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PRESS RELEASE

COMMITTAL OF BILL ON CYBER CRIME

Following continued debate on the Bill entitled "The Cyber Crime Act of 2020", the Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 29/04/2021 committed it to the Legislative Committee, chaired by Hon. Abdul Marray-Conteh for further scrutiny and subsequent enactment into law.

Hon. Dr. Markmahmoud Kalokoh objected to the Cybercrime Act citing infringements on the human rights of the general citizenry and spoke on committal of the said Bill for further scrutiny.

Leader of NGC, Hon. Dr. Kandeh Yumkella talked on the need for protecting the rights and privacy of the citizens and also called for committal to advance the consultative process with stakeholders for a positive legislation.

Hon. Abdul Marray-Conteh, Chairman of the Legislative Committee, said we need laws around Cybercrime for the protection of the new media generation cognizant of human rights. Comparing the Bill to others in the subregion, he said "our proposed Cybercrime bill is the best", having provided for citizens rights and protection from cyber bullying.

Speaking on committal, PC Kanagbaro Sanka III commended the Speaker of Parliament for allowing MPs and the general public to make their inputs before passage into law.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo spoke on the need of passing a Cybercrime law that will serve in the best interest of the citizens and pointed to the impacts the repealed Public Order Act of 1965 had on the media in the country. He spoke on continued consultations before passage into law.

Hon. Daniel Koroma thanked the Minister of Information for consulting stakeholders and hoped their concerns and recommendations will be looked into before passing the said Bill into law.

Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor Bah thanked MPs for contributing to the debate, and the Minister of Information for cooperating with Parliament on the consultative process with the general public on the said Bill. He said, "we make laws for the people we represent and we should make them in good faith". He observed we should have a law on Data Protection first, before enacting one on Cybercrime. Being a member of the Legislative Committee, he promised to join them in doing the needful.

Concluding, Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie commended MPs for their brilliant submissions and joined the Leader of the Opposition in calling for a Data Protection Bill, for protecting the privacy of individuals. He called on the Legislative Committee to do the needful after committal.

Responding, Minister of Information and Communications Mohamed Rado Swaray promised MPs that issues raised would be considered and addressed during hearings at the committee level.

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