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PRESS RELEASE

**PARLIAMENT OBSERVES MINUTES OF SILENT PRAYERS FOR HON. A.O KAMARA,
KADIJAH SACCOH AND MOTHER OF HON. P.C SHERIFF**

Following announcements by the Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu, the Parliament of Sierra Leone on Thursday 25th June 2020 stood and observed moments of silent prayers in honour of Hon. Alimamy O. Kamara, former MP for Constituency 078 in Bo District; five year old Kadijah Saccoh who allegedly died of sexual penetration and murder; and the deceased mother of Hon. P.C Alie Badara Sheriff representing Bonthe District.

The Hon. Speaker prayed for their earthly mistakes to be forgiven and asked God to provide them with eternal rest in His Heavenly Kingdom; whilst extending condolences to the bereaved families on his behalf and Members and Staff of the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

Announcing his demise, Dr. Bundu said Hon. A.O Kamara was first elected to Parliament in 2018 to represent Constituency 078 consisting Lugbu and Bagbo Chiefdoms in Bo District. He also recognized his immense contributions in Parliament; particularly so as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Tertiary Education. His untimely death, according to the Hon. Speaker took place on Thursday 18th June 2020 in Freetown.

Relating to Kadijah's death, the Hon. Speaker recalled the passage of the Sexual Offences Amendment Act of 2019 by Parliament which made stronger penalties against rape and other forms of sexual penetration on women and children in Sierra Leone. He said, in spite of numerous legislations, rape and penetration of women and girls continue unabated. He also said that Parliament as the supreme legislative body in the country is deeply disturbed by this act of cruelty perpetrated against an innocent child whose future has been brought to an abrupt and tragic end. On his behalf, Members and Staff of Parliament, he unreservedly and absolutely condemn such a heinous and abhorrent act against a poor soul; promising to work with the Government and the Judiciary to bring justice to the matter; and expressed commitment to put an end to rape and sexual penetration against women and girls.

The Hon. Speaker has called on “His Excellency the President to speedily establish the taskforce on rape and gender-based violence as a fulfillment of his commitment to the eradication of rape and other forms of gender violence in Sierra Leone”; urging the Chief justice and other judicial actors to expedite the setting up of the fast track court to speedily try and conclude cases of rape and gender violence; and called on our donor partners and appealed for support to establish a forensic lab to assist the prosecution of rape and other related offences.

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