



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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

18th March, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENT MEETS WITH SIERRA LEONE POLICE AND OTHERS ON KUSH

Following a Parliamentary summon, Ministries, Departments, and Agencies on Monday, 18/03/2024 met with Members of Parliament in Committee Room One, Parliament Building at Tower Hill in Freetown to answer questions related to an intake of a notorious harmful drug "Kush".

In his submission, on the subject matter, the Deputy Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie said the meeting is called to address the menace caused by the dangerous Kush drug and underscored that agencies responsible should brief Parliament on how they are tackling the incredulous addiction and spread of Kush in the country.

The Deputy Leader said sincerity is necessary in the fight against Kush and pleaded with MDAs to stop compromising with those involved and urged them to serve in the interest of the nation.

He said the level of intake of the kush substance is worrisome and requested those agencies to do the needful "If you think Parliament should enact more laws, we will do it " he strongly concluded.

The Chief Whip of Parliament, Hon. Dickson Rogers said there is an allegation that Sierra Leone has been used as a hub or transit to transfer Kush to other parts. The Chief Whip pleaded for concerted efforts to address the issues and requested for the judiciary to be part of the engagement.

Hon. Emerson Saa Lamina, Deputy Majority Leader 2 pleaded for a collective effort in fighting the Kush drug intake. The youthful MP went on to narrate how Parliament intends to address the Kush risk and other related drugs.

On his part, Hon. Aaron Aruna Koroma Deputy, Opposition Leader 2 recalled that fights against deadly Ebola and Coronavirus were collective. He said similar sentiment should be forwarded by stakeholders on the Kush issues. He called for overall statistical data from all DMOs to be furnished to Parliament to address the Kush peril and related issues.

While briefing MPs on Kush, Andrew J. Kai-Kai Executive Director National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency explained their mandate and vision related to the enforcement of drugs. He disclosed that the agency with other partners had launched the rehabilitation drug center at Hastings to mend those who are affected by the Kush drug.

He said since his appointment at the agency he had engaged several communities and schools to enhance awareness raising about the effect of the Kush drug. He said drug abuse can't be related to politics, but to individuals who are bent on destroying society. "If we can't address the kush drug issues then the youths can't feed Sierra Leone" he concluded.

On his part, the Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, Mohamed Hajii Kella said Kush drug has affected every facet of society. He said the ministry with other inter-ministerial agencies is currently working together to find these young people and take them to rehabilitation centers. He disclosed that the center is just receiving fifty people and at present he said, the ministry has over three hundred youths awaiting rehabilitation.

The Deputy Minister highlighted the challenges the ministry is facing in addressing the Kush-related problems. "We need more centers, doctors, nurses, and social workers" he said. He requested Parliament for additional political will in the fight against drugs.

The Chief Medical Officer, Dr.Sartie Kenneh of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation said any drug-related issues are first sent to the Pharmacy Board for testing and went on to highlight the substances that are involved in the manufacturing of Kush.

He said the number of drug-related issues is rapidly on the increase and went on to give statistical data on the intake of drugs.

He said 75% of the drugs are consumed by youths.

Dr.James P. Koroma of the Pharmacy Board said they have been collaborating with other agencies to fight and monitor drug-related issues.

The Director General of the Port Authority, Yakuba Aksie Bio explained to MPs the mandate of the port and went on to explain how drugs are treated and certified by the port. He said for the past years modalities had been put in place to address drugs issues. He disclosed that 37 suspects had been handed over to the judiciary for further actions to be taken."We should review the laws related to drugs" he said.

The National Revenue Authority Commissioner General Jeneba J. Bangura said it is high time the country declared war on Kush. She said all borderlines have customs officers and went on to disclose that it is difficult to catch drug lords unless they work as a team. "We have been very active as a commission but collaboration is needed in fighting the Kush drug".She concluded.

While briefing MPs, the Inspector General of the Sierra Leone Police, William Fayia Sellu said it is a serious concern for all, and requested lawmakers to quickly find a way to address the Kush-related issues in the country. The IG highlighted the work of the Sierra Leone Police in fighting drugs and went on to explain how drug movements are happening in the airport the quay and the

marine sector. The IG informed MPs on the number of tramadol and other related harmful drugs that were burnt by the police recently and went on a note that the fight against drugs should not only be limited to the police but also the communities. The IG also explained matters connected to the judiciary on suspected cases of Kush-related issues.

The IG said religious leaders and stakeholders should partner with the SLP through community relations to address kush-related matters.

He said in the 37 divisions of the SLP each of them, has a community relations department working with the community. He appealed to the judiciary to do the needful on related matters and also urged them for the establishment of a fast-track court for drug-related issues.

MPs in their contributions called on the police to stand tall in addressing the harmful substances and also called for a State of health emergency to be declared by the President.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

Parliament of Sierra Leone

+23278495023/+23276625960/+23278426851/+23278697776