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## Diplomatic And Bilateral Relations

# SIERRA LEONE: Parliamentarians Briefed on Diplomatic Spat With USA

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

**F**lorence Nyawa Bangalie Director General (DG) Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and President Julius Maada Bio's proposed nominee for the position of Ambassador-At-Large has briefed the Parliamentary Committee on Appointments and the Public Service about the cause of the diplomatic dispute between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and that of the Government of the United States of America (USA) over deported immigrants.

Bangalie who was responding to questions on Wednesday 7th October 2020 at Committee Room No. 1 Parliament Building, Tower Hill Freetown with regards to her work experience, academic qualifications and plans for the new job if confirmed by Parliament, said she has been in the Foreign Service for over thirty years describing the Members of Parliament's quizzing as "very fair."

Asked by *Parliamentary News (PN)* what caused the U.S sanction of a one hundred and eight days B1 and B2 Sierra Leonean visa holders ban, Bangalie said that the Americans wanted Sierra Leone to accept all of its citizens in the USA who are undocumented immigrants to be returned to Sierra Leone.

"But we have told them that we need to interview these people for us to be sure that they are Sierra Leoneans before accepting them, this is what has caused a tie-up. If they are our people, we will

repatriate them back to Sierra Leone and will not deny them," Bangalie said.

She added that: "We don't actually want to repatriate people that are not our citizens because once we bring them in-country and they are not our people, they are going to remain, so that is why we want to screen them and upon their return, we have a Stakeholders Committee comprising the Office of National Security, Criminal Investigations Department, Ministry of Social Welfare, all coming together to sort them out for them to have a stable position in the country."

The top Foreign Ministry official, Bangalie, however, briefed Lawmakers that the number of deportees was eight but they observed that four of these people were not Sierra Leoneans upon their arrival in Sierra Leone's Lungi International Airport causing some delay in their disembarking.

International partners like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been assisting the Government of Sierra Leone on the issue of returning emigrants home and in some cases providing them with startup capital.

Bangalie said IOM is only assisting (buys ticket, returns and gives some money) voluntary returnees with package, "but if one is deported, IOM does not offer any package."

Leader of Government Business Honorable Mathew Sarh Nyuma who also doubles as the Chairman of the Committee on Appointment and the Public Service while butressing the explanation of Bangalie over the spat with the USA said that America is only taking advantage over Sierra Leone because of circumstances.

PN, however, asked Bangalie if she subscribes to Hon. Nyuma's supposition that the Americans are acting like bullies.

Bangalie said yes, adding that: "They are just bullying us. It is just a bully because we have accepted the eight deportees that they send from the USA and there is another eight on the way coming. In fact, we have interview tomorrow for another one deportee. We have agreed to accept all

of them, so we don't know where the one hundred and eighty days visa sanction came from."

However, it is believed that the American government was dismayed over the delay of its flight for some thirty seconds in Sierra Leone but Bangalie said, "I don't even know what caused the delay. We asked them and they have not told us what is the delay, so I don't know what the delay was. They said we delayed their flight for thirty seconds. I was not there. I don't know."

She, however, expressed that the Sierra Leone Parliament does have a role in maintaining and strengthening diplomatic and bilateral ties adding that, "that is why we have a Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Foreign Affairs."

"Sometimes when these things get stocked with us we come to the Foreign Affairs Committee and they will try to negotiate with the other side so that it will be an easy walkover for us as a Foreign Ministry. So far, the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee has not yet intervened. We have not come to them yet. We are still on the diplomatic negotiation. We are being sanctioned for a hundred and eighty days, yes. I don't think the U.S government will reverse its decision," Bangalie said.

Bangalie in her reading of the intent behind the U.S Government's action slamming sanction on B1 and B2 visa holders said that: "I think that America is having their presidential elections in November and President Donald Trump four years ago had his main focus on immigration, removal of all illegal immigrants from his country. They are fighting very hard to succeed with this promise because he is going for reelection so that is one of the reasons why they are taking all of these people out of the country; so that when he gives his manifesto, he will say I promised to drain the swamp on immigration and I have delivered on it, so reelect me again."

The African continent is seriously suffering from what observers call brain drain and some of its citizens have turned to dangerous journeys (Temple Run) to reach Europe and America to achieve the American dream of seeking

greener pasture since their home countries are either grappling with wars, poverty or other forms of harsh economic, political and other conditions of living.

Bangalie said nations and governments in Africa must learn lessons from the American action against Sierra Leone.

"We have to control our documentations – passports, national identification cards, birth certificates, etc. We should issue these documents to those who are entitled to it, our nationals not people who can come to buy it. This is what the problem is; our documents are all over the world and we are trying to retrieve them although the problem is there. Unless we try to control our documentation, then we can get the problems over," Bangalie said

On the subject of the Government of Sierra Leone's plans to open new embassies in Turkey, Morocco, France, South Africa and India, Bangalie said: "I am also happy for us to have these embassies because the more we have embassies, the more Sierra Leone will be known in the world. There are places where when you mentioned Sierra Leone they do not know where it is located in the globe, but if we begin to have embassies now, people will know that there is a country called Sierra Leone and this will place the country on the global map."

Asked if she is surprised about her appointment by President Julius Maada Bio, Bangalie said, "no, I am not," assuring Sierra Leoneans to expect a very vibrant Foreign Ministry if her appointment is confirmed as Ambassador-At-Large.

"I want Sierra Leoneans to expect a very vibrant and active Foreign Ministry. I am confident that I am going to succeed. I have acted for eight months and I have seen the success on the way," She said.

She however established that she did not canvas, nor pay a bribe to any member of the Committee for her appointment to be considered or confirmed adding that she does not know any of them.

Bangalie, however, said limited finances and lack of training for serving Foreign Ministry's personnel abroad for them to know what they are doing are already very big challenges, "but I am seeing the political willingness on the part of the Government to overcome these challenges."



Madam Bangalie, Director General Ministry of Foreign Affairs, proposed Ambassador-At-Large

## Defense and Interior

# GHANA: MINISTRY DEPLOYS 200 POLICE OFFICERS TO GUARD MPS FOLLOWING MURDER OF MP

By: Emmanuella Dadugblor

The Ministry of Interior has deployed 200 police officers to serve as guards to Members of Parliament (MPs). The officers, who will be operating under the Parliamentary Protection Unit, are to begin their new assignment with immediate effect until the end of the year.

This was made known by the sector minister, Ambrose Dery on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 when he spoke to the Parliamentary Press Corps after an in-camera session with MPs. Under the new arrangement, each of the 275 MPs will be entitled to a police officer as a bodyguard.

“Due to the retooling of the security agencies by President Akufo-Addo, the country has more security agencies and security personnel available. So we have proposed that, between now and the end of the year, we are going to provide an additional 200 police personnel to be part of the parliamentary protection unit. We are making this arrangement to ensure that the unit attains the status of divisional police command to take care of the Members of Parliament as bodyguards.” He said.

The minister also disclosed that plans are underway to provide 800 additional police officers to protect the homes of the MPs.

“Ideally to get to where we want to get to means that, subsequently, we should have 800 police added so that each MP will also have security at home in the day and night.”

The MPs, following the murder of their colleague, Hon Ekow Quansah Hayford, who until the early hours of Friday October 9, 2020 represented the Mfantseman constituency, reiterated their call for state-sponsored security for themselves.

The entire country was thrown

into a state of shock and mourning following the gruesome murder of the Member of Parliament who was returning from a campaign trail. The 50-year old MP was reportedly shot dead on the A beadze Dominase – A beadze Duadzi – Mankessim Road.

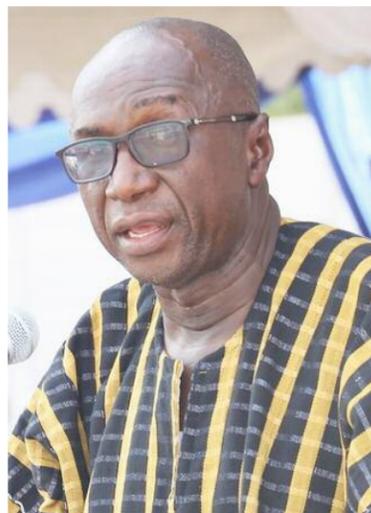
According to an eyewitness report, while the robbery was ongoing, the MP identified himself, which allegedly infuriated the robbers who blamed him for the problems being faced in the country. He was then shot twice, leading to his untimely demise.

Reacting to a commiserative message addressed to the House by the President, Nana Addo Dankwah Akufo Addo, and read by the Speaker, Rt Hon Prof Aaron Mike Ocquaye, leadership of the house bemoaned the lack of interest of security apparatus in the country towards the security of MPs, a situation they describe as worrying. They said several attempts to get the IGP and the police to give security protection to members have been unsuccessful. The MPs contend that, as people who work to represent the people, the state must protect them as their work is laced with danger.

Member of Parliament for Trobu constituency, Hon Moses Anim said just as ministers of state are targeted by criminals because of their positions, Members of Parliament also remain targets to these criminals and must be protected.

“We are also saying that as Members of Parliament, we are so vulnerable and we are so targeted as much as the Minister of State. The report reaching us confirmed that it was when the Member of Parliament said he is a Member of Parliament that is when he was shot. It’s an indication that yes, Members of Parliament, we are endangered species and can be targeted by any person” he said.

The MP also demeaned the lack of concern on the part of the police service although the house has formally written to them



Minister of Interior, Hon. Ambrose Dery

to seek protection.

“Mr Speaker, we are aware that in one of the decisions taken by the board, you directed the Clerk of Parliament to write to the Inspector General of Police to demand from him that because this is an election year, he should take steps to provide the necessary protection for Members of Parliament. The response that was received by the Clerk of Parliament was not an appropriate response or reaction that we expected of the institution. We want to reiterate and restate our position that we really need security protection”.

He also entreated his colleagues to be mindful of their campaign timings and not campaign at night, to avert the occurrence of a similar event in future.

Adding his voice to the calls made by his colleague, Minority Leader and MP for Tamale South, Hon Haruna Idrissu noted that the murder is a wake-up call to the leadership of the house to take the security of its members as a primary concern. He said beyond the messages of condolence, it is important that the Inspector General of Police acts expeditiously and diligently and report to the house on the circumstances that led to the death of their slain colleague.

“We need to know the circumstances leading to the murder of our colleague this morning after he successfully went to file his nomination as Ekow Hayford, Member of Parliament

wanting a renewal of his mandate; he loses his life at 1 am. So Mr Speaker, the Inspector General of Police and Minister for Interior will have to take up this matter and report same to this house as a matter of urgency”

Hon Ekow Quansah Hayford was a first-time Member of Parliament and served on the Judiciary Committee and the Defence and Interior Committee.

The Mankessim Divisional Police Commander, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mr Owoahene Acheampong who confirmed the incident said the Police are still gathering information as part of investigations.

An eyewitness in a radio interview monitored by Parliamentary News said the suspected robbers stopped the MP's vehicle with others which had joined him on the campaign tour but the MP's driver attempted to drive through. The driver was reportedly shot first which resulted in him losing control over the vehicle.

They were all ordered out of the vehicles and the MP reportedly introduced himself when the suspected robbers asked which of them was Ekow Kwansah, the eyewitness recounted.

The suspects, according to the eye witness said he [MP] was part of the people who were making life uncomfortable for them and was shot thereafter. The robbers are currently at large.

The driver who was said to be in a critical condition at the Mankessim Mercy Women's Hospital later died, Saturday morning.

The deceased MP had filed his nomination for re-election Thursday [October 8, 2020] and met with the Central Regional executives of the NPP before he set off on the campaign trip.

Hon Ekow Kwansah Hayford left behind a wife and four children.

## Parliamentary Affairs

# GHANA: Minority Leadership Push For Suspension Of Parliament

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

The Minority leadership in Parliament is pushing for the suspension of public business until the majority of members return from their constituencies where they are filing their nominations ahead of the 2020 polls.

Deputy Minority Leader, James Klutse Avedzi who made the call during the house's sitting on Wednesday, October 7, 2020, bemoaned the absence of a large number of members from proceedings of the house, a situation he described as worrying.

As of 11:30 am when the house officially commenced sitting, the chamber looked virtually empty with only 16 of the members present as against its membership of 275.

Mr Avedzi said the commencement of public business with such low numbers is a dent on proceedings of the house and business on the floor must start only when there are more MPs present.

"We cannot be taking decisions when out of a House of 275 people only 16 of us are here. We are not doing our country any good. Mr Speaker, let us get the numbers, then members can debate the issues very well, and then we will go and get them approved".

Majority Leader, Osei Kyei Mensah Bonsu however expressed surprise at his colleague's stance. He noted that in consultation with the leadership of the house, their rules of engagement were relaxed in a bid to allow their colleagues who were still in their constituencies filing their nominations or engaged in other activities ahead of the for 2020 general elections to do so.

**"We cannot be taking decisions when out of a House of 275 people only 16 of us are here. We are not doing our country any good. Mr Speaker, let us get the numbers, then members can debate the issues very well, and then we will go and get them approved".**

done. We agreed on this and I am surprised that the Deputy Minority Leader is getting up just the following day after we made the appeal to say that the house cannot go on. I think we can go ahead because this is not contentious and it was anonymously adopted at the level of the committee so I don't see what will hold us down" he indicated.

The Speaker, Prof Aaron Mike Oquaye after hearing from both sides, urged members to stick to previous decisions taken by the house to ensure a smooth running of public business on the floor of the House.

"There were certain decisions taken yesterday with regards to enabling this house to go on and I can see some members nodding to that effect because they know what we agreed on, so let's just make progress".

Meanwhile, a total of 42 bills are expected to be presented by the executive arm of government for Parliament consideration according to a statement signed by the Director of Public Affairs of Parliament, Kate Addo on Monday, October 5, 2020. They include the Judicial Service Bill, 2020, Creative Arts Bill, 2020, Council of State Bill, 2020, Wildlife Bill, 2020 among others.

The Public Universities Bill, 2020, the Ghana Cocoa Board (Amendment) Bill, 2017, and the Petroleum Hub Development Corporation Bill 2020 are also expected to be read for the second time.



Deputy Minority Leader, James Klutse Avedzi made the call during the house's sitting on Wednesday, October 7, 2020

## Parliamentary Affairs

# SIERRA LEONE: Lawmaker Highlight Gains of Sub Regional Tour

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

The Member of Parliament (MP) representing constituency 016, Nongowa Chiefdom, Kenema District, Eastern Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) party, Honorable Abu Bakarr Fofanah has intimated *Parliamentary News (PN)* about what he believes was his lessons learnt and benefits gained during the first official West Africa familiarization tour of the Speaker of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament, His Excellency (HE) Honorable Sidi Mohamed Tunis.

H.E Hon. Tunis is also a sitting third-term serving MP in the current Parliament of Sierra



Honorable Abu Bakarr Fofanah

Leone representing Pujehun District, Southern Sierra Leone and until recently after his appointment to the position as t ECOWAS Speaker, he was the Leader of Government Business in the Sierra Leone Parliament, representing the governing SLPP party

Responding to questions posed to him by *PN* on a social networking app, Hon. Fofanah described the tour as a "familiarization of the ECOWAS Speaker to ECOWAS to meet with his staff."

Ever since he was inaugurated as the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, the COVID-19 pandemic seriously impeded the work of the ECOWAS Speaker limiting him to countless zoom and webinar or virtual meetings. He was unable to travel as a result of almost every country in the sub-re-

gion having COVID-19 travelling restrictions in force.

Hon. Fofanah is the only Sierra Leonean MP that was accompanied in the delegation of the ECOWAS Speaker. Hon. Fofanah's inclusion as part of the delegation is not part of Sierra Leone's official delegation to the ECOWAS Parliament. He is part of the ECOWAS Speaker, H.E Hon. Tunis' fifteen-man delegation comprising five other MPs from the sub-region.

However, the significance of this tour to the personal political career of the first-term, MP Hon. Fofanah is huge, according to him.

"It has exposed my political career by bringing me in contact with different MPs in Africa. It has also improved my parliamentary leadership

skills and approaches," Hon. Fofanah said.

Being a part of international parliaments poses threats (loss of common touch) and opportunities (networking) to the local electorates of those MPs, but Hon. Fofanah said for him, the tour ushered enormous opportunities for his constituents in the stronghold of the governing SLPP, Kenema District.

"Being a part of this delegation brings my constituency and constituents to the limelight of exposure," Hon. Fofanah said.

He appraised the new ECOWAS Speaker as a beckon of hope for the sub-regional parliament.

"Well, according to what I am seeing, the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, H.E Hon. Tunis is going to be one of the best. He wants to bring West Africa and Africa together. That is his aim," Hon. Fofanah disclosed.

The ECOWAS Speaker's special tour visits Nigeria, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, and spans for sixteen days. It is thematically focusing on breeding peace and stability in a region with growing political tensions in Conakry, Mali and elsewhere.

Guinea Conakry is a next-door neighbour to Sierra Leone, but its political situation ahead of presidential elections on October 18th, 2020 is being characterized with violence and tension. The ECOWAS Speaker believes that with a fifteen-man delegation that visited the country, it is hoped, that the people will be more confident with the ongoing electoral process, Hon. Fofanah said.

**"It has exposed my political career by bringing me in contact with different MPs in Africa. It has also improved my parliamentary leadership skills and approaches," Hon. Fofanah said.**

## Defense and Interior

# GHANA: MPs Vow To Assist Gov't Clamp Down On Secessionists Attacks

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

Some members of parliament have expressed their preparedness to rally behind the government in its fight against secessionist attacks witnessed in recent times. This comes on the back of several disturbances witnessed in the Volta region from members Homeland Study Group Foundation, the group masterminding several activities aimed at persuading the government to secede the Volta Region to them.

Members of Parliament, who resumed legislative duty on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, after a seven-week-long break, threw their full support behind the Akufo-Addo-led government in fighting this national security threat.

Speaking on the floor of the house, Minority leader and the Member of Parliament for Tamale South Haruna Idrissu described the disturbances as

an ugly threat to the stability, sovereignty and territory of the country, stating that the activities of the secessionist groups have dented the country's image.

Mr Idrissu noted that the President has the full backing of the constitution to deal with the situation in a manner that protects the integrity and sovereignty of the country.

"The President as Commander-In-Chief of the Ghana Armed Forces [should] be assured that he has the full support of the house to deal decisively with the threat to the sovereignty and integrity of our country. We cannot afford a disunited Ghana. He should endeavour to uphold the provision of the constitution, particularly Article 4, which guarantees the sovereignty of a united Ghana Republic"

He added that the actions of the group may undermine the conduct of the 2020 general elections hence parliament's commitment to help fight the threat.



Member of Parliament for Tamale South Haruna Idrissu described the disturbances as an ugly threat to the stability, sovereignty and territory of the country

"We will support the President fully as Commander-In-Chief and President of Ghana to contain the imminent threat to the peace stability of Ghana and the people of Volta Region...The threats there can be worrying and undermine the conduct a fair election throughout Ghana and particularly in that region," he said.

Majority Leader and Member of Parliament for Suame, Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu also entreated members of the house not to, support the ill motives of the secessionist groups to set the country apart.

"This country has had a referendum in 1992 and resolved as a nation that we will live together in unity. We are resolved to also protect the stability of this country...A clarion call should go to all of us that, that collective resolve which happened when we conducted the referendum that approved the 1992 constitution to exist. Hence, we should not allow a group of individuals with ulterior motives to take this nation to the brink."

The secessionist group, Homeland Study Group Foundation, also known as Western Togoland group on the dawn of Friday, September 25 blocked major routes to Volta Region. The group also seized police

arms amidst attacks on some police posts.

On Tuesday, September 29, 2020, the secessionists staged yet another attack when, some people believed to be members of the group, burnt down an Intercity STC minibus in Ho, the Volta Regional capital amid the firing of gunshots. They reportedly also attacked some drivers who were spending the night in the bus terminal.

According to one of the drivers, the attackers pointed a gun at him and asked him to go down on his knees when they stormed the terminal. A flag similar to that one the group, which one of the attackers carried, gave them away as members of the secessionist group. Security personnel made up of police and the military have since visited the yard and secured the place.

A previous unsuccessful attempt to declare Western Togoland independent from Ghana took place in 2017. In March 2020, about 80 members of the separatist group were detained for protesting the arrest of seven leaders of the Homeland Study Group Foundation. The charges were later dropped by the state.

Hundred people have so far been arrested in connection with the attack according to the Volta Regional Minister, Dr Archibald Yaw Letsa.

The territory of Western Togoland was first colonized by Germany in 1884 and incorporated into the Togoland colony. After Germany's defeat during the First World War, the colony of Togoland was divided between France and Britain as protectorates. The western part of Togoland became part of Britain's Gold Coast colony, which became independent in 1957 to form modern-day Ghana.

**"We will support the President fully as Commander-In-Chief and President of Ghana to contain the imminent threat to the peace stability of Ghana and the people of Volta Region...The threats there can be worrying and undermine the conduct a fair election throughout Ghana and particularly in that region,"**

## General News

# SIERRA LEONE: MP Nab Alleged Fraudster

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

The Honorable Peter Musa Moigua representing constituency 011, Kenema District, Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) on Monday 5th October 2020 succeeded in the netting of an alleged fraudster (419er) who for weeks had been panting him with phone calls all in an attempt to defraud him the sum of Five Hundred United States Dollars approximately, Five Million Leones.

In his testimony at the Criminal Investigations Department (CID), Hon. Peter explained how on the 19th September 2020, he received a phone call from Abdul Rahman Kanu the alleged fraudster who purported that he was a relative and a native of Blama, Kenema District, the Member of Parliament (MP's) birthplace. The accused, however, according to Hon. Peter told him in subsequent WhatsApp telephone calls that he has some money which he will like the MP to help him legalize so that he will use it to travel out of the country.

The MP said that having suspected that something is foul, he told the CID that the accused forwarded him passports of people that he claimed were his business partners and on the 2nd October 2020, the accused told him that he has the sum of Two Million Five Hundred United Dollars (\$2.5M) but that the money is stamped and will need to be cleaned with a chemical which he can get from a certain foreign national called Michael Pratt.

Knowing that the deal was rogue and criminal, Hon. Peter

said he requested to talk to the accused in person after he turned down several prior invitations for a meet in parliament, his home, etc.

The accused, the MP said, gave him Pratt's phone number and later called Pratt, to ascertain if he has the chemical to clean the unclean money. The MP told Police that he inquired of Pratt about the chemical, telling him that Kanu gave him his number. Pratt, believably being a part of the alleged criminal enterprise, asked the MP what kind of money he was having, but the MP reportedly told him that he does not know adding that it was at this juncture, that Pratt told him that before he can talk to him in detail, he must first pay the sum of five hundred United States Dollars as registration fees.

The MP said, he told the alleged 419ers that he is a man of law and will not do dealings of such nature on the phone, urging for a face-to-face meeting. He said, 'there were several back and forth as to when and where to meet' but in summation, they agreed to meet at Syke Street, Western Area Urban, Freetown on Monday 5th October 2020.

Hon. Peter said he called and informed the accused that he has returned from Kenema District and was in possession of the money for the registration and purchase of the chemical. By this time, "I have arranged with the Police to intervene and effect an arrest."

Fraudsters have made Parliament and MPs targets of fake calls and requests, even the name of the Clerk of Parliament among several other officials in the House have been impersonated in attempts to defraud

unsuspecting members of the public.

"The suspect showed up, I offered him a drink and we were talking details about how much is the total dirty money and how much is the cost of the bottle chemical to clean it. At around 3:40 pm, while conversing with the accused, I was informed that one battle of the chemical can clean up to eight to ten thousand United States Dollars and that they were in need of approximately twenty-five bottles to clean the sum of \$2.5 million," Hon. Peter said.

It was at this point the Police stormed the discussion and arrested the accused. He was escorted to the OSD Headquarters where he was interrogated and detained.

According to the MP, the OSD Boss told him that the said

matter is one of an attempt to defraud him, a case for the CID Headquarter to investigate.

At the CID, Gabriel Tommy Head of Crimes treated the matter by allocating it immediately for a statement to be obtained from the MP while they were waiting for the escorting of the suspect from the OSD Headquarter to the CID Headquarter.

PN waited for a while at the CID Headquarter but was in futility. The investigating officer, however, said that the investigation would be dealt with swiftly since the suspect is already in their custody.

"We have released the suspect, we asked the MP if he was ready to help in the prosecution of the matter in court, he said no, his action was only taken in the interest of the state," a Police source told a PN followup.



Honorable Peter Musa Moigua representing constituency 011, Kenema District

## Public Accounts

# GHANA: Parliament Gets Clarity On Delayed Auditor-General's Report

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

Parliament has received a letter from the acting Auditor General, Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu detailing the reasons for the delay in the submission of the Report on the Audited Accounts of Government and the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

Speaker of Parliament, Professor Aaron Mike Oquaye, who made this known to the house on Tuesday, October 5, 2020, said according to the letter, the delays are as a result of the ravaging impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on the institution and therefore unintentional.

"I have received a letter from the Auditor General which I refer appropriately to the two leaders, which refers to certain delays in audited accounts to Parliament, which has been a subject of some comments. It states in clear terms that the delays were not deliberate

in any way or whatsoever. With the arrival of the Covid-19 several institutions including their office was adversely affected as known to the public and that the office will continue to fulfil its constitutional duties."

The minority National Democratic Congress (NDC) caucus in September this year regrouped from recess to organize a press conference in which they urged the acting Auditor General, Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu to as matter of urgency, publish the Report on the Audited Accounts of Government and the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

They alleged that the delay is an attempt by the Auditor General to save the government from embarrassment and also questioned. They also questioned the Auditor if the "delays are not intended to cover up malfeasance on the part of Government because this year is an election year."

"The Minority is particularly concerned that these delays may be deliberate for the primary purpose of avoiding further embarrassment to the Government,"

Minority Leader and MP for Tamale South, Mr Haruna Iddrisu, who addressed the press, based the concerns of the caucus on the constitutional provisions which enjoin the Auditor General and the Audit Service to audit and submit to Parliament Reports on the audited accounts of Ghana for the preceding year within six months after the end of a preceding year.

Mr Iddrisu quoted Article 187 (5) of the 1992 Constitution, which says "The Auditor-

General shall within six months after the end of the immediately preceding year to which the accounts mentioned in clause (2) of this article relates, submit his report to Parliament and shall,

financial year to which each of the accounts mentioned in this Part relates, submit his report to Parliament and shall, in the report, draw attention to any irregularities in the accounts audited and to any other matter which in his opinion ought to be brought to the notice of Parliament." Mr Iddrisu, however, observed that "notwithstanding the imperative of the above provisions of the Constitution and Act 586, the Auditor-General has failed to submit and publish his Reports, three (3) months to the end of the financial year."

"We are therefore calling on the Acting Auditor-General to as a matter of the urgency, submit to Parliament, his Reports for the 2019 financial year," they urged.

The Minority recalled that the Auditor-General, Daniel Yaw Dormelevo who was asked by President Nana Akufo-Addo to proceed on leave had complied with the constitutional provisions and had been prompt with his reports to Parliament, stating for instance that the Reports of the Auditor General for the 2018 Financial Year were submitted within the statutory time limit.

The Minority caucus also called on President Nana Akufo-Addo to call his appointee to order and direct him to urgently submit the report to Parliament for consideration and report just as he directed the Auditor-General to proceed on leave.

"Accountability, transparency and good governance obliges us all to ensure that the Auditor General complies with the tenets and dictates of the constitution and laws of Ghana," Mr Idrissu noted.

**Speaker of Parliament, Professor Aaron Mike Oquaye, who made this known to the house on Tuesday, October 5, 2020, said according to the letter, the delays are as a result of the ravaging impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on the institution and therefore unintentional.**

in that report, draw the attention to any irregularities in the accounts audited and to any other matter which in his opinion ought to be brought to the notice of Parliament."

The Minority Leader also referred to Section 20 of the Audit Service Act, 200 (Act 586) which states that "The Auditor-General shall, within six months after the end of the immediately preceding fi-



Ghana's Acting Auditor General, Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu

## Transparency and Parliamentary Openness

# SIERRA LEONE: HOUSE LEADERS ESPOUSED ON WHO POLICES PARLIAMENT

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

In its maiden press conference ever since it assumed office (2018), the Leadership of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone took time to clear its name following the publication of two separate corruption perception survey reports categorizing Members of Parliament (MPs) and Parliament among the topmost corrupt in the country.

During the press conference held on 30th September 2020 at the famous Committee Room No.1, Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown Sierra Leone, the Speaker of Parliament Honorable Dr Abass Chernor Bundu said that "Parliament is not a corrupt institution, still less the second most corrupt institution in Sierra Leone."

Hon. Dr Bundu said: "Therefore, for Parliament (carrying the trust of the people, the sovereign must of necessity be viewed as committing a crime analogous to



Members of the Leadership of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone at first press conference refuting corruption perception surveys reports

treason, the crime of betraying one's country," adding that, it objects to the allegations of corruption levelled at it by the Center for Accountability and Rule of Law (CARL) and Institute for Governance Reform (IGR).

During the question time, *Parliamentary News (PN)* asked the Leadership of the Sierra Leone Parliament that with a rosy picture being painted of being incorruptible, who polices or watches over Parliament as an institution and MPs as individuals.

In their various responses, Hon. Solomon Sengehpoh Thomas Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Chairman Public Accounts Committee (PAC) said that it is the people that monitors and polices Parliament.

"Parliament just as democratic principles will say, parliament polices the Executive branch of government, so it is true to state that parliament is answerable to the people of the Republic of Sierra Leone. It is the citizenry of the Republic of Sierra Leone that police the Parliament of Sierra Leone. Parliament is your house. We are here representing you, so it behoves you to always police your people, those you send as representatives. In short, it is your mandate to make sure that you police whatever we do as your MPs," Deputy Speaker, Hon. Thomas said.

Hon. Thomas furthered that every year between January and December, incidentally the financial year, "the Auditor-General produces a report and that report also covers the disbursement and

expenditure of funds allocated to Parliament. That also is placed before Parliament and is giving to the PAC for scrutiny. So, apart from the fact that the people police Parliament, we also have our internal mechanism to police ourselves. But in the circumstances, even as we police Parliament, you are free as citizens of this country to bring up anything that you know Parliament is doing that is wrong."

Head of parliamentary administration and Vote Controller, Hon. Paran Umarr Tarawally Clerk of the Sierra Leone Parliament in his response to the question, who polices parliament said that "this Fifth Parliament has been audited four times since I assumed office some two and half years ago."

Hon. Tarawally said this is because they met a backlog of two years audit for the years 2016/17 but with collaboration with the Audit Service Sierra Leone, they have cleared all the backlog of non-audit.

"As I speak, the 2018 and 2019 audit is ready and it is a public document now in process in Parliament," the Clerk of Parliament said.

Leader of the main opposition All Peoples Congress (APC) party, Hon. Chernor Ramadan Maju Bah replied to the PN question by saying that, "I also want to add that parliament is not above the law."

"Couple with all that has been said, we are subject to the law, so all the laws in Sierra Leone guiding individuals, we are also

under it and the Constitution being the gron norm also protect us," Hon. Bah said.

Andrew Lavalie Executive Director IGR, one of the publishers of the corruptions survey with Afro Barometer told PN that they interviewed the people and they are only bringing their voices and views adding that he hopes this marks the start of a collaborative relationship between Civil Society and Parliament.

"Of course, we do not feel flustered or threaten at all. Parliament, Civil Society and the Media have a duty to ensure that there is stronger oversight. If Parliament, Media, etc is weak, we will not be deterred to say so. CARL and IGR spoke to people, and the people of Sierra Leone are saying that Parliament is ranked second in corruption. You cannot fight that. What we need to do now is to sit down and answer the question why are people saying that and how can we correct it. We can't fight it or else we will lose the fight against poverty, cohesion and national accountability," Lavalie said.

He, however, noted that: "Nobody has accused anyone of corruption. We are just reporting what people said, nobody accused anyone of corruption, that is the difference between accusing someone of corruption and saying that we feel that there is corruption."

However, when PN pressed Lavalie whether his organization will be able to provide 'impeachable quality evidence beyond all reasons doubt' as demanded by the House Speaker, and, should the matter be taken to court, Lavalie said: "I am sure we will never reach that stage. I am sure it will not happen."

In contrast, the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Dr Bundu said: "We, therefore, challenge both CARL and IGR (Afro Barometer) and all their financiers to bring evidence to substantiate their allegations or else run the risk of being found guilty of contempt of Parliament with all its attendants' consequence."

**"...We are here representing you, so it behoves you to always police your people, those you send as representatives. In short, it is your mandate to make sure that you police whatever we do as your MPs," Deputy Speaker, Hon. Thomas said.**

## Public Accounts

# SIERRA LEONE: DEPUTY OPPOSITION LEADER REACTS TO COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY WHITE PAPER

**"What is of grave concern to me now is the fact that the report itself seriously tarnishes a good number of members of my party and that in itself has a very negative story about my political party which we are going to correct. The irregularities are obvious but we also need to put some corrective measures to correct that one," Hon. Kargbo said.**

among those who adverse findings were made against by the three Judge-led Commissions of Inquiry (CoI) into the conduct and wealth of top officials in the last administration for the periods 2007 to 2018, the impact of these indictments on his APC party, his ambition to replace the party's current Leader and Chairman and the way forward for national cohesion among other issues.

Hon. Kargbo served as Minister of Information and Communications under the APC administration and an inquiry into his properties and conduct found him guiltless.

How does it feel for Hon. Kargbo's name not to be included on the CoI's White Paper, "I will not celebrate because my name did not appear on that list," Hon. Kargbo said.

"What is of grave concern to me now is the fact that the report itself seriously tarnishes a good number of members of my party and that in itself has a very negative story about my political party which we are going to correct. The irregularities are obvious but we also need to put some corrective measures to correct that

one," Hon. Kargbo said.

How will the APC party correct the negative story hanging over its members, Hon. Kargbo said public perception must also be taken into consideration, adding that: "We do not think that everybody, as blanketed in the report, could have been guilty of the grave allegations made against them," adding that they are going to do more investigations.

He said members of his party whose names are included in the White Paper are on moves to appeal to the Appeals and Supreme Courts for a consideration that some of them are cleared of these allegations.

"Appeals Court is next step but we can go up to the Supreme Court. We are entitled to do that because we also need to clear the name of our party, apart from clearing the names of the individuals and members of our party. The coincidence is not unusual. In the first place, we were the ones running the state and if you want to investigate irregularities relating to that period of administration, I think that you can bring in some of our own people but of course, it

must be done in a manner that is very objective. The more important thing is that we thought that the whole exercise could have been tailored to ensure that everybody feels satisfied. Remember that when we started the process, even from a point of debate in Parliament; because of the absence of court rules that were clear and decisive, we said that we were not very satisfied with the structures being put in place for the Commissions of Inquiry but of course, we lost the vote and the result was that the Commissions of Inquiry were set up," Hon. Kargbo said.

*PN* asked Hon. Kargbo whether he thinks the APC lost the vote on the establishment of the CoI democratically in tandem with legislative due processes, he said, "well whatever you want to call it, we lost the vote but we also used that occasion to definitely point out to members of the public that we in the APC party were not a party to the efforts to open up old wounds that can easily bring about problems in this country."

The governing Sierra Leone Peoples (SLPP) party say it wants to minimize if not eradicate corruption in public and private service in the country. Corruption in the public and private sector is still rife although the country has been making steady progress in the global rankings. The Government says the fight against corruption is a fight that it must win, amending weaknesses in the 2008 Anti Corruption Act (ACC), with a 2019 Act which was enacted by Parliament.

Hon. Kargbo said accountability should not open old wounds, adding that, "if I were president to rule any

By Melvin Tejan-Mansaray

The Deputy Leader of the main opposition All Peoples Congress (APC) party in the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, Honorable Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, representing Bombali District, Northern Sierra Leone has in an exclusive interview with Parliamentary News (PN) expressed his feelings about his name not being included



Hon. Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, Deputy Parliamentary Leader, APC party

**Continued On Pages 12, 13**

## Finance

# GHANA: PARLIAMENT OKAYS \$243M FACILITY TO PURCHASE 413 TRAIN COACHES

By: Emmanuella Dadugblor

The railway sector will soon see a re-vamp following Parliament's approval of a \$243.6 million facility for the procurement of 413 standard gauge rolling stock. The agreement is between the government represented by the Finance Ministry and Messrs Dongfan Electric International Corporation.

The facility will cover the cost of the acquisition of standard gauge rolling stock to enable

testing, commissioning, and immediate operation of the new standard gauge railway lines currently under construction in the country.

Presenting the report of the Finance committee on the facility, its Chairman, Dr Mark Assibey Yeboah revealed that the scope of work between the partners is to supply nine Nos. 4500HP Mainline Diesel Locomotive with a maximum speed of 160km/h for passengers, the supply of 48 Nos. Passengers' coaches, 15 Nos. 4500HP Mainline diesel locomotives for freight with a maximum speed of 100km/h. It also includes the supply of



Finance committee Chairman,  
Dr Mark Assibey Yeboah

330 Nos. Freight Wagons and supply of 11 Nos. 1000HP Shunting Diesel Locomotives. It comes to a total of 35 standard gauge trains which are to be delivered by the suppliers according to the terms of the agreement.

Dr Assibey Yeboah also observed that the company will also provide spare parts and tools along with a 24 months warranty period according to the agreement adding that the contract will see the establishment of one Maintenance Workshop (not more than 3000m<sup>2</sup>) with equipment at a location yet to be determined by the purchaser.

The supplier is also expected to provide training for skilled personnel or railway engineers and managers in all aspects of the rolling stock systems including Locomotive design, operation, and maintenance to ensure adequate transfer of technology from the suppliers to the local staff.

The contract will be implemented in two phases and the first phase will be completed in two batches within

12 months and 18 months respectively from the date of contract commencement.

Messrs. Dongfan Electric International Corporation as part of the agreement will be procuring the 100% financial solution to execute the contract from the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) Limited or China Construction Bank.

The terms and conditions of the agreement are two years grace period and 10 years of repayment period with an interest rate of 6M Libor +2.5% p.a. with 12 years tenor.

The socio-economic benefit of the project according to the Chairman is the easy movement of goods and persons as well as the creation of both direct and indirect employment opportunities. It will also generate income within the catchment communities.

The committee also revealed in its report that the construction of the 97km railway line from Port of Tema to Mpakadan is expected to be completed ahead of the scheduled July 2021 date of completion and some of the rolling stock being financed under the instant Supplier's Credit Agreement will be used to test, commission and operationalize the Tema-Mpakadan rail line.

Taking his turn to comment on the report, the minority Spokesperson on Roads and Transport, Hon Governors Kwame Agbodza demanded a Value for Money (VfM) assessment on the agreement under the laws of Ghana. He, however, added that smooth implementation of the facility will boost the railway sector of the economy.

**The scope of work between the partners is to supply nine Nos. 4500HP Mainline Diesel Locomotive with a maximum speed of 160km/h for passengers, the supply of 48 Nos. Passengers' coaches, 15 Nos. 4500HP Mainline diesel locomotives for freight with a maximum speed of 100km/h. It also includes the supply of 330 Nos. Freight Wagons and supply of 11 Nos. 1000HP Shunting Diesel Locomotives. It comes to a total of 35 standard gauge trains which are to be delivered by the suppliers according to the terms of the agreement.**

## Public Accounts

# SIERRA LEONE: DEPUTY OPPOSITION LEADER REACTS TO COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY WHITE PAPER

*Continued from Page 10*

country, the first thing I will do is to start from the point where I take over and just move ahead and develop a country without wasting much time looking at who did what or that."

Pressed on the fact that Section No. 147 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No. 6 of 1991 gives the President the power to institute a CoI and asked if he (Hon. Kargbo) becomes a president, he will not institute a CoI, Hon. Kargbo said it is left with him entirely but depends on the situation that prevails at the time.

He said he is very conversant with the operations of government, adding that, "your discretion is also important in running a state, mark you, I have served as MP for years from 1985. I have gone out to become Minister, I have been an adviser to President, I also know the methodology of making sure that you don't open up old wounds."

"Let me tell you something when former President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah (1996-2012) came to power, he suddenly discovered that he needed a whole lot of support from members of the public and he also wanted to make sure that the wounds that opened up that created the civil war were not recreated, so he had to call for the CoI reports and he set up a Committee to look at them again and they reviewed and everybody was happy when he took a decision to correct the irregularities that came out of those reports," Hon. Kargbo said.

The APC party, Hon. Kargbo said, holds the position that corruption is evil, they will not support anybody that promotes corruption, during the APC's tenure it sharpens the

ACC legislation to show the public and the international community that it does not condone corruption.

"Corruption can easily lead to backwardness," Hon. Kargbo said.

Responding to PN's question that he (Hon. Kargbo) in essence was saying that public officials be they APC or SLPP should not be held accountable during and after their tenures in office, for old wounds not to be opened, Hon. Kargbo said: "You don't hold them responsible to the extent of ignoring the point of discretion that will help you run your state properly. To us it is important, I have not said that we should not hold anybody responsible for whatever things he or she did while in office, I am merely stating that if you can avoid it, for goodness sake, do what you can do but don't create a thing that will create tension within the politics, to us, that is also important. You can talk about the constitution or other things but what is important it is to make sure that we develop a cohesive state. I am not saying that this is going to dismantle the country, I'm merely stating that we should be careful," the APC Deputy Leader, Hon. Kargbo said.

When the PN asked Hon. Kargbo whether the discretion of the governing SLPP party as per the trend of events is ill-motivated, Hon. Kargbo said he does not perceive the situation as an SLPP effort but a state effort.

"It is the President that decided that we are going to do this and he has a right to continue or discontinue with it as well, but the fact of the matter is that I do not want to perceive this as an APC or SLPP matter," he said but the MP was reminded that he earlier opened the interview on the note that even though

he emerged triumphant over the White, yet he could not celebrate because his party's image is being tarnished by the conclusions of the White Paper.

Asked where he draws the line between his personality and party, Hon. Kargbo said: "Of course, you will be most dishonest for you to celebrate just because you have been lucky to get off the hook."

Hon. Kargbo said that the APC party will work towards national unification adding that by no stretch of the imagination, they will begin to talk about a matter that creates divisiveness in the country, a matter of concern to them.

Hon. Kargbo also confirmed to PN reports that he is interested to run for the Leader and

Chairman of the APC party, a position currently occupied by his former boss, ex-president Dr Ernest Bai Koroma.

"I have always said it very clearly that taking into consideration my experience over the years, service to my political party over the years, my service to society itself, I think I have acquired enough knowledge to be able to become the Leader and Chairman of my party and I am looking forward to that office," Hon. Kargbo said.

Dr Ernest Bai Koroma former President of Sierra Leone - 2007 to 2018 is the current Leader and Chairman of the APC party, a position he has held ever since.

*Continued On Page 13*

**The APC party, Hon. Kargbo said holds the position that corruption is evil, they will not support anybody that promotes corruption, during the APC's tenure it sharpens the ACC legislation to show the public and the international community that it does not condone corruption.**

## Public Accounts

# SIERRA LEONE: DEPUTY OPPOSITION LEADER REACTS TO COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY WHITE PAPER

*Continued from Page 12*

His critics described him as the Leader and Chairman for life while his supporters see him as the backbone of an APC party that is under judicial and political disturbances induced by the SLPP party.

Dr Koroma also faces serious indictment ranging from unexplained wealth, asset declaration, abuse of executive order among several earlier and fresh charges being brought forward by the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) against him.

On October 5, 2020, an invitation of the former President to testify at the ACC was cancelled and on the 8th October 2020, the erstwhile President reportedly failed to show up at the ACC Regional Office in Makeni, Bombali District. An attempt by the ACC to interview Dr Koroma at his house in Makeni was obstructed by his supporters who crammed the streets, displaying secret societies and the situation was on the brink of public disorder.

The ACC investigators had to pull out in fear of their safety and security.

How will the ongoing reactions pan out for the APC Leader and his party is something that is closely being followed at home and abroad.

Hon. Kargbo said: "I will not even assume to think about whether the current Leader and Chairman Dr Koroma thinks that he is going to monopolize that office for a lifetime."

Dr Koroma's critics say he has monopolized the APC Leader and Chairmanship positions ever since the day he assumed the office.

Hon Kargbo said: " I do not

subscribe to that. I am very certain that when the time comes Dr Koroma will bow out and another person's steps in. It is a democratic office. When the time comes, I, in particular, will vie for that position. I think I am qualified and I am happy to announce that I will vie for that position."

Dr Koroma's supporters say an APC without him will be disintegrating, but Hon. Kargbo disagrees.

" Well, before he became President, there was already an APC without Ernest Koroma. We brought him to become Ernest Koroma within the APC. If he decides to bow out, we can always make arrangements to get in other people to take the party forward."

Hon. Kargbo discarded PN's question on what if Dr Koroma decides not to bow out saying that it is a democratic arrangement wherein one man can simply not refuse to bow out and hold a whole party to ransom.

"That is not his thinking, that is not his position, and I assure you that when the vacancy occurs, some of us will come out openly and contest for that position," Hon. Kargbo said

On the issue of Civil Society, corruption perception survey reports indicting the Sierra Leone Parliament and MPs, Hon. Kargbo said that the way forward, as a journalist by training, objectivity is what is needed in handling such matters.

"We are not saying by any stretch of the imagination that there is no corruption or there is corruption in Parliament, but what is important, if you want to run a credible institution that makes statements about the very credibility of other citizens of this country,

**"We are not saying by any stretch of the imagination that there is no corruption or there is corruption in Parliament, but what is important, if you want to run a credible institution that makes statements about the very credibility of other citizens of this country, you better be friendly with them."**

you better be friendly with them. Come and ask them relevant questions, asked them about everything that you want to know. Once you ask them, you will get a proper picture. I practised journalism for years, right. I was always interviewing former President Kabbah in the SLPP when I was in the opposition. I interviewed a whole lot of people. I interviewed former Vice President Solomon Berewah, but with objectivity and with open-mindedness. The whole business of gathering information and relating to other people, which is also very critical, we also must be very friendly and open-minded in our operations. I think the only thing that created this problem is that some MPs think that there is malice against them and I don't think that is it. As members of the

opposition, we can easily argue that the running of Parliament is not in our hands but that is not fair, that is dishonest, we are part of the Leadership of Parliament and we will begin to put together those things that make sure that those perceptions are erased completely."

Hon. Kargbo said the way forward between Parliament and Civil Society is the friendship that seeks not to disrupt the future of the other person.

Hon. Kargbo cautioned senior and junior ranking MPs, saying that: " For our colleagues in Parliament who may want to talk to the public, make sure that when you talk to the public, you should not implicate your colleagues without doing the necessary research."

## Parliamentary Practice & Procedures

# SIERRA LEONE PARLIAMENT IN RETROSPECT

## First Week October 2020

By Melvin Tejan-Mansaray

The first week of October 2020, in the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone started on a sound footing unlike September 2020, which was characterized in a complex web.

On the 5th and 6th October 2020, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) probed officials of the Ministries of Agriculture and Food Transport and Aviation with regards to findings of the Auditor General for the year 2018. The officials were however stood down due to the absence of previous serving officials for which the current serving officials declined to answer to questions for transactions not done under their tenure.

“Matters of money business are not matters of fancy, I cannot answer to questions for periods for which we were not in post,” Sadiq Sillah Deputy Minister of Transport and Aviation told the PAC. The Committee, however, resolved that the full team of present and past serving officials must appear before it on a date that will be communicated to them by the Clerk of the Committee.

On Wednesday 7th October 2020 the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Appointments and the Public Service held public hearings for the interviewing of presidential nominees for the following proposed positions; Mohamed Serray Jalloh member National Drug Law Enforcement Agency,

Grace Fulla Commissioner National Commission for Social Action, Mohamed Sesay Commissioner Western Area Right to Access Information Commission, Fabundeh Ansumana Member National Commission for Children, George Vandy Director-General Sierra Leone Water Company and Florence Nyawa Bangalie Ambassador-At-Large.

During the Appointments Committee probe, Foday Mansaray President Julius Maada Bio’s nominee for Director General Petroleum Directorate was stood down for what the Leader of Government Business Hon. Mathew Nyuma said, “the figures in your bank account do not tally,” although stating that Mansaray’s academic qualification is intact.

Also, the proposed Ambassador-At-Large Florence Nyawa Bangalie who is presently the Director-General Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, used the vetting exercise to brief MPs on the cause of the US-Sierra Leone diplomatic dispute, plans to open new embassies, etc. The following nominees are expected to face the plenary sitting of the House on the 20th October 2020 for confirmation or rejection.

Tragically, the House received news about the passing on of Hon. Samuel Genwai Panda (born 12th January 1952). Panda fondly called ‘The Jungle MP’ representing constituency 010, Kenema District, ruling Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP). Sources say the MP was suffering from an unknown medical condition. His debate on the floor of Parliament hinged on advocacy for the development of agriculture and tourism in his constituency will forever be remembered. The late Hon. Panda is the second government bencher to have met his demise in the year 2020 after the death of another government MP from Bo District, Hon. Alimamy O. Kamara.

In all, three MPs have died so far in the current Fifth Parliament.

The first was opposition Lawmaker Hon. Momodu Eskimo Mansaray, Koinadugu District, Northern Sierra Leone, he was replaced by his son Hon. Amidu Holla Mansaray

in a by-election. In this regard, there are three looming bye-elections two caused by death and one as a result of a High Court order for a rerun at constituency 110 Western Area Urban. This election rerun was conducted but later cancelled due to the outbreak of political violence between supporters of the SLPP and APC. This constituency has remained unrepresented in Parliament for over a year now and the electorate has been endlessly calling for the conduct of this election which will restore their representative following the ousting of Hon. Kadijatu Davies Cole.

Again, the Leadership of Parliament converged at the Northern City of Port Loko. According to sources,

ernment Business Hon. Mathew S. Nyuma. He was unable to attend due to the holding of a retreat for the training of Committee Chairpersons. It was quite tiring, I am feeling pain all over my body but the exercise was unique.”

It was also during the period under review that some opposition Lawmakers reacted to the Government of Sierra Leone’s Commissions of Inquiry White Paper.

Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo Deputy Leader APC party said he would not celebrate because his name was let off the hook. This, Hon. Kargbo said is a result of the fact that the names of some members of his party, and the party itself being gravely tarnished.

Hon. Mohamed Bangura, APC, constituency 066 Karene District denied claims of false asset declaration adding that he will appeal his case. He confirmed that his bank account has been frozen and his name is also included on a travel ban. Same is the fate of the Hon. Ajibola Manley-Spaine a Member of the ECOWAS delegation, Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara, Hon. Amadu Kanu, all sitting opposition APC Lawmakers.

The Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, His Excellency Hon. Sidi Mohamed Tunis for the period under review, embarked on his first working tour in the sub-region, paying special attention to Guinean, Conakry and Mali.

The House is expected to reconvene in October 2020 after its recess. It is expected that the list of full re-composition of oversight committees will be announced, an action to be announced by the Leadership against the Hon. Hindolo M. Gavao Esq. for telling the BBC that MPs are corrupt, the tabling of a Special Investigation report on violence Makeni, findings on claims of corruption against MPs and Parliament to be tabled by a Special Select Committee chaired by the Hon. Musa Shaka Sama, Independent MP Pujehun District, Southern Sierra Leone.

The House is expected to also debate the 2018 Auditor General’s report, the tabling of rules and regulations for the ongoing Public Emergency due to COVID-19, a debate on the Cybercrimes bill, are all expected to be laid on the table of Parliament.

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this meeting was to provide training for all Committee Chairpersons. This comes after the temporary suspension of all Committee summoning of witnesses of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

On Saturday 10th October 2020, two MPs (Hon. Benjamin Turay and Hon. John T. Koroma) joined other groups of people and organizations to embark on the European Union (EU) sponsored ‘Beach Cleanup Event’ at the Aberdeen –Lumley Beach.

Hon. Benjamin Turay MP constituency 128, Western Area Urban, SLPP said that: “I was there representing the Leader of Gov-



The late Hon. Samuel G. Panda, MP Kenema District, Eastern Sierra Leone

## Parliamentary Practice & Procedures

# LAST WEEK IN GHANA'S PARLIAMENT

By: Benjamin Opoku Aryeh

Once again, the bells rung and gates opened to welcome Members to the Parliament of Ghana on Tuesday, 6 October, 2020 to conduct parliamentary business. This Third Meeting will be the final meeting of the Fourth Session of this Seventh Parliament until it is dissolved after the general elections in order for the newly elected MPs to form the new Parliament. The Speaker of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Prof. Mike Aeron Oquaye, welcomed MPs and called on them to endeavour to attend to the business of the House amidst the campaign season. The Majority and Minority Leaders, Mr. Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu and Mr. Haruna Idrissu respectively, in their welcome remarks also encouraged their colleagues to pay much attention to the business of the House even as they go about their campaigns. This Third Meeting is expected to travel about five weeks before the general elections.

Enthusiasm was however met with grief in the first week of Parliament sitting after a Member of Parliament (MP), Hon. Ekow Hayford (Mfantshipim) was murdered after a campaign in his constituency. The murder resurrected a longstanding debate concerning the security of MPs.

### Bills

The Judicial Service Bill, 2020, Council of State Bill, 2020, the Corporate Insolvency and Restructuring (Amendment) Bill, 2020 were laid on the floor and referred to their respective committees for their consideration and report to plenary.

On education, the University for Film, Journalism and Languages, Bill, 2020, Ghana National Research Fund Bill, 2019, and the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana Bill, 2020 were also presented and referred to the Education Committee for its consideration and report. The Complementary Education Agency Bill, 2019 was however taken through the consideration stage.

The Ghana Cocoa Board (Amend-

ment) Bill, 2017 was passed.

### Papers laid

The following papers were laid on the floor during the first week in the House.

The Court Regulations, 2020 was laid by the Attorney General, Supreme Court (Amendment) Rules, 2020, Court of Appeal (Amendment) Rules, 2020, High Court (Civil Procedure) (Amendment) Rules, 2020, District Court (Amendment) Rules, 2020, Legal Profession (Professional Conduct and Etiquette (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 were laid and referred to the Committee on Subsidiary Legislation for their consideration and report.

The Security sector had a number of papers laid including the Ghana Armed Forces (Amendment) Regulations, 2020, the Ghana Police Service (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 and the Ghana National Fire Service (General Administration) Regulations, 2020 was presented by the Ministers for Defence and Interior. The papers were all referred to the Subsidiary Legislation Committee for consideration and report.

On local government, the Local Government (Guan District Assembly) (Establishment) Instrument, 2020, Local Government (Jasikan District Assembly) (Establishment) Instrument, 2020, Local Government (Krachi West Municipal Assembly) (Establishment) Instrument, 2020, amongst others were presented before the House.

Hon. Majority Leader and Minister responsible for Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu laid the annual report of the Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) on the management and use of petroleum revenues for the period January to December 2019 which was referred to Finance Committee for consideration and report.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee, Dr Mark Assibey-Yeboah laid the Committee's reports on the Supplier's Credit Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Finance) and Messrs. Dongfang Electric International Corporation for an

amount of Two Hundred and Forty-Three Million, Six Hundred Thousand United States Dollars (US\$243,600,000.00) for the procurement of standard gauge rolling stock; and the EKN-Backed Facility Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Finance) and Standard Chartered Bank for an amount of One Hundred and Thirty-Eight Million, Two Hundred and Twenty-One Thousand, and Fifteen Euros and Sixty-Three Cents (€138,221,015.63 [including EKN insurance premium]) to finance the Sunyani Water Supply Expansion Project (Phase I).

The Deputy Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources presented to the House a request for waiver of Import Duties, Import VAT, GET-Fund Levy, NHIL, EXIM Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of Seven Million, Four Hundred and Forty-Four Thousand, Six Hundred and Ninety-Two United States Dollars and Sixty-Seven Cents (US\$7,444,692.67 [made up of US\$5,963,498.00 imports and US\$1,481,194.67 local purchases]) on materials, equipment, and services to be procured for the Construction, Supply and Installation of Educational Equipment and Training to Ten (10) Regional Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) Centres; and the OeKB-Backed loan facility agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Finance) and Commerzbank Aktiengesellschaft [with ECA premium support] for an amount up to Seventy Million,

Seven Hundred and Thirty-Three Thousand, Four Hundred and Twenty-Three Euros (€70,733,423.00) to finance the Sekondi-Takoradi Water Supply Rehabilitation and Expansion Project.

On behalf of the Minister for Finance, Dr. Anthony Akoto Osei presented the Financing Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana (represented by the Ministry of Finance) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for an amount of Twenty Million United States Dollars (US\$20.00million) to finance the implementation of the Emergency Support to Rural Livelihoods and Food Systems Exposed to COVID-19 (ESRF) which was referred to the Finance committee for consideration and report.

### Statement

MPs mourned the demise of Hon. Ekow Quansah Hayford who was killed in an attack after returning from a campaign in his constituency on Thursday 8 October 2020. This has resurrected the debate around the request for increased security protection by MPs.

### Committees

The Committee on Subsidiary Legislation met and considered the Draft Plants and Fertilizer (Aflatoxin Control in Grains) (Technical) Regulations, 2020.

### The Week Ahead

The House scheduled a number of bills to consider during the week.



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