

The Judiciary

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TEMPLE OF JUSTICE BUILDING, MONROVIA

THREAT TO THE SEPARATION OF POWERS

Call for Judicial oversight body at Legislature threatens separation of powers doctrine

The Supreme Court of Liberia says it has heard of a call or proposal for the creation of what is to be called a 'judicial oversight committee' within the National Legislature. Liberia's Chief Justice, His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. says what surprises him most about the proposal is the fact that the call is being made by an unlikely source. According to Chief Justice Korkpor, the Judiciary will say more in due course about the establishment of such body. He however described the proposal as having the propensity to undermine the independence of the Judiciary and that it directly assails the doctrine of Separation of Powers enshrined in the

constitution of Liberia.

The Chief Justice's statements were contained in the 12-page speech delivered during the opening of the October 2018 Term of the Supreme Court in Monrovia on October 8, 2018.

Also speaking on the matter, Liberia's Attorney General agreed with the Supreme Court, that the call for setting up a 'judicial oversight committee' in the Legislature will undermine the doctrine of Separation of Powers stipulated in the Constitution of Liberia.

Article (3) of the Liberia Constitution states in part that: Consistent with the principles of Separation of Powers and checks and balance, no person holding office in one **SEE PAGE 2**

Justice Ministry says Critical reforms are needed to promote speedy trial

The Justice Ministry has expressed the need for reforms in Liberia's criminal justice system and amendment to some Liberian laws to reflect current day realities. Justice Minister Cllr. Frank Musa Dean, Jr. suggested that in addition to providing training for prosecutors and judges, transformation in the criminal

justice system is critical to the promotion of access to justice for the ordinary Liberian people. Cllr. Dean said the Justice Ministry is currently in the process of reviewing critical areas of the Criminal Procedure Law and other laws they think are vital to enhancing access to justice and rule of law. Responding to **SEE PAGE 2**



CLLR. FRANK MUSA DEAN, JR.

Threat to the separation of powers



of these branches shall hold office in or exercise any of the powers assigned to either of the other two branches except as otherwise provided in the Constitution; and no person holding office in one of the said branches shall serve on any autonomous public agency.

Although Cllr. Frank Musa Dean, Jr. told the Supreme Court, the public and the community of lawyers that the move was dangerous to maintaining independence within the Judiciary, he said the latter must embark on what he calls 'self-cleansing'.

"We must work assiduously at 'self-policing and self-cleansing' to restore the respect, faith and confidence of the common people in our Judiciary and rule of law" he strongly suggested.

Justice Minister Dean continued, "Our courts' judgments and actions must be grounded in and have the support of

law; and must be seen as fair, judicious and impartial."

Cllr Dean wants the judgments of Liberian courts carry the moral authority to demand compliance from party litigants.

Reflecting on the role of the Judiciary in Liberia's constitutional democracy, the Justice Minister recalled the words of former Chief Justice James A. A. Pierre, who, speaking for the Supreme Court in the case, *In re: C. Abayomi Cassell*, Cllr-at-Law, 14 LLR 391 (1960) made the following statement.

"The Judiciary is the anchor which holds stabilized government in balance; without it, vested interest might suffer, sacred rights might be violated constituted authority might be challenged, and in fine, administrative chaos could result."

Justice Ministry says Critical reforms are needed to promote speedy trial

the opening statement delivered by Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. during the opening of the October 2018 term of the Supreme Court, Cllr. Dean named amending the Criminal Procedure Law to provide for longer jurisdictional sitting days as one of the reforms critically needed.

This, he said, would afford prosecutors and judges in the leeward counties enough time to remain in their respective jurisdictions for a longer period to prosecute and hear many cases as possible.

Currently, the Judiciary Law at Section 3.8.2 under Quarterly Sessions provides that the trial session of the circuit courts runs for forty-two consecutive days, not including Sundays and legal holidays unless sooner terminated because all businesses before the courts are disposed of before the expiration of that period.

Another aspect of the Criminal Procedure Law being reviewed is the one relative to arrest and incarceration of party litigants by magistrates on the strength of a complaint by a party without reference to the Ministry of Justice or the Liberia National Police.

"It has been found that there is a direct correlation between pre-trial detention, prison over-crowdedness on the one hand, and imprisonment on the orders of magistrates without any reference to the Justice Ministry on the other hand," the Attorney General added.

According to the Cllr. Dean, the number of pre-trial detainees will significantly reduce, if the law is amended so that no magistrate orders the incarceration of an accused until the police investigates and the county attorney or city solicitor makes an assessment as to whether charges should be brought.

Plea bargaining is another aspect of the Criminal Procedure Law that the Justice Minister says needs reforming, as a means of cutting back on lengthy trials and the huge cost associated with them.

The Attorney General's statement defined plea bargain as a process in which the prosecutors and lawyers of the accused are given the opportunity to negotiate and work out a plan for the accused to plead guilty to a lesser offence for a lesser sentence.

The Justice Minister said the suggested reforms, combined with training of magistrates; city solicitors and other judicial officers will go a long way in improving the Judiciary and enhance access to justice.

In another development, the Ministry of Justice has frowned on what it calls the growing trend of lack of respect and adherence to the rule of law in Liberia.

Minister Dean noted the attitude has permeated the Liberian society to the extent that it can be seen in every aspect of our existence, ranging from traffic violations to rape, murder, drug abuse, illegal strikes by workers, illegal protests and misconduct by government officials.

"This is a dangerous trend and threatens the peace, security and gains made over the years" he lamented.

Cllr. Dean disclosed that a meeting of various state actors and opinion leaders to include civil society, religious leaders, human rights institutions, and law enforcement agencies will soon be convened to discuss the deteriorating trend of lawlessness in Liberia.

The Dean of the Supreme Court Bar described respect for the rule of law as the bedrock of any functional judicial system and demanded that precepts and orders emanating from the courts



CLLR. FRANK MUSA DEAN, JR.

must be respected.

He advised that challenges relating to the legal basis and soundness of such legal instruments must be addressed within the framework provided by law. "Respect for the rule of law must be felt

in our homes, in our communities, in our offices and throughout the length and breadth of the Republic. Our laws must be applied and enforced, no matter against whom," the Justice Minister stressed.

From The Courts



Serve the people not political parties ...Weah urges commissioned judges



PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH WEAH ADMINISTERING OATH

The President of Liberia, George Manneh Weah, has commissioned three circuit judges he recently appointed following their confirmation by the Liberian Senate in keeping with law.

President Weah appointed the judges on the 26 October 2018 with the consent of the Liberian Senate before they were confirmed.

Section 3.6 of the Judiciary Law of Liberia states "The President shall nominate and by and with the consent of the Senate, appoint and commission (sixteen) Circuit Judges, (fourteen) of whom shall be resident judges, one for each circuit, and two of whom shall be relieving judges. They shall hold office during good behavior."

The commissioned Circuit Judges include Cllr. Ousman F. Felkai, Resident Circuit Judge, 5th

Judicial Circuit, Grand Cape Mount County; Cllr. Roland Dahn, Resident Circuit Judge, 8th Judicial Circuit, Nimba County and Cllr. Onesimus Banwon, Resident Circuit Judge, 14th Judicial Circuit, River Cess County.

President Weah also commissioned Attorney Patrick W. Williams as Debt Court Judge of Bong County, central Liberia.

According to section 3.7 of the Judiciary Law, "No person shall be appointed or hold office as judge of a Circuit Court who has not been a citizen of Liberia for at least five years immediately previous to his appointment, who shall not have attained the age of twenty-five years, who is not an attorney licensed to practice and who has not engaged in the active practice of law for at least five years next preceding his appointment, and except

for the persons appointed as relieving judges, who is not a resident of the county in which the Circuit Court to which he is appointed, is located. Active practice of law, as used herein is not limited to the direct practice of law, but includes judicial service, governmental service and the teaching of law."

Performing the commissioning ceremony, President George Manneh admonished the judges to dispense justice without fear or favor. He instead urged them to ensure honesty and fairness become the hallmark of their decisions.

President Weah said those who administer justice must hold their loyalty to the Liberian Constitution and the statutes of land, and not to a political establishment, a tribe or an individual.

"You are called to serve the people of Liberia. You are not called to serve anyone or political party or tribe or your pecuniary interest. I want you to know that Liberia is depending on you to dispense justice with fairness and honesty and without fear or favor."

The Liberian leader promised that his government will strongly support the Liberian Judiciary to enable it fast track cases as a way of reducing the case-flooded dockets of court system.

The nomination, appointment, confirmation and commissioning of the judges come in the wake of vacancies created as the result of death and retirement of some judges in three circuits mentioned.

In July of 2018, the 14th Judicial Circuit Court in River Cess County lost its Resident Circuit Judge, His Honor Samuel Geevon Smith after a period of illness. Similarly, the death of Judge Benedict Holt about two years ago, created the

vacancy that existed at the 2nd Judicial Circuit Court in Grand Bassa County.

Their deaths created the vacancies in the neighboring counties which are now being filled.

On the other hand, the retirement of Judge Emery Paye and the late Judge Amymusu K. Jones in July and August 2018, both of the 8th and 5th Judicial Circuits of Nimba and Grand Cape Mount Counties respectively, created the need for judges in the two counties just mentioned.

With the commissioning of the judges, the situation of a circuit judge presiding over two courts at the same time will probably come to an end at the First Judicial Circuit in Montserrado County.

For instance, Judge Roosevelt Willie of Criminal Court A currently presides over Court D, the court responsible for handling armed robbery cases, because the judge of Court D is presently filling the gap created by the death of Judge Geevon Smith in River Cess County.

The Chief Justice of Liberia, His Honor Francis S. Korkpor and Associate Justice Joseph Nagbe were among several government officials who attended the commissioning program which took place on Friday, the 23rd of November 2018, at the Foreign Ministry Office of the President on Capitol Hill.

Meanwhile, at a well-attended ceremony held at the Temple of Justice, TOJ, early December, the commissioned Judges were ceremoniously seated.

Their colleague, Cllr. Joe Barcon, who was also appointed but did not form part of the presidential commissioning ceremonies due to confirmation hitches, was commissioned by Chief Justice Korkpor, upon authorization of the Liberian leader.

Judge Barcon now takes over the 2nd Judicial Circuit in the port city of Buchanan, Grand Bassa County.

Since the death Judge Benedict Holt about two years ago, the 2nd Judicial Circuit has been without Resident Circuit Judge.

Chief Justice vows to keep Judiciary independent

The Chief Justice of Liberia says the Supreme Court of will ensure that the Liberian Judiciary remains a neutral, non-aligned and non-political branch of the Liberian Government, as is constitutionally required.

Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. said the Supreme Court will be what he terms a "sanctuary to which the injured and distressed, irrespective of color, creed, and religion or political persuasion can seek justice."

Chief Justice Korkpor noted that his bench will continue to protect the liberty and freedom of all. "It should be clear by now, judging from our many positions and opinions that this Court favors no particular person or institution, including the Government. Of course, if the Government is in the right, we will not hesitate to say so; but the converse is also true. We will remain only on the side of the law", he added.

The statements were contained in his speech delivered at the opening of the October 2018 term of the Supreme Court of Liberia on the second Monday in October 2018, as provided for in the Judiciary Law of Liberia.

Section 2.5 of the Judiciary Law of Liberia states: "The Supreme Court shall hold two terms annually, commencing on the Second Monday of October and on the Second Monday of March and continuing as long as the business before the Court may require.



CHIEF JUSTICE FRANCIS S. KORKPOR, SR.

They shall be known as the October and March Term respectively."

Chief Justice Korkpor told hundreds of people attending the ceremony, including senior

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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) 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.

Chief Justice vows to keep Judiciary independent



CHIEF JUSTICE FRANCIS S. KORKPOR, SR.

government officials, lawyers, diplomats and the general public, that, party litigants who have matters before the Supreme Court should not harbor apprehension of the expected outcome of their cases, as their fate will be decided solely on the facts and the laws applicable.

The program coincided with the seating of Associate Justice Joseph N. Nagbe on the Supreme Court as a replacement of Justice Philip A. Z. Banks, III, one of Liberia's most

However, Chief Justice Korkpor added that the Judiciary was doing so in the midst of some daunting challenges, key of which is the lack of adequate budgetary support to the Judiciary—a situation seriously hampering reform programs.

According to the Chief Justice, over the years and until now, the budget of the Judiciary has remained extremely low compared to the other branches of government, even though courts throughout the fifteen counties of Liberia are

"It should be clear by now, judging from our many positions and opinions that this Court favors no particular person or institution, including the Government. Of course, if the Government is in the right, we will not hesitate to say so; but the converse is also true. We will remain only on the side of the law",

experienced jurists, who retired after attaining the age of 70, in accordance with Article 72 (b) of the Constitution of Liberia.

President George Manneh Weah, Vice president Jewel Howard-Taylor, Speaker Bhofol Chambers, Pro Temp Albert Chie and several other senior government officials graced the occasion.

Associate Justice Nagbe hails from the southeastern County of Sinoe and comes with a wealth of experience from the National Legislature, where he initially served as representative and senator prior to his appointment by the President to the Supreme Court.

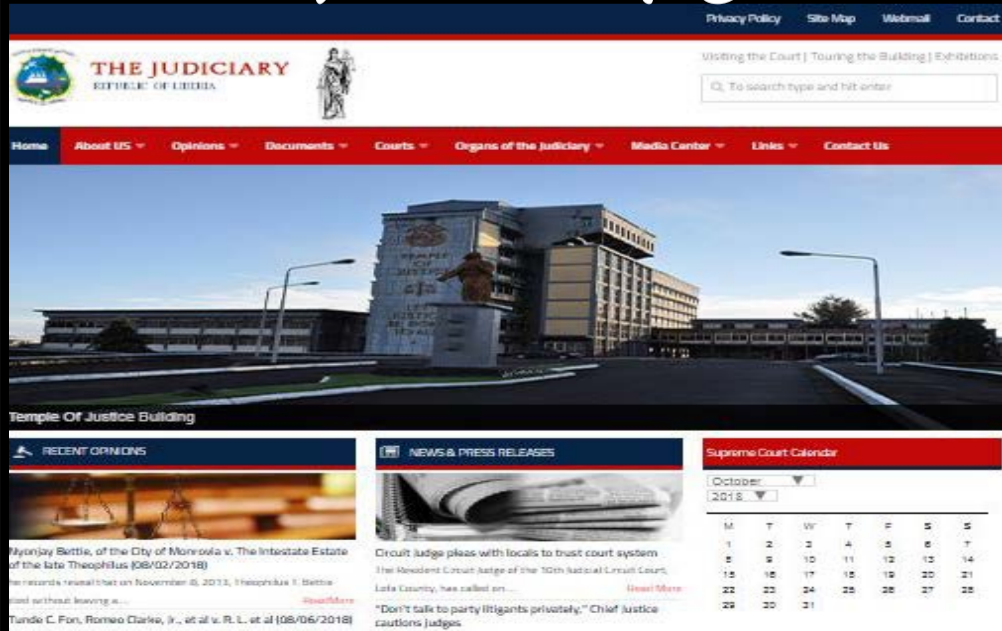
Speaking further, the Chief Justice reported that the Liberian Judiciary remains fully functional across the country with several reform programs taking place, including the implementation of existing projects and programs of the Judiciary, as well as the attendance of local and international trainings and seminars by judicial actors to enhance their capacities.

operating. "Circuit Courts, Specialized Courts and Magistrates Courts continue to adjudicate cases within their respective assigned areas and file returns in keeping with the mandates given them. These returns of Judges are compiled and analyzed to guide us in planning and decision making and they are posted on the Judiciary website (www.judiciary.gov.lr)," he pointed out.

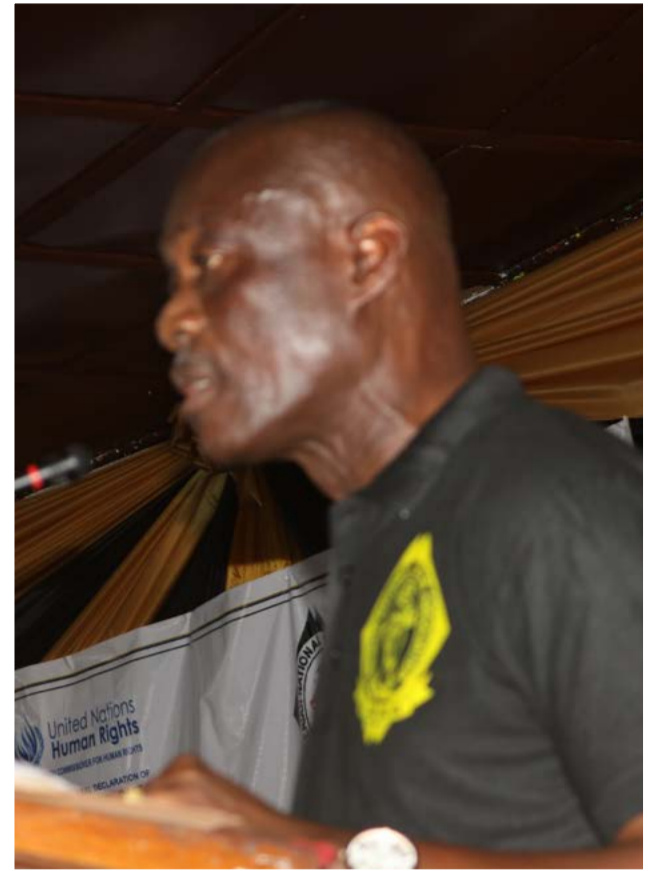
Chief Justice Korkpor said he was making public the operational structure and functions of the Judiciary to make the argument that its activities are so enormous and the need for reform so critical that appropriate budgetary allocations are required.

The Chief Justice used the occasion to thank local and international organizations, as well as friendly governments, that continue to help the Judiciary in its quest to uphold rule of law in Liberia.

READ THIS ONLINE @ www.judiciary.gov.lr



Liberia National Bar Association Convention in Pictures



Supreme Court's opening and seating of Justice Nagbe in October



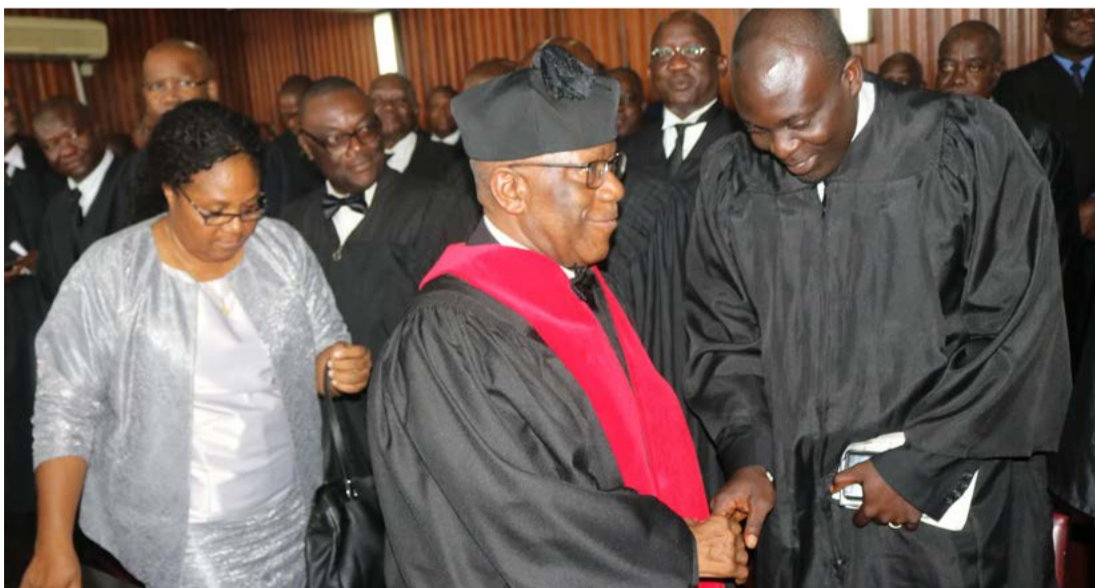
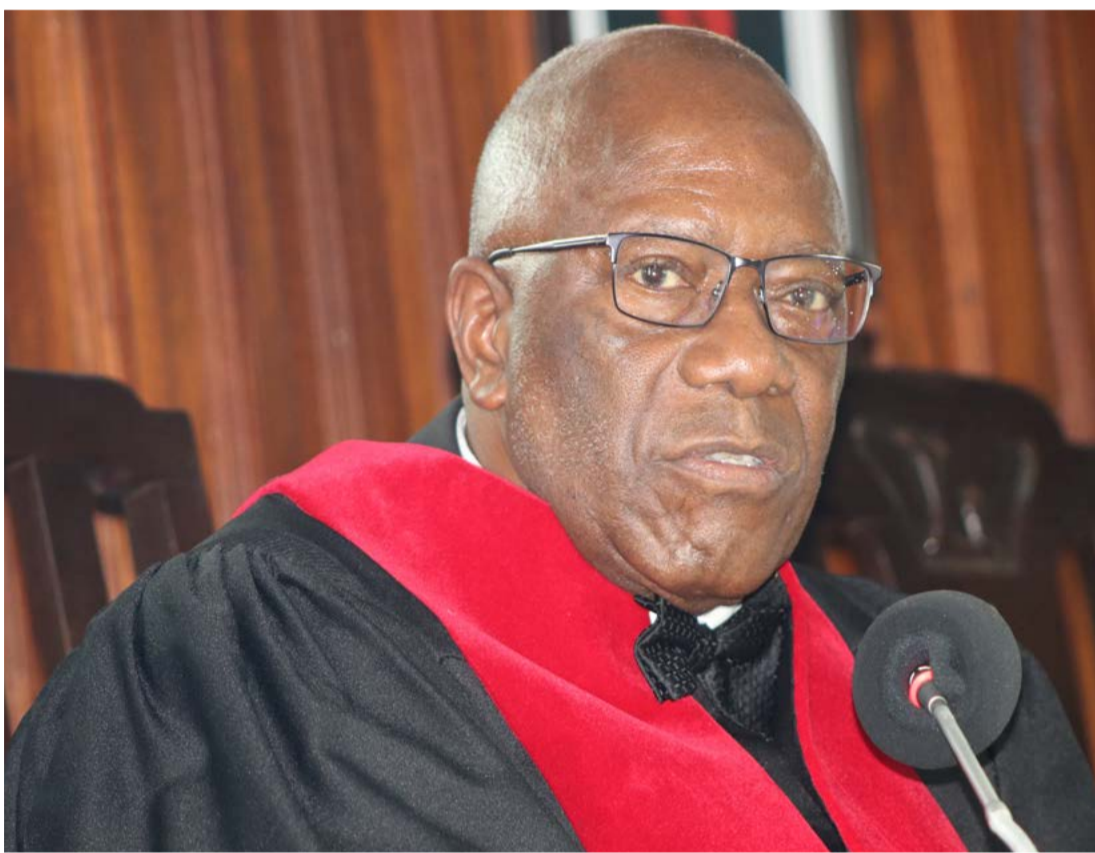
Pres. George Manneh WEAH lights Christmas tree at Temple of Justice



Commissioning of new judges at Temple of Justice



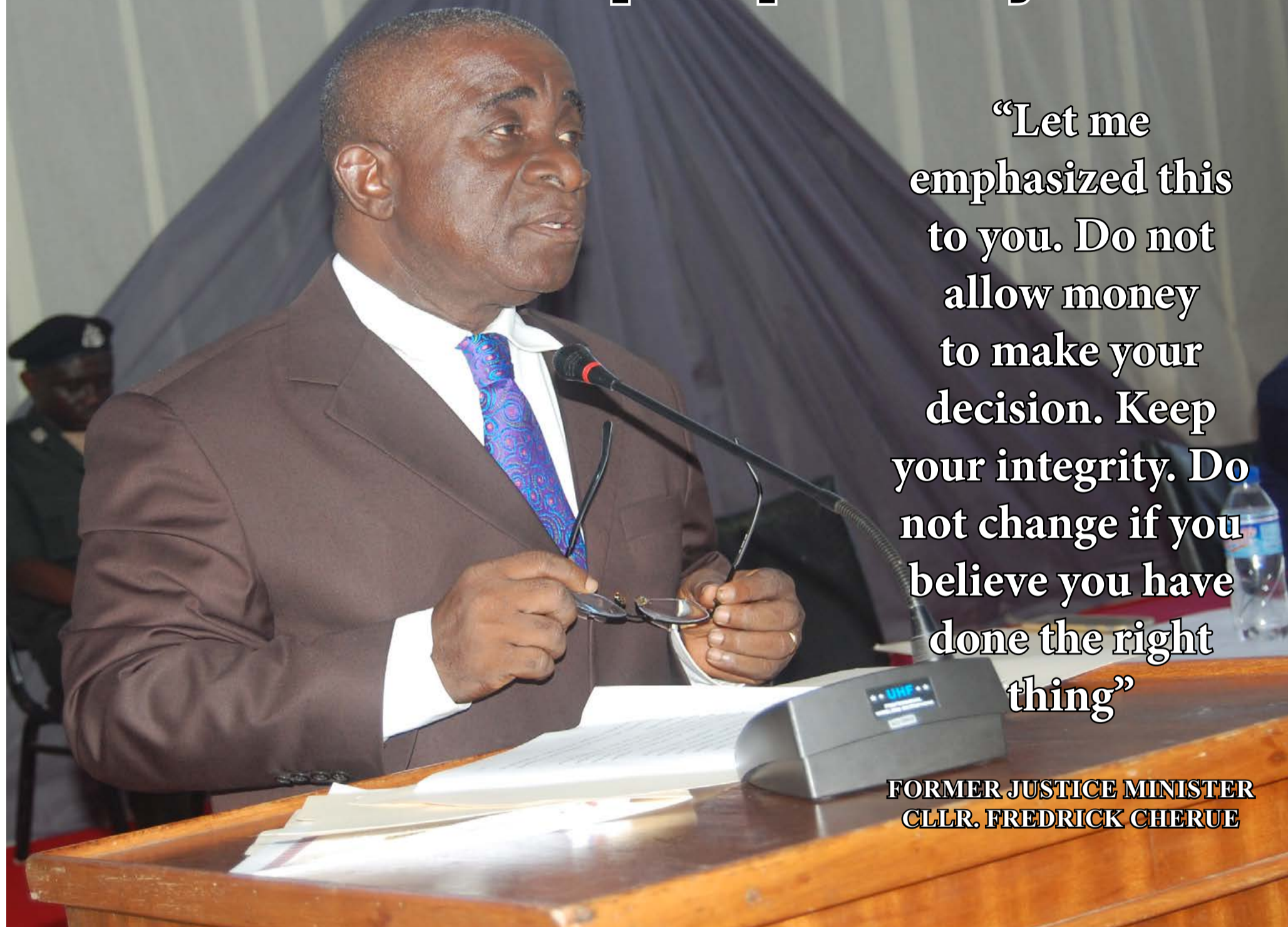
Associate Justice Philip A. Z. Banks, III Retirement in Retrospect



JUDICIARY NEWS

Don't allow money make your decision!

Cllr. Cherue warns prospective jurors



“Let me emphasized this to you. Do not allow money to make your decision. Keep your integrity. Do not change if you believe you have done the right thing”

**FORMER JUSTICE MINISTER
Cllr. FREDRICK CHERUE**

FORMER JUSTICE MINISTER Cllr. FREDRICK CHERUE

Former Justice Minister Cllr. Fredrick Cherue has cautioned jurors, lawyers, judges and court workers to serve their country with honesty.

Cllr. Cherue, speaking to prospective jurors at an orientation program organized by the Jury Management Office in Monrovia, called on other stakeholders to help in maintaining the integrity of the Judiciary.

According to the former Justice Minister, jury service is not a money making service. “Let me emphasized this to you” he said. “Do not allow money to make your decision. Keep your integrity. Do not change if you believe you have done the right thing” he added.

Cllr. Cherue at the same time told

the prospective jurors that their integrity is highly depended upon, and as such, they must listen to the cases and weigh the facts from both sides carefully before rendering a decision.

If jurors follow on a case in a step by step manner as the facts are presented, the immediate past Justice Minister said, they will know who is guilty and who is not.

Cllr. Cherue said a juror is similar to a police officer and as such they must be patriotic, so that their services can be appreciated.

He cautioned that if they are not honest and wise enough they could send innocent people to prison.

The legal practitioner said if jurors fail to perform their duty honorably,

the justice system will not be credible.

He said a juror must have a sense of total fairness and justice. Cllr. Cherue said though there are still some challenges within the system, all prospective jurors must come to the service as men and women of integrity.

In the past, he noted, the process of acquiring a juror was very transparent, because it was done in a traditional way, and those selected did not know what they were going to do until they got to the courts.

He however stressed that due to the advancement of technology the system has become somehow corrupt.

Cllr. Cherue claimed that it is because

of some the challenges the system currently faces that the judiciary has revised the old method to conform to present day realities, by setting up the Jury Management Office which is clothed with the authority to select and train jurors prior to the opening of each court term.

The former Attorney General described jury service as one of the highest duties of a citizen to his or her country and extolled the organizers and the Supreme Court for the initiative.

He concluded with a praise for the Judiciary for affording him the opportunity to speak to the prospective jurors on what their role is in the Judiciary.

JUDICIARY NEWS



Promote integrity and be independent CJ cautions prospective jurors

CHIEF JUSTICE FRANCIS S. KORKPOR, SR.

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia has appealed to hundreds of prospective jurors to assist the Judiciary make credible decisions when selected to decide cases at the courts.

Prospective jurors are Liberians,

randomly selected by law, from various ministries and agencies of government to serve as jurors if selected by the courts.

Chief Justice Francis Korkpor, Sr. said jury service is an important venture and prospective jurors must take it as such by rendering decisions in cases

that will promote trustworthiness in the Judiciary.

According to Chief Justice Korkpor, if selected, the jurors must see themselves as ambassadors of the courts and an integral part of the justice system of Liberia.

“If the ordinary man on trial sees the

faces of other ordinary people, s/he develops faith in the system” the chief justice noted.

He noted that legally speaking, court decisions are predominantly made by judges, but the presence of ordinary people serving as jurors or peers of the accused brings trust to the process and system.

Chief Justice Korkpor urged prospective jurors who will be selected for service this term of court to be independent, promote integrity in their work and avoid being influenced by others.

“You may sit on cases like rape, murder, property dispute, damages and armed robbery and decide the fate of the accused people.”

The Chief Justice has meanwhile called on government ministries and agencies said to be refusing to send their employees for jury service to refrain from doing so.

He said government Institutions seeking to excuse their employees from jury service will be impeding and obstructing the work of the Judiciary.

Chief Justice Korkpor was quick to however point out that there are legal grounds for excusing people from jury service and the court will respect the rules governing those grounds.

Fix bad spots on highways to avoid obstruction of justice says Judge Smith

on those highways during the August and partly the November terms of court when said highways are more or less impassable due to thick and deep muds caused by heavy rains.”

According the Circuit Judge whose charge was delayed for a week because terrible road conditions could not permit him open court on the statutory date, circuit judges, the poor masses travelling on commercial vehicles, trucks and other vehicles transporting goods and services to the improvised common people are usually stranded in muds along the highways for days or weeks thereby posing danger to lives and properties.

Judge Smith lamented that the situation even leads to the destruction of vehicles transporting goods/merchandise and other properties to the masses of the counties affected by bad roads and thereby damaging societal and economic lives of the poor masses in those counties adversely affected and harmfully challenging the national economy.

The judge’s charge also noted that the bad and impassable highways negatively imparts on the administration of justice.

“In those counties adversely affected by bad highways, material witnesses find it difficult and sometimes

impossible to appear in court to testify. And when witnesses don’t appear in court cases are not heard for the term and unfortunately continued to the next term of court thereby delaying and denying justice to the people, predominantly the poor,” Judge Smith maintained.

He stressed that the cause of the bad highways to the counties named above which impedes the travel of circuit judges is a reason why the circuit courts in those counties, usually do not open on time, especially during the last two terms of court- August and November. The Circuit Judge was quick to note that it is not the whole stretch of our highways that are impassable during the rainy season, but it is only a few and infinitesimal parts of the highways.

Speaking further, Judge Smith recommended that government manage the few bad areas of the highways to make them travelable during the rainy season, adding that it takes planning, commitment, courage, proactivity and what he called “a Mary-Brohaic approach” to remedy the perennial problem of the highways. “Even though managing the few bad areas requires funding, the disadvantages attending the bad highways during the rainy season by far outweigh the money it takes to fix



HIS HONOR GEORGE W. SMITH

the few challenging areas on the roads. In other words, the socio-economic benefit outweighs the money it takes to repair just those few damaged spots of our highways.”

Moreover in the charge, Judge Smith called on the Public works Minister, also a lawyer, to ensure the named roads are worked on to help judges and other road users to affected parts of the country travel safely.

“Minister Mabutu Nyepan, is particularly hereby charged, as Counsellor-at-law, officer and arm of court, to have those few damaged areas of the above-named highways

fixed against this dry season to avoid the obstruction of the administration of justice by circuit judges during the August and November terms of Court” the learned judge continued.

There are 12 cases on the docket on the court and Judge Smith has asked lawyers in the county to work with the court as it endeavors to clear those cases. His Appeal is in line with rule #7 of the Rules of Court which states: “Clearing the trial docket by the disposition of cases, shall be the foremost concern of the judge assigned to preside over the term.”

Supreme Court has power to declare laws unconstitutional if...

The Resident Circuit Judge of the 9th Judicial Circuit Court in Gbarnga, Bong County says the Liberian Constitution vests the Supreme Court of Liberia the power to declare unconstitutional, any laws or actions that contravene provisions of the organic law of the land.

Judge J. Boima Kontoe, who currently presides over Criminal Court C of the First Judicial Circuit in Montserrado County, said no laws whether statutory or otherwise can violate provisions of the constitution, many of which are core to the Democratic Governance of Liberia as a nation-state.

Judge Kontoe made the statement on the 12th of November 2018 when he delivered the joint opening charge of Criminal Courts A, B, C, and D at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia.

Delivering the joint charge on behalf of his colleagues at the commencement ceremonies of the last quarterly term of the criminal courts, the Circuit Judge described the Liberian Constitution as the bedrock of the country's national existence.

"The organic document" he disclosed, "outlines in the more comprehensive and extensive manner sets of principles to protect persons charged with the commission of crimes. The Constitution also establishes an independent court system with clearly defined perimeters, within which, the court in protecting the rights of citizens and residents of Liberia should operate."

According to Judge Kontoe, the consti-

tution nevertheless recognizes the difficulties of crystalizing all of the rights it seeks to protect and guarantee and therefore vested in the Legislature, the power to make and pass laws, including laws creating subordinate courts.

"To my mind, the framers of our constitution intended that laws made and passed by the National Legislature would be in furtherance of the constitution, giving greater clarity to its provisions and expanding on the rights, processes and procedures for protecting and securing those rights. It is within this legal framework and mechanism established by them, that we find the bedrock of our democracy" the learned judge maintained.

Like the constitution protects rights as mentioned above, Judge Kontoe also stated that in similar manner, the Legislature laid out in the Civil and Criminal Procedure Codes, certain procedures which circuit and subordinate courts should follow while conducting trials.

He further explained that if any action by any court runs contrary to the procedures specified in the Criminal and Civil Procedure Codes, the laws applicable to such proceedings may be challenged before the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia by the aggrieved parties.

Judge Kontoe used the occasion to call on the prosecution to peruse the dockets of the Criminal Assizes and Nolle Prosequoi (drop) cases lacking sufficient evidence for prosecution and make the necessary application



JUDGE J. BOIMA KONTOE

instead of waiting for public defenders and other lawyers to move the court for dismissal or indictment.

He wants the action of perusal of cases and their subsequent removal from court records extend to complaints before magistrates and other subordinate courts so as to save the court time to conduct trials speedily.

Additionally, the Judge Kontoe called upon those summoned for jury service during this term of Court, to disabuse their minds of the notion that they have come to make money. Although, you, when selected after examination, will serve as jurors and receive honorarium at the end of the term, you should view the summons of jury ser-

vice as an honor bestowed on you by the Government of Liberia to participate in the Judiciary of your country.

He urged the jurors, to whom he referred as the judges of the fact, to search for nothing but the fact and truth in every case whether they serve as grand or petit jurors.

Before declaring the courts open for business, he said "Let all of us as judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers, jurors and court staff extend our vision beyond the distant horizon and conduct ourselves in ways and manners that will lead to reduction of pretrial detainees in our prisons thereby making the Judiciary responsive to the need of our society."

Fix bad spots on highways to avoid obstruction of justice says Judge Smith



HIS HONOR GEORGE W. SMITH

The Resident Circuit Judge of the 15th Judicial Circuit Court in River Gee County has suggested one key way, he thinks, the Liberian Government could make its pro poor agenda felt by the masses in counties with terrible road conditions.

His Honor George W. Smith, who defines "pro-poor agenda" as a government program whereby the administration proactively seeks the welfare of the vulnerable masses, says from the prospective of the administration of justice, a short term fixing of the highways will greatly ease the social and economic pressures on rural people.

Judge Smith, in his November 2018

charge, mentioned the difficulties circuit judges, poor rural masses and other travelers encountered to get to counties with very bad road conditions to perform their national duties to the country.

"During the February and May terms of court," he said "the highway from Ganta to Zwedru through River Gee and Pleebo, Maryland Counties; the highway from Buchanan to River Cess County through Sinoe and Grand Kru Counties; the highway from Tubmanburg to Gbarpolu County; and the Voinjama highway, though very bad, these highways are less difficult to travel through as compared to travelling

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