

SLPP matter in Kenema... Prosecution closes case

Written by Expotimes
Sunday, 21 February 2016 16:41

The Prosecution has closed its case in the ongoing matter involving 15 SLPP supporters and a Human Rights Commission staff standing trial before Magistrate Alhaji Koroma in Kenema. The 13 are standing trial in the Kenema Magistrate Court after they were arrested on Independence Day in 2015 on allegations of illegal gathering, riotous conduct, incitement, conspiracy and other related matters. The Human Rights Commission staff faced his arrest after it was alleged by police witnesses that he interfered with their work when they were locking up the SLPP demonstrators by stating that it was the democratic right of the demonstrators to express their will.

They were charged on 11 counts but on Wednesday 10th

February, Principal State Counsel Monfred Sesay told the court that he was applying to amend the information and drop count 5 which was an offence charged under the Public Emergency Regulation.

In all, 20 Prosecution witnesses testified and all of them, Police officers. They were also cross examined by the Defence lawyers led by Editayo Pabs Garnon, A.M Bangura, Paul Squire and Alex Bonapha and P.I Bangura. Testifying in court, the 8th Prosecution witness- PC Lansana Kebbie 10437 told the court he recalled on Monday 27 April 2015 when he was detailed at the lock up with other officers. He continued that they heard that some SLPP supporters were rioting at their party office on Hangha road which led to the arrest of 15 of them and later a senior human rights officer working for the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone who had intervened against the arrest of the supporters.

The witness further testified that the Human Rights Commission staff told them they had no right to arrest the demonstrators as it was their constitutional right. When crossed examined by Defence Counsel

A M Bangura whether he knew the work of the Human Rights Commission staff, the witness answered in the negative.

In the same vein, PW10 and PW11 gave collaborative account of the incident that led to the arrest of the 2nd accused- Dawson Kuyateh and 3rd accused, Ella Goba who is the female young generation leader for the SLPP. They recounted that the two had gone to the office of AIG Karrow Kamara to demand the release of the arrested unconditionally. It was then that they said the accused persons referred to the AIG as 'stupid APC Police officer that is always bias against the SLPP in Kenema.

SLPP matter in Kenema... Prosecution closes case

Written by Expotimes

Sunday, 21 February 2016 16:41

The matter was adjourned to March 18 when it is expected the Defence will start their own case.

When Sierra Leone faced the Human Rights Council during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Japan strongly recommended that the State should take prompt action to prevent harassment by police officers of members of the National Human Rights Commission, human rights defenders and citizens.

Also Czech Republic recommended that Government should take concrete steps to ensure the full enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression for all, including journalists and human rights defenders, and strengthen protection of journalist and human rights defenders against harassment and persecution.

United Kingdom and Northern Ireland also urged the State to uphold the right to freedom of expression, including journalists and human rights defenders, in particular taking steps to ensure that defamation charges are not used to undermine the right to freedom of expression.