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UNMIL renovates court houses in Liberia to strengthen the Justice Sector and the Rule of Law

Gbarnga, Liberia – As part of UNMIL’s overall efforts to support the Government of Liberia to improve the judicial infrastructure in the country, the Officer-in-Charge of UNMIL, Mr. Luiz Carlos da Costa and Associate Chief Justice of Liberia, Hon. Francis Korkpor, on Friday officially opened two court houses renovated through UNMIL’s Quick Impact Projects in Kakata, Margibi County and Gbarnga, Bong County.



The renovated 13th Judicial Circuit Court in Kakata

Speaking during the ceremony marking the opening of the renovated 13th Judicial Circuit Court in Kakata, Mr. da Costa said that UNMIL prioritizes such projects since the improvement of judicial infrastructure is an essential component of strengthening the justice system in Liberia, which in turn contributes to re-establishing the Rule of Law in a country that has experienced long years of conflict. “The improvement and strengthening of the justice system requires the hard work of each of its members. It is incumbent upon all members of the judiciary, the prosecution and the public and private defence bar to play their part by performing their duties and functions in a manner characterized by dignity, fairness, transparency and integrity,” he said.



Mr. da Costa and Hon. Korkpor interacting with members of the judiciary outside the Gbarnga Judicial Circuit Court

At the Gbarnga Judicial Circuit Court, Mr. da Costa urged the judges and magistrates to treat all persons equally, whether they are rich or poor. “This will engender greater public trust and confidence in the system. The principles of equality before the law and due process of law must be upheld. There is no place in the justice system for corruption and discrimination.” The UN Envoy also recounted the importance of reviewing certain laws to make them more effective and made special mention of the bail law. “The issue of bail for very serious offences is of grave concern and is a clear and present danger to an effective judicial system,” Mr. da Costa said.

Representing Liberia’s Chief Justice at the two occasions, Associate Justice Francis Korkpor expressed his appreciation to UNMIL for assisting with the renovation of courthouses and reiterated the indispensable role the court system plays in the preservation of justice. He urged the judges and magistrates both in Kakata and Gbarnga to let the law take its course and make sure the Rule of Law prevails inside the court houses.

The ceremonies were attended by county authorities, members of the judiciary, community leaders, and UNMIL civilian and military officials. UNMIL through its Quick Impact Projects has financed the construction and/or rehabilitation of numerous court houses, correctional facilities, schools, clinics and government buildings.
