



Woman Sentenced to 20 Years for Human Trafficking

Judge Jabateh-Sirleaf Orders US\$58,000 Restitution to Victims

The Assigned Judge Mameita Jabateh-Sirleaf of the Fifth Judicial Circuit Court, Grand Cape Mount County, has sentenced defendant Bendu V. Kamara to 20 years' imprisonment at the Zwedru Correction Palace in Grand Gedeh County for trafficking several individuals from Liberia into neighboring Guinea. She was also ordered to pay US\$58,000 in restitution to the victims and the Government of Liberia.

The victims include Mustapha Bafalie, Hawa Buttel, and Mohammed Bafalie, who were deceived into traveling under false promises of employment.

On Thursday, July 23, 2026, Judge Jabateh-Sirleaf ruled that Kamara must pay US\$6,210 directly to the victims for money taken from them. Additionally, US\$32,000 for pain and suffering the victims endured. And US\$20,000 into the Government/Judiciary account to cover safe-home expenses during the trial.

The court found overwhelming evidence against Kamara, including video footage, oral testimony, and documentary proof. The jury returned a unanimous Guilty Verdict during the May Term of Court, A.D. 2026.

Judge Jabateh-Sirleaf emphasized that Kamara's own admission of receiving payments from victim Mustapha Bafalie amounted to a confession under Liberian Criminal Procedure law.

During the trial, the prosecution presented seven witnesses, while the defense produced five, including Kamara herself. Testimonies revealed that Kamara arranged with her daughter in Senegal to lure victims with false job offers. Victims were forced to pay thousands of dollars, only to be detained in Guinea by Kamara's family members until further payments were made.

The total amount extorted from the victims reached US\$6,210, while the broader damages and government expenses brought the restitution order to US\$58,000.

Judge Jabateh-Sirleaf concluded that Kamara's actions met the definition of "Trafficking in Persons", which involves recruitment, transportation, or harboring of individuals through fraud, coercion, or abuse of vulnerability for exploitation.