



***Statement on  
Armed Forces Day  
By  
His Excellency Joseph N. Boakai, Sr.  
President of the Republic of Liberia***

***February 12, 2024***

***My Fellow Citizens,***

On Sunday, February 11, I received in audience wives of some members of the Armed Forces of Liberia who had come to express their concerns on several issues. These issues included poor living conditions, high tuition fees for their children, lack of adequate medical care, and low salaries, among others. The women stated their most important demand was the removal of Retired Major General Prince C. Johnson, III, as Minister of Defense. They said their husbands had told them that unless General Johnson was removed there would be no Armed Forces Day celebration. We made it clear to the women that the Government would look into their grievances regarding all the issues, but that General Johnson had been confirmed by the Senate and appointed by me as Minister of Defense. We were hence not prepared to discuss his issue.

Meanwhile, we received throughout the day and night information that some of the Armed Forces Wives and their husbands had initiated protest actions across the country by blocking major roadways and highways. Others had engaged in agitations in barracks around the country. In an effort to prevent violence and preserve lives and properties, we ordered that the Armed Forces Day celebrations for today be reduced to a low-key program. We have since held consultations with our strategic partner, the United States, and other regional stakeholders on the situation.

As a true soldier and a patriot, Retired Major General Johnson, III, of his own volition, informed us that he would step aside if he were the obstacle in order to save the AFL and preserve peace and tranquility in the country.

Retired Major General Johnson, III, accordingly tendered his resignation to me earlier today. I have accepted the resignation and thanked the General for his sacrificial services, loyalty, and commitment to our country. Meanwhile, I have appointed Brigadier General Geraldine George as Acting Minister of National Defense.

## ***My Fellow Citizens,***

The issues raised by the Armed Forces Wives affect all sectors of our population throughout the country. We inherited these problems as we have been in office for barely 21 days only. The problems take on graver connotations when it comes to the military. The men and women in arms put their lives on the line to defend and protect us. We must be extra sensitive to their plight. The Army is our collective national pride, and we must preserve its dignity. I have therefore appointed a special independent investigator to probe into these grievances and report to me within two weeks. We have also activated the Board of Inquiry to look into the case of several soldiers who were discharged from the AFL for various serious crimes but were said to be undeservedly pardoned and reinstated.

We must never tolerate indiscipline and breakdown of order in the Armed Forces of Liberia. The reconstituted AFL has won the praises and admiration of the entire country for its professionalism and has become a source of national pride for all of us. We cannot afford to indulge in anything that will dampen the morale of our soldiers and generate doubt and suspicion. On the other hand, our government will ensure that our military is well looked after. We should always Think Liberia, love Liberia, and Build Liberia.

***God bless the works of our hands and save the state.***