



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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

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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENT BARS JOURNALIST FOR RECKLESS JOURNALISM

The House Speaker of the Sierra Leone Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, the Rt. Hon. Speaker Segepoh Solomon Thomas has on Friday the 10th January 2025, made a ruling indefinitely barring a Journalist, Melvin Tejan Mansaray from gaining access to the precinct of Parliament for practicing reckless journalism.

In his ruling, Mr. Speaker informed the House that he had received many complaints and concerns from Members of Parliament across both sides of the House about a particular individual parading the territorial enclave of Parliament as a journalist goes by the name Melvin Tejan Mansaray for maliciously misleading the public regarding the decision Parliament took on the 20th December 2024 regarding the removal of the Auditor General and her Deputy for various misconducts.

Speaker Thomas continued that Melvin Tejan Mansaray had been engaging several Media Houses maliciously criticizing the decision of the House of Parliament. Speaker Thomas made it very clear that on that day of voting, he tried his best to ensure that the procedures and processes of parliament relating to that particular matter were transparent. He said the process was done in the face of the gallery to ensure that people were in the Chamber of Parliament just to observe the process. He added that even the Clerk of Parliament went close to the opposition side when he was conducting the election with the full view of promoting transparency.

The Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament encouraged the nation that when the House of Parliament makes a ruling and someone feels dissatisfied, that person has the legal standing to go to the Supreme Court as a citizen for interpretations of certain provisions in the 1991 constitution.

Speaker Thomas assured the public that Sierra Leone Parliament is open to the Public adding that, they are not operating a closed parliament.

“ But this journalist has taken upon himself going all over the places criticizing not only the ruling of Mr. Speaker, but the decision of Parliament. I don’t consider this to be a journalism. Away from this, he had long taken upon himself singularly to be an opposition to whatever parliament does. So in the circumstances, I hereby rule that he shall not have henceforth, any access to the precinct of parliament until on such time when parliament shall decide”, Speaker Thomas ruled.

The Opposition Leader Hon. Abdul Kargbo from Lungi acknowledged the firmed provision of Standing Order (SO) 42 which makes it very clear that the decision of Mr. Speaker could not be challenged. However, the Opposition Leader called on Mr. Speaker to further direct the matter to the Independent Media Commission (IMC) as the regulator body for journalists. He said the IMC and SLAJ are the competent bodies to investigate the conduct of journalists.

In addition to the suspension of Journalist Melvin Tejan Mansaray, Speaker Thomas also nodded to the suggestion put forward by the opposition leader. Speaker Segepoh Solomon Thomas made it categorically lucid that 90% of journalists are practicing responsible journalism. The Rt. Hon. Speaker concluded that these few journalists are the bad eggs putting the much-cherished profession into disrepute.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department, Sierra Leone Parliament.

Contacts: +23278495023/+23276625960/+23278426851/+23278697776/+23277473804.