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PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT ENGAGES NEC ON FINAL VOTER REGISTRATION

The Leadership of Parliament has engaged the Chief Electoral Commissioner and the four regional Commissioners on issues surrounding the final voter register for the upcoming 7th March 2018 General Election.

The meeting which was organized by Parliament also attracted the PPRC Chairman, the Chairman of the National Registration Authority and the UN Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone.



Parliament & NEC Deliberate on the Final Voter Register

According to the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Chernor Bah, the purpose was to ascertain the final voter register for the coming election, for which he and other leading MPs raised several concerns of citizens. These ranged from alleged omission of voters from the register to excesses and various issues for clarification, necessitated by the recent NEC Press Release.

The Deputy Speaker noted that as a Parliament, representing the widest interests of the citizenry, they realize that any challenges regarding the election must be addressed to pave the way for a fair and creditable democratic exercise.

The Leader of the House, Hon. Leonard Fofanah, expressed disapproval on the number of voters so far registered for the election, saying that many names had being left out by NEC and

that several complaints have reached Parliament that thousands of names were being omitted from the original voter register, whilst certain areas record excesses or surplus registrations with misplacement of data that NEC needed to clarify.

The Deputy Leader of Parliament, Hon. Hassan Sheriff, told the meeting that during voter verifications, it was even discovered that some MPs' names had been omitted. He affirmed that "we cannot deprive a single voter in the election."

On the other hand, the Acting Minority Leader, Hon. Ansu Kai Kai and the Minority Whip, Hon. Sidi Tunis were very pleased with the operations of NEC and advised that they be given more time to settle their challenges.

Responding to the allegations, the NEC Commissioner, Mohamed Unfa Alie Conteh and his Regional Commissioners briefed Parliament with responses to the allegations. They assured the House that the final voter register is the true reflection of their work and that "absolutely nothing was omitted". They said they omitted 1,539 voters on the voter register for double registration and that those names have been already forwarded to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice for court action.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Sierra Leone thanked the Leadership of Parliament for the invitation and assured that the UN will provide expertise and resources to ensure that the election is fair and credible.

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