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**JUDICIARY PRESS RELEASE**

**COUNSELLOR M. WILKINS WRIGHT AND OTHERS SUSPENDED FROM THE PRACTICE OF LAW IN LIBERIA**

The Supreme Court of Liberia, sitting in its October Term A.D. 2016, on Friday February 17, 2017, suspended Counsellor M. Wilkins Wright, former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia and former Solicitor General of the Republic of Liberia from the practice of law within the Republic of Liberia for a period of twelve (12) calendar months. Also suspended from the practice of law within the Republic are the Resident Circuit Judge of the 8th Judicial Circuit of Nimba County, His Honor Judge Emery S. Paye and the Resident Circuit Judge of Criminal Court “B”, 1st Judicial Circuit Montserrado County, His Honor, Judge Karboi K. Nuta.

Delivering its opinion and final judgment in the case: Messrs. Liberia Mining Corporation (LIMINCO) represented by and through its President, S. Ciapha Gbollie, and Mr. Jonathan Mason, (the Government of Liberia)….. Petitioners; versus His Honor Emery Paye, Assigned Circuit Judge, Sixth Judicial Circuit, Montserrado County and Messrs. FIDC, Inc. a duly registered Corporation, under the Liberian laws, represented by its President, shareholder and chairman of the Board of Directors, Mr. Vladimir Juha and Corporate Secretary, Mrs. Daniela Geohova, with offices in Monrovia, Liberia… Respondents, for a Petition for the Writ of Prohibition filed before the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia, the Court observed that Counsellor M. Wilkins Wright, then Solicitor General , Ministry of Justice, Republic of Liberia, representing the Government and who had previously represented the Respondent Party in this case, deliberately obscured the fact of his lawyer-client relationship with FIDC/Sochor when at the time, he conceded to a 15.9 million United States Dollars fraudulent judgment against the Government of Liberia.

The Court held that the conduct of Counsellor M. Wilkins Wright constitutes gross conflict of interest in breach of Rules 8 and 9 of the Code for the Moral and Ethical Conduct of Lawyers which states:

* “Rule 8”: “It is the duty of the lawyer at the time of retainer to disclose to the client all of the circumstances of his relations to the parties, if there be any and any interest in or connection with the controversy, which might influence the client in the selection of the counsel. It is unprofessional to represent conflicting interests.”
* “Rule 9”: “Within the meaning of this rule, a lawyer represents conflicting interests when, on behalf of one client, it is his duty to contend for that which duty to another client requires him to oppose. The obligation to represent the client with undivided fidelity, and not to divulge his secrets or confidences, forbids also the subsequent acceptance of retainers or employment from others in matters adversely affecting any interest of the client with respect to which confidence has been reposed.”

The Court has therefore suspended Counsellor M. Wilkins Wright from the practice of law directly and indirectly within the bailiwick of this Republic for a period of twelve (12) calendar months with immediate effect.

In respect of Judge Emery Paye, then Assigned Circuit Judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit Civil Law Court of Montserrado, the Supreme Court held that he diverted the course of justice in the case, when on April 20, 2005, he awarded damages in the amount of 15.9 million United States Dollars to FIDC/Juha and against the Government of Liberia, being fully aware that the due process of law had deliberately been withheld from the Government. The Court also noted a consistent pattern of misconduct by Judge Paye in violation of several Judicial Canons, and has thereby suspended him for a period of twelve (12) calendar months with immediate effect.

Judge Karboi Nuta, also whilst serving as Assigned Circuit Judge of the same Sixth Judicial Circuit Civil Law Court of Montserrado County, was also adjudged in breach of his sacred duty as a Judge by engaging in acts unbecoming of a Judge and thereby degrading the dignity and integrity of the Judiciary when he made the court a party to the case before him by having the court enter into a contract with a third party for the sale of iron ore and receiving monies therefor in a questionable manner. Judge Nuta’s conduct was also in breach of several Judicial Canons and is also suspended for a period of six (6) calendar months with immediate.

During the period of their suspension, these judges shall forfeit their salaries, allowances and other emoluments.

According the a judiciary release, the Honorable Supreme Court also expressed its disappointment in Counsellors Sayma Syrenius Sephas and Roland F. Dahn for their failure as lawyers to thoroughly review the files of the said case by which means they would have discovered the sham calculated to defraud the Government of the Republic of Liberia and for further challenging the constitutional authority of the Supreme Court of Liberia by attempting to subordinate this Court to the ECOWAS Court. This, the court held was in contravention of Article 66 of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia.

The Court therefore warned these lawyers that a repetition of this course of action shall lead to stringent disciplinary action.

Signed: 

 Darryl Ambrose Nmah, Sr.

 DIRECTOR

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