supreme law of Sierra Leone, the 1991 Constitution. I want Honourable members to note that the Constitution is not under suspension; it is in full operation. That is why we are here this morning, through the mandate of the President to give the full force of the law to the provisions of the proclamation proclaimed thereto. As it has been stated by all speakers, Ebola is a killer disease. It kills people; it kills business; it drives away investors; and it brings government into a state of kaput. Mr Speaker, as other speakers have been saying about quarantining people, the commanders rely on their generals to give advice before reaching a decision. In the same token, Inspector-General of police relies on his Assistant Inspector-Generals and other Local Unit Commanders (LUCs) before reaching a decision. The President relies on his professional advisers to proffer advice before reaching a decision. So, the question of when and how some decisions are reached, whether delayed or not, in the opinion of some people, it is as a result of such occurrences.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy today because we are not doing any filibustering on this motion. I would endeavour to do just that and with that, I will just come up with recommendations. Mr Speaker, as I said in my opening statement, the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone is the only supreme document we have in this country. On that note, I want to recommend that:

- i. the office of the Attorney-General and the Minister of Justice avails this House with all the regulations and the amendments that are pertained thereto to be laid in this House;
- ii. one of the Deputy Ministers of Health and Sanitation to be permanently stationed in Kenema to provide political guidance to the two epicenters;
- iii. the government defines the roles and responsibilities of institutions and associations. In this case, we want to know who leads and who are the followers?

iv. pursuant to Section 118(7) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, this House ratify a resolution that any person or authority who receives donations, grants or loans from any person or body adheres to the provision in Section 118, which is an entrenched clause.

**THE SPEAKER:** Section 118 of what, Honourable Member?

**HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU:** Mr Speaker, I was referring to Section 118 of the 1991 Constitution, Act No. 6. I want to urge this House, because of exigency or expediency, if you receive cash, material or medicines as donation, please forward it in writing to the Office of the Clerk of this House, providing all those information for onward ratification when situation come to normal. As I speak a lot of people and NGOs have sent applications to the Minister of Finance, seeking duty free waivers in the guise of bringing goods meant for the fight against the Ebola disease. With the leave of Mr Speaker Section 110, Sub-section 2 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone says:

- i. "No taxation shall be imposed or altered otherwise by or under the authority of an Act of Parliament; and*
- ii. where an Act enacted, pursuant to Sub-section 1, confers a power on any person or authority to waive or vary a tax (otherwise than by reduction) imposed by that Act, the exercise of the power of waiver or variation in favour of any person or authority shall be subject to the prior approval of Parliament by resolution passed in that behalf."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I say so because over the period, waivers have been given without reference to Parliament. During the course of the emergency, we will work with the Office of the Clerk to come up with a clear modus operandi to partner with the Minister of Finance during this period to see how waivers are given to people who request them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also want to urge parliamentarians to abide by the law. We are in a state of public emergency and during such period, the law is not a respecter of those who disobey it. Nobody is above the law, including parliamentarians. We make the laws and therefore, we should obey the laws we

make. I want to urge all parliamentarians to be taking their ID cards along to any places they are visiting, especially restricted areas. I also want you to use your marked number plates, so that you provide proper identification.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of our colleagues said it in her contribution that the only way we will vindicate ourselves as Members of Parliament is to account for every resources given to us for this fight. In that line, with the leave of Mr Speaker, I will read Section 97 (a) and (b) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. I am doing this for the attention of the listening public, who do not know that parliamentarians are always very mindful of their responsibilities. In fact, most of the accusations levied against Members of Parliament are done out of sheer ignorance. Section 97 'a' and 'b' says, *"The responsibilities of the Members of Parliament shall include the following:*

- a. all Members of Parliament shall maintain the dignity and image of Parliament both during the sittings in Parliament as well as in their acts and activities outside Parliament; and*
- b. all Members of Parliament shall regard themselves as representatives of the people of Sierra Leone and desist from any conduct by which they seek improperly to enrich themselves or alienate themselves from the people."*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know that Members of Parliament are aware of these responsibilities and we will vindicate ourselves by following this provision to the letter.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all of us for attending this sitting at a very short notice. Some had to come from overseas to answer to this national call. I want to thank Members of Parliament for that prompt response. I also want to thank all the health workers, those who are alive and those who are dead for the untiring effort they made and they are still making to make sure that this deadly disease is eradicated. I want to thank all associations, donor partners, both local and international for donating generously and timely towards the fight against this disease. I also want to thank those who have pledged to speedily cut

down on the bureaucracy, as mentioned by the Deputy Speaker of this House. Ebola disease is not a disease to be contained, or to be eradicated.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join other colleague Members of Parliament in ratifying this proclamation. Therefore, be it resolved that Pursuant to Section 29(3) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6 of 1991, I move that this Honourable House ratify the Declaration of a State of Public Emergency made by His Excellency the President, published in the Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette, Volume CXLV No.41, Dated 31<sup>st</sup> Day of July, 2014.

**HON. MOHAMED K. THOLLEY:** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** What is your point, Honourable Member?

**HON. MOHAMED K. THOLLEY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am standing on S. O. 30 (1&2). With your leave, Mr Speaker, it says:

- 1. "when a motion has been moved and if necessary seconded, Mr Speaker shall propose the question thereon to the House in the same term as the motion. Debate may then take place upon that question and may continue as so long as any Member of Parliament wishes to speak; and*
- 2. when no more member wish to speak, Mr Speaker shall put the question to the House, which shall express its decision in accordance with the provision of S.O 44 the decision of the questions."*

**THE SPEAKER:** So, what is the point, Honourable Member?

**HON. MOHAMED K. THOLLEY:** Mr Speaker, my point is that, there are Members of Parliament who want to make their own contributions.

**THE SPEAKER:** The debate has been closed and the decision of the Chair is final.

*(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)*

*(The Proclamation by the Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business, Pursuant to Section 29(3) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6 of 1991, that this Honourable House Ratify the Declaration of a State of Public Emergency made by His Excellency the President, and published in the Supplement*

*to the Sierra Leone Gazette, Volume CXLV, No.41, dated 31<sup>st</sup> Day of July, 2014, has been ratified).*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I want to thank all of you for turning out in your number to ratify this proclamation. This is a reflection of the seriousness with which all of us treat the Ebola disease and I would like to thank all the Ministers that are here. Some were here, but they had to leave out of sheer necessity. I thank all of you, but some people have been asking this morning, before coming to the Chamber about the Gazette. Mr Attorney General and Minister of Justice, it is normally said Gazette Volume CXLV. I think this is traditional, but the question is, why this CXLV. Some people were asking whether I could tell them what it means. These are Roman numerals and 'C' is hundred, 'X' is ten, 'L' is fifty and 'V' is five, but where a letter placed after another letter of greater value, you add; and when a letter is placed before a letter of greater value, we subtract. So, this CXLV should be 145. Only those who attended St. Edwards Secondary School are right. I want to inform this Honourable House that the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice and Inspector –General of Police attended the St. Edwards Secondary School. I thank all of you.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

*(The House rose at 1.15 p.m. and was adjourned sine die).*