

‘BURY CORRUPTION, HEADS AND TOES’: Orator Identifies Missing Links In Liberia

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Even the National Orator for Monday’s National Independence Day could not deliver Liberia’s 163 Independence Oration without calling on the government to bury what has proven to be the most challenging task it has been faced with since its inception a little over four years ago: corruption.

Delivering for the second time in his life the country’s Independence Day Oration in the historic town of Sanniquellie, Nimba County, the legionary Liberian Catholic prelate Monsignor Dr. Robert Tikpor announced, “I am warning this nation, to kick away corruption, bury it head and foot in the grave, stop corruption otherwise it will raise its ugly head very loud again, we are talking about corruption in high places, it will corruption in the heavens, stop it now, it is eating up the government’s energy, please stop it catch what you can work for”, as he called on the Unity Party (UP) led-government to, in his words, bury the virus heads and toes.

Speaking on a selected theme “In National Unity, we will stand”, Father Tikpor, known in Liberia for his fearless posture on issues of national concerns, warned that unless the Government buries the deadly corruption virus that is currently eating the energy of the government, all else achieved will go down the drain.

Issues of corruption continue to confront President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf’s government despite affords in the setting and funding of some anti-corruption agencies such as the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) and the European Union funded General Auditing Commission (GAC) which has already produced over 30 audit reports suggesting massive corruption.

The Catholic father who turns 84 in September of this year reminded the government that corruption was dangerous and called on public officials to catch what they work for.

Dr. Tikpor who delivered the 1997 Independence Day Oration at the request of then Chair of one of Liberia’s several transitional governments, Ruth Sando Perry, at the time offered similar strong warring to the audience in presence of former Liberian President Charles Taylor who was President-elect when he said, “If you don’t change the course of history of this country, those who are on board with you in the ship that carried Liberia, they are going to tie you up and dump you where the shark’s would be waiting.”

Tikpor told FrontPageAfrica last week that that aspect of the 1997 speech seriously angered then President-elect Charles Taylor at the time which prompted him to pass a note through his foreign Minister for him, Father Tikpor, to stop speaking though he requested to read the remaining text.

Thirteen years on, Father Tikpor still maintains his stance on issues with an angry voice during Monday’s celebration, warning the nation that corruption was eating the fabric of the society, though the government has in recent times said corruption is being magnified in the country and government was taking serious steps to end the pandemic which it has failed in the meantime to implement a single audit report detailing flagrant violations of acceptable financial process on the part of public officials.

The clergyman’s call for a clamp down on corruption in the presence of public officials who jam-packed the Administration Building in the host city of Sanniquellie in the midst of the heads of foreign diplomatic



ON CITIZENSHIP AND NEGROES

In order to preserve, foster and maintain the positive Liberian culture, values and character, only persons who are Negroes or of Negro descent shall qualify by birth or by naturalization to be citizens of Liberia. The Legislature shall, adhering to the above standard, prescribe such other qualification criteria for and the procedures by which naturalization may be obtained.

missions sent a strong warning down their nerves though they managed applause upon Father Tikpor's pronouncement.

Sanniquellie, the provincial capital of Nimba County, served as host to Liberia's 163rd Independence Day in a colorful event that was preceded by several other events heading to Monday's main event including several dedication ceremonies.

Liberia's Missing Links

The fearless and outspoken clergyman who expressed complete dissatisfaction at the appalling absence of his fellow clergyman at such a national event identified what he termed as three missing links that have kept Africa's first independent nation backward and led the country to the ills and misfortune it have befallen the nation.

Naming them the absence of blood relationship, language and religion or common faith, the National Orator said the absence of the elements have been the reason for the country's current state.

Tikpor, touching on blood relationship, explained that those who came from across the Atlantic Ocean refuse initially to have blood relationship with others they met in the country through inter-marriage.

Tikpor: "I told you another instrument of national unity is blood relationship. We try at the instigation of an earlier settler Edward Wilmot Blyden who came to Liberia in 1850 and the first place Blyden settled was in Buchanan my home town, and then he toured the settler community that he met there and told the community 'These tribal people we met here, we have to inter-marry them so that we will have common blood strain, relation by blood, those of us who are just coming, we will only survive in this country if we inter-marry with the tribal women.'"

"For a nation to be united, it must have a language which all the of its different sectors must speak", he said, continuing, "Because if they speak that language anywhere in the world, they will be hearing the Liberian language"

He blamed the settlers for the introduction of the English language which is spoken in all parts of the world.

"Now when the pioneer fathers came to this land, they brought that language with them, which was spoken in the greater part of the world, most part of Africa, in India and the largest democracy in the world, they brought that language and our and when I say our people, I am saying those who the love of liberty met here', the Catholic Church strongman told the gathering.

The catholic prelate said sectarianism still exists in Liberia, though he said it might be in disguise.

The 163rd independence orator named common religion as one of the factors that supports national unity but said that aspect does not matter at this time because according to him even in countries where there one religion, troubles still exist there, citing instances in the Middle East where almost 100 per cent of Islamic religion exist but continues to see multiples of suicide bombing daily in that part of the world.

Tikpor called on Liberians to continue to live in harmony with their various religious beliefs and avoid the problems around the world.

Knight Distinction Honor Bestowed On National Orator



CITIZENSHIP UNDER RULERS

"In the days of Tubman, who came to claim "his rights" to citizenship or to the presidency? In the days of Tolbert no one came up. In the days of Samuel Kanyan Doe, no one came up to make such a claim. When Charles Taylor occupied the Presidential Chair at the Mansion no one dared stir up the dust on Broad Street when his motorcade was passing by."

Tikpor, after his oration, became the proud recipient of the 'Knight Great Band in the Humane Order of African Redemption', bestowed upon him by President Sirleaf.

Be United Despite Land Disputes

President Sirleaf, in her remarks, could not pretend on the host county's most troubling effect as she used the occasion to call on the citizens of Nimba to be united in the midst of county's engulfed land disputes.

While commending them for turning out in mass to ensure the successful staging of the celebrations in their county, she cautioned them that unless peace reigns from their hearts the recently submitted Land Commission Report will be of no significance.

The issue of land disputes became a post-war crisis in Liberia with host Nimba being the center of it, causing several misunderstandings that have led to fears of a potential.

President Sirleaf gave words of encouragement to Nambians that with the civil war being fought in the country over the last decade, Liberia has shown to the world that it will still rise up from its post-war status to a developing nation among the comity of nations.

She added: "I call on all Liberians backward never and forward ever."

In the build-up to the celebrations in Nimba, Liberia's 163rd Independence could go down the country's historical achieve as probably the best in recent years of receiving tangible independence day gifts for it was bolstered by a triple package of landmark projects from its Chinese counterparts.

A US\$10 million modern hospital dedicated over the weekend in the Lower Nimba County town of Tappita sealed a triple People's Republic of China's Independence Day gifts to the continent's oldest declared republic, following earlier dedications of first the modern University of Liberia's Fendell Campus in Careysburg outside Monrovia and another modern agricultural project in the Central for Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) outside Bong County's provincial capital of Gbarnga-all done in the space of four days and two days to the celebration of the Independence Day.