



# NATIONAL GRAND COALITION PARTY



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## FOUR YEARS OF HARDSHIP FOR THE POOR MAN IN SALONE

Exactly four years ago in the Republic of Sierra Leone, there was a peaceful transition from the All Peoples Congress regime to the Sierra Leone Peoples Party Government led by His Excellency Brig. Rtd. Julius Maada Bio. The destiny of the people changed hands and we all hoped that the newcomers who promised to take a new direction would lead us all to a “*betteh Salone*.”

We assumed that the first priority of the new regime on gaining power, if they were a responsible party, was to cater for the basic needs of the ordinary citizens; especially since J.J Saffa, the man who was to become the Minister of Finance and later Chief Minister had faithfully promised at campaign time that if elected, his party would resolve the *bread and butter issues*. The National Grand Coalition (NGC) therefore, assuming our responsibility as an opposition party, adopted a very simple way of monitoring the performance of the newcomers. We systematically recorded the prices of basic food items in the market that every family needs to survive since March 2018.

The report we present today to commemorate the Paopa regime’s fourth year in office is the eighth such report since we started in 2018. Paopanistas initially ridiculed this exercise, called us the idle party that goes to markets. But here we are today with another snapshot of the way this regime has impoverished our people, another report card for the “talk and do”. Please read it well and see for yourselves.

Everything has increased since 2018; today the lowest increase recorded is the price of a bag of rice, Le 430,000 or 83% increase although a cup of rice has increased by 150% at Le 3,000 per cup. Note that these prices are from markets in Freetown and can be higher in the provinces (a cup of rice now costs Le 5,000 in Jendema). Interestingly but not surprisingly, the highest



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increases are on locally produced items such as dry bonga fish (1100% increase), tie plassas (700% increase), pepper by cup (757% increase). It is not surprising because the local producers, the fisherman, plassas and pepper grower need money to buy other things that have also become expensive.

Our chop money budget, that is the estimate of the prices of items needed by a family of four persons (papa, mama and two kids) to prepare their daily meal, stands today at Le 82,500. This means that for a low-income family that depends on one person earning the minimum wage of Le 600,000, if they spend all the money on preparing food, that family will eat for only four days. This is the reality of the ordinary man. No explanation about high world prices for fuel or COVID or Ukraine, can convince a man whose salary lasts only four days on just food. If he can no longer feed his family for twenty-six days in a month, pay his rent, send his children everyday to school or buy top up, but hears that one Big Man in his country is ready to pay two billion leones in a church as bus fare to go to heaven, he is bound to be angry!

This Government cannot blame the opposition for their failure. By their ineptitude and arrogance they are very successful in campaigning against themselves. They refused to take us seriously when we told them to address the issue of hardship as a matter of urgency. Instead of doing something about it, they sent people on radio and television to defend, refute and explain. Now even the Minister of Information has run out of explanations and disappeared, leaving their *strategic vuvuzelas* to embarrass themselves. Four years have gone by and sweet nothing to show. This morning, when one would have expected Paopa to be celebrating their fourth anniversary, guess what?, AYV and Radio Democracy 98.1 went off the air. Nothing to talk about. Shame! And yet, they want more time. FOR WHAT???