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PRESS RELEASE
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PARLIAMENT WITHDRAWS INSTRUMENT ON LEGAL EDUCATION

Because it was not properly before the House, the Parliament of Sierra Leone has debated and voted unanimously on the withdrawal of Statutory Instrument No. 12 of 2016 entitled “The Council of Legal Education Act, 1989 (Act No. 1 of 1989)” on Wednesday 17th May 2017.

Moving the motion, Hon. Umar Paran Tarawally said among other things that many students have suffered “injustice for far too long” by “a law that has not yet become law through the approval of Parliament”. Therefore, he said that all actions taken under Statutory Instrument No. 12 are without legal effects, and “therefore null and void” regarding the admission criteria to Law School.

Seconding the motion, Hon. Bashiru Silikie said that MPs will not allow “contravention of existing laws”. He also said that for the past three years, “students who have read law had been disadvantaged” by the Legal Service Commission through the contravention of provisions in the Council of Legal Education Act 1989.

Submitting, Hon. Frederick Sourie queried that “a statutory instrument cannot amend a provision in an Act without the approval of Parliament”, whilst speaking on the withdrawal that “Law School should not be allowed to thrive on laws that are ultra vires”.

The Instrument stands withdrawn because it is in violation of Standing Order 18(2) and that it also lacks a commencement date.

Standing Order 18(2) reads thus:

“The request that a paper or treaty or constitutional or statutory instrument be laid on the Table shall be made to the Clerk of Parliament with an explanatory memorandum, which in the case of subsidiary legislations shall include a note on the objectives, where necessary, the consultation process with appropriate stakeholders, and other relevant information”.