



# JUDICIARY BRANCH



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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## **Judges Brainstorm on Judiciary & Democracy; Safeguard Democratic Values in the Legal System, Especially During and After Elections.”**



About one hundred and fifty (150) delegates from across Liberia consisting of Judges and Magistrates of the National Association of Trial Judges (NATJL) have converged in Monrovia at the grounds of the Temple of Justice, for a three-day National Trial Judges Conference from February 1-3, 2024, to brainstorm on issue of the Judiciary & Democracy; Safeguarding Democratic Values in the Legal System, Especially During and After Elections.

Judge Ousman F. Feika Resident Circuit Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, Grand Cape Mount County, currently presiding over the Sixth Judicial Circuit Civil Law



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Court of Montserrado County as the Assigned Judge, in a welcome remark to the delegates said this year the conference dealt into a critical theme, “Judiciary & Democracy; Safeguarding Democratic Values in the Legal System, Especially During and After Elections.”

Judge Feika asserted that over the three days event, judges are set to engage in taught provoking discussion, exchange valuable insight and explore the pivotal role the Judiciary plays in upholding the democratic principles particularly in the context of elections.

*“Our share commitment to the rule of law and democratic values underscores the importance of this gathering. As we gathered here, let us be mindful of the significant responsibility we have as guidance of justice. The knowledge share and relationship built during this conference will contribute to the advancement of our legal profession and the society,”* stated Judge Feika.

Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Liberia, in a special remark note the organization’s (NATJL) continuous enhancement of the welfare and well-being of its members.

Chief Justice Yuoh recalled that during the formal opening of the March Term A. D. 2023 of the High Court, and speaking to all stakeholders of the electoral process to include political parties, independent candidates, registered voters and the National Elections Commission (NEC), she described the election process in the following:

*“...It is an undeniable fact that our election calendar is the most tumultuous and tedious in the history of the Supreme Court. Hence, even in these quiet moments, the storms of election cases/challenges are quietly brewing and gathering strength at the National Election Commission and elsewhere, and is preparing to dash upon the shore of the Supreme Court’s docket like a wave.*



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*...But be that as it may, the Supreme Court, like a light tower in the midst of a storm is well fortified and judicially poised to hear and disposed of all and any elections disputes regardless of the magnitude or underlying currents. We are resolved to dispense justice evenly without fear and favor. The Supreme Court performed this task and duty as mandated by the Constitution and disposed of all elections matters within the time frame of the law."*

In order to safeguard democratic values in the legal system, the Chief Justice further stated in that address, that "Article 65 of the Constitution vests in the Supreme Court and such subordinates courts as established by the Legislature the judicial power of the Republic.

The said article also provides that judgments of the Supreme Court are final and binding and that they shall not be subject to appeal or review by any other branch of Government.

Cllr. T. Negbalee Warner, Senior Partner of Heritage Partners & Associates, serving as keynote speaker opined that the objective of the theme of the conference is a desire to explore and interrogate what judges and the entire Judiciary can do to safeguard democratic values in Liberia.

Cllr. Warner said reflecting on the aforementioned, there are few observations namely, *"that judges are not politicians that response to change in political dynamic, party interest, public clamor or fear of criticism during and after elections; that the role of judges on the legal system is to be faithful to the law and fairly apply the law without undue delay; that the role of judges along with the existing of the Judiciary is to safeguard democracy and democratic values through implementation of the rule of law and lastly, that judges and the judiciary simply doing their job is sufficient to safeguard democratic values."*



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He said these four points of observation have led him to the conclusion that Liberian Judges need not to do anything more than what is require; that is, discharging the duty of their office in a manner that promotes and preserve the integrity of the Judiciary thereby promoting public confidence in the Judiciary.

*“Efficient, predictable and fairly disposition of cases is indispensable to safeguarding democratic values and promotes public confidence in the Judiciary,”*  
Cllr. T. Negbalee Warner, the keynote speaker emphasized.

Prominent among those invited to the opening ceremony of the conference were Her Honor Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Liberia, Associate Justice, His Honor Yussif D. Kaba, Former Chief Justice, His Honor Francis S. Korkpor, Sr., Madam Chinyelumugi Okoh, Country Manager/IDLO, Mr. Stephen Rodriguez, Resident Representative/UNDP, Ms. Johanna Suberu Svanelind/Swedish Embassy, Cllr. Dr. Jallah A. Barbu, Dean/Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law and Cllr. Sylvester D. Rennie, President, Liberia National Bar Association.