



The Liberian Senate

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WEST AFRICA

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT (PART I):

SENATE PROTEMP REACTS TO RECENT MEDIA REPORTS ON HIS FORMER ACTIVITIES IN THE LIBERIAN MINING SECTOR

The President Pro-tempore of the Liberian Senate, Prof. Albert T. Chie, in an interview with the Press and Public Affairs Bureau of the Liberian Senate, has termed as falsehood and broad-day lies information aired on the Costa Show and simultaneously reported in the Frontpage Africa newspaper during the week of April 1-6 that he was involved in several acts of impropriety when he served as Assistant Minister of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy more than **ten (10) years ago**.

According to the Protemp, this late day attempt to smear his internationally-acclaimed reputation as one of Liberia's best brains and experienced professionals in the mining sector and academia, is being perpetrated by three of his Senate colleagues and their collaborators in the media who ill-advised the now constitutionally-removed Cllr. KabinehJa'Neh from the Supreme Court Bench.

Protemp Chie boasts that he has the confidence of twenty-six (26) of the current 29 Senators and more than ninety percent (90%) of his Grand Kru Constituents residing in the County due to his transparent and consultative leadership style with daily guidance from Above.

To set the record straight, the Senate Protemp has made the following clarification on the lies propagated on the Costa Show and published in the Frontpage Africa Newspaper:

1. Alleged Shareholding in the then Broadway-PepperCoast Petroleum Block LB 13 which was sold by the Liberian Government to ExxonMobil

Senator Chie stated that at no time was he a shareholder in Petroleum Block LB 13 which was leased to Broadway/PepperCoast by the Government nor did he receive a cent from the sale of the Block by the Government. He accused Frontpage Africa of spreading the rumors from 2013 after the block was sold by the Government that he Senator Chie was one of the Liberian Shareholders who benefited from the transaction. This false allegation was repeated in the Frontpage Africa and aired on the Costa Show two weeks ago. At that time in 2013 when Frontpage started spreading the lies, the Protemp was contesting the Senatorial Seat he now occupies for Grand Kru County which another candidate supported by the newspaper was also contesting.

Senator Chie revealed that the issue of Liberian Shareholders in Block LB 13 has been investigated extensively by many institutions and none of those investigations found him as a shareholder or a beneficiary of the transaction.

During its takeover of the block from Broadway/ Peppercoast, **ExxonMobil conducted a Due Diligence** to find out about the rumors of Liberian officials shareholding in Block LB 13. The Protemp's name never came up from that investigation. The records are available at the National Oil Company of Liberia (NOCAL).

Secondly, **Global Witness** conducted an extensive investigation into the sale of Block 13, including alleged Liberian shareholders. Global Witness's Report entitled: **Catch Me if you Can, published in March 2018**, discussed the Liberian Shareholding, and the Name of Albert Chie, was never mentioned because he was never a shareholder in the Block or in Broadway/Peppercoast. This report is available on the Global Witness Website.

Finally, based on the Global Witness Report, President Weah in 2018 set up a Presidential Committee to look into the findings of Global Witness. The Presidential Committee's report found nothing about Senator Chie's involvement in the block whatsoever.

Thus the lies of the Protemp's involvement in Block 13 are nothing but envious fabrications under the framework of the Liberian Concept: "Pull Him Down: nothing is good for Liberians; if I can't get, he should not get."

2. Alleged Involvement in Liberty Gold Investment

Protemp Chie indicated that as Assistant Minister for Mineral Exploration and Research in 2005, he encouraged Mr. Len Lindstrom, the CEO of Liberty Gold to invest in exploration rather than in small-scale mining. As part of his responsibility, he provided the Canadian basic information about the mining sector, potential mineralized areas and mining laws and regulations.

In mid 2006, the then new Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Administration re-assigned the then Assistant Minister for Exploration Albert T. Chie to the position of Assistant Minister for Energy until he left the Ministry in the first quarter of 2009.

The events narrated by Mr. Lindstrom in his pamphlet occurred after 2006 when the Protemp was no more involved with mineral exploration and mining.

More besides, those officials at the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy who monitored the activities of Mr. Lendstrom indicated that the Canadian was involved in 419 and OPM (Other People's Money) eating activities and could not meet up with his responsibility to the Government, which led to the problems he found himself in.

Audits of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy

According to Pro-tempore Chie, there are many audit reports of the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy, from the Special Audit of the sale of the Buchanan ore stockpile by the Government of Liberia to other audits of the Ministry, covering the periods Senator Chie was Assistant Minister. All these audits were conducted by the respected former Auditor General Mr. John Morlu.

None of those audits found former Assistant Minister Albert Chie culpable of any wrongdoing.

4. Recommendations of Old Pals to Positions at the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy

The Senate Pro-tempore says that some of the appointed positions at the Ministry were filled upon his recommendation to the President of Liberia, which is normal, for someone of his political status, training and experience in the mining sector.

He stressed however, 90% of those he recommended are not his Kru tribesmen, but Liberian citizens from other counties who are well qualified and experienced in the mineral sector.

Furthermore, none of the current officials of the Ministry ever owned shares or worked for the geological consultancy firm Earthcons, which was owned by the Pro-temp and the late Mulbah Wille on a 50-50 basis.

According to the Pro-temp, his only relation at the Ministry is his younger sister, a strong supporter of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), who serves as Assistant Minister for Administration, with a good worth of administrative training and experience, having worked for the United Nations System and an International NGO, Save the Children, for over ten (10) years.

5. Departure from the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy

Contrary to the information propagated on the Costa Show and FrontPage Africa Newspaper, the President Pro-tempore says he and the present Minister, Honourable Gesler Murray, were not dismissed from the Ministry by President Sirleaf for corruption, but for upholding the Minerals and Mining Law of Liberia.

He only read on the Executive Mansion website in February 2009 that “he was relieved of his position as Assistant Minister for Energy” without any stated reason and without a letter.

Years later, ex-President Sirleaf would admit that her action was based on the “usual” rumors;

Here is the story, according to the President Pro-tempore: When President Sirleaf took over the Government in 2006, Mr. Gesler Murray was appointed to the position of Assistant Minister for Mineral Exploration, the position the Pro-temp held for ten years; the Pro-temp was transferred to the Department of Energy and appointed as Assistant Minister of Energy; Before Mrs Sirleaf became President, AmLib United Minerals had a concession over Kokoya in Bong County (sold to MNG Gold later) and mineral exploration properties in Klekle (Montserrado County), Cestos Area in Rivercess County and Menyea in Grand Gedeh County.

When she became President in 2006, **her brother**, Mr. Carney Johnson, no doubt a well-trained and experienced mining engineer, was hired by AmLib as a consultant. Then the foreign owners of the company decided to **misuse that connection** and applied to the Ministry for all of their exploration licenses in different counties to be merged into one concession agreement (MDA). This was in contravention of the Minerals and Mining Law which states that **each** exploration license must be converted into **its own** concession (MDA). Thus AmLib should have applied for **three** additional concessions instead of merging all the exploration licenses into one MDA. As Assistant Minister for

Mineral Exploration, Minister Gesler Murray refused to violate the Mining Law and thus rejected the application; the Protemp, Minister Murray's predecessor, supported him.

Using their connection to the President (having hired her brother Mr. Carney Johnson), the owners of AmLib carried lies to her that the Protemp and Minister Murray wanted to give their properties to Earthcons. The two Assistant Ministers were never called in by the President to defend why AmLib's application was rejected, but were immediately relieved of their positions in 2009, in a "poor no friend" manner.

According to the Protemp, once he and Minister Murray were out of the way, AmLib was successful in violating the Minerals and Mining Law and got all their exploration licenses scattered all over the country to be merged into a single concession agreement in 2010, thus causing loss to the Government in revenue and undeveloped mineralized areas.

Years later, when the Protemp was elected Senator and had the opportunity to sit with President Sirleaf and explained his side of the story, Madam President would regret the incidence and said she was misled.

This was one of the reasons the former President strongly supported the bid of Senator Albert T. Chie to become President Pro-tempore of the Liberian Senate.

6. Other Falsehood

There are other falsehood, inconsistencies and ironies which permeated the Costa Show Broadcast and Frontpage Africa publication, such as the reason for the review of mineral applications by the Ministry of State and so forth.

6. Admonishment to the Press

The President Pro-tempore then cautioned the Press to be responsible in their reporting, check their facts before reporting, void of blackmail, biases, politicking and malice.

"If you don't have the capability to look back into history without prejudice, judge me by my accomplishment and record at the Liberian Senate, Pro-temp Chie finally admonished FrontPage Africa Newspaper, the Costa Show and other media outlets and personalities."

Meanwhile, the President Pro-tempore says he is reviewing his options to seek relief from the injury he has sustained from the Costa Show broadcast and Frontpage Africa publications.

Jarlawah A. Tonpo

Director

Press & Public Affairs

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