



**OFFICE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
WAR AND ECONOMIC CRIMES COURT
FOR LIBERIA (OWECC-L)**



**UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES
UNDERTAKEN IN THE
MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER
AND PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE
MONTHS OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, 2025**

**PRESENTED TO
HIS EXCELLENCY JOSEPH NYUMA BOAKAI, SR.
PRESIDENT
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

OCTOBER 31, 2025

UPDATE ON OWECC-L's ACTIVITIES: SEPTEMBER 1-OCTOBER 31, 2025

I. Introduction:

This Update, on the process leading to the establishment of the War and Economic Crimes Court (WECC) and the National Anti-Corruption Court for Liberia (NACC), is made His Excellency President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., consistent with the OWECC-L's reporting obligations to the President. It builds on the June 1 to August 31, 2025 Update also submitted the President and, upon request, to Her Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Liberia to the Republic of Ethiopia in furtherance of the collaboration with all stakeholders. Similarly, the earlier May 31 Update was in this direction, but also to pursue the Office's mandate to broadly consult, and ensure robust public awareness and engagement.

Additionally, this Update constitutes the final quarterly submission to His Excellency the President, as the subsequent report will cover the entire year, January to December, 2025. In essence, OWECC-L will be submitting its annual report encapsulating these quarterly reports and updates, and the workplan for 2026 to His Excellency the President.

These reports are submitted not only to meet our reporting obligations to His Excellency the President; they are intended to aid in the preparation the quarterly reports the President submits to the Legislature on the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), including the establishment of the Special War Crimes Tribunal in pursuit of criminal accountability, reconciliation and peace.

As the public institution vested by law with the authority to lead the establishment of the WECC and the NACC by developing mechanisms to achieve these mandates, OWECC-L works with all stakeholders and accordingly informs the public of the progress being made. In this direction and to support the drive for public trust in the proposed courts when established, the Office relies on the commitment of the Executive Branch of the Government not to interfere with its work, to engage the public in diverse ways, including sharing such reports for public awareness, education, and public participation. Hence, subsequent to the submission of each report to the President primarily through the Minister of Justice, the reports are also shared with the Legislature and the general public, including but not limited to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), government institutions, international organizations, academic, religious and other institutions, women and youth groups, etc., through the Offices website oweccliberia.org and Facebook page, Office for the Establishment of War & Economic Crimes Court for Liberia, and other media.

We report appreciable improvement in our collaboration with local and international transitional justice actors, including Liberian stakeholders in and out of Liberia. Our Liberia-Diaspora engagements are gaining traction although there is much still wanting in this area. At the same time, the international community, ECOWAS, AU, UN, diplomatic missions, international nongovernmental organizations, development partners and others have been collaborating with the Office in various fashions; they continue to provide invaluable technical and logistical support and avail themselves for in-person technical planning and other works.

As other reports, this Update reflects activities we covered during the period, immediate future activities, challenges and recommendations. The overarching goal is to provide substantive information to our principals to facilitate informed decision-making on the entire process.

In that regard, we refer to pending issues in past reports. The August 31 Update reported plans to make study and engagement trips to at least three countries for specific reasons: Abuja, Nigeria - to interact with the Liberian Community and the President of the ECOWAS Commission; Banjul, The Gambia - to have a first-hand exposure to their war crimes court process as well as efforts at fighting corruption; and, Kigali, Rwanda, to study its war crimes court and reconciliation processes. Although arrangements are underway and have not materialized, we look forward to making a similar visit to the Republic of Sierra Leone, which has a rich and similar history as our process.

These visits are dependent on state actions. They require the issuance of a note verbal by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the relevant authorities of ECOWAS and the host governments. Additionally, these travels are contingent on the provision of funding primarily from the Government of Liberia and then partners. Howbeit, we expect to make at least one of these study visits prior to the end of the year.

II. MAJOR ACTIVITIES FROM SEPTEMBER 1 TO OCTOBER 31, 2025

a. Collaboration and Coordination

Several new formal relationships have emerged between the OWECC-L and other actors. A number of new academic institutions, the Kofi Annan Institute for Peace Studies, Samay Development Association (**Bong County**), the National Liberia Children Representative Forum (**Youth Parliament**) and others are in strong collaboration and participating in the activities of the Office. These have added to the existing ones representing CSOs, government agencies; grade schools, universities and professional schools; religious institutions including the Liberia Council of Churches and the Liberia Muslim Council, media and other professional institutions such as the Liberian National Bar Association.

We affirm that a strong aspect of the collaboration and coordination is the continuous improvement of the National Transitional Justice Coordination Committee (**NTJCC**), the body set up by TJ actors to coordinate these activities. It is chaired by the OWECC-L and jointly co-chaired by the Women NGO Secretariat (**WONGOSOL**) and the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Liberia (**OHCHR**). Other sub-coordinating and working groups have emerged under separate terms of reference. Two high-level ones are the technical working groups responsible to lead the drafting of the NACC and WECC Bills, discussed in the subsection “b” below.

b. Activities Undertaken and Ongoing

(i) Regionalization of the Country for Outreach Enhancement

To manage the outreach and public engagements, the Office divided the Country into five regions headed by Regional Coordinators; each comprising three counties. Each region is subdivided into county headquarters, headed by County Supervisors. The Regions have working offices for organized operations of the structures.

(ii) Nationwide Outreach

Since the launch of the national Outreach in July this year, and the demarcation of the Country into the five regions, the Office and its collaborating partners have carried out awareness and have had consultations with citizens and residents in three of the regions: Bong, Lofa and Nimba; Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland; and, Grand Bassa, Margibi and Montserrado Counties. One County, Grand Kru, in the remaining two regions has benefited from the general outreach activities. We are pleased to report that the reception and support from the general public and the local authorities for the establishment of the WECC and NACC are excellent

The outreach does not only cover awareness and public engagements. It encapsulates community empowerment and supporting the Government's efforts to attract national leaders to their constituencies and thus bring the government to the People. In this regard, the OWECC-L has done the following:

- a. Actively participated at the invitation of MICAT, in the latter's "**Your Come Let's Talk**" dialogue in Saniquellie, Nimba County where the Executive Director of OWECC-L made a cutting-edge presentation on the historicity, achievements, and plans of the Office as well as the benefits to the Republic of Liberia when the courts are established.
- b. Supported by helping to plan and actively participate in the National Convention of the National Rural Women Association in Harper, Maryland County, at which the Executive Director of OWECC-L served as the Guest Speaker. That occasion witnessed a significant increased bond in the relationship between the two institutions as the Office finally concluded its regional office set up in Grand Kru County with the assistance of the Rural Women.
- c. Joining in and collaborating with the people of Samay in District #2, Bong County, and the Samay Development Association, in the solemn observation of the 31st Anniversary of the Samay Massacre by a warring faction was a heroic undertaking. The solemnization of the anniversary was buttressed by the participation of authorities of the County including members of the Senate and House of Representatives, in particular, Senator Caucus Chairperson Hon. Prince Kermue Moye, Sr., and the District Representative, Hon. James Kolleh, the County Superintendent, Hon. Loyelah Hawa Norris and other County Officials, Traditional Chiefs and Elders, women and youth organizations, and a host of CSOs and Victim and Survivors' groups.
- d. OWECC-L trained three elementary and junior high school students, two females and one male, during the just ended vacation period in basic good citizenship standards, including accountability, transparency, conflict resolution, and leadership, under its Grade School and Internship Ambassadorial Program. At the close of the training, the Office had a recognition program in collaboration with the schools for the trainees. At St. Teresa Convent, the Principal commended the OWECC-L and requested a collaboration. Both institutions agreed and appointed the student as the focal person for the School for the relationship with OWECC-L. Similarly, the J.J. Roberts School hailed the program and urged continuity through regular visits and ultimately, enrollment of some of its high school students in the senior students ambassadorial and internship program. The modalities are underway. As the two schools, the Dwe Wulu School, along the ELWA-RIA highway, extolled the initiative and organized an elaborate program for all students to have an insight into the works of the OWECC-L. We are pleased to report that since then, these schools have participated in all activities under this program.

- e. The hosting of the Grade School & Ambassadorial Summit is the highlight of this program, as it has both sparked a strong collaboration between OWECC-L and other institutions involved with children’s rights and future. The leading UN agency in this area, **UNICEF**, provided direct financial support to the Office to carry out this program at three venues in Montserrado County (**S. K. D. Sports Complex**) and Margibi County (**Booker Washington Institute Campus in Kakata; and Harbel Multilateral High School Campus in Harbel**). The Montserrado County event was on October 25. We are most certain that the remaining two activities will also give the young people a clearer understanding and appreciation of the causes of the civil war as well as reasons to avoid violence and rather be good citizens. The report to UNICEF will be shared with the Government of Liberia and the general public.

(iii) Technical works leading to the establishment of the Courts

The Roadmap produced and published by the OWECC-L is instructive on timelines for the establishment of each of the two courts. The timelines are unequivocal on the deadline, providing the period within which each court will be established, operationalized and commence trials. Thus, it is important for readers to understand that the dates stated in the roadmap are not the compelling date for the courts to be established; they are rather the envisaged final date for a full-fledged court to exist under this process. It is therefore possible that long before the stated dates, the courts could be operationalized and commence trials. To move this process as fast as necessary, two technical working groups dubbed “The NACC Bill Drafting Committee” and “The WECC Bill Drafting Committee” have been set up. Each of these Committees is chaired by the OWECC-L represented by the Executive Director, not because of his status but based primarily on his legislative drafting expertise. The timelines for completing the final bill and submitting to the President are also set in the ToR of each Committee, as explained below.

a. The NACC Bill Drafting Committee

This Committee comprises the Law Reform Commission (**Co-Chair**), Ministry of Justice (**MoJ**), Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (**LACC**), Independent National Commission on Human Rights (**INCHR**), Liberian National Bar Association (**LNBA**), Center for Transparency International (**CENTAL**), and Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**).

The framework of the bill was first completed and members made substantive comments and inputs allowing for the drafting of the initial draft; it is now underway and is expected to be finalized in the third week of November. Thereafter, a two-day retreat is expected to be held with members of the Committee to finalize same and immediately shared with other institutions for their review and return within two days. Thereafter, the draft will be presented to the President for comments, to be within a week. Thereafter, the OWECC-L will work with the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the President to carry out the validation of the draft Act. The results from the validation will inform the final version to be submitted to the President through the Minister of Justice. The President will then determine the date of submission to the Legislature for its consideration.

b. The WECC Bill Drafting Committee

This Committee comprises the Law Reform Commission (**Co-Chair**), Ministry of Justice (**MoJ**), Ministry of Internal Affairs (**MIA**), Independent National Commission on Human Rights (**INCHR**), Liberia Massacre Association (**LIMASA**), Liberian National Bar Association (**LNBA**), Press Union

of Liberia (**PUL**), Women NGO Secretariat (**WONGOSOL**), National Association of Rural Women of Liberia, Women in Peace Building Network (**WIPNET**), National Union of the Disabled (**NUOD**), National Traditional Council of Liberia, and the Law Students Association of the University of Liberia (**LAWSA**). The contemplation is for at least two international organizations from Africa and the UN to serve as technical advisors.

The draft Act developed by the LNBA in 2019 which has been reviewed and revised in part is the start-up instrument that is informing the drafting of the WECC final draft law. That draft has been substantially certified by several internationally acclaimed institutions and individuals with vast experience in war crimes prosecution and transitional justice mechanisms, and has in fact, informed the drafting of other similar acts in other countries, The Gambia being an evidentiary case.

On the basis of its holistic capacity to accelerate the completion of a well-written and responsive draft law for the court envisaged, the OWECC-L has made the decision to employ the LNBA draft bill as the instructive guide for the court. Consequently, it has now been placed under scrutiny to ensure that all current and foreseeable legal complexities are fully provided for. In that regard, the draft has been designated as the working draft for the Committee.

The workplan lays out similar deliverable and timelines as that for the NACC, except that the completion and submission date to the Minister of Justice for onward submission to His Excellency the President is the Third Week of December. Thereafter, the process is expected to be moved in layers on a weekly basis so that it will form a part of the President's January 2026 Annual Message.

c. Pioneer Accountability Program (PAP) and Independent Investigative Unit (IIU)

The Roadmap provides for a Pioneer Accountability Program and the establishment of an Independent Investigative Unit. The Unit is to be the standalone evidence gathering of evidence that will inform the decision on indictment of perpetrators. It requires a number of highly technical steps, some of which are ongoing while the others depend on the ones that are ongoing.

At the moment, OWECC-L has collaborated with the MOJ in identifying the first set of trained investigators. The ten individuals are now conducting intensive study with the relevant experts at OWECC-L to determine the criteria for recruitment, the nature of the training required and whether Liberia has the expertise, the venue and other relevant issues.

A second but also very pressing activity is the conclusion of the discussions for the entry into a memorandum of understanding by the MoJ and OWECC-L which will support the Pioneer Accountability Program and the IIU. This is a compelling legal support to ensure that evidence gathered by the investigators are admissible under the law. While these are not hinged to the completion of the two Bills, they are integral parts and as such, are expected to be undertaken simultaneously. Credit to the Minister of Justice who has exhibited full support to these processes.

d. Explication of the Roadmap

It is mandatory that the steps in establishing the courts are clear and not subject to interpretation by various actors. While the Roadmap is instructive on the major steps, those layers themselves need to be stratified for persons undertaking the detailed technical works. Consequently, the major phases have been further broken down into specific activities and the resource needs aligned with each. Hence, since the Roadmap requires a decision on the *model of the court*, the initial step was to critically analyze both the Joint Resolution No. 001/'24 promulgated passed by the Legislature and Executive Orders 131 and 148 issued by His Excellency President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, and study various

models of such courts in other jurisdictions. This study led to the conclusion on The WECC and the NACC as follows:

➤ **The WECC:**

1. As to situation, it will be established in Liberia.
2. It will be a hybrid or mixed court of national and international law.
3. There are critical constitutional and other legal questions that must be addressed to ensure a system of justice that is not abusive of the rights of anyone.
4. That the functioning of the court will require a level of expertise that suggests both national and international actors at all levels.
5. To enable substantial national presence in the courts, it is imperative that at this time, appropriate training opportunities be provided to would-be Liberian actors.
6. The security concerns cannot await the future; hence, studies on the locale and other features of the court must commence. We report that in this regard, our team has made visits to possible locations and is working in confidence with experts to advise the Government appropriately.

➤ **The NACC**

1. As to location, it too will be established in Liberia but will be visible in structure throughout the Country in line with its national characteristic.
2. Pursuant to the above, the plan is to have the court initially seated at the Temple of Justice and then gradually rolled out in other Counties, most likely on a regional basis.
3. It will be a part of the regular Liberian court system under the Judiciary.
4. It will however be a stand-alone court insofar as its substantive and procedural laws are concerned, consistent with the dictates of JR #001/'24 and Eos 131 and 148.
5. It will be a specialized court with jurisdiction over all corruption cases.
6. It will exercise primacy in any and all corruption cases, irrespective of which court may be hearing a particular case that is substantially embedded with issues of corruption.
7. The jurisdiction of the court will take into account the powers of the LACC such that it's docket is not unnecessarily overloaded with cases that either the LACC or another court can conveniently dispose of under the law.
8. It's relationship with the Supreme Court is within the latter's appellate jurisdiction, but at the same time, such appeals are given prompt attention.

e. Submission of Financial Report on Second Funding Grant/Revisiting the Budget

The submission of a request for additional funding grant from the Government is made through the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs (**MoS**). The second grant followed the same as the first. Thus, the subsequent grant payment request also followed the same procedure.

For the second GoL funding grant of United States Dollars Three Hundred and Four Thousand (**USD304,000.00**) out of a little over USD310,000.00 as we were informed, this amount covered a portion of our quarterly budget needs. The expenditure report covering the entire amount was submitted to the MoS, MoJ and the MFDP as an integral part of the new funding grant request. That request to the MoS was forwarded to the MFDP as evidenced by the copy forwarded to the OWECCC-L by the MoS. Additionally, the Executive Director of the OWECC-L briefed the Minister of Justice on this development, and abreast him of the delay in MFDP making payment to the Office. The Minister promised to intervene, although to date, there is no indication of what that intervention was or what was the response from the Minister of Finance and Development Planning.

From the financial straits the OWECC-L faces from time-to-time, and the justification by actors that it is due to its omission from the national Budget, it appears that the ultimate solution to this menace is to consider including the OWECC-L as a line item in the budget. Hence, the 2026 budget process, to which neither the MFDP nor the MoS invited the OWECC, may need to be lifted beyond these entities at the level of the Legislature by inviting the OWECC-L to workout modalities for its inclusion in that budget.

III. Immediate Next Steps

a. Completing the Bills

Our focus is the completion of the two Bills within the timeframe indicated above. The Committees remain actively engaged despite some hurdles and unexpected developments which could hinder the process going forward as envisaged. Meanwhile, efforts are ongoing to remove those hurdles and avert any further inhibition of achieving these goals.

b. Rebranding the Grade School Ambassadorial Program

New designs of the program are compelling in two areas: first, there is need to reach other counties to provide similar awareness to young people who are and are not in school, since the essence of this program is to make good citizens and nurture a more responsible citizenry for Liberia. Second, the program now envisages the development of simple-to-read literatures as well as the preparation of documentary on the civil war and the peace process so that these young people will visualize the many things that occurred in Liberia when they were not yet born. In this way, we propel our goal of making a justice system that will not be reactive but proactive and thereby make our dream of “**NEVER AGAIN**” and respect for the rule of law a reality. OWECC-L is developing a project proposal on these two activities.

c. Complete the identification of prospective independent investigators

The group of trained MoJ investigators collaborating with the OWECC-L are assisting in identifying individuals to be trained as investigators. This is an extremely confidential process that is guided jealously at this stage, to avoid infiltration that could derail the entire process.

d. Completion of the draft MOU for the MoJ’s Consideration

The draft is underway and is being informed from time-to-time by the ongoing conversations with authorities of the Ministry of Justice.

e. Finalizing arrangements for the study tours

A major component for this subject is the communication of the note verbal to ECOWAS by the Foreign Ministry and the availability for funds from the funding allocation from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. It is hoped that these will come through soon. Follow up engagements are ongoing but to date, there is no firm idea as to when they will materialize.

IV. Challenges

The representations made in the various parts and sections of this Update reveal that the Office is incredibly challenged in most, if not all of its activities. First, the political will as expressed in the legislative and executive actions from the legal instruments therefrom, are strong indications of the Government's decision to establish the courts. However, this political will is not seen in many situations, some of which are outlined below.

a. Hurdles in the provision of fund

The Office and the entire process are poorly funded by the Government. It is important to note, though not encouraging for a process of this sort, that the staff at the OWECC-L have not been paid for at least five. This also goes for lack of operational support to the Office. For an entire year, the support is less than USD700,00.00. Compared to the results produced so far by the Office, including the payment of the annual rent for the office building and the purchase of three vehicles. To enable the OWECC-L to operate at the minimum up to the end of the year 2025 and at up to the end of January 2026, the minimum amount of funding support required is USD 1.5 Million (**One Million Five Hundred Thousand United States Dollars**).

b. Threats of Eviction

While salaries and operational funds are quite important, the image of the process is found in its facilities; the availability of a building from which the staff and collaborating institutions can engage and which houses the assets and records of the institution. As it stands, within a few weeks, the annual rent amount falls due. The lessor is already giving signals of demand for timely payment. This amount is embedded in the funding grant the Government makes to the OWECC-L. in the absence of remittance the rent will be overdue also. That could trigger demands and public information on the failure to pay which cast a showdown on the good intention of the Government. Engagements with the Minister of the MFDP have not yielded any positive results.

c. Security threats

As the process becomes more of a reality and it is now more likely than not at this stage, that the two courts will soon be established, the security threats to the personnel and facilities of the OWECC-L are growing. In recent times, unexplained visitations around the premises of some staff, questionable telephone calls, and in fact, tailgating have increased. Coupled with this is the refusal of the security agencies, including the Liberian national Police, to provide adequate security protection to the OWECC-L despite repeated promises. This is a serious problem considering the resistance from a few but very powerful elements mainly in the Government, to the establishment of these courts.

d. Legislative action and possible adverse consequences

The Liberian Senate has recently been debating two Bills proffered by Senator Joseph K. Jallah, Lofa County, and President Pro Tempore and Grand Bassa County Senator Nyonblee Karngar Lawrence, for the WECC and NACC respectively. Without discussing the quality of those instruments, the actions of these two Senators have the proclivity to undermine and derail the entire process as they clearly are in tension with the very process the Government set in place. Additionally, the substance of the two instruments do not have the capacity to address even remotely, the complexities associated with the

nature of such courts. It is therefore a threat to the transitional justice process if the Senate were to give credence to those instruments.

e. Foreseeable Suspension of Nation-Wide Outreach

The National Outreach Program is a very expensive initiative. It involves transportation, sustenance, communication/media, hall rental and other costs for each phase. At the same time, the collaborating national partners and the OWECC-L have resource-sharing responsibilities that aid in the reduction of costs in many ways but yet, require some minimum outlay for money to cover the costs of intervention of these partners. Even then, the outreach program now demands at least two four-wheel jeeps to transport people in various parts of the Country and at least fifteen motorcycles for the regional and county offices. Hence, in the absence of funding, the compelling public engagements that are indeed a recurring part of the entire court making process will come to a halt, and by that, will cause a serious setback for the timely completion of most of the other activities.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Conclusion

1. Recounting achievements

We have outlined our achievements, next steps and challenges and have indicated the Government's strong political will to establish the courts, though there are incredible hitches along the way. We have however remained engaged and note that the staff has never disengaged or exhibited conduct of lack of interest in achieving the mandates of the Government to the OWECC-L. We conclude that these hurdles can be overcome on the strength of the staff unwavering commitment to the process.

2. Highest Political Will / Support

His Excellency the President has by all accounts, given his fullest support to the establishment of the two courts. The President's appeal to the UN for its support at the recent General Assembly and his several assurances in his addresses, including that in Togo recently, support our conclusion of his firm decision to bring this process to fruition. In this direction we are not only confident that the President and the Government will give greater attention to the OWECC-L, but are doubly resolved to reach the finished line soon. We conclude on the note that our datelines remain constant.

3. The exclusion of the OWECC-L in the National Budget is a problem that needs to be resolved.

b. Recommendations

1. Focus on the OWECC-L

With the problems outlined above under challenges, we recommend that Government pays keen attention to the OWECC-L and resolves the problems that it is confronted with. The political will that has been shown by the President and the Government has to be converted into substance with the greatest urgency as our experience from the public engagements show that the people are becoming impatient.

2. Senate to Recall its Bill

We also ask the Senate to take cue from the works we have undertaken so far and the schedule of completion outlaid in the Roadmap as well as the collective decision both Houses of the Legislature

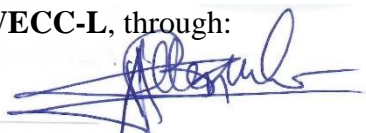
and the Executive reached in the procedures for the establishment of the two courts. There is not shortcut to this process and it cannot be done halfway.

3. Making budgetary appropriation for the OWECC-L

There is a dire need to include the OWECC-L directly in the national budget as a budget line item to remove all hurdles and explanations that it is not been adequately funded because it is not in the budget.

Done this 31st day of October, A.D. 2025

OWECC-L, through:



Dr. Cllr. Jallah A. Barbu (Prof.)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

