Judge Jabateh- Sirleaf Sends Two Jurors To Prison
…For Deliberately Refusing To Serve



Her Honor, Judge Mameita Jabateh-Sirleaf of Criminal Court “D” sent two jurors to prison for deliberately refusing to serve, an act the judge considered an attempt to impede the court's function, and held them in contempt.

On Tuesday, November 10, 2026, two jurors serving during the August Term of court at Criminal Court “D” spent 24 hours at the Monrovia Central Prison for contempt of court.

Those jurors are part of the jury hearing a case drawn from an indictment involving an Armed robbery of defendant Abraham Jalloh, famously known as (HP), and others to be identified, who committed the crime of Armed robbery in the Paynesville Zubah town community in violation of Title 26, Chapter 15, Section 15.32 of the new penal law of Liberia.

According to Judge Jabateh-Sirleaf, the jurors' actions impeded the function of the court and the timely delivery of justice, and were therefore worthy of contempt. Her Honor Judge Jabateh-Sirleaf relied on Section 18.6 of the Jury Law, which talks about the Penalty for Refusal to serve as a juror.

Accordingly, "Any person who is summoned to serve as a juror and who is not exempt from such service under the provisions of this chapter and who without an excuse refuses to serve as a juror may be punished for contempt of court." “This provision makes jury service a legal obligation, not merely a voluntary civic activity,” she concluded.

During the hearing on the Motion for contempt, the Public Defender's legal team pleaded with the Judge, begging for mercy.

Cllr. Bestman Juah further pleaded, noting that the defendants' absence should not be considered in isolation from the time they have served; however, he begged the court to temper mercy with justice to protect the defendants' right to a speedy trial.

Meanwhile, Judge Jabateh -Sirleaf concluded that the issue of contempt is squarely on contempt, not the prosecution; therefore, the two jurors will go to prison to serve as a deterrent and show respect to the function that impedes the court’s function.

In addition, the Supreme Court clearly elaborated on the interpretation of contempt, indicating that, “The Supreme Court has the inherent power not only to punish for contempt of court, but to determine what constitutes contempt, and any act which tends to belittle, degrade, obstruct, interrupt, or prevent the Court’s administration of justice is contemptuous.” IN RE: Francis G. Doe, Sr., 23 LLR 38, 42 (1974).