

**STATEMENT FROM THE LEGAL TEAM AND FAMILY OF FORMER VICE PRESIDENT
JEWEL HOWARD-TAYLOR
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Our justice system is built on the guarantee of a fair and speedy trial. Because Madam Jewel Howard-Taylor has never been served a proper indictment detailing the specific facts and allegations against her, the defense sought a preliminary examination to review the evidence used to justify her unprecedented arrest and incarceration.

Regrettably, the prosecution objected even to this basic level of disclosure, and the court sustained that objection — denying access to evidence that could include material favorable to her innocence, and preventing the defense from meaningfully questioning prosecution witnesses. Rather than allow the preliminary stage to become a platform for unproven theories without the safeguard of full discovery, we have chosen to proceed directly to trial, where pretrial discovery is guaranteed and the former Vice President's constitutional rights can be fully protected.

This decision must be understood in its proper context, and the record must be set straight: as of this statement, Madam Howard-Taylor has not been indicted by a grand jury. The Government has announced allegations and filed a criminal complaint — but a complaint is not an indictment, and an indictment, if ever returned, would not be a conviction. No press conference or political statement can substitute for the judicial process the law requires.

Madam Howard-Taylor is innocent of all these charges. It is deeply troubling that official statements and media reporting have created the impression that she is already indicted or guilty. This repetition of allegation as established fact is prejudicial and damages the integrity of Liberia's justice system.

We therefore call upon:

- * The Government to communicate truthfully and distinguish allegations from an indictment and a conviction.
- * Public officials to cease prejudicial pronouncements while the matter is before the courts.
- * The media to verify the case's procedural status rather than report allegations as proven facts.
- * Civil society, religious leaders, and human-rights advocates to demand due process and humane treatment.
- * All Liberians to remain peaceful and committed to justice.

Madam Howard-Taylor asks for no special treatment — only the constitutional protections owed to every Liberian: the presumption of innocence, humane treatment, and a fair, impartial process. If the Government has evidence, let it be tested lawfully in court. Until then, accusation must not be presented as conviction.

We remain confident that a fair hearing on the full record will vindicate her.

Issued by:

The Family and Legal Support Team of
H.E. Chief Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor
Former Vice President of the Republic of Liberia