

CHARGE OF HER HONOUR, NANCY FINDA SAMMY, RESIDENT CIRCUIT JUDGE, TENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF LOFA COUNTY FOR THE OPENING OF THE AUGUST A.D. 2018 TERM OF COURT, VOINJAMA CITY LOFA COUNTY, MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2018

Hon. William Kamba, Superintendent and Local Officials of Lofa County; Specialized Court Judges, His Honor. Sawo G. Buku, Coordinator, National Trial Judges of Liberia, Lofa County Branch, Dr. Samuel Ngaima, President, Lofa County Community College; Dr. Joseph Glenn, President, Free Pentecostal College, Stipendiary and Associate Magistrates; Cllr. Luther J. Sumo, Dean of the Lofa Bar, Mr. President, Officers and Members of the Lofa Bar Association present, Defense Attorneys, Officers of the Security Sector; Staff, Prelates and Members of the Religious Community, Elders and Members of the Traditional Council, Visiting Friends, Prospective Jurors, Members of the Fourth Estate, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today, I am very glad and thankful to God for making it possible for us to converge in this hall which is the home of this Court. My personal joy comes from the fact that every one of you have taken time off your basic schedules to grace the formal opening of the August A. D, 2018 Term of the Tenth Judicial Circuit of Lofa County. In my mind, your presence is a historic turning point in the life of this Court.

Therefore, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me use this time to humbly welcome you all in response to our invitation to you to grace this occasion.

I also like to welcome Atty. George S. Dunor, former Superintendent, Lofa County, for being with us today at this very important occasion. As a member of the Lofa Bar, I encourage you to please be present at all subsequent formal openings of terms of court. Reason being that, if our citizens see the caliber of members of the Lofa Bar in attendance at opening of courts, it would send a message to them that indeed the Lofa Bar is ready for business. Again, I say welcome and thanks for coming.

We like to congratulate members of the Lofa Bar that were admitted last week to the Supreme Court Bar as Counsellors-At-Law. Our special congratulations go to Cllr. Moses Soriba, Acting Director, James A. A. Pierre Judicial Training Institute and Cllr. Bobby W. Livingstone, former Public Defender, Lofa County. We pray that the

Almighty God will endow them with wisdom as they continue to embark on their legal sojourn.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, we once again wish to reassure you that we still remain committed to this work and will make sure that justice is delivered equitably and fairly in this County, be it at the Magisterial Courts' level; or at the Circuit level.

By this, we as judges are under legal duty and obligation to always ensure that justice prevails in every case that is brought before us.

In this vein, we are calling on all Lofa citizens to revert to the courts in order to seek justice whenever someone offends you instead of taking the law into your hands; as this is against the norms of civilized societies.

Further, I am calling on all Magistrates to be vigilant, cautious and diligent in handling cases that are forwarded to your various courts. Because justice delayed, is justice denied. And if justice is delayed and denied, people will have a negative view of the entire Judiciary. We cannot allow this to happen in our county. So, let us please be mindful.

However, if cases are brought before you which would cause conflict of interest, then in such situations, the most appropriate thing to do is to recuse yourselves from hearing such cases.

This is important because as dispensers of justice, we cannot allow ourselves to be caught in situations that would embarrass us, yea the entire judiciary.

We as judges must at all-time exhibit cool neutrality in the cases we handle, and we must always remember that we are never parties to a suit.

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen, please be re-assured that this Circuit Court and all other Magisterial Courts in this Circuit will make justice accessible to all because this is vital to the development agenda of Liberia.

Development will be illusive when the rule of law and governance is undermined; where access to justice is absent; where the marginalized are deprived of opportunities to redress and protection under the law.

Once again, I would like to categorically send a caveat that being the Resident Judge of this Circuit, I will not allow any Magistrate, neither the Prosecuting Attorney, or the Defense Attorneys, or by **any** Judicial worker, to take undue advantage of any citizen of Lofa simply because they are connected to the courts. If any one of you engages in such behavior, and a complaint is filed against any such individual, you would have yourself to blame because we would ensure that appropriate measures are taken against you.

Let this caveat please claim your attention because this Court will be robust in ensuring that the citizens' rights are protected in this county.

During this August term of court, we must work harder. Let us work harder so that we can improve an individual's access to the Court and guarantee him/her adequate legal representation.

I guarantee you that the outcome of our decisions will remain just, equitable and upheld for the good of society.

CONCLUSION

Ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, I challenge all of you not to rest in the fight and search for justice!

For justice to prevail in the midst of cruel and evil-minded elements, our commitment to work under these difficult conditions requires more diligence and patriotic action.

If our people should be emancipated from suppression, rape, murder, and other human rights violations condemned by our statute and constitution, then every actor of the justice system must roll up its sleeves to win the war against the cancer of lawlessness that is gradually creeping in our county.

We must work to transform evil minded characters in our society and make them good citizens. **Our probation system has a pivotal role in this drive.**

We all have our respective work to do; we must do them so well in order for us to effectively deliver justice at every town and village in Lofa County.

I hear the cry of lack of logistics, and funding, but I say to you, this is a national call to duty. Hence, we must execute our work in the spirit of patriotism and love for our County and Country.

For this August 2018 Term of Court, we have eleven (11) cases that are currently on the trial docket comprising seven (7) criminal cases; two (2) civil; one (1) appeal and one (1) Summary Proceedings.

Further, we have thirty (31) cases on the Court's docket that require the drawing up of indictments.

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen, as a demonstration of our unwavering commitment to dispense justice and build public confidence in the Judiciary in this county, since our incumbency as Resident Circuit Judge, we have expeditiously adjudicated matters that are brought before us.

Therefore, we will continue to work extra hours to ensure that we exhaust all the cases on the trial docket and if additional cases are advanced on the docket, we will hear them and render appropriate rulings.

I like to call on the County Attorney to work harder by ensuring that more indictments are drawn in order to reduce the heavy caseload on the court's docket.

Now therefore, with the power vested in me by the Mandate of His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Sr., Chief Justice of the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia, mandating me to preside over this August A. D. 2018 Term of the Tenth Judicial Circuit, I hereby declare the August A. D. 2018 Term of Court formally opened for the transaction of business.

All who have matters before this court should draw nigh and they shall be heard.

May the Almighty God save the State and bless our nation.

Thanks!