

## Ellen Wants Speedy Trial for Gray

Written by Daily Observer

Wednesday, 28 December 2011 22:58 - Last Updated Wednesday, 28 December 2011 23:09

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President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf says she played no role in the temporary release of Acarous Moses Gray, secretary general of the opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), now facing nearly 10-count criminal charges, including sedition.

Gray, released on bail on Sunday after spending about two nights at the Monrovia Central Prison on UN Drive, has also been charged with criminal facilitation, arson, vandalism, aggravated assault, criminal mischief, theft of property, disorderly conduct and others.

The Montserrado County District # 8 Representative-elect was arrested last Friday, by the Liberia National Police (LNP), for his alleged role in the violent protest of hundreds of individuals believed to be vacation job students in Monrovia and its environs.

In demand of prompt payment of their wages from government, the protestors, brandishing rocks, sticks, bottles and other dangerous weapons, damaged the facilities of several line ministries and agencies including the Ministries of Public Works and Finance.

The protestors also destroyed several vehicles belonging to private individuals and government officials and massively looted one of the major cell phone marketing companies in central Monrovia of its goods.

At least one mini-bus owned by the Ministry of Finance was set ablaze.

However, President Sirleaf told the Daily Observer yesterday in an exclusive interview at her Foreign Ministry office on Capitol Hill that she had not seen the writ on which the CDC secretary general was arrested, neither was she aware of the charges brought against him by the police.

The Liberian leader, while expressing the need for Mr. Gray to be accorded due process of law, underscored the need for his trial to be fast-tracked by the judicial branch of government.

President Sirleaf maintained that most of those who were offered vacation jobs were students who deserved a such good opportunity but their ranks may have been infiltrated by other individuals with ulterior motives.

At least 15,000 of the vacation job students, she said, have so far, been paid their wages and efforts were being made to pay the wages of those who have not been paid.

“Yes, we will complete the payment,” President Sirleaf told the Daily Observer yesterday.

The second phase of the vacation job scheme, she said, would not be implemented as funding that may have been available for that purpose would now be used by government to assist business entities and public institutions severely affected by the series of violent protests. The affected victims in the public and private sectors have to be allowed to recover from their losses, she added.

Mr. Gray could not comment on his release on bail but his lawyer, Cllr. Cyrennius Cephas, told journalists that his release shows that “we want to move forward.”

Circumstances under which Mr. Gray was released on Sunday, a non-working day in Liberia remain unclear.

The CDC secretary general’s lawyer categorically dismissed claims in some quarters that his client (Gray) was arrested with narcotic drugs in his vehicle.

According to sources, Gray and others last Friday, at different places at different times were heard making derogatory remarks against President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her

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