



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Parliament Building - O.A.U Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown | admin@parliament.gov.sl | www.parliament.gov.sl

16th October, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



INTERNATIONAL MORAL GUARANTORS, KEY PLAYERS IN THE PEACE AGREEMENT, MAKE FOLLOW-UP VISIT TO PARLIAMENT

On Wednesday, 16/10/2024, a momentous event unfolded as representatives from the African Union, the ECOWAS Commission, the United Nations Office for West Africa, and the Sahel (UNOWAS) amalgamated into International Moral Guarantors visited the Leadership of the Sixth Parliament of Sierra Leone with a purpose of a crucial follow-ups on the importance in the context of the implementation of the Agreement on National Unity signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and All People's Congress Party (APC), and the recommendations of the Report of the Tripartite Committee.

The Former Vice President of the Gambia and Head of Delegation, Madam Aja Fatoumata C.M Jallow-Tambajang, expressed elation for the red carpet and welcomed the leadership of Parliament accorded them. She said their joint follow-up visit was aligned with the Peace and Unity Agreement signed Between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Main Opposition All People's Congress Party (APC). The Head of Delegation reiterated that their visit to the House of Parliament and Sierra

Leone generally was to monitor the implementation of any document or agreement signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the APC Party. She acknowledged the pivotal role of the House of Parliament in promoting peace and stability, which was the reason the delegation chose Parliament as one of the institutions for their joint follow-up visit. The delegation emphasized the importance of their visit, making the audience feel valued and integral to the process.

Welcoming the Delegation to the House of Parliament, the House Speaker of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, the Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas, highlighted the peaceful and tolerant nature of the Sixth Parliament. He assured the delegation that it would be in his interest that both political parties work together to promote peace and unity in Parliament and outside Parliament. Speaker Thomas alluded that he would be the greatest beneficiary if the House of Parliament embraces Peace and National Cohesion. The Rt. Hon. Speaker also acknowledged the visibility of rancor and uncontrollable pandemonium in the absence of peace among Members of Parliament. Unlike the Fifth Parliament, Speaker Thomas assured the delegation that, the Sixth Parliament had been tolerant and peaceful, especially under his leadership, instilling a sense of optimism about the political climate.

Elucidating the position of the Main Opposition regarding the status quo of the implementation of the Tripartite Recommendations, the Opposition Leader, Hon. Abdul Kargbo, referenced Resolution 4 (D), which makes mention of the entitlements for Opposition Members of Parliament, Mayors, and Councilors had not been addressed by the government. He also referenced Resolution 2, which states that immediately after the President made his statement that the opposition MPs should take their seats, adding that they all took their respective offices no sooner after the president addressed the nation. The Opposition leader called on the delegation to make frantic efforts to ensure that the Government of Sierra Leone meets the conditions in Resolution 4 (D). He also decried the snail-pace of government in addressing Resolution 4 (E) regarding the placement of leadership of Opposition Members at the International Parliament. He, however, expressed optimism for a fair sharing of leadership composition at committees to reflect the 60-40% for the opposition. He also called for the release of political prisoners.

In response to the opposition leader, the Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie, said the opposition members of Parliament came very late to the first session of the Sixth Parliament. He referenced section 93 of the 1991 constitution, which indicates that Parliamentary Committees should be distributed at least twenty-one days after the opening of Parliament. He added that the opposition did not take their seats for over four months, but the Government Bench still reserved committees for them. The Acting Leader of Government Business assured that they would address all of those issues at the beginning of the new session. He also disclosed that the House is planning a retreat to address all of those issues. He disclaimed that backlogs and other finances for the opposition do not fall within their mandate as SLPP Members of Parliament. He assured the delegation that the government is fully committed to upholding the recommendations of the Tripartite Report.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition APC, Hon. Daniel Brima Koroma, also assured the delegation that the Sixth Parliament has many goodies, especially with the election of Speaker Thomas. He said Speaker Thomas was elected in accordance with the laws of Sierra Leone and had a landslide victory. He disclosed to the delegation that he contested against Speaker Thomas but lost the election. “I am contesting against Mr. Speaker because I also want to become Speaker. And I am qualified by law. But we have to give room for democracy. Among five or six contenders, democracy must prevail just like it happened in the election of Mr. Speaker”, he said.

The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, assured the International Delegation that tremendous reforms had been made, especially under the leadership of the Sixth Parliament. He said that in terms of the quota system for Female representation, only Senegal is doing more than Sierra

Leone, with 50% and Sierra Leone 30%. He added that the 30% was legislated in the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2022. The Deputy Speaker also disclosed that the indications are obvious as the Sixth Parliament has forty-one Female Members of Parliament. He said even the governance structure of the Executive Arm of Government reflects the 30% quota. He assured the team that the nation would continue to stride forward as a nation.

The Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Paran Umar Tarawally, addressed the issue of the backlog for opposition Members of Parliament, adding that his administration had prepared all the documents and sent them to the Ministry of Finance. He assured that the Parliament's leadership would constantly remind the Ministry of Finance to pay the backlogs for opposition Members of Parliament. He concluded by committing that by December 2024, all backlogs for opposition Members of Parliament would be paid.

The Delegation was very pleased with the responses from all sides and assured constant monitoring of the agreement. The meeting was climaxed with a group portrait.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

Parliament of Sierra Leone

+23278495023/+23276625960/+23278426851/+23278697776/+23277473804

For more information, please visit us @:

>www.parliament.gov.sl

> Parliament of Sierra Leone app

> Parliament of Sierra Leone's Facebook account

> Parliament of Sierra Leone's Twitter account >Email:admin@parliament.gov.sl