



**OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT BUILDING
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL
FREETOWN**

E-mail: sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com/admin@parliament.gov.sl



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PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT COMMITS THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AMENDMENT ACT 2019

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 04th April 2019 debated and committed the Bill entitled "The Anti-Corruption Amendment Act 2019" to its Legislative Committee for further scrutiny.

The Bill is seeking to amend the The Anti-Corruption Act of 2008 with a view to amend Sections dealing with assets declarations, soliciting and obtaining undue advantage and other related matters.

It was piloted in Parliament by the Deputy Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Abdulai Bangurah who said among other things that the objects and reasons were to increase penalties, protection of witnesses and to provide the Commissioner alternatives to addressing offences related to graft.

In his submission, Acting Chairman of the Legislative Committee, Hon. Osman Timbo of APC appreciated the move to amend The Anti-Corruption Act of 2008 to fight against corruption. He also referred to it "as a serious fight", before calling for its committal for further deliberations aimed at ironing some of the contending issues.

Hon. Hindolo M. Gevao of SLPP also commended the Government for taking the bold step to empower the ACC in the fight against corruption, adding that the Bill is seeking to address some of the lacunae in the parent Act.

Rounding the debate, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah referred to the fight against corruption as a "continuous process", and commended the ACC Czar, Francis Ben Kaifala for acting on a document that had been left by the previous government to fight corruption. He also called on the Legislative Committee to speedily look at the Bill in its entirety and report to the House in due course for enactment into law.

Concluding the debate, the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sidie M. Tunis commended the MPs for their valuable contributions, adding that "the essence of the Bill is to make corruption expensive and painful, and on implementation it will reduce corruption by 80-90 percent like in Rwanda".

In another development, the Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 04th April 2019 debated and approved with some dissenting voices the Thirty-Second Report of its Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, chaired by the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sidie M. Tunis.

The APC objected to the approval process on the grounds that the outgoing Commissioners were sacked against applicable provisions in the Human Rights Commission Act, that adequate compensation must be paid to the affected Commissioners, and the issue relating to conflict of interest.

Responding, the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sidie M. Tunis said "that Section 61 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone authorises the President to constitute offices, makes appointments and terminates such appointments at will".

The Presiding Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas has directed the Office of the Clerk of Parliament to write the Ministry of Finance to make the necessary payment to the Commissioners whose services had been terminated by the President.

The following presidential nominees were approved by Parliament:

1. Mrs. Patricia N. Ndanema-Chairman, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
2. Mr. Victor I. Lansana-Vice Chairman, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
3. Mr. Hassan S. Yarjah-Commissioner, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
4. Ms. Simitie Lavalay-Commissioner, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone and
5. Dr. Gassan Abess-Commissioner, Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone

Department of Public Relations

Parliament of Sierra Leone

+23278495023/+23278426851