

THE STAGE MEDIA-LIBERIA

STORIES THAT MAKE HEADLINE FOR THIS YEAR 2024



STORIES IN THIS EDITION



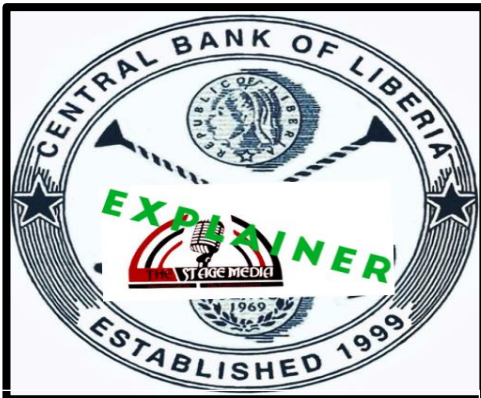
Explainer: How Does the Legislature Vote?



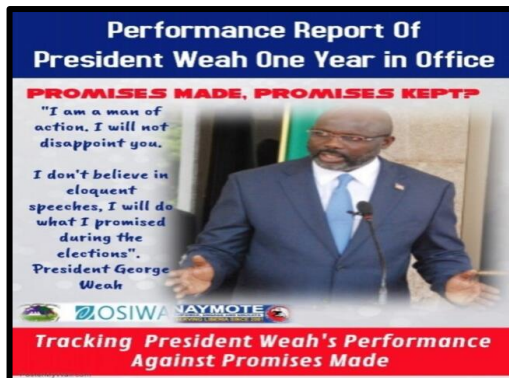
Fact check: Franck Kessie has united with his mom.



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Explainer! What To Know About Compassionate Leave



Fact Check: "Four water trucks are a donation from Vice President Jeremiah Koug?"

Season's Greeting

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL OF US AT TSM!

As the festive season fills our hearts with joy and reflection, we at The Stage Media-Liberia would like to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to you our incredible community.

This year has been remarkable, filled with milestones, challenges, and triumphs in our mission to combat misinformation in Liberia. None of this would have been possible without your unwavering support for our beliefs and cause.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and an excellent 2025! Don't forget to subscribe to our WhatsApp channel for verified information, and visit our website at www.tsmliberia.com as you celebrate this festive season.



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.

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



Explainer: How Does the Legislature Vote?

By: Hannah N. Geterminah

Liberia's upcoming legislative leadership elections, following the 2023 general elections, will determine the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

The race for Speaker is highly competitive between J. Fonati Koffa, backed by the outgoing ruling CDC, and Richard Nagbe Koon, supported by the Unity Party (UP) and its alliances. In the Senate, Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence (UP-backed) faces Gbehzohngar Milton Findley (CDC-backed) in a contest dubbed the "Bassa Race."

The elections mark a shift from past consensus-based selections, with both races expected to be closely fought. Experts predict a divided legislature, with the CDC likely controlling the House and the UP leading the Senate.

Public expectations focus on transparency, accountability, and the election of leaders untainted by corruption to foster trust and effective governance.



Explainer: No! President Boakai did not Collapse on Stage

By: The Stage Media-Liberia

Liberia's new President, Joseph Nyumah Boakai, experienced a brief health incident during his inaugural address on January 22, after former President George Weah handed over power.

The ceremony, held at the National Legislature, was interrupted when Boakai was escorted off stage by security less than 40 minutes into his speech.

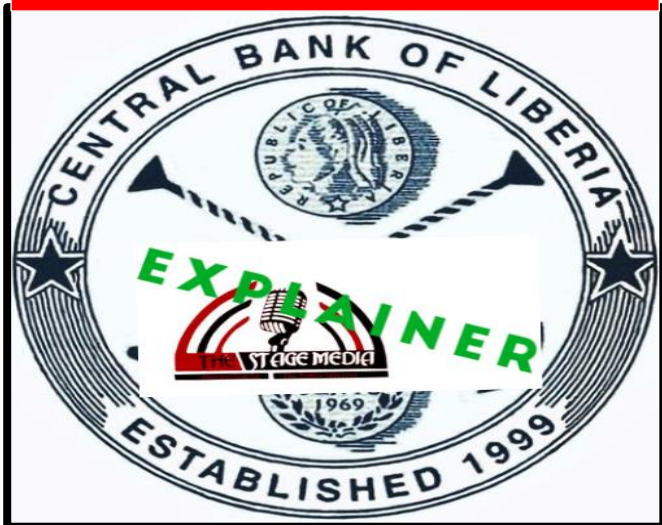
Claims circulated that Boakai collapsed while speaking, but medical verification clarified he suffered heat exhaustion due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures (29°C) and insufficient hydration.

Dr. Moses Ziah, a medical expert, explained that heat exhaustion involves symptoms like heavy sweating, dizziness, and nausea, but is less severe than heat stroke.

TSM confirmed that Boakai did not collapse but cannot provide an update on his current health, as party officials have not responded to inquiries.

Explainer: What did we gather from the government's consolidated account?

By: [Hannah N. Geterminah](#)



Liberia's peaceful transition of power from George Weah to Joseph Boakai after the 2023 elections has sparked debate over the state of the country's economy. Weah claimed his administration left a stronger financial position, highlighting a 136% rise in net international reserves and a US\$40 million consolidated cash balance.

However, Boakai disputed these figures, stating the actual reserves were US\$220 million and the cash balance was US\$20.5 million.

Public debt was another concern, with Boakai noting a 601.8% increase since 2017. Conflicting interpretations of the financial data have caused public confusion.

Experts suggest that both leaders presented figures differently, combining USD and Liberian Dollar amounts. A planned independent audit is expected to clarify the true state of the economy.

However, the current administration's independent audit of the CBL, led by George M. Weah, would better explain to Liberians the state of the nation's consolidated account in terms of balance.



Fact-Check: Has Ivorian footballer Franck Kessie reunited with his 'Liberian Mother'?

Verdict: Misleading

By: [R. Joyclyn Wea](#)

A blog post by Woocho Memes on February 7 claimed that Ivorian footballer Franck Kessie had reunited with his long-lost Liberian mother, Ma Nancy, after years of separation. The post suggested that Kessie had contacted his mother by phone and was arranging her travel to the Ivory Coast. The claim gained traction online, receiving over 372 comments.

The background of this story stems from Ma Nancy's public appeal in 2023 on OK FM, where she revealed that she lost contact with her two sons, Franck and Andy, over two decades ago. She described the emotional toll of their separation and detailed her failed attempts to reconnect with them. Despite seeking help from the Ivorian Embassy in Liberia in 2021 and 2023 and traveling to Abidjan, her efforts yielded no results.

To verify the claim, The Stage Media reached out to Jacob Dahn, another son of Ma Nancy. Jacob confirmed that their mother has not yet established contact with Franck or Andy, and the blog's report is false. Attempts to contact Andy for further clarification went unanswered.

The claim that Franck Kessie has reunited with his mother is misleading. Verified information confirms that no contact or reunion has occurred, although efforts to reconnect are ongoing. Updates will follow if the situation changes.



Fact Check: Beware: Facebook page with the name of the First Lady is fake.

Verdict: Misleading

By: Bettie Johnson-Mbayo

A Facebook page named "Katumu Y. Boakai" claimed that visitors must pay 300 Liberian Dollars (LD) to enter the Invincible Sports Park for maintenance purposes. The claim gained significant attention, with 336 comments, 74 shares, and 412 reactions. However, this page falsely presented itself as belonging to Liberia's First Lady, Kartumu Yarta Boakai, wife of President Joseph Boakai.

The Invincible Sports Park, constructed in 2021 by former President George Weah, was built to honor the Invincible Eleven football club and transform an area previously used for open defecation. The claim that a fee is being charged for park maintenance was denied by the First Lady's office. Arthur Douglas, the Communication Director for the First Lady, clarified that the Facebook page "Katumu Y. Boakai" is fake and does not belong to the First Lady. He highlighted that the official page is titled "Office of the First Lady, Republic of Liberia" and includes accurate photos and details.

The fake page misspelled the First Lady's name as "Katumu" instead of "Kartumu" and has more followers (5.1K) than the official page (274), making it more misleading. The office of the First Lady published a media advisory warning the public about the fake page.

In conclusion, the Facebook page "Katumu Y. Boakai" is fraudulent, and its claims about maintenance fees for the Invincible Sports Park are false and intended to mislead the public.

Fact Check: Did Shine Liberia get facts Correct on White House ?

Verdict: Partly True

By: R. Joyclyn Wea



A blog, "Shine Liberia," criticized a live-streaming tour of Liberia's Executive Mansion, claiming it posed security risks and compared it to the White House, which allegedly bans phones and live broadcasting. While the White House restricts personal devices like phones and smartwatches to enhance cybersecurity, there is no clear ban on live streaming if official equipment is used.

Security experts highlighted that live streaming from sensitive locations like the Executive Mansion could expose vulnerabilities, including layouts and security details, increasing the risk of cyberattacks or intrusion. The comparison by "Shine Liberia" is misleading, as the risks depend on how and where streaming is conducted.

In conclusion, while the claim about the White House banning phones is partly true, there is no evidence that live streaming is outright prohibited. The issue in Liberia appears to be more about cybersecurity concerns regarding live streaming in sensitive locations, rather than a clear policy like that of the White House.

Fact Check: “Four water trucks are a donation from Vice President Jeremiah Koug?”

Verdict: Misleading

By: R. Joyclyn Wea



Jeremiah Koug, the current Vice President of Liberia, was recently involved in the commissioning of four water and sewer trucks at the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) on April 25, 2024.

These trucks were intended to address challenges in providing clean drinking water and improving the sewage system in the country. However, a local blog, Shine Liberia, misrepresented the situation, claiming that Vice President Koug had "dedicated" the trucks to the LWSC, with a sarcastic comment about the government's handling of funds.

The blog post spread on social media, with some users agreeing with the criticism. However, the claim was false. Mohammed Ali, the Managing Director of LWSC, clarified that the trucks had actually been arranged under the previous administration of former President George Weah, not by Koug. The total cost of the trucks was estimated at over \$900,000, and the procurement process was completed satisfactorily under the previous leadership of the LWSC. Two of the sewer trucks were delivered in October 2023, and the remaining two water trucks were delivered in April 2024.

**SENATORIAL & REPRESENTATIVE
BY-ELECTIONS**
Tuesday, April 23, 2024

"Election is everybody's business"

Explainer: What you need to know about the by-elections in Grand Gedeh and Nimba.

By: Bettie Johnson-Mbayo

By-elections are scheduled for April 23, 2024, in Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties, following the deaths of Erol Madison Gweion and the election of Jeremiah Kpan Koug as Vice President. These elections are governed by the National Electoral Commission (NEC), which oversees the process, ensuring compliance with voting procedures, ballot counting, and voter rights. By-elections are held to fill vacancies in elective positions other than the Presidency and Vice Presidency (as per Section 1.2(h) of the election law).

The NEC ensures consistency in election procedures, and the list of candidates must be published 90 days before the election, with precincts capped at 3,000 voters each (Section 4.2).

Polling and candidate information are published and made available through local magistrates and administrative authorities.

There are 19 candidates: 4 running for the Senate in Nimba and 15 for representative positions in Grand Gedeh.

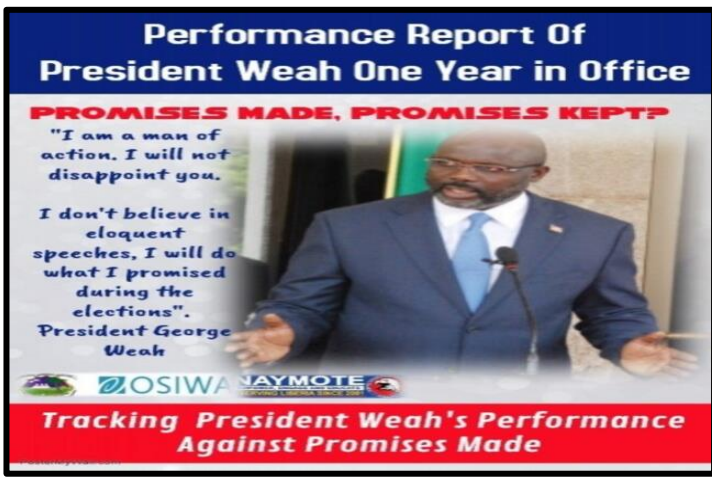
A total of 327,661 registered voters: 307,254 in Nimba and 20,407 in Grand Gedeh.

141 voting cards have been replaced: 84 in Nimba (23 females, 61 males) and 57 in Grand Gedeh (28 females, 29 males).

The election campaign period runs until April 20.

Ballots have arrived for both counties in preparation for the election.

Davidetta Brown-Lansanah, head of the NEC, confirmed that all preparations, including candidate nominations and logistics, are on track for the by-elections.



Fact Check: "Former President George Weah scored 8% in 6 years, while Boakai scored 10% in 100 days."

Verdict: Partly True

By: The Stage Media-Liberia

A claim from DN News stated that former President George Weah fulfilled 8% of his promises in six years, while President Joseph Boakai achieved 10% in just 100 days.

This claim is partly true. According to the Naymote Partners for Democratic Development's 2023 Presidential Meter Project, former President George Weah made 292 promises during his term from 2018 to 2023, and by the end of 2022 (the last year covered by the report), only 8% (24 promises) were fully implemented. The report revealed that 31% of the promises were partially fulfilled, while 61% had not been started or were ungraded due to lack of information.

The claim by DN News is misleading in several ways:

The 8% figure for Weah refers to promises made between 2018 and 2022, not six years. The report did not include the final year of his term.

The comparison between Boakai's performance in 100 days and Weah's five years is not accurate, as Boakai's score of 10% lacks any supporting evidence or a similar evaluation.

In conclusion, while it is true that only 8% of Weah's promises were fully implemented, the claim about Boakai's 10% achievement is unverified, and the comparison between the two leaders is not based on the same time frame or criteria.

Fact Check: 1. The ban on Rubber didn't start under George Weah (2:07:48 mins)

Fact Check: 2. Liberia has four Rubber Processors (2:13:02 mins)

Verdict: Misleading

By: Bettie Johnson-Mbayo



President Weah issued an Executive Order in November 2023 banning the exportation of unprocessed natural rubber due to issues like abuse, theft, and misuse in the sector. However, this was not the first instance of such a ban. Former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf had issued similar executive orders (Nos. 16, 50, and 60) in 2008 and 2013 to curb the decline of the rubber industry. These orders aimed to stop the misuse of rubber resources and protect the national economy. Therefore, while Weah continued this policy, the ban was first introduced under Sirleaf.

Claim 2: Liberia has four rubber processors

Verdict: Misleading. There are more than four rubber processing plants in Liberia.

Details: Dr. Alexander Nuetahn, Liberia's Agriculture Minister, claimed there are four rubber processors in the country. The Rubber Planters Association of Liberia (RPAL) confirmed this, listing four major processing factories: Jeety Rubber Factory, Firestone Rubber Plantation, Liberia Agriculture Company (LAC), and the Lee Group. However, further research indicated that there are additional processing plants beyond these four. The exact number may vary depending on the sources, but the claim that there are only four processors is not entirely accurate.

The first claim regarding the rubber export ban under George Weah is correct, as earlier bans were issued by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

The second claim that Liberia has four rubber processors is partially misleading because more than four rubber processing plants exist in the country.



Explainer! What To Know About Compassionate Leave

By: R. Joyclyn Wea

Cllr. Gloria Musu Scott, a former Chief Justice of Liberia, and three family members are incarcerated at Monrovia Central Prison after being found guilty of murder, criminal conspiracy, and providing false statements in connection to the death of Scott's niece, Charloe Musu.

If the Supreme Court upholds the jury's verdict, Scott and her relatives face a lifetime prison sentence. Reports recently surfaced claiming that Scott had been granted compassionate leave to visit her home, sparking debates about the legality and precedence of such an action.

Reports emerged claiming she was granted compassionate leave to visit her home, sparking debates about its legality and precedence.

Key Findings:

Compassionate leave is permitted under Liberian law (Chapter 34.20) and has been granted before, but granting it to a convicted murderer like Scott would be unprecedented.

Both Scott and the government deny she was granted leave or released, labeling the reports as misinformation.

Conclusion:

Granting Scott compassionate leave would be legally possible but unprecedented due to her conviction. Claims of her release are unverified and denied.



Fact Check: The government of Liberia has spent US\$95,000 to purchase buses from Ghana.

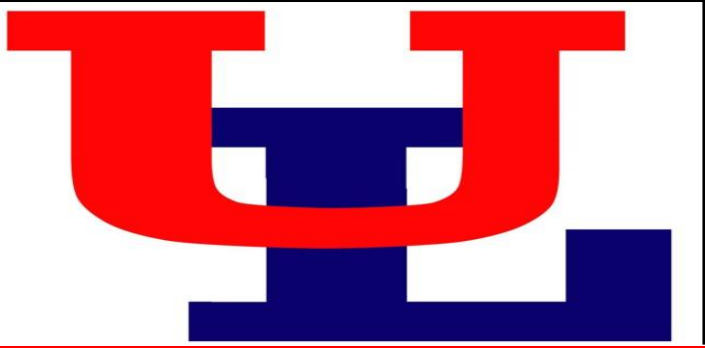
Verdict: Misleading

By: Kerper Soclor

The claim that the government of Liberia spent US\$95,000 on purchasing buses from Ghana is misleading. Social media circulated rumors about the National Transit Authority (NTA) spending this amount on two buses. However, an investigation revealed that the buses are not yet purchased but are instead part of a trial process. Daniel Sando, Deputy Minister for Press and Public Affairs, clarified that the buses were brought to Liberia for testing, and discussions with the supplier, Marco Polo (a Brazilian company with a branch in Ghana), are ongoing. These buses are not yet part of a formal purchase agreement.

Noah Z. Gibson, NTA Deputy Director of Operations, also confirmed that the buses belong to Marco Polo and are running in Liberia for trial purposes. Additionally, Edmund Forh, Director of the NTA, explained that the government is negotiating with Marco Polo for a potential deal to supply 300 buses over three years, but no purchase has been finalized.

Thus, the claim that the government spent US\$95,000 on the buses is false. The buses are being tested, and the government is exploring partnerships with companies for future public transportation initiatives.



Explainer: Social media claims about the UL budget are misleading
By: Bettie Johnson-Mbayo

The claims surrounding the University of Liberia's budget made by Montserrado County Senator Abraham Darius Dillon, Dell Francis Wreh, and Martin Kollie have been thoroughly fact-checked and clarified.

Senator Dillon's Claim: Dillon stated that the University of Liberia's budget never exceeded US\$20 million under former President George Weah's administration, and that this year's budget was raised to US\$33 million. This claim is correct. The University of Liberia's budget for 2023 was US\$18,305,000, which aligns with Dillon's statement that the budget had not surpassed US\$20 million in the past six years. The outturn for 2023 was US\$30,176,218, which is the actual amount spent, not the proposed budget.

Martin Kollie's Claim: Kollie countered Dillon's claim by stating that the University of Liberia's budget in 2022 was US\$25.18 million. This claim is misleading. According to the 2024 FY draft budget, the University of Liberia's budget for 2022 was actually US\$17,600,000, not the US\$25.18 million Kollie cited.

Dell Francis Wreh's Claim: Wreh posted that the University of Liberia's actual expenditure budget at the end of 2017 was about US\$14.5 million, but increased to US\$30.2 million by the end of 2023. This claim is misleading as well. The actual budget expenditure for the University of Liberia at the end of 2017 was US\$15,597,868, not the US\$14.5 million Wreh mentioned.

Dillon's claim about the University of Liberia's budget being under US\$20 million for the past six years is correct. However, both Kollie and Wreh misled the public by citing incorrect figures. Kollie misrepresented the 2022 budget, and Wreh used an outdated figure from 2017, further distorting the facts.



Fact Check: "West Point fishermen caught a sea cow."
Verdict: Misleading,
By: R. Joyclyn Wea

The claim that West Point fishermen caught a sea cow in the Atlantic Ocean is misleading.

Claim Source: The claim was made in a Facebook post by "Duport Road Girls Them Chairlady" in a group called "Sekou Kalasco Damaro," which has 73.3k followers. The post attracted significant engagement with 111 comments and 60 reactions.

Location Context: West Point is a densely populated slum area in Monrovia, Liberia, located on a small peninsula between the Mesurado and Saint Paul Rivers. It is predominantly inhabited by fishermen.

Image Verification: The image accompanying the post was traced back to a YouTube video in Indonesian. The text in the video described the animal as a "cow-headed sea lion," surprising people who saw it. This image has no connection to West Point or Liberia.

Species Verification: Sea cows, part of the Sirenia order, include manatees and dugongs. These marine mammals do not inhabit Liberian waters, as confirmed by available ecological and biological data.

The claim is false and misleading. The image is not from Liberia, and no sea cow was caught in West Point. It is a misrepresentation based on an unrelated image from Indonesia.



Fact Check: "A Royal Air Maroc airplane reportedly crashed earlier this morning at Robert International Airport"

Verdict: Incorrect

By: Ayeason Yeeba

On August 17, 2024, Facebook posts by "Pepper Bird" and Edwin Clarke claimed that a Royal Air Maroc airplane crashed at Roberts International Airport (RIA). The posts described the incident as a crash but later referred to it as a "hard landing and missing of the runway," creating confusion.

Upon investigation, it was confirmed that the incident did not involve a crash. A Royal Air Maroc Boeing 737-800 (flight AT-567) landed at RIA without reported issues, but routine inspections found debris on the runway. The Liberia Airport Authority (LAA) and Liberia Civil Aviation Authority (LCAA) clarified that the aircraft veered off the runway during landing. There were no injuries, fatalities, or structural damage to the plane. Passengers were safely accommodated in nearby hotels while awaiting a replacement flight.

Aviation expert Wilmot Reeves emphasized that the incident was an "incursion," not a crash. An incursion can result from debris or veering off the runway and is distinct from a crash, which implies severe damage or loss of life. The Aircraft Investigation Bureau (AIB) is conducting an ongoing investigation into the matter.

Conclusion: The claims of a crash by Pepper Bird and Edwin Clarke are false and misleading. The incident was a hard landing and runway incursion, with no casualties or significant damage.



Fact Check: "Liberia tops 2024 list of rejected U.S Department of State visas."

Verdict: Correct,

By: Augusta Lafalay

The claim that Liberia tops the 2024 list of rejected U.S. Department of State visas is correct. According to official data, Liberia has a 78.19% visa refusal rate, making it the highest in Africa and the fourth highest globally for the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

The high rejection rate is attributed to factors such as concerns over visa overstays, economic instability, and a large volume of applications. Despite historical ties between Liberia and the U.S., this issue highlights ongoing challenges in their diplomatic relationship.

Rev. Torli H. Krua, a critic, has described the visa rejections as discriminatory and a violation of U.S. constitutional principles.

Diamond Online's claim is accurate. Liberia leads Africa in U.S. visa refusals for 2023/2024 with a 78.19% rejection rate and ranks fourth globally.

This situation highlights broader issues in Liberia-U.S. relations, including concerns over overstays and economic challenges.



Fact Check: Indonesia is the third largest producer of rice.

Verdict: Misleading!

By: Bettie Johnson-Mbayo

The claim made by Varflay Kamara, a state broadcaster, that Indonesia is the third-largest producer of rice is misleading. Kamara, during a live broadcast on August 30, 2024, referenced a document shared by Liberia's Executive Mansion, which stated that Indonesia is the third-largest rice producer.

This information was based on a 1998 FAO report, but current data from 2022/2023 shows that Indonesia is actually the fourth-largest rice producer, not third.

Reports from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the FAO's 2024 Food Outlook also confirm Indonesia's position as the fourth-largest producer.

Kamara's statement about rice being a staple food in both Indonesia and Liberia is accurate, but the ranking of Indonesia as the third-largest rice producer is outdated.

Therefore, while Kamara's comparison of rice as a staple in both countries is correct, his claim about Indonesia's rice production rank is incorrect.



Explainer: Did Senate Pro Temp Declare Her Assets?

By: Hannah N. Geterminah

The claim made by Julius Jeh that **Senator Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence** is among the 17 senators who have not declared their assets is **correct**, although it requires clarification.

While Karnga-Lawrence publicly declared her assets in January 2024 and stated that she submitted the documents to the Senate Secretary for onward submission to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), there were issues with the declaration process. The LACC did not accept the initial submission due to errors in the asset form. The form was sent back for correction, but due to procedural issues, such as the identity of the person submitting the corrected form not being verified, the LACC did not officially record her declaration.

The LACC confirmed that the senator's asset declaration was still incomplete and that the corrected form had not been properly processed or accepted as per the new asset declaration laws. The Senate Secretary, Nanborlor Singbe, confirmed that the declaration was being submitted for the third time to the LACC, but at the time of this research, it had not yet been officially recorded.

Therefore, while Karnga-Lawrence made an attempt to comply with the law, the process was incomplete, and her asset declaration was not finalized.



Explainer: "Cllr. J. Fonati Koffa single-handedly selected Liberia's Representatives to the ECOWAS Parliament and lied under oath that he conducted an election."

By: Augusta Lafalay

Claim: Cllr. J. Fonati Koffa "single-handedly selected Liberia's Representatives to the ECOWAS Parliament and lied under oath that he conducted an election."

Selection Process: Speaker Koffa appointed Liberia's ECOWAS representatives without conducting elections, violating ECOWAS Protocol Article 18, which mandates representatives be elected to reflect the political composition of member states.

Misrepresentation: Koffa informed ECOWAS that an election had occurred, which lawmakers and records dispute, making the claim misleading.

Historical Context: Previous Speaker Bhofal Chambers also appointed representatives without elections, while Alex Tyler held a voting process during his tenure.

Lawmakers' Criticism: Many legislators criticized the lack of elections and called for greater transparency and adherence to ECOWAS rules in future appointments.

Koffa's actions contradict ECOWAS protocols but follow practices established by previous Speakers, particularly Chambers. His claim of an election was misleading.



Explainer: "Liberia hosts more than 40% of the remaining forest in West Africa."

By: Watson Richards

Claim: "Liberia hosts more than 40% of the remaining forest in West Africa."

Source: Emmanuel Urey Yakpawolo, EPA Executive Director

Emmanuel Urey Yakpawolo stated on the BBC's Focus on Africa that Liberia hosts over 40% of West Africa's remaining forest. This assertion emphasizes Liberia's ecological significance within the region.

Paul Kanneh of Liberia Forest Media Watch confirmed that Liberia hosts approximately 40–41% of the Upper Guinean Forest, a critical biodiversity hotspot in West Africa.

Historical data shows this figure was previously higher (46%) but has decreased over time due to deforestation and other pressures.

Liberia is part of the Upper Guinean Forest ecosystem, a unique forest system stretching across West Africa.

Liberia has approximately 4.3 million hectares of forest, representing one of the last major remnants of this ecosystem.

Liberia's forest coverage constitutes around 43% of its total land area, making it one of the most forested nations in West Africa.

Comparison with Other Countries:

While Guinea-Bissau has the highest forest coverage percentage in the region, Liberia's forests represent the largest portion of the Upper Guinean Forest.

Other significant forest areas in Africa include the Congo Basin, which is not part of West Africa but remains a vital global forest system.

Liberia's forests are critical for the ecological health of West Africa, hosting over 40% of the remaining Upper Guinean Forest. Emmanuel Urey Yakpawolo's claim is accurate based on available data and expert verification.



Fact Check: “Representative Ellen A. Attoh-Wreh increased Liberia’s Special Economic Zone Budget from US\$ 20,000 to US\$ 800,000.”

Verdict: Misleading;

By: Patrick Moryor

On November 5, 2024, a leaked audio posted by DN News-Liberia featured James Emmanuel Nuquay, the senator of Margibi County, accusing Representative Ellen A. Attoh-Wreh of increasing the Liberia Free Zone Authority (LFZA) budget from US\$20,000 to US\$800,000. Nuquay further claimed that after his intervention, the budget was reduced to US\$600,000.

To verify this claim, TSM examined Liberia's national budgets for 2022, 2023, and 2024. The actual allocations for the LFZA were found to be:

2022: US\$21,805

2023: US\$22,623

2024: US\$697,623

The increase from US\$22,623 in 2023 to US\$697,623 in 2024 is significant but does not align with Nuquay’s claim of a rise to US\$800,000. Attoh-Wreh denied the accusations, stating that the national budget is prepared by the executive branch, not the legislature, and no single lawmaker has the authority to unilaterally alter a ministry or agency's allocation.

She explained that the increase in the LFZA's budget was likely due to its transformation into an autonomous agency, which required more funding for its operations and developmental goals.

TSM's research shows that Attoh-Wreh did not have a role in increasing the LFZA budget to US\$800,000, and the actual figure for 2024 was US\$697,623. Therefore, the claim made by Senator Nuquay is misleading.



Fact Check: “The Bitcoin delivery contract investments are currently trading suitable for all types of investors.”

Verdict: Fake; don't click the link.

By: Augusta Lafalay

On November 28, 2024, TSM received a verification request about a website claiming that Bitcoin delivery contract investments are suitable for all types of investors, suggesting that both novices and experienced traders could profit from it. Bitcoin, a decentralized cryptocurrency created in 2009 by an anonymous entity, has become the world’s most popular cryptocurrency.

To verify the claim, TSM investigated the linked website. Upon visiting the site, users were asked to provide personal details, including email, phone number, and password. A trust evaluation using Scamdoc.com showed a **1% trust score**, which is extremely low and indicates the site is likely fraudulent. Additionally, the website’s domain was less than six months old, and its ownership details were hidden in the Whois database, both signs of a risky or fraudulent website.

Given these findings, TSM concluded that the claim was a scam. The website is likely designed to mislead users and steal personal information or funds. Therefore, it is strongly advised to avoid the site and not click any links or provide any personal details.



Fact Check: “Education funding has increased to \$111 million compared to \$92 million in 2023.”

Verdict: Partly True

By: Augusta Lafalay



Fact Check: “A water shortage has hit Kpamu Town in Zota, and citizens are now drinking dirty water.”

Verdict: false;

By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan

Claim 1: Education Funding
Dillon’s claim that education funding increased to \$111 million in 2024 compared to \$92 million in 2023 was partly true. The actual allocation for education in 2024 is \$111,329,481, slightly higher than Dillon's figure. The University of Liberia received \$33,481,284 from this budget.

Claim 2: Security and Rule of Law Sector
Dillon claimed the security and rule of law sector received over \$90 million. The actual allocation for this sector is \$108,012,679, higher than Dillon’s stated figure. This sector includes the Law Reform Commission, Judiciary, Ministry of Justice, National Security Agency, and Liberia National Police.

Claim 3: Health Sector
Dillon stated that the health sector received \$64 million, including \$7.1 million for John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital. The health sector's actual allocation was \$80,101,200, which is higher than Dillon's figure. The hospital received approximately \$7,172,401, which aligns with Dillon's claim for the hospital’s portion.

While Dillon correctly noted the increase in education funding, his figures were slightly off. The education funding increased from around \$97 million to \$111 million, the security and rule of law sector allocation was \$108 million, and the health sector received \$80 million, not \$64 million.

Star TV posted on December 17, 2024, that a water shortage had struck Kpamu Town in Zota, Liberia, leading citizens to drink dirty water. The post included a photo of a child fetching water from a pit, which was claimed to depict the situation in Kpamu Town.

Upon investigation, Joseph S. Kollie, a youth leader from Kpamu Town, refuted the claim. He confirmed that the village has never lacked safe drinking water. An NGO, the Association of Evangelicals of Liberia, had built a functional hand pump for the community years ago. Before the pump, the village used clean, running water from a cold rock stream, which continues to serve the residents.

A Google image search revealed that the photo shared by Star TV was not from Liberia. The image was originally taken from a charity news platform called World Vision in Kenya. The child in the photo, named Cheru, is from a Kenyan village experiencing water scarcity, not Kpamu Town. When contacted for clarification, Star TV's response was dismissive and lacked further details.

The claim about a water shortage in Kpamu Town is false, and the image used by Star TV is not from Liberia. There is no water shortage in Kpamu, and the village continues to have access to clean water.



Explainer: Is the Video of Police in a Fight from Liberia?

By: R. Joyclyn Wea

A video circulating on social media shows Liberian police officers involved in a fistfight with a civilian.

Emmanuel Tophic Degleh, Secretary General of the Association of Liberia Community Radios (ALICOR) and Manager of Classic Communications Inc., shared the video on his Facebook page with a cautionary note.

On December 17, 2024, Emmanuel Tophic Degleh shared a 0.07-minute video showing two police officers fighting a civilian. Degleh expressed doubt about the video's origin, inviting fact-checkers to verify its authenticity.

The video showed two officers wearing black berets and orange reflectors over their uniforms, but Liberian National Police officers wear blue berets, not black. Additionally, the language spoken by bystanders cheering in the video did not match Liberian pidgin English.

Further investigation revealed that the video was originally posted by Le Point Congo TV on YouTube, with a description referencing Kinshasa, Congo, and not Liberia. The video also appeared on the page of Top Feelings Promo, a media company based in Congo, which deals with entertainment, news, and promotions.

The video of police officers in a fistfight is not from Liberia but originates from Kinshasa, Congo. The claim associating the video with Liberian police is false.

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

