

Fighting War Crimes

...Jonathan Massaquoi Heads Office Of War Crimes



Cllr. Jonathan Massaquoi

By Darlington Porkpa

Liberian lawyer, Cllr. Jonathan Massaquoi, has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Office of War Crimes Court by President Nyuma Boakai, Sr.

On May 2, 2024, in a rather historic move, President Boakai signed an Executive Order to establish the Office of a War and Economic Crimes Court, empowering the office to investigate, design, and prescribe the methodology, mechanisms, and the processes for the establishment of a Special War Crimes Court, as well as a National Anti-Corruption Court for Liberia.

The conflicts between 1989 and 2003 resulted in the death of

more than 250,000 people, however bringing to book warlords and their financiers have been a challenge for successive governments before the election of President Boakai.

Meanwhile, in his appointment letter, the Liberian leader asserted that he is pleased to appoint Cllr. Massaquoi as Executive Director of the Office of War and Economic Crimes Court, consistent with the Executive Order establishing this office, calling on Cllr. Massaquoi

to expedite the full implementation of the Executive Order.

“As you are aware, the establishment of this office and the setting up of the War and Economic Crimes Court in Liberia represent an historic milestone in the fight against corruption and impunity in this country. I am convinced that combating these corrosive practices in our society will contribute to peace, sustainable development and prosperity of

our country. You are therefore, expected to use your best effort to ensure the success of this initiative,” Pres. Boakai said in his appointment letter.

President Boakai said he trust that Cllr. Massaquoi will carry out his duties with utmost diligence, dedication, and loyalty to the country.

Civil war broke out in this small West African nation—Liberia in 1989 by disenchanted Liberians headed by former

warlord now convicted criminal—Charles Taylor.

The civil war did not end until 2003, leaving over 250,000 people dead, and because of the conflict, thousands of Liberians sought refuge in several countries across the world.

Cllr. Jonathan Massaquoi, is a license Counsellor-at-Law, member of the Supreme Court Bar, with over 13-year of experience.

During the heat of the 2023 political campaigning, Boakai as a presidential candidate

assured Liberians that if elected to the Presidency, his administration would end the culture of impunity by pushing for the establishment of the court.

Boakai got a massive endorsement from Liberians who elected him as President. During his first 100 days, President Boakai shocked the entire world by signing Executive Order #131 to constitute the office of War Crimes.

This new trend of events is considered as a game changer for Liberians as tons of commendations have been pouring in from the international community, specifically the United States government, international human rights campaigners and institutions and anti-war crimes campaigners among others.

“I commend President Joseph Nyuma Boakai Sr. for taking this historic and courageous step to bring justice and accountability for the

atrocities committed during the Liberian civil wars and ensures the culture of impunity comes to an end.

The United States firmly supports Liberia's establishment of the War and Economic Crimes Court and stands ready to assist all Liberians as it moves forward," Chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia Catherine Rodriguez said.

Additionally, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for global Criminal Justice, Beth Van Schaack, congratulated President

Joseph Boakai on signing Executive Order #131 to open the Office of War and Economic Crimes Court for Liberia and pledges the United States' support in ensuring that perpetrators of war crimes in Liberia are brought to justice.

So far, Liberians are excited about the unprecedented move on the part of the President to end war times' atrocities.