



Press Release

3rd April 2024

CSOs Demand Swift Judgment Following Conclusion of Auditor General's Tribunal

Three months following the conclusion of the tribunal, which was set up to investigate the Auditor-General and one of her Deputies, civil society organizations (CSOs) are urgently calling for the tribunal's decision to be delivered as Sierra Leoneans are anxiously awaiting the outcome of the legal proceedings.

We, the undersigned organizations, including the Budget Advocacy Network, the 50/50 Group, the Institute for Legal Research and Advocacy for Justice (ILRAJ), and the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), join together in urging the Tribunal to fulfil its duty and provide its decision, as the matter has been concluded and awaiting a decision since December 22nd, 2023.

Lara Taylor-Pearce (Auditor General) and Tamba Momoh (Deputy Auditor General) were suspended in early November 2021 on allegations of **'professional misconduct'**. The tribunal reviewed charges around **'breach of confidentiality and professional misconduct'** relating to the contact of a third party **'without the client's expressed permission (Office of the President)'**. The specific concern was that **'the Auditor General contacted a hotel in Lebanon to confirm the authenticity of a receipt that was submitted for audit without the expressed permission of the Office of the President'**.

Section 23(6) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6 of 1991, stipulates that judgment should be delivered in criminal cases within three months after trial. While this is not a criminal case, the expectation of timely justice remains paramount. The prolonged delay in delivering judgment on this matter is of grave concern to CSOs, media, and citizens alike. Any further delay risks undermining the pursuit of justice and accountability.

"Justice delayed is justice denied. In this case, the outcome holds significant implications for accountability and transparency in Sierra Leone," emphasizes Abu A. Brima, Executive Committee Chairman of the Budget Advocacy Network.

Therefore, we urge the Tribunal to expedite the delivery of judgment on the concluded tribunal without further delay. The integrity of our legal system and the principles of accountability and transparency depend on it.

End of statement

About BAN

BAN is composed of local and international organizations such as Christian Aid Sierra Leone (CASL), Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), Western Area Budget Education Advocacy Network (WABEAN), ActionAid Sierra Leone (AASL), Talking Drum Studio (TDS) and Transparency International Sierra Leone (TISL).

About the 50/50 Group

The 50/50 Group Sierra Leone is a non-partisan organization advocating for equal rights and political participation of women in Sierra Leone.

About the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)

The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) is the umbrella membership body for the media in Sierra Leone established to protect and promote free speech and a free press and hold public officials accountable.

About Institute for Legal Research and Advocacy for Justice (ILRAJ)

ILRAJ is an independent non-partisan public policy research and educational think tank established to explain, monitor and contribute to the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

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