

STATEMENT TO THE PRESS



Republic of Liberia
NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION
TUBMAN BOULEVARD, 9th & 10th STREETS, SINKOR – P.O. BOX 2044
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PRESS STATEMENT BY, MADAM DAVIDETTA BROWNE LANSANAH, CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION, (NEC).

19 December 2021

Ladies and Gentlemen of the press, fellow Liberians, today we offer this general response to the LACC's investigation of the National Elections Commission's procurement of Goods and Services from Tuma Enterprises. We say general response because, as of the time of this statement to you, the LACC has not served us with its report; therefore, we cannot provide a detailed response to allegations in a report we have not seen. Moreover, because the LACC has not served its report on us, we on December 17, 2021 wrote the LACC requesting the report since it had already released the report to the public.

Fellow Liberians, on November 19, 2021, the LACC served us with letters of invitation to appear for investigation. Before the ink could dry on the letter of invitation, the LACC sent it to local media and its Chairman later that day appeared on the Voice of America international broadcast to tell the World the LACC had placed us under criminal investigation.

On advice of our lawyers and out of respect for the LACC as another institution of government, we remained silent even in the face of the weekly prejudicial leaks by the LACC to certain local dailies claiming it had found criminal wrongdoing but was receiving political pressure concerning the investigation. Never before has such calculative and coordinated leaks been seen in the LACC's investigative history.

We believe that an agency with investigative and/or prosecutorial powers is obligated not to make, condone, or cause to be made public statement

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the agency knows or should reasonably know has the likelihood of prejudicing a criminal matter or heightening public condemnation of the target of an investigation.

Following its investigation, the LACC through its Chairman held a press conference on December 15, 2021 in which he told the public the LACC had completed its investigation, and then read out an outcome claiming we had made certain admissions of guilt during our appearance before the LACC. This is false and misleading. We appeared before the LACC with our legal counsels, submitted the requested documents along with written statements; at no time during the interviews did any of us ever make any admission of guilt as falsely stated during the LACC's December 15th press conference.

As we await the LACC's report to provide a detailed response, we note that the Liberian Constitution instructs that an announcement to pursue an indictment should not raise inference of guilt, as all accused persons are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Please rest assured that we remain focused on our critical role in our system of government to conduct free, fair and credible elections.

Thank you.