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PRESS RELEASE



UNOPS MAY COMMIT CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT

The Rt. Hon. Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 23/03/2023 announced at the plenary session that United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) may commit contempt of Parliament.

Read the speech fellow:

**ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER
23 MARCH 2023**

Hon. Members

You will all recall that some renovation works have been going on in Parliament; some have reached completion and others are still in progress. These works have come about as a result of an EU grant of 27 Million Euros in 2016 to support the governance sector in Sierra Leone and Parliament was allocated the sum of 3 million therefrom. For this generous assistance, we wish to express our thanks and appreciation to the European Union.

However, the application of the 3 million Euros to Parliament has been applied in ways that fall far short and certainly do not meet with our expectations. The contract for the renovation works was awarded by the EU Office in Freetown to UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services). Evidently lacking the technical capacity to deliver on the contract, UNOPS subcontracted to a number of contractors.

Regrettably, some of the subcontractors have performed manifestly poorly and considerably below par, using materials and workmanship that are grossly substandard. As a result the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) authorised a Parliamentary Quality Assurance Committee to be constituted by the Clerk in July 2022. This Committee has completed its assignment and has produced an excellent report notwithstanding the lack of cooperation by the UNOPS and I want to take this opportunity to thank the Assurance Committee for a job well done.

This Report is going to be considered by the Parliamentary Service Commission. Without prejudice to the ultimate decision that the PSC will take on the Report, I hasten to make it abundantly clear at this point that unless immediate remedial measures are taken to ensure that this Parliament gets value for money through the rectification of the deficiencies and shortcomings in the works already done, we shall all take a dim view of the UNOPS and its subcontractors to the extent of considering their poor performance as a contempt of Parliament as defined by the provisions of Section 95 of the Constitution.

I also want to sound a warning to UNOPS that this Parliament will not allow them to take refuge behind the shield of diplomatic immunity. Once they have descended from their exalted position as a diplomatic agent and come to the market place as a contractor, by that act alone, they cannot juristically be allowed to claim immunity from the laws of the market place that relate to contractors in this country.