

**JUDGE'S CHARGE OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CRIMINAL
COURTS 'A', 'B', 'C', AND 'D', MONTSERRADO COUNTY,
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, SITTING IN THE NOVEMBER TERM OF
COURT, A.D. 2017, DELIVERED BY HIS HONOR A. BLAMO DIXON,
RESIDENT CIRCUIT JUDGE, CRIMINAL COURT 'C',
MONTSERRADO COUNTY.**

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

We bring you greeting from the Almighty God, whose Grace enables us to assemble here at the Courtroom of the Criminal Court "A" for the Formal and Official Opening Program of the First Judicial Circuit, Criminal Courts "A", "B", "C" AND "D", Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia, Sitting in the November Term of Court, A.D. 2017, respectively, pursuant to Section 3.8 of the New Judiciary Law of Liberia.

We are grateful to the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Honorable Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia for our Assignments to preside over our respective Courts. We wholeheartedly welcome all of you for your presence in the sacred Room; thereby adding more grandeur to the program.

At this stage, Ladies and Gentlemen, our Country is at an interregnum period. Therefore, this is not time to deliver a loaded Charge; because issues that may arise out of such Charge could be brought before the Court system or other Tribunals of due cognizance.

Further, on behalf of my Colleagues present, the National Trial Judges Association of Liberia (NTJAL), the Support Staff and all Employees of the Judiciary Branch of Government, we joined the Honorable Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia to categorically condemn in the harshest possible terms the unprovoked, unwarranted, unprecedented, calculated and cowardice attack on the Residence of Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of Liberia.

We would like to tell all Liberians in and out of the Country, and the World at large that we are convinced that the attack on the Residence of Justice Yuoh is an attack on the respective Residences of the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia, Judges of Subordinate Courts and all

employees of the Judiciary Branch of Government. While we ceased the opportunity to say sorry to our Boss Lady, we also signal a caveat that such devilish act should not be repeated in our Country, in any form or manner.

It is worthy to note that the Korkpor Bench is united, stable and unique; since the incumbency of His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. as Chief Justice of the Honorable Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia, unlike other previous Supreme Court Benches.

In other words, we have not heard of any confusion among Members of the present Supreme Court Bench. We are impressed with that development up to the present; because we stand to be corrected, one or two Associate Justices of the said Bench are older than the Chief Justice, but yet news of any such confusion has not come to the public domain.

Moreover, we, as Trial Judges, are obliged to emulate the good example of our Bosses. We must also be united, stable and unique. That is why few deceased Judges, may their Souls rest in peace, worked tirelessly for the establishment and formulation of an Association.

The said Association became modernized through the wisdom of some present Judges. It is now known and styled as the National Trial Judges Association of Liberia (NTJAL), comprising of all Circuit and Specialized Court Judges and all Magistrates throughout the length and breathe of the Republic of Liberia.

The Mandate of the National Trial Judges Association of Liberia (NTJAL) is to speak with one voice and become a common front to liaise with the present Administration, cater to the welfare of all Judges and Magistrates through dues collected from the Members, and to also resolve issues, problems or disputes among its Members for amicable settlement.

But nowadays, there is no unity among Members of the Association. We have become cowards; to the extent that Judges are by passing the Association and complaining one another directly or indirectly to the Chief Justice, thereby opening a floodgate for us to write against and under one another; and wash our dirty clothes outside.

To sum up, Ladies and Gentlemen, You, the Magistrates, are doing very well. Some of you are bona fide and genuine Graduates of the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia; while some of you are also Graduates of the Judicial

Training Institute (JI), and inclusively Members of the National Trial Judges Association of Liberia (NTJAL).

We respect you and you must also respect us. When a complaint is filed against you by a Party Litigant and we send for you to Answer; and make an Appearance, please cooperate and attend the Summary Proceedings., It is part of your Assignment and Job.

If you continue to proceed in keeping with Law and maintain your cool neutrality without being Lawyer for one of the parties before your Court, no Circuit Judge will send for you. Besides, you Have Cell Phones, Learn to call us for smooth working relationship. A hint to the wise is quite sufficient.

Our Clerks, Support Staff and Bailiffs are trying their best as our Frontline Commander. But there are few Court Officers who when they served a precept in any Case for a Party Litigant, be it an Individual, Company or Law Firm, that Case becomes a chopping spot for them on a daily basis, even when the Case is disposed of by the Court. Stop begging or extorting money from Party Litigants.

Remain at your assigned Court and stop going to other Courts to hustle for the weekend. Stop using the names of Judges to beg, collect or extort money from Party Litigants, because such act has the tendency to put Judges at loggerheads. Before you go to help any other Court, either to serve a precept or to evict, let that Assignment be approved by the Judge or Clerk.

Do not live above your Income to destroy yourself and other innocent Employees or Judges. If you have a Car that you owned or bought through an Auction from any other Court in the Temple of Justice and you are unable to service and maintain that Car, sell it and stop going around begging and extorting money or gas slips from Party Litigant by falsely using the names of Judges. Our Court Officers should not abuse or take advantage of the Rotational System of Circuit Judges, which is provided for in Section 3.9 of the New Judiciary Law of Liberia.

In conclusion, we welcome you, the prospective Jurors, to the Temple of Justice. Your duty is civic and not commercial. The Jury system is as old as the British Commonwealth, the Old World, now Great Britain, and was permeated into the New World, now the United States of America. It is part of the Criminal Justice and Court Systems of many Nation States, our Country being no exception.

Notwithstanding, some Countries around the Word have already scrapped the Jury System for reasons best known to them.

However, you have come to assist us as Judges of the facts and not Lawyers for any of the Party Litigants that you will encounter, during the course of the November Term of Court. A.D. 2017. Jury service is not for money making, because it is not Employment.

The Tubman Birthday, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Holidays fall within the November Term of Court. So when you come here for your Holidays, I beg you to go back home. If you do not take your own time, you might spend those Holidays at the Monrovia Central Prison Compound.

You will be divided into two Groups: Grand Jury and Petit Jury. The Grand Jury shall be assigned at the Criminal Court "A". They shall work daily for only Twenty One (21) days at the rate of US\$6.00 per day present in Court. The Grand Jury might receive similar additional Days, predicated upon proper Legal Arrangements. They shall be commissioned on Today or Tomorrow.

The Petit Jury shall be requested from the Jury Manager on a Court by Court basis. They shall work daily for the same amount until the Case assigned to them is disposed of and upon their disbandment. They shall be commissioned later, during the course of the Term.

Finally, by virtue of the power vested in us by the Constitution and Statutory Laws of the Republic of Liberia, and in accordance with our respective Assignments, we do hereby officially announce the formal Opening of the First Judicial Circuit, Criminal "A", "B", "C" and "D" for Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia, West Africa, respectively for official transaction of Business for the November Term of Court A.D. 2017.

Thank You!