

HON.M/G DANIEL D. ZIANKAHN, (RET)  
**MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE**  
DURING THE 64<sup>rd</sup> ARMED FORCES DAY CELEBRATION  
FEBRUARY 11, 2021  
BARCLAY TRAINING CENTER  
MONROVIA, LIBERIA

His Excellency, Ambassador George Manneh Weah,  
President and Commander-In-Chief, of the Armed Forces  
of Liberia

Madame Vice President

Mr. Speaker

Mr. President Pro-tempore of the Liberian Senate

His Honor the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,

The Chairmen on Defense from the Liberian Senate and  
house of Representatives

Distinguished Guests,

The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia,

Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, Enlisted and Sailors  
of the Armed Forces of Liberia

Family members of our Gallant Men and Women of the  
Armed Forces Liberia

Members of the fourth Estate

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

## **Your Excellency**

It is my esteem honor to welcome you and other distinguished personalities as we celebrate this year's Armed Forces Day, an occasion to honor the dedicated and committed Men and Women of our Armed Forces, and to pay homage to those who sacrificed their lives to protect our Nation. On like other Armed Forces Day Celebrations when men and women of our Military and Paramilitary Organizations participated in drill ceremonies, this year's virtual program symbolizes the challenge we are facing as a nation due to the global pandemic, Covid-19, which requires a coordinated and robust response effort to ensure its containment.

However, due to the urgency for a collective response effort, the involvement of our Armed Forces in the fight against the rapid spread of the Corona Virus became imperative. Consequently, based on directive from the Commander-in-Chief, the AFL begun deployment of personnel from the medical command, and utilizing the newly constructed 14<sup>th</sup> Military Hospital as a treatment facility.

This strategic coordination headed by the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute (NPHIL) created an all-inclusive approach to implementing a response system that aligned with international healthcare protocols; thus reducing the fatality rate of patients infected with COVID-19 in Liberia. This effort, couple with other contributions on the part of our men and women in arms demonstrates the professional competence and force readiness of our military.

### **Your Excellency**

A little over ten months ago, you instructed the Armed Forces of Liberia to begin construction of sidewalk pavements at several locations in the country. I am proud to report that the full implementation of your directive is ongoing and the Armed Forces of Liberia continues to demonstrate its readiness to support civil authorities as a 'Force for Good'. I am also pleased to report that the Armed Forces of Liberia recently participated in joint border patrol exercises with our Guinean counterpart as a show of force. While these exercises are intended to strengthen our relationships, it also reaffirms our commitment to protecting the territorial integrity of Liberia against armed aggression and at the same time restores the confidence of our people in their security forces.

## **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On July 1, 2013, the AFL joined the United Nation Stabilization Mission in Mali, now called MINUSMA. To date, the strength of our troops has increased from a platoon to a company size, and I am pleased to report that after several years of partnership with our United Nations counterparts, we are closed to completing the rotation of our entire brigade. The success of our Peacekeeping operations epitomizes the gains we have made as a nation and the need to further strengthen our efforts to ensure that pre-deployment training exercises remains a priority, and I am incredibly proud of the regimentation and discipline being exhibited by our men and women in arms, which reflects a high standard of professionalism and training.

## **Your Excellency**

The Armed Forces of Liberia has a unique opportunity to plan for the future and now is the time to build a military that will cater to the future needs of our country; a military that will continue to represent the admiration of the Liberian people. That is why we must ensure that budgetary allocations are made to begin the recruitment and training process. We also need to invest in infrastructure improvements at various military barracks to meet the accommodation needs of military personnel and their growing families, and provide the basic needs that reflect sustenance of our men and women in arms.

Additionally, a year ago, you instructed the Armed Forces of Liberia to develop a strategic framework for the implementation of an Agriculture program. It is my distinct honor to report that the AFL is coordinating with the Ministry of Agriculture to harness the potential of experts, and we believe with the appropriate funding and support from the government of Liberia and our partners, the AFL can begin the production of rice and vegetables, while at the same time beefing up the readiness of our Engineering Company to undertake interventions on road projects per your directive.

**Your Excellency, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me express my profound gratitude to our international partners, The United States, China, India, Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, but most especially the United States Government our traditional partner. We appreciate your continued support to our men and women in arms, particularly in the midst of this global pandemic. We are grateful for your partnership over the years in strengthening the capacity of the AFL as a Force for Good and we will "Dare to Defend"

Finally, to the men and women in arms, you continue to demonstrate your resilience through loyalty and discipline in defending our territorial sovereignty, through your participation in regional and internationally peacekeeping operations, and through your heroic roles during this global pandemic. We are proud of the gains we have made together over the years.

As we celebrate this day, let us remember that we have set the milestone towards the attainment of a better Armed Forces of Liberia. Every individual soldier must at all times embody the core Army values; **Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity** and **Personal Courage**. You have the responsibility as the people's Army to do what is right at all times.

Happy Armed Forces Day!!!!!!! I Thank You!!!