



Budget Advocacy Network

“we believe in participation transparency & accountability”

Freetown –Sierra Leone
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THE INDEFINITE SUSPENSION OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL STILL REMAINS A VERY SERIOUS CONCERN FOR THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Budget Advocacy Network (BAN) is concerned about the government’s unmoved stance regarding the fringe position the Auditor-General and one of her deputies is in, following their suspension from office in November 2021. The deafening silence by the government on the issue is interpreted in many ways than one and is pointing mainly to the negatives for the reversal of the country’s progressive status on transparency and accountability issues.

The work of the now indefinitely suspended Auditor-General has helped in exposing public officials and institutions who are not following systems and procedures in terms of managing public resources. The Auditor-General and team has offered immense support to uncover corruption and mismanagement of public resources. This is evidenced in several Audit reports utilized in the last Commission of Inquiry.

We want to remind His Excellency and the Government of Sierra Leone of the 66th, United Nations General Assembly Resolution¹ adopted on strengthening the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs). The Resolution was specific about the independence of the SAIs being protected from the Executive who are the primary focus of its audits. The independence of the Supreme Audit institutions is necessary for good governance in any country including Sierra Leone. Furthermore, the Mexico and Lima declarations² on the SAIs adopted by the United Nations stated that the head of the SAI should be immune to any prosecution for any act, past or present that results from the normal discharge of their duties as the case may be. It further makes it clear that the SAIs should be free from direction or interference from the Legislature or the Executive in the selection of audit issues planning, conducting audits, organising and managing the audit office.

The Audit Service Sierra Leone has demonstrated over the years, high levels of financial probity and provided oversight on the use of public resources professionally. The work of the Auditor-General and team has been highly appreciated both nationally and internationally as is evident in the Open Budget Survey Report in which the Audit Service scored 72%.

Our position in calling on His Excellency President Bio to reverse the decision still stays the same based on those records of accomplishments which have seen the country improves in the

¹ https://www.eurosai.org/handle404?exporturi=/export/sites/eurosai/.content/documents/UN_Resolution.pdf

² https://www.intosai.org/fileadmin/downloads/documents/open_access/INT_P_1_u_P_10/INTOSAI_P_10_en_2019.pdf



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global ranking to win laurels. We continue to call for the reinstatement of the Auditor-General and one of her deputies. His Excellency still has the power to reverse the suspension and correct the seeming anomaly to defeat the very purpose for which the institution was established. Furthermore, we want to remind His Excellency of his Government’s commitment to protecting the independence of the Audit Service as is evident in the New Direction Manifesto. The prolonged suspension is not a popular action, and affects citizens’ perception on accountability especially at a time when Sierra Leone is making consistent progress in Control of Corruption indicator in the MCC Score Card.

We remain hopeful to see a comprehensive resolution of the current issue and see the Auditor-General and one of the deputies back to work.

End of Statement

About BAN

The Budget Advocacy Network is organized around the three principles of the budget process i.e., Participation, Transparency and Accountability. BAN is composed of local and international organizations such as the Christian Aid (CA), Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), Western Area Budget Education Advocacy Network (WABEAN), ActionAid Sierra Leone (AASL), Search for Common Grounds (SFCG) and Transparency International Sierra Leone (TISL).