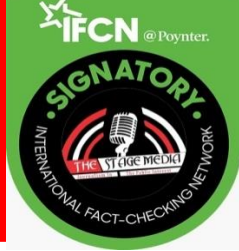


# THE STAGE MEDIA-LIBERIA

## NEWSLETTER - EDITION TWO



### STORIES IN THIS EDITION



**Claim:** “Former Margibi County Superintendent Donates Waste Tricycle to Kakata City Corporation.”



**Claim:** “Former President George Manneh Weah allocated US\$ 4 million for the reconstruction of C.H. Rennie Hospital during the 2023 Budget Year.”



**Claim:** Indonesia is the third largest producer of rice.



**Claim:** “Josiah Marvin Cole contributed \$140,000 for the renovation of the superintendent’s official residence.”



**Claim:** “The government delegation to the FOCAC Summit in China comprised 60 delegates.”



**Claim:** “U.S. Embassy denied Top Government Officials.”



**Claim:** “It’s the first time in history for schools in Liberia to reopen without WASSCE results.”



**Claim:** “17 Senators chose not to declare their assets while thirteen did, Interestingly, Senate Protemp Sen. Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence leads the group of noncompliant Senators.”



**Claim:** The Boakai government is chasing after journalists who supported the Coalition for Democratic (CDC).

## Editor's Note

**The Stage Media (TSM)**, Liberia's first fact-checking media institution with the overarching vision of mitigating misinformation and disinformation was established in 2020 to tackle misinformation and disinformation while bringing to light untold stories of survivors and ensuring that the powerful and elites are held accountable.

With the wide spread of misinformation and disinformation across various social media platforms in Liberia, it has been an amazing journey providing verified content for Liberians over the last four years.

To ensure our fact-check cuts across every sector irrespective of educational background, our content with support from the International Fact-checking Network is translated into pidgin and aired on local radio stations in the counties. Those pidgin contents are also published on our YouTube channel and other social media pages.

**TSM** has promoted media literacy to enable citizens to become knowledgeable about the danger of information disorder to have the public participate in decision-making processes from an informed background. Also, we strongly believe that educating the public will make them verify content before sharing it on various social media handles.

At **TSM**, we believe that providing verified information to the public and having them participate in information verification improves accountability, good governance, respect of the rule of law, and promotes a responsible society.

In September, we published five explainers and eleven Fact-checks.

We urge you to always follow our social media pages and website to get verify content.





**Claim:** “Former Margibi County Superintendent Donates Waste Tricycle to Kakata City Corporation.”

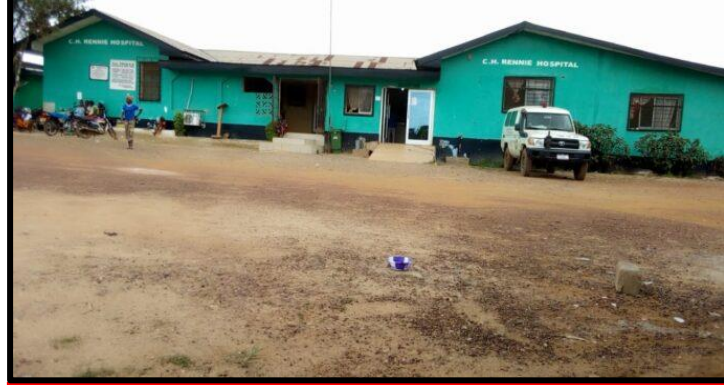
**Verdict: False!** Margibi County’s former superintendent did not donate a tricycle to Kakata City Corporation.

**By: The Stage Media-Liberia**

The claim that former Margibi County Superintendent Jerry O. Varnie donated a waste tricycle to Kakata City Corporation is False.

According to findings, the tricycle was not a personal donation by Varnie but was purchased using funds from the county's development budget as part of a resolution made during the 2022 County Council Sitting. The resolution allocated \$12,000 to purchase tricycles for Kakata and Unification Cities to address sanitation issues.

Former Kakata City Mayor Emmanuel M. Goll rejected the tricycles, deeming them too small to effectively handle waste removal. Varnie later handed the tricycle to the current city leadership, but the claim of a personal donation is inaccurate, as the tricycle was originally bought with government funds.



**Claim:** “Former President George Manneh Weah allocated US\$ 4 million for the reconstruction of C.H. Rennie Hospital during the 2023 Budget Year.”

**Verdict: Misleading!** Former President George Manneh Weah did not allocate US\$ 4 million to reconstruct C.H. Rennie Hospital during the 2023 fiscal year.

**By: The Stage Media-Liberia**

The claim that former President George Manneh Weah allocated US\$ 4 million for the reconstruction of C.H. Rennie Hospital during the 2023 fiscal year is misleading.

This claim was made by Sekou Kalasco Damaro, a former Presidential Aide, but upon verification, it was found that only US\$ 440,000 was allocated in the 2023 budget for the hospital’s renovation, and none of this amount was actually spent.

Sekou Kalasco Damaro could not provide evidence to support his claim, and official budget records confirm the lower allocation, making the claim inaccurate.



**Claim:** Indonesia is the third largest producer of rice.

**Verdict: Misleading!** Indonesia is not the third-largest rice-producing country.

**By: Bettie Johnson-Mbayo**

The claim that Indonesia is the world's third-largest rice producer, made by Varflay Kamara, a state broadcaster, during a live broadcast from the Indonesia-Africa Forum, is misleading.

Kamara stated that Indonesia ranks third in rice production, basing this on a document shared by the Executive Mansion.

However, updated statistics from reputable sources, such as Statista, the FAO, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, place Indonesia as the fourth-largest producer of rice, not the third.

While Kamara's claim about Indonesia’s reliance on rice as a staple food was accurate, the ranking was outdated.

**Claim:** “Josiah Marvin Cole contributed \$140, 000 for the renovation of the superintendent’s official residence.”

**Verdict: False!** Josiah Marvin Cole, Representative, Bong County District District #3, did not contribute USD 140,000 for the renovation of the superintendent’s official residence.

**By: The Stage Media-Liberia**



The claim that Josiah Marvin Cole, Representative of Bong County District #3, contributed \$140,000 for the renovation of the superintendent’s official residence is false.

This claim was spread by Gbarnga TV and supported by Alvin Flomo at a local discussion center.

However, an investigation revealed that the renovation is part of a \$302,913 100-day development plan funded by the county’s administration, not Cole.

Cole's office confirmed that he did not contribute any money to the project. Therefore, the report is inaccurate.



**Claim:** “U.S. Embassy denied Top Government Officials.”

**Verdict: Unverified,** we found no evidence to support the Facebook post.

**By: Augusta Lafalay**

The claim that the U.S. Embassy denied visas to top Liberian government officials, including Vice President Jeremiah Kpan Koug, is **unverified**.

This claim, made in a Facebook post by CDC supporter Torkpa Korkoryiza, suggested that the officials were denied visas due to allegations of corruption and other serious offenses.

However, after inquiries, the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia stated that it cannot disclose details of individual visa cases due to confidentiality under U.S. law.

Attempts to verify the claim through other sources, including the Liberia National Police, were unsuccessful. Therefore, there is no evidence to support the claim at this time.

**Claim:** “The government delegation to the FOCAC Summit in China comprised 60 delegates.”

**Verdict: Unproven;** even though the government of Liberia delegates to the FOCAC Summit in China is more than 20 we could not independently establish if the number reached 60.

**By: Augusta Lafalay**



The claim that the Liberian government sent a 60-member delegation to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit in China is unproven.

Martin K. N Kollie made the claim, but official records from the Liberian government list 20 delegates, including ministers, key personnel, and support staff. Kollie’s assertion is based on unnamed sources, but no concrete evidence has been provided to confirm that the total number reached 60.

Therefore, while the delegation may have included more than 20 people, there is insufficient proof to verify a delegation of 60.



**Claim:** The Boakai government is chasing after journalists who supported the Coalition for Democratic (CDC).

**Verdict:** Jefferson Kojie's claim about Boakai's government attacking journalists is misleading.

**By: The Stage Media-Liberia**

The claim by Jefferson Kojie, former Monrovia City mayor that the Boakai government is chasing after journalists who supported the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) is misleading.

Jefferson Kojie made this assertion during an interview but did not provide any names or specific incidents to support his claim.

Verification efforts, including contacting Kojie and the Press Union of Liberia, yielded no evidence to confirm such actions.

Additionally, reports from Reporters without Borders show no detentions or deaths of journalists in Liberia since January 2024.

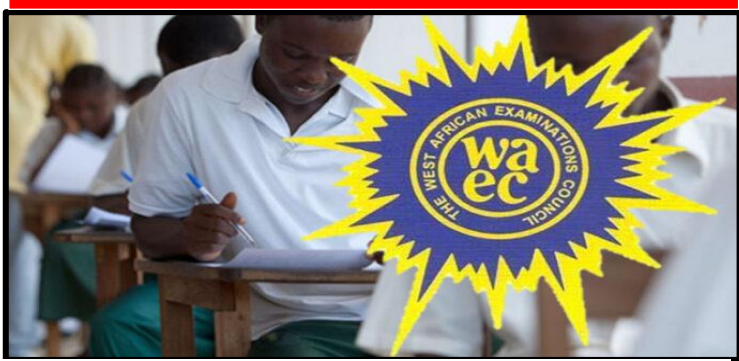
Therefore, the claim lacks factual basis and is deemed false.



**Claim:** "It's the first time in history for schools in Liberia to reopen without WASSCE results."

**False;** schools in Liberia have previously reopened without National Examination Results.

**By: The Stage Media-Liberia**



The claim made by J. Francis Karpu, former Development Superintendent of Margibi County, that schools in Liberia are reopening for the first time without the release of WASSCE results is false.

Historical records show that there have been several instances in past years where schools reopened before the release of WASSCE results. For example, in 2018, 2021, and 2022, schools reopened well before the national exam results were announced.

Furthermore, according to both WAEC Liberia and the Education Ministry, it is not mandatory to release WASSCE results before reopening schools, as the two events are independent of each other.

The 200 instructional days prescribed by the Ministry of Education determine the academic calendar, and schools can reopen as scheduled, regardless of WASSCE results.

The only requirement is that schools cannot graduate 12th-grade students without the release of the results.

**Explainer:** Did Senate Pro Temp Declare Her Assets?

**By: Hannah N. Geterminah**



**Explainer: Did Gray Get Facts Correct About MCC Employees Dismissal?**

**By: Augusta Lafalay**



The claims made by Acarous Moses Gray regarding the dismissal of Monrovia City Corporation (MCC) employees are supported by evidence:

**1. Claim:** Dismissal of MCC Employees Violated the Code of Conduct and Usurped the Function of the Ombudsman This claim is correct. According to Liberia's Code of Conduct (CoC) for public officials, the Ombudsman is responsible for overseeing and investigating complaints related to the CoC. The dismissal of the nine MCC employees for allegedly insulting President Boakai did not involve the Ombudsman's office, as required by the law. Cllr. Findley Karngar, head of the Ombudsman office, did not confirm whether an investigation was ongoing, but his refusal to comment suggests that the Ombudsman's office had not completed or initiated a formal review before the dismissals.

**2. Claim:** Nine MCC Staff Dismissed for Insulting President Boakai This claim is accurate. Official documents revealed that eight of the nine employees were dismissed for insulting President Boakai and other government officials on social media, as outlined in their termination letters. The Monrovia City Corporation confirmed the reason for dismissal, aligning with Gray's statement.

Thus, Gray's claims are substantiated: the dismissals occurred as described, and the process appears to have bypassed the required oversight from the Ombudsman's office, violating the CoC for public officials.

The claim by journalist Julius Jeh that 17 senators, including Senate Pro Tempore Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence, have not declared their assets appears to be correct.

While Karnga-Lawrence began the process of declaring her assets, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) does not have a valid record of her declaration due to issues with submission.

Although Karnga-Lawrence declared her assets to the Senate Secretary in January 2024 and attempted to submit them to the LACC, there were several errors in her asset declaration. The LACC sent the form back for corrections, and although the Senate Secretary attempted to resubmit the form multiple times, the LACC rejected the submission due to further procedural issues.

As a result, the asset declaration has not been officially recorded by the LACC as required by law.

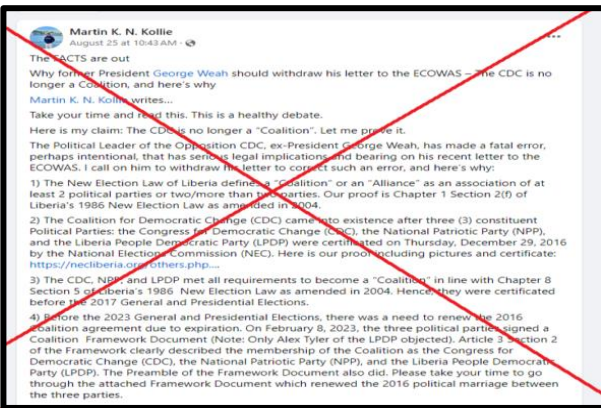
Thus, despite Karnga-Lawrence's efforts to declare her assets, the process remains incomplete. Therefore, the claim that she leads a group of noncompliant senators is accurate based on the current status of her asset declaration.



**Explainer: What To Know About Women's Dominance on Supreme Court**

**By: R. Joyclyn Wea**





## Explainer: Is CDC No Longer A Coalition?

By R. Joyclyn Wea

Martin K.N. Kollie claims that the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) is no longer a coalition following a statement by former President George Weah regarding political tensions.

On August 23, 2024, Weah accused the current government of targeting the CDC and infringing on political freedoms. Following this, Kollie asserted on social media that the CDC ceased to exist as a coalition due to internal issues. The CDC was originally formed in 2016 and expanded in preparation for the 2023 elections, including various parties.

To verify this claim, officials from the CDC were contacted. Jefferson Kojee, the National Secretary-General, clarified that the coalition's Framework Agreement, renewed in February 2023, remains active until 2029, despite some parties withdrawing. He noted that the coalition is still intact under the terms of the agreement.

Further discussions with party officials revealed mixed views. Atty. George Mulbah of the National Patriotic Party stated that, since two out of three founding parties had exited, the coalition no longer exists. However, Augustine Nimely from Change Democratic Action confirmed that his party remains in coalition with the CDC, and CDC Chairman Janga Kowo affirmed that the coalition still includes four parties despite the departures.

Research indicates that, contrary to Kollie's claim, the Congress for Democratic Change continues to exist as a coalition with other parties, excluding the National Patriotic Party and the Liberia People's Democratic Party.

Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence, speaking on Liberia's Independence Day, asserted that women dominate the Supreme Court bench, which is supported by the current composition of justices.

**Details:** As of July 2024, the Supreme Court of Liberia consists of five members: Chief Justice Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh and four Associate Justices, three of whom are women. This is a significant representation in a country where gender inequality is prevalent.

Liberia ranks sixth from the bottom on the Gender Inequality Index, with women holding only 10.7% of elected positions as of recent elections. Despite President Joseph Boakai's commitments to inclusivity, men still make up a significant majority of his appointments.

Frances Greaves, a former civil society leader, emphasized the importance of female representation in the legal field, noting that the women justices have achieved their positions through hard work. Loretta Pope-Kai, chair of the National Civil Society, highlighted that the presence of female justices is a crucial step toward gender equality and improved access to justice, particularly for issues affecting women.

With three women currently serving on the Supreme Court bench, Karnga-Lawrence's statement that women dominate the Supreme Court is accurate and reflects a positive development for gender representation in Liberia's judiciary.



Explainer: Did the Civil Law Court order CDC's eviction?

By: Augusta Lafalay



**Claim:** Mo Ali refuses to install a meter on the Aqua Life water line; he does not want them to pay their water bill directly to the government.

**Verdict:** The claim made by Aloysius Howe is misleading.

**By: Augusta Lafalay**

Claim: Mo Ali refuses to install a meter on the Aqua Life water line; he does not want them to pay their water bill directly to the government.

Aloysius Howe claimed that Mo Ali, the Managing Director of the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC), refused to install a water meter on Aqua Life's line, allegedly to prevent the company from paying its water bills directly to the government. Howe further claimed that Ali sought \$10,000 monthly in exchange for supplying water without a meter.

However, this claim is misleading. Mo Ali and LWSC officials clarified that Aqua Life has five boreholes, but only one had been reported to the LWSC, meaning the company defrauded the government by not reporting the others. Ali confirmed that the unreported boreholes' tariffs were backdated, and Aqua Life must now pay for past water usage.

Aqua Life is tax-compliant with the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), but the allegation regarding water payments is false. Therefore, Howe's claim is misleading.

**Claim 1:** Martin Kollie claimed that the Civil Law Court has issued an order to evict the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) from its headquarters.

**Claim 2:** Boima JV Boima claimed that the CDC has refused to pay rent for six years or sign a lease for the property.

On March 7, 2024, Judge Golda A. Bonah Elliot issued a writ of possession to evict the CDC from its headquarters, confirming that Martha Stubblefield-Bernard is the rightful owner of the property following a lengthy legal battle. This property is part of the estate of the late William Thomas Bernard, with various beneficiaries involved in disputes over its ownership.

Despite the CDC's claims, previous court rulings have established that they illegally withheld the property and owed rental fees. While the CDC did make a significant payment of \$360,000 on March 29, 2024, for the previous six years of occupancy (January 2018 to December 31, 2023), this does not negate the court's ruling for eviction.

Both claims are accurate. The Civil Law Court has indeed ordered the CDC to vacate the premises, and Boima's assertion that the CDC failed to pay rent or sign a lease during their time in power from 2018 to 2023 is correct.

**Claim:** The Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) demands 10% of legislative project money for administrative use.

**Verdict: True,** LACE demand accordingly is part of the appropriation.

**By: The Stage Media-Liberia**







91.9  
**Kool FM** **K** RADIO

THE REAL DEAL IN BROADCASTING

**Claim:** “Samuel Tweah and Others Arrested in \$6.2 Million Corruption Case”

**Verdict: False!** The government of Liberia is yet to arrest former finance minister Samuel D. Tweh and others, as claimed by journalist Z Benjamin Gabriel Keibah of Kool FM and [knewsline.com](http://knewsline.com).

**By: Ayeason Yeeba**

The article titled “Samuel Tweah and Others Arrested in \$6.2 Million Corruption Case” falsely claims that former Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah and others have been arrested in relation to a corruption case.

In late July, a Monrovia court issued arrest warrants for former officials of President Weah’s administration, including Tweah, due to various charges such as economic sabotage and money laundering. While some officials turned themselves in, Tweah’s whereabouts were unknown until he returned to Liberia on September 25.

On September 10, a journalist claimed the indicted individuals had been arrested, but investigations revealed this to be untrue. The official spokesperson for the Liberia National Police denied any arrests had been made. Additionally, Cllr. Richard Scott confirmed that, although there was an indictment, no arrests had occurred.

The claim by Kool FM journalist Z Benjamin Gabriel Keibah is determined to be false.



The claim by Lofa County District #3 Representative Momoh Siafa Kpoto that the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) demands 10% of legislative project money for administrative use is **True**.

LACE confirms this as a standard procedure in contracts and appropriations, with 7% allocated for project monitoring by LACE and 3% for legislative staff. This fee is not illegal but is a recognized administrative cost applied to both legislative and donor projects.

Multiple lawmakers, including Lofa Senator Momoh Cyrus and Lofa District No. 4 Representative Gizzie Collins, confirmed this practice, aligning with LACE's operational procedures.

TO READ THE FULL STORIES GO TO OUR WEBSITE:



**ALSO IF YOU SEE A CLAIM AND YOU WANT US TO  
FACT-CHECK IT SEND IT TO +231 77 593 7658**

