



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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23rd August, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE RECOVERS OVER LE 40 BILLION

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Sierra Leone Parliament, chaired by the Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, announced on Friday, 23rd August 2024, at the Kenema District Council, in the presence of Heads of devolved sectors, that it has recovered over 40 billion old leones in tax arrears during the last three months. These recoveries relate to 2021 and 2022 audit periods.

The Chairman highlighted that the Committee focused on areas such as Corporate Taxes, GST, PAYE, and withholding taxes.

Regarding GST, the Chairman noted that the Committee examined the cases of eleven taxpayers and engaged both the Ministry of Finance and the National Revenue Authority (NRA) to assist in the inquiry process. With this collaborative strategy, Hon. Tawa Conteh revealed that the NRA had successfully recovered a substantial sum, stating, "Over 30 billion leones was recovered."

Concerning mobile network operators and internet service providers, the Chairman further disclosed that 10.5 billion old leones had been recovered and paid into the Universal Access Development Fund.

Additionally, he mentioned that small and medium-scale businesses, along with micro-tax contributors, owed the state over 3.5 billion old leones. He reported that over one billion old leones had already been recovered, and other business entities had made payment plans to facilitate further recovery.

For transit accounts and machinery operations, the Chairman confirmed that a significant amount had also been deposited into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The Chairman reiterated that the PAC Secretariat is currently sending correspondences to the NRA and other agencies to address outstanding arrears. He also emphasized that the Committee is working on settling inter-agency tax liabilities.

Furthermore, the Deputy Speaker assured that all recovered revenues were deposited into the Consolidated Revenue Fund and confirmed that the PAC Secretariat is in possession of all payment documentation for verification purposes. The Chairman vowed that any institution owing the Government would be held accountable and would eventually pay its dues to the state.

He took the opportunity to advise Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to operate within the legal framework and adhere to prescribed rules and regulations to meet satisfactory audit standards.

"In the work of the PAC, there is no secrecy; it is open, transparent, and a work in progress. The Committee will never relent in its quest to recover missing funds for the state," he stated.

Hon. Conteh further stated that moving forward, the PAC would continue to engage MDAs by raising awareness about its work and the importance of training in prudent public financial and fiscal management.

The Chairman expressed his appreciation to his fellow MPs for their resilience and commitment to promoting openness, transparency, and accountability in Sierra Leone's governance. He also commended past Chairmen of the PAC for their dedication to advancing accountability and transparency for the betterment of the state.

The Chairman noted that the PAC is currently engaging Local Councils across the country, based on the Auditor General's Reports for the fiscal and financial years 2021/2022.

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