



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

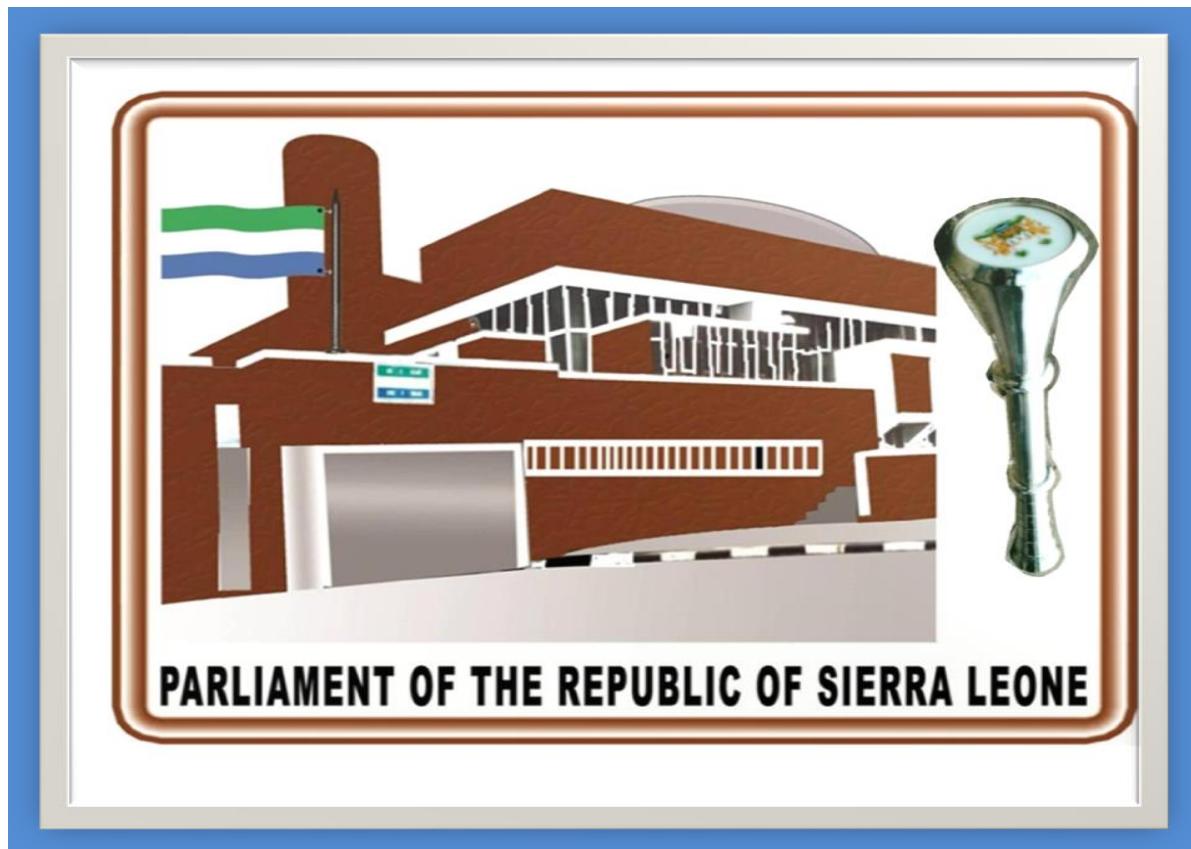
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING

THURSDAY, 14TH JANUARY, 2025.

SESSION – 2024/2025



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First Meeting of the First Session of the Sixth Parliament
of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 14th January, 2025.

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THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

**SIXTH SESSION – FIRST MEETING
OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

Tuesday, 14th January, 2025.

I. PRAYERS

[The Deputy Director of the Legislative Department, Mrs Fatmata Bintu Weston, read the Prayers]

[The House met at 10:30am in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.]

[The Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

II. THE RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR FRIDAY 10TH JANUARY, 2025.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, record of Votes and Proceedings. Pages 1 to 4? Page 5?, Page 6?, Page 7?, Page 8?, Page 9? Can a Member please move for the Record of Votes and Proceedings held on Friday 10th January, 2025?

HON. MOHAMED B. SHAW: I so move, Mr Speaker

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. EMILIA LOLOH TONGI: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[The Record of Votes and Proceedings for Friday 10th January, 2025 has been adopted].

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Sorry Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I move to amend the Order Paper on number4; **Laying of Papers**. In the absence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Leader of Government Business will lay the Paper. I move that the heading should be read: The Leader of Government Business to lay the following papers, I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, permit me to say something before the Seconder. Of course we know that the composition of the Order Paper is the business of the Business Committee. So whenever there are amendments, I am sure that the Business Committee should be notified before the amendment is done in the Well, so that everybody is in sink with what is happening, Sir.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I know for sure that the Business Committee met sometime last week and these issues were raised. The only thing we are doing is

that the Leader of Government Business would lay the Paper on behalf of the Minister who is absent. I believe these documents were looked into by the Business Committee at our last meeting.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I agree with you; what I am saying, subsequently when there are amendments on the Order Paper, the Committee should be notified before the amendments are made....

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: This is an unavoidable amendment...

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: No, I understand; this is an exceptional case, I grant you, Sir.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: But I am just saying, subsequently Sir.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you, we would try to do so

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Leader. Any Seconder?

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: I so second

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

*[Motion for the amendment of Order Paper by the Acting Leader of Government
Business has been carried]*

III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER:

Honourable Members, my ruling relating to the Journalist, Melvin Tejan Mansaray, still remains in force until such time when Parliament shall decide, I repeat. I have seen several analysis of the action of Mr Speaker, relating to that particular Journalist. In fact, people have gone all out to misunderstand the reason for the ban. I have not banned the Journalist because he criticised Parliament simplicita; that is not the point. The Journalist was banned because he went beyond mere criticism, to what we call in law, '*insulting conduct*'. He insulted the integrity of this House and the Members of Parliament. In criticising Parliament, you have no reason to refer to Members of

Parliament as '*useless*'. Where have our values gone? Where have our values gone? How can you refer to Members of Parliament as '*useless*', and that Mr Speaker rigged the elections; I did not conduct any election here, I only presided over the elections – I am only the Presiding Officer; it was the Clerk that conducted the elections. If you impune the integrity of Mr Speaker, then I have right to take the necessary action. As a matter of fact, we have not taken any action as such, because he is already in contempt of this House and for which, we are going to take the necessary action [*Applause*]; we have not even started. Let the citizens of Sierra Leone know that we have not even started anything against that journalist. We would be inviting him to face the Ethics Committee of Parliament, and we would hand down the necessary punishment. In the course of your criticism, how can you refer to Members of Parliament, as '*useless*'? And he has been doing it for quite a while now; he has even get used to that kind of conduct against this House, and all what some people have been saying is that: 'Oh, Parliament has banned the Journalist because of criticism'. It is not just because of criticism simplicita; the action was taken because of his insulting conduct in addition to that criticism. Of course we cannot be against criticism as a House. In fact, that is what makes democracy quite interesting; we cannot be against criticism in fact, criticism shapes us better. But for you to go and sit at a Media House; at a Television Station and you are saying '*in fact, the APC MPs are the most useless of all*'. How can you say that? Is that what we call '*Freedom of expression*'? This nation should know that Parliament has no reason to punish anybody for merely expressing your freedom of expression; you are free to express anything. But you must know that in exercising your right of expression, you must be aware that the right of the other individual should matter. Because where your right of expression ends, there the right of another begins. You cannot go about impugning the integrity of people, of course as a nation, we have values and our values are in our laws. Otherwise, no offence was going to be created by the Drafters of our laws relating to insulting conduct or public insult and provocation if our values do not accept such offences.

So the ban on him remains, and this House is going to take further action against him. And this is to inform the Journalists in the Press Gallery; the only reason why you are seated there is because Mr Speaker has allowed you to be there. It is in our laws that it is by my permission that you sit there. So if you do not conduct yourself properly, then I also have the right to say you cannot sit there anymore. We have no case against Journalist practicing their Journalism appropriately. You are even free to criticise us and to analyse certain things we do. But in the process, you have to be careful not to insult the integrity of this House; as long as you do not insult the integrity of this House, or you do not insult Members of Parliament, or Mr Speaker, you are free to criticise, and you are free to analyse because that is what democracy is all about. But do not cross the line, when you cross the line, we would take the appropriate action, thank you very much, we proceed *[Applause]*.

IV. PAPERS LAID

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE *[Acting Leader of Government Business]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following Papers:

- I. THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER CAUSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES DATED 17TH MARCH, 1992;
- II. CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATER CAUSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES AS AMENDED ALONG WITH DECISION, D1/3 CLARIFYING THE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE DATED 17TH MARCH, 1992 and
- III. CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF NON-NAVIGATIONAL USES OF INTERNATIONAL WATER CAUSES, NEW YORK DATED 21ST MAY, 1997 *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Leader. I told Mr Clerk yesterday that he should put in place the list for the Committee of Selection; is that list ready with you? Is it ready, Mr Leader?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Let me ask

THE SPEAKER: Yes, please do. IT, is anybody here from the IT? Please come. Can you get us the old list for last year? *[Undertone]* Okay, please do. Please come, come; can we get the list from here? Yes, Leader.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Honourable Members, please.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, take your seats

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in tandem with **SO 70** [b]; on behalf of the Leader, I move that we announce the Selection Committee. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Selection Committee reads thus:

Honourable Segepoh Solomon Thomas	- Chairman
Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh	- Deputy Chairman
Honourable Mathew Sahr Nyuma	- Member
Honourable Bashiru Silikie	- Member
Honourable Abdul Kargbo	- Member
Honourable Daniel B. Koroma	- Member
Honourable PC Babar Kandeh	- Member
Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara [Kambia]	- Member
Honourable Dickson M. Rogers	- Member
Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay	- Member

I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. IBRAHIM T CONTEH: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[The membership of the Committee of Selection as announced by the Acting Leader of Government Business has been approved].

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE SPEAKER: Members of the Selection Committee that has been mentioned, there would be a meeting tomorrow at 12noon; there is going to be a meeting so that we would work on the Committees. The Laying-Out-Ceremony of the late Honourable Moinina Conteh, former Member of Parliament from Kailahun District, would be held on Thursday, the 16th January, 2025 at 12noon. You who know KC, that is KC's dad; former Director of Legislative Department.

ADJOURNMENT

The House rose at 11: 10am and was adjourned to Thursday, the 16th January, 2025, at 10am prompt.