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**PRESS RELEASE**

**PARLIAMENT DEBATES NATIONAL SECURITY AND CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE ACT 2022**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 19/07/2022 debated the bill entitled, "The National Security and Central Intelligence Act, 2002", for the development and security of Sierra Leone.

The bill seeks to repeal and replace the National Security and Central Intelligence Act, 2002 (Act No.10 of 2002) to provide for the internal and external security of Sierra Leone and to provide for other related matters.

Presenting the bill to the House, the Chief Minister Jacob Jusu Saffa said it has been over a decade since the parent legislation was passed into law and went on to inform Parliament that, so many dynamic changes had occurred in the security landscape of Sierra Leone, relative to human security and the demand for the inclusive role of all. According to him, the proposed bill intends to address critical issues in the parent Act. He underscored that, the bill would strengthen the role of the National Security to coordinate security and enhance its capacity to prevent or respond to threats. The Chief Minister said the bill would also improve collaboration and coordination of the various security sectors of the country. He highlighted the objectives, in light of strong security promotion and decentralization as well as outlining the regulatory role of security units across the country. The Chief Minister spoke about the composition and structural trend of the proposed bill and other unique values.

In his submission, the Parliamentary Chairman of Defence, Hon. Sahr Juana said the bill would improve on the excesses of the 2002 parent Act and emphasized on the former moribund nature. He outlined the positivity of the proposed law, in light of empowering the sector for more effective and functioning security. He heaped praises on the team that developed the bill and urged all for speedy approval of the document. He said the establishment of this bill would address the Yenga issues and another security threats to the nation.

Hon. Aaron Aruna Koroma, Chairman of the Local Government and Rural Development Committee in Parliament commended the Defence Committee chairman for his submission and underscored that security issues should not be politicized. He said the bill would address many

lacunas in the security sector of the state. The MP informed Parliament that, the establishment of a new subvention agency has to meet several criteria in the Public Financial Management Act which are missing. According to him, the proposed agency in the Bill lacks proper composition and also cited that, the appointment of the Director General of the agency should follow the approval of Parliament and not otherwise.

He decried several sections in the Bill that contravenes laws that are already being established by Parliament. He commended the Office of National Security (ONS) for the just concluded bye-election in Tonkolili District.

On his part, Hon. Alex Rogers said the bill is progressive and justifiable and later highlighted the compositions of the board from 12 to 22. He said the proposed bill decentralized powers and functions to other MDAs. He said issues bothering on National Security should not be exposed to the general public. He called for adequate funding to improve the security sector, in order to have an effective security apparatus.

Hon. PC Bintu M.Kajue Koroma used the opportunity to inform Parliament that, many councillors and other stakeholders hardly attend chiefdom security meetings and called on them to do the needful.

Hon. Rebecca Y.Kamara said UN Resolution 1325 involved women in security matters and underscored that, the Minister of Social Welfare should be involved in the composition of the agency. She said in any security matter of the state, the youth, and women should not be left out in the Compositions of the agency.

Hon Musa Shaika Sama, an Independent MP from Purjahun District said the implementation of the law is a problem for certain institutions. He said security is vital for a state and the human rights of people have to be respected and also asked for certain definitions to be clarified in the Bill.

In his submission to the debate, Leader of C4C Hon. Emerson Saa Lamina said section 73 of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone should be paramount to the debate. He said security issues are very key in the governance of the state. The Leader said during the advent of the civil war in Sierra Leone, there was no security sector and praised the government for adding more weight to the security sector. He also highlighted that, a person with dual citizenships should not head any office dealing with the Security sector. He said as a male champion, let 30% position be given to women in the composition of the board. He said this bill would settle the lacuna in the security sectors. The MP commended the the team that developed the Bill and the Office of National Security.

Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara commended the Paramount Chief Member of Parliament for Kambia district for briefing stakeholders on matters relating to security issues in that district. He said the bill would address the heavy-handedness of the security sector to the general citizens. "Early warning sign is a process of preventive mechanism against violence", he stated. He

called for all reports connected to police investigations to be a table in the House of Parliament for consideration and went on to mention the riots in Makeni, Pademba Road prison and the Tombo community incidence.

The Acting Leader of NGC Hon. Foday Mario Kamara said the Bill is not bad, but said It has to be reviewed properly during the committee stage to make it better. He reiterated that, the Bill would address the aspect of the high-handedness of the security sector.

Hon. Abdul Muniru Lassana submitted his debate on the section dealing with the restriction of information on the security of the state and highlighted its significance. He also spoke on the need for lawmakers to be given state security

Hon. Moses Edwin said the bill before the House is necessary and timely. He said the riverine areas must be protected by those foreign fishing vessels on the sea and expressed that more engagements be conducted for the chiefdom level security.

Hon. Ibrahim Alieu Kamara said the Bill would strengthen national security for the country. He also said the ONS would have leverage in their work, in light of collaboration and efficient and as well as effective coordination with others. He used the opportunity to highlight the new clauses in the bill.

Hon. Hafiju Maada Kanja talked about the principle of security and related it to the chiefdom security committee in the Bill. He advised that MPs be part of the chiefdom security committee.

In rounding up the debate, the Acting Leader of Opposition Hon Hassan Sesay said reviewing the laws is important, "We need to amend laws based on the time and circumstance", he stated. He decried the enormous powers given to the Director General by the proposed law and called for these powers to be monitored by the state. He said the authority to arrest lies with the police, but cautioned the heavy-handedness of security sector. The Leader said as an opposition, they are not opposed to the Bill, but questioned the proper things to be done. He called for the Bill to be submitted to the legislative committee for further scrutiny.

In concluding the debate, the Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie in his response to issues, raised by MPs and highlighted many things are properly in place and referred to the Bill as a "fine bill". He said the parent bill did not highlight many compositions, but this one does. He said in the establishment of this agency, both the Director and his Deputy would be approved by Parliament. He welcomed the proposed chiefdom level security committee and urged MPs to be part of the process.

In responding, the Chief Minister said all that had been highlighted are legitimate and categorically stated that, MPs should perform oversight and therefore should not to be part of the chiefdom security committee.

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