

13 Former Officials “Corruption” Trial Begins

The Criminal Court “C” at the Temple of Justice began selecting jurors to serve as judges of fact in the high-profile corruption trial of thirteen former government officials indicted for allegedly stealing 29,412 bags of 25kg humanitarian relief rice donated by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

On Monday, August 17, 2026, the defendants were arraigned before the court, and all pleaded not guilty to the indictment read by presiding Judge Ousama Fieka of Criminal Court “C, thereby joining issue with the state.

Minutes later, state prosecutors petitioned the court to select and sequester jurors to preside over the trial.

The Government of Liberia has indicted former Foreign Affairs Minister Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, former Internal Affairs Minister, Varney A. Sirleaf, former GSA Director General Mary Broh, and former NDMA Executive Director Henry O. Williams. Other defendants include former Deputy Minister for Administration Thelma Sawyer and former Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs for Administration Momolu Johnson, among others, for Theft of Property, Economic Sabotage, Misapplication of entrusted property, Abuse of office, and Criminal Conspiracy.

According to the indictment, rice valued at approximately US\$500,000 was donated in April 2023 by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for disaster victims in Liberia, but was allegedly diverted through unauthorized meetings and undocumented distributions.

The trial is expected to continue today at the First Judicial Circuit Criminal Court “C” of Montserrado County at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia.