



CITIZEN'S FORUM FOR DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY



We Aspire To Inspire And Empower

Add: 48 Siaka Stevens Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone Mob: +(232) 76 891538/31 891538/33 914853
Mob: +(232) 76 891538/31 891538/33 914853 | Email: marcusbangus.bangura@gmail.com | c4d840@gmail.com

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, 19th March, 2022

URGENT CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO CUT THE RECENT PRICE INCREMENT OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS IN SIERRA LEONE

Freetown, 18th March, 2022- In the service of democracy and good governance, Citizens Forum for Democratic Accountability (hereinafter referred to as C4D) is an independent entity that is committed to work with government to **improve democratic accountability, effective service delivery, respect for human rights and national cohesion through advocacy, monitoring and increase public awareness in the country**. The niche of C4D is democratic accountability by which we aspire, inspire and empower citizens to demand feedbacks and hold government, elected and public officials to account, so as to enable government promote better performance, combat corruption, create better policies, ensure effective service delivery, national cohesion; make elected officials accountable to their constituents and combat corruption and abuse of power.

In respect of the above, the attention of C4D is conspicuously drawn to the recent increment in the prices of petroleum products in the country by the government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) through the Petroleum Regulatory Agency (PRA) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry in collaboration with petroleum products distributors in the country. C4D wishes to draw your attention to the artificial scarcity of the commodity due to profiteering and hoarding by some unscrupulous fuel dealers at the expense of Sierra Leoneans, leading to long queues at petrol stations to date.

From the aforesaid, C4D is worried and frowns heavily at the decision of the government to perversely increase the prices of petroleum products without a speck of magnanimity to the poor people of Sierra Leone, the majority of whom lives below the poverty line, plagued with hardship and unemployment. It's incredible and heart rendering that the government can engender the Petroleum Regulatory Agency to

effect increment in the price of petroleum products twice in 17 days between 1st March and 17th March, 2022, that is from Le 10, 10000 to Le 12,000 and from 12,000 to Le 15,000 respectively. This suggests an increment of 50% in less than three weeks and 100% in four years.

In light of the above, C4D wants the government to note that, we are not oblivious of the current crisis in the Russo-Ukrainian War and its global impact on the prices of petroleum products. C4D is also aware of the argument advanced by the Petroleum Regulatory Agency in their effort to defend the increment in their **Press Release, dated 28th February and 16th March 2022**. However, C4D view the decision of the government to increase petroleum products as unjustifiable, inconsiderate and unacceptable at a time when the living conditions of ordinary Sierra Leoneans is appalling and families are struggling to make a living or survive. **With this standpoint, C4D is calling on the government to note the following:**

1. That the increment in the price of petroleum products is astronomical in cost despite the price of crude oil in the international scene.
2. That the increment in the price of petroleum products is an enormous burden to the already existing hardship experienced by Sierra Leoneans, compounded with the challenges of COVID-19 in the country.
3. That the increment has given rise to sheer exploitation and more suffering of Sierra Leoneans, especially to those who take home a minimum salary of Le, 600,000 per month.
4. That the increment is an additional burden that is hard to bite down and its therefore unbearable.
5. That the increment is affecting businesses in the country, especially those that depend heavily on petroleum products like fuel and diesel in the absence of electricity, which in turn affects the prices of goods and services in the country.
6. That the increment will cause an increase in inflation rate in the country which has the proclivity of deflating the economy.
7. That the cost of fuel is now higher than the minimum wage in the country. A pittance, unfit to match the increased prices of basic social amenities, such as foodstuffs, transport fares, goods and services in the country.
8. That the increment has led transport fares to double and routes shortened, forcing poor Sierra Leoneans who could not afford the unreasonable prices to trek to and from their places of work or businesses on daily basis.

C4D strongly believe that irrespective of the current global price increment on petroleum products due to the Russo-Ukrainian war and other factors, the government has the capacity to lower the prices of petroleum products in the country. With this view, C4D calls on the president and the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSLP):

1. To manage the crisis in the country by prompt review and cut down on the recent increment of petroleum products and other essential commodities, such as rice and cement among others, so as to salvage the burden of the suffering masses in the country.
2. To prioritize the wellbeing of the people rather than conniving with these importers to unscrupulously exploit the masses.
3. To invest in the importation, storage and distribution of petroleum products in the country
4. To construct storage facilities and procurements of Platts of refined petroleum products.
5. To increase the salary of workers as a way to improve the living conditions of Sierra Leoneans.
6. To review the prices of petroleum products on a monthly basis in accordance with the World market.
7. To review the transport fares and prevent drivers, who are of the habit of exploiting passengers with by increasing transport fares or make halfway stops instead of plying the roads from point to point as prescribed by the government.
8. To call on petroleum products dealers to open their stations and sell the commodity in order rather than creating panic as a result of long queues and the challenges in obtaining fuel.

Over and above, C4D is calling on the government to do the needful and cut down on the recent increment on petroleum products, announced by the Petroleum Regulatory Authority on 17th March, 2022. As a responsible government you have a duty to provide basic social amenities for your citizens at a reasonable cost, such as electricity, pipe borne water, education, housing, good roads, hospital and food security as well as economic activity to promote living standards among others. However, If the prices of petroleum products are left unabated, the suffering masses will hold the government to account through political accountability.

/Ends

Issued by: Citizens Forum for Democratic Accountability (C4D)

Contact: Marcus A. Bangura, Executive Director

Email: Marcusbangus.bangura@gmail.com

Mob: +23276891538 /+23231891538

