



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**NGC ACCUSES DR. ABASS BUNDU, SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT, AIDING
AND ABETTING CORRUPTION IN PARLIAMENT**

Freetown, 14th January 2024 – The National Grand Coalition (NGC) is shocked and deeply concerned by the apparent lack of action by Dr Abass Bundu, the Speaker of Parliament, in response to the serious allegations of corruption and malpractice within the Sierra Leone Parliament. Specifically, the NGC accuses the Speaker of aiding and abetting corruption by failing to take decisive disciplinary action against Paran Tarawally, the Clerk of Parliament, charged with alleged corruption by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The NGC finds it appalling that despite the serious allegations against the Clerk of Parliament, no concrete steps have been taken by the Parliament's leadership to address the issue. This lack of action raises serious questions about the commitment of Parliament to uphold integrity, accountability, and transparency as a legislative organ of government.

This troubling development is not an isolated incident. In October 2020, this same Parliament, under the leadership of the current Speaker, immediately suspended two parliamentary whistleblowers, Hon. Hindolo Moiwo Gevao and Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, from Parliamentary Committee Proceedings following their interviews with the BBC and Radio Democracy. In those interviews, both members of Parliament raised concerns about corruption within the institution of Parliament. Instead of addressing these concerns, the leadership of Parliament referred to the allegations as unverified and sought to silence the voices of those speaking out against corruption.

The NGC believes these actions and inactions indicate a systemic problem within the Sierra Leone Parliament. It is troubling that individuals who raise legitimate concerns about corruption and malpractice within Parliament are subjected to punitive measures while those accused of actual wrongdoing are seemingly shielded from accountability.

The NGC calls on Dr Abass Bundu, as the Speaker of Parliament, to demonstrate decisive leadership and uphold the highest standards of integrity and accountability. Immediate, transparent, and impartial investigations into the allegations against the Clerk of Parliament must be conducted, and appropriate disciplinary actions, if warranted, should be taken.

NGC believes that corruption should be treated as a criminal offence. Part of the problem in our enforcement effort is the need for adequate, fair and consistent punitive measures proportional to the crime's nature, extent and monetary value.



Therefore, we strongly urge the Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone to revise its approach by discontinuing the practice of treating acts of corruption in Sierra Leone as a civil offence rather than a criminal offence. This practice allows individuals with unique connections and privileges to evade accountability for their crimes by simply paying fines without facing imprisonment. We firmly believe that effective anti-corruption enforcement requires certain acts of corruption, whether active or passive, in both the private and public sectors to be classified as criminal offences. This approach would ensure that individuals convicted of corruption, regardless of their wealth or connections, must serve a prison sentence commensurate with the severity of their crimes. Failing to implement stringent punitive measures as deterrents only perpetuates further corruption.

In conclusion, the NGC urges the Parliament to create an environment that encourages whistleblowers to come forward with concerns about corruption and malpractice without fear of reprisal. A truly transparent and accountable Parliament is essential for advancing democracy and good governance in Sierra Leone.

The NGC remains committed to working towards a Sierra Leone where transparency, integrity, and accountability are upheld at all levels of government, including the Parliament.

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End of Press Release.

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