

Special Remarks

Delivered By

His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr.

President of the Republic of Liberia

On the Occasion Marking the

69th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day

Barclay Training Center, Monrovia, Liberia

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Honorable Guest Speaker;

Distinguished Members of the Legislature;

Esteemed Members of the Judiciary;

Senior Officers, Men and Women of the Armed Forces of Liberia;

Representatives of the Joint Security and other Security Apparatus;

Our International Partners;

**Fellow Liberians:**

On this solemn occasion of commemoration of this year's Armed Forces Day, we gather once again as one nation to pay tribute to and celebrate the gallantry of the men and women of the Armed Forces of Liberia and our security institutions. This day is a reminder of the sacrifices made, the courage displayed, and the unwavering commitment shown by our soldiers in defense of our sovereignty, our democracy, and our people.

It is also a day for reflection — to honor the legacy of those who came before us, and to renew our pledge to strengthen the Armed Forces. Our Armed Forces remain a pillar of stability and national honor. I usually say I avoid being with a man with a gun and a grudge.

**My Fellow Citizens, Distinguished Guest,**

The Armed Forces of Liberia have endured trials and emerged as a disciplined, professional institution. Yet, we must prepare for the future. In this regard, our Government has taken action to address the challenges of high attrition rates and the natural aging of elements of our Force.

My Government has undertaken several measures to promote the dignity and integrity of our men and women in arms. Beginning in 2026, this year the annual recruitment of six hundred (600) personnel into the Armed Forces of Liberia will commence and will run up to 2029.

This recruitment drive is not just about numbers; it is about fashioning a force that reflects the diversity, resilience, and aspirations of the Liberian people. This is a deliberate strategy to ensure that the AFL remains youthful, dynamic, and capable of responding to both traditional and emerging security threats.

**Fellow Citizens, Distinguished Guests,**

We recognize that the strength of our military lies not only in its training and equipment, but also in the physical and mental welfare of its personnel. In addition to the recently renovated barracks in Margibi and Nimba counties, my Government will prioritize the renovation and restoration of barracks in Bomi and Maryland counties. We must decongest the living quarters of our soldiers. The renovation is not intended to target anyone but to offer decent housing to our soldiers and keep them fit and ready. This must be seen as a collective national duty.

In this regard, the Ministry of National Defense will work with the Ministries of State, Public Works, and other government line institutions to conduct an assessment on these facilities to begin renovation and/or construction work. These projects are more than infrastructure; they are investments in dignity, guaranteeing that our soldiers and their families live in safe, decent, and supportive environments. A soldier who is dignified at home will defend our nation abroad.

**Fellow Citizens and Distinguished Guests,**

Military service often comes with invisible wounds. Trauma, stress, and psychosocial challenges affect not only the individual soldier but also their families and communities. It

is in this view that we extend our deepest appreciation to ECOWAS for its initial contribution toward constructing and operationalizing a mental health facility at the 14 Military Hospital. This facility represents a new frontier in our commitment to the well-being of our troops. My Government pledges to ensure that the facility is completed and fully operational, serving not only the AFL but also the wider Liberian population. By addressing mental health, we affirm that resilience is not only physical but also psychological. A strong military is one that is prepared in mind as much as in body.

**Fellow Liberians,**

The future of the Armed Forces must be inclusive. We are proud to acknowledge and appreciate the support of the ELSIE Foundation, which has committed funds solely for the purpose of increasing female parity within the AFL.

This should not be mistaken for being merely symbolic; it is transformative. Women bring unique perspectives, skills, and strengths to the military. Their presence enriches the Institution and ensures that the AFL reflects the full potential of our nation. We will continue to create pathways for women to serve, lead, and excel in every aspect of military life.

May I remind you and proudly announce that my Defense Minister is the first female in this position.

**Compatriots,**

Liberia's security is inseparable from the security of West Africa. We extend heartfelt appreciation to you, Honorable Keynote Speaker, Major General Waidi Shaibu, Chief of Army Staff of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and your delegation. It is firmly etched in history that Nigeria has stood with

Liberia both in times of trial and triumph, offering solidarity, expertise, and friendship.

Your support reinforces the teaching that peace in one nation strengthens peace in the region.

Together, we stand as partners against the challenges of instability, terrorism, and transnational threats. Liberia remains committed to regional cooperation, knowing that our collective strength is greater than the sum of our individual efforts.

To the Capstone Program of the National Defense University of the United States of America- General Thomas D. Waldhauser and delegation, Liberia remains ever grateful for your participation in the 69th Armed Forces Day Celebration.

Your attendance is not only a testament of long standing traditional diplomatic relations that our both countries enjoy, but it also represents the United States commitment to safeguarding peace and security in Liberia and the West African region.

**Fellow Liberians and Invited Guests,**

As we celebrate Armed Forces Day, let us remember that the men and women in uniform are not only defenders of our borders; they are defenders of our future. They are defenders of our sovereignty. They embody discipline, sacrifice, and patriotism.

To our soldiers, officers, and all members of our security institutions, Liberia salutes you. Your courage inspires us, your sacrifice strengthens us, and your service unites us.

Let us, as a nation, continue to support the Armed Forces of Liberia with the resources, respect, and recognition they deserve; for in their strength lies our peace.

GOD BLESS OUR NATION, PROTECT OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN ARMS, AND SAVE THE STATE!!