

Chief Justice Commissions Judges for Nimba County



From left to right: Associate Justice Yussif D. Kaba, Judge Musa S. Sidibey, Judge Pape Suah, Chief Justice Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh & Solicitor General Nyanti Tuan

Liberia's Supreme Court Chief Justice, Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, has officially commissioned and seated two Counsellors-At-Law, Cllr. Pape Suah and Cllr. Musa S. Sidibey to serve as Resident Judge and Judge of the Sexual Offenses Division of the 8th Judicial Circuit Court, Nimba County respectively.

The official commissioning and seating of their Honors Pape Suah and Musa S. Sidibey has filled vacancies created by the retirement of their predecessors.

Conducting the official commissioning and seating of the two judges on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at the Temple of Justice, Chief Justice Yuoh said it is the expectation of the High Court that the judges will uphold and support the Constitution and laws of the land.

“Therefore, by the authority vested in me as Chief Justice of the Republic of Liberia, I passed both of you these gavels of authority and officially declare you seated as Judges of the 8th Judicial Circuit Court, Nimba County with all the rights, and responsibilities appertaining thereto,” the Chief Justice remarked.

Chief Justice Yuoh informed the Judges that consistence with the oath taken during the commissioning ceremony; they are now masters of their respective courts in Nimba County. She admonished them to work in accordance with the judicial canons, all of which governed judges in the performance of their duty.

Speaking on behalf of the two judges, His Honor Pape Suah expressed thanks to the Supreme Court and President George Weah for their appointments to serve in Nimba County. He assured both the Judiciary and Executive branches that the rule of law will be applied to the fullest.

Judge Suah said it is only through the full application of the law that Liberia can be peaceful and successful.

Also speaking, the vice president of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) Cllr. Jamal Detho conveyed the Bar’s delight to have been involved in the nomination process of the two judges; stressing, “it is the first time in recent years that the Bar has participated in the vetting of judges in the country”.

He said as the umbrella organization for lawyers, judges and justices in Liberia; the Bar plays a very crucial role in the nomination of its members to an exotic position in the Judiciary.

Cllr. Detho however reechoed the LNBA’s called for the establishment of a Judicial Commission where lawyers will properly be vetted as to their competence, character and overall ability to manage the courts and dispense justice without fear, favor and political maneuvering.

Judge Chenoweth Craves for Independent Judiciary Void of Political Affiliation



As electoral campaigns have started and Liberians will be marching to the polls in October to elect their President, Senators and Representatives; the Assigned Judge of Criminal Court “E” Her Honor Mardea Tarr Chenoweth has craved for an independent Judiciary where magistrates, judges and justices of the Judiciary branch will exempt themselves from political party affiliations.

Judge Chenoweth speaking Monday, August 14, 2023 at program marking the joint formal opening of the First Judicial Circuit, Criminal Assizes “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, & “E” iterated that individual judges and the judiciary as a whole be impartial and independent of all external pressures so that those who appear before the

courts and the wider public can have confidence that their cases will be decided fairly and in accordance with the law.

Judge Chenoweth explained further that the requirement that judges be impartial is the bedrock of the country's legal system. *"Judges should always keep an open mind in deciding matters, free of personal opinions or campaign promises,"* she noted.

Judge Chenoweth cited count thirty-seven (37) of the Judicial Canon which states: *"while a judge is entitled to entertain his personal view of political questions, and why not required to surrender his rights or opinion as a citizen, it is inevitable that suspicion of being wrapped by political bias will attach to a judge who becomes an active member of a political party and a promoter of its interest against another, especially those judges of the highest courts who by constitutional command are empowered to review and determine electoral issues under the multiparty system introduced by the 1986 Constitution. Judges should neither accept nor retain a place on any party committee nor act as party leader or generally engage in party activities."*

She noted: *"we expect that our judges and magistrates will not attend meetings of any political party, nor wear any paraphernalia, such as t-shirts or caps belonging to political parties."*

She disclosed that there are instances where magistrates have resigned to contest for political positions, and in some instances, they have won. *"If you are a magistrate or a judge and intent to run for any position this year, or campaign for your friend or relative, the honorable thing is to resign,"* the judge cautioned.

She continued: *"when the law says remain neutral, it also means that you don't openly or clandestinely lend support to any individual politician or political party."*

According to her, judges are the pillar of peace in the country and as such, election disputes must be handled with care if Liberia is to move forward as a peaceful nation, taking cue from where Liberians have come.

The judge expressed that when people have confidence that disputes arising out of elections in the country will be timely and impartially heard by the courts of the land, they will have no reason to return to violence, even when provoked.

The Judge maintained that the Judiciary must not be political and must remain inherently different from the other two branches of government.

She stressed the need for those who are aspiring for political positions in the Executive and the Legislature to be told in a loud voice that it is the electorates that decide those who win election in the country and not the courts.

The Judge asserted that it will be an illusion for any candidate to think that the Judiciary will validate any election result that will be a product of fraud.