

CENTAL



**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL**
the global coalition against corruption



100 DAYS +

AN **ANTI-CORRUPTION MONITORING REPORT** OF THE EARLIEST DAYS
OF THE **BOAKAI** ADMINISTRATION

The Center for Transparency and Accountability (CENTAL) is a civil society organization and national chapter of Transparency International (TI), the global coalition against corruption with chapters and networks in more than 120 countries worldwide. Since 2004, we have led and sustained active civil society engagement with integrity building and anti-corruption efforts in Liberia.

Authors: Gerald D. Yeakula and Anderson D. Miamen

Contributors: Leelah P. Semore, Torwon F. Gensee, Marian L. Haba, Williamson Wehyee, Roger Hinneh, Eric Cisco, Jerryline T. Wonde, Edward Blamo, John Sando, Clara K. Mallah, Timothy L. Reeves, Nornor Bee, and Randall Makor.

Cover: CENTAL

Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. All information was believed to be correct as of June 1, 2024. Nevertheless, CENTAL cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of its use for other purposes or in other contexts.

Copyright (c) CENTAL
Monrovia, June 2024

This publication was produced with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through the Embassy of Sweden near Monrovia. Its contents are the sole responsibility of CENTAL and do not necessarily reflect the views of SIDA.



Table of Contents

Acronyms	5
Introduction	7
Executive Summary	8
Methodology	12
Limitations	13
Findings	14
Appointments	14
<i>Controversy and delays</i>	14
<i>Integrity records</i>	21
<i>Favoritism</i>	22
<i>Gender and Inclusion</i>	25
In Focus: Gender	27
Allegations of Corruption	28
Actions not matching Anti-Corruption Commitments	29
<i>Targets and results</i>	30
In Focus: Payroll Cleanup	33
<i>Anti-Corruption Financing</i>	34
In Focus: Assets Recovery	35
Rights and the Civic Space	37
In Focus: The Legislature	39
Recommendations	41
References	47



Acronyms

ARREST	Agriculture, Roads, Rues of laws, Education, Sanitation
BMMC	Bea Mountain Mining Corporation
CENTAL	Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia
CDC	Congress for Democratic Change
CoC	Code of Conduct for Public Officials
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FIA	Financial Intelligence Agency
GAC	General Auditing Commission
GC	Governance Commission
GSI	Gender and Social Inclusion
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LACC	Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission
LBDI	Liberia Bank for Development and Investment
LEITI	Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
LMA	Liberia Maritime Authority
LMHRA	Liberia Medical and Health Product Regulatory
LNP	Liberia National Police
LIPA	Liberia Institute of Public of Administration
LPRA	Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority
LPRC	Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company
LTA	Liberia Telecommunication Authority
LWSC	Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation
MACs	Ministries, Agencies, and Commissions
MICAT	Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism

NASSCORP	National Social Security and Welfare Corporation
NAYMOTE.	NAYMOTE Partners for Democratic Development
NEC	National Election Commission
NIR	National Identification Registry
NICOL	National Insurance Company of Liberia
NLA	National Lottery Authority
NOCAL	National OIL Company of Liberia
NRF	National Road Fund
NTA	National Transit Authority
ORWOCH	Organization for Women and Children
PPCC	Public Procurement Concession Commission
PWDs	People With Disabilities
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
STDs	Sexual Transmitted Diseases
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNCAC	United Nation Convention Against Corruption
USAID	United State Agency for International Development



Introduction

On January 22, 2024, President Joseph N. Boakai became Liberia's 26th President. His inauguration marked the second transfer of power from a democratically elected government to another in post-war Liberia.¹ In his inaugural speech, the President recognized corruption as a drawback and promised to 'reset the fight against corruption and impunity to demonstrate firmness and resolve'.² At last, President Boakai has the opportunity to lead the charge against corruption. While Vice President during the administration of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Boakai famously complained of not having the opportunity to utilize his potentials.³ He likened the situation to that of a 'race car parked in the garage' that has never been tested.⁴ As President, however, he has a greater opportunity to race the country to higher heights. With more than 100 days in office, it is important to take stock of how far the country has come since President Boakai received the proverbial baton.

This report catalogs developments in the anti-corruption space spanning the first 130 days of the Boakai administration. With the first '100 days plus' monitoring report published in 2018, this is the second monitoring report produced by CENTAL to gauge the progress of a new administration. It analyzes actions, inactions, and allegations with a view to laying bare realities that contrast or support aspirations for a vibrant anti-corruption framework. It then recommends actions to address issues identified.

¹ R Sieh 'Liberia Wins as Another Successful Democratic Transfer of Power Looms' (*Frontpage Africa*, 18 November 2023) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/analysis/analysis-liberia-wins-as-another-successful-democratic-transfer-of-power-looms/>> accessed 2 June 2024.

² 'Inaugural Address of His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr.' (2024) 9 <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/sites/default/files/documents/INAUGURAL-ADDRESS-OF-HIS-EXCELLENCY-JOSEPH-NYUMA-BOAKAI.pdf>> accessed 25 May 2024.

³ J Browne 'Boakai's "Race Car" campaign under attack' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 26 September 2017) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/boakai-s-race-car-campaign-under-attack/>> accessed 19 June 2024.

⁴ As above.



Executive Summary

Liberia has multiple governance, infrastructure, performance and other challenges, which President Boakai inherited and ought to deal with. Addressing these challenges will require adequate time to plan for and take decisive and strategic decisions, including mobilizing the requisite domestic and external resources. A six-year government cannot be entirely graded by its first 100 plus days in office. However, the period can be used to initiate groundbreaking actions and build a solid foundation for improved accountability and performance. The period is relatively enough to give an indication of true intent and willpower to aggressively plan for and begin dealing with multiple corruption, underperformance and other governance challenges facing the public sector. The first 100 plus days of the Boakai-Koung led administration have shown mixed performances and developments. While there have been some positive developments, there are major issues to address, if the government must succeed in delivering for the people and breaking away “business as usual”. Below are key findings and recommendations of the report.

Key Findings

Appointments characterized by delays, controversy, limited transparency. There were noticeable delays in appointments. Nominations to most positions took place over a three-month period following inauguration and, in some cases, were spaced apart by a week. Some appointments were not publicized. There was also a lack of transparency regarding appointments revoked by the President, thus, undermining the public’s right to know. Of 1,306 appointments 38 were affected by controversies. Of this number, 13 concerned appointments that were changed while 25 appointments were made ineffective by revocation, resignation, court proceedings, or refusal of current office holders to turn. The volume and nature of appointment withdrawals does not only bring into question the rigor of vetting procedures, if any, but raises doubt over awareness of the nature of restrictions on appointment to certain position as well as the motivation for doing so.

Some appointees have negative integrity records. Some appointees are returning to public service despite a checkered history in government. These include: Chairman of the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA), S. Tornorlah Varpilah, designated by the National Legislature to reconstitute public funds; Daniel Johnson, appointed as Secretary General of the Roberts Flight Information Region, wanted by the United States government for defrauding the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) of approximately US\$1.9 million; Nortu Jappah, the President’s choice to head the National Insurance Company of Liberia, was ‘forced to resign’

his position as Managing Director of the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) in 2012 due to his involvement in a corruption saga related to the importation of substandard pipes and chemicals; Patrick Sandike, Deputy Managing Director for Technical Services to the LWSC, dismissed for corruption from the institution when he served as Operation Engineer; Rudolph Merab, Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), reputed to have been involved in illegal logging activities during the war years; and Mohammed Maladho Bah, Special Presidential Envoy for Investment, reportedly defrauded Liberians while posing as a dealer of used cars.

Appointments characterized by nepotism. President Boakai has so far not appointed immediate family members. Nonetheless, the President has appointed Jacob T. Kabakole, an 'influential' nephew, as Chairman of the Board of the Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority (LPRRA). We found nepotism regarding appointment of family members of public officials, particularly those appointed by the President and tasked with responsibility to select nominees. Sirleaf Tyler, brother of Senator Alex J. Tyler, was appointed as Minister of Transport. Nancy Moye, wife of Senator Prince Moye, was named as member of the board of the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC). Daybah E. Johnson, daughter of Senator Prince Y. Johnson, was appointed as Assistant Minister for Regional Labor Affairs. Senator Darbah Varpilah's husband, S. Tornolar Varpilah, was appointed as Chairman of the Board of the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA), and her children Nee-Alah T. Varpilah and Feetor Varpilah were appointed as Director-General of the Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA), and Deputy Director General of the National Insurance Company of Liberia (NICOL) respectively, while her brother-in-law, Gallah Varpilah, was appointed City Mayor of Gbarnga.

Of the 75 ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs) of government to which heads were appointed, CENTAL investigated and identified the counties from which 70 heads of MACs hail. More than half (i.e. 57 percent) of those appointed to head MACs are from the North-Central region comprising Lofa, Bong, and Nimba counties. Majority of those appointed supported his presidential bid. Those suspected of supporting opposition parties have been denied appointment.

Highs and lows for gender and inclusion. President Boakai appointed the first female Minister of National Defense, Retired Brigadier General Geraldine Janet George. Females also account for 30 percent of the Cabinet, thus meeting globally accepted gender quota regarding minimum proportion of women in leadership positions. However, this percentage drops by nearly half when the leadership of MACs in general or the total appointments made by the President are considered. Of those appointed as heads of the 75 MACs to which appointments affecting management were made, females constitute 17.3 percent. Also, females constitute 18.5 percent of all appointments made by the President. Meanwhile, the President appointed three physically challenged persons to top roles in government. They are: Samuel S. Dean, Sr., Executive Director of the National Commission on Disabilities; Dr. Luke Bawo, Managing Director of the Liberia Medical and Health Products Regulatory Authority (LMHRA); and Nowa Zawu Gibson, Deputy Managing Director for Operations at the national Transit Authority (NTA).

Allegations of corruption have emerged. It has been reported that President Boakai, prior to his inauguration and lacking any constitutional, requested from NASSCORP and did receive funding to finance the purchase of five Land Cruiser SUVs valued at US\$117,000 each. This misapplication of public funds have faced intense public scrutiny. The President has been accused of bribing Legislators in a bid to influence leadership at the Legislature. There were reports that the President's nephew and Officer-In-Charge of the National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL), Jake Kabakole, disbursed US\$600,000 to contractors under questionable circumstances. Public Works Minister Roland Giddings admitted to violating the procurement law by awarding road maintenance contracts valued US\$22.4 million without a competitive bidding process. According to reports, the 285 pieces of earth moving equipment were given to the Boakai government as part of a deal with the Guma Group for exploration of the Wologizi mountain. The government has, however, denied that such deal was finalized.

Actions not matching Anti-Corruption Commitments. The President has taken some important steps such as appointing officials to the Ombudsman and suspending Stanley Ford, Director-General of the Financial Intelligence Agency (FIA), following reports of is involvement in money laundering. He has, however, so far failed to hold his officials accountable. For instance, without release of investigative findings into circumstances around poor planning of the inauguration and allegations of mismanagement of the US\$600,000 program budget, the President issued an official statement expressing utmost confidence in Madam Miatta Fahnbulleh, Chairperson the inaugural committee. The President also violated the Code of Conduct regarding declaration of his assets. Rather doing so prior, he declared 16 days into office. Also, support to anti-graft institution remains low.

Key Recommendations:

There is a need for more robust, timely, and inclusive actions and efforts in dealing with corruption and other core governance, transparency and accountability issues. While we acknowledge few notable early efforts of the President and his administration, he needs to do far more to match his commitments with deeds. Liberians need to see well-resourced, robust and more independent LACC under his watch, giving his bold anti-corruption commitments and promises. Equally, LACC must show tangible impacts for resources at its disposal at the moment, as the public has not seen much from the Commission, so far. President Boakai must public his assets, incomes and liabilities and require same of his officials, as a show of true commitment to breaking away from the past or 'business as usual'. Additionally, the Asset Recovery Team must be dissolved and the resources directed at the LACC to take on the Task. If the President insists on having a Taskforce to deal with the matter, it should be an interagency team with representations from existing government agencies linked to the mandate. This will save cost and ensure sustainability of the process as well as public confidence in its work, something that the current Taskforce lacks. LACC must show more will and commitment in implementing their mandate, ensuring that those accused and sanctioned for corruption are investigated and prosecuted.

Additionally, the Legislature must do more to be accountable and transparent in its dealings. Ongoing preparations for audit must be timely completed. Also, the Legislature must ensure openness in voting and decision-making around critical matters as well as make conformation processes robust and transparent, ensuring adequate citizens' participation. Liberians also expect a robust and well-resourced Legislative Budget Office and Public Accounts Committee. Meanwhile, citizens, development partners, media and other stakeholders need to play their respective roles in collaborating with the government at different levels. Development partners support and strengthen civil society and the media to work with citizens in holding the government accountable. This is important to ensure that promises made and other democracy, rule of law and other good governance requirements are promoted, upheld, and respected.



Methodology

This report is a product of qualitative research. Data was gathered through desk review of relevant laws and documents, online research, media monitoring, and interviews with informants. While information on appointments in government were tracked from January 22, 2024 to May 9, 2024, data on other issues were gathered up to June 1, 2024. Specific information on appointees were gathered through informants as well as online research through social media and other outlets. The authors have adopted the Pretoria University Law Press (PULP) referencing style for this report.



Limitations

This report does not paint a full picture of corruption in the period under review because it is primarily based on desk research and media reports. As a result, useful insights that could have been gleaned through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and other methods have been missed. Also, information presented on appointments do not extend to the full duration of the period under review. It is, therefore, possible that important data might have been missed. Further, difficulty in gathering information on appointees with limited online presence affected data analysis. Despite these limitations, data gathered was sufficient to support analysis. Efforts were also made to verify information across different sources.



Findings

Appointments

Controversy and delays

The Liberian presidency may not be timebound to fully form a government or cabinet, as the Liberian Constitution and other laws are silent on the matter. However, the Section 4.5 of the Code of Conduct for public officials (CoC) requires the President and all public officials to perform their duties with efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, integrity, among others. Thus, it is important that a candidate seeking state power be adequately prepared to assemble a team of qualified, result-driven and integrity-oriented individuals to serve, especially after being declared winner.

Immediately following his inauguration, President Boakai commenced nomination of officials to key roles in government. With the first set of appointments made on the day of his inauguration, many assumed that subsequent appointments would follow quickly. However, there were noticeable delays in appointments although the intervening two-months before inauguration provided cushion for deliberations on formation of the new government. Nominations to most positions took place over a three-month period following inauguration and, in some cases, were spaced apart by a week. Since the process of filling several key positions requires nomination by the President, confirmation by the Senate, and appointment and commissioning by the President, concerns which arose over delays in nominations were valid as prolonged vacancies affected smooth running of government. Although the President himself has indicated that he is being 'very selective',⁵ delays could well be explained by other factors.

CENTAL tracked 1,306 appointments made in government as at May 9, 2024.⁶ While many of these appointments were well received by the public, a few raised eyebrows—prompting resignation, revocations and court proceedings.⁷ Generally, there was lack of transparency regarding appointments revoked by the President, thus, undermining the public's right to know.

⁵ N Booty and J Ball 'How President Joseph Boakai hopes to rid Liberia of its problems' (*BBC*, 28 March 2024) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68682538>> accessed 16 June 2024.

⁶ When adjusted on account of appointments withdrawn or appoints changed, total appointments for the period sum up to 1,269.

⁷ Major General (Rtd.) Prince C. Johnson III resigned after being appointed Minister of National Defense following protests by wives of service men at the Armed Forces of Liberia.

Some appointments were not even publicized. Madam Carmerna C. Yeke, Deputy Director General of the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP), was dismissed by the President for gross insubordination after she refused to honor an appointment to the entity which was not publicized.⁸ Information about particular appointments revoked were not provided although subsequent publications featured the catchphrase: “*these nominations supersede any previously published in similar agencies and positions*”.⁹ Yet, such notices fell short of full disclosure, provided no reasons for recalls, and shifted to the public the responsibility of figuring appointments that were withdrawn—a painstaking process requiring tracking of appointments and comparison with previous appointments.

CENTAL identified 38 appointments affected by controversies of varying degrees. Of this number, 13 concerned appointments that were changed while 25 appointments were made ineffective by revocation, resignation, court proceedings, or refusal of current office holders to turn over. Regarding majority of the revoked appointments, it has been alleged that appointment lists approved by the President were tampered with by his office staff before publication.¹⁰ As such, unapproved names were recalled for replacement. Senator Prince Moye of the Unity Party told the media that, in a meeting with some Senators, President Boakai expressed shock over an appointment published by his office.¹¹ There is no public information regarding whether any actions have been taken by the President against those suspected. Meanwhile, Presidential Press Secretary Kula Fofana refuted allegations that names approved by the President were replaced by staff of the President’s office although she did not respond to remarks attributed to the President by the Senator.¹² Albeit, some revocations were not triggered by foul play. For instance, there were recalls made by the President after those concerned had faced Senate confirmation hearings,¹³ fueling concerns that certain affected nominees were discovered not to have been supporters of interests of the President, including his presidential bid.¹⁴ Responding to withdrawal of their appointments by the President, Cllr. Bobby W. Livingstone and Cllr. Lafayette B. Gould, Sr. stated that they felt no need to apologize

⁸ GC Koinyeneh ‘Liberia: Pres. Boakai Sacks NASSCORP Deputy Director General for Resisting Presidential Mandate’ (*FrontPageAfrica*, 22 March 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-pres-boakai-sacks-nasscorp-deputy-director-general-for-resisting-presidential-mandate/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁹ ‘President Boakai Nominates and Appoints Additional Officials To Government | The Executive Mansion’ <<https://emansion.gov.lr/media/press-release/president-boakai-nominates-and-appoints-additional-officials-government>> accessed 5 June 2024.

¹⁰ L Dodoo and S Lomax ‘Liberia: Nomination Controversies and Political Maneuvering Cloud Boakai’s Government Formation Process’ (*FrontPageAfrica*, 25 March 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/liberia-nomination-controversies-and-political-maneuvering-cloud-boakais-government-formation-process/>> accessed 6 June 2024.

¹¹ As above.

¹² As above.

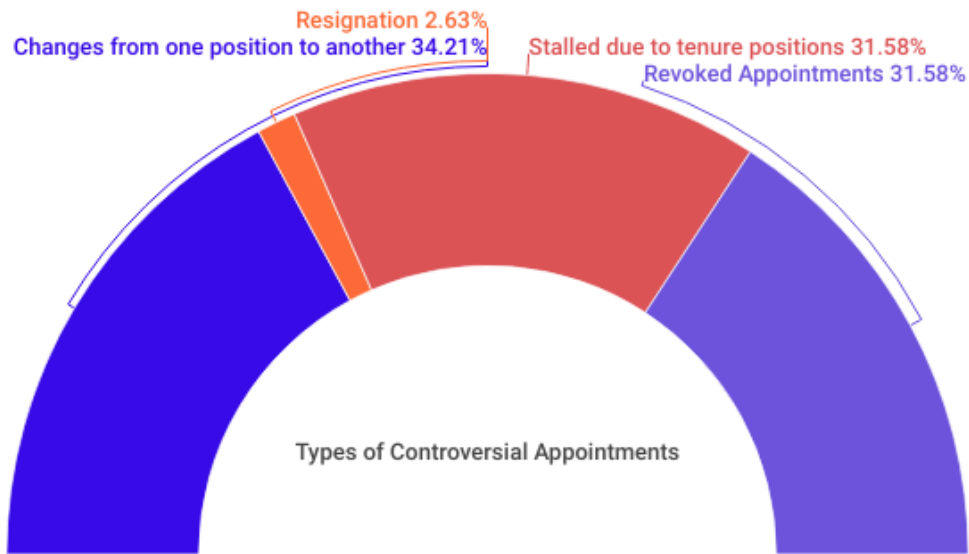
¹³ BN Toe ‘President Boakai Withdraws The Nominations of Three Individuals’ (*Focus On Liberia*, 6 April 2024) <<https://focusonlib.com/opinions/f/president-boakai-withdraws-the-nominations-of-three-individuals>> accessed 6 June 2024.

¹⁴ Dodoo et al (n 10).

for their roles in prosecuting former Chief Justice Gloria Musu Scott, a stalwart of the Unity Party.¹⁵

Controversial Appointments

Of the 38 appointments affected by controversy, 13 involved changes from one position to another, 1 resignation, 12 stalled due to appointments to tenure positions, and 12 revoked appointments.



President Boakai withdrew the appointment of Cllr. Cooper Kruah as Minister of Justice following public criticism based on reports that Cllr. Kruah had engaged in unethical conduct as a lawyer.¹⁶ According to reports, President Boakai had been informed about the findings of the Grievance and Ethics Committee of the Supreme Court prior to the nomination but that same was ignored.¹⁷ President Boakai subsequently appointed Cllr. Kruah as Minister of Labor begging the question of whether a person deemed unfit to occupy one public office on grounds of integrity can be said to have the integrity to occupy another? Considering the President's promise not to do 'business as usual', the appointment does not show a clear line of departure. This is particularly true given that former President Weah also withdrew his nominee for Justice Minister following revelations of unethical conduct and appointed him as Minister of Labor.¹⁸

¹⁵ "No Apologies For Prosecution Role", Cllr. Livingstone & Cllr. Gould Respond To Nomination Withdrawal" (*Independent Probe*, 7 April 2024) <<https://independentprobe.com/2024/04/07/no-apologies-for-prosecution-role-cllr-livingstone-cllr-gould-respond-to-nomination-withdrawal/>> accessed 6 June 2024.

¹⁶ R Sieh 'Liberia: Under Pressure President Reportedly Sets up Team to Deal with Appointments' (*FrontPage Africa*, 29 January 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-under-pressure-president-reportedly-sets-up-team-to-deal-with-appointments/>> accessed 16 June 2024.

¹⁷ As above

¹⁸ As above

The tables below present details about President Boakai's appointments that were changed, revoked, stalled, or involved resignation.

Table 1: Appointments rendered ineffective (withdrawn/stalled)

Cllr. Jonathan Massaquoi	Minister	Ministry of Justice	January 24, 2024	January 26, 2024
Cllr. Cooper Kruah	Minister	Ministry of Justice	January 26, 2024	February 13, 2024
Major General (Rtd.) Prince C. Johnson III	Minister	Ministry of National Defense	January 31, 2024	February 12, 2024 (resigned)
Cllr. Bobby W. Livingstone	Deputy Minister for Press & Public Affairs	Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism	March 18, 2024	April 4, 2024
Adana Paye	Assistant Minister for Corrections & Rehabilitation	Ministry of Justice	March 19, 2024	April 4, 2024
Cllr. Lafayette B. Gould, Sr.	Assistant Minister for Litigation, Ministry of Justice	Ministry of Justice	March 19, 2024	April 4, 2024
D. Emmanuel Wheinyue	Assistant Minister for Research & Planning	Ministry of Internal Affairs	March 18, 2024	March 21, 2024
Roger Domah	Deputy Minister for Administration	Ministry of Health	February 20, 2024	March 28, 2024
Jerome Jaryee	Deputy Director General for Audit Services	Internal Audit Agency	March 18, 2024	(Stalled)
Robell Laytee Gbeintor	Director of Public Health Research	National Public Health Initiative of Liberia	February 20, 2024	N/A
Prof. Alaric Tokpa	Chairperson	Governance Commission	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)

Samuel M. Nyema	Deputy Director-General for Administration	Internal Audit Agency	March 18, 2024	N/A
Abdullah Kamara	Chairpersom	Liberia Telecommunications Authority	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Patrick Honnah	Commissioner	Liberia Telecommunications Authority	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Clarence Kortu Massaquoi	Commissioner	Liberia Telecommunications Authority	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Ben A. Fofana	Commissioner	Liberia Telecommunications Authority	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Angela Bush Cassell	Commissioner	Liberia Telecommunications Authority	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Dr. Edward Liberty	Executive Director	National Identification Registry	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Hanson S. Kiazolu	Chief Executive Officer	National Road Fund of Liberia	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Ciapha Saah Gbollie	Director General	National Lottery Authority	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Ennish Fahnbulleh	Deputy Director General for Administration	National Lottery Authority	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Christian Cooper	Deputy Director General for Operations	National Lottery Authority	February 20, 2024	(Stalled)
Joseph Cooper	Executive Director	Libeia Refuge Repatriation and Resettlement Commission	March 6, 2024	March 25, 2024
James Ketter	Commissioner, Cinta Township	Margibi	April 4, 2024	April 29, 2024 (reportedly due to misspelling)
Eric G.Y. Jenn-Judgges	Deputy Minister for Technical Services	Ministry of Public Works	February 1, 2024	February 1, 2024

Table 2: Appointments affected by shifts in positions

Cllr. Cooper Kruah	Minister, Ministry of Justice	Minister, Ministry of Labor
Major General (Rtd.) Prince C. Johnson III	Minister, Ministry of National Defense	Director, National Security Agency
Jacob T. Kabakollie	Officer-In-Charge, National Oil Company of Liberia	Chairman of the Board, Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority
Massah Sobboh	Assistant Minister for Human resources, Ministry of State & Presidential Affairs	Coordinator of Special Projects, Ministry of State
Martha Morris	Assistant Minister for Administration, Ministry of Health	Deputy Minister for Administration, Ministry of Health
Joseph Toumed	Deputy Director General-Central Agriculture Research institute	Deputy Director for Administration, & Finance, Cooperatives Development Agency
Emmanuel N. Reeves	Officer-In-Charge, Liberia Maritime Authority	Deputy Commissioner for Fiscal Affairs, Liberia Maritime Authority
Alexandra B. Amnon	Deputy Director General for Administration, Liberia Broadcasting System	Deputy Director General for Public Affairs, Liberia Broadcasting System
D-Flow Flomo, li	Deputy Director General for Public Affairs, Liberia Broadcasting System	Deputy Director General for New Media & Rebranding, Liberia Broadcasting System
Joash T. Hodges	Deputy Director General for Media Services, Liberia Broadcasting System	Commissioner, Independent Information Commission
B. Lewis Kaine	County Administrative Officer, Margibi	County Development Officer, Margibi
Togea Samu Zarwea	County Development Officer, Margibi	County Administrative Officer, Margibi
Arthur Bestman	Officer-In-Charge, Rural Renewable Energy Agency	Acting Executive Director, National Center for the Coordination of Response Mechanism

The volume and nature of appointment withdrawals does not only bring into question the rigor of vetting procedures, if any, but raises doubt over awareness of the nature of restrictions on appointment to certain position as well as the motivation for doing so. For instance, appointments were made to tenured positions at different agencies including the Internal Audit Agency—a public integrity institution.¹⁹ Other affected institutions include the Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA), Governance Commission (GC), National Lottery Authority (NLA), National Identification Registry (NIR), and the National Road Fund (NRF). Officials serving at those entities refused to vacate on grounds of having legally protected tenures and took further steps by seeking protection from the Supreme Court.²⁰ Government had claimed that removal of the officials was due to violation of Code of Conduct provision prohibiting appointed officials from being involved in political canvassing.²¹

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court upheld tenure security for the said officials and reiterated that persons in such positions can only be removed for cause established through due process.²² Shortly after the Court issued its opinion, the President suspended LTA officials over allegations of corruption and appointed his initial nominees in their stead pending audit by the General Auditing Commission (GAC). He also suspended officials of the Governance Commission (GC) for activities inconsistent with the Act creating the GC.²³ Chairman Garrison Yealue and Commissioner Elizabeth Dorkin were affected. The President then appointed his initial nominee to act in the position pending investigation by a committee. or investigation. The move brings into question the President's sincerity in tackling abuse of office since it appears more as a ploy intended to reward political associates. For instance, at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) where the President's nominee was given the green light by the Supreme Court,²⁴ no such audit has been commissioned although the agency has been a subject of corruption allegations.²⁵ Also, the President's deployment of the GAC in such fashion raises concern that the integrity institution is being weaponized against perceived opponents to the administration.

¹⁹ 'President Boakai Makes Additional Nominations in Government' (*The Executive Mansion*, 18 March 2024) <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/index.php/media/press-release/president-boakai-makes-additional-nominations-government>> accessed 17 June 2024.

²⁰ 'S/Court Decides on Tenure Case Wednesday' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 23 April 2024) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/s-court-decides-on-tenure-case-wednesday/>> accessed 17 June 2024.

²¹ As above

²² W Tokpa 'Liberia: Supreme Court Orders Withdrawal of Nominations to LTA, LNLA, NIR, and Governance Commission Due to Illegal Appointments; Prof. Tarpeh Loses Tenure Battle' (*Frontpage Africa*, 25 April 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-supreme-court-orders-withdrawal-of-nominations-to-lta-lnla-nir-and-governance-commission-due-to-illegal-appointments-prof-tarpeh-loses-tenure-battle/>> accessed 12 June 2024.

²³ 'Boakai ambushes tenure holders - Liberia news The New Dawn Liberia, premier resource for latest news' <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/boakai-ambushes-tenure-holders/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

²⁴ As above.

²⁵ 'Tenure Hullabaloo Sparks At EPA; Protesters Resist Wilson Tarpeh's Return, But.... - Independent Probe Newspaper' <<https://independentprobe.com/2024/01/23/45667/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

Integrity records

Some appointees are returning to public service despite a checkered history in government. For instance, the Chairman of the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA), S. Tornorlah Varpilah, has been designated by the National Legislature to reconstitute public funds owing to a report of the GAC on his tenure as Minister of Transport.²⁶ Daniel Johnson, appointed as Secretary General of the Roberts Flight Information Region, is wanted by the United States government for defrauding the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) of approximately US\$1.9 million.²⁷ In November 2010, his co-conspirators Joe O. Bondo and Morris B. Fahnbulleh were convicted in the United States by a jury.²⁸ Johnson was indicted on September 19, 2007, by a grand jury of a US District Court of Columbus for allegedly diverting US\$240,000 of the IRC's money into his personal account when he served as Project Accountant for the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Monrovia from June 2004 to July 2007.²⁹ Attempts to have Johnson extradited to the US has failed due to denial of the extradition request by the Civil Law Court.³⁰ The appointment of Johnson has been shrouded in secrecy. It was not published on the website Executive Mansion but the letter of appointment was reportedly directly given to him due to fears that publication would have drawn the attention of the United States.³¹

Nortu Jappah, the President's choice to head the National Insurance Company of Liberia, was 'forced to resign' his position as Managing Director of the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) in 2012 due to his involvement in a corruption saga related to the importation of substandard pipes and chemicals.³² The President also appointed Patrick Sandike as Deputy Managing Director for Technical Services to the LWSC despite being dismissed from the institution when he served as Operation Engineer.³³ According to reports, while investigation concerning procurement related to a contract was underway, the attention of the Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI) drawn to a bulk deposit of US\$250,000 made by Sandike in his salary account which received only US\$1,600 monthly. The bank alerted the LWSC board and the incoming LWSC leadership appointed by President Weah dismissed him.³⁴

²⁶ GD Yeakula, AD Miamen and RM Makor 'State of Corruption Report (SCORE) 2021' (2021) 60 <<https://www.cental.org.lr/index.php/documents/reports/state-of-corruption-report/score-2021/viewdocument>> accessed 5 June 2024.

²⁷ R Sieh 'Liberia: Roberts Flight Information Region Appointee Daniel Johnson Still a Fugitive for Alleged Wire Fraud and Theft' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 13 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-roberts-flight-information-region-appointee-daniel-johnson-still-a-fugitive-for-alleged-wire-fraud-and-theft/>> accessed 17 June 2024.

²⁸ As above.

²⁹ As above.

³⁰ As above.

³¹ R Sieh 'Liberia: Appointment Screw-up in President's Office; Man Sought in US for Fraud Gets Letter' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 9 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-appointment-screw-up-in-presidents-office-man-sought-in-us-for-fraud-gets-letter/>> accessed 17 June 2024.

³² L Dodo 'Liberia: Madam Sirleaf Corruption Rejects Land in Boakai's Government' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 21 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/liberia-madam-sirleaf-corruption-rejects-land-in-boakais-government/>> accessed 17 June 2024.

³³ As above

³⁴ As above

Rudolph Merab, Managing Director of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), is reputed to have been involved in illegal logging activities during the war years.³⁵ Prosecutors in the Charles Taylor trial cited Merab as one of those who raised money for President Taylor through exploitation of Liberia's forest products.³⁶ Campaigners have also criticized Merab's appointment due to his opposition to efforts aimed at halting deforestation and promoting community participation in forestry management.³⁷

The appointment of the Special Presidential Envoy for Investment, Mohammed Maladho Bah, has also drawn public criticism amid revelations that he defrauded Liberians while posing as a dealer of used cars.³⁸ According to a victim, Bah swindled him out of US\$1,500 while a separate account has it that, following his arrest by Court officers, Bah executed a promissory note undertaking to repay US\$10,000 stolen from one Godfred Wesseh through deception.³⁹ The President's pick for Foreign Minister, Sara Beysolow Nyanti, was embroiled in controversy over the authenticity of her educational credentials.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the Senate confirmed her without satisfactorily probing the issue. Also, two senior officials of the Boakai administration have also been embroiled in controversy related to bigamy. Madam Sajo Juwara accused Madam Maccella Cooper, Senior Political Advisor to the President, of having an affair with her husband Alioune Kebe, Ambassador-at-Large for sports, who also happens to be Juwara's husband. related to bigamy.⁴¹ Kebe's reported marriage to Cooper while allegedly married to Juwara does not only raise legal and ethical concerns but sheds further light on how top jobs in the Boakai administration are landed through connections (family, political, social, or ethnic).

Favoritism

³⁵ 'Merab's Choice May Harm Forestry Sector -Donors' Dossier on him "not favorable"' (*Analyst Liberia*, 14 February 2024) <<https://analystliberiaonline.com/merabs-choice-may-harm-forestry-sector-donors-dossier-on-him-not-favorable/>> accessed 17 June 2024.

³⁶ As above

³⁷ 'Local And Int'l Concern Mounts Over Rudolph Merab Wartime Logging Records (Part 1) - Independent Probe Newspaper' <<https://independentprobe.com/2024/04/27/local-and-intl-concern-mounts-over-rudolph-merab-wartime-logging-records-part-1/>> accessed 17 June 2024.

³⁸ 'Public Outcry Over Boakai's Nomination' (*Afric Daily News*, 26 April 2024) <<https://africdailynewspaper.com/2024/04/26/public-outcry-over-boakais-nomination/>> accessed 15 June 2024.

³⁹ As above.

⁴⁰ 'Liberia: Foreign Minister Designate Faces Senate Amidst Controversy Over Education Credentials - FrontPageAfrica' <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-foreign-minister-designate-faces-senate-amidst-controversy-over-education-credentials/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁴¹ S Saywon 'A TARNISHED ADMINISTRATION: THE SCANDAL SURROUNDING MCDELLA COOPER AND THE INTEGRITY OF PRES. BOAKAI'S APPOINTEES' (*Smart News Liberia*, 4 June 2024) <<https://smartnewsliberia.com/a-tarnished-administration-the-scandal-surrounding-mcdella-cooper-and-the-integrity-of-pres-boakais-appointees/>> accessed 16 June 2024.

President Boakai has so far not appointed immediate family members, including his four children, to government.⁴² This is consistent with prohibitions of the Code of Conduct for Public Officials (CoC) against appointment of relatives.⁴³ Nonetheless, the President has appointed Jacob T. Kabakole, an 'influential' nephew,⁴⁴ as Chairman of the Board of the Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority (LPRA). Other appointments in government amount to violation of the CoC regarding nepotism considering that the process of selecting appointees was significantly presided over by associates of President Boakai who are also public officials. According to unrefuted reports, faced with pressure from the Unity Party Alliance (comprised of the Unity Party and other parties that supported Boakai's Presidential bid), President Boakai setup a selection committee comprised mainly of Senators of the Unity Party Alliance to oversee selection of candidates for appointment.⁴⁵ As a result, some committee members and other public officials successfully influenced or advocated for the appointment of their relatives contrary to Section 9.7 of the CoC. It must be noted also, that the appointment of Senators to committees such as the selection committee and the Joint Presidential Transition Team,⁴⁶ which exercised Executive functions, does not only promote conflict of interest but runs contrary to the constitutional doctrine of separation of powers intended to foster check and balances in government.⁴⁷ The Liberian Constitution states that:⁴⁸

... no person holding office in one of these branches shall hold office in or exercise any of the powers assigned to either of the other two branches except as otherwise provided in this Constitution...

Regarding nepotism as practiced by Senators and sanctioned by President Boakai, a few examples are illustrative. Sirleaf Tyler, brother of Senator Alex J. Tyler, was appointed as Minister of Transport.⁴⁹ Nancy Moye, wife of Senator Prince Moye, was named as member of the board of the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company (LPRC).⁵⁰ The appointment was only made public by the Executive Mansion following backlash over Madam Moye's certification by the LPRC as board member. Daybah E. Johnson, daughter of Senator Prince Y. Johnson, was appointed as Assistant Minister for Regional Labor Affairs.⁵¹ Senator Darbah Varpilah's

⁴² 'Biography of President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr. | The Executive Mansion'

<<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/general/biography-president-joseph-nyuma-boakai-sr>> accessed 4 June 2024.

⁴³ Section 11.13 of the CoC prohibits such appointment and Section 1.3.21 defines a relative as a father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, and wife.

⁴⁴ 'Boakai's Inaugural Night Appointees?' (*Independent Probe Newspaper*, 31 December 2023)

<<https://independentprobe.com/2023/12/31/boakais-inaugural-night-appointees/>> accessed 18 June 2024.

⁴⁵ Members reportedly included Vice President Jeremiah Koung, Senator Prince Moye, Senator Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence, Senator Abraham Darius Dillon, Senator J. Alex Tyler, Senator James Biney, Minister Sylvester Grigsby, and Unity Party Chairman Luther Tarpeh. See Sieh (n 11).

⁴⁶ Senator Amara Konneh later resigned as member of the Joint Presidential Transition Team.

⁴⁷ Senators have a responsibility of confirming nominees and their involvement in the nominee-selection process undermines their ability to properly scrutinize candidates during confirmation.

⁴⁸ Liberian Constitution of 1986 art. 3.

⁴⁹ Dodoo et al (n 10).

⁵⁰ S Lomax 'Liberia: Wife of Bong Senator Prince Moye Name Controversially Appears on Newly Formed LPRC Board' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 16 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-wife-of-bong-senator-prince-moyes-name-controversially-appears-on-newly-formed-lprc-board/>> accessed 18 June 2024.

⁵¹ JT Tumu 'Liberia: Minister of Labor, Cllr. Cooper Kruah, Accused of Violating Civil Service Freeze, Filling Positions with Kinsmen and Women' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 16 May 2024)

husband, S. Tornolar Varpilah, was appointed as Chairman of the Board of the Liberia Maritime Authority (LMA), and her children Nee-Alah T. Varpilah and Feetor Varpilah were appointed as Director-General of the Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA), and Deputy Director General of the National Insurance Company of Liberia (NICOL) respectively, while her brother-in-law, Gallah Varpilah, was appointed City Mayor of Gbarnga. Generally, favoritism has characterized appointments in government. Although President Boakai promised to form a government not based on 'loyalty to a party',⁵² majority of those appointed supported his presidential bid. Those suspected of supporting opposition parties have been denied appointment. In fact, it is reported that the President revoked some appointments after it became known that the appointees had associated with the opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC). For instance, the appointment of Eric G.Y. Jenn-Judgges as Deputy Minister for Technical Services was reportedly withdrawn after he made a social media post featuring pictures of him in a CDC beret.⁵³ Also, the appointment of D. Emmanuel Wheinyou as Assistant Minister for Research and Planning at the Ministry of Internal Affairs was reportedly withdrawn over concerns that he was involved in campaign activities of the CDC.⁵⁴

Favoritism has also manifested on a county or regional basis. Of the 75 ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs) of government to which heads were appointed, CENTAL investigated and identified the counties from which 70 heads of MACs hail. More than half (i.e., 57 percent) of those appointed to head MACs are from the North-Central region comprising Lofa, Bong, and Nimba counties. At 22 MAC heads, Lofa accounts for the highest appointment per county and constitute nearly a third (i.e., 31 percent) of the appointments. The South-Central region comprising Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa hold the least top-level appointments (11.4 percent) followed by the Western region comprising of Bomi, Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu (14.2 percent), and the South-Eastern region (17.1 percent). South-Eastern counties are Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Maryland, Rivercess, River Gee, and Sinoe.

<<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-minister-of-labor-cllr-cooper-kruah-accused-of-violating-civil-service-freeze-filling-positions-with-kinsmen-and-women/>> accessed 18 June 2024.

⁵² 'Liberia: Joseph Boakai Promises Government of Inclusion - FrontPageAfrica'

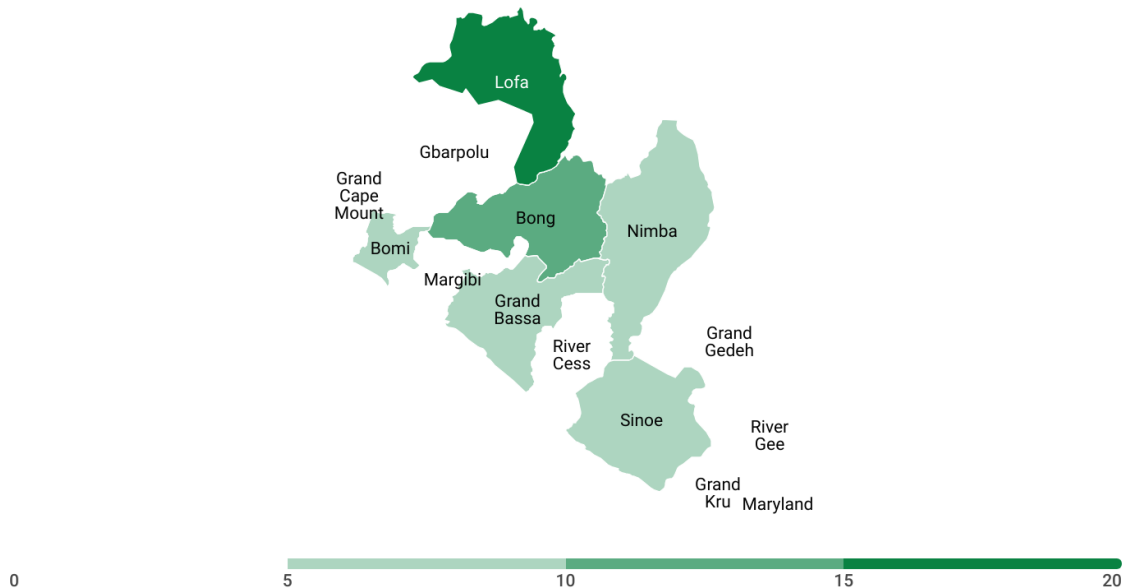
<<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/liberia-joseph-boakai-promises-government-of-inclusion/>> accessed 18 June 2024.

⁵³ 'For immediate release President Boakai replaces nominated Deputy Public Works Minister' (*Executive Mansion-Liberia | Facebook*, 1 February 2024)

<https://web.facebook.com/story.php/?story_fbid=757091553116474&id=100064469095550&paipv=o&eav=AfbMfewvZ1Oao82GP4AJcymQJm3VjuKjgYDDJ_q7CYrpN3saduMm14yti2U2OGmVlvU&_rdc=1&_rdr> accessed 18 June 2024.

⁵⁴ Dodoo et al (n 10).

Heads of MACs by County



Gender and Inclusion

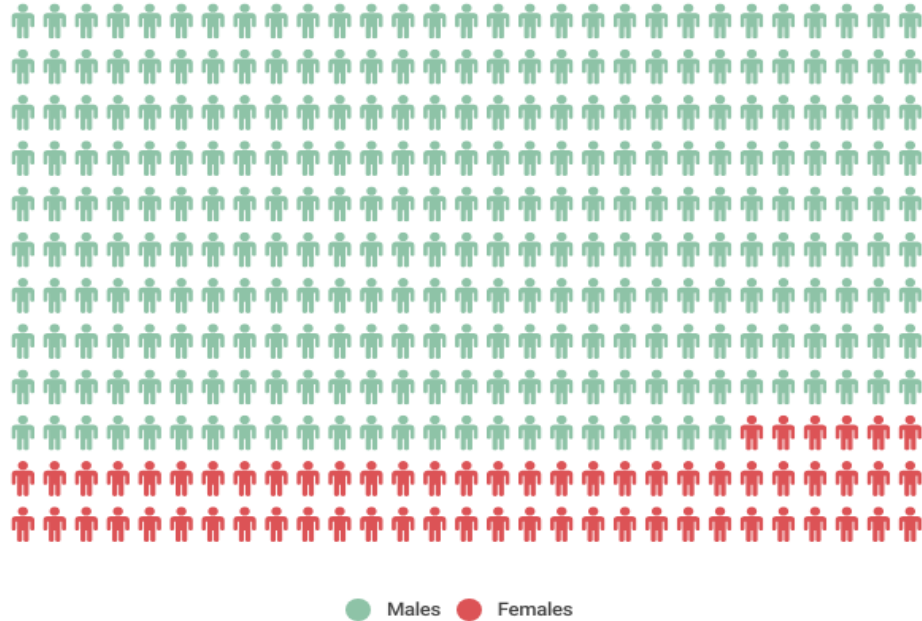
President Boakai made history when he appointed the first female Minister of National Defense, Retired Brigadier General Geraldine Janet George.⁵⁵ Females also account for 30 percent of the Cabinet, thus meeting globally accepted gender quota regarding minimum proportion of women in leadership positions.⁵⁶ However, this percentage drops by nearly half when the leadership of MACs in general or the total appointments made by the President are considered. Of those appointed as heads of the 75 MACs to which appointments affecting management were made, females constitute 17.3 percent. Also, females constitute 18.5 percent of all appointments made by the President.

⁵⁵ 'Liberia Makes History with Female Defense Minister - Africa Defense Forum' <<https://adf-magazine.com/2024/06/liberia-makes-history-with-female-defense-minister/#:~:text=Retired%20Brig.%20Gen.%20Geraldine%20Janet%20George's%20long%2C%20decorated%20career,nation's%20first%20female%20defense%20minister.>> accessed 18 June 2024.

⁵⁶ 'Global norms and standards: Leadership and political participation' (UN Women) <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/global-norms-and-standards>> accessed 18 June 2024.

Appointees by Sex

18.5 percent are females while 81.4 percent are males.



Meanwhile, the President appointed three physically challenged persons to top roles in government. They are: Samuel S. Dean, Sr., Executive Director of the National Commission on Disabilities; Dr. Luke Bawo, Managing Director of the Liberia Medical and Health Products Regulatory Authority (LMHRA); and Nowa Zawu Gibson, Deputy Managing Director for Operations at the national Transit Authority (NTA). These appointments are a crucial step in improving representation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in government.

In Focus: Gender

Gender and inclusion issues are human rights issues. Article 11 of the Liberian Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to all persons regardless of sex, ethnicity, race, political opinion, or national origin. Also, Liberia is a signatory to several international instruments including, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security unanimously adopted in 2000. These instruments amongst others, highlight the plights of women and mandates governments to ensure their protection and inclusion in all processes affecting their peace and security. Even though there is no particular mention of gender and Inclusion in the 100-day deliverables and the ARREST agenda of the government of President Joseph N. Boakai, support for critical gender-related issues like education and healthcare delivery could be found in both the 100-day and ARREST agenda.

Notably, the Chair of the House's committee on Gender, Representative Moima Briggs-Mensah, is championing bills on gender including Female Genital Mutilation, Midwives' Sustainability, and the creation of a Domestic Violence Court in Liberia. Additionally, the new Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection Minister Gbeme Horace-Kollie have toured several counties to see first-hand safe home facilities, listened to county field staff present prospects and challenges, and held meetings with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other local human rights groups. She has also announced the Ministry's planned program, "The Street Children Road Map Program," expected to be launched soon. She has further announced the Ministry's effort to establish the Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI) Unit, the revision of the National Gender Policy, the development of the National Social Protection Policy, and the implementation of the Women's Empowerment Project, worth \$44.6 Million United States Dollars. Also, the Second Lady of Liberia, Mrs. Synleseh Stephenie Dahn-Koung, heads the Group of 77, renovating the headquarters of the Group of 77 in Monrovia. Despite all these, there are still several deep-rooted challenges like rape, sexual and gender-based violence, sodomizing among teenagers, lack of adequate support, and proper care for people living with disabilities, and youth affected by drugs. Increase in sexual activities among children have been reported. Increased budgetary support to the Ministry of Gender, Ministry of Education, the National Commission on Disabilities and other groups working on gender and PwD issues will be in order. Such support should be directed to helping rape victims get justice, creation of psychosocial counseling programs in schools for rape victims, and addressing PwD issues.

Allegations of Corruption

Allegations of corruption have already started to germinate considering a number of reported abuses of office. In fact, some predate Boakai's ascendancy to the Presidency. It has been reported that as President-Elect, Boakai through his then Senior Advisor and now Minister of State Sylvester Grigsby requested from NASSCORP and did receive funding to finance the purchase of five Land Cruiser SUVs valued at US\$117,000 each.⁵⁷ Lacking any constitutionally vested authority, it can be said that then President-Elect Boakai conspired with NASSCORP officials to misapply public funds. Such dealing involving the President and his officials have the propensity to foster corrupt relationships and further entrench impunity for corrupt conduct. This can already be sensed given that the Presidency has been tightlipped and has failed to act on the issue despite several calls to do so. Meanwhile, the President has been accused of bribing Legislators in a bid to influence leadership at the Legislature. Representative Yekeh Kolubah is on record for displaying a US\$4,500 furniture coupon issued by the Ministry of State to a select group of lawmakers.⁵⁸ According to Honorable Kolubah, although he had been told that the gesture was directed at those who supported the Speakership bid of Unity Party lawmaker Richard Koon, he believes that it was made in a bid to have Legislators remove Honorable J. Fonati Koffa from the position of Speaker.⁵⁹ In any case, the action of the President's office does not fall short of bribery.

There were other reports which emerged during the period. There were reports that the President's nephew and Officer-In-Charge of the National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL), Jake Kabakole, disbursed US\$600,000 to contractors under questionable circumstances.⁶⁰ Public Works Minister Roland Giddings admitted to violating the procurement law by awarding road maintenance contracts valued US\$22.4 million without a competitive bidding process. This is strange since the Minister also noted that he received 'no objection' from the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) regarding single sourcing the contracts. In any case, the award of contracts of such high value without competition and under the guise of 'emergency' is a recipe for corruption since procurement represents a major corruption risk. The fact that the contracts were also awarded prior to legislative allocation in the national budget raises further red flags about motivations for flagrant violations of law.⁶¹ Meanwhile, no action has been taken against the Minister by his principal President Boakai or the Legislature which

⁵⁷ A Konneh 'Sen. Amara Konneh's 90-Day Update: Progress, Initiatives, and Commitments' (18 April 2024) <<https://senatoramarakonneh.gov.lr/sen-amara-konnehs-90-day-update-progress-initiatives-and-commitments/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁵⁸ BN Toe 'Liberia: Rep. Yekeh Koluba Accuses Pres. Boakai of Bribing Lawmakers to Unseat Speaker Fonati Koffa' (*Frontpage Africa*, 25 March 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-rep-yekeh-koluba-accuses-pres-boakai-of-bribing-lawmakers-to-unseat-speaker-fonati-koffa/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁵⁹ As above.

⁶⁰ JHW Clayeh 'Liberia: NOCAL Clarifies Media Reports over Alleged Misapplication of Funds' (*Frontpage Africa*, 2 April 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-nocal-clarifies-media-reports-over-alleged-misapplication-of-funds/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁶¹ O Johnson 'Liberia: Senate Joint Committee Reveals \$22M in Road Contracts Awarded Without Competitive Bidding by Public Works, Justice, and Finance Ministers - FrontPageAfrica' (*Frontpage Africa*, 29 May 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-senate-joint-committee-reveals-22m-in-road-contracts-awarded-without-competitive-bidding-by-public-works-justice-and-finance-ministers/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

exercises oversight. In fact, the Legislature has justified the Minister's action as an 'inadvertent misstep with good intentions aimed at the national interest'.⁶² The trend seems to be continuing as Minister of State Mamaka Bility recently announced that the government had acquired 285 earth-moving equipment but soon backtracked following concerns over the source of the equipment. Information minister Jerolinmek Piah stated that there are plans to acquire machines but that no decision had been made.⁶³ According to reports, the machines were given as part of a deal with the Guma Group for exploration of the Wologizi mountain. This is concerning since Liberian law is clear on process leading to award of licenses or concessions and that there is no information that Guma Group had initiated said process.

Actions not matching Anti-Corruption Commitments

President Boakai came to power with a promise to tackle corruption. Upon assuming office, he reassured the public of his commitment to fight graft in government and has consistently urged his officials to serve with integrity. The President has taken some important steps such as appointing officials to the Ombudsman which Presidents Weah and Sirleaf failed to achieve.⁶⁴ He also suspended Stanley Ford, Director-General of the Financial Intelligence Agency (FIA), following reports of his involvement in money laundering.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the President established an Assets Recovery Committee which was criticized for assuming existing functions of the LACC in a bid to undermine existing efforts, and lacking independence and relevant experience.⁶⁶

It can also be recalled that, without release of investigative findings into circumstances around poor planning of the inauguration and allegations of mismanagement of the US\$600,000 program budget, the President issued an official statement expressing utmost confidence in Madam Miatta Fahnbulleh, Chairperson the inaugural committee.⁶⁷ Although the program was prematurely adjourned after the President himself suffered heat exhaustion, he expressed satisfaction noting that the committee worked with 'remarkable probity' and 'adhered' to the

⁶² 'Public Works Ministry Admits to Procedural Errors in \$22 Million Road Works Project' (*Smart News Liberia*, 29 May 2024) <<https://smartnewsliberia.com/public-works-ministry-admits-to-procedural-errors-in-22-million-road-works-project/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁶³ "'No Decision Yet"...Information Minister Speaks On 285 Road Equipment' (*The News Newspaper*, 2024) <<https://thenewsnewspaperonline.com/no-decision-yetinformation-minister-speaks-on-285-road-equipment/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁶⁴ 'CENTAL welcomes Ombudsman, but - Liberia news' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 16 April 2024) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/cental-welcomes-ombudsman-but/#:~:text=Monrovia%2C%20Liberia%2C%20April%2016%2C,fight%20against%20corruption%20in%20Liberia.>>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁶⁵ 'President Boakai Suspends FIA Director General Stanley Ford' (*The Executive Mansion*, 30 March 2024) <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/media/press-release/president-boakai-suspends-fia-director-general-stanley-ford>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁶⁶ 'Liberian president sets up task force to trace stolen state assets' (*Reuters*, 6 March 2024) <<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/liberian-president-sets-up-task-force-trace-stolen-state-assets-2024-03-06/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁶⁷ 'President Boakai Commends Madam Miatta Fahnbulleh and Members of the Transition Inaugural Committee | The Executive Mansion' <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/media/press-release/president-boakai-commends-madam-miatta-fahnbulleh-and-members-transition>> accessed 19 June 2024.

financial guidelines in the disbursement of expenditures allocated for the inauguration.⁶⁸ This statement is puzzling given that Madam Fahnbulleh herself had publicly apologized over how the program unfolded though laying blame on Unity Party officials, the Legislature, and other officials of the outgoing government.⁶⁹ It remains to be seen whether actions of the President will transcend ordinary expectations and address issues known to be critical to advancing anti-corruption. These include holding officials, particularly those in the presidential circle, accountable and providing support to anti-graft efforts.

For anti-corruption and accountability to be considered top priorities of an administration, one would easily agree where anti-corruption mechanisms are supported and enhanced. An obvious but significant demonstration of preference for anticorruption would be seen in efforts to address the lack of financial, logistical and other forms of support perennially cited as key factors responsible for the underperformance of anti-graft institutions. Put simply, one cannot succeed against corruption without enlisting the services of those on the frontlines or having the mandate to tackle it. Actions taken by the President so far still fall short of matching his professed anti-corruption agenda. And if President Boakai's decision in the earliest days are anything to go by, the fight against graft cannot be considered as top priorities of the President.

Targets and results

In its 100-day Action Plan Assessment report, the government claims that it has improved transparency and accountability within a short period.⁷⁰ According to the report, rule of law has been enforced, financial oversight has been strengthened, and ethical practices have been promoted. Two specific interventions earmarked under the plan are: i) ensuring public officials declare their assets as required by law and ii) initiating a comprehensive audit of all MACs.⁷¹ Government reports that these interventions are still on-going despite expiry of the 100-day period. A key point to note is that of the US\$23,488,543 spent by government in achieving deliverables under the 100-day plan, no funding was provided to support earmarked anti-corruption interventions.⁷² As such, it cannot be said that anticorruption was considered a top priority.

Making its report at the close of the first 100 days, the LACC through its Chairperson Cllr. Alexandra Zoe disclosed that only 75 officials across all branches of government had declared

⁶⁸ As above

⁶⁹ JHW Clayeh 'Liberia: Miatta Fahnbulleh Blames Legislature, Unity Party and CDC Govt for Poor Planning of Inaugural Program' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 26 January 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-miatta-fahnbulleh-blames-legislature-unity-party-and-cdc-govt-for-poor-planning-of-inaugural-program/>> accessed 19 June 2024.

⁷⁰ 'Government of Liberia 100-Day Action Plan Assessment Report' (*mfdp*, 21 May 2024) 7 <<https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/docs/national-development-plan/development-plan/government-of-liberia-100-day-action-plan-assessment-report>> accessed 16 June 2024.

⁷¹ As above, 42.

⁷² As above, 28-32.

their assets.⁷³ The Presidency through Presidential Press Secretary Kula Fofana disputed the report but noted further that the President will take action against those failing to declare.⁷⁴ There is no record that any such actions have been taken. Meanwhile, the President himself violated the law on declaration by declaring his assets 16 days after inauguration.⁷⁵ Section 10.1 of the CoC requires officials to declare their assets *prior* to taking office. A recent report released by the LACC puts the number of declarants at 207.⁷⁶ With the LACC indicating that 500 relevant appointments had been made, declarations made so far are low especially taking in to account declarations required from the Judiciary and Legislature.⁷⁷ Thus, the government's 100-day target of ensuring public officials declare their assets by the end of the 100-day period was not significantly met.

It must be noted that after being announced as winner of the November 2023 presidential run-off election the President began to make expenditures which raised eyebrows since he had hitherto not gathered reputation for big spending. Notably, these include the donation of 10 million Liberian Dollars and 200 bags of rice to victims of gasoline tanker explosion in Totota, Bong County,⁷⁸ and the provision of US\$365,000 to the Unity Party officials to support inaugural celebrations by local level party structures.⁷⁹ Not only did the President declare his assets late, it is yet to be published, as a show of true transparency and political will to do things differently, despite lack of publication requirement in the law.

On the target of initiating comprehensive audits of all MACs, President Boakai mandated the GAC to audit the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), Executive Protection Service (EPS), and the National Security Agency (NSA). This was welcomed by the public although a few argued that audit of the NSA would expose sensitive security information. In response, it was noted that the NSA had consistently been used by previous administrations as a conduit to siphon off public resources since it was shielded from audit for 'security reasons'. Thus, the pronouncement by the President was seen as a break with the past and as an important move. In a strange twist of events, however, President Boakai secretly decommissioned the audit on grounds of the

⁷³ 'Executive Mansion, LACC "Clash" ...Over Assets Declaration Claims' (*The News Newspaper*, 20 May 2024) <<https://thenewsnewspaperonline.com/executive-mansion-lacc-clash-over-assets-declaration-claims/>> accessed 19 June 2024.

⁷⁴ As above.

⁷⁵ S Miapue 'Did Pres. Boakai Violate Code of Conduct on Assets Declaration?' (*Local Voices Liberia*, 14 February 2024) <<https://localvoicesliberia.com/did-pres-boakai-violate-code-of-conduct-on-assists-declarations/>> accessed 19 June 2024.

⁷⁶ '207 Liberian officials declare assets' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 7 June 2024) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/207-liberian-officials-declare-assets/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁷⁷ Executive Mansion (n 73) above

⁷⁸ O Johnson 'Liberia: Controversial Yekeh Koluba Questions Boakai on the Source of L\$10m and 200 Bags of Rice Donated to Victims of Totota Tanker Explosion' (*Frontpage Africa*, 9 January 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-controversial-yekeh-koluba-questions-boakai-on-the-source-of-l10m-and-200-bags-of-rice-donated-to-victims-of-totota-tanker-explosion/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁷⁹ GC Koinyeneh 'Liberia: House Seeks Clarity On Controversial U\$365k Disbursed By President Boakai For Inauguration Celebration in Electoral Districts' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 26 January 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-house-seeks-clarity-on-controversial-u365k-disbursed-by-president-boakai-for-inauguration-celebration-in-electoral-districts/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

'sensitivity' of NSA's operations.⁸⁰ The public only became aware of the development following a communication of the Auditor General, P. Garswa Jackson, to Senator Amara Konneh, the Senate's Chair on Public Accounts.⁸¹

Still on audit of MACs, it is important to restate that the President commissioned an audit of the LTA following suspension of its leadership, while the Senate mandated the GAC to perform a Special Reconciliation Audit of the Consolidate Funds.⁸² With the exception of these selective audits, there is no further information that audits have been mandated across all MACs. It is possible, however, that additional MACs may be covered since the GAC audits public agencies on its own accord. Still, GAC has complained that limited funding hinder its ability to audit all spending entities of government on a yearly basis as required by law. As a result, only a few high-risk entities are frequently audited. Given President Boakai's promise to audit the Weah administration upon assuming office,⁸³ minimal selective audits leave much to be desired. In sum, claims by government that it has improved transparency and accountability do not suffice when measured against its own indicators.

⁸⁰ 'Pres. Boakai Orders GAC To Decommission NSA's Audit; Cites "Sensitivity" Of Its Operations, But...' (*Hot Pepper Liberia*, 20 March 2024) <<https://hotpepperliberia.com/pres-boakai-orders-gac-to-decommission-nas-audit-cites-sensitivity-of-its-operations-but/>> accessed 19 June 2024.

⁸¹ As above

⁸² L Dodoo 'GAC Audit Exposes: Weah Administration Leaves Boakai Administration with No Funds, Contradicting Previous Claims' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 7 March 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/gac-audit-exposes-weah-administration-leaves-boakai-administration-with-no-funds-contradicting-previous-claims/>> accessed 19 June 2024.

⁸³ MD Sandy 'Boakai to audit Weah's government, if elected' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 14 November 2021) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/boakai-to-audit-weahs-government-if-elected/>> accessed 19 June 2024.

In Focus: Payroll Cleanup

As a part of broader transparency and accountability efforts, there has been a review of human resource/personnel hiring processes across all Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs): payroll, civil servant salaries disparities, overstaffing, and salaries arrears. The entity charged with leading this effort, the Civil Service Agency, has begun on a good footing, although more could have been achieved. They have managed to show appreciable results, working with the resources at their disposal. Over the years, consultancy has been one of the main conduits for channeling public funds to cronies, partisans and other individuals, without government reaping the desired benefits. Accordingly, between January 1st to December 31st 2023 alone, government's spending on consultancy services totaled US\$6.1 million, with not much to show for in terms of performance. To address this, on April 30, 2024, the institution officially launched a consultancy policy guideline to streamline and ensure transparency in the recruitment of consultants across government. While development of the policy was initiated by the immediate past administration, its completion and launch represent a proactive action aimed at enhancing transparency and integrity in dealing with consultancy related matters in government.

Furthermore, CSA has been implementing recommendations of a forensic payroll audit conducted by the General Auditing, covering the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2021. The Audit uncovered corruption, fraud and waste, with recommended actions for remediation. Among other findings, the report uncovered that 122 (one hundred twenty-two) employees from across 20 ministries and agencies had shared bank accounts, causing government to lose US\$30,795.09 monthly; mobile money payments to 127 individuals whose names on the GSM registered mobile numbers were different from the names on the payroll, which costs government \$US\$12,040.14 and LRD\$550,852.75 monthly; and Nine Thousand Two Hundred Eighty-Seven (9,287) employees, representing 13.7% of employees' records across 91 Spending Entities, causing the government to lose US\$3,764,204.92 monthly. The Civil Service Agency acted to implement various GAC's recommendations related to these frauds and discrepancies, including blocking of salaries of the individuals concerned, pending verification and subsequent permanent removal from government's payroll.

The Civil Service Agency (CSA) officially announced the start of the Employees Status Regularization Project (ESRP) to strengthen and manage the payroll system for transparency and efficiency. The CSA recently reported the completion of physical verification and headcounts of employees at 26 Government Spending entities, from which it blocked 210 unverified individuals from 12 Entities, pending verification of their statuses in one month. The government is said to be losing 74,998.89 USD to the employees in question, a further undue strain on government's already weak financial position. While more efforts are needed, these initial developments at CSA are highly welcoming.

Anti-Corruption Financing

As stated earlier, no funding was provided for anti-corruption targets in government's 100-day action plan. The draft budget for fiscal year 2024 submitted by the President to the Legislature put the Transparency and Accountability sector at 3.1 percent of the budget, placing the sector amongst the least prioritized sectors.⁸⁴ Sectors prioritized by the President include Public Administration (40.3 percent), Education (15.3 percent), Security and Rule of Law (13.9 percent), Health (10.9 percent) and Infrastructure and Basic Services (6.5 percent). Albeit, the budget of the PPCC was increased from US\$815,353 in 2023 to US\$1,238,479 and the budget of the GAC was increased from US\$5,478,191 in 2023 to US\$ 5,755, 053. Meanwhile, the LACC budget was reduced from US\$2,221,061 in 2023 to US\$2,066, 811 while the budget of the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) was reduced from an already meager sum of US\$386,875 to US\$213,641.⁸⁵ On the other hand, for example, the NSA budget was increased by over US\$2 million.⁸⁶ Senator Amara Konneh recently hinted that funding to the Transparency and Accountability sector has been increased by US\$1.7 million in the approved budget.⁸⁷ The approved budget is yet to be published.

Considering the President's professed commitment to anti-corruption, it was expected that unnecessary and wasteful funding would be reduced and funding directed to fund anti-corruption. Notwithstanding competing interests, prioritizing anti-corruption would translate into significant increases in budgetary support to integrity institutions. In the case of the LACC, increased funding would allow it to recruit and train additional investigators and prosecutors as well as acquire vehicles, technologies, and other logistics to improve perform. To the contrary, sources indicate that the LACC has not received operational funds for months. More so, the President moved to usurp one of the functions of LACC by constituting and providing funding for an Asset Recovery Taskforce, to the exclusion of the Commission. More concerning is the fact that the Taskforce is overstaff with fifteen persons, many of whom lack the independence and political neutrality needed to implement such a critical anti-corruption function. More than 50% of the body's membership are individuals who visibly supported the presidency of Ambassador, thus making undermining their independence and suitability for the role. Support to such parallel structure provide reason for underperformance as the LACC is yet to prosecute several individuals for alleged corruption, including those sanctioned by the US Government or release detailed investigative reports into assets, incomes and liabilities declared by former officials of government, accompanied by appropriate sanctions and other lawful actions.

⁸⁴ 'Draft National Budget FY 2024' (*Ministry of Finance and Development Planning*, 19 March 2024) ix <<https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/component/edocman/national-budget-fy2024-2/fdocument?Itemid=9999>> accessed 19 June 2024.

⁸⁵ As above, xxii.

⁸⁶ As above, xxiii.

⁸⁷ A Konneh 'Yes Vote' (30 April 2024)

<https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10163693586312627&id=737237626&mibextid=oFDknk&rdid=Btf73HzRmokZBGiO> accessed 19 June 2024.

In Focus: Assets Recovery

According to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), ratified by Liberia in 2006, asset recovery is the process by which the proceeds of corruption are recovered and, when they were transferred abroad, returned to the country from which they had been taken or to their rightful owners. This is a major issue for many developing countries, including Liberia where rampant corruption has undermined the country's growth and development. Section 5.1 of the amended Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission Act gives LACC the power to investigate and prosecute all acts of corruption, including misapplication of public funds and assets. Liberians, home and abroad, have been championing this call for ever so long.

Former President George Weah failed in his quest to recover stolen assets, in part due to lack of political will and politicization of the process by appointing his loyalists and their cronies. The initiative soon crumbled, when the constituted Asset Investigation, Restitution, and Recovery Team (AIRRET) engaged into more media stunt rather than the actual work for which they were constituted. Months following its establishment, Cllr. Arthur Johnson resigned as head of the Team, accusing the President Weah of lacking political will in the fight against corruption. Equally, the Boakai-Koung administration has made asset recovery a key priority, as part of a broader anti-corruption agenda aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability across government and the Liberia society, more broadly. Much to the surprise of many, instead of financially and logistically empowering the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission to initiate a robust and an independent initiative to identify and recover stolen and hidden state assets, in March 2024, President Boakai issued Executive Order No. 126, establishing the Office of Assets Recovery. This was followed by constitution of an Assets Recovery and Property Retrieval Core Team headed by Cllr. Edward Kla Martin, former executive chairperson of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission. A staggering 15-person team was named by the President, chaired by Cllr. Edwin Kla Martin, former chairperson of the Liberia Anti-corruption Commission and Mr. Alex Cuffy, former director general of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), now Financial Intelligence Agency (FIA). Interestingly, the Taskforce members were politically active and campaigned for Boakai during the just ended elections, thus bringing into question their independence and suitability to serve in such a delicate capacity. To execute its mandate, the Taskforce was allotted 1.5 Million USD in the draft 2024 national budget, an amount almost equivalent to the 2.06 Million budgeted for LACC, a body with a more elaborate mandate.

Many persons and stakeholders have questioned the decision of the President, whether it was a true intent to fight corruption and recover stolen assets or an action meant to accommodate some of his supporters. The President's ill-advised decision has been visible for all to see, as the committee's first major action to move into the streets to impound vehicles duly attracted criticisms from the public and resistance from those targeted. The Asset Recovery team lost a legal battle with Gracious Ride Company, whose vehicles were impounded, but later ordered released by the Court. Some members of the team itself have begun to raise accountability, inclusion, leadership and other issues. On May 10, 2024, a member of the Committee, Emmanuel Gonquoi, Standard bearer of the Economic Freedom Fighters of Liberia, announced on social media his resignation from the committee. Days later, another supporter of President Boakai, Martin Kollie raised multiple issues with the leadership of the Committee.

Among other things, in a leaked letter to the Chairperson, Martin, Mr. Kollie alleged lack of proper coordination of the group, unilateral decision making by the leadership, lack of consultation with members in making major decisions¹, lack of clear plan and agenda for the team, and questionable spending. The Committee's leadership is yet to openly speak to the allegations. However, what is clear is controversy has engulfed the group meant to implement a very important mandate, whose work should be void of politics, biases, controversies, and allegations of corruption and financial misdealing.

President Boakai may have good intentions for covering stolen assets, but his approach has backfired, having been criticized by stakeholders for not adhering to best practices around recruiting individuals to lead and serve on teams to perform key anti-corruption mandate. There is enough time for the President and his team to review the action and correct the mistakes made. The sooner he does this, the better it will be for the reputation of the committee and the extent to which citizens trust in and support its work. Also, it will be critical in terms of getting civil society, the media, development partners and ordinary citizens as well as other integrity institutions to confidently do business with the group, knowing that its mandate aligns with theirs and may enhance their work, if carried out properly, with the required independence, integrity, robustness, fairness and impartiality.

Rights and the Civic Space

Over the last decade and more, Liberia's democracy has been thriving, despite some challenges, notably high youth unemployment, weak enforcement of campaign finance law and regulations and weak economic positions of most citizens that affect their ability to address their needs and make independent and informed decisions. The Country has enjoyed/witnessed successive free, fair, and transparent presidential and legislative elections, the latest being the 2023 elections brought into power the Boakai-Koung-headed Boakai-Koung-headed Unity Party administration. Civil society and community-based organizations, the media, and citizens have played important roles in promoting the culture of accountability and adherence to key democratic principles such as anti-corruption, rule of law, access to information and justice, participation, and inclusive governance. Thanks to a largely conducive civic space and operating environment, which has enabled the emergence of new media and civil society institutions, as well as sustenance of existing ones. Development partners have also helped the national government's quest in this regard. Media development organizations such as Internews, Sida, USAID and others continue to support varying programs and activities aimed at supporting the media and civil society to sustain, improve upon and scale up their work and activities. These efforts are helping media institutions and individuals to navigate through the challenges of resources, human capacity development, and technological support.

During the elections, candidate Boakai and his party promised free speech and maintenance of the democratic culture, in part through ensuring that independent voices of civil society, media, and other stakeholders are protected. This was reaffirmed by the President during his inaugural address in January 2024, whereby he applauded the work of civil society and promised to work with them in moving the country forward. .."Your voice will matter because you will make us better. We extend a hand of partnership to you to collaborate with us in ways that reinforce our roles to improve the conditions of our people and elevate our country." President Boakai iterated.⁸⁸ The President also promised to establish a War and Economic Crimes Court to ensure accountability for the dark past. Beyond the President's promise, freedom of speech and expression as well as maintaining the civic space are key democratic values to be protected and honored by any government, especially in Liberia.

For the most part, the first 100 plus days of his administration have lived up to this promise. The overall governance and anti-corruption environment remain increasingly open and supportive of the work of civil society and the media. The Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), Naymote Partners for Democratic Development (Naymote), Organization for Women and Children (ORWOCH), and other civil society organizations continue to speak out on human rights, gender, democracy, anti-corruption and other issues without being targeted. New pressure groups and civil society organizations have also emerged, especially groups politically-aligned. The Solidarity and Trust for a New Day (Stand), a group headed by the former chairperson of the Coalition for Democratic Change, Mr. Mulbah K. Morlu has been vocal

⁸⁸ (n 3) 10.

in speaking to human rights, democracy, and other critical issues.⁸⁹ Additionally, media institutions linked to opposition figures, such as Freedom FM and Voice of Liberia have been operating largely unhindered. The President has also established the Office of the War and Economic Crimes Court following a resolution signed by members of the Legislature.⁹⁰ The move has been applauded by many as a significant step, considering also that previous post-war Presidents did not act on formation of the court.

While the media and civil society have been largely free to operate, there have been isolated incidences of violence and brutality against citizens by state actors. In particular, the Liberia National Police has had mixed engagements with citizens, especially protesters in concession communities, leaving room for improvement. On February 29, 2024, a concession-linked initially peaceful, but later provoked violent protest in Kinjor, Grand Cape Mount County in Western Liberia led to the death of two persons and injuries to many.⁹¹ Residents of the area were bemoaning poor treatment and lack of due benefits from Bea Mountain Mining Corporation (BMMC), the company mining gold and other resources in the area. Officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) reportedly carried out the killing, which Police authorities termed as justified as being due to threats from protesters. "If you look at the video released, the police exercised maximum restraint, they didn't reach to the point of using live round until there was a threat, danger feared by the officers before reaching that point," the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police, Col. Gregory Coleman told reporters during a March 2024 press conference held in Monrovia to provide update on the incident.⁹² Also, the Police intervened in another May 6, 2024 citizens-led protest in the ArcelorMittal concession area in Nimba County. This time, the Police succeeded in restoring calm, as no death or Police brutality was reported.⁹³

If care is not taken, incidences like the one in Kinjor would lead to instability and jeopardize the already fragile peace. Maintaining and enhancing civic space is critical, as civil society, media, and other players need to freely operate, speak out on critical issues and collaborate with national government to promote and protect the rights of citizens as well as address corruption, sexual and gender-based violence, and other governance challenges. The administration and state institutions need to do more to ensure that lawful work, activities, and engagements of civil society, media and other stakeholders go on unhindered.

⁸⁹ 'STAND Appoints First Country Director' (*The New Dawn*, 20 March 2024)

<<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/stand-appoints-first-country-director/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁹⁰ MK Garzeawu 'Liberia's President Joseph Boakai to set up first war crimes court' (*BBC*, 3 May 2024)

<<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68946897>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁹¹ 'Liberia: Two dead, 23 others arrest in violent protest in Grand Cape Mount county' (*West Africa Democracy Radio*, 4 March 2024) <<https://wadr.org/liberia-two-dead-23-others-arrest-in-violent-protest-in-grand-cape-mount-county/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁹² 'Two Killed In Kinjor Protest ...Police Boss Admits, But ... -' (*The Independent News Paper*, 4 March 2024)

<<https://www.theindependent.com.lr/2024/03/04/two-killed-in-kinjor-protest-police-boss-admits-but-2/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

⁹³ 'Tensions Rise in Nimba County as Boima Morgan Allegedly Disrupts ArcelorMittal Mining Sites' (*Independent Probe Newspaper*, 8 May 2024) <<https://independentprobe.com/2024/05/08/tensions-rise-in-nimba-county-as-boima-morgan-allegedly-disrupts-arcelormittal-mining-sites/>> accessed 20 June 2024.

In Focus: The Legislature

In October 2023, Liberians elected another batch of senators and representatives to perform the country's legislative functions. Bad leadership, inaccessibility, neglect of consistencies, corruption, and over poor performance led to the defeat of many incumbent lawmakers, thus opening doors for others to come in. Notably, the sitting speaker of the House Representatives, Hon. Bhofal Chambers lost his seat to a youth leader and former student activist Alex Williams in Maryland County. Speaker Chambers' leadership was marred by allegations of corruption, poor coordination and decision-making, inaccessibility, and collusion with the executive on matters against public interest. The Legislature now has a mixed of old and new lawmakers, in whose hands Liberians have placed their hopes to provide the needed oversight and lawmaking functions to stir the country in the right direction.

What kind of Legislature Liberians now have? What the first 100 days of the Boakai-leg administration has so far show, in terms of the decision-making at the legislature and the overall leadership of the body? What can Liberians initially read into the what's obtaining at the legislature at the moment?

The legislature has a new leadership, Representative Jonathan Koffa of the House of Representatives and Senator Nyonblee Karngar Lawrence of the Senate. The 100-day performance has been mixed, but largely positive and encouraging, considering past performance. The Legislature appears to be showing signs of reforms and acceptance of the culture of accountability. In their election messages, Speaker Kofa and Protemp Lawrence committed to leading by example and ensuring a transparent and an accountable legislature. These sentiments have been echoed by other representatives and senators, to the liking of the public and development partners who have consistently seem lack of accountability and transparency from the legislature. True their commitments, there are indications of willingness and acceptance of the culture of accountability and transparency.

Firstly, the leadership and members seem open to the culture of transparency and accountability, especially openness in decision making and financial audit. This has never been the case in the past, as the previous four post war legislatures were not open to audit and other critical accountability initiatives. In a landmark move, the Speaker Kofa and Protemp Lawrence have invited the general auditing commission to review the systems and processes of the legislature and prepare the body for financial and other audits. The public eagerly awaits the outcome of the exercise and subsequent audit and other efforts to enhance transparency and accountability of the first branch of government. Secondly, the legislature has adopted the system of open voting on critical matters. This is necessary to allow Liberians track and determine the individual and collective positions of their senators and representatives on critical matters and issues. More importantly, the legislature has voted to establish a war and economic crimes court, an issue that has been lingering for years, with little progress. This was a massive and encouraging decision of the legislature. Notably, also, the legislature moved to undo the executive's plan to make major cuts to the budgets of integrity institutions.

More importantly, the body has accepted and members have begun to declare their assets, incomes and liabilities, alongside the executive and judiciary branches of government, something rarely seen in the past. The growing level of accessibility of the legislature and individual members is highly welcoming, in addition to commitments to clean the payrolls of both houses of ghost workers, a scheme that has deprived the government and country of critical and much-needed resources that could fund development. During an anti-corruption financing dialogue organized by CENTAL, with funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Speaker Kofa and other participating legislators promised to increase funding to the Liberia Anti-corruption Commission and other core integrity institutions. True to their commitments, the legislature increased budgetary support and allocation to the transparency and integrity sector, with notable increases in the budgets of LACC, LETI and other institutions whose budgets were reduced in the draft submitted by the executive. Although previous government made marginal increases in the budgets of some integrity intuitions, the recent action of the legislature is noteworthy, in the wake of reductions proposed by the executive, through the ministry of finance and development planning. More so, laudably, the legislature created space for civil society's participation in budget hearing and deliberations, something that hadn't happened in many years. This was a highly encouraging move that may go a long way in fostering cordial and enhanced working relationship between the legislature and civil society strengthening the culture of accountability, rule of law, enhanced law making and other well-meaning processes in the country.

Despite these initial positive trends and developments, there are some issues that must be addressed. For example, the senate moved to nominate sanctioned senator Nathaniel Macgill of Margibi County on the crucial education committee that requires someone with integrity and untainted records to lead. Also, the legislature reintroduced direct support to legislators, a decision that has proven to be problematic over the years, as recipients have not accounted for the funds received. Also, confirmation process of those appointed by the president have not been characterized by the level of transparency, robustness and integrity required. On multiple occasions, nominees were voted for and confirmed by Senators, even before they mounted the podium to undergo their confirmation proceedings. In many instances, the line of questioning of nominees seem more promoting than an exercise meant to quiz them on their performance, integrity, credentials, and suitability for the roles to occupy. If government must recruit more qualified and competent individuals to serve in strategic positions, the conformation process of the senate must be robust, transparent and free of biases and extreme political manipulations and interplays.



Recommendations

The Liberian Presidency:

1. The President must continue with his initial positive efforts, including full constitution and empowerment of the Office of Ombudsman to oversee implementation of the Code of Conduct for public officials. This laudable action of the President must be completed by giving the body the required resources to fully and impartially implement her mandate. Additionally, President Boakai should continue, but be holistic in his quest to audit public institutions. His much-publicized audit should be extended to the second term of Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf where he served as vice president. Any accountability issues during that period should be investigated and addressed, just as the 6 years of George Weah's leadership.
2. The President must match his speeches with words in taking the necessary timely and robust actions to tackle corruption. President Boakai has made a rough and unconvincing start in the fight against corruption. Among others, he needs to publish his assets, adequately support LACC and other anti-corruption institutions and suspend or dismiss his officials who have fragrantly violated the code of conduct by not declaring their assets.
3. That President Boakai is still forming his cabinet, after more than five months in office shows a level of inefficiency, effectiveness, and underperformance in this regard. He needs to be more efficient and effective in forming his cabinet, ensuring a thorough vetting process to bring in people with the requisite competences and of integrity.
4. In order to address the issue of favoritism and tribalism, the President must pay keen attention to the geographical configuration of the cabinet. As the government is still in its embryonic stage, the President must ensure that subsequent appointments reflect county/regional/geographical and ethnic balance. This is especially necessary considering that more than half of the current appointments (i.e., 57 percent) hail from the North-Central region comprising Lofa, Bong, and Nimba counties, while Lofa, the President's home county, accounts for 31%, the highest appointment per county.
5. President Boakai must respect tenure security and protect those occupying the said position. Issues pertaining to tenure positions and officials must be dealt with lawfully and not arbitrarily. The law must work for all and not certain individuals.
6. Consistent with the constitutional doctrine of separation of powers, ensure the independence of the Legislature, Judiciary and the entire criminal justice system. This should be achieved by not only refraining from interfering with Legislative and judicial decisions and processes, but prohibit reprisals against prosecutors, lawyers and other judicial actors for performing their duties.

Legislature

1. The Legislature has seen glimpse of progress under the leaderships of Speaker Fonati Koffa and Pro Tempore Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence. Positive efforts related to declaration of assets by some senators and representatives should be continued and scaled up, especially covering legislators who have not yet done so. Also, ongoing work with the General Auditing Commission to review internal systems and process and eventually make the Legislature auditable is highly welcoming and commendable. For transparency, detailed report of the process should be released to the public to inform their decisions.
2. The Liberia Senate must improve upon the robustness and transparency of its confirmation process for quality outcomes--to ensure that only individuals with the required levels of integrity and experiences are confirmed. The tendency of expressing votes or support for candidates, while still under scrutiny undermines the transparency and competitiveness of the confirmation process.
3. Resources budgeted for Legislative engagements and projects should be properly managed and accounted for, through the required systems and processes of government. A neutral body, such as the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment should oversee management of the funds, working closely with the leadership of both houses and individual lawmakers.
4. The fight against corruption and good governance efforts of the country lie in the hands of the legislature, in as much as the executive is the implementer of government's policy and programs. The body should provide adequate financial and logistical support to public integrity institutions such as LACC, GAC, PPCC, LEITI to fully execute their functions/mandates in preventing and addressing corruption and other unethical behaviors. Also, the legislature should timely act on good governance and anti-corruption bills before it and those to come, to strengthen laws and policies governing the integrity and accountability sector.
5. Finally, the Legislature must adopt and enhance accountability processes and be robust in performing her core functions. The much-awaited financial and system audits must be timely conducted and the report published; legislative budget office and public accounts committee made fully functional and vibrant; confirmation processes made more transparent, robust and speedy; voting and other key decision-making processes be open and accessible to the public and partners; and payroll and other human resource management frameworks and processes be strengthened for proper accountability and transparency at the first branch of government. Additionally, there should be increased transparency, robustness, and integrity in reviewing the national budget, concession agreements and other key instruments as well as the recruitment of qualified individuals with integrity to serve in the offices of lawmakers. Furthermore, the leadership of the

Legislature should refrain from appointing persons accused of corruption to leadership and other positions.

Judiciary

1. The Judiciary has been undertaking reforms. The process should continue and be enhanced, to increase public trust and confidence in the sector. The Justices, Judges, court administrators and other judicial workers must act ethically at all times, ensuring full compliance with the Code of Conduct for Public Officials, Judicial Canon, and other regulations and polices governing the behaviors of public servants, especially judicial workers.
2. The Judiciary must lead by example in the fight against corruption by upholding integrity and ensuring that Justices, Judges, Lawyers, Court administrators and other workers exhibit high degree of accountability, transparency and integrity in their dealings. Also, systemwide reforms of the judiciary is needed, along with the financial autonomy required to ensure its true independence.
3. As head of the Judiciary, the Chief Justice of the Republic of Liberia and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court must firmly and timely implement judicial reforms, ensuring that lingering issues around judicial corruption, malpractices of some lawyers, judges and other judicial officials are independently investigated and prosecuted, where necessary. The body should take strong administrative and other sanctions against violations of the Code of Conduct for Public Officials, the Judicial Canon, and other policies and regulations governing the sector. Dealing with negative public perception about the sector is extremely important, as many believe they cannot get justice through the courts, perceiving high level of corruption in the system.
4. Judges, lawyers, court workers and other judicial officials that excellently perform, with the required levels of integrity, accountability, and transparency should be named and famed to serve as a motivation to others. Similarly, those who investigated and found wanting for acts of corruption, fraud, and other unlawful dealings should be shamed, suspended, dismissed and made to bear the penalties of his/her actions.

Public Integrity and Anti-graft Institutions

1. The Liberia Anti-corruption, General Auditing Commission, Public Procurement and Concession Commission and other core transparency organizations should lead by example in upholding the culture of accountability, transparency, and integrity, in line with the code of conduct for public officials and other regulations and policies. They should perform their mandates with the robustness, independence, integrity, and care required to prevent and address corruption, fraud, waste and abuse as well as ensure value for money in all government's financial and other dealings.

2. Part five of the Code of Conduct on Assets Declaration should be fully and impartially implemented by LACC, in collaboration with other stakeholders, as it grossly ineffective at the moment. Currently, LACC must work to show to the public the value and benefits of the Asset declaration process, something that practically does not exist at the moment. While we fully support deceleration of assets, incomes and liabilities by the current UP-led officials, the lack of concrete and visible actions on those declared by former government officials is highly concerning. We urge the commission to timely and robustly investigate and report to the public the authenticity and completeness of assets declared by former government officials. In a country where corruption is rife in public service and there are ample evidences of acquisition of illegal wealth accumulation, LACC cannot sit idly, while those who cunningly and defiantly stole public resources go with impunity.
3. While the inadequacy of resources may be justified in some instances, it cannot always hold true, especially so that LACC has multiple low-hanging fruits to deal with, including verifying assets, incomes, and liabilities declared by former government officials that they should be reviewing and reporting to the public on. It has been six months since the CDC government left power. There is no publicly available information that one assert verification has been completed by LACC, not even for officials of high-risk institutions and those sanctioned by the US Government. The Commission does not need much resources for this, especially so when a significant proportion of the assets, incomes and liabilities declared are reachable and traceable in Montserrado and other nearby locations. The Commission needs to deeply reflect on its work and begin making impacts and showing to the public and development partners why they should continue to be trusted to lead the country's fight against corruption and integrity building process.

Development Partners

1. Partners like SIDA, USAID, EU, and World Bank should continue to support the country's democracy, good governance and other well-meaning initiatives. However, they should demand more transparency and accountability from government and other stakeholders with whom they work. In part, financial and other support provided should be anchored strong anti-corruption commitments to deliver for the people.
2. There is a need for development partners to implement localization policies by providing increased and direct financial and non-financial support to civil society, media development organizations and broadcast houses. This will significantly help to strengthen their technical and institutional capacities to improve the quality and scope of their work as well as enable them to operate more independently and robustly. There cannot be a strong democracy and accountability culture without a vibrant media and

civil society that checkmates and collaborates with government at all levels to deliver for the people.

Managing Directors, Ministers, and other Public Servants:

1. Officials of government and public servants should uphold public trust and set high standards by upholding the principles of integrity, transparency and fair play in the discharge of their duties. They must fully comply with relevant laws and policies on financial management, procurement, access to information, competitive and merit-based recruitment in public service, asset declaration and other requirements of the code of conduct for public officials. Also, they must improve internal coordination efforts, as it is circuital to enhance horizontal and veridical accountability as well as improve transparency and integrity of key activities and processes.
2. Government officials and civil servants should collaborate with civil society organizations and the media to ensure transparency and integrity in their functions and improved service delivery. Meaningful engagements around policy design, review, implementation and monitoring will help to improve effectiveness and efficiency of key processes and activities. Collaborative efforts should be pursued to enhance transparency and accountability in and out of government.

Citizens/Liberians:

1. The fight against corruption will not succeed without active and sustained citizens' engagement and participation. Hence, Liberians need to fully support the fight against corruption and overall good governance efforts in the country. Among other things, citizens should reject and report acts of corruption; educate others about integrity and the benefits of fighting corruption; and demand transparency and accountability from national and local leaders. The cannot and will not be a successful fight against corruption without active citizens' engagement and involvement. Their deep and meaningful involvement will significantly impact the process.
2. Liberians need to petition their government, especially LACC to be robust and effective in handling corruption allegations, cases and other related matters and issues. They need to exert more pressure on LACC to verify and report on assets, incomes and liabilities declared by former and current public officials.

Media and Civil Society Organizations

1. Civil society organizations and the media must lead by example by being truthful, independent, constructive, impartial, and accountable in their dealing. This will give them the moral authority/standing to demand accountability and transparency from central government and other stakeholders. The change that both sectors and

institutions envisage in the country and among public officials should be reflected in their lives and activities, individually and collectively.

2. CSOs need to strengthen the capacity of citizens and provide them with relevant platforms and tools to support good governance, integrity building, rule of law and other pertinent efforts/initiatives that border on fulfillment of their rights. Both groups must forge sustainable partnership and work with citizens to demand accountability and improved performance from national and local leaders as well as encourage the public to make informed decisions on critical matters, especially in supporting the fight against corruption and bad governance.



References

Booty, Natasha and Ball, Janet 'How President Joseph Boakai hopes to rid Liberia of its problems' (*BBC*, 28 March 2024) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68682538>> accessed 16 June 2024

Browne, Jonathan 'Boakai's "Race Car" campaign under attack' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 26 September 2017) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/boakai-s-race-car-campaign-under-attack/>> accessed 19 June 2024

Clayeh, JH Webster 'Liberia: Miatta Fahnbulleh Blames Legislature, Unity Party and CDC Govt for Poor Planning of Inaugural Program' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 26 January 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-miatta-fahnbulleh-blames-legislature-unity-party-and-cdc-govt-for-poor-planning-of-inaugural-program/>> accessed 19 June 2024

— 'Liberia: NOCAL Clarifies Media Reports over Alleged Misapplication of Funds' (*Frontpage Africa*, 2 April 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-nocal-clarifies-media-reports-over-alleged-misapplication-of-funds/>> accessed 20 June 2024

Dodoo, Lennart 'Liberia: Madam Sirleaf Corruption Rejects Land in Boakai's Government' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 21 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/liberia-madam-sirleaf-corruption-rejects-land-in-boakais-government/>> accessed 17 June 2024

— 'GAC Audit Exposes: Weah Administration Leaves Boakai Administration with No Funds, Contradicting Previous Claims' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 7 March 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/gac-audit-exposes-weah-administration-leaves-boakai-administration-with-no-funds-contradicting-previous-claims/>> accessed 19 June 2024

Dodoo, Lennart and Lomax, Selma 'Liberia: Nomination Controversies and Political Maneuvering Cloud Boakai's Government Formation Process' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 25 March 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/liberia-nomination-controversies-and-political-maneuvering-cloud-boakais-government-formation-process/>> accessed 6 June 2024

Garzeawu, Moses Kollie 'Liberia's President Joseph Boakai to set up first war crimes court' (*BBC*, 3 May 2024) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68946897>> accessed 20 June 2024

Johnson, Obediah 'Liberia: Controversial Yekeh Koluba Questions Boakai on the Source of L\$10m and 200 Bags of Rice Donated to Victims of Totota Tanker Explosion' (*Frontpage Africa*,

9 January 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-controversial-yekeh-koluba-questions-boakai-on-the-source-of-110m-and-200-bags-of-rice-donated-to-victims-of-totota-tanker-explosion/>> accessed 20 June 2024

— 'Liberia: Senate Joint Committee Reveals \$22M in Road Contracts Awarded Without Competitive Bidding by Public Works, Justice, and Finance Ministers - FrontPageAfrica' (*Frontpage Africa*, 29 May 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-senate-joint-committee-reveals-22m-in-road-contracts-awarded-without-competitive-bidding-by-public-works-justice-and-finance-ministers/>> accessed 20 June 2024

Koinyeneh, Gerald C 'Liberia: House Seeks Clarity On Controversial U\$365k Disbursed By President Boakai For Inauguration Celebration in Electoral Districts' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 26 January 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-house-seeks-clarity-on-controversial-u365k-disbursed-by-president-boakai-for-inauguration-celebration-in-electoral-districts/>> accessed 20 June 2024

— 'Liberia: Pres. Boakai Sacks NASSCORP Deputy Director General for Resisting Presidential Mandate' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 22 March 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-pres-boakai-sacks-nasscorp-deputy-director-general-for-resisting-presidential-mandate/>> accessed 20 June 2024

Konneh, Amara 'Sen. Amara Konneh's 90-Day Update: Progress, Initiatives, and Commitments' (18 April 2024) <<https://senatoramarakonneh.gov.lr/sen-amara-konnehs-90-day-update-progress-initiatives-and-commitments/>> accessed 20 June 2024

— 'Yes Vote' (30 April 2024) <https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10163693586312627&id=737237626&mibextid=oFDknk&rid=Btf73HzRmokZBGiO> accessed 19 June 2024

Lomax, Selma 'Liberia: Wife of Bong Senator Prince Moye Name Controversially Appears on Newly Formed LPRC Board' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 16 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-wife-of-bong-senator-prince-moyes-name-controversially-appears-on-newly-formed-lprc-board/>> accessed 18 June 2024

Miapue, Siaway 'Did Pres. Boakai Violate Code of Conduct on Assets Declaration?' (*Local Voices Liberia*, 14 February 2024) <<https://localvoicesliberia.com/did-pres-boakai-violate-code-of-conduct-on-assists-declarations/>> accessed 19 June 2024

Newspaper, Afric Daily 'Public Outcry Over Boakai's Nomination' (*Afric Daily News*, 26 April 2024) <<https://africdailynewspaper.com/2024/04/26/public-outcry-over-boakais-nomination/>> accessed 15 June 2024

Sandy, Moses D 'Boakai to audit Weah's government, if elected' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 14 November 2021) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/boakai-to-audit-weahs-government-if-elected/>> accessed 19 June 2024

Saywon, Socrates 'A TARNISHED ADMINISTRATION: THE SCANDAL SURROUNDING MCDELLA COOPER AND THE INTEGRITY OF PRES. BOAKAI'S APPOINTEES' (*Smart News Liberia*, 4 June 2024) <<https://smartnewsliberia.com/a-tarnished-administration-the-scandal-surrounding-mcdella-cooper-and-the-integrity-of-pres-boakais-appointees/>> accessed 16 June 2024

Sieh, Rodney 'Liberia Wins as Another Successful Democratic Transfer of Power Looms' (*Frontpage Africa*, 18 November 2023) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/analysis/analysis-liberia-wins-as-another-successful-democratic-transfer-of-power-looms/>> accessed 19 June 2024

— 'Liberia: Under Pressure President Reportedly Sets up Team to Deal with Appointments' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 29 January 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-under-pressure-president-reportedly-sets-up-team-to-deal-with-appointments/>> accessed 16 June 2024

— 'Liberia: Mystery Clouds National Economic Advisor, Newest Addition to President's Inner Circle' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 5 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/who-is-jnbs-mystery-senior-economic-advisor/>> accessed 15 June 2024

— 'Liberia: Appointment Screw-up in President's Office; Man Sought in US for Fraud Gets Letter' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 9 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-appointment-screw-up-in-presidents-office-man-sought-in-us-for-fraud-gets-letter/>> accessed 17 June 2024

— 'Liberia: Roberts Flight Information Region Appointee Daniel Johnson Still a Fugitive for Alleged Wire Fraud and Theft' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 13 February 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-roberts-flight-information-region-appointee-daniel-johnson-still-a-fugitive-for-alleged-wire-fraud-and-theft/>> accessed 17 June 2024

The Analyst 'Merab's Choice May Harm Forestry Sector -Donors' Dossier on him "not favorable"' (*Analyst Liberia*, 14 February 2024) <<https://analystliberiaonline.com/merabs-choice-may-harm-forestry-sector-donors-dossier-on-him-not-favorable/>> accessed 17 June 2024

Toe, Blamo N 'Liberia: Rep. Yekeh Koluba Accuses Pres. Boakai of Bribing Lawmakers to Unseat Speaker Fonati Koffa' (*Frontpage Africa*, 25 March 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-rep-yekeh-koluba-accuses-pres-boakai-of-bribing-lawmakers-to-unseat-speaker-fonati-koffa/>> accessed 20 June 2024

— 'President Boakai Withdraws The Nominations of Three Individuals' (*Focus On Liberia*, 6 April 2024) <<https://focusonlib.com/opinions/f/president-boakai-withdraws-the-nominations-of-three-individuals>> accessed 6 June 2024

Tokpa, Willie 'Liberia: Supreme Court Orders Withdrawal of Nominations to LTA, LNLA, NIR, and Governance Commission Due to Illegal Appointments; Prof. Tarpeh Loses Tenure Battle'

(*Frontpage Africa*, 25 April 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-supreme-court-orders-withdrawal-of-nominations-to-lta-lna-nir-and-governance-commission-due-to-illegal-appointments-prof-tarpeh-loses-tenure-battle/>> accessed 12 June 2024

Tumu, Jaheim T 'Liberia: Minister of Labor, Cllr. Cooper Kruah, Accused of Violating Civil Service Freeze, Filling Positions with Kinsmen and Women' (*FrontPageAfrica*, 16 May 2024) <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-minister-of-labor-cllr-cooper-kruah-accused-of-violating-civil-service-freeze-filling-positions-with-kinsmen-and-women/>> accessed 18 June 2024

Yeakula, Gerald D Miamen, Anderson D and Makor, Randall M 'State of Corruption Report (SCORE) 2021' (2021) <<https://www.cental.org.lr/index.php/documents/reports/state-of-corruption-report/score-2021/viewdocument>> accessed 5 June 2024

'207 Liberian officials declare assets' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 7 June 2024) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/207-liberian-officials-declare-assets/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Biography of President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr. | The Executive Mansion' <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/general/biography-president-joseph-nyuma-boakai-sr>> accessed 4 June 2024

'Boakai ambushes tenure holders - Liberia news The New Dawn Liberia, premier resource for latest news' <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/boakai-ambushes-tenure-holders/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Boakai's Inaugural Night Appointees?' (*Independent Probe Newspaper*, 31 December 2023) <<https://independentprobe.com/2023/12/31/boakais-inaugural-night-appointees/>> accessed 18 June 2024

'CENTAL welcomes Ombudsman, but - Liberia news' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 16 April 2024) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/cental-welcomes-ombudsman-but/#:~:text=Monrovia%2C%20Liberia%2C%20April%2016%2C,fight%20against%20corruption%20in%20Liberia.>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Draft National Budget FY 2024' (*Ministry of Finance and Development Planning*, 19 March 2024) <<https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/component/edocman/national-budget-fy2024-2/fdocument?Itemid=9999>> accessed 19 June 2024

'Executive Mansion, LACC "Clash"...Over Assets Declaration Claims' (*The News Newspaper*, 20 May 2024) <<https://thenewsnewspaperonline.com/executive-mansion-lacc-clash-over-assets-declaration-claims/>> accessed 19 June 2024

'For immediate release President Boakai replaces nominated Deputy Public Works Minister' (*Executive Mansion-Liberia | Facebook*, 1 February 2024) <https://web.facebook.com/story.php/?story_fbid=757091553116474&id=100064469095550&p>

aipv=o&eav=AfbMfevvZ1Oao82GP4AJcymQJm3VjuKj9YDDJ_q7CYrpN3saduMm14yti2U2OGmVlvU&_rdc=1&_rdr> accessed 18 June 2024

'Global norms and standards: Leadership and political participation' (*UN Women*) <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/global-norms-and-standards>> accessed 18 June 2024

'Government of Liberia 100-Day Action Plan Assessment Report' (*mfdp*, 21 May 2024) <<https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/docs/national-development-plan/development-plan/government-of-liberia-100-day-action-plan-assessment-report>> accessed 16 June 2024

'Inaugural Address of His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr.' <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/sites/default/files/documents/INAUGURAL-ADDRESS-OF-HIS-EXCELLENCY-JOSEPH-NYUMA-BOAKAI.pdf>> accessed 25 May 2024

'Liberia: Foreign Minister Designate Faces Senate Amidst Controversy Over Education Credentials - FrontPageAfrica' <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-foreign-minister-designate-faces-senate-amidst-controversy-over-education-credentials/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Liberia: Joseph Boakai Promises Government of Inclusion - FrontPageAfrica' <<https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/liberia-joseph-boakai-promises-government-of-inclusion/>> accessed 18 June 2024

'Liberia Makes History with Female Defense Minister - Africa Defense Forum' <<https://adf-magazine.com/2024/06/liberia-makes-history-with-female-defense-minister/#:~:text=Retired%20Brig.%20Gen.%20Geraldine%20Janet%20George's%20long%20C%20decorated%20career,nation's%20first%20female%20defense%20minister.>> accessed 18 June 2024

'Liberia: Two dead, 23 others arrest in violent protest in Grand Cape Mount county' (*West Africa Democracy Radio*, 4 March 2024) <<https://wadr.org/liberia-two-dead-23-others-arrest-in-violent-protest-in-grand-cape-mount-county/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Liberian president sets up task force to trace stolen state assets' (*Reuters*, 6 March 2024) <<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/liberian-president-sets-up-task-force-trace-stolen-state-assets-2024-03-06/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Local And Int'l Concern Mounts Over Rudolph Merab Wartime Logging Records (Part 1) - Independent Probe Newspaper' <<https://independentprobe.com/2024/04/27/local-and-intl-concern-mounts-over-rudolph-merab-wartime-logging-records-part-1/>> accessed 17 June 2024

""NO APOLOGIES FOR PROSECUTION ROLE", Cllr. Livingstone & Cllr. Gould Respond To Nomination Withdrawal" (*Independent Probe*, 7 April 2024)

<<https://independentprobe.com/2024/04/07/no-apologies-for-prosecution-role-cllr-livingstone-cllr-gould-respond-to-nomination-withdrawal/>> accessed 6 June 2024

'“No Decision Yet”...Information Minister Speaks On 285 Road Equipment' (*The News Newspaper*, 2024) <<https://thenewsnewspaperonline.com/no-decision-yetinformation-minister-speaks-on-285-road-equipment/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Pres. Boakai Orders GAC To Decommission NSA's Audit; Cites “Sensitivity” Of Its Operations, But...'*(Hot Pepper Liberia*, 20 March 2024) <<https://hotpepperliberia.com/pres-boakai-orders-gac-to-decommission-nsas-audit-cites-sensitivity-of-its-operations-but/>> accessed 19 June 2024

'President Boakai Commends Madam Miatta Fahnbulleh and Members of the Transition Inaugural Committee | The Executive Mansion' <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/media/press-release/president-boakai-commends-madam-miatta-fahnbulleh-and-members-transition>> accessed 19 June 2024

'President Boakai Makes Additional Nominations in Government' (*The Executive Mansion*, 18 March 2024) <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/index.php/media/press-release/president-boakai-makes-additional-nominations-government>> accessed 17 June 2024

'President Boakai Nominates and Appoints Additional Officials To Government | The Executive Mansion' <<https://emansion.gov.lr/media/press-release/president-boakai-nominates-and-appoints-additional-officials-government>> accessed 5 June 2024

'President Boakai Suspends FIA Director General Stanley Ford' (*The Executive Mansion*, 30 March 2024) <<https://www.emansion.gov.lr/media/press-release/president-boakai-suspends-fia-director-general-stanley-ford>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Public Works Ministry Admits to Procedural Errors in \$22 Million Road Works Project' (*Smart News Liberia*, 29 May 2024) <<https://smartnewsliberia.com/public-works-ministry-admits-to-procedural-errors-in-22-million-road-works-project/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'S/Court decides on tenure case Wednesday' (*The New Dawn Liberia*, 23 April 2024) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/s-court-decides-on-tenure-case-wednesday/>> accessed 17 June 2024

'STAND appoints first Country Director' (*The New Dawn*, 20 March 2024) <<https://thenewdawnliberia.com/stand-appoints-first-country-director/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Tensions Rise in Nimba County as Boima Morgan Allegedly Disrupts ArcelorMittal Mining Sites' (*Independent Probe Newspaper*, 8 May 2024) <<https://independentprobe.com/2024/05/08/tensions-rise-in-nimba-county-as-boima-morgan-allegedly-disrupts-arcelormittal-mining-sites/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Tenure Hullabaloo Sparks At EPA; Protesters Resist Wilson Tarpeh's Return, But.... - Independent Probe Newspaper' <<https://independentprobe.com/2024/01/23/45667/>> accessed 20 June 2024

'Two Killed In Kinjor Protest ...Police Boss Admits, But ... -' (*The Independent News Paper*, 4 March 2024) <<https://www.theindependent.com.lr/2024/03/04/two-killed-in-kinjor-protest-police-boss-admits-but-2/>> accessed 20 June 2024

