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**PRESS RELEASE**

**PARLIAMENT DEBATES CYBER CRIME ACT, 2020**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 11th March 2021 commenced intensive debate on the Bill entitled: "The Cyber Crime Act, 2020"; aimed at protecting critical national information infrastructure in the country.

The Bill is seeking to provide for the prevention of the abusive use of computer systems; to provide for the timely and effective collection of electronic evidence for investigation and prosecution of cyber crime; to provide for the protection of Critical National Information Infrastructure; to provide for facilitation of international cooperation in dealing with cyber crime matters and to provide for other related matters.

Introducing the Bill prior to the suspension of debate, Minister of Information and Communication, Mohamed Rahman Swaray said the object of the Bill is to make provision for the prevention of the abusive use of computer systems; underscoring the point that, the world is going digital. He also noted that 75% of Sierra Leoneans are using the digital space. Thus the need for improving and protecting citizens rights. He said if this Bill is enacted, it will help Sierra Leone to benefit from international cooperation through the Budapest Convention.

Hon. Boston Munda, Chairman Information and Communication Committee in Parliament said cyber crime is a global issue that is also affecting Sierra Leoneans; whilst speaking on financial and data loss from African countries through cyber

crime. He said many African countries have domesticated cyber crime through adherence to the Budapest Convention.

Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara said the Bill is critical and it needs more education. Considering the composition of the regulatory committee proposed in the Bill, he observed one would tend to believe that the cyber crime act is targetting opposition politicians. He pleaded for serious national sensitization on the Bill considering its critical nature.

Hon. Joseph Williams Lamin said the Bill is very significant to the people of Sierra Leone; adding that for far too long Sierra Leoneans have been waiting for this Bill. He appreciated the Ministry for the efforts they have put so far on the Bill.

Hon. PC Bai Kurr Kanagbaro Sanka III said cyber crime is an international issue and highlighted its negative effects on many countries around the world. He called for expert training on areas related to cyber crime for the security of the state.

Hon. Mohamed Bangura requested attendance of the Sierra Leone Police, Office of National Security, and the general public relating to the sensitivity of the Bill.

Leader of C4C, Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina said justice needs to be done to the Bill; believing that its enactment will save lives, address e-market and curb cyber crime. He called on Sierra Leone to do same as most of the member countries belonging to ACP-EU have enacted laws geared toward combating cyber crime.

Opposition Leader, Hon. Chernor Bah called for massive sensitization on the Bill for it to stand a test of time.

Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie applauded the debate and also called for the Office of National Security and Police to be in attendance on the next adjourned date in light of the said Bill.

In light of existing rules of procedure, the Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie has moved a dilatory motion; seconded by Hon. Daniel Koroma suspending debate on the said Bill until further notice pending

determination and consultations by Parliament before furthering the process of passage into law.

Following that, the Leadership of Parliament is seeking public inputs in the form of presentation of position papers or otherwise from the General Public before the said Bill will be enacted by Parliament.

Therefore, the general public is encouraged to rise to the occasion by following the process to its logical end and present their position papers to the Office of the Clerk of Parliament.

Department of Public Relations

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