

Announcement
Sitting of Thursday 13 July 2023

Hon. Members

I have an announcement to make regarding the admissibility of questions which are being widely reported in the media.

Such press articles are tantamount to casting doubts on the manner in which Parliamentary Questions are processed by the office of the Clerk and disallowed, if any, by the Speaker pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Standing Orders with which Hon. Members are expected to be fully conversant.

I wish to once again draw the attention of Hon. Members that admissibility of a Parliamentary Question rests with the Speaker and any question which has been disallowed pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 27, representations to that effect by a Hon. Member has to be made to the Speaker in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 21(4).

However, Hon. Members have chosen to adopt a new modus operandi of bringing into public domain issues between the office of the Clerk without making any representation to the Speaker well before Parliamentary Questions for a sitting are rendered public, that is, on Friday afternoon.

I am of the view that such behaviour from Hon. Members is most regrettable and brings Parliament into disrepute by giving the wrong impression through their unbecoming attitude.

Hon. Members

My attention has also been drawn to a press article which appeared in l'Express of today whereby it has been reported that Hon. Joanna Bérenger who is presently suspended from the service of the Assembly since 04 July for the next ensuing two sittings has complained that her PQs sent to the office of the Clerk have been refused.

Hon. Members

I wish to remind Hon. Members that Members under suspension are debarred from tabling any Parliamentary Question and motion in line with the practice and procedure which obtains in the UK House of Commons and the only exception under Standing Order 49(5) is that they are allowed to serve on any committee to which they have been appointed before their suspension.

The Hon. Joanna Bérenger is also reported to have stated in the said article that her Parliamentary Questions for the sitting of Tuesday 13 June 2023 were in fact received by the office of the Clerk on Wednesday 07 June 2023 whilst she was under suspension.

Hon. Members,

With regard to the sitting of Tuesday 13 June 2023, the issue of entertaining her Parliamentary Questions does not arise as the House was sitting in the Committee of Supply for the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure of the Appropriation Bill and pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 24(3)(c), Notice of Questions, including Private Notice Questions, are not entertained on such a day.

In the light of the above, Hon. Members are requested to stand guided accordingly.

I rely on the cooperation of Hon. Members and the press to elucidate the matter.

I thank you.
