



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENTARY AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETS SIERRA RUTILE

Following previous engagement with Sierra Rutile Limited (SRL) Management and their host community residents in light of a complaint, the Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Hon. Musa Fofana from Kono District on Wednesday 19/11/2025, completed an investigation at SRL's Plant Site, Imperri Chiefdom, Bonthe District.

Consistent with Section 93 (4) the Ad Hoc Committee members were selected to go and investigate the complaints earlier lodged by host community landowners at Victoria Village in the Imperri Chiefdom. The landowners had alleged that the Sierra Rutile Limited Company had destroyed their crops during exploration work, and had refused to pay compensation for the affected crops after several consultations and engagements by the residents.

The Ad Hoc Committee toured the area around Victoria Village and the exploration site, where landowners alleged that their crops were destroyed without compensation. It was discovered at the site that SRL's crop assessors who counted the crops have been investigated and dismissed by its Management. The Committee also discovered that there were remaining crops in the area which was described as a grassland.

One of the dismissed SRL crop assessor, Mohamed Massaquoi, alleged that SRL sacked them unlawfully in connection to work done with regards to the crop assessment and compensation. "The

area was an off-book resources area on the company's map, but later the company expressed interest again in the same", he disclosed during investigation and went on to say, "after another exploration, it was discovered that the land was not commercially viable for mining and they immediately discontinued the geological drilling work", and Mohamed revealed that all five of them were laid off by SRL.

Regent Chief of Imperri Chiefdom, Chief Leslie Tucker-Thomas, expressed that the process of assessment on crops was done by the company's workers, which warranted payment for the same. According to the Regent Chief, the company stopped payment halfway using doubtful technologies like satellite and drone, which were not part of the initial agreement they had with the company. He expressed dismay over the company's refusal to adhere to his advice, which culminated into the payment dispute. He encouraged SRL to do the needful in order to enjoy peaceful co-existence with the community.

According to SRL, their staff members were assigned to undertake crop assessment and compensation at Victoria Village for nearly two years. They revealed in a presentation that 994 farms were assessed, which amounted to Le4.16Billion Old Leones. According to SRL, the said 9 hectares of land comprised of 28,254 crops, which were categorised under 33 different plants. The SRL Management revealed that the data presented by their crop assessors were later analysed and discovered that figures of crops and landowners were inflated by 45%. Out of Le4.16Billion Old Leones, the Management had paid Le2.3Billion Old Leones to the actual landowners. The Management also informed the Ad Hoc Committee that they had dismissed all five of their crop assessors and suspended the outstanding payments of Le1.8Billion Old Leones pending the outcome of an internal investigation.

The SRL Management further maintained that the Victoria crop compensation is one of their major challenges ever encountered and that they have evidence of opportunistic crops from satellite and drone survey, which triggered their suspension of payment and investigation into the matter.

However, the Ad Hoc Committee had expressed concerns over the absence of independent observers of the crop assessment, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and the National Minerals Agency (NMA).

Finally, the said Committee noted that the price of rutile product has dropped in the world market, hence a cause for financial difficulties faced by the company.

The Committee concluded that a full blown investigation report will be prepared for the attention of the Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone for appropriate action.

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