



PRESS RELEASE

Monrovia, Liberia (July 15, 2022) - Naymote Partners for Democratic Development calls on President George Weah to report to the public on the status of special committees he previously established to investigate or address issues of national concern including those bordering on corruption allegations and addressing service delivery challenges. The institution notes that special presidential committees are intended to perform special tasks or conduct special investigations and report back within a reasonable timeframe. In essence, they perform functions which the traditional bureaucracy might take longer or might not have the expertise to perform. Therefore, the public expects high quality deliverables and integrity in the conduct of the work special presidential committees.

The institution has tracked 14 committees mandated by President George Weah, between 2018 and 2022, to perform special functions, including investigations into alleged acts of corruption.

However, NAYMOTE notes that only three (3) of the 14 committees established so far have publicly reported or executed their mandates, while the status of the work of the remaining twelve (12) remains largely unknown. This might be either because their reports were not made public, or they did not perform their functions.

Below is a brief information on the 14 committees established (and tracked by NAYMOTE) since 2018.

1. Committees whose reports are publicly available

1.1 Special Presidential Task Force to “retrieve all government-owned vehicles” in the possession of former government officials – This task force was established on February 26, 2018. The task force executed its mandate and reported to the President on July 4, 2018 — it was also dissolved on this date. However, there is no information on action taken against noncompliant former officials.

1.2. Special Presidential Committee to review allegations made by Global Witness in its reports concerning the National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL). The committee was established in April 2018 and chaired by Cllr. Ndubuisi Nwabudike. The committee **executed its mandate**, and their report was presented to the President on May 16, 2018. However, there is no available information on action taken in implementing the recommendations in the report.

1.3. Special Presidential Committee to recruit two Deputy Auditor Generals of the General Auditing Commission (Deputy Auditor General for Audit Services and Deputy Auditor General for Administration), **and the Director General of the Internal Audit Agency.** The committee was established in October 2021. The **committee executed its mandate** and reported to the President on May 16, 2022. The President appointed the Director-General of the Internal Audit Agency (IAA) and three new Deputies at the GAC on the same day.

2. Committees whose status are unknown to the public or have yet to execute their mandate

2.1. Special Presidential Committee on Market Maintenance, the committee was established in July 2021, and mandated to carry out a comprehensive cleanup exercise of all county capitals and the city of Paynesville, implement of a 90-day Action Plan ahead of the 2021 July 26 Independence Day

celebration, and ensure that all marketers leave the Red-Light grounds and relocate to the Omega Market in peaceful and orderly manner. **The Committee is yet to execute all of its mandate and there is no public information on its status.**

- **2.2. Special Review Committee to evaluate all concessions, management and other agreements/contracts, currently in force in Liberia, executed by and between the Government of Liberia and concessionaires, managers, partners and investors.** The nine-members special review committee was established in February 2018, and guidelines to constitute committee code of conduct was adopted. However, there is no available information on the committee's report or its activities. Hon. Archie Bernard and Cllr. T. Negbalee Warner were appointed as Chair and Co-Chair respectively.

2.3. National Steering Committee to provide oversight to the COVID-19 Household Food Support Program (COHFSP). The committee was established on April 18, 2020, and President Weah requested the National Legislature to re-appropriate US\$ 25 million from the FY 2019/20 National Budget for the COVID-19 Household Food Support Program, implemented by the World Food Program. There is no available report on the work of the committee. Also, the committee is yet to provide a comprehensive account of the US\$25 million used for COVID-19 Household Food Support Program.

- **2.4. Special Presidential Committee to probe a petition presented by members of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) on allegations of harassment and violence meted out against journalists.** The committee was established in March 2020 and mandated to probe petition which recounted numerous acts of violence journalists have suffered since the government of President Weah came to power. Dr. Laurence K. Bropleh, former Minister of Information, was appointed as head of this committee. There is no available information on the committee's report.
- **2.5. Committee to investigate waves of death in Liberia amongst public servants, particularly in Monrovia and its environs, including the mysterious deaths of two employees of the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and the former Director General of the Internal Audit Agency (IAA).** The committee was established on October 12, 2020 and headed by the Ministry of Justice. There is no available report on the status of this committee.
- **2.6. National Response Executive Committee on Coronavirus (ECOC) in Liberia.** The committee was established in April 2020 and chaired by Madam Mary Broh, the National Compliance Manager of ECOC. There's no available information on the status of the committee or committee's report.
- **2.7. Special Presidential Committee to Mediate Nimba County Land Conflict (Nimba County Conflict Resolution Committee).** The committee was established on May 13, 2021 and chaired by the Minister of Internal Affairs. The committee was mandated to fully investigate reported land dispute in Nimba County, particularly in Ganta, and make recommendations for resolution. There is no available report on the status of the committee's work.

- **2.8. National Bicentennial Steering Committee to plan and execute appropriate activities to commemorate the Bicentennial Celebration.** The committee was established in August 2021. Series of events were announced in commemoration of the bicentennial to be celebrated throughout the year 2022, and a major event were held in January and February. However, there is no report on the status of the events, reports from previous events and amount spent so far.
- **2.9. National Bicentennial Sub-Committees.** The committee was established on Saturday, October 30, 2021- mandated to aid the work of the National Bicentennial Steering Committee, and host the Bicentennial Celebration. There is no available information on the committee's report.
- **2.10. Steering Committee (SC) of Special Economic Zones (SEZs).** The committee was established on April 8, 2019, and mandated to create, drive, guide, enhance, coordinate and manage single, multiple and mixed-use Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Liberia. Three years after its establishment, there's no available information regarding the committee's work and report.
- **2.11.** In May 10, 2022, President Weah mandated the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dee-Maxwell Kemayah, to investigate circumstances leading to the issuance of Liberia's Diplomatic passport to Mr. Sheik Bassirou Kante, who was recently arrested in the United States on allegations of fraud and report. The President mandated Minister Kemayah to submit a full report detailing a review of how Liberian diplomatic passports are issued in one week. There is no available information on the status of the committee's work.

The institution believes that special committees are an important part of the governance process and facilitate service delivery and accountability mechanisms. It is therefore important that the government ensures that functions of the traditional bureaucracy occasionally outsourced to special committees are speedily implemented and reports on their activities are made publicly available. This is important not only for the effective functioning of the government but also in deepening trust between the government and the citizens and strengthening the social contract which mandates the government to act on behalf of the people. We therefore call on the President of the Republic of Liberia to ensure the timely release of the reports of these presidential committees where they are available and prevail on those that are yet to deliver on their mandate or report on their work to do so in the interest of the public.

The institution believes for the government to be accountable the people must be aware of what is happening in the country so it is important that the press and the people are able to get information about the statutes of the various committees' setup by the President in a timely manner.

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