



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

# JUDICIARY BRANCH



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
PUBLIC INFORMATION/STRATEGIC PLANNING

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **LIBERIAN JUDICIARY REACTS TO PUL'S STATEMENT**

The Judiciary Branch of Liberia has strongly reacted to a statement issued by the President of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) on August 15, 2025, terming said statement, which accuses the courts in Rivercess County, particularly the Yarpah Town and Cestos City Magisterial Courts, of a “coordinated legal campaign aimed at harassing, intimidating and silencing journalists” in that county as reckless, ill-informed and misguided.

The Judiciary states that at no time did the magistrates named in the PUL's statement abuse their judicial powers or authority to unlawfully arrest and detain two journalists as insinuated by the president of the PUL and is therefore abhor by such statement emanating from a body that is not only charged with the responsibility to ensure that the journalism profession is practiced with all professionalism but also to guide such profession from abuse by society misfits who profess to be journalists.

*The fact of the case is that, the two journalists reported that an officer of the Liberia National Police, Ojuku Weeks, was arrested by agents of the Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agency (LDEA), charged with drug related offenses and taken to the Yarpah Town Magisterial Court. The journalists also reported that whilst at the court, the alleged suspect offered bribe, which was received by the magistrate, who then released the accused. This report, which was widely discussed on various social media platforms and media outlets in Rivercess, did not only question the integrity of the Yarpah Town Magisterial Court, but also brought the reputation of the magistrate to public disrepute by accusing him of accepting a bribe for the release of a suspected criminal.*



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*The police officer, Ojuku Weeks, who had never been arrested for any drug offense, nor had he ever appeared before the magistrate on any charge, filed a complaint with the court through the Ministry of Justice, which charged the journalists with the offense of Criminal Coercion, for which the court issued a writ of arrest. In the same vein, the integrity of the court and the reputation of the magistrate, having been brought to such public disrepute, the magistrate also issued a writ of arrest for the journalists to answer to contempt charges before the court. These journalists were brought before the court, their rights read to them, including the right to bail, and due to the fact that they had no one to sign for their release at the time, they were incarcerated and subsequently released after meeting the bail conditions.*

Like every judicial system around the world, the courts in Liberia have the inherent power, by the laws of this country, to protect the sanctity of the Judiciary from any act that is intended to defame the courts and bring it to public disrepute. Hence its power to cite any person or institution whose action(s) or conducted tend to bring the Liberian Judiciary to public disrepute is fully grounded in its Contempt Power.

The magistrates named in the PUL's statement had all legal authority to cite the two journalists to answer as to why they should not be held in Contempt of Court, when they published and broadcast report that the magistrate of the Yarpah Town Magisterial Court accepted bribe from a police officer brought before the court charged with drug related offenses; a reportage that provided no evidence to substantiate such allegation of bribery between the magistrate and the supposed suspect.

The Liberian Judiciary frowns on the statement issued by the president of the PUL also terming it as a failure of the PUL to uphold the professional standards of journalism by condemning those two journalists and bring them to book for flagrant violation of the ethics of the profession, despite acknowledging that the reportage was false and injurious to the character and reputation of both the magistrate and the police officer, but rather attempted to arouse unwarranted public and international sentiments under the guise of trampling on press freedom. The fact that there exists the Kamara Abdullah Kamara Act of Press Freedom and



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Liberia's accession to the Table Mountain Declaration, in no way give journalists the right and a carte blanche to write or report such unfounded accusations that brings the image of the Liberian Judiciary to public disrepute. It is such reckless reportage and false accusations made against the Judiciary that find their way in various international reports without verification.

For too long the image and reputation of the Liberian Judiciary and its personnel, to include justices, judges and magistrates have been defamed and brought to public disrepute by such false, malicious and reckless reportage without any guard rails erected by the PUL.

The Judiciary reiterates that as the courts of this land uphold and protect the rights of every person within this Republic to Freedom of Expression and Free Speech, it will spare no efforts in holding persons fully responsible for the abuse thereof as enshrined in Article 15 (a) of the Constitution of Liberia (1986).

Signed: 

DIRECTOR  
Judicial Public Information