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PARLIAMENT VOTES FOR THE CONTINUATION OF VOTER REGISTRATION

On Tuesday 04th April 2017, majority of MPs present in the light of what had been said in the foregoing debates and in the public interest voted for the continuation of the voter registration process.

Regarding the two statutory instruments relating to ward and constituency boundaries, the Parliament of Sierra Leone has posited that “they are not properly before the House and agreed for their withdrawal”, pending their fixation by NEC and the office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice (AGMJ), before the approval of Parliament. This, they said is as a result of what they had agreed with NEC, the latter having admitted to procedural and constitutional breaches.

In responding to concerns raised by MPs during the course of the ensuing debates, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Joseph F. Kamara argued that “the constitutional/statutory instruments are properly before the House”, with due regards for their publications in the gazette, and said that “the arguments put forward by MPs are legitimate” even though he has responsibility to examine the validity and correctness of the law. On the issue of timing with regards to the meets and bounds, he said NEC submitted it on a provisional census, which was finalized in February 2017, thus the late submission to Parliament in March this year. Speaking on the dual registration process, as a result of laws passed by Parliament, he called on Parliament not to withdraw the two documents because “it will collapse the entire electoral process”. He pleaded for “the two instruments to remain laid until the issues raised are cleared”.

At this point, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the House, SBB Dumbuya disagreed with the opinion expressed by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, having regards for the maturity of the constitutional/statutory instruments due on Thursday 06th April 2017, thereby forming part of the laws of Sierra Leone, or until otherwise annulled by two-thirds of votes



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cast by all MPs. This is in line with Section 170 sub-section 7a, b, & c of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.

However, it is the unanimous belief of MPs that these two statutory instruments stand withdrawn for the purpose of posterity, and were also in disagreement in large part of most of the submissions and opinions expressed by the AGMJ.

It was also confirmed that Parliament cannot amend a constitutional/statutory instrument; it either accepts or rejects it.

It is in view of this that Parliament stands adjourned to tomorrow 05th April 2017, pending the AGMJ's conferment with NEC on the way forward, subject to the approval of the House.