

## Meet Liberia's First Independent Information Commissioner




**Mark Bedor-Wla Freeman, Sr.** was named Liberia's first Independent Information Commissioner by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in May 2012 and confirmed by the Senate in August of the same year.

Cllr. Freeman, most recently a lawyer for the United Nations Mission in Liberia, previously worked as a journalist for *The Inquirer*, *Daily Observer*, and the *Catholic Herald* newspapers, and served as the president of the Press Union of Liberia.

 **The Independent Information Commissioner works for you.**

As Liberia's first Information Commissioner, Cllr. Freeman is committed to fulfilling the Commission's mission "to receive, adjudicate and render decisions on all complaints brought to the Commission and ensure compliance by all parties."

 **The Commission staff are available to provide information, support, and advice on FOI related issues.**



## Contact the Liberia Independent Information Commission

### Address:

10th Street and Jallah Town Road, Sinkor  
Monrovia, Liberia

### Telephone:

0888-721-920 (office hours)  
0776-204-953 (after office)  
0555-210-067 (after office)

### Email:

[independent.info\\_commission@yahoo.com](mailto:independent.info_commission@yahoo.com)

### Website:

<http://iic.gov.lr>

The Carter Center currently is working in Liberia to support the efforts of Government, the Information Commission, and civil society to establish greater transparency and transform lives through the right of access to information.

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### For additional information, contact:

Alphonsus Zeon, Project Coordinator  
Carter Center Field Office  
Monrovia, Liberia  
Phone: 231-886-522-916  
Email: [alphonsus.zeon@cartercenterliberia.org](mailto:alphonsus.zeon@cartercenterliberia.org)

Laura Neuman, Manager  
Global Access to Information Initiative  
The Carter Center  
One Copenhill • 453 Freedom Parkway  
Atlanta, GA 30307  
Phone: +1-404-420-5146 • Fax: +1-404-420-5196  
Email: [lneuman@emory.edu](mailto:lneuman@emory.edu)  
[www.cartercenter.org/accesstoinformation.html](http://www.cartercenter.org/accesstoinformation.html)

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# Liberia Independent Information Commission



# Free Informal Timely



## What is the FOI Act?

The right of access to information, or freedom of information (FOI), is a fundamental human right now enjoyed by over 4 billion people in 95 countries around the world. Liberia's **Freedom of Information Act**, signed into law in 2010, provides all persons the right of access to public information. Under Liberia's FOI law, everyone has the right to request and receive information from all public agencies of the Government of Liberia and any private entity that performs duties normally carried out by the government, provides public services, or receives public funds or benefits.



## How can I get information?

- ◆ **Requests:** You can ask for information by mail, phone, or in person and given to the agency you think holds the information you want.
- ◆ **Exemptions:** Your request can only be denied if the information falls within an exemption and the harm of disclosure is greater than the public interest.
- ◆ **Cost:** Asking for information is free. Viewing information is free. You can only be charged for the actual costs of reproducing the documents you want.
- ◆ **Proactive Publication:** Certain categories of information must be made available to the public without a specific request. When you want a specific document, you should first see if it has already been published.

## What is the Independent Information Commission?

Per Section 5.1 of the 2010 Freedom of Information Act, the **Independent Information Commissioner** is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The Commissioner's office and staff make up the **Independent Information Commission** of the Republic of Liberia. The Commission is legally mandated to oversee implementation of and compliance with the FOI law. Specific functions and powers include:

- ◆ Receiving, hearing, deciding FOI complaints and mediating disputes
- ◆ Ordering release of non-exempt information
- ◆ Investigating, monitoring, and promoting compliance with the FOI Act, including collecting statistics
- ◆ Training and building capacity to ensure understanding/application of FOI
- ◆ Developing FOI guidelines and procedures
- ◆ Educating the public about their FOI rights
- ◆ Reviewing existing laws/regulations related to FOI, and making suggestions for reform
- ◆ Collecting annual agency FOI reports and submitting an aggregated report to the National Legislature

 **Liberia's Independent Information Commissioner is the first in Africa.**



## How can I file and appeal?

If after filing a FOI request you receive:

- ◆ no response within 30 days
- ◆ a denial of information
- ◆ a partial document
- ◆ a transfer notice with which you disagree
- ◆ a fee/charge you think is too high
- ◆ or any other negative decision

you have the right to ask for an internal review from the agency where you filed your request. A senior official or internal review body is required to review your appeal and provide you with a decision in writing within thirty (30) working days (about 6 weeks).

 **You do not need a lawyer to make an appeal.**

If you are still not satisfied or didn't receive a response from the internal review, you can appeal to the **Independent Information Commissioner**, who will provide a decision. If still unsatisfied, you can appeal the Information Commissioner's decision to a circuit court.

 **The services of the Information Commission are free, informal, and timely.**

**Appeals to the Independent Information Commissioner must be made in writing and delivered to the Commission's office at 10th Street and Jallah Town Road in Sinkor, Monrovia. In the future, appeals may be made in counties or via email.**