

REMARKS

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

ON THE OCCASION

OF

THE OFFICIAL RETIREMENT

OF

**HIS HONOR FRANCIS S. KORKPOR, SR.
CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF LIBERIA R.L.**

**THE SUPREME COURT
TEMPLE OF JUSTICE
CAPITOL HILL
MONROVIA, LIBERIA**

SEPTEMBER 27, 2022

His Honor the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of Liberia and Members of the Judiciary;

The Speaker, President Pro-Tempore, and Honorable Members of the 54th Legislature, here present;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

Officials of Government;

The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

The President and Members of the Liberian Bar Association

Members of the Fourth Estate;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honored to be here today to participate in and witness this very important event.

The most fundamental precept of Liberia's legal system is the guarantee of rights and freedoms, which makes the judiciary cardinal to the democracy my administration continues to strive to consolidate.

Over the past several years, we have been deliberate in this national project, as we endeavor to maintain the independence that this branch of government ought to have. I must therefore applaud all of your efforts in this regard, particularly the man who we are here to honor today, the outgoing Chief Justice of the Republic of Liberia, His Honor Francis Korkpor.

Justice Korkpor has paid his dues, dating as far back to when he championed the cause of the poor and needy and when he represented the interest of the nation by his support for civil society and journalists.

During his work at the Justice and Peace Commission established by the Catholic Church in the early 1990's to address human rights abuses and injustices in our society, he quietly but fearlessly made the case for justice and peace for all Liberians, but especially for the underprivileged and the poor. Many times, his work brought him into conflict with some of Liberia's past leaders, but he always remained steadfast to the cause of justice.

Justice Korkpor's record for almost two decades as a Justice on the Supreme Court bench has remained exemplary and outstanding. He dedicated his time, first as an Associate Justice and later as Chief Justice, to seeing through key judicial reforms - as well as embarking on the development of major additions and improvements to court infrastructure throughout the country, thereby bringing justice closer to the people.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

We are fully cognizant of the crucial role the Judiciary plays in the maintenance of our hard-earned peace. Therefore, as we head to general and presidential elections next year, it is expected that you will continue to be of critical importance in our efforts to solidify our democratic credentials as a Nation.

Members of the Judiciary, in ensuring that blind justice is done to all, you will do well to rely on the excellent foundations that have been laid by Justice Francis Korkpor and his colleagues during his leadership of this honorable Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Korkpor, even though you are retired, I know that you are not tired. So I will still continue to seek your wise council when needed.

And now, on a personal note, I would like to inform this audience that Chief Justice Korkpor is no stranger to me. Papay, now that you are retiring, I am about to bust out our little secret. I am free now to talk, so now I'm talking. I took all these years to hide our secret.

I have been knowing the Papay since 1986, some 36 years ago. At that time, he was a serious I.E. supporter, and as I was a player for I.E., he was a very kind person to me. Many times, during my school days, when it was rough, I used to go to his office, and he never failed me. Moreover, not only was he very generous to me, but through his personal advice and guidance, he became a mentor to me, and a strong father-figure in my life.

So, Papay, as you retire today, I can now tell the world that you are my Pa. I can go around you now, and associate freely with you. I know you are retiring now, but I am still your son, yah? Now that you are leaving Government, I am still your son, yah?

So thank you Papay, for everything that you have done for me. When times were hard, you were there. When times were good, you were still there. But what I enjoy most is the respect that we kept for each other. Respect and love.

Enjoy your retirement. May God Almighty continue to guide you and protect you in your retirement.

I thank you.