



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PAC CONCLUDES INQUIRY WITH LOCAL COUNCILS IN THE NORTH ON AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORTS FOR 2021/2022

In its continued engagements with Local Councils across the country on the Reports of the Auditor General for 2021/2022, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) responsible for conducting public hearings with a view to looking into the queries raised in the said Reports for the period under review has also had engagements with the Councils in the Northern Region of the country, in the Makeni City Council Hall, Bombali District.

During the hearings, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee in the Parliament of Sierra Leone, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh reiterated and admonished Council Officials, by stating that the Auditor General's Report is the property of Parliament and that no other authority or agency had the right to investigate anything relating to these Reports. He also sounded a strong note of caution to MDAs including Local Councils to desist forthwith from answering to issues raised in the Auditor General's Reports, except to Parliament or otherwise matters arising therefrom are so referred by Parliament in respect of same to anybody, institution or authority established by law like the ACC and others for further investigation.

"The Audit Report submitted to Parliament by the Auditor General is the property of Parliament. Let nobody call you to investigate anything from the Audit Report, it is Parliament's responsibility to

conduct investigations and hearings on this Report. If there is any issue that Parliament deems to be criminal or in the opinion of Parliament meets the requirements of other provisions or other legislations passed by Parliament, for which other bodies in governance or the executive or otherwise are responsible, Parliament will refer to them. It is not the business of any other institution or agency to start hearings or conduct hearings on this document afresh. So if the Anti-Corruption Commission or any other body calls you, tell them the Deputy Speaker of Parliament has ruled and you are going to stay by that ruling. Until and unless that rule changes, nobody can issue any summons, subpoenas or warrants you, because the document belongs to Parliament, and nobody has any legislation that gives them power or authority over this Audit Report. Except Parliament and by the powers of the grund norm or the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone", he stressed.

The Chairman continued by saying that going forward, there would be no regional hearings, save for district focus and in-depth inquiry into the activities of Local Councils. He assured that the Committee would visit each Council and investigate matters connected to it. He noted that even the Council in Falaba District would be visited by the Committee.

On own-source revenue mobilization, the Chairman of the PAC strongly urged for collaborative efforts and training for Council and Chiefdom authorities with a view to developing strategies to increase revenues for the development of their localities, and to meet projected revenues for the realization of same.

"I don't have a friend in my drive to collect money for the government, and at present, my nickname is Tawa for collect", he emphasized.

During the engagements, many outstanding issues raised by the Auditor General were resolved, and some were recommended for follow-ups pending a determination by the Auditors, subject to approval by the PAC. Officials of Koinadugu District Council were surcharged NLe 5,000 for failure to present accountable documents during audit. The Committee directed the staff to pay to the Council's Account and recognize it as bankable income to the Council and be used for the benefit of the said council.

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