

SIERRA LEONE PEOPLE'S PARTY



ONE COUNTRY ONE PEOPLE

PRESS RELEASE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE OF THE SLPP ON THE RULING OF THE ECOWAS COURT ON THE SAM SUMANA CASE

FREETOWN, 27TH November 2017: In my capacity as the Presidential Candidate of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), I wish to inform the membership of the Party and the general public at large that my attention has been drawn to the Ruling rendered today by the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in favour of Vice-President Alhaji Sam Sumana. The ECOWAS Court ruled that the removal of Vice-President Alhaji Sam Sumana from office by President Ernest Bai Koroma in 2015 was wrongful and that as such it clearly violated his fundamental human rights to fair hearing and to freely participate in the politics of his country; rights guaranteed by the African Charter on Human Rights, the Revised ECOWAS Treaty, the Protocol establishing the ECOWAS Court and several other international conventions on human rights to all of which Sierra Leone is a signatory.

In this regard, I would like to recall my earlier statement in 2015 in which I unreservedly condemned the arbitrary removal of Vice-President Sam Sumana by President Koroma as wrongful, unconstitutional and unacceptable. Despite this I expressed respect for the judgement of the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone based on my conviction that respect for the Rule of Law as interpreted by the Superior Courts is always paramount. By the same token, that judgement of the Sierra Leone Supreme Court, now having been overturned by the Ruling of the ECOWAS Regional Court, the Protocol for the establishment of which Sierra Leone was a notable signatory, and remaining faithful to my abiding and unflinching commitment to the Rule of Law as a fundamental principle of State governance, I want it to be known that I fully respect the Ruling of the ECOWAS Regional Court.

The citizens of Sierra Leone cannot easily forget two very recent instructive precedents involving the Government of President Ernest Bai Koroma and the ECOWAS Regional Court, namely the Wansa and Tayyib Bah Cases again decided by the same Regional Court: the first dealt with the payment by the Government of the colossal sum of US\$25 million for a non-existent gun-boat and the second the payment of damages amounting to US\$250,000. If indeed those two payments by the Government were driven wholly and solely by the imperative of fulfilling the international legal obligations of the State of Sierra Leone as determined by the ECOWAS Regional Court, it can hardly be gainsaid that the same powerful considerations more than demand the same Government to respect and honour the ruling of the same Court in the instant case. Accordingly I will not hesitate for a moment to implore and exhort the Government of

President Ernest Bai Koroma to swiftly and diligently accept and honour the Ruling of the ECOWAS Regional Court in respect of its wrongful removal from office of the elected Vice-President Alhaji Sam Sumana. Consistency in respecting the Rule of Law by the Government of a country is as important a virtue as upholding and defending the honour and dignity of its sovereignty. By its conspicuous failure to appear before the ECOWAS Regional Court and enter a defence in each of these three cases, the Government of President Ernest Bai Koroma singularly failed in the discharge of its international legal duty to defend the honour and integrity of the sovereignty of Sierra Leone, to say nothing about the dereliction of duty by the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice as the principal legal adviser to the Government.

Finally, let me conclude this Statement with a solemn pledge to this nation once again. Under my tenure as President of the Republic after the Elections of March 2018 I shall ensure that the Rule of Law shall reign supreme and to this end the Judiciary in Sierra Leone shall be enabled to be supremely independent of legislative and executive interference so that it can truly and faithfully exercise and discharge its powers and functions subject to control and direction from no one but subject only to the terms of the extant Constitution as the supreme law of the land. This is a solemn promise I want to make today to the entire citizenry of our dear country.

ONE COUNTRY ONE PEOPLE!

Signed:.....

Brig. (Rtd.) Julius Maada Bio

Presidential Candidate of the SLPP for the 2018 Elections

