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**PRESS RELEASE
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PARLIAMENT DEFERS DECISION ON FOUR ELECTORAL INSTRUMENTS

After an extensive debate on Thursday 30th March, 2017 relating to the Private Member's Motion moved and seconded by Hon. Sualiho M. Koroma and Hon. Dickson Rogers respectively on the four constitutional and statutory instruments tabled in Parliament on Thursday 16th March 2017 by the Deputy Minister of Justice, John Arrow Bockarie, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the House, SBB Dumbuya has ruled, cognizant of the proposition made by the Minority Leader, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai and supported by the Majority Leader of the House, Hon. Leonard Fofanah, that the motion remains inconclusive, pending the summoning of the officials of NEC on Monday 03rd April 2017 to explain to MPs on the electoral preparedness within the confines of the constitutive laws of Sierra Leone.

Hon. Koroma moved that "be it resolved that the statutory instruments laid by the Deputy Minister of Justice be annulled or reviewed in line with Section 38(5) of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone" relating to the review of wards and constituencies for the next elections, in his view the action of NEC is in serious "breach of procedures outlined in the supreme laws of the land".

Section 38(5) of the 1991 Constitution states that "where the boundaries of any constituency are altered in accordance with provisions of this section, that alteration shall come into effect upon the next dissolution of Parliament after the alteration has been approved by Parliament".

In seconding the motion, Hon. Dickson Rogers said that some villages in his constituency were not mapped or captured in the data of NEC, which he said is also affecting the current voter registration process in Pujehun.

Hon. Ansumana Kaikai said that the Constitution of Sierra Leone transcends all other laws, including statutory instruments, having regard that they could be annulled by two-thirds of votes cast by MPs. He called on NEC to do the right thing as contained in the Constitution, whilst saying that the current voter registration process is characterized with a lot of flaws.

Hon. Claude Kamanda, Chief Whip of Parliament referred MPs to Section 170(7) that the statutory instrument relating to the creation of two new districts has become law, having



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certified the due process of law. He also noted that the two new districts are not being provided for by NEC in the forthcoming elections.

Hon. Paran Tarawally said that NEC should revert to the use of the existing data for the 112-Constituencies, instead of the proposed 132-Constituencies that is posing problems, with the view of not “tampering with the proclaimed elections dates on the 07th March, 2018”.

Hon. Chernor Bah said that the Constitution is supreme and that it must be respected, citing Section 38(4) that the review of the constituencies must be done before elections are held. He also said that these instruments were published on the 15th and tabled in Parliament on the 16th March 2017. He furthered that to revert to the old order is “not practicable because of increase in population” saying that “Parliament will not allow the executive to muzzle or force the House to do what is wrong, in spite of the announcement of proclaimed elections dates”.

Hon. Solomon Sengepoh blamed NEC for commitment “deliberate errors” and called on them to do the right thing. He also warned that “Parliament cannot afford an extension of the slated elections dates”.

Hon. Paramount Chief, Bai Kurr Kanagbaro recalled when makeshift electoral arrangements were used in consultations and agreement with political parties and the international community during the days of instability in the country, citing the PR and the District Block systems that were used in 1996 and 2002 elections.

Hon. Dr. Lahai recalled that the 2004 census was used for the conduct of the 2007 and 2008 general elections, and its projections for the 2012 general elections. She decried NEC for poor financial inducements to voter registration officials that are highly constrained in the fields. She also proposed that NEC be summoned to explain their preparedness to MPs in line with established laws and to address the concerns raised by MPs.

Hon. Leonard Fofanah shared similar sentiments expressed and informed the House that Mannoh village in his constituency has been lifted to another, whilst saying that “principles should be kept and laws implemented to the letter”. He agreed that “NEC be summoned to Parliament to explain its activities within the remit of established laws embedded in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.