



LIBERIA MEDIA FOR DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES

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Dialoging for Peace, Democracy & Development in Liberia

PRESS RELEASE

ZEE-MAANEH-----ZEE-MAANEH (PEACE AND ENJOYMENT)

LMDI Event...THE LIBERIA MEDIA FOR DEMOCRATIC INITIATIVES (LMDI) IS APPALLED BY THE ALLEGED CREATION OF FAKE DEED BY THE UL ADMINISTRATION AND OUTGOING PRESIDENT ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF TO CLAIM THE FENDELL ABORIGINAL HOME LAND VILLAGES AND RESIDENCES OF TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AFTER THE WANTON DEMOLITION OF THE HOMES IN MAY 2016...CONDEMNS THE ACTION AS ILLEGAL AND CRIMINAL AND CALLS ON THE INCOMING GEORGE WEAH GOVERNMENT TO INVESTIGATE AND TALK TO THE THOUSANDS OF VICTIMS FOR A AMICABLE RESOLUTION. ...LMDI/THE DIALOGUE/DUCOR DEBATES-ZEE-MAANNEH---ZEE-MAANNEH (PEACE & ENJOYMENT)...PLEASE VISIT AND VIEW OUR NEW WEBSITE AND FSCEBOOK PAGE AT www.lmdilib.org and www.facebook.com/lmdilib.org. PLEASE FOLLOW AND KNOW ALL ABOUT US AND LIBERIA AND ALL THAT WE DO TO SUSTAIN LIBERIA'S POST CONFLICT DEMOCRACY.

ZEE-MAANEH-----ZEE-MAANEH (PEACE AND ENJOYMENT)

Monrovia Liberia...Friday January 19, 2018...The Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives, LMDI, the facilitator of Liberia's leading conflict transformation and peace building media and community outreach blended flagship platform, "THE DIALOGUE" and the lead advocate against the May 2016 violent demolition of the homes of thousands of Bassa, Gola, Vai and Kpelleh aboriginal homeland people of FENDELL and residents alike, is gravely appalled by the discovery that a fake land deed has been produced by the University of Liberia administration and purportedly signed by outgoing president ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF on January 10, 2018 for the FENDELL land that the UL claims was bought by the Tubman and Tolbert administrations for it.

JOHN KOLLIE, Director of the LMDI says the making of the alleged fake deed by the UL with the backing of outgoing president ELLEN JOHNSON administration in an attempt to criminally and illegally own the FENDELL people's nearly 6000 acres of aboriginal homeland, if true, is the gravest show of wickedness and inhumanity by a post conflict government especially led a first African woman president like Mrs. ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF.

JOHN KOLLIE says the alleged action by the UL administration and President SIRLEAF is intended to deny the thousands of FENDELL residents violently evicted by the demolition of more than 3000 residential houses, schools, business and 20 aboriginal Bassa, Kpelleh, Gola and Vai homeland villages in May last year.

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The LMDI Director says he finds it unthinkable that president ELLEN JOHNSON who was one of the proponents of the Liberian civil war that destroyed homes of hundreds of millions of Liberians, but was yet voted to improve the lives people affected by the war would still go on to order the destruction homes of thousands people struggling to resettle without any compensation in the name of expanding a university.

JOHN KOLLIE says the wanton destruction of thousands of homes of tens of thousands of the FENDEL people with intentioned impunity by president SIRLEAF and the UL administration without any documents to back their claim to the FENDEL land and now making a fake deed, should be considered unthinkable by any civilized group of people anywhere in the World.

The LMDI questions the situation as a high level inhumanity and insensitivity to the thousands of FENDELL people made homeless by the UL and President SIRLEA. The government's flagrant refusal to consult with its own people and provide a resettlement to them in keeping with its social responsibility and international obligation to forced eviction in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is mark of a failed leader.

The LMDI says the government and the University of Liberia also failed to make the eviction process at FENDELL transparent, a key requirement for any forced eviction as violently carried out by the government against its own people at FENDELL. In the meantime, The LMDI has asked its lawyers to launch an investigation into the creation of the alleged fake deed for possible legal action by the perpetrators.

Meanwhile, the LMDI calls on the incoming Government to set up a board of inquiry to investigate the May 2016 wanton destruction at FENDELL by the UL, reported ordered by outgoing president ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF.

Legal requirements for authorities carrying out evictions

Under forced Eviction laws of the Universal declaration of Human Rights, the below outlined requirements must be met:

If you're a state authority planning to evict some residents against their will, here's what you are obliged to do before you can move them from the land they're living on:

1. Genuinely **consult** with the community at risk of eviction.
2. Give them reasonable **notice**.
3. Make your plans for the land **transparent** and clearly known to all affected.
4. Provide **alternative housing** for evictees.
5. Give them adequate **legal support**, possibly compensation, access to legal aid for those who need it.
6. Ensure **no one will be vulnerable to human rights abuses** as a result of your eviction.

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Though clearly outlined as done above, the ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF Government which prides itself as Africa's first female led government and therefore an ardent respecter of human rights, has done just the opposite; destroyed at least 3000 houses and 20 aboriginal villages, the same villages that the government claims to have bought the land from in the 1960's and 70's.

The Transparency failures

Though the University of Liberia claims ownership of the FENDELL land, nearly 6000 acres, it had yet to even display its title or deed to the land, it rather presents maps and boasts about cornerstones it claims to have planted decades ago, but under Liberian laws only titles or deeds are recognized to hold ownership of land in Liberia.

Double standards in the FENDELL land dispute

While the UL and government with their police and all kinds of power claim the FENDELL land, they allowed the sale of parcels of the land to other buyers and allowed construction on them. The government's court system even allowed and probated the deeds or titles of the same land it claims and yet subsequently destroyed millions of dollars worth of property of more than 20 thousand post conflict poor Liberians.

The LMDI can only describe the UL and Government's action as an outrageous dispossession and further impoverishment of poor Liberians in a post war and EBOLA broken economy.

Current Property Destruction and Land Dispute, a threat to Liberia's Hard Earned Peace

The Government has identified land as the next notable source of possible violent conflict and claims to be acting to avert any potential outbursts, but its current actions (the wave of the destruction of poor people's private property in the name of land ownership and claims are clearly astonishing). The land sector of Liberia is overwhelmed by massive corruption tied to land administration and a grossly corrupt judiciary and so when the government brags about efforts to deal with land conflict, it was least imagined that it would start violently dispossessing its own people of property, especially land that it's showing no titles or deeds for. No one really imagined that the government would have started the land trouble that it rather should be seeking to resolve.

Beyond the FENDELL land claims, the ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF led government has destroyed several densely populated communities either in its own name or relatives of the elites of the status quo. It all started with a parcel of land at Sinkor Monrovia near the VAMOMA house. There it moved bulldozers on the people, with no transparency to date as to who owns the land and why it's clearing it. With more than two years gone after the demolition of the occupying property, the land still lies there undeveloped. The second property damage was done at GIO TOWN at Oldest Congo Town, with claims by the government that it had a court order to

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evict residents on behalf of Ms. GRACE MINOR, a former Senate Pro-Tempore of the Liberian senate and a presumed close friend of president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. It turned out later that Ms. MINOR reportedly could not prove any legal title or deed to the property. That parcel of land after clearing about two years ago also lies there with no development.

The Government's third destruction of the people's property is at the Free Way along the Somalia drive near the Free Port of Monrovia. It claims a huge parcel of land for industrial park. Again more than 20 thousand people were violently evicted to allow for the construction of a cement factory and a coal based power plant by Africa's richest man, Nigerian ALIKO DANGOTE. The government evicted the people without any relocation or resettlement plan or action.

What is worrisome about the wave of demolitions and the attending displacement of the thousands of people is that they are usually marked by violence and in the case of the FENDEL destruction, killings are reported. At least two people are said to have been shot dead by riot police for apparent threat of an arson attack on the University of Liberia FENDELL campus and the victims are constantly threatening future unknown response for their survival at least, posing a threat to the hard earned post conflict peace of Liberia.

In June 2008, some two dozen young people were killed in a dispute over a farm land and thrown into Farmington River near the farm about 55km (35 miles) south-east of Liberia's capital Monrovia. This incident sent a shockwave across the nation about the potential damaging threat that land related disputes would pose in post conflict Liberia. Since then it has been thought that the government would work to peacefully resolve land disputes or seek policies directed at land reform to instill peace, but the government itself now seems bent on fueling the conflict as it makes violent moves at forced eviction on its own behalf and those of relatives of elites in the regime and the status quo.

Attempts to balance investigation and story rebuffed by apparent bluff by the demolition woman

To try and balance all the claims above, we the Liberia Media for Democratic Initiatives (LMDI) have made all frantic efforts to contact Madam Weade Kolba Wureh, UL Vice president and lead person on the FENDELL demolition exercise, but she's asked us to do more research, in her words "to add our informed voice in stopping the criminality of looters of government and private properties". She sounds clearly disconnected from any sense Liberia's national social responsibility and international law obligations especially in line with forced eviction rules and the general principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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Conspicuous Silence on the massive destruction

Whilst the government carries out what appears to be a calculated series of violent destructive forced evictions of the property of poor Liberians without any resettlement plan or action, human rights groups in Liberia are conspicuously silent to the dismay of thousands of victims and observers, considering that the basis for their establishment and operation is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under which illegal forced eviction like the FENDELL one and others in recent times fall.

The other mystery is that Liberia, though headed to its next elections, its political leaders are also conspicuously silent on the wave of property demolitions by the SIRLEAF government they profess to be trying to replace. Our investigation has hinted that Liberia's political leaders, especially the leading opposition ones are apparently hopeful that current leader, Johnson SIRLEAF will pass on power to them or are simply waiting to capitalize on the wanton destruction against the current vice president and newly elected standard bearer of the ruling party, Joseph Boakai.

A Call to Act for the poor

The LMDI challenges human rights groups and political leaders to intervene in the current wave of massive destruction of poor people's property by the SIRLEAF government ahead of the 2017 elections.

The LMDI sees the wave of property destruction by the ELLEN SIRLEAF Government as intentional design to humiliate and further impoverish the already impoverished suffering people of Liberia and says it is continuing its investigation of the continuous demolition of the homes of poor Liberians with contemplation on options for national and international class actions for redress.

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Please follow us on our website at www.lmdilr.org and also visit our face book page at Liberia Media for Democratic initiatives (LMDI)2. You can send comments to info@lmdilr.org, thedialogue.lmdi@lmdilr.org and john@lmdilr.org and john@lmdi.org THE DIALOGUE is generally in association with THE STARZ COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY across Liberia.

Signed:



John O. Kollie

DIRECTOR

