

WEDNESDAY, 28 MARCH, 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ANNUAL RETURNS OF SOCIETIES

The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr Kampyongo)

Madam Speaker, I want to sincerely thank you for according me this opportunity to issue a ministerial statement on the obligation by all registered societies to file annual returns in accordance with the law. The Societies Act, Chapter 119 of the Laws of Zambia provides for the registration and deregistration of societies.

Madam Speaker, currently, there are over 25,000 registered societies which are expected to file annual returns with the Registrar of Societies. These registered societies include women clubs, youth clubs, farmers' clubs, cultural groups, associations, community service societies, political parties and religious bodies, among others.

Madam Speaker, it is of great concern that the majority of these registered societies are not complying with the requirement of filling in returns. In this regard, my ministry issued a press statement in which amnesty was given to all defaulting societies to reactivate their registration by remitting the sum of K100 for each year defaulted without any penalties. This amnesty is aimed at ensuring that all registered societies are captured on the societies registration system for better management and coordination. Further, the amnesty will help clean the register by ensuring that non-complying societies are deregistered. The period of the amnesty is with effect from 13th February, 2018, to 30th April, 2018.

Madam Speaker, since the amnesty was issued, it is encouraging to note that some defaulting societies are coming forward to inquire the status of their registration. However, I am concerned that the number of defaulting societies that have so far normalised their registration status is less than 1 per cent. This is undesirable and considering that the amnesty period is now over a month since it took effect, we expect a little bit more.

Madam Speaker, I, therefore, wish to appeal through this august House, to the nation and indeed to my fellow parliamentarians, whom I believe are custodians of these societies in their various

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constituencies, to disseminate this information to the general public and encourage them to visit the registration offices in their respective districts to file in annual returns and settle their dues.

Madam Speaker, to all registered societies and their branches, I would like to urge them to take advantage of the amnesty and normalise their registration by 30th April, 2018. All defaulting societies that will fail to meet the deadline will be regarded as inactive and risk being deregistered. After 30th April, 2018, defaulting societies will only have an option to pay a penalty fee of K6,000 in order to reactivate their registration status.

Madam Speaker, in the same vein, I wish to warn all those societies, including the one that hon. Members opposite me belong to, operating illegally that the long arm of the law will catch up with them. Let me urge such type of societies that are operating illegally to register with the Registrar of Societies in accordance with Section 6 of the Societies Act, Chapter 119 of the Laws of Zambia.

Finally, let me appeal to hon. Members of Parliament to remind all registered societies, including those they belong to, in our respective constituencies that it is the responsibility of each and every society to always ensure they file in annual returns in time as required by law. This will not only accord all registered societies to be up to date with annual returns, but will also enhance effective management and coordination of societies by my ministry.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.