

SPECIAL STATEMENT

BY

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

IN OBSERVANCE OF THE 174TH NATIONAL FLAG DAY
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

AUGUST 24, 2021

Her Excellency Madam Clar Marie Decontee Weah
First Lady of the Republic of Liberia;

Her Excellency Madam Jewel Howard Taylor
Vice President of the Republic of Liberia;

The Speaker and President Pro-Tempore of the 54th Legislature;

The Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of Liberia;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

The Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Traditional Leaders and Members of Civil Society;

Representatives of Local and International Organizations;

Students and Teachers;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

Fellow Liberians;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me begin by asking all of us to kindly observe a moment of silence for our compatriots who have died due to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic in our country, and also for those who lost their lives onboard the Niko Ivanka vessel which sank off the Liberian coast a few weeks ago.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Thank you.

On this day exactly 174 years ago, our founding fathers courageously raised the Liberian Flag, declaring to the world that Liberia was a free and sovereign nation. Today, we come together to celebrate that day as a National Holiday, under the Theme: “The Lone Star: A Symbol of Peace and National Unity”.

The Liberian Flag, popularly known as “The Lone Star”, is the visible evidence of our country’s pride and dignity. It is our stamp to the world that signifies that all Liberians, both at home and in the diaspora, are one people with a common destiny, regardless of political persuasion, religion or social status.

As a nation, we have endured many difficult times in these past 174 years of our existence, more recently including a brutal civil conflict which took away the lives of over 250,000 of our citizens, and also tore down the fabric of our society. Today, we are facing another grave national crisis, as we struggle to battle the negative impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic, which has already drastically altered our way of life.

However, in spite of all these challenges, we must continue to celebrate all that God has graciously given us as a People. We must continue to celebrate all that we ourselves have done to be where we are today, as One Nation, united under God.

Most importantly, we must continue to celebrate the Peace that we now enjoy, which creates a conducive atmosphere for the development which we see taking shape across the country.

In all that we do, we must ensure that we prepare a better nation for future generations. This is why my administration will continue to take steps in the direction of creating a better environment for young Liberians to prepare themselves, so that they will be ready to take full advantage of the opportunities that are certain to present themselves, both now, and in the future.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

As we celebrate this 174th National Flag Day, I encourage all students to take their education very seriously, for it is the key to a better future.

With certain major policy changes we have initiated, we are beginning to turn around the negative narrative about the Liberian education system. As a leader who believes in the importance of education, I could not sit by and watch our students continue to fail their WASSCE examinations, while falling behind their counterparts in the region.

We continue to pay the WASSCE fees for 12th graders, and provide financial support for their tutorial classes, while the free tuition policy at the state-run universities and all public colleges in the country is being fully implemented. We had to make other interventions to eliminate those barriers that made it hard for students to study. These measures are intended to ease the financial burden on parents and motivate our children to stay in the classroom.

I therefore urge all students to take advantage of the opportunities that are being afforded to you. We will continue to listen to you to determine how we can improve your educational experience, such as improving school facilities, having more qualified teachers in the class rooms, and having better instructional materials. We are committed and determined to removing these hurdles. Together we can achieve these goals.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

As our democracy flourishes, let me admonish all Liberians to continue to show respect for the rule of law and for the legal authorities. Too often these days we have seen people go beyond their right to free and peaceful assembly and engage in the destruction of private and public property. This is unacceptable.

You may recall that from the onset of my Administration, I committed to ensuring that the democratic rights of everyone will be guaranteed, regardless of who they are. We remain

committed to that pledge. However, it is very important that we balance the need to have a peaceful and stable society where rights are guaranteed, against those who would use those rights to infringe upon the rights of others.

We ought to be proud of who we are as Liberians. We must stand firm in claiming the future together, in order to see Liberia rise again. And we must be aggressive about saving Liberia from those who are aggressive about destroying it. I admonish you to love your flag, for it symbolizes our identity and way of life.

Liberia remains our common patrimony. Whatever our differences, the need to guarantee a better future for our children must stand paramount. We cannot afford to reverse the gains that we have made after enjoying close to two decades of peace. I am convinced that we shall continue to overcome every trial and tribulation, as we strive to make Liberia a better place.

On this day, therefore, we should bear in mind that the Lone Star is our symbol of Peace and National Unity. As we pledge allegiance to our Flag, let us all remember that we are One Nation; indivisible; with liberty and justice for all.

Happy Flag Day.