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## Liberia: Disgusted of Lawmakers - Gbarpolu Citizens Smell 'Criminal Act'

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By Henry Karmo

Monrovia — Some protesting citizens believed to be from Gbarpolu County Wednesday presented to the County legislative caucus a petition in protest against decision by some caucus members to swap names of nominated local government officials for confirmation.

The citizens led by Gbarma, Kongba and Gou-Nwolaila, said they are disenchanted in the Caucus. The citizens declared in the statement: "We the Citizens of Gbarpolu have gathered here today to present a statement of disenchantment to the caucus expressing our disagreements on several political issues in the County."

Among the many issues the citizens claimed, some nominations that were made by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf affecting positions, including Gbarpolu County Inspector, Gbarma District Commissioner designate and Gon-Nuwolaa Commissioner designate was swapped and subsequently replaced with other names which they described as criminal.

It is believed that the President has made no public pronouncement contrary to her previous nomination indicating changes in the names of people nominated. "We should maintain balance leadership to be represented by all political districts", the citizens are demanding.

"Honorable chairman and members of the Gbarpolu County Caucus, in view of the above, we the citizens from Gbarma, Kongba and Gounwolaila districts have resolved on measures including calls for names of people nominated by the President to serve to be placed back for confirmation", the petition stated. The citizens threatened non-cooperative posture against any leader who will be manipulated by the caucus against the Presidential nomination by boycotting all pending county sitting especially the pending one scheduled to take place on June 6.

### Lawmakers' trade blames

In separate interviews with FrontPageAfrica Representative Gertrude Lamin (UP-District 2 Gbarpolu County) accused Senator Daniel Naatehn (Alternative National Congress -Gbarpolu County) of masterminding the swap in favor of his loyalists. The Gbarpolu County lawmaker said her colleague (Naatehn) is doing everything possible to divide the county and put members of the caucus against each other as she vowed to resist such practice.

In response to his colleague accusation, Senator Naatehn said he and other lawmakers of the county don't participate in nomination of officials of the Executive branch of government because according to him it is the absolute constitutional responsibility of the President.

Senator Naatehn said: "I don't think me or any other lawmaker of the county has the power to appoint officials of the Executive, so I don't believe that the allegation is meant to me because I have nothing to do with nominating officials of the Executive Branch of the government." Representative Lamin contested the 2014 special senatorial election as a senatorial candidate on the ticket of the ruling Unity Party, an election won by Senator Naathen.

Like Representative Lamin Senator Naatehn was a member of the ruling Unity Party, a party once served as senator during his first legislative tenure, but was dropped in favor of Lamin by the party in the 2014 special senatorial election.

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