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PRESS RELEASE

AMIDST WALKOUT BY SOME OPPOSITION MPs, PARLIAMENT APPROVES ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER, WESTERN REGION, ZAINAB UMU MOSERAY AND FIVE OTHERS

After a protracted debate for several hours, the Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 28/10/2021 approved six presidential nominees including the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region, Zainab Umu Moseray amidst walkout by some opposition Members of Parliament.

Opposition MPs who walkout include APC, NGC and some C4C Members of Parliament.

The six nominees constitute the third report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, chaired by the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma in the fourth session of the current Parliament assembled.

The following presidential nominees were approved by Parliament:

1. Mrs Zainab Umu Moseray, Electoral Commissioner, Western Region
2. Dr. Simeon Owizz Koroma, Chief Medical Examiner
3. Mrs Mary Penn-Timity, Member, Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission
4. Ms. Mary Yeanor Musa, Member, Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission
5. Rev. Mrs Ethel Marjorie George, Member, Sierra Leone Teaching Service Commission and
6. Mr. Musa Salam Conteh, Member, Board of Directors, Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion

Seconding the motion, Deputy Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie described the nominees as qualified, and called on them to serve in the best interest of the country.

He decried the Opposition APC for aversion to the nomination of the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region and appealed to their conscience to support her nomination in light of gender-sensitivity and inclusivity.

He called on the nominees to the Teaching Service Commission to work hard to ensure that President Bio's vision on free quality education holds sway in the country.

Calling on NEC, Civil Society and the International Community to investigate the conduct of the bye-elections recently held in Koinadugu District, Hon. Daniel Koroma also spoke against the nomination of the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region citing constitutional violation in light of consultation with political parties before such appointment was made by the President.

Leader of NGC, Hon. Dr Kandeh Yumkella, speaking on the need for respecting the constitution said the NGC was not consulted on the appointment of the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region. Talking on nation first and the independence of NEC, he said they would not sacrifice democracy on the platter of gender and the youth.

Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh said that political parties were duly consulted in respect of the correspondence sent to them by the Secretary to the President in light of her appointment as the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region, Zainab Umu Moseray by President Bio. He said the government acted within the confines of the constitution and it was not in breach as allegedly stated by the opposition parties.

Independent MP, Hon. Emilia L. Tongi praised President Bio for appointing women of substance to positions of trust in the country.

Hon. Rebecca Y. Kamara shared similar sentiments and spoke on the need for women to be given the space to serve in the best interest of the country.

Hon. Abdul Kargbo decried NEC for the conduct of the recent bye-elections in Koinadugu District and challenged earlier submissions on consultation before her appointment.

Hon. Hindolo M. Gevao stressed on the need that President Bio made due consultations before appointing the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region, Zainab Umu Moseray.

Calling on MPs to support her nomination, President of Parliamentary Female Caucus, Hon. Veronica K. Sesay praised President Bio for fulfilling his commitment to appoint women to positions of trust in the country.

The Opposition Whip, Hon. Hassan Sesay said the APC was neither against the personality, nor the credentials of the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region, but her manner of appointment.

Leader of C4C, Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina said the C4C was duly consulted and thanked President Bio for her appointment to serve as Electoral Commissioner, Western Region, Zainab Umu Moseray.

Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, Deputy Leader of the Opposition said the APC was not against women's empowerment, but that wider consultations were to be done before such appointment was made.

Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas warned Parliament not to transform itself into an entity to interpret the constitution, which sits well with the superior court of judicature. He referred to the nominees as well qualified and wished them a successful tenure, adding the word consultation as defined in the constitution was not a fait accompli.

Hon. Sahr Charles spoke on issues relating to consultation and opposed to the nomination of the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region.

Rounding, Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah said the nominee for the position of Electoral Commissioner, Western Region was not fit for the appointment, and noted that political parties were not duly consulted on her appointment. He recalled that the first NEC boss who was appointed by former President Kabbah was rejected on the ground of consultation by all registered political parties. He called for strict following of the law, in spite of women's empowerment and called for ethnic audit at NEC, the country's election management body.

Concluding, Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma denounced statements made by the opposition and commended the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region, Zainab Umu Moseray for her experience and good track record in the country. He said it was difficult to put a good woman down and challenged them to seek interpretation to the Supreme Court in respect of the word, consultation. Speaking on consultation before her appointment, he said seven political parties accepted as opposed to three including the APC.

Hon. Nyuma recalled that former Electoral Commissioner's appointment, Dr. Christina Thorpe was questioned on credibility and not consultation; assuring that the nomination of the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region, Zainab Umu Moseray was going to be approved by Parliament. He appealed to MPs to vote in respect of the affirmative bill aimed at empowering women.

In his felicitations to the nominees, Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu called on them to live up to the expectations of their respective appointments, moreso the Electoral Commissioner, Western Region to perform her duty with care and excellence in view of what transpired in Parliament on her approval.

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