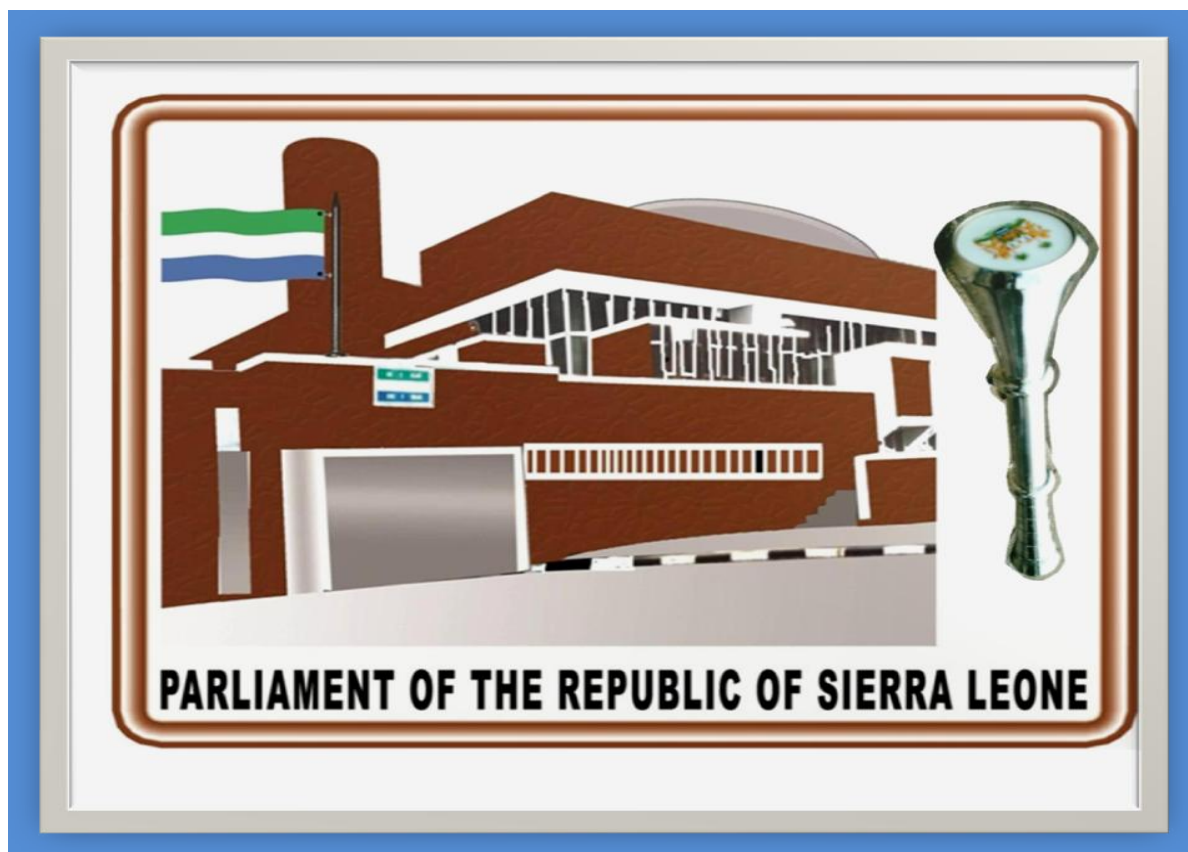


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OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

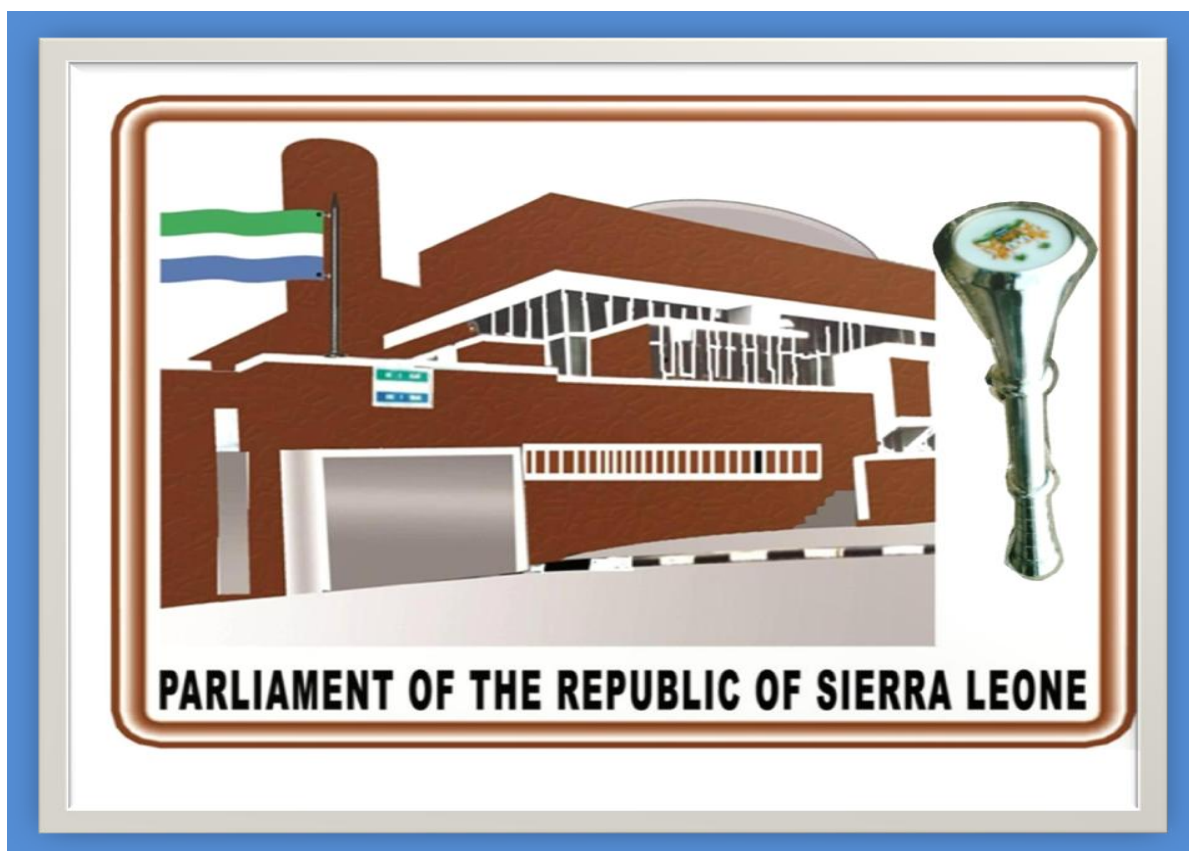
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION –FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 12TH MARCH, 2024

SESSION – 2024/2025



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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First Meeting of the First Session of the Sixth Parliament
of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 12th March, 2024.

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THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

Tuesday, 12th March, 2024.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Fatmata Bintu Weston, Read the Prayers]

[The House met at 10:25a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

[The Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

*Suspension of **S.O** 5[2]*

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THURSDAY 7TH MARCH 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, can we now start with the Records of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 7th March, 2024? As usual, we shall skip Pages 1 through 4. Page 5?, Page 6?, Page 7?.

Clerks, I have warned you severally that when I sit here I do not sit here as Deputy Speaker; I sit here as Acting Speaker. You do not address me as Deputy Speaker, you address me as Mr Speaker because I sit here as Acting Speaker. So do the corrections now *[Applause]*. Page 7?, Page 8?, Page 9? Can a Member please move?

HON. ABDUL LATIFF SESAY: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: Mr Speaker, I so second.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order, the Motion is wrong. We move with amendment, thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, certainly.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: The mover should come again.

THE SPEAKER: Who is the mover?

HON. ABDUL LATIFF SESAY: I so move, Mr Speaker, with amendment.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ABDUL KARIM BANGURA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[The Record of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday 7th March, 2024 has been adopted]

THE SPEAKER: Let me repeat this for the attention of the Clerks; when I sit here I don't sit as Deputy Speaker, I sit as Mr Speaker. If you want to call me Deputy Speaker wait until I am sited there, then I am Deputy Speaker *[Applause]*. Maybe you would want to refer to the Standing Orders 10 [2]; that is why I sit up here *[Laughs]*, thank you very much, proceed.

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday 7th March, 2024 has been adopted as amended]

III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPAKER

THE SPEAKER: Proceed.

IV. PAPER LAID

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following papers:

- MILITARY FRAME WORK AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TOKIO.
- A MILITARY COOPERATION PROTOCOL BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE *[Applause]*.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on **S.O** 23 to bring to the notice of this House that there are two Small Scale Mining Companies that are operating in my Chiefdom. We all can agree that we enacted the Mines and Mineral Development Act, 2022 in this House. With your leave Mr Speaker, I would refer you to Part 7 Section 33 [6b], it reads; *'...not create unprotected pit, hazardous waste, dumps or hazard that is likely to endanger the stock, crop or lawful activities of the community'*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is a company called **FS Mining** which has been in operation, maybe for a year now. I have tried to locate their office in this city but I cannot find it. That Company has up to eight 40ft Trailers that are plying that route, and according to the Environmental Health Impact Assessment, they are supposed to do what we call Dust Suppression, as per one of the hazardous effect mitigation strategies, but that is not happening. And as per the Acts, they are in contravention of this particular section I have just read. We have tried all ways and means for them to see reason and salvage that situation but nothing has happened. There is another Company called **Sunder Ore**, whose Trailers recently blocked the main road leading to my Chiefdom, and the diversion they made was very dangerous. There is a valley around that area that made it extremely difficult and risky for even the bikes plying that route.

Mr Speaker, like I said, I have exhausted all possible avenues; I have engaged the Chairman of Mines and the National Minerals Agency [NMA] on this but nobody seems to be willing or ready to salvage the situation. So I am bringing it to the attention of this House to ensure that we put a stop to this.

Before this time, one of their Dams again became hazardous to the community, and when the Community people took up the issue with the company, the company went and reported the matter to the Moyamba Police Station and the LUC ordered for the entire village to be arrested, brought to Moyamba and locked up in the Cells until I had to intervene again. Currently as I speak, there are military personnel now guarding that facility and I don't know where they are coming from. Thank God the Military Leaderships are here, and this is very serious, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Minister of Defense, please come and listen to this.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: I am bringing this to your attention so that we can take appropriate measures, moving forward. And I want the Media to carry this clearly as I am reporting it, thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Who is in charge of environment; who is the Chairman for the Committee on Environment?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I want to observe. The Honourable Member has just levied an accusation against the Chairman of the Mines Committee that he has made a complaint to him but with no actions taken. I do not know whether the complaint was made formally or informally. That is a very big accusation because Honourable Sellu is coming from that area; that is his locality. For a sitting Member of Parliament to bring a complaint to the fore of the House, especially to the Chairman of a Committee and that Chairman ignores that complaint is a serious matter that we must look into with all seriousness.

Secondly, based on the gravity of the situation that he has alleged, **S.O** 23 is not appropriate because this is a serious situation. So for me, I beg my colleague to do the needful so that appropriate actions can be taken. You can make your ruling but the force of the procedure must be asserted by you telling him to do the needful. The Honourable Member said he brought the issue to the attention of the Chairman, perhaps he did a formal complaint, but this is personal explanation. I am so concern because if the Chairman indeed refused to adhere to the

complaint, the Honourable has the opportunity to come to the Supervisory Committee to complain. There are structures within Parliament; the Chairman is not the be-all and the end-all. If someone comes to me and I don't give that person an attention, he can go to Speaker or Deputy Speaker. So my question now to the Honourable Member is whether he has exhausted the structures within Parliament? We are so strong in our Oversight, and we have enormous powers but we don't pay attention to that. There are other plans that the Honourable can bring onboard so that we can give him attention, mind you, he is representing the people from that locality.

So Mr Chairman, I beseech the Honourable Member to do the needful. If indeed the Chairman did not listen to him as sitting Member, action must be taken by the Supervisory Committee.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do a formal complaint on behalf of your people to the Joint Committees of the Mines and Environment. Do a formal complaint to them and I will urge the Chairman for Mines, and the Chairman for Environment to summon that company or do an investigation and report to Parliament accordingly.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I still need one point of clarification, because he has called in members of the Fourth Estate to carry the information far and wide.

THE SPEAKER: No, not yet, not yet.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, it is now in the open because we are on TV. So I want to know whether the complaint was made formally or informally. If formally, let him tender in the formal procedure he used to bring the complaint to the Chamber. Both the Chairmen of Mines and the Environment are not around, I am not in any way trying to defend them.

THE SPEAKER: So, Honourable Sellu, how did you complain?

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Certainly Mr Chairman, I think I have to explain that very well. Just like I approached you this morning, as a colleague, I engaged the Chairman informally and he asked me to send him a Text Message, outlining the details of the matter and mentioning the names of these Companies. I have done that and I have shown him the evidence.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, make it formal now.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, this is a health issue and we are looking at the long term measure, but in the interim, it is happening on a daily basis. And by the Legal Instrument that they provided as a company, Dust Suppression is one of the mitigating strategies of that particular hazard.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Sellu, we totally agree with you. What we are saying, just make it formal.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Yes, I am making it formal but my question is what happens within the short time?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. Mr Speaker, we have not asked for theory. As I said, that is why we are called Honourable men and women; to make sure that proper things are done. I am not coming in defense of the Chairmen; I am coming in defense of Parliamentary Protocol. You have said let the message be carried far and wide, no problem, but mind you, this is a grave accusation against the Chairmen. So if you have not done the complaint formally, you now need to do it formally. I will not tell the Honourable Member to withdraw because I do not want to use that word; but let him paraphrase what he said *inter alia* so that these guys viewing us [*the Media*] and the public can know that we are not just giving unnecessary blame to our colleagues who are not here. The Honourable has brought in an explanation on behalf of his people, and he is **100%** correct in doing that. All I have said is for him to use the appropriate channel to address the issues, which he has accepted. What I require from the Honourable now is for him to tell the House again that he did not do the complaint formally, and that this time round he is going to do it formally, thank you.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, like the Leader said, I will do it formally. But for me, as colleagues, not everything has to be done in written text. I can take a message to a colleague verbally and that message can be acted upon. However Mr Speaker, I will do the complaint formally to the Chairman of Mines; not both the Chairmen of Mines and Environment because I have not reported the matter to the Chairman for the Environment.

THE SPEAKER: I am now forming a joint Committee of the Environment and Mines. So do a Letter to both of them.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Okay Mr Speaker, I will do as directed

THE SPEAKER: Yes, please do.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: But let me clarify that I only mentioned the Chairman of Mines and not Environment.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, it's alright.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, to the other point; what about the military personnel who are on ground as security?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr. Speaker, Point of Order. You have ruled on this for a Letter to be written to both Committees and your ruling is final in the Chamber. But apart from that, even though the Honourable Member did not report the matter to the Environment Committee, he cited environmental issues and quoted the Act of Parliament in his submission. So by law, both Committees are implicated; the only thing is that he did not do his complaint formally, you understand? This is purely personal explanation under **S.O** 23. If he had moved the appropriate Motion, you can ask them to sit or to talk to the Chair. So I want to beg my colleague with all due respect not to create a situation

THE SPEAKER: It's alright, yes, it's alright. It was I who called them to hear this because most of the time the military is being used by individuals, so that they will hear this and see what appropriate actions to take [*Undertone*].

Okay it's alright, Honourable Sellu, this is a very simple matter, we have dealt with this. Go do the needful, please. Simple in the sense, your explanation to this House is a very simple thing; just explain and you will have the relevant instructions.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I believe as Leaders, one of our primary responsibilities is to ensure that we guide our MPs as to what the process and procedures are. From the exchanges, I have come to realize that the Honourable Member engaged the Chairman but did not engage his Leader. And whatsoever step he is to take should have been determined by the Leader. So I am of the firmest conviction that this issue is so important that Honourable Sellu should have brought it to the attention of the Leader.

THE SPEAKER: You see we have gradation in Parliament; if you informed the Chairman and nothing is done, escalate it to your Leader of Government Business. If nothing is done, escalate

it to the Deputy Speaker and then to the Speaker- you heard the Leader clearly. We do not have any reason going back and forth on this particular issue. We are done with this like the Leader suggested, and like I have instructed, do the needful; do your formal complaint and we take it from there, please. I know you are passionate about this whole thing but do the needful, thank you very much. Yes, Honourable AKK.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I rise on **S.O.** 23.

Mr Speaker, yesterday I was around Agan Street, going towards Mabella area and in my presence, seven young people within the ages of nineteen to twenty-one were taken out of the market as corpse as a result of the dangerous Kush. And as I speak, there are more that are struggling down those communities as a result of Kush. Yesterday I learnt that it is not just Kush, now it is called Jagaban Kush; this shows how dangerous the situation is.

Mr Speaker, I have said many times in this Well that if you take a look at the rate of destruction of Kush on our young people in our country, I am with the firm conviction that the number of young people we have lost as a result of this drug is so serious that as a House, or as a Human Right Committee Chairman, we need to meet with the Drug Law Enforcement Agency. When you look at the Agency, you look at the laws, you look at the monies allocated to them and you look at the current pandemic, then you will understand that we are in a serious situation.

I therefore call on this House to do the needful; I think we should move away from the lip service and take concrete action to save the lives of our young people in this country- the situation is terrible.

HON. DR UNPHA G. SORIE KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I want to rise on **S.O** 23 and subsequently I will rise on the relevant **S.Os**. Couple of days ago, few young men came to my house and asked that I support them to bury their friend

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are not speaking from your seat, right?

HON. DR UNPHA G.BASSAY: Yes Sir, because my Mike is not working.

THE SPEAKER: That is why you must seek the leave of Mr Speaker.

HON. DR UNPHA G.BASSAY: Mr Speaker, May I use this mike, Sir?

THE SPEAKER: It is alright, proceed *[laughter]*. You know these little things are very important, so that you train yourself in Parliamentary proceeding. Even these young ones that have come want to learn from us, not so? You don't speak out of your seat without seeking the leave of Mr Speaker to do so, proceed.

HON. DR UNPHA G. KOROMA: So Mr Speaker, as I was explaining about the interface I had with the young people, to cut long matter short, we ended up laying that young man to rest. Couple of days ago I also saw a video making rounds on social media in which people were shaving the heads of, supposedly young boys that are Kush addicts.

THE SPEAKER: Shaving them for what, were they arrested?

HON. DR UNPHA G. KOROMA: Cleaning them up, I am glad, a lot of MPs saw that video. So Mr Speaker, we all note that the Kush epidemic is alarming; our society is under attack. Personal interest by Sierra Leoneans may undermine the effort of government in this fight. Relevant authorities that should be making the moves and the steps in the right direction to curb this menace do not have the support. So I think it is important and imperative for this House to take the relevant steps to fight against Kush.

In that regard Mr Speaker, I want to move a Motion, provided I am doing the right thing, but I want to stand on **S.O** 19 again, which means we should be calling on the relevant authorities; National Drug Enforcement Authority and even the Ministry of Social Welfare to take the appropriate actions. I know that citizens might want to be proactive by taking steps and measures to tackle the problem, but as the Chairman of the Human Right Committee who doubles as the APC Whip stated, is it the prerogative of the citizens to clean or shave the heads of those people on the street?

The Ministry of Social Welfare should come in to salvage this situation. We have a facility right now at Kerry Town that they used for Ebola. My question to this House is what is being done with that facility? A lot of people are taken upon themselves to rehabilitate people that are under Kush. Can the government do the needful? Can the Ministry of Social Welfare do the needful? Even the Ministry of Health needs to come in because they are health issues.

So as we continue to arrange the calendar of this House in inviting Ministers to answer to Questions by this House, I want the National Drug Enforcement Agency, the Ministry of Social

Welfare and the Ministry of Health to be included in the Calendar so that they can come and help forge a way on how we can fight this menace with Parliament's support and their reactivity.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave I want to move a Motion or put a Notice to this House that we invite those relevant Authorities for Question Time.

THE SPEAKER: Let me advise you on this; what I would advise at this point is for you to do your relevant Questions to the Minister of Social Welfare, because I think we have a set day, not so? We have a set day at the end of this month for Question Time, not so? Yes, do your Question to the Minister of Social Welfare and the Minister of Health. The National Drug Agency on the other hand cannot come here for Question Time. For that, you can do a Formal Letter to the relevant Committee for that Department of State to be invited for questioning by the Committee. But for the Ministers, I advise that you do your relevant Questions to them, set for that particular day.

HON. DR UNPHA G. KOROMA: I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, just a basic concern. In as much as we want to use the Question Time for Ministers, please consider this matter to be a very serious matter in which lives are being lost. Please use your powers to ensure we start doing something now.

Mr Speaker, I am still emphasizing that the lives we have lost under Kush are many. And the interesting thing is that Kush is present in almost every village in Sierra Leone, and we are losing young people. If we have to wait until next month for the Minister to come, and mind you there are Questions already on the line; which means we have to address those previous Questions, and then wait until April to address Questions relating to the Kush problem.

THE SPEAKER: No, no, no, Parliament works through Committees; Parliament works effectively through Committees. Can we bring those to the notice of the Committees? I think that is the best way. I urge the relevant Committees; the Committee of Health and the Committee of Social Welfare to be proactive.

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: Mr Speaker, maybe this is just information to Members of Parliament. Yes, we all know that Kush is an epidemic and we have seen a lot of lives being lost. But the Ministry of Social Welfare has already taken a move; just two weeks ago they launched a Rehabilitation Center at Hastings for Kush victims, and we currently have a lot of young boys and girls in that center. Several dignitaries, including Members of Parliament, Donor Partners, and representatives from the Ministries of Health, Youth and the National Drug Agency were all present, and each and every one committed to fight against this Kush epidemic.

So a move has already been made by the Ministry of Social Welfare and partners to fight against this epidemic. This is just the information I want to give.

HON. AMIE N. MORIBA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the fight against Kush should not only be limited to those taking the Kush; the importers of Kush should also be chased because they are making money out of something which is killing our children. A center should also be established for the rehabilitation for those who take Kush to Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, the other day I was traveling to Bo and I saw a commercial vehicle ahead of me which was overloaded with goods in such a way that even the Police will not have the time to offload and check whether that vehicle was carrying Kush. And these are the types of vehicles that normally transport such drugs across the country unnoticed.

So honestly Mr Speaker, government and MDAs concerned should not only be chasing people who are smoking the Kush, but also the Importers that transport Kush through our International Airport and other Border entry points in the country. The other day I heard a man telling his wife, **S.O2**, *U dae see u pikin?* This is indicating that the moment a son or daughter starts smoking Kush or doing something stupid, that son or daughter automatically becomes the son or daughter of the wife; men always dissociate themselves from bad children. So let us all come together to chase those people who are importing Kush into this country. That is my take, Mr Speaker, thank you.

HON. ABDDUL LATIFF SESAY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker, of course I am the Chairman for the Youth Affairs Committee in the House of Parliament, and indeed the issue of Kush is a terrible experience that our youth are currently having.

Mr Speaker, even the dead are no longer at peace in their graves; their bones are wanted just like how people are looking for diamonds. Mr Speaker, that is why I want you to use your good office to ensure that our major cemeteries are secured, otherwise, there will come a time when people will no longer visit and meet the remains of their loved ones in the cemeteries.

And Mr Speaker, it is not just about identifying the Kush victims, but let us begin to think about creating Rehabilitation Centers and hospitals for the victims. Let us not just centralize or limit the fight to Freetown; let it be a Regional or District fight because we have people that are taking Kush in Bo, Port Loko, Kenema and all other Districts in the country. Yes, we can withdraw the Kush from the market, but what about their health; how are we going to ensure that the victims regain their health?

So Mr Speaker, I believe this is a very important issue that we as Parliamentarians should involve in. I don't know whether the Central Government is incapacitated, but it seems as if we are not focusing on this menace affecting our society. As Parliamentarians, we are the representatives of the people, and the youthful population is one that carries the highest percentage in terms of the population of this country. So if we allow that population to go down the drain, it will be very detrimental for the future of this country.

Mr Speaker, another disturbing fact is that these Kush victims no longer yearn for women; they have no sexual urge for women no sooner they start taking Kush. And Mr Speaker, this is dangerous for us, taking into consideration the rate at which the female population dominates that of the male. Having our male youths dying in numbers, and at the same time having most of those alive not interested in women affair as a result of Kush is a big problem, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: What are your worries about that?

HON. ABDUL LATIFF SESAY: We do not want to have a situation wherein one man will be going for ten women.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, meaning the few will be under serious pressure, not so? *[Laughter]*

HON. MOHAMED TAWALLIE FOFANAH: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of Kush should not be underrated. Recently, I received few calls from two villages in my area in Kambia. Some of the parents do not even know about Kush, but because it is changing the condition of their children, they are worried, and because we are Members of

Parliament, they always call on us for whatever little thing that happens to them. I was in Kambia last weekend and I had to go to those places but by the time I got there, unfortunately those two gentlemen who suffered from Kush had passed off and buried.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as part of the Youth Committee, we had the National Youth Commission yesterday and we talked to the Commissioner who explained to us about the Obasanjo facility that they are now using as a rehabilitation center for not only Kush, but for all other drugs abusers around the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, just like my other colleagues said earlier, I do not think posing questions to the Minister of Social Welfare or the Minister of Health is enough to combat this pandemic. I think we have to take it to another level because by the time we have those two Ministries here, the danger might have increased due to the number of death multiplying day by day. For that reason Mr Speaker, I want to join my colleagues in calling for other measures to be applied in order to tackle this menace.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, taking the affected people to rehabilitation center is not the only solution. We have to think about stopping the importation of Kush into this country. Kush is not manufactured in Sierra Leone; there are people who are coming with it in the country. The question now should be where is it coming from and where is the point of entry?

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, we are all coming from different districts and we are here representing the entire country. Kush is affecting every district in this country, so let us come together as Honourable Members of Parliament to make this pandemic our issue; let us fight against it because it is affecting us, it is affecting our sons, our brothers and sisters. Let us not turn blind eyes on it because our sons, daughters or brothers are not directly affected. In one way or the other, a community member is affected.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I said, I want to join my colleagues in calling for a solution that can remedy this situation, thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this thing is extremely serious; I think it is a pandemic, and the way this thing is going even our children are not safe, because I have come to realize, and some people are even saying that some of these boys are given this substance without even their knowledge; they put it in something or some kind of food and you eat it and you are

drunk the whole day; so even our children in schools are not safe. This is very serious; I think I join other Members of Parliament to treat this particular thing as a pandemic. And let's urge the government to ensure that all necessary modalities are put in place to address this particular malaise, but let me hear from the Leaders.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I have said in this Well times without number that this Kush thing is taking a different trend. Mr Speaker, I want to move a Motion that we summon the top management of the Sierra Leone Port and Harbor and NRA to face us because when these Containers come at the Quay they are opened and inspected. So how do the Importers sneak with this Kush to the communities? The Managements at NRA, the Quay, including the Inspector General of Police and top management of the Police should come and explain to us how this Kush is utilized by the communities. Currently you would realize that there are Kush Centers all over the place.

THE SPEAKER: It's being sold openly now.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Yes, it's open and sold all over the place. And you would see the Police Officers at times seated in these areas smoking with these people.

So Mr Speaker, we have said it times without number in this Well, so now we should summon them to come and explain to us because we are representatives of the people. Let the Managements of Port, NRA [Customs], the Police and the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency come and explain to us where the challenges are. If urgent moves are not taken, there is a tendency that even our children in primary schools will be joining Kush squad and the future will be bleak.

THE SPEAKER: Of course, I saw a video one day where these little children were fighting over Kush.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: So Mr Speaker, I want to move a Motion that the Clerk's Office summons these entities to face us at least in Committee Room One so that we can pose questions to them.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, I totally agree with you, Honourable Bashiru. Honourable Leader of Government Business, you have heard your Deputy, what do you have to say to that?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, you need to understand how they produce Kush, because you don't understand, that is why you are talking about the borders. Kush is a component of different substances put together, with the addition of chemical which serves as the reactant to stimulate fast reaction. So Kush is made from different components. So even if you have a highly sophisticated detector at the Borders or at the Airport you cannot detect anything called Kush. Kush is produced within Sierra Leone.

The reason why I sat down listening quietly is because I have been thinking of how we can get those who are producing it. All of what we are talking is about the victims, and I agree with my colleague. When I first saw the clip I had two feelings about it; the sanitary and the Human Right aspects. Sorry for the language, the victims are filthy. So I had mixed feelings when looking at the video. I saw one of the guys saying, **S.O** [2], *'una leh we clean am; barb am'*, and the other one was saying *'e get sor foot'*. So I felt sorry for the victims even though I also appreciated what they were doing for them. I know how someone looks when he or she is under the influence of Kush; they automatically behave like crazy monkeys or Zombies.

So what I will tell my colleagues in the House is that even if you call the Ministers, they are just going to explain theory. Kush is produced here but it is difficult to get those who are producing it. So let us now go after those who are marketing it; the retailers, we should go after them. Government is trying very hard to take care of the victims. Initially they started arresting the victims, but when we requested during our Debate session that they should not be incarcerated, rather, they should be taken to Rehabilitation Centers, that is what they are now doing for them. As for me, I have contributed to organizations fighting against Kush, and I also organized a Gala which ended this week. We used that Gala to raise awareness around Kush and its negative impact.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as my colleague on the other side said, this is not one man business; we all have to come onboard to fight against Kush. This issue of complaining to the Chamber is not enough. Even if we make laws, the enforcement might be a problem; the legislations are there but the enforcement is our problem. So as my Deputy Leader said, let us call them and see how best we can trigger the enforcement by going after them. I also agree that we should go after the retailers, arrest and persecute them speedily; we need to take serious actions against them.

But Mr Speaker, let me tell you something; today we are shouting, we are requesting the government to make hard decisions against those who are peddling Kush around. But do you know that politics will set in one day, and some people will start talking about Human Rights abuses?

For us Mr Speaker, it has reached a point where we should be thinking about instituting a State of Emergency just like we did for the Sexual Violence against women, although that also had its ramification; some people thought we were going to misuse it for Public Health Emergency.

So as Legislators, I believe we should be calling on the government in that direction; talking about Public Health Emergency, especially for Kush, and with the regulations to ensure that something is done.

Mr Speaker, when the President made the pronouncement about the sexual violence, we enacted the laws, and look at what is happening today; aggravated sexual harassment can now result to life imprisonment. So in the same vein Mr Speaker, we should now graduate from making talk shops and asking questions, to now use the sexual violence model we did in this House and call on the government to declare Public Health Emergency because our youths are going in the direction we don't want them to.

So let both sides of the House call on government to make it loud and clear so that we have the authority to say '*arrest on sight anyone you see selling Kush*'. But as it is now, if you take any action, the activists will come to talk about Human Right. If the government triggers State of Public Health Emergency, people will now have the right to arrest violators on sight because the regulations will give right to arrest, speedily persecute and jail or sentence them.

So Mr Speaker, I join my colleagues to say I perfectly agree that we do engagement, but I want us to move beyond engagement and call on government to do the needful. I cannot be the referee and a player at the same time; I have triggered that government should now be thinking about declaring Public Health Emergency on Kush. I want us to use a Bi-Partisan approach on this. So in the next Sitting, let us, including my colleagues on the other side, come out clearly and call on government to use the powers of the Constitution to make pronouncement. So we are now urging the government that it needs to do something so that this business of Kush which has become a menace in our society is put under control.

Mr Speaker, let me say this before I finally take my seat. Honourable Members, we have to take actions; we have to be proactive and futuristic. If you label Kush, they will come with another name; these things are just nomenclatures they are playing around with. The only good aspect about some of the things that we are doing is to make sure that we strengthen our laws and support them with enforcement. In enforcing the laws you don't need to stick to one name because they will come up with another nomenclature; they have started calling it Jagaban Kush, and that is the climax the mixtures have attained so far.

So my point here is that we should not continue to stigmatize the victims because their story is so pathetic. We should encourage people to start thinking of ways to rehabilitate the victims and call for the nation to pay attention to the fight against any drug abuse in general- not only Kush. As we are now planning to fight Kush, the peddlers are hearing us and after few days they are going to use another name. So let us talk about the intake of harmful substance.

So we are fully in support of government, I know it is a Bi-Partisan approach and I believe by the next sitting my colleagues will come and we would have a full debate on that and then move the necessary Motions, thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: So you want this Motion to be put on hold for now?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Yes, my colleague said it is just a Notice and I want us to have Bi-Partisan approach on it. We know what we are going through, and I have said this times without number; the public don't like Parliament, no matter what you do. That is the situation all over the world, so we have to be careful in dealing with the public.

So the approach I want us to take is that we should use the bipartisan approach, and secondly, we call on government to trigger a Public Health Emergency on this. By doing that, it will carry the steam because it is not just coming from one side. So the Honourable has sent in a Notice, and we would now discuss the modalities in carrying on; perhaps we would put it in the Order Paper for Debate. As somebody rightly said, asking questions is really not enough to deal with this kind of thing that is posing danger around us, thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: So let wait after the Debate and we can find a way of bringing in the Drug Law Enforcement Agency to come and answer questions to Parliament.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Sorry Sir, let me come to that. They are supposed to have one session tomorrow, but we do not want to do the oral aspect or the written Questions and Answers. We wanted to start with Waka Fine tomorrow but unfortunately, the Minister is not around. So we are exercising patience to have one session before the substantive date we have slated for the Question Time. If the Minister comes around before the substantive date, we will have one set before the final set.

But I will assure colleagues that these things are very serious, and we have to disuse them using **S.O 19**; ask Ministers Questions so that they can educate us. It is not any witch hunting; it is just the practice of a beautiful democracy, thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I advise that we invite the IG and the Drug Law Enforcement Agency to Committee Room One, maybe Tuesday next week after Sitting. Let them come and answer relevant questions from Members of Parliament, that's how I look at it. But apart from that, Honourable Members, let me warn you; in as much as we are taking the lead in this fight, please Honourable Members, let us be extremely careful, because from what I have heard, people are saying that sometimes these Drugs are administered even without your notice. So please guard your drinks, guard your food, because as Members of Parliament, of course we are the most hunted. Somebody might want to make fun of you and lace your drinks or your food with this substance. So please guard your food, guard your drinks, it is extremely important. And what they have said is that the moment you taste of this drug, you become addicted- that is the most dangerous aspect of it; you will never rest without it.

So please, I don't know if we can be agreeable on this; to just find a day, probably after Sitting on a day, we invite these two Agencies to come and answer questions so that after that we can now have our Debate, and we would now be debating from an informed point of view because if we ask the relevant questions and they provide answers, then we would know what we come here to Debate about; we would know all the loopholes, we would know the challenges, the interventions and then we can come and properly debate. This is just my pinch of salt. Yes, Leader of the Opposition.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I want to join the Leader of Government Business in expressing our total willingness to work together to ensure that we curb this menace. Of course this is not the first time as a nation that we are addressing issues affecting us collaboratively. I

could remember years back when Ebola struck; we did it collaboratively and at the end of the day there was a solution. When we had Corona, we attacked it collaboratively and there was a solution. Also, when we had the Rape issues, we did it collaboratively.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is clearly stated in the Constitution. Please permit me to read Sub section [2] of Section **29**, it says; *'the President may issue a proclamation of a State of Public Emergency only when [f], there is any other public danger which clearly constitute a threat to the existence of Sierra Leoneans'*.

Mr Speaker, to me, Kush is a big threat to the existence of mere Sierra Leoneans, so it should be treated with priority. We on this side want to join Members on the other side to ensure that we treat this with the utmost urgency it deserves. There is not a single Member of Parliament here who has not seen victims of Kush because they are spread right across the country. In my community, young and useful boys, in fact University Graduates have been subjected to Kush, and it is destroying their future.

The Bible says, *'when the foundation is destroyed what can the righteous do?'* So to us, it is better and it is very much important that we act expeditiously, and so Parliament could even communicate with His Excellency the President, so that we do what we did to address the other epidemics or pandemics as a Parliament. So I want to join the Leader of Government Business in expressing our total willingness in handling this menace *[applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Veronia Kadie Sesay, the Floor is yours.

HON. VERONICA K. SESAY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I have been listening keenly to what my colleagues have been saying, and I agree 100% to join to fight this common enemy. Like my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, we indeed fought against Ebola and Corona and we succeeded. So, this one again is another dangerous pandemic that we need to fight together because we are losing our children; we are losing potential Members of Parliament, potential Presidents and potential Ministers.

Few days ago, when I watched the Social Media I nearly cried because of what I saw; all the victims are having sores over their bodies. So we cannot limit this issue to inviting those Agencies to come and answer questions; we have to break the chain just like we did for Ebola. We need to have Holding Centers in the various districts, communities and villages, so that

Kush victims could be brought to those Centers. We should not only bring them to those Centers, but also engage Doctors who would flush out these substances in their systems. We have to talk to our Donor Partners to come to our aid just like they did for us during the Ebola and Corona epidemics.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are other drugs that these people take, apart from Kush. 50 to 90% of Alcohols that come to this country are highly intoxicant; they may seem to be in small bottles but with high percentage of Alcoholic content. Most times you would realize that the partakers of Kush would not only stop at Kush, but also back it up with these Alcohols. So we need to take cognizance of that when dealing with issues related to drug abuse. I am happy that we are all saying the same thing, and we want to make sure that we eradicate this menace in our various Consistencies because the victims are our people, they voted for us and we want to see them grow.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, since we are all together in this, and we are all representing our various communities, let us work together as a team. In my area for example, people started the fight against Kush using Secret Societies but I told them that such method cannot help fight Kush. I instead encouraged them to involve not only the Police, but the Military as well; just as we did to eradicate Ebola. That is why we the Members of Parliament should go back to our various Constituencies and help the people to develop Byelaws that deal with this issue. We do not need to harass, arrest, or jail the victims; we just need to move them from others in society and place them where they can be treated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it would surprise you to know that they are now putting these substances in Butter Scotch and Cakes so that little children in Primary Schools can be involved. That is very dangerous because, as you have heard from other colleagues, the moment you start taking Kush you become addicted to it in a way that you find it difficult to quit.

Therefore, I am very much happy that we are all in it together; let us make sure we work together and engage the government to help us fight against this common enemy, thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay.

HON. EMMILIA LULU TUNGI: Mr Speaker, I want to suggest that you add a Medical Doctor to the list of Agencies you invited, so that they would scientifically explain the chemistry involved in making Kush, and the gravity or the consequences of taking it. I heard from the United State that some victims are even behaving like Zombies by chopping off their limbs. So if we can get a Medical Doctor to come over and explain the seriousness of this Drug, the better.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, Leader, please take note of that.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, my Motion is that we summon the Leadership of Sierra Leone Ports Authority and the Leadership of NRA because they are covering our borders, the Leadership of the Sierra Leone Police and the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency, and by extension, as has been said by the Honourable from Kailahun, the Chief Medical Officer [CMO]. I move that they come and appear before Parliament in Committee Room One [1] on Monday the 18th of this month.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, sorry I came late. I agree with the Deputy Leader of Government Business, but my concern is, are we not putting the Cart before the Horse? I actually came late, I may be wrong, so please correct me if am wrong. What I met is that it seems that there is a move to convince government to declare a State of Emergency, is that correct?

THE SPEAKER: Well, we intend to have a Debate on this particular matter, but we want to hear from the experts to inform our Debate. After our Debate, then we can go to the emergencies and so on and so forth. But let us listen to the experts to inform our Debate so that we know what the challenges are, what the interventions are, and all of those.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: So We can use those convincing points to convince government to take action?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, certainly. Honourable Deputy Leader, you have not stated a specific day; can we say Monday?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I have said Monday 18th of March at 11:00am

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion moved by the Deputy Leader of Government Business has been carried]

THE SPEAKER: Where is the Acting Clerk of Parliament? Inform him to do those Summon Letters today to the relevant Institutions. Monday without fail at 11.00am, we should be meeting here, thank you very much.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/ ADJOURNMENT

Mr Speaker adjourned the House to Tuesday 19th March, 2024 at 10:00am. The House rose at 11:35am