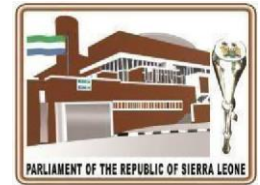




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E-mail: [sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com](mailto:sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com)/[admin@parliament.gov.sl](mailto:admin@parliament.gov.sl)

3<sup>RD</sup> February, 2022

**PRESS RELEASE**



**SPEAKER SHARES CONCERN TO OUTLAW FGM**

Following a Petition submitted to the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu in his Chambers at Parliament Building by Anti-FGM Campaigners led by Rugiatu Nenneh Koroma nee Turay on 03/02/2022 for onward transmission to the Head of State, and Leaders of political parties in Parliament, with a view to outlawing FGM practices in Sierra Leone, excluding the Bondo Society, Dr. Bundu said he had consented to the task of presenting the memorandum to the Head of State as well as to the Leaders of political parties in Parliament on behalf of Anti-FGM Campaigners.

He made it categorically clear that he was not against the Bondo Society, but shared their concern that FGM be outlawed in the country, whilst acknowledging that it might sound unpalatable to a certain section of society for traditional reasons. He also said that he knew it was hard to change tradition, but as a great believer in change, good traditions needed to be preserved while discarding bad ones. This is an incident of evolution in every society.

He further stated that no society could afford to remain backward and primitive forever, and that it was natural for countries to go through an evolutionary process and Sierra Leone was no exception.

He said that the time has come for our country to evaluate its cultural practices and decide as a people what is good to be preserved and what is not good to be discarded. He further added that this should be done not by force, but by persuasion and affirmed that there is already a Standing Committee on FGM in Parliament.

Following another death from FGM in Sierra Leone, 130 women's rights groups around the world have called on the Government of Sierra Leone to criminalize and outlaw FGM in the country.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

Parliament of Sierra Leone

+23278495023/+23276625960