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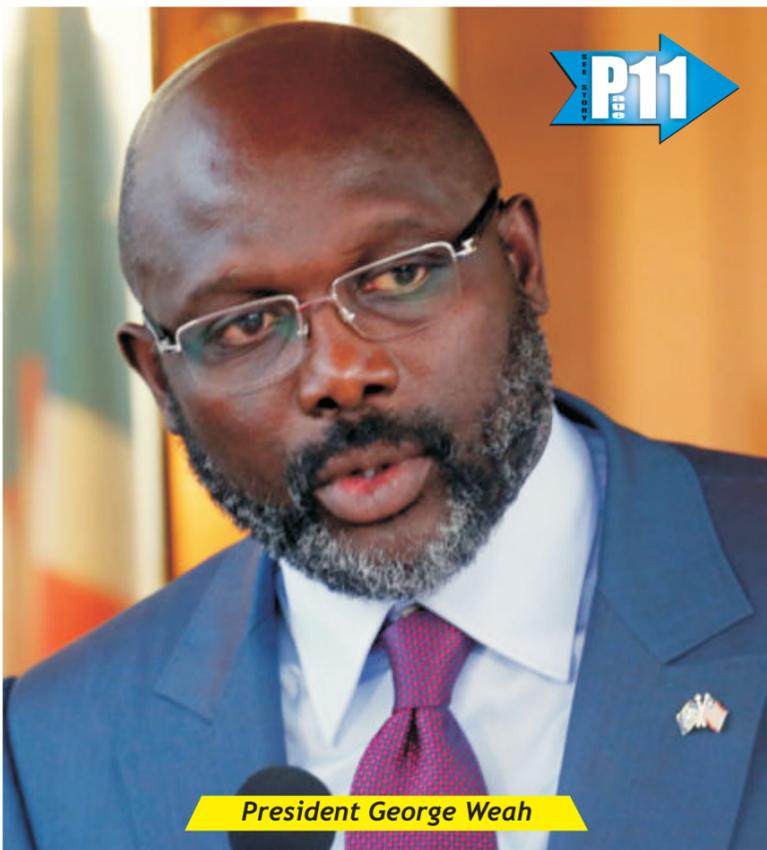
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President George Weah

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Weah delivers policy statement today



Continental News

South Africa shocked by live rape trial of Timothy Omotoso

A televised rape trial in South Africa has prompted a furious public backlash after a witness - who says she was raped by her pastor from the age of 14 - was subjected to a lengthy and, at times, aggressively intimate cross-examination by the lawyer representing a 60-year-old Nigerian televangelist, Timothy Omotoso, who denies the allegation.

Warning: This piece contains graphic content which may upset some readers.

Over the weekend, Mr Omotoso's church, in the coastal city of Port Elizabeth, was forced to shut its door after angry crowds besieged the building, while a Sunday newspaper reported that the woman who gave evidence against him - Cheryl Zondi, now a 22-year-old student - had received death threats ahead of the trial.

The trial - the first prominent rape case to be broadcast live in a country where more than 100 rapes are reported to the police each

day - has attracted huge interest, and raised difficult questions about victims' rights, impartiality and whether justice is best served by having television cameras in courtrooms.

Anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela's granddaughter, Ndileka Mandela - who said in

2017 that she had been raped by a former boyfriend - is one of many South African women who have voiced support for Ms Zondi, linking her experience to the global #MeToo movement.

Ms Mandela argued that the student's treatment during three days in the witness box

helped explain why so many rape victims stay silent in a nation with notoriously high levels of sexual violence.

Miracles and prophecies "I really feel pain for this young woman and I am so proud to see how courageous she's been on the witness stand," Ms Mandela told South Africa's Sunday Times newspaper.

Mr Omotoso and two female co-accused, from the Jesus Dominion International church, based in South Africa's Eastern Cape, are facing 97 charges, ranging from sexual assault to rape and human trafficking. They deny all the charges.

The church - one of a growing number of evangelical ministries in the country, promising miracles and prophecies for its followers - is known for its videos of uniformed young women singers, some of whom have appeared on the Idols SA television contest.

Since it began last week, the nation seems to have stopped in its tracks to follow the trial, and social media erupted in support and sympathy for Ms Zondi.

She was the first prosecution witness and told the court, with great composure, that Mr Omotoso - quoting the psalms and threatening God's anger if she did not comply - had allegedly repeatedly raped her a year after she had joined his church as a child.

But public sympathy soon turned to fury when Mr Omotoso's lawyer, Peter Daubermann, sought to challenge her account.

Shouts in the courtroom "You're a good actress," he said.

"I put it to you that you are lying about what happened to you.

"You were prepared to let him rape you?"

"You basically consented?" he asked, referring to later alleged incidents when Ms Zondi was an adult.

South Africa's justice system is deliberately confrontational, and lawyers are expected to challenge witnesses robustly - perhaps the most famous instance being prosecutor Gerrie Nel's explosive quarrels with disgraced Olympic and Paralympic star Oscar Pistorius during his murder trial.

But in this case, according to the opinion of some experts and ordinary South Africans, Mr Daubermann appeared to cross a line.

"How many centimetres? Do you know?" he asked Ms Zondi, after she had described how the pastor had allegedly partially penetrated her, at the age of 14.

There were cries and shouts in the courtroom.

"How would she know that?" Judge Mandela Makaula interrupted, visibly angry.

"She could have felt it," suggested Mr Daubermann.

"And measured it at the same time? No. I will not allow that question," declared the judge, who went on to thank Ms Zondi for her testimony and to wish her good luck in the university exams she had interrupted in order to attend the trial. "This is not about you. This is about justice," he told her. -BBC



Image copyrightSOWETAN/GETTY IMAGES

Somalia's vital Aamin Ambulance service 'faces closure'

The only free ambulance service in Somalia's capital is under threat of closure and is having to use fewer vehicles, its founder has told the BBC.

Aamin has a fleet of 16 ambulances but can now only afford to operate 10 on a regular basis in Mogadishu, which suffers regular bomb attacks.

"If the service stops it will

be difficult to save victims' lives," founder Abdukadir Abdirahman said.

There are no publicly funded health services in Somalia.

The BBC's Ahmed Adan in Mogadishu says whenever a bomb goes off, Aamin ambulances are seen speeding to the scene to transport the injured to hospital.

Aamin, which means

"faithful" in Somali, was started in 2006 and has become a vital part of the emergency services responding to attacks from al-Shabab Islamist militants, he says. 'They stopped me bleeding to death'

It is run by about 30 volunteers, including telephone operators, ambulance drivers, nurses and medical students.

Many of them put their own lives at risk by going into an area that is still under attack to get the injured people out.

Every day, the Aamin helpline, which is open from 06:00 local time to midnight (03:00 GMT to 21:00 GMT), receives about 100 calls, with emergencies ranging from women going into labour to injuries from stray bullets.

But it is the ambulance service's work in the wake of bomb attacks that has become so crucial. When a truck bomb killed more than 580 people in Mogadishu a year ago, many of the injured were ferried to hospital in private cars without first-aid support.

But Bile Adan Farah was

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lucky to have been collected by an Aamin ambulance, whose drivers are first-aid trained. "When the metal [from the blast] hit my head, I fell down and fainted," he told the BBC. "I was bleeding when the ambulance arrived. They performed first aid until we reached the hospital. Honestly, they stopped me bleeding to death."

Aamin raises money through donations to go towards paying rent, bills, equipment and the upkeep of the vehicles.

Currently it is surviving on \$12,000 (£9,000) a month, but Mr Abdirahman says with an

additional \$13,000 each month it could offer a properly equipped 16-ambulance 24-hour service.

He would also like salaried doctors to join the team.

"We're trying to save this service for as long as we can," he said.

"We go to people who know us and ask for help with petrol, tires, even \$1 can help.

"I'm a university lecturer and I often ask my students to donate money to help save a life.

"When I get my salary, before I pay my bills, I always think of Aamin Ambulance." -BBC



Image copyrightGETTY IMAGES: Aamin ambulances often rush to the scene of an attack to help the injured

EDITORIAL

The economy needs urgent revival

THE LIBERIAN ECONOMY is rapidly deteriorating under the Weah administration much earlier than expected, pushing ordinary Liberians tightly to the margins of society, as prices of basic commodities, including food, petroleum products and the exchange rate keep rising.

THE FRENCH-OWNED PETROLEUM importer and distributor, TOTAL, is scaling down from the counties, while the price for a gallon of gasoline in Monrovia has jumped from 540 Liberian Dollars to 700 LRD, amid suspected artificial shortage characterized by hike in transport fares.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER TAKING office in January, President George Manneh Weah announced that he inherited a broke economy amid rising inflation, primarily as a result of the soaring exchange rate. In June, the President constituted an economic management team to help salvage the economy. The team is comprised of technicians from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Central Bank of Liberia, among others.

THE GOVERNMENT THRU the Central Bank had announced it was releasing US\$25 million into the financial market to mop up excess liquidity in the economy in a bid to offset the exchange rate, officially setting the rate at 150 Liberian Dollars for one United States Dollar. But these initial steps have yielded no tangible impact, as the current rate in the forex market is between 156 and 160 Liberian Dollars for one U.S. Dollar.

LAST WEEK, THE President again constituted another economic team, the Business Climate Working Group to identify quick "low-hanging fruits" in the business climate and deliver them in the shortest possible time, accompanied by an action plan.

HOWEVER, LIBERIANS ARE becoming skeptical, particularly so when previous interventions by the current administration brought no relief, as the soaring exchange rate and prices still persist amid elaborate lavish lifestyle by government officials, some of whom have adapted a habit of buying expensive cars and houses, costing hundreds of thousands of United States Dollars less than 12 months in a government that professes to be for the poor people.

THESE CHALLENGES ARE being further compounded by news of the alleged disappearance of "containers and bags of moneys" or newly printed Liberian banknotes, totally about US\$15.5 billion LRD from the Freeport of Monrovia. The Government of Liberia is probing issue surrounding the missing moneys alongside assistance by the Government of the United States to get the facts.

WE ARE WONDERING whether the Business Climate Working Group would produce any tangible gains in improving the general business climate in the country to impact citizens' lives as the Weah administration ends one year in office.

PRESIDENT WEAH MAY have good intentions for the citizenry, but he seems to be chewing too much than he can swallow, breaking grounds here and there for roads and other constructions despite serious lack of funds.

WE BELIEVE IT is not the amount of committees or projects announced that matters, but tangible results that impact lives of the people. The government can't claim it is in financial squeeze, while its officials, including the President himself, are on purchasing spree and massive renovation of private properties, barely nine months in office.

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COMMENTARY

By Ngaire Woods

Why a Sino-American Cold War Won't Happen

Rather than a superpower standoff, the world is more likely to be heading toward an international system led by four powers. In this scenario, the US, China, Russia, and Germany dominate their respective regions while seeking the upper hand in international negotiations.

OXFORD - It is often said that the US and China - superpowers at economic, geopolitical, and ideological loggerheads - are heading toward a new cold war. And the rhetoric - at least from one side - has come to resemble that of Winston Churchill's 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech, one of the inaugural events of the Cold War. Just this month, US Vice President Mike Pence accused China of predatory economic practices, military aggression against the United States, and attempts to undermine US President Donald Trump.

But despite the media hype, a new cold war is not inevitable - or even likely. To be sure, Chinese leaders, fearing disorder and any weakening of the Communist Party of China's legitimacy, are determined to prevent the US from forcing changes on China's political and economic system. China will continue to pursue reforms at its own pace and in its own way. For Chinese President Xi Jinping, a top priority is to merge the CPC with the machinery of government in order to reduce corruption and burnish the state's ideological credentials. Any attempt to interfere in this process would be crossing a red line.

Fortunately for Xi, Trump has no interest in "democratizing" other countries, and he doesn't seem to have been swayed by the US investors, financiers, and technology titans who want his administration to press for more access to the Chinese economy.

No doubt, US tariffs threaten the 18% of Chinese exports that go to the US each year. But the Trump administration has more urgent priorities than changing China's system of government, notwithstanding the aggressive rhetoric of US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and White House National Trade Council Director Peter Navarro. Trump desperately wants to bolster US manufacturing by repatriating global supply chains and blocking or curbing imports. "Make America Great Again" is really about making in America again.

Still, even if today's US-China standoff does not evolve into a new cold war, it could weaken both countries and usher in a more multipolar world. Within China, US rhetorical broadsides, tariffs, and sanctions may be empowering Xi's domestic critics. And it doesn't help that China currently has limited options for retaliating. True, it could start to sell off some of its \$1 trillion in US dollar reserves. But that would weaken the value of the US Treasuries that it continues to hold.

Within the US, Trump's decision to pursue sweeping import tariffs has been described by one industry representative as "the most self-destructive trade act I've ever seen." And the administration's renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement - which includes a clause to prevent Canada or Mexico from negotiating with China - has met with similar disdain. Such policies threaten both to destroy US jobs and to alienate America's allies, many of which are already distancing themselves.

Indeed, the Trump administration's "America

First" positions have increasingly translated into "America Alone." The US now constitutes a minority of one within the G7, the G20, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. After Trump pulled the US out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), the remaining parties moved ahead on their own. Far from setting the terms of debate on international issues, the Trump administration has convinced other countries to reduce their reliance on US leadership.

Widespread circumvention of the US will hasten the emergence of a new multipolar order. For example, by withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, Trump has essentially dared the United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, Russia, and the European Union to defy US prerogatives.

For now, countries that rely on Iranian oil may have no choice but to go along with the US. Like most traded goods, oil exports are paid for in dollars - largely through the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) in Belgium - and the US has the power to shut down such transactions. Most companies and countries have concluded that doing business in Iran is not worth losing access to the US market and the international dollar-payments system.

But in the future, they may no longer have to make such tradeoffs. On August 21, Germany's foreign minister, Heiko Maas, urged Europe to establish payment channels that are independent of the US. And the following month, the EU's foreign policy chief announced plans to form a "special purpose vehicle" to "assist and reassure economic operators pursuing legitimate business with Iran."

Meanwhile, Russia has said that it is developing its own system for financial transfers, to protect itself from being shut out of the SWIFT system in the event of harsher US sanctions. And China has been pursuing a similar project at least since 2015, when the People's Bank of China launched a system to facilitate cross-border transactions in renminbi.

None of these alternative systems have yet to match the convenience of SWIFT and the dollar system. But if a new system were to take hold, it could rapidly shift power away from the US.

Rather than a cold war, the world may be heading toward an international system led by four powers, with the US, China, Russia, and Germany dominating their respective regions and seeking the upper hand in international negotiations. Such a scenario is reminiscent of the World War II vision of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who proposed that the four victorious allies - the US, the UK, China, and the Soviet Union - act as "Four Policemen," each patrolling its own sphere of influence and negotiating with the others on world peace.

Today, approximations of the same four powers are once again in the lead, only now we have stronger international institutions to help keep the peace. Whether that peace lasts will depend on the willingness of the four powers to use and adapt those institutions to the emerging international system.

O-PED

By *Stawomir Sierakowski*

The End of Germany's Two-Party System

BERLIN - The German Social Democrats' (SPD) existential crisis can no longer be treated as a typical party crisis. The party captured a mere 9.7% of the vote in regional elections in Bavaria this month, and it is trailing both the populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and the Greens in national opinion polls. With another important regional election fast approaching in Hesse, polls indicate that the SPD will lose still more support, albeit not as dramatically as in Bavaria.

The SPD and the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) have stood as the twin pillars of German politics since the end of World War II. But with the SPD declining, Germany is moving from a de facto two-party system to a multiparty system in which no single party plays a dominant role.

The German post-war consensus is collapsing in key areas - history (attitudes toward WWII), geopolitics (attitudes toward Russia), the economy (attitudes toward the auto industry), and ethics (attitudes toward refugees) - and this is reflected in the fracturing of the political scene. German voters have rejected the longstanding CDU/CSU-SPD "grand coalition." Whereas smaller parties once functioned as mere subsidiaries of either the SPD or the CDU/CSU, the bit players are now eclipsing the former stars.

Moreover, what was once "Red Munich" has now turned Green. Whereas cities had long been SPD strongholds, they are switching to the Greens and other smaller parties. Making matters worse for the SPD, the demographic profile of its core electorate amounts to a death sentence. Only 8% of SPD voters are under the age of 30, and a whopping 54% are over 60. By contrast, just 24% of Greens are over 60. And Die Linke, meanwhile, has become increasingly attractive both to younger new leftists and aging post-communists from the former East Germany.

Just as a two-party system ensures stability and predictability, so might its collapse contribute to radical social change. By definition, the fall of the establishment implies the rise of the anti-establishment, often in the form of populism. Since 2005, the SPD has participated as the minority partner in three grand-coalition governments. As a result, it has come to be associated with the status quo, even though it hasn't been able to claim direct credit for the previous governments' successes.

Something similar happened in Austria, where the Social Democratic Party ruled either alone or in conjunction with the Austrian People's Party between 1971 and 1999 (except for 1983-1986). Such long periods of grand-coalition rule allowed for the right-wing populist Freedom Party of Austria to present itself as an agent for change.

When a grand coalition is threatened, its members tend to panic. Those who toe the party line lose support, as German Chancellor Angela Merkel has. Others thus attempt to appropriate populist language - as CSU leader Horst Seehofer has done in recent months - while still others will try to associate themselves with new political platforms. Hence, Alexander Dobrindt of the CSU has promised a "conservative revolution," while Martin Schulz, the erstwhile leader of the SPD, has promoted EU federation.

At any rate, when the constituent parts of a coalition start moving in different directions, things quickly fall apart. Still, it is worth noting that while the SPD and the CDU are currently losing support, their ideas remain popular. Their problem is not that they are devoid of ideas, but that they lack political credibility.

This credibility deficit has created a vacuum for other parties to fill. Thus, the Greens have made gains in Bavaria by supporting an open-door refugee policy that actually originated with the CDU/SPD. Likewise, the AfD has wrested the anti-refugee mantle away from the CSU and Seehofer, who went so far as to try to undermine Merkel's government from within while serving as Minister of the Interior. The common thread connecting all of the parties that performed well in the Bavarian election is that they ran politicians who are at least consistent in their views.

Unfortunately for Germany, multiparty systems are generally unstable and less predictable, which explains why every other European country - Latvia is a current example - constantly struggles to establish a governing coalition. Under such conditions, it is not uncommon for bizarre arrangements to arise, including coalitions between the far left and the far right, as we have seen in Greece, Italy, and Slovakia.

Germany's best hope now is that its newly emerging multiparty system will impede the progress of the AfD, by nullifying its anti-establishment appeal. The AfD will take its place on the radical right as one party among many. Its support will remain in the 10-20% range, but it will not go any further than that. In fact, this has already happened in Bavaria, where the AfD garnered 10.2% of the vote this month, down from the 12.4% that it received in last year's federal election.

Another potential silver lining to a multiparty system is that it might lead to more political engagement. In the case of Bavaria, voter participation rose to 72.4% this election cycle, up from 63.6% five years ago.

Looking ahead, Germany may now end up with rotating coalition governments comprising multiple parties. For example, one could imagine an arrangement between the CDU/CSU, the Free Democrats, and the Greens - the so-called Jamaica coalition. But this scenario would most likely produce political paralysis, because politicians from competing parties within the coalition would constantly undercut one another while pandering to the popular will. Moreover, the chancellorship - traditionally very strong in Germany - will always be weaker in a patchwork government.

Most likely, the fall of the CDU/CSU-SPD duopoly will undermine German hegemony in Europe, even if no other country can replace Germany in that role. At the same time, the weakening of the SPD will diminish the socialist faction in the European Parliament, where a similar eclipse of two-party rule could be in the offing. Yet without the twin pillars of the European People's Party and the Party of European Socialists, the parliament will be incapable of making even insignificant decisions. As Germany and the SPD go, so goes Europe.

OPINION

By *Anatole Kaletsky*

Theresa May Could Back a New Brexit Referendum

LONDON - As the Brexit negotiations enter their endgame, a stalemate has become the most likely outcome. This is good news. It does not mean that Britain will "crash out" of the European Union with no agreement: deals in the European Union tend to be struck at the last possible moment. But the British parliament will probably reject whatever arrangement Prime Minister Theresa May manages to negotiate with European leaders, and the likeliest way to end the deadlock will be to hold a new referendum that reconsiders the decision to leave the EU.

Until recently, conventional wisdom dismissed this possibility. But now the political mechanics that could lead to a new referendum and the cancellation of Brexit are becoming clear.

Whatever version of Brexit May proposes now faces a veto. A Norwegian-style "soft Brexit" that would keep Britain in the EU's trading structures would be blocked by the Euroskeptics in May's Conservative Party. A "hard Brexit," which would require border controls with the Republic of Ireland, is unacceptable to the Irish government and the EU. And a hybrid arrangement that would take Britain out of the EU single market but keep Northern Ireland in would be a dealbreaker for Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, whose support May needs to stay in power.

These competing vetoes explain May's only strategy for delivering Brexit: to tell MPs and EU leaders that they must choose the lesser of two evils. Either they accept whatever Brexit deal May proposes, or they will face a chaotic "no deal" Brexit that would be catastrophic not just for the United Kingdom, but for the entire EU.

But May's effort to present a Hobson's Choice suffers a fatal flaw: almost nobody believes that she would dare to inflict chaos on British businesses and voters. A no-deal Brexit would rule out the transition period that Britain desperately needs to negotiate the thousands of rules, regulations, and standards required to continue trading with Europe, as well as the US, Japan, China, and other countries covered by agreements negotiated by the EU over many decades.

Without this transition period, British exports would come to a temporary standstill in March 2019, because agreements on product safety, labeling, food quality, public procurement, and hundreds of other little-known issues must be negotiated to trade under World Trade Organization rules - and these need to satisfy all 164 members of the WTO. The disruption of trade flows would only be temporary, because Britain would eventually negotiate the necessary WTO agreements, but even a brief interruption could be devastating, as evidenced by the "sudden stop" in bank finance that lasted only a few weeks after the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in 2008.

To make her no-deal threat more credible, May has tried sending dozens of "technical notices" to businesses, hospitals, and public agencies about the emergency preparations they should make. Unfortunately for the Brexiteers, the effect of these warnings has been counter-productive: instead of triggering an upsurge of preparations, the prospect of aircraft being grounded, hospitals running out of medicines, and exports coming to a standstill have made a no-deal Brexit implausible to the point of absurdity and probably discouraged business decision-makers from wasting money preparing for such an unrealistic contingency.

The upshot is that even if May genuinely wanted to pursue a no-deal Brexit, a large parliamentary majority would unite to prevent it. While there are questions about the exact parliamentary procedures, the political dynamics are clear. Pursuing such a desperately risky gamble against the expressed wishes of a parliamentary majority would trigger a constitutional crisis that could be resolved only by appealing to voters - either through a general election or a new referendum.

The opposition Labour Party would demand a general election, but the Conservatives, split as they are over Europe, would unite to block this. Once the election gambit failed, Labour would almost surely support a referendum, which is backed by 85% of its members. Only a few Conservatives would then be needed to create a referendum majority, and they might find themselves with an unexpected ally: Theresa May.

For May, a referendum could be the key that unlocks the cage in which her own "red lines" have trapped her. Once it was clear that the only option for leaving the EU would be to crash out with no deal, May could honestly claim that she had followed the mandate from the 2016 referendum to deliver Brexit, but that this would involve more disruption than predicted. It would therefore be right to ask voters where or not they still wanted to go ahead with Brexit on these tougher terms.

By posing this question, May could outmaneuver Boris Johnson and her other rivals. Because the hardline Brexiteers have presented "no deal" as a perfectly acceptable outcome, they could not object if this were the form of Brexit put to voters. If it won, May could not be held responsible and would have the satisfaction of watching Johnson cope with the resulting chaos.

Much more likely is that a new referendum would reject a no-deal Brexit, not just because of the economic risks, but also because the demographic balance of the UK population has shifted in favor of pro-European voters by around one million since 2016. If voters rejected "no deal" in favor of no Brexit, May's hardline opponents would be silenced, and her position as Prime Minister would be secured until the 2022 election. Better still, the end of Brexit uncertainty would result in an economic rebound, almost certainly guaranteeing a Conservative victory in 2022.

In short, a new referendum to break the impending parliamentary deadlock would probably mean that Britain remains in Europe and May remains in Downing Street. Why would she not seize this chance

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

More Than Me students claim Katie's innocence

By Lewis S. Teh

Students from More Than Me (MTM) Academy peacefully protested Tuesday, 23 October, claiming that MTM founder Katie Meyler is innocent in an alleged rape scandal against Liberian students by her deceased boyfriend McIntosh Johnson.

There are claims here that MTM allegedly did not take steps to protect Liberian school girls while allegedly being raped by Johnson.

The late Johnson was responsible for the recruitment of girls from underprivileged communities for enrolment in the scholarship program at MTM.

But he is believed to have infected the girls with HIV, something that led to his arrest in 2014. However the suspect died at the Monrovia Central Prison allegedly from AIDS-related illness in 2016 while awaiting trial.

Since the news was broke

out in the country, many prominent citizens across the country have been calling on government through the Ministry of Justice to prosecute Mrs. Meyler, and the closure of the school.

On the contrary, students

from the school are staging a counter -protest, most of whom come from the slum community of West Point, and other surrounding communities.

They were seen Tuesday, 23 October gathering on Ashmun

Street in Central Monrovia, where they began their peaceful march with placards and banners indicating that Katie should not be implicated in McIntosh's crime.

The wordings on their various placards include: "More Than Me is Katie; No Katie No MTM; We stand with Katie; Katie we are with you to the end; and Do not hurt our hero," among others.

Some parents were also seen joining the students in the protest, while students of the school were seriously chanting slogans: "Leave Madam Meyler alone, crime cannot be transferable," among other things.

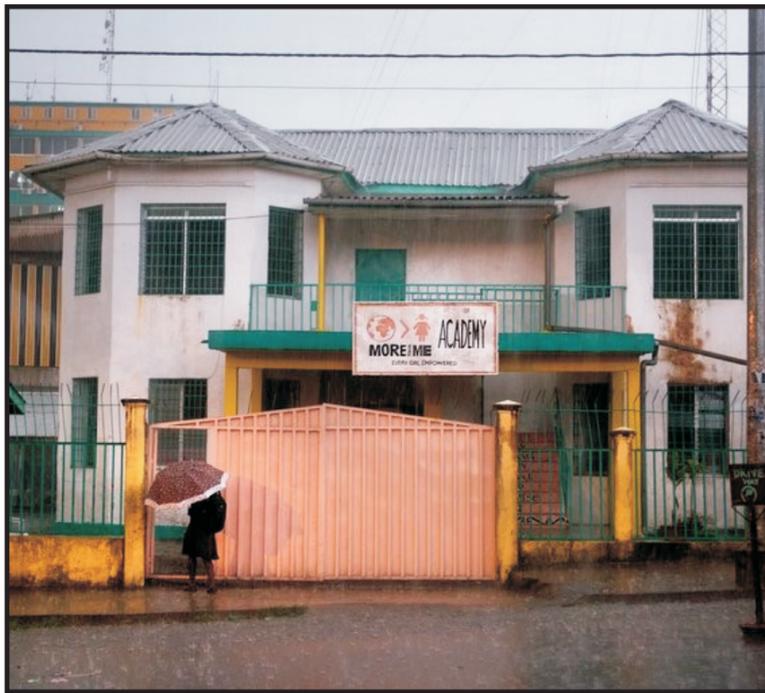
Recently, a group of Liberians took the streets in a

peaceful protest, calling on the government to intervene into the disturbing situation.

Among the protesters were Kotie D. Bazzi, a Liberian musician known as Kobazzi, calling on government to prosecute More Than Me CEO for the act against the girls.

According to Kobazzie, the girls' lives were upended, their futures clouded and worst of all, the pains they went and are going through were kept under wraps by those they loved and trusted.

Kobazzi noted that Katie Meyer's action was inhumane, neglectful and also an unacceptable and unforgivable act.--Edited by Winston W. Parley



Probe cannot exclude lawmakers

-Rep. Jones

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Margibi County Electoral District #2 Rep. Ivar Jones says it makes no sense to exclude the House of Representatives from the ongoing investigation into alleged missing \$15.5 billion Liberian Dollars.

In contrast to Speaker Bhofal Chambers' earlier refusal to avail the Legislature to the probe into Liberia's biggest financial scandal, Rep. Jones said on Monday, 22 October that immediate past members of the 53rd Legislature were the ones who passed a resolution for the printing of the \$15.5 billion Liberian Dollars.

Some of those members of

the 53rd Legislature were reelected in 2017 and are also members of the 54th Legislature.

He told reporters on Capitol Hill Monday that the House cannot be exempted from the ongoing investigation, saying there is no way that Speaker Chambers can claim that the investigation cannot include lawmakers.

He explains that through protest, Liberians and the duly elected government called for investigation of the missing money and President George Manneh Weah honored the request by setting up an investigative committee.

Besides, Rep. Jones notes that President Weah also invited the United States Government to help with the

investigation, following which experts from USAID came in to help in the investigation.

Given these events, Rep. Jones believes that it makes no sense to exclude the House from the investigation.

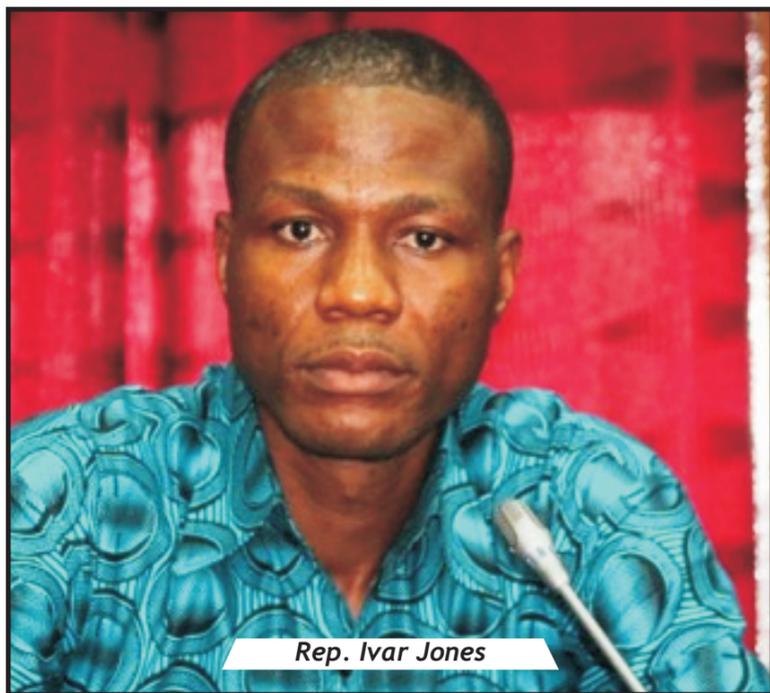
Recently, the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives Mildred Sayon was summoned but Speaker Chambers said the House of Representatives will never allow itself to be 'invited' to an investigation from any institution.

The next day following Chambers' defiant statement, ruling party CDC Rep. Moses Acarus Gray clarified that Speaker Chambers will not shield anyone involved in the scandal, but he would require that proper authority be written if any lawmaker or document are needed.

But according to Rep. Jones, the House of Representatives gave the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) authorization for the printing of coins and legacy banknotes.

On the basis of this claim, Rep. Jones believes that if things gone wrong, the origination of the authorization should be quizzed thoroughly.

He adds that the recent statement of Speaker Chambers that lawmakers should not be questioned is totally out of order and must not be accepted by those who are conducting the investigation. He says the Speaker spoke on his own.-- Edited by Winston W. Parley



Rep. Ivar Jones

Liberia at moderate

Starts from back page

Liberia's current account deficit has improved compared to the previous DSA and is projected to improve due to a further contraction in imports.

It notes, however, that with a decline in current transfers, the current account deficit will nonetheless remain elevated at 22.4 percent of GDP in 2018. With limited net capital inflows anticipated for the remainder of 2018, gross international reserves are projected to decrease further to about 3 months of imports by the end of 2018, which is lower than in the previous DSA update.

The World Bank says its External Sector Assessment (ESA) shows that Liberia's external position is substantially weaker than implied by fundamentals and desirable policy settings, and that under the baseline scenario, which reflects staff's interpretation of government's stated plans, Liberia will remain at moderate risk of debt distress but move closer to thresholds that mark a high probability of debt distress.

The Liberia - 2018 Update is Joint Bank-Fund Debt Sustainability Analysis (DSA) prepared by the staffs of the International Development Association (IDA) and the International Monetary Fund

or IMF in collaboration with the Government of Liberia.

The report notes that in January, Liberia successfully completed its first democratic political transition between different political parties since 1944, which saw the ascendancy of the Weah-led administration.

It does not currently have a Fund-supported program but continues to be subject to the IDA Non-Concessional Borrowing Policy (NCBP) regardless of the risk of debt distress.

According to the IMF, accumulation of external debt has accelerated since 2010 due to scaled-up infrastructure spending and the fiscal response to a series of adverse shocks.

The total public external debt stock was \$736 million (25 percent of GDP) at end-FY2017, comprising mostly multilateral loans. The Government of Liberia also has ratified but undisbursed loans amounting to \$422 million. Two thirds of the total debt outstanding, \$431 million, was disbursed during the last four years (FY2014-17).

The distribution of external loans is concentrated in infrastructure (excluding energy) and basic services (37 percent), energy (29percent), public administration (including both public finance management and budget support, 24 percent), agriculture (7 percent), and health (4 percent), respectively. World Bank Report

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Weah declares Wednesday working holiday

President George Manneh Weah has by proclamation declared Wednesday, October 24, 2018, as "United Nations Day" and is to be observed throughout the Republic as a Working Holiday.

According to a Foreign

world at large.

The proclamation calls on government ministries and agencies, international organizations, United Nations Agencies here, schools and other institutions of learning, as well as citizens in general to cooperate with the Ministry of

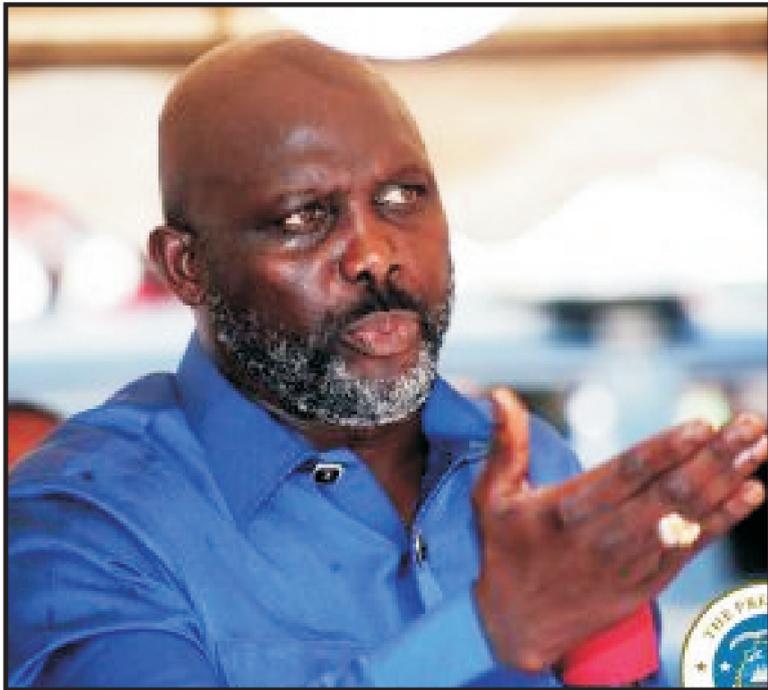
Resolution adopted October 13, 1957, declaring October 24 of each year as the anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is to be observed as "United Nations Day" and Member States are called upon to cooperate with the United Nations in the observance of the Day.

According to the release, Liberia will join other Member States to celebrate the 73rd Anniversary of the United Nations Day under the theme: "Traditions of Peace and Non-Violence."

The proclamation praises the United Nations Organization and its Member States for their roles played and critical role they continue to play in the rebuilding of Liberia following its civil crisis for which the country remains most grateful.

It concludes that Liberia, as a founding member and signatory to the charter of the august body, meaningfully benefits there from and continues to support all programs of the world body as an expression of its constant appreciation, particularly with emphasis on the operation of the United Nations Mission in Liberia.--*Press release*



Ministry release issued Tuesday, 23 October President Weah says the observance is in recognition of the invaluable contributions of the United Nations to Liberia and the

Education in organizing appropriate programs befitting the occasion.

The proclamation is in consonance with the United Nations General Assembly

Witchcraft bill in preparation

-Rep. Larry Younquoi

By Valery Guhena

Nimba County District #8 Rep. Larry Younquoi, has announced the preparation of a bill called "Witchcraft Bill," that he says when passed, will do away with witch activities in Liberia and punish those involved in it.

Speaking Friday, 19 October on OK FM in Monrovia, Rep. Younquoi said he was mandated by his constituents to make witchcraft a criminal offense under the laws of Liberia.

"I am speaking on behalf of the citizens of District 8 who have told me to pass a bill on the witchcraft that is affecting our people in this country", he says.

Rep. Younquoi underscores the need for Liberians to uphold the positive values of their culture, stressing that "Article 5(b) of our constitution says we will uphold the positive values of our culture".

The Nimba County lawmaker indicates that he is posed to bring this bill on the floor so that it can be debated and passed into law by the 54th Legislature.

According to him, witchcraft activities are negatively affecting this nation, adding that he has researched the constitution and seen reliable sources in it that motivate him to bring it on the table.

Witchcraft is considered a spiritual, complex and secret society that cannot be monitored, proven or evaluated by scientific methods.

Witchcraft is said to have made many people to live in fear and evil suspicions.

Most deaths of infants for instance, are attributed to witchcraft attacks as well as deaths of adults who die mysteriously. Many chronic diseases are also thought to be due to the work of witches.

Some hold witches responsible for acts of mismanagement or carelessness and all sorts of bad behavioral practices are attributed to the schemes of witches here.

Some say the relatives of good witches prosper, supposedly due to the benevolent spiritual operations of the good witches in their families.

But it is thought also that the relatives of evil witches suffer poverty, diseases, failures, disgrace, and all sorts of afflictions as the result of the diabolical spiritual operations of the bad witches in their families.

Despite the fact that witchcraft cannot be proven by scientific method, it is an activity known all over the world, ever since the ancient time.

The Holy Bible, in Exodus 22:18, says: "Thy shall suffer not a witch to live".

Liberia will not be the first country to have passed such a law in the world, should Rep. Younquoi succeed with the passage of his bill.

A similar act has been in existence in Great Britain and in South Africa, to name few.

Religious tensions in England during the 16th and 17th centuries resulted in the introduction of serious penalties for witchcraft.

Henry VIII's Act of 1542 (33 Hen. VIII c. 8) was the first to define witchcraft as a felony, a crime punishable by death and the forfeiture of the convicted felon's goods and chattels.

But this law was repelled in 1957 by the Witchcraft Suppression Act 3.

Ascertaining that someone is involved in witch activities remains a challenge, as that cannot be proven by scientific method and the sole method called "Sassywood" known in Liberia is now prohibited.

But the Nimba lawmaker may have a solution.

According to him, those who voluntarily confess that they are responsible for the plights that are affecting their family members, their communities or the country in general must be punished.

"My people gave me this mandate during one of the town hall meetings we have been having [in] recent time; and we are traditional people. So there is no doubt about it," he says.

Rep. Younquoi is convinced that if this bill comes on the floor, it will be passed because this is a national issue that no one can deny.

He concludes that "Liberia has already established the traditional counsel that we put in over seventy-five to hundred thousand every time to rule this country; we are just taking it to one more level".--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Student arrested with over 500,000 worth of drugs

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong County

The Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agency (LDEA) has arrested a student of the Bong County Technical College (BCTC), aged 28, with 79 kilograms of marijuana in Gbarnga, Bong County.

Marijuana is a dangerous drug that damages the brain and makes people abnormal.

The street value of the 79 kilogram of marijuana is placed at little over 553,000 Liberian dollars.

According to LDEA Bong County detachment Commander Alex Taweh, suspect Christopher Narmei was arrested in the Civil Compound Community while enroute to market the drugs in Monrovia, Montserrado County.

It is reported that suspect Christopher Narmei has been involved with drugs trafficking in the Civil Compound Community, a situation the Bong DEA Commander Alex Taweh has described as against the development of Liberia.

Meanwhile, Mr. Taweh is urging residents of the County

to join the fight against drugs trafficking by informing the LDEA about drugs related issues in their various communities.

For his part, suspect Christopher Narmei claims to be a student of the Bong county technical college, saying he decided to venture in the sale of drugs in order to sustain himself.

He notes that he is self -

supported and does not have anyone to sponsor him in school and other activities.

He however appeals to the LDEA to have mercy on him and set him free.

Since January this year, more than 20 persons have been arrested in Bong County including a teacher with drugs.

Some residents of the County are calling on the LDEA to intensify the battle against drug trafficking in ensuring that it can be curtailed.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



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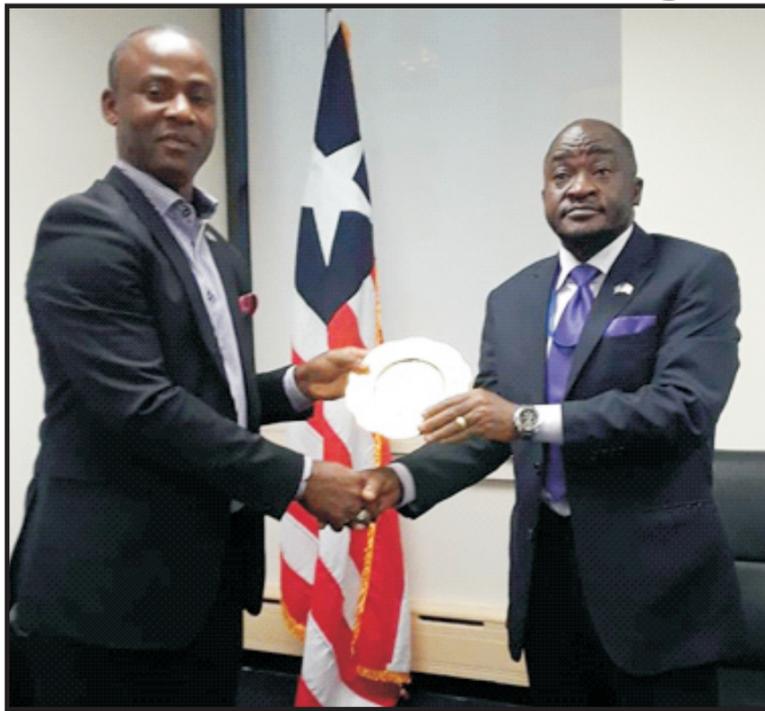
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Kemayah commits to seeking welfare of military at UN

Liberia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), Ambassador Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr. says the welfare of the military, especially Liberian peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is a priority for the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the UN.

In a dispatch from the UN mission, Amb. Kemayah assured the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), Major-General Prince Johnson who was in New York to follow-up on negotiations of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Liberia and the UN that he would engage his colleagues at the United Nations to fast-track the finalization of the MOU to ensure that Liberian peacekeepers serving in MINUSMA are properly catered for.

According to the dispatch, the MOU, which is being negotiated, will detail the number and type of personnel, equipment, and services that



Liberia provides as a peacekeeping contributor; as well as the support expected from the United Nations.

The dispatch further states that as a standard UN procedure, every troop-contributing country including Liberia funds the deployment and upkeep of its soldiers; including the provision of

major equipment and services, and gets reimbursed. When completed, the MOU will state how much and how Liberia will be reimbursed for major equipment, maintenance, troop deployment and welfare among others.

Ambassador Kemayah informed the Chief of Staff that under his leadership,

Liberia's Permanent Mission would forge the interest of the military at the world body in support of His Excellency President George Manneh Weah's commitment to improving the plight of the gallant men and women in arms, evidenced by the ongoing construction of the 14 Military Hospital. He commended President Weah's efforts to ensure that people's impression of the military is changed for the better.

At the sametime, Ambassador Kemayah has emphasized the need for both a Military and Police Attaché to be assigned at Liberia's Permanent Mission to effectively handle security-related issues, and pledged to work with the relevant authorities to ensure that Liberia is properly represented. "We are also going to work towards making representation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and through him to the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), His Excellency President Weah, so there can be a Military Attaché to this

mission. Not only Military Attaché but even Police Attaché because we've come and seen what is happening at other Missions, we need to have these two here." He said.

For his part, Major-General Johnson thanked Ambassador Kemayah for the warm reception and presented him a plaque bearing the seal of Liberia and the Emblem of the Ministry of National Defense in appreciation of the good work the Ambassador was doing in representing the Government and people of Liberia, especially in such a short space of time.

Ambassador Kemayah thanked the Chief of Staff for the honor and dedicated it to the His Excellency President George Manneh Weah, who reposed confidence in him to serve as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations. He also dedicated the honor to the staff of the Permanent Mission who continue to support his leadership. - Dispatch

Drivers on go slow along Somalia Drive -as petroleum price increases

By Ethel A. Tweh

Commercial drivers in the Barnersville and Gardnerville areas along Somalia Drive have parked their cars in demand of reduction of gasoline prices.

There was no traffic observed in Barnersville on Tuesday, 23 October, which is not normal for the early part of a week when workers, business people and students are in line for commercial vehicles to get to their various destinations.

Many commercial drivers took their vehicles off the roads Tuesday, making Barnersville and Gardnerville

areas to appear like ghost town.

In an interview with this paper Tuesday, a Taxi driver called Moses Togba says he will not put his car on the road until the gas price drops.

According to Mr. Togba, he bought a gallon of gas at the price of \$700.00 Liberian Dollars on Monday, 22 October.

Mr. Togba alarms that this price is too high for a gallon of gas.

"We know that gas is in this country; all the big gas stations are keeping their gas so we the commercial drivers can suffer," Mr. Togba expresses his

suspicion as saying.

He complains that he can't spend \$3,500.00 Liberian Dollars on five gallons of gas for just one day, stressing that it is too much for this "Pro-poor" era that Liberians are in.

Moses is concerned that if he spends so much money to buy gasoline, passengers will not be willing to adjust to increased transport fares from commercial drivers, especially passengers along Barnersville route.

Given the challenges at hand, Mr. Togba thinks that it is better to park his car than to find himself arguing with passengers after purchasing gas at high price.

Sam Johnson is another driver who says that his car will be parked until the government intervenes.

He expresses fear that the rise in prices of goods here daily will really suffer Liberians, saying government needs to do something very quickly to help the citizens.

Meanwhile, the drivers lament that they have been denied access to buy gas from the top gas stations, except the petite traders.

According to the commercial drivers, gasoline shortage here is causing serious problem to their business, stressing that they commercialize transportation to take care of their families. - Edited by Winston W. Parley



Driver gives reason for increased accidents

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Mr. William Farr, Jr., a professional train Librarian driver and Program Coordinator of the Royal Aid Driving School (RADS) in Gbarnga, Bong County says lack of qualified drivers in traffic is responsible for continued accidents across the Country.

According to him, Liberians continue to die in car accident and motorcycle accidents in the Country from time to time due to unqualified drivers conveying them to their destinations.

Speaking to our correspondent recently, he underscores the need for central government through the Ministry of Transport to cater to Liberian drivers by providing them training such as road safety awareness so that they can know various traffic signs.

"Our entity wants to battle the increase in number of accidents in the Country, but the government of Liberia through the Ministry of

Transport will need to aid us in this struggle of saving lives in the Country," he says.

Mr. Farr notes that it is a difficult war to fight, but with the help of government "we will get there."

His institution - Royal Aid Driving School was established between 2012 and 2013 with the aim of providing training for Liberian drivers and motorcyclists who are desirous of acquiring knowledge in driving.

Mr. Farr boastfully says since the establishment of the Royal Aid Driving School in Bong County, they have been able to graduate a little over 100 students from the county, many of whom he says are self-reliant and contributing to the society.

Meanwhile, Mr. Farr is also appealing to humanitarian organizations and well-meaning Liberians to join him in battling against the increase of motor car accidents in the Country. - Edited by Winston W. Parley

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Français

La Fed lève sa sanction temporaire imposée au Libéria

C'est un véritable ouf de soulagement pour le Libéria. Les informations dont dispose ce quotidien font état de la levée par la Réserve fédérale américaine de l'interdiction temporaire imposée à la réserve Libérienne, ouvrant ainsi la voie à la reprise des paiements par le biais de la Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL) à partir de ce lundi 22 octobre.

L'interdiction imposée à la réserve libérienne fait suite à l'interdiction de voyager imposée à plusieurs responsables de la CBL, parmi lesquels le gouverneur adjoint sortant de la CBL, Charles Sirleaf, fils de l'ancienne présidente de la république du Libéria, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, et signataire de la réserve, à la suite de l'annonce en septembre de la disparition présumée de 16 milliards de dollars libériens.

Selon les documents dont a eu copie le New Dawn, la reprise du paiement intervient après que la CBL a fourni les documents demandés par les autorités fédérales américaines, notamment une copie signée de la procédure de sécurité modifiée, une liste des nouveaux contacts et une liste de signatures révisée.

« Nous avons examiné et sommes prêts à reprendre les opérations de paiement pour le



lundi 22 octobre. Nous voulions simplement clarifier quelques points avant de poursuivre », a déclaré Anthony Reginelli, responsable de la US Federal Bank, la banque centrale et le groupe international des marchés des services de comptes internationaux chargé des relations avec la région Afrique et Moyen-Orient, dans un courriel le

vendredi 19 octobre.

« Nous continuerions d'accepter les paiements ... et continuerions de vérifier le respect de nos sanctions américaines et de nos politiques anti-blanchiment », a déclaré M. Reginelli, ajoutant que « Nous pourrions parfois devoir chercher des informations supplémentaires et demandez votre coopération et

notre patience. À cet égard, nous vous le ferons savoir par SWIFT ou par courrier électronique si nous avons déjà eu besoin de retenir ou d'annuler un paiement similaire selon la pratique historique. »

Un représentant de la Réserve fédérale américaine a en outre déclaré dans son courrier électronique que la banque avait pré-approuvé les deux premiers signataires de la liste officielle autorisée par la CBL le 15 octobre 2018.

La levée de cette interdiction temporaire est une bonne nouvelle pour un pays en proie à une crise financière sans précédent, tandis que les enquêtes sur la disparition présumée des 15,5 milliards de dollars libériens se poursuivent.

L'aide américaine pour le développement international (USAID) a conclu, il y a à peine deux semaines, un accord avec le gouvernement libérien afin que des enquêteurs indépendants issus d'une firme

internationale renommée puissent faire la lumière sur le plus grand scandale financier du pays. Il s'agit d'une enquête préliminaire qui pourrait aboutir à une enquête à grande échelle selon les conclusions qui en découleront.

L'USAID et le gouvernement libérien ont convenu que toutes les conclusions établies par l'équipe seraient rendues publiques.

La semaine dernière, des membres de l'équipe d'investigation indépendante engagée par l'USAID ont effectué une brève visite au palais de l'Assemblée nationale, The Capitol, et rencontré des députés. Mais rien n'a filtré de la rencontre.

L'USAID et les autorités libériennes sont parvenues à l'accord quelques jours après que le gouverneur de la CBL, M. Nathaniel Patray, a annoncé qu'il ne manquait pas d'argent.

« La Banque centrale du Libéria tient à préciser au grand public et à ses partenaires qu'il ne manque pas de 16 milliards de dollars libériens, comme cela a été rapporté à tort dans les médias », a déclaré la CBL dans un communiqué de presse le mardi 2 octobre.

La CBL a par ailleurs demandé au gouvernement de lever l'interdiction de voyager imposée à son personnel afin de ne pas interrompre le bon fonctionnement de la banque.

Plusieurs employés de la CBL ont été convoqués pour interrogatoire dans le cadre de l'enquête, dont l'ancien gouverneur exécutif, J. Milton Weeks, et le gouverneur adjoint sortant, Charles Sirleaf.

Mais M. Sirleaf et d'autres responsables de la CBL ont été radiés la semaine dernière, ce qui pourrait avoir contribué de manière significative à la décision de la Fed.

Une flambée du prix de l'essence sur le marché, le gouvernement pointé du doigt

Le prix de l'essence à la pompe sur le marché libérien a considérablement augmenté, passant de 540 à 700 dollars libériens, ce qui a poussé les chauffeurs des véhicules du transport public à augmenter eux aussi les frais de transport à travers la capitale.

Bien que le gouvernement libérien n'ait pas officiellement annoncé

d'augmentation du prix de l'essence, les chauffeurs de taxi de Bushrod Island, dans la banlieue de Monrovia, font maintenant payer 70 dollars libériens, tandis que les motocyclistes et les conducteurs des engins à trois roues ont augmenté les tarifs jusqu'à 100 LRD au centre de Monrovia. La situation est telle

qu'il arrive que les passagers et les conducteurs se prennent au collet. Tony Wleh, chauffeur de taxi, sillonnant l'axe Bushrod Island - Center Monrovia, a expliqué que la hausse subite des tarifs est due à l'incapacité du gouvernement à gérer correctement le prix de l'essence et des autres produits de base.

« Nous, les conducteurs, n'avons pas le droit d'augmenter les frais de transports dans ce pays, mais si le gouvernement avait un prix constant et stable, personne ne le ferait », a-t-il expliqué.

Selon lui, récemment un gallon d'essence était vendu à 400 dollars libériens, mais maintenant il est vendu à 540 LRD. Les chauffeurs n'ont donc d'autre choix que d'augmenter les frais de transport.

« Nous avons tous vu que le gouvernement libérien, par la voix de la Liberia Petroleum Refining Company (LPRC) et du ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie, a annoncé une augmentation des prix de l'essence et du carburant diesel sur le marché libérien

tout récemment, mais c'est là où nous en sommes encore. »

Quant à Fatu Bility, une passagère, elle a déploré la situation, la qualifiant d'embarrassante pour les Libériens ordinaires qui luttent chaque jour pour quitter leur domicile pour se rendre en ville afin de nourrir leur famille. « Ils sont désormais tenus de déboursier plus que leurs revenus pour le transport ». Elle a ainsi appelé le gouvernement du Libéria à intervenir pour mettre fin à cette situation et réguler les prix de l'essence à la pompe et du transport. « Imaginez-vous

un instant si j'étais sortie de chez moi juste avec le montant normal et habituel pour le transport, je serais honnie par ce chauffeur de taxi ; qu'avons-nous fait pour mériter ce type de traitement de la part des mêmes personnes pour lesquelles nous nous sommes tués sous la pluie et le soleil », s'est lamentée Fatu.

Cependant, certains importateurs de pétrole attribuent l'augmentation soudaine du prix de l'essence et par extension des frais de transport à un nouveau tarif routier introduit par le gouvernement.



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Français

Cameroun : Paul Biya réélu à la présidence avec 71,28 %

Le président Paul Biya, âgé de 85 ans, est officiellement réélu pour un septième mandat à la tête du Cameroun qu'il dirige depuis 1982, soit 36 années de présidence. Il a été donné vainqueur, ce lundi, du scrutin du 7 octobre, après plus de quatre heures de proclamation des résultats donnés par le Conseil constitutionnel, département par département. Une victoire écrasante sur fond de contestation des candidats de l'opposition.

Le président Paul Biya est vainqueur dans neuf régions sur dix. Il l'emporte largement dans les trois départements du septentrion : 79 % des suffrages exprimés dans l'Adamaoua, 89 % dans l'Extrême-Nord, 81 % dans le Nord. Il l'emporte aussi largement dans le Centre et dans l'Est et obtient 92,91 % des voix dans son fief du Sud. Seul le Littoral (dont le chef-

Depuis ce matin, en tout cas, un fort déploiement sécuritaire est visible à Yaoundé et à Douala où la police anti-émeute et la gendarmerie sont déployées notamment au niveau des grands carrefours.

A noter également qu'Adamou Ndam Njoya obtient 1,73 %, Garga Haman Adji 1,55 %, Frankline Ndifor 0,67 %, Serge Espoir Matomba 0,35 % tout comme Akere Muna qui s'était désisté, à la veille du scrutin, en faveur de Maurice Kamto. Une victoire « incontestable » pour le RDPC

Joint par RFI, Issa Bakary Tchiroma, porte-parole du gouvernement, a salué la réélection du président Biya. Cette victoire est large. Elle est incontestable. C'est une confiance renouvelée parce que, pour ce peuple, le président Biya est une assurance tous risques et une garantie.

Du côté de l'opposition,



lieu est Douala, la capitale économique) échappe au président sortant. Le candidat de l'opposition Maurice Kamto, qui avait revendiqué la victoire au lendemain du scrutin, y est donné vainqueur avec 38,60 % des suffrages. Maurice Kamto qui, selon ces résultats officiels, arrive en deuxième position avec 14,23 % des voix.

Cabral Libii prend la troisième place avec 6,28 % des voix.

A noter enfin le très mauvais score de Joshua Osih, du SDF, qui était pourtant le principal parti de l'opposition camerounaise, et qui obtient seulement 3,35 %.

Tous ces chiffres, les opposants les contestent. Ils parlent tous de résultats fabriqués et d'élection volée. On attend désormais les déclarations officielles de ces candidats, notamment celle de Maurice Kamto.

Maurice Kamto a rejeté les résultats avant même leur proclamation. Cabral Libii a, quant à lui, estimé que les résultats de cette présidentielle sont une forfaiture.

Des personnes qui sont là depuis 36 ans décident de continuer à détruire un pays, décident de mépriser ce que le peuple dit. Le peuple camerounais, debout, vous apportera, dans les jours, les semaines, les mois qui viennent la démonstration de ce que sa détermination pour un changement est aujourd'hui irrévocable.

Réaction également des Nations unies. Le secrétaire général de l'ONU a indiqué avoir « pris note » des résultats et appelle, en cas de contestations, à ce qu'elles suivent « la voie légale ». Antonio Guterres encourage également toutes les parties à « privilégier le dialogue ».

COMMENTAIRE

Par Ngaire Woods

Pourquoi la guerre froide sino-américaine n'aura pas lieu

OXFORD - On dit souvent que la Chine et les États-Unis - superpuissances à couteaux tirés sur les plans économique géopolitique et idéologique - se dirigent vers une nouvelle guerre froide. Et les déclarations - du moins d'un côté - en viennent à évoquer le discours de Churchill de 1946, au cours duquel il mentionna pour la première fois le « rideau de fer », l'un des événements qui inaugureront la guerre froide. Ce mois-ci, le vice-président des États-Unis, Mike Pence, est allé jusqu'à accuser la Chine de pratiques économique prédatrices, d'agression militaire contre les États-Unis et de tentatives de déstabilisation contre le président Donald Trump.

Pourtant, malgré le battage médiatique, une nouvelle guerre froide n'est pas inévitable - et peut-être n'est-elle pas plus probable. Certes, les dirigeants chinois, craignant des désordres et tout ce qui serait susceptible d'affaiblir la légitimité du Parti communiste chinois (PCC), sont résolus à empêcher toute tentative de États-Unis qui aurait pour but de contraindre la Chine à changer son système politique et économique. La Chine continuera de mener ses réformes à son propre rythme, et de la façon dont elle l'entend. La fusion du PCC avec la machine gouvernementale est pour le président chinois Xi Jinping une priorité absolue, censée vaincre la corruption et renforcer la cohérence et la crédibilité idéologique de l'État. Chercher à entraver ce processus serait franchir une ligne rouge.

Heureusement pour Xi, Trump ne manifeste guère d'intérêt pour la « démocratisation » des pays tiers, et il ne semble pas avoir été ébranlé par les investisseurs, financiers et autres géants de la technologie américains qui aimeraient bien voir son administration faire pression pour leur ouvrir un accès plus large à l'économie chinoise.

Sans doute le relèvement des droits de douane aux États-Unis pèse-t-il sur les 18 % des exportations chinoises qui chaque année partent vers l'Amérique. Mais l'administration Trump a des priorités plus urgentes que le changement du système de gouvernement en Chine, nonobstant les déclarations agressives du représentant au commerce américain Robert Lighthizer et du président du Conseil du commerce national à la Maison Blanche Peter Navarro. Trump cherche désespérément à renforcer le secteur manufacturier aux États-Unis en y rapatriant les chaînes d'approvisionnement globales et en bloquant ou en réduisant les importations. « Faire à nouveau la grandeur de l'Amérique », c'est surtout faire à nouveau en Amérique.

Pourtant, si la confrontation actuelle entre les États-Unis et la Chine n'évolue par vers une nouvelle guerre froide, elle pourrait affaiblir les deux pays et instaurer un nouveau monde multipolaire. En Chine, les rododendons américaines, les tarifs douaniers et les sanctions pourraient alimenter d'éventuelles critiques contre Xi, et les options de représailles relativement limitées dont dispose actuellement celui-ci ne l'aident pas. Certes, le pays peut commencer à se débarrasser d'une partie des mille milliards de dollars accumulés dans ses réserves de change, mais il affaiblirait du même coup la valeur des bons du Trésor américain qui resteront dans ses caisses.

Aux États-Unis, un représentant du monde de l'industrie a qualifié la politique tarifaire de Trump, fondée sur la hausse radicale des barrières douanières, d'« acte le plus autodestructeur qui [il ait] jamais vu en matière commerciale ». Et la renégociation par l'actuelle administration de l'Accord de libre-échange nord-américain - qui comprend une clause interdisant au Canada et au Mexique de négocier séparément avec la Chine - s'est attiré le même genre de critiques. Ces mesures menacent non seulement de détruire des emplois américains, mais de lasser la bonne volonté des alliés de l'Amérique, déjà nombreux à prendre leurs distances.

À la vérité, le slogan de l'administration Trump, «

l'Amérique d'abord » se traduit de plus en plus par « l'Amérique toute seule ». Désormais, les États-Unis sont isolés au sein du G7, du G20 et de la Convention cadre des Nations unies sur le changement climatique. Après leur retrait du Partenariat transpacifique, les parties restantes avancent sans eux. Loin de poser les termes du débat dans les questions internationales, l'administration Trump a fait tant et si bien qu'elle a convaincu les autres pays qu'il valait mieux éviter de trop faire crédit à la direction américaine.

Ce détournement généralisé à l'égard des États-Unis hâtera l'émergence d'un nouvel ordre multipolaire. Ainsi, en se retirant de l'accord sur le nucléaire iranien, Trump a surtout incité le Royaume-Uni, la France, l'Allemagne, la Chine, la Russie et l'Union européenne à défier les prérogatives états-uniennes.

Pour le moment, les pays qui ont besoin du pétrole iranien n'ont d'autre choix que de se conformer aux exigences américaines. Comme pour la plupart des biens échangés, les paiements des exportations de pétrole sont effectués en dollars - en passant, pour la plupart, par la Society for Worldwide Interbank Telecommunications (SWIFT) établie en Belgique - et les États-Unis ont les moyens d'interrompre ces transactions. La plupart des entreprises et des pays en ont conclu que poursuivre leurs activités avec l'Iran ne méritait pas de leur faire perdre l'accès au marché américain et au système international de paiement en dollars.

Mais à l'avenir, ils pourraient ne plus devoir se résoudre à de tels arbitrages. Le 21 août, le ministre des Affaires étrangères allemand, Heiko Maas, a exhorté l'Europe à mettre en place des mécanismes de paiement indépendants des États-Unis. Et le mois suivant, la cheffe de la diplomatie européenne, Federica Mogherini, annonçait la création d'une « entité juridique pour faciliter les transactions financières licites avec l'Iran, et [permettre] aux sociétés européennes de continuer à commercer avec l'Iran conformément aux règlements de l'UE ».

Dans le même temps, la Russie affirmait développer son propre système de transferts financiers, afin de se prémunir contre une éventuelle exclusion de la SWIFT si les États-Unis venaient à durcir leurs sanctions. Quant à la Chine, elle poursuit un projet similaire depuis 2015 au moins, lorsque la Banque populaire de Chine a lancé un véhicule destiné à faciliter les transactions transfrontalières en renminbis.

Aucun de ces mécanismes de rechange ne sont encore parvenus à rivaliser avec la commodité de la SWIFT ni avec le système des échanges en dollars. Mais si l'un d'entre eux venait à prendre pied, il pourrait rapidement laisser les États-Unis impuissants.

Plutôt que vers une guerre froide, le monde pourrait s'orienter vers un système international dirigé par quatre puissances, les États-Unis, la Chine, la Russie et l'Allemagne, dominant chacune sa région et cherchant à prendre la main dans les négociations internationales. Ce scénario rappelle la vision du monde qu'avait après la Seconde Guerre mondiale le président des États-Unis Franklin Delano Roosevelt, qui proposait que les quatre alliés victorieux - les États-Unis, le Royaume-Uni, la Chine et l'Union soviétique - se comportent comme « quatre gendarmes », assurant chacun la sécurité dans sa sphère d'influence et négociant avec les autres les questions relatives à la paix mondiale.

Aujourd'hui, ce sont approximativement les quatre mêmes puissances qui mènent à nouveau le monde, à ceci près que nous disposons d'institutions internationales plus fortes pour contribuer à faire régner la paix. Le maintien de cette paix dépendra de la bonne volonté des quatre puissances à utiliser ces institutions et à les adapter au système international qui est en train de voir le jour.

ANALYSIS

Of monetary economic crunch and looming smiles ahead

By Sherman C. Seequeh

There is no question about the fact that in-country living conditions—or the costs of living in Liberia—have been changing for the worse for many people if not all. The prices of goods and services are increasing, and many are finding it difficult to fend for themselves and families or make ends meet. And for the most part, since the last ten months, it appears these conditions were put into a catapult and shot in economic space. Wherever one turns, the cry is all the same: life is hard, things are bad and little is done to save us.

Why it is true that every Liberian—illiterate or educated, private business person or public official, critic or supporter of Government—agree that things are pretty bad, explanation and blames for the causes and what's needed to be done is different from person to person. There are those who think—and perhaps understandably out of frustration—that government is to blame for not being austere and radical to dealing with prevailing economic conditions. Others also posit, however, that the current government is not to blame, that it inherited worsening conditions already in orbit at its advent and that much is being done to repel the economic crisis.

There is a sense in which any rational person will agree with both positions—but partly. It may sound odd, isn't it?

Firstly, it would be irresponsible to give government blanket vindication in the prevailing matters of the unfavorable state of the national economy. And this is not because the George Weah government has done anything specifically wrong creating the situation. It is simply because it is the government in charge and that it is naturally the shock absorber of the faults of politics and economics it has inherited, but also of the frustrations, criticisms and condemnations that come with it. So, to this extent of this line of thinking, the government is not totally clear of blame.

Secondly, it would also be irresponsible and disingenuous to accept fully that the current political administration has anything by omission or commission in the prevailing tough times. All honest analyses and examinations of problems economically affecting the people of Liberia point straightly to spillover effects from what happened or was done before this time, 2018.

In fact, those who have seen and read firsthand the World Bank's October 12 security, political and economic updates would not take the misrepresentations pivoted by detractors lightly; for the Report had neither explicit nor implicit insinuations of complicity of the Weah government in any of the factors underpinning rising inflation and associated high cost of living in the country.

One does not need to be theoretically economically savvy to understand and appreciate what the Work Bank wrote in that Report. The Report states: "Liberia's economy is still struggling to recover fully from the effects of multiple shocks in recent years; namely: Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak, collapse of commodity prices, UNMIL withdrawal and the perception of risk associated with the political transition in January 2018. Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2017 is estimated to have recovered to 2.5% and is projected to rise to 3.0% in 2018."

"Liberia's economy is still struggling to recover fully from the effects of multiple shocks in RECENT YEARS," [emphasis mine], the Report asserts—not in recent months. And thank God the report, which is supposedly held in high esteem by both critics and supporters of Government, notes that the "Real gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2017 is estimated



to have recovered to 2.5% and is projected to rise to 3.0% in 2018"—an "incipient recovery is driven largely by increased production of gold and iron ore, following the uptick in the prices of gold and iron ore on the international market."

That the report posits that the "Agricultural sector growth remains subdued" is not the blame of Government but is "due to weak recovery in global prices of rubber and palm oil." Even, as the Report further asserts, "Headline inflation continued to rise during the year, reaching an all-time high of 24% in June 2018 from 10.8% the same period last year. This is largely due to a sharp drop in foreign exchange supply (30% following the drop in the exports and donor inflows), in the face of relatively rigid demand for U.S. dollars and rising global oil prices." Liberia neither controls global oil prices nor can an infantile government settle the insidious foreign exchange problem in just nine months.

Still, it wouldn't make much sense holding the 9-month government for what is considered "the resultant rise in the cost of living and limited employment opportunities that continue to undermine the welfare of Liberia" or "the fiscal deficit [that] widened to 5.2% of GDP in FY2018 compared to 4.8% of GDP in FY17, due to a significant short-fall in revenues and higher than anticipated non-discretionary expenditures."

The report showed that, in fact, "The shortfall in revenues (20% of the approved budget) is due to the slower than anticipated economic activities due to prolonged period of political uncertainty, tax waiver policies in the run up to the presidential elections, unresolved court dispute with respect to the collection of petroleum levy and lower than projected donor grants." Not a single of those underpinnings is attributable to the current Government, as much of it have to do with external actions—prolong period of political uncertainty, tax waiver policies up to the presidential elections, etc., all of which got consummated before the birth of the George Weah Government.

Should the George Weah Government fold its arms and allow the biting economic conditions facing Liberians continue unabated and worse? In fact, is the government really folding its arms? Even the much quoted Report points to the medium term economic outlook that it says is "optimistic despite substantial downside risks."

Many Liberian regimes and other countries before us had similar conditions—conditions in which either a young government bumped into crushing economic nightmares or a longtime incumbent administration witnessing economic hell breaking loose. Many endured the direst of conditions.

In the United States, for instance, there was the Great Recession—"severe financial crisis combined with a deep recession." Taking the mantle of power in 2008, an infantile Obama administration bumped into this devastating crunch which had begun December 2007 and took several years for the economy to recover to pre-crisis levels. At about the same time, or thereabout, many European Union countries, including Greece, suffered severe economic crises. They were bailed out by neighbors. And please don't ask how similar conditions rocked and are rocking African countries.

Though the causes and remedies of those conditions may not be fully identical to ours, it underlines one fact—that no nation is immune or insusceptible to harsh economic conditions. What is emblematic to all such situations is that there are always options walking out of them. The solid hope is that Liberia will prevail because, firstly decision-makers of this Government, the Head of State George Weah included, is fully aware how they were demonized and dismissed as not having the capacity to govern well. And they are resolved to prove critics wrong. Additionally, and because of that first point, President Weah and his corps of officials have fastened their governance ideals around people-centered ideologies firmly articulated by the pro-poor agenda which they have all sworn to defend, promote and implement to the letter.

And secondly, thank God voodoo economics is not part of the menu of options before the crops of Liberia's best economists in charge, who are spending sleepless nights figuring out and applying the most expeditious but sustainable remedy to the crushing situation on hand. The last time I checked, I saw the likes of Samuel Tweah, Finance Minister, preoccupied with fostering prescriptions that have got the endorsement of revered international economic institutions, such as World Bank and IMF. They all have concurred on the need to mitigating the impacts and risks of the prevailing economic crisis by embarking upon "policy reforms that will promote economic diversification, improve the investment climate, promote domestic revenue mobilization and to ensure prudent borrowing strategy."

It is therefore a matter of time before Liberia, like other survivors of devastating economic crunches of yesterdays, will triumph over the natural fluctuations in human activities and expectations and would celebrate a boom looming in the air as massive visible developments begin on the ground around the country very soon if not now.

Editor's note: the views expressed in this article are that of the author's and not of the New Dawn newspaper.

Citizens decry hardship

Citizens of Grand Bassa County decry serious economic hardship in the county characterized by unemployment and increase in food and basic commodity prices.

Here in Monrovia, gasoline price has increased from 540 Liberian Dollars to 700 LRD, amid artificial shortage characterized by hike in transport fares. TOTAL, a leading petroleum importer and distributor in the region, is scaling down from the counties.

President George Manneh Weah has constituted a Business Climate Working Group to identify quick “low-hanging fruits” in the business climate and deliver them in the shortest possible time, accompanied by an action plan. The President mandates the group to report in three weeks.

But narrating their plight from the county live via OK FM on Tuesday, 23 October they lament that life is unbearable for the ordinary person in Grand Bassa as a result of the lack of jobs.

“Grand Bassa is very hard right now, our husbands are not working because no



company here to prove jobs for them. I will come in the market early morning to sell but we don't make money anyway, the U.S. [exchange] rate is very high here, so the goods prices are high too,” a marketer narrates.

Sandy Gray, a marketer in Buchanan City similarly decries that life has become so difficult to an extent that citizens cannot even afford the country's stable food (rice) and

are now living on Fufu pounded cassava, including farina daily.

“Grand Bassa is very harder than ever before, we are suffering here; we the students that are selling in the market can only fight to get our recess on a daily basis because when the people bring the goods from rural Bassa, they complain of paying lot of transportation fares due to the bad road condition. We buy these pepper from the people

at a high rate and sell for 20 to 25 Liberian Dollars per pile,” Sandy Gray continues.

A local retail fish seller says a cartoon of fish (Herring) previously sold for 2,500 Liberian dollars now costs 4,000 Liberian Dollars, while other species of fish that were sold for 3,500 Liberian Dollars per cartoon now costs 8,500. A retail cup of rice is being sold for 50 Liberian Dollars, while Vita Cube previous sold for five 10 Liberian Dollars, is now three cubes for 25 Liberian Dollars, respectively.

Another marketer only identified as Rachel, says another means of livelihood in the county is to credit goods from local importers, sell and later repay, explaining they are unable to secure loads from commercial banks for fear of not being able to pay back.

“They are the same people making zogoes them getting

plenty in the country than they say that pro poor government. I have to sell roasting pepper before I can pay my children's school fees and feed my family. The U.S. rate is causing serious problem for us; we are calling on the President to do something about the exchange rate, we need to live,” Rachel emphasizes.

Grand Bassa County Superintendent Janjay Baikpeh concedes some of the comments made by the citizens are realistic, but others were unrealistic, pointing out that the CDC-led government has just gone nine months in power.

He calls on the people of Bassa to exercise patience, disclosing that government, through his office, has lots of things in stored for the country, but transformation does not happen overnight. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Weah delivers policy statement at UL today

President George Manneh Weah visits the University of Liberia Capitol Hill campus today, Wednesday, 24 October to make a major policy statement that would affect thousands of students attending the University.

According to a press release, to afford students, faculty, staff, and others the opportunity to attend and listen to President Weah, the UL Administration has, with

immediate effect, suspended all classes on all campuses of the University of Liberia today, Wednesday.

The President is expected to arrive at 2 p.m. and will make a brief tour of some of the facilities on the Capitol Hill campus, including the university's historic library housed in the Nathaniel H. Cassell Building, the Williams V.S. Tubman Hall, one of the oldest buildings on the Capitol Hill campus, among others.

Following the brief tour, President Weah would proceed to the historic UL Auditorium to deliver a special back-to-school statement and make the policy announcement.

The President's visit comes less than three weeks after he dedicated the automation/digitization of the University's registration system, on October 4, 2018, bringing to an end the manual UL registration system, which was a source of frequent students protest at the University of Liberia.

Meanwhile, the UL Administration invites all current students of the University of Liberia – including students recently admitted, students seeking admissions, students who dropped out, as well as future students on the Capitol Hill campus to grace the President's visit.

Students are advised to arrive early enough in anticipation of the 2 p.m. arrival of the Visitor.

The University of Liberia resumed classes on Monday, October 22, 2018, for the 1st semester academic year 2018/19. **-Press Release**



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APRIL 11, 2018

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BEFORE HIS HONOR: ...YAMIE QUIQUIL GBEISAY..... ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE

THE PETITION OF **ALHADJI M. TARWULLEH** PETITIONER, BY AND THRU HIS LEGAL COUNSEL, PRAYING THIS HONORABLE COURT FOR A DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME TO BE, REGARDED, CALLED AND KNOWN AS “MUSA M. TARWULLEH”

COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME

The Petitioner by and thru his legal counsel filed a Petition before this Court requesting this Honorable Court to order the Change of his name from Alhadji M. Tarwulleh to “Musa M. Tarwulleh”.

During the hearing, the Petitioner testified that the Change of his name requesting this Honorable Court is intended to reflect his truth family name and render his identity more explicit and absolute.

After conducting the necessary interrogations requested by law in these proceedings, the Court observed that the intention is just and legal and that there is no objection to the change of name proposed by him.

That the Petitioner having shown with justification and satisfaction that he was born in the Republic of Liberia, and that he was born unto the union of **Mr. Mamadee Tarwulleh and Madam Massamah Kromah**, all of the Republic of Liberia; and that the Change of his name will substantially promote his interest in all of the understandings and help to establish just identity more firmly, and being satisfied that he has met all legal requirements for the Change of his name in this jurisdiction, it is therefore DECREED as follows:

That the petition having been heard, same is hereby ordered granted and we now render that the name Alhadji M. Tarwulleh be changed to **Musa M. Tarwulleh** beginning this 11th day of April, A.D. 2018. That all documents signed by the petitioner herein prior to this decree remain valid.

THIS DECREE shall be registered in the Office of the Registrar of DEEDS and other Official Documentations within(10) days from this date and also be published twice in any recognized Newspaper operating in the Republic of Liberia within twenty(20) days from this date. AND IT IS HEREBY SO ORDERED.

GIVEN UNDER MY HANDS IN OPEN COURT, THIS 11TH DAY OF APRIL, A.D. 2018

COURT SEAL:

YAMIE QUIQUIL GBEISAY, SR.
ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING
SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CIVIL LAW COURT

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Liberia at moderate risk

-World Bank



The World Bank says Liberia remains fragile and vulnerable to external shocks, with significant infrastructure deficit and poor living conditions for majority of its population.

In its 2018 Update, the Bank reports that Liberia remains at moderate risk of debt distress, though care and precision in implementing its ambitious

infrastructure program will be critical.

The report specifically notes the effect of road construction on aggregate demand may be fairly limited, since only a small part of the total cost of asphalt-surfaced, capital-intensive roads would be expected to be sourced locally, adding "The medium-term outlook is subject to both upside and downside risks."

According to the bank, inflation is projected to remain high in the near term, given the sharp depreciation of the Liberian dollar in the past year, and then to gradually decline from an estimated 11.7 percent in 2018 to 6.3 percent in 2023, but says that in the long run, inflation is set to continue its gradual decline and stabilize at around 5½ to 6 percent.

On key baseline macroeconomic assumptions, the report says the country's revenue-to-GDP ratio is estimated to improve from 12.9 percent in FY2018 to 15 percent in FY2023 by, among other measures, improving tax compliance and efficiency and expanding coverage, after which it is expected to remain broadly stable, while fiscal deficit is expected to remain elevated as the authorities meet high spending needs, declining only from 5.1 percent of GDP in FY2018 to 4.4 percent in FY2023.

It continues that



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Pacquiao, Mayweather rematch a step closer

A potential blockbuster rematch between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather moved a step closer as the Filipino icon confirmed he has signed with Al Haymon's Premier Boxing Champions (PBC).

Eight-weight world champion Pacquiao said he would close out his storied career by facing "top PBC fighters" in announcing late

Monday the tie-up with influential Mayweather adviser Haymon's organisation.

"My team will work closely with Al Haymon for the remainder of my career to deliver the most anticipated fights with the top PBC fighters," Pacquiao said in a statement.

"Those are the fights the fans want to see and the ones I want to have to close out my

career," he added.

Pacquiao said last week that he was "90 percent" sure a bout with former four-division world champion Adrien Broner would happen in January, possibly in Las Vegas.

"Pacquiao's first defense of the World Boxing Association welterweight world title will kick off the new partnership," Haymon's PBC said in a statement without giving further details.



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