Court Sentences Ex-Foreign Minister Kemayah, Others to 10 Years

-Orders US$425,918 Restitution in Saudi Rice Case

TEMPLE OF JUSTICE, Monrovia, November 16, 2026 – The New Dawn Newspaper in its November 16,2026 online version reported that "Criminal Court "C" at the Temple of Justice has sentenced former Foreign Affairs Minister Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, former Internal Affairs Minister Varney A. Sirleaf, and several former government officials to 10 years' imprisonment each in connection with the alleged misappropriation of 25,054 bags of rice donated to Liberia by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

Presiding Judge Ousman F. Feika according to the paper also ordered restitution of US$425,918, representing the monetary value of the donated rice, following the defendants' conviction on charges arising from the handling of the consignment. The other officials sentenced include former National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) officials Augustine Kollie, Edward Kollie, Archievego Doe, Momolu Johnson, and Edris Bility. Delivering the ruling on Friday, November 13, 2026, Judge Feika also sentenced co-defendant Rosetta Gbessay Gbowah to five years' imprisonment after the jury found her guilty of misapplication of entrusted property, theft of property, and criminal conspiracy.The paper also reported that the court ordered separate retrials for co-defendants Thelma Sawyer and Wayfa Ciafa after the jury failed to reach unanimous verdicts on charges against them. Sawyer faces retrial on charges of criminal conspiracy and abuse of office, while Ciafa will be retried for misapplication of entrusted property, criminal conspiracy, and abuse of office. The case originated from a grand jury indictment issued during the May A.D. 2025 Term of Court in Montserrado County. The defendants were indicted on charges including economic sabotage, theft and/or illegal disbursement and expenditure of public money or property, misapplication of entrusted property, abuse of office, and criminal conspiracy. During their arraignment, the defendants pleaded not guilty to the charges. Following trial proceedings during the August A.D. 2026 Term of Court, the jury returned guilty verdicts against the convicted defendants on October 9, 2026. Judge Feika subsequently affirmed the jury's verdicts, ruling that the prosecution had presented credible and sufficient evidence to support the convictions.

The information provided does not indicate whether the convicted officials intend to appeal their sentences. Former Deputy Internal Affairs Minister for Administration Momolu Johnson and former Deputy Director of the General Services Agency (GSA) Edriss Bility were also found guilty on all five counts. Meanwhile, former National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) Director for Disaster Victims Augustine Kollie and former NDMA Communications Director Archievego Menneah-Doe were each convicted on three of the five charges. Former NDMA Executive Director Henry O. Williams was found guilty on one count of economic sabotage.

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