

# The Judiciary

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## Prolonged pretrial detention is wrong, Chief Justice warns



CHIEF JUSTICE KORKPOR SPEAKING AT THE PROGRAM

The Liberian Judiciary, like local and international organizations operating in the country, as well as friendly governments with embassies near our capital, has expressed grave concern about the growing number of pretrial detainees in prisons across the country.

SEE PAGE 6

## Justice Ja'neh calls for law reform, says old laws are undemocratic

Associate Justice Kabineh M. Ja'neh has called on civil and political organizations in Liberia to initiate what he calls "a vigorous dialogue and working relationship" with national stakeholders to begin a sustained reform of Liberian laws.

Justice Ja'neh said the request for the reorganization of Liberian laws to reflect current day realities is aimed at strengthening the rule of law and democratic governance in Liberia.

Associate Justice Ja'neh made the call at the opening of the fifth Young Political Leadership School organized by the National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections, NAYMOTE, for young and aspiring leaders under the theme: "Adherence to the Rule of Law: A foundation to a Sustainable Democracy in Liberia".

Defining rule of law in simple terms, Justice Ja'neh

said the phrase meant that "the law is the ruler of the community and all persons and institutions operating in that society." In practical terms, the Associate Justice added, "Rule of law means that our individual and collective conduct is directed and regulated by the law. It means all persons and institutions in the society submit to the law. This includes those who serve as guardians, interpreters and enforcers of the laws."

On the contrary, Associate Justice Ja'neh warned that history has shown that disrespect for law lands countries in chaos and anarchy. "This is the reason why legal experts believe that 'Where law ends, tyranny begins.'"

Adherence to the "Rule of Law," on the other hand, Associate Justice Ja'neh stated means application of the law by the enforcement authority even handedly and that those in authority, the powerful and well

SEE PAGE 6



Associate Justice Kabineh M. Ja'neh

# From The Courts



## JUDGES VOW SPEEDY DISPOSITION OF CASES TO MAINTAIN PEACE

The Civil Law Court at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia opened for its June Term A.D. 2018, on Monday June 18, 2018 - same being the third Monday in June - in keeping with law. Delivering the joint charge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court, Montserrado County, Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay promised to prioritize the speedy and timely disposition of cases this term of court. Judge Gbeisay urged lawyers to cooperate with the court, as the court would do all within its powers to ensure that cases are assigned in a timely manner and trials are had speedily. The Circuit Judge is at the same time calling on lawyers to desist from making excuses not to appear in court when a case is assigned. Judge Gbeisay advised the lawyers to consider revisiting rule 11 of the court rules to govern their professional behavior before the court. If this is done, he emphasized, most of the cases that are before the court will not be there, but the court would rather deal with debatable matters before it. "The role of the courts is to make peace within the society by making better decisions," Judge Gbeisay told the gathering of lawyer, prospective jurors, law school students, journalists and the public. "This can be done



when lawyers do everything humanly possible to make sure cases on the dockets are reduced by cooperating with the courts." Speaking further, the Assigned Judge of

the Civil Law Court called on the leadership of the Liberia National Bar Association, LNBA, to plan in advance and publish activities of the association as a way of giving judges, who are also members of the LNBA, sufficient notice and afford them the opportunity to assign cases on dates that will not coincide with the BAR's activities. His special focus was on jury cases, because according to him, the time allotted for jury trials are in most instances limited. Judge Gbeisay further appealed to the National Bar Association to conduct periodic workshops on "Legal Ethics" in consultation with the Supreme Court as well as Attorneys-at-Law. Judge Gbeisay frowned on single lawyers operating law firms stating that those in the habit should desist from the act as it is causing embarrassment to the court and the judicial system. "These and so many other factors are tying down the legal proceedings and lawyers need to stop." He said. Another issue of concern Judge Gbeisay commented on in the joint charge was the enforcement of court judgments which, he said, lies within the purview of the Executive Branch of Government. According to the learned Judge, known for coming to court on time and nicknamed "no nonsense judge", the Justice Ministry has the statutory responsibility to enforce court judgments through the police and sheriffs at the courts. But their failure to do so is responsible for the lack of enforcement of most court decisions.

## To strengthen jury service, Judiciary holds training for gov't HRs, Directors

The Liberian Judiciary, through its Jury Management Office, on 27 April 2018, concluded a day long workshop for senior employees of government ministries and agencies aimed at creating awareness on the importance of jury service and improving the current service provided by the jury system.

Funded by International Development Law Organization, (IDLO), and organized by the Judiciary Branch of Government, the workshop brought together Human Resource Managers and Directors of the various government ministries and agencies who were trained to become trainers.

Speaking at the opening of the workshop, IDLO Senior Program Officer Alfred Hill pledged his organization's continuous commitment to assisting the Judiciary in its reform programs.

The International Development Law Organization has funded and facilitated the conduct of several training workshops for members of the National Association of Trial Judges of Liberia, other judicial organs and actors in collaboration with James A. A. Pierre Judicial Institute at the Temple of Justice.

Also speaking at the program, His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Sr., Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, emphasized that jurors are very important in the administration of justice in the Judiciary of any democratic nation like Liberia; adding that jury service is a civic duty that comes with an enormous responsibility. According to the Chief Justice "the role of the jury is not to only listen to facts and make decision based on what they have heard and seen, but to also be aware that they should be fair in the process."

Chief Justice Korkpor used the occasion to appeal to the participants to go back to their respective places of work and encourage their colleagues and others employed with government to favorably respond to jury service when called upon.

"The Judiciary has revised the system to make it better, and the services rendered by the participants will help it," the Liberian Chief Justice noted. "In the past, he confessed, "the system was bias in a sense that all the participants were either family members or friends of the party litigants."

"That is no longer going to be the case. Jury selection will be a random process so that it cannot be manipulated." Chief Justice Korkpor asserted.



The establishment of the Jury Management Program in May of 2013, which is one of the key reforms in the Judiciary of late, confers upon the Jury Management Office the responsibility to oversee jury selection, organize a central jury pool and order the number of jurors necessary for the functioning of the circuits during each term of court.

It also provides education to prospective and selected jurors about the law and legal processes and helps them understand their civic duties in the administration of justice as citizens of

the Republic of Liberia.

Article 20(a) of the 1986 constitution of Liberia lays the foundation for civic participation in the administration of justice through jury trial.

At least eight (8) of Liberia's Judicial circuits now have jury management offices in their provincial capitals. They include Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Margibi, Nimba, Lofa, Bong and Bomi Counties.

# The Judiciary

## EDITORIAL

### Advancing Freedom of Information and the Right to Know

The Judiciary Branch of the Liberian Government is the final arbiter of constitutional issues and exercises final appellate jurisdiction in all cases whether emanating from courts of records, courts not of records, administrative agencies and so forth. Since its creation, ordinary Liberians have had difficulty understanding its functions.

In light of this difficulty, the Judiciary under the administration of Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. has established the Public Information Department tasked with the responsibility to inform and educate the public about the Liberian Judiciary.

One of such mediums being the publication of a quarterly newsletter, "The Judiciary." The publications will provide basic education on the workings of the courts and events within the Judiciary, as well as provide basic legal education that will enlighten the public on the Rule of Law.

"The Judiciary" will also serve as a medium to create awareness that repositions the Judiciary Branch in a way that maintains its dignity and respect, in addition to the Judicial website ([www.judiciary.gov.lr](http://www.judiciary.gov.lr)) which is one the most significant platforms for legal and academic research in Liberia.

It is our goal that this newsletter will bring the administration of justice closer to the public and promote understanding that will engender respect for the rule of law in Liberia.

### OGP, Judiciary have similar principles and values says Chief Justice Korkpor

a continuing process of publishing a quarterly analysis of court returns from the various circuits and Opinions of the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia on the Judiciary's website, the Chief Justice added.

Other areas Chief Justice Korkpor named in which the Judiciary has taken concrete steps to ensure transparency, equity and accountability in line with OGP principles include Access to Information which led to the establishment of the Public Affairs Section of the Judiciary; the inclusion of non-lawyers on the Judicial Inquiry Commission and Grievance and Ethics Committee, which in time past had only

lawyers as members; promulgation of a Revised Schedule of Court Costs, Fees, and Fines of courts around Liberia with an account agreed with the LRA and allowing live media coverage of proceedings from the Chambers of the Supreme Court.

In conclusion, Chief Justice Korkpor maintained that the Judiciary is fully committed to the fair and just application of the rule of law to all at all times, irrespective of creed or color, describing the rule of law as the anchor and surest security for any democratic society. "Where the rule of law is weak and ineffective, the people suffer, violence goes unchecked and perpetrators go with

## PROMOTE JUDICIAL INTEGRITY! Justice Wolokollie urges Judges



Associate Justice Jamesetta H. Wolokollie has called on judges of the Circuit and Magisterial courts to observe the rules governing the Administration of Justice at their various courts as a way of promoting judicial integrity. Handling cases transparently and dispensing justice fairly, would lead to the enhancement of public trust and confidence in the Judiciary, as well as foster respect for the rule of law across Liberia. Associate Justice Wolokollie cautioned. Associate Justice Wolokollie made these statements when she represented the Supreme Court of Liberia at the opening of the May 2018 Term Criminal Courts A, B, C, and D, of the First Judicial Circuit, Montserrado Court. At the ceremony held in Criminal Court A, at the Temple of Justice, the Associate Justice, in a displeased tone, noted that it was grossly wrong for Magistrate Courts to take up to six months to dispose of a single matter instead of between fifteen to thirty (15-30) days as enshrined in the law. "The cases stay so long at the Magistrate Courts because most magistrates usually ask community people to be represented by lawyers in every case, no matter how small the issues of contention are. The people are even supposed to represent themselves if the matters do not border on major violations of rights. But you still ask the people to bring lawyers." Associate Justice Wolokollie stressed that promoting judicial integrity through the dispensation of fair and impartial justice was the responsibility of every judicial actor, especially judges and magistrates, and as such, she advised that all judicial actors strive to uphold judicial integrity through the discharge of their respective responsibilities. Earlier the Resident Circuit Judge of Criminal Court D called on his colleagues presiding over Criminal Courts in Montserrado County to dispense justice with the highest level of transparency for the sustenance of peace and development of Liberia. Flanked by his colleagues, Judge Roosevelt Z. Willie of Criminal Court A, Judge

Korboi K. Nuta of Criminal Court B and Judge A. Blamo Dixon of Criminal Court "C", Judge Sikajipo Wollor said judges have the legal obligation to base their judgments and decisions in matters they handle on the facts and evidence of the law. Judge Wollor who is the resident Circuit Judge of Criminal Court D, the circuit court responsible for trying armed robbery cases, made the statements on May 15, 2018 while delivering the joint charge of Criminal Courts A, B, C and D at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia. According to Judge Wollor, if the courts adjudicate cases transparently, lawyers and parties appearing before them will be convinced that judges are impartial. "We are knowledgeable of the law, our judgments in matters before us should be free from political manipulation and also free from dollars. Then at the denouement of the term, party litigants will hold us in high esteem," Judge Wollor cautioned. The judge's charge highlighted the provision of access to justice as a cardinal duty of judges, which would lead to resolving conflicts and disputes, and promoting the avoidance of what Judge Wollor termed as the "extrajudicial means for the attainment of desired ends." A satisfactory remuneration and a good pension scheme for judges were not spared in the joint charge of the circuit judges. Judge Wollor called for support for a recent bill Cllr. Varney Sherman, a renowned Liberian lawyer and Senator of Grand Cape Mount County proposed for "judges' retirement", describing the bill as being in the right direction. Other suggestions proffered by Judge Wollor include raising the salaries of judicial workers who are university graduates, recommending judicial magistrates for Supreme Court vacancies and reducing the suspension of lawyers and judges who violate the judicial cannon to not more than six months. Responding to the charge, state and defense lawyers pledged their unflinching support to work with the circuit judges during the May 2018 Term of court, to ensure Liberians and foreign nationals have access to justice.

# Observance of International Law Day: May 4, 2018- A Pictorial



# A Pictorial from the Home-going of Cllr. Francis Garlawolo



# Prolonged pretrial detention is wrong, Chief Justice warns

Liberia's Chief Justice, His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Sr., in an interview said, the Judiciary is very concerned about the prolonged pretrial detention of accused people because, it is legally wrong to keep someone in jail for a long period without trial. Chief Justice Korkpor noted that Liberia's criminal justice system is based on the premise that an accused person is presumed innocent until a court of competent jurisdiction finds that person guilty of the offense or the crime charged. "The only way a person can be proven guilty is by going through the regular trial, witnesses are brought against you, and there is sufficient evidence, probable cause established and there is reasonable belief that you committed the act, then, you are a convict. But, if on mere allegation that you committed a crime, you are in jail for a protracted period and later on you are brought to trial and you are set free, the damage would have already been done. So, you are innocent until the trial is conducted and the court has declared that you are guilty." The Chief Justice further stated that there should be prompt activities and arrangements set into motion to try accused people within the statutory time to avoid such legal wrongs being committed by the state against people who are merely accused. Answering a question on what is responsible for the hike in the number of prolonged pretrial detainees; Chief Justice Korkpor attributed the situation to several factors. He named the failure of the state to prosecute on time, magistrates detaining accused people and not calling their cases in statutory time, and the failure of complainants to follow up on their cases. Other key contributors, the Chief Justice mentioned, are the growth in the population, the creation of more counties which comes with the creation of more courts, knowledge of the law by Liberians which promotes number of cases going to courts and the lack of intermediary appellate courts. According to Chief Justice Korkpor, however, there are legal remedies to reducing the number of prolonged pretrial detainees. "The



law says when you are accused of a criminal act and you are taken to jail on a charge of a court, you should be tried in 14 days, if it is a case triable before a magistrate court; if not, you should be set free. If it is a case that requires indictment, you should be tried at the end of the next succeeding term of court. If not, a lawyer can file to have you set free." Another remedy that is working very well but has serious financial and logistical challenges, Chief Justice Korkpor mentioned further, is the Magistrate Sitting Program, MSP, which is being piloted in Montserrado County. Chief Justice Korkpor explained that every working day, the MSP on a rotational basis,

sends eight (8) of the (10) magistrates in Monrovia, Montserrado County, to the Monrovia Central Prison along with the necessary court actors, including public defenders and prosecutors, to fast track cases of pretrial detainees. Elaborating further, the Chief Justice acknowledged that the Magistrate Sitting Program, which came into being as a result of collaboration between the Judiciary and its partners, including the erstwhile United Nations Mission in Liberia, UNMIL, has made enormous progress at decongesting the Monrovia Central Prison. Chief Justice Korkpor stressed the need for the Liberian Government to ensure that

funding for the Magistrate Sitting Program is continued and enhanced through adequate budgetary support to the Judiciary, so as to sustain the progress already made in the reduction of prolonged pretrial detainees at the MCP and to also extend the program to other counties as required by the MSP. Even though friendly governments and organizations are helping, the Judiciary has to be very mindful of how it solicits assistance and from where it gets its support, Justice Korkpor added. "We don't just go and ask for assistance from anywhere, or if you see assistance coming from some place then you just accept it. No! You have to know who is giving the assistance, the purpose and all those kinds of things, otherwise, you open yourself for compromise, the integrity level will go down and the perception of the public will be lower for the Judiciary." The Chief Justice maintained that because the Judiciary is the 'anchor of democracy and the foundation of rule of law', it must be supported adequately by the government so that it is not drawn into a situation of conflict of interest, where its decisions will not be trusted and respected. He appealed to other actors in the justice sector, especially the Justice Ministry, which prosecutes criminal cases for the state, to continue working with the Judiciary in its quest to battle prolonged pretrial detention and prison overcrowding at the Monrovia Central Prison, adding that the Judiciary cannot do it alone; since no accused person goes to jail without the knowledge of the Justice Ministry. Justice Korkpor did not also forget to call on the level of the Liberian Judiciary mainly responsible for a huge number of pretrial detainees—the Magistrate Courts—to operate within the confines of the law by ensuring that their cases are tried within the statutory time of between 14-30 days, or free the accused person if the state does not come to prosecute the accused. He also urged every Liberian, including party litigants, to play their part in combatting prolonged pretrial detention and overcrowded prisons around Liberia.

## Justice Ja'neh calls for law reform, says old laws are undemocratic



CHIEF JUSTICE KORKPOR SPEAKING AT THE PROGRAM off people face the wrath of the law when they offend it. "I propose that it is not 'Rule of law' when the poor and marginalized languish for years in prison awaiting trial. Referencing the state of Liberia's prisons, Associate Justice Ja'neh lamented that for the last twenty (20) years, Liberia's justice system has not been able to satisfactorily address the problem he terms as the "shameful national malaise" of the accused persons being subjected to long pretrial detention.

"As we speak, there are a good number of cases where some pretrial detainees have been in prison for years and have not been accorded their Day in court. Most of the persons lingering in prison awaiting trial are on account of un-bailable offenses. These include armed robbery, sexual offenses and murder."

Associate Justice Ja'neh believes, admitting an accused to bail before trial constitutes sound administration of Justice but tagging some offenses as "non-bailable" tends to subject an accused to legislated imprisonment before conviction.

To allow this disorder to continue have a tendency to breed disgruntlement and disappointment, especially amongst the largely affected poor and marginalized population towards the rule of law, Justice Ja'neh maintained.

He concluded with the emphasis that: "A governance system based on the "Rule of Law", a legal system which ensures that all is regulated by the law of the land and are treated alike, is the foundation for attracting international private and bilateral investments in any country. Liberia is no exception."

Following the Associate Justice's ten-minute speech, the young and aspiring leaders who were being trained by the National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections, NAYMOTE, thanked Associate Justice Ja'neh for the deliberation.

They expressed shock that Justice Ja'neh was so liberal and down-to-earth to the point of taking group and individual photos with them.

NAYMOTE, the organizer of the gathering, praised the Supreme Court for sending Associate Justice Ja'neh to the program. It also commended the Associate Justice for the speech delivered and for being on time.

# SPECIAL FEATURE

## Associate Justice Jamesetta J. Wolokolie



**H**er Honor, Associate Justice Jamesetta H. Wolokolie was born in Maryland County, Liberia, and has three children: one (1) boy and two (2) girls. She obtained a B.A. Degree in English/Sociology, College of Liberal and Fine Arts in 1981 from the University of Liberia. She received a M.A. Degree in English and Teaching & Production of Drama, School of Drama, in 1985 from the Florida State University, U.S.A., and later received an L.L.B. in Law from the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia in 1988. She served as instructor within the English Department at the University of Liberia from 1981 – 1994, and as Legal Counsel at the Law Offices of Barnes and Johnson; Maxwell and Maxwell; and Cooper and Togbah; in-house counsel, Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI), Monrovia, Liberia from 1988-2005. As Counselor-at-Law, she served as Assistant Secretary General and subsequently as Secretary General of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA). She also served as the 1st Vice President of the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL). Her services with the Government of Liberia began when she served as Nationwide Consultant for the Governance Reform Commission (GRC), Monrovia, Liberia from 2004-2005; Minister of Youth and Sports, Monrovia, Liberia from April 2005-June 2007. In July 2007, she was nominated by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and confirmed by the Liberian Senate to serve as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Republic of Liberia. Justice Wolokolie has Judicial Oversight for Maryland County, the home of the 4th Judicial Circuit, Grand Kru County home of the 12th Judicial Circuit and River Gee County which is home to 15th Judicial Circuit.

## Associate Justice Sie-A-Nyene Gyapay Yuoh

**H**er Honor, Justice Sie-A-Nyene Gyapay Yuoh was born in Montserrado County, Liberia. She obtained her high school education from the St. Teresa's Convent in Monrovia in 1974 and enrolled at the Cuttington University College (CUC), now Cuttington University (CU), Bong County, graduating in 1978 with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Political Science. In 1979, Justice Yuoh enrolled at the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia, and obtained a Bachelor of Law, (LLB) in 1981, subsequently being admitted into in 1988 as Counselor-At-Law.

**PUBLIC & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

Associate Justice Yuoh began her public and professional service within the Executive Branch of Government, first at the Ministry of Justice as Assistant Minister for Legal Affairs, 1983 – 1985, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Coordinator, African Affairs, 1988 – 1990, Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) as Corporate Secretary/Assistant Legal Counsel/Secretary, Board of Governors, Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) 2000 – 2003 and the Law Reform Commission, Acting Executive Director and Commissioner respectively from July 2011 – April 2013. Justice Yuoh also extended her professional legal services within the private sector where she served as Associate and Legal Counsel at the David A.B. Jallah Law Firm, Monrovia Liberia, from 1994 – 2000. In 2013, Madam Justice Yuoh was nominated, appointed and subsequently commissioned as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

**PROFESSIONAL & SOCIAL AFFILIATION**

Justice Yuoh also served as Vice President of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) from 1994–1998; was a founding member of the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia (AFELL) and served as its 1st Vice President from 1997–1998; Chairperson of the Judiciary Committee of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) from 2012 – 2013 and also served as President of the Maryland County Local Bar Association in 2013. She is married and the union is blessed with ten (10) children and two (2) grandchildren.

Justice Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh has judicial oversight over Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, and River Cess Counties, homes of the 3rd, 7th and 14th Judicial Circuit Courts.



## OGP, Judiciary have similar principles and values says Chief Justice Korkpor



The Liberian Judiciary says it subscribes to the principles and ideals of the Open Government Partnership, OGP, which the Pro Poor Government of President George Manneh Weah embraces. Liberia's Chief Justice, His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. said the guiding principles of the OGP-transparency, equity and accountability-are amongst the core values of the Judiciary Branch of Government, thus converging the principles of the OGP and those of the Judiciary at many points. "This is why we readily accepted to collaborate with, and be represented on the Steering Committee, which is the technical arm of the OGP in Liberia,"

Chief Justice Korkpor added. The Chief Justice made these statements at a symposium organized by the Ministry of Information and Members of the Steering Committee of the Open Government Partnership, OGP, at the Monrovia City Hall. The symposium was in observance of the climax of the Open Government Week on May 11, 2018. Chief Justice Korkpor, speaking on the Role of the Judiciary in Advancing OGP Principles in Achieving Government's Pro-Poor Agenda, described the OGP as an international initiative which seeks to secure firm commitments from governments to promote transparency, equity, accountability as well as fight

corruption for the good of their peoples. "As I see it, this initiative was borne out of the universal principle of free governments which grants citizens the right to know about their governments instituted by their authority and for their purpose and benefit. OGP therefore provides a glorious opportunity to actualize good governance especially, in third world countries during this 21st century." According to Chief Justice Korkpor, the 2015/2017 OGP action plan placed the Judiciary under thematic area no. 2, which deals with citizens' participation, obligating the Judiciary to work on and report on two major transformative areas within the Judiciary; namely implementation of the New Jury Law and enhancing citizens' monitoring of the

justice system. In furtherance of the OGP's call, Chief Justice Korkpor told the gathering that the Judiciary has established the Central Office of Jury Management, appointed its staff and rolled out jury services in seven (7) of Liberia's (15) fifteen counties. "To enhance citizens' participation and appreciation of the New Jury Law, we are currently conducting series of social mobilizations on the awareness of the law and the role of citizens as partners with the Judiciary in the implementation of the law and the dispensation of justice." In fulfillment of its commitment to ensuring that citizens monitor their justice system, the Judiciary has commenced

SEE PAGE 3

## Your role is significant, Justice Yuoh tells prospective jurors

The Jury Management Office at the Temple of Justice on 4 May 2018 conducted an orientation session for over fifty prospective jurors to help the circuit courts decide if selected.

The prospective jurors are Liberian citizens selected from different sectors of the country, as required by the jury law.

Associate Justice Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, serving as the keynote speaker at the brief program warned the participants to avoid getting tempered with, as it is a crime for a juror to accept bribe or even violate the laws of the court. "I encourage you not to get tempered with because when this happens you risk being fined or jailed."

Justice Yuoh informed the prospective jurors about how huge and important their task is to the Judiciary and to the promotion of rule of law and peace in Liberia. "Conduct yourselves properly as the life, property, immunity, privilege, or liberty of a person is in your hands."

According to Justice Yuoh, the law is the law; it is not based on sentiment and speculation, but on evidence and proof.

She also told the gathering that the law is not based on what the public says but what can be seen as an evidence that the defendant actually committed the crime or not. She therefore cautioned prospective jurors carefully look into matters they will handle if selected.

Prior to now, jurors were selected from the municipalities through their leaderships, which submitted the names of people who wanted to be jurors. That system of jury selection promoted what was known in the judicial setting as "professional jurors," who mostly came to the service for the monetary benefit associated with it.

Associate Justice Yuoh told the prospective jurors that that procedure had a serious problem when it came to the selection process.

Curtailling the serious problem associated with the process mentioned by the Associate Justice led to the enactment of the New Jury Law: An Act to Amend Title 1 of the Liberian Code of Laws Revised, Civil Procedure Law, Chapter 22 Relating to Juries and Jurors.

The New Jury Law, in simple terms, provides for the involvement of citizens' participation in how trial courts decide cases in line with the Liberian Constitution, which calls for judgment



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