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Inner Chambers,
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20th May, 2024.

Madam Edinia Swallow Sandy,
President,
Sierra Leone Bar Association,
Sierra Leone Special Court,
New England,
Freetown.

Dear Madam President,

RE: FRAUDULENT AND SHAM ELECTIONS HELD BY THE SIERRA LEONE BAR ASSOCIATION ON THE 18TH DAY OF MAY, 2024 IN KENEMA, SIERRA LEONE

I write as a paid up member of the Sierra Leone Bar Association (SLBA) to express and register my profound dismay and outright abhorrence and condemnation of the blatant rigging of elections of officers of the executive of the SLBA held on the 18th day of May, 2024. Should I keep back my views at such a time on this solemn and serious subject, myself conscience shall hold me prisoner of a resulting guilt, of an act of disloyalty to the SLBA and the profession we all cherish so dearly.

Just about a week ago, to the rank and file of Lawyers, all roads led to Kenema, in the wake of weeks of campaigns by various candidates, for positions of officers of the Association. However, from the outset, it was crystal clear that a certain group of persons, abetted by your executive was bent on determining the outcome of the elections irrespective of the desires or yearnings of the majority. It was against that backdrop that by a social media message, I warned members of the Bar as follows: *"The different campaigns have created an election hysteria within Sierra Leone's Association of Lawyers; there have been open exchanges between and amongst colleagues in favour and against the various Presidential Candidates. It seems like a make or break for the Association that represents a conglomeration of Sierra Leone's Legal Minds. It is therefore hoped that the outcome of the elections be a reflection of the aims, aspirations and ballots of the many and not the resulting effect of the manipulative endeavours by a few against the many or else the centre shall rent apart, necessitating an assemblage of the many under a different name for similar purposes, thus causing harm and loss of stamina and image to what has been one of Sierra Leone's oldest and most revered pressure groups".* It is very clear today that my greatest fear was demonstrated by only a few who thought that manipulating the system to get their candidates elected was the only way to hijack the Bar Association with all of us as hostages on-board.

The Annual General Meeting (Biennial)?, held in Kenema on the 17th Day of May, 2024 could only be best described as a parody of what we know and have over the years accepted as the August Gathering of the Legal Minds of Sierra Leone, same being the Sierra Leone Bar Association, a Company Limited by Guarantee. The said meeting had an agenda which

clearly stated the procedural steps and running order of the conference. What was of huge interest to all, was the election of officers to be known as the executive of the Bar Association, slated as item No. 8 of the agenda of the final day of the conference on the 18th day of May 2024, scheduled to commence at 1:00 P.M.

On Saturday 18th May 2024, prior to the time listed for the start of the conference, it became apparent that some other colleagues, outside the incumbent executive had bestowed upon themselves the rights and responsibilities of presiding over the final day of the 2024 Bar Association General Meeting; things turned obvious when the present Anti-Corruption Commissioner of the Republic of Sierra Leone, in the person of Francis Ben Kaifala, yanked the microphone from the present Chairman of the General Legal Counsel of Sierra Leone, Sulaiman Banja Tejan Sie, the latter had barely uttered a complete sentence before the microphone was snatched from him, however, it was gathered from the few words he had uttered that he was not in league with the seeming usurpation of authority by Ben Kaifala and others as unfolded in the presence of us present. As if acting a role from a drama script, Mr Kaifala called the meeting to order and moved a motion that the long circulated agenda for Saturday 18th May 2024, be adjusted with particularly the election of executive members be dislodged from Item No. 8 and installed as Item No. 2.

Madam President, those actions as stated in the preceding paragraph took place in your absence, a fact you corroborated in a video whilst talking to some other colleagues within the precincts of the hall in Kenema on the 18th May 2024, sometime after the meeting had dispersed in disarray. It is clear by the Memorandum of Association that created our company as to who is responsible for what at the General Meeting of the Sierra Leone Bar Association and it is clear that your terms of reference as stated therein, stipulates what your responsibilities were at such a meeting, the fact that you did not abdicate or abrogated those responsibilities does mean that it was within your purview and thus incumbent upon you to have declared invalid and of no moment, whatever actions had taken place in your absence or risk it being naturally viewed that you were in cahoots with the caboodle that upstaged and seemingly wrestled you and your executive from your vested powers on that dull day in the history of the Sierra Leone Bar Association.

Madam President, you may have heard that happenings in your absence at the General Meeting of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, on 18th May 2024, included occurrences that took our Bar Association to a new low. The imposers and impostors attempted to conduct an election of executive members which turned out to be a disaster, everything was wrong, from their failure to ensure that positions were declared vacant, to ensuring that there was a comprehensive voters list of members in good standing, and the cavalier attitude with which voting slips were distributed. It may interest you to know, that means of identification turned surreptitious, with a notorious blue wrist-band seemingly meeting the preference and pleasure of the Anti-Corruption Commissioner, Francis Ben Kaifala whom, it appeared, was meticulously scanning the wrists of voters before issuing voting slips as he posed as the Sole SLBA Electoral Commissioner of 2024.

Madam President, as you are aware, we are a group of lawyers, from time to time, we take up matters of national interest, matters akin to upholding the tenets of democracy, good governance and human rights, matters that sustain fair-weather for free, fair and credible elections at all levels. In the past decades, as an association, we have won accolades and the veneration and admiration of many, at home and abroad for our maintenance of high ideals and ethical standards in our undertakings. The Bar Association I know, has never turned a

blind eye, not with the authoritarian attempts of Prime Minister Sir Albert Margai from 1964-1967 or the Dictatorial tendencies of President Siaka Stevens or the lethargic attitude of President Momoh. Ours, is the Bar Association that stood its ground against the Megalomaniac tendencies of Colonel Andrew Juxon-Smith between 1967 and 1968 and the association that restlessly agitated for the return to civilian government from the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) in 1992-1996; it is the same Bar Association that refused to recognise Major Johnny Paul Koroma as Head of State of Sierra Leone, from May 1997 to February 1998 and stood up against the unprecedented sacking of the Vice President of Sierra Leone (Samuel Sam-Sumana) in March 2015 and all other unprocedural and undemocratic actions in the recent past.

It is because of the reasons as stated and many more, that we have attracted regards and respect within and outside Sierra Leone and have maintained a top-spot amongst national and international pressure groups. However, after what happened in Kenema on the 18th Day of May 2024, which could be best described as acts lacking the candour, tenets of democracy, decency, decorum and dignity and an election that featured blatant disregard for due process and daylight robbery as demonstrated in open disenfranchisement of qualified colleague voters, where ballot slips were issued in exchange for clandestine signs and gestures and where the majority got kicked to the curb by the minority, we now stand at a cliff, where, failure to act and publicly decry the charade perpetrated upon us and passed-off as SLBA 2024 Election will only reverse all gains made over the decades and an eventual tumble, downhill.

Madam President, I here this day, unequivocally assure you, that the elections attempted in Kenema on 18th May, 2024, were fraudulent, shameful and a sham and must not be made to stand, lest we all fall. In fact, without your good self being present at the hall, in the absence of the usual reports of the incumbent executive and the declaration of vacant positions for which elections would have been warranted, no verified voters' list there was no election. I therefore call on you to take steps towards the nullification of that nightmare called an SLBA Election of 18th May 2024. I also implore you, to and as soon as possible, convene another meeting of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, where, we shall use the usual stipulated, dignified and dignifying procedures and processes to elect officers that shall be in charge of the affairs of our highly regarded Sierra Leone Bar Association (SLBA). I also wish to assure you, that singular though my views and opinions may be seen, as expressed in this letter, I echo the displeasure and discomfiture of the majority of the members of the Bar Association. A quick poll will prove me right.

Finally, I wish to remind you, that the Sierra Leone Bar Association (SLBA) is a voluntary membership organisation thus not mandatory for Lawyers to belong to. If you do not reverse this anomaly, many may be forced to decamp as they would not have an executive imposed upon them by power and by force.

Sincerely yours,



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1. The Chief Justice
2. The Minister of Justice and Attorney General
3. Members of the Sierra Leone Bar Association