



CAMPAIGN FOR NATIONAL UNITY – SIERRA LEONE (CNU-SL)

Every Sierra Leonean Matters, One Nation, one Sierra Leone

DATE: 20 March 2015

LIVING UNDER THE THREAT OF EBOLA AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF SACKING THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE BY THE PRESIDENT

STATEMENT

From Jonathan Sandy (JPJ)

On behalf of the Campaign for National Unity – Sierra Leone (CNU-SL):

Fellow Citizen's, you may probably be wondering why I have suddenly decided to speak out from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the official headquarters of the African Union.

I have decided to do so, to inspire you, and to give you hope for the future, especially at a time like this, when our President, Ernest B. Koroma, on Wednesday, 18th March, 2015, suddenly announced that he has fired our democratically elected Vice President, His Excellency, Alhaji Samuel Sam Sumana, and replaced him on, Thursday, 19th, with Ambassador Victor Bockarie Foh who has not been elected.

Indeed, listening to, and reading from various international mass media channels, national and local radio/TV stations, and social media platforms, I can sense and feel how the majority of us are disturbed, frustrated and disappointed that, once again, our country is at a critical juncture in its political and democratic transformation process.

Certainly, the executive decision by the President, backed by his ruling party, the All Peoples Congress (APC) to sack our democratically elected vice president, poses a number of threats to the political, social and economic stability of our nation. Such an act clearly demonstrates the inability of our current political leadership, whether at the executive and legislative arms of government, to uphold the fundamental principles of the supreme rule of law of our nation, our national constitution.

This act, coupled with the persistent threat of EBOLA we are experiencing now, illustrates that we are in one of the worst years in memory, since the end of the 11 years of civil war in 2002. We have lost over 3691 of our citizens, our schools and tertiary institutions and public service facilities remain closed or restricted, our economic activities - agriculture, farming, fishing, mining sectors, petty trading, small to medium term micro enterprises, the mainstays of our survival, are at a standstill; our quest to contribute to international peace and security efforts on the African continent and beyond is in shutdown; and the situation has caused critical damage to our reputation, our national identity and core values as well as our image on an international stage.

As Principal Founder and chairman of the Campaign for National Unity - Sierra Leone, a student, grassroots and youth voluntary movement, with membership at home and abroad, it is with regret that I

see the current political development as an action which will continue to further disrupt our nation at a time of fragility, particularly when the image we present to the international community is of great importance to our survival as a nation state in a world of interdependency.

Hence, fellow citizens, before I proceed with any further comments and observations, let me quickly say this - do not worry, the national elections are just around the corner. I hope that when we have our local Government Elections next year, in 2016, and select our leaders to run for parliamentary and presidential elections in 2017, that we choose, as a nation, politicians who can commit themselves to securing our common future, including ability and skills to deal with internal threats such as political wrangling and instability at the highest level of state governance; people who can protect us from global health crises such as EBOLA, internal violent conflict, rebel movements, terrorism and transnational organized crime and bad governance; people who can put our country before themselves and the people of Sierra Leone above political party politics and interests.

On the economy; we have already had, over the past year, companies pull out of our country, such as London Mining, costing many thousands of our countrymen and women their jobs, and hurting their families. Rightfully, as a country, we feel pain that this has happened.

And for international businesses; many of whom I talk to regularly across Africa and the world, do not feel they can work in a country that cannot give them a safe, stable, and secure political environment. Above all, they say to me, that our country, within its highest levels of leadership, does not seem to be adhering to the Rule of Law, which is a primary requirement for attracting substantial private sector investment. Hence, the consequences of these new political developments, will make attracting back foreign direct investment, jobs we have lost, and creating new jobs for our vulnerable population: the youth, women, and young graduates much harder.

Fellow citizens, we have suffered and continue to suffer, as I have also seen across Africa and indeed the world, from politicians who put personal interest, and party interest, before the interests of the people who elected them. At this time, splits between our elected leaders, at the highest levels, on top of everything else we have endured, is, clearly, not in the interests of Sierra Leone. Now is a time for our political leaders to demonstrate their dedication to see a unified Sierra Leone, to pull together for our country, not a time to pull it apart.

Again, let me remind our President, your excellency, Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, that you are the democratically elected President of our nation, the whole country, not just your party and not just for the people who voted for you. As one of your sincere and objective compatriots, let me say this to you, honestly, it is the place of the people of Sierra Leone to sack and elect their Vice President (VP), should they choose, through either due process of the law, based on constitutional provisions, or a fair and transparent electoral process. It is not for you, our democratically elected, President, to do so on a personal whim. Much like you, as our President, the Vice President, who was, and remains, elected through democratic means, should be accountable to the people, and no-one else.

Hence, this single act continues to demonstrate that we are being badly served at home, by politicians taking away our democratic right to elect and fire our leaders, into their own hands and away from ours, such as our Vice President (VP).

Mr. President, if you cannot trust your own Vice President, after working together for nearly eight (8) years in the presidency, and fail to hold your own government together and accountable, how can we, the

people, be expected to trust and believe that you can hold our country together at this time of a persistent EBOLA crisis? This is a time, after our civil war, and as the threat of Ebola persist, that the government needs to nurture the trust and confidence of the people, to rule with the consent of the people, not *over* the people.

Mr. President, your excellency, you need to help us dedicate ourselves to the attainment of national cohesion, reconciliation and unity amongst all political parties, ethnic groups and regions in Sierra Leone, as inspiration for collective actions aimed at socio-economic prosperity for all, and generations yet unborn.

To my fellow citizens of Sierra Leone, as we march into the future, and setting our post-millennium development goals, it is clear that we can no longer afford politicians with their own agenda; we can no longer respect any of our political leaders who do not want to respect the rights of the people based on the rule of law and constitutionalism.

Hence, let me conclude my statement, by once more asking you for a simple favour, that when you vote next year, 2016 for local elections, and in 2017 for Parliamentary and Presidential Elections, I ask you this:

1. Please vote not on purely political party affiliation, tribal lines or region of origin; nor for people who can help you, and you alone.
2. Please, vote for people who can help us reduce threats to our constitution, democracy and the rule of law; vote for people who can secure our common future, our dignity and economy prosperity;
3. Please vote for people who can help us reduce the risks of doing business in Sierra Leone;
4. Please vote for people who can help us rebuild public trust in our democratic institutions, whether at the local governance(Local Councils) or central governance level (Parliament and Presidential);
5. Please vote for people who can serve us all, and keep to the true spirit of our national constitution, Justice system and the rule of law, and finally,
6. Please vote for politicians who can help us grow and become stronger; as a united country and people;

Let me end with the motto of our Campaign for National Unity: “ *Every Sierra Leonean Matters, One Nation, one Sierra Leone,*”

May God Almighty bless us all as we struggle to sustain the true values of democracy and the rule of law, in our beloved country, Mama Salone.