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# The New Dawn

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# Weah mocks false prophets



Pres. Weah





# Continental News

## Mobile Phone Explodes, Kills Woman, Injures Husband

**M**ary Akinyi, a 45-year-old woman, was reportedly killed by a mobile phone while her husband was rushed to a hospital over injuries sustained when the device, which was being charged, exploded in their family house.

Reports indicate that Akinyi from Kadibuoro Village, Homa Bay County in Kenya died after lightning struck her cell phone and transmitted the electric charge into her body.

The lightning allegedly struck a solar panel on the roof of the couple's house before the power surge was conducted through the electric wiring to her phone. The high voltage led to the explosion of the phone which was charging on the bed where Akinyi and her husband Patrick Yala Okach were fast asleep.

Okach sustained serious injuries during the incident and was rushed to Ndiru Health Centre.

Nathaniel Ochieng', a brother-in-law to the deceased, indicated that the explosion of Akinyi's mobile phone led to severe burns

and killed her on the spot. Other electronic devices connected to the solar system were reportedly destroyed in the

unfortunate incident.

The death of the woman came on the heels of a horrific incident recorded in a CCTV camera of a restaurant in Mumbai, India which showed a mobile

phone exploding in the pocket of a man while he was having lunch.

The man sustained minor injuries and was admitted to a nearby hospital. AFP



## Tanzania to build dam at heritage site

**T**anzania's President John Magufuli has signed a deal for the construction of a hydroelectric power plant in one of East Africa's best-known game reserves, amid criticism from environmentalists.

The deal, worth \$3bn (£2.4bn), envisages the construction of a dam on the Rufiji River in the Selous Game Reserve, a Unesco World Heritage site.

Tanzania says the project will double its total power supply.

But conservationists warn

the WWF, the global environmental body, says the project will also endanger the livelihoods of some 200,000 people - including farmers and fishermen - living downstream from the proposed dam.

A 2017 report by the body warns that the project could lead to greater erosion downstream, potentially drying out lakes that attract wildlife tourism, reducing the fertility of farmland and causing the retreat of the Rufiji Delta.



that it will destroy wildlife habitat. The deal was signed with two Egyptian construction firms.

The reservoir created by the dam is expected to be the largest in east Africa, inundating 1,200 sq km (463 sq miles) of land in an area known as Stiegler's Gorge.

Tanzania has argued that the project will boost development and double its existing power capacity. Only one-third of the country's population currently has access to electricity. The

The Selous Game Reserve is home to a huge variety of animal species, including elephants and rhinos, whose population numbers have been falling because of heavy poaching. The reserve's elephant population has fallen by 90% in the last 40 years, according to the WWF.

Stiegler's Gorge is named after a Swiss engineer who was killed by an elephant in 1907. He had been planning to build a dam in the area. BBC

## Uganda to probe against minister: Museveni

**U**gandan authorities will investigate claims that the foreign minister, Sam Kutesa took a bribe of \$500,000 from a Chinese official, the country's president said on Monday.

President Yoweri Museveni, who was launching new initiatives to tackle corruption in Uganda, said the minister had explained that the money was donated to a charity he runs, rather than to him as an individual.

Chi Ping Patrick Ho, a former Hong Kong government official, was last week found guilty of bribing Kutesa and Chad's president Idriss Deby, in exchange for contracts for a Chinese energy company. "I have told him to get in touch with the Attorney General, who will cross check if this money was indeed for charity as he said, or if it was for him," the president said when asked about Ho's conviction.

"Obviously, it is a crime for him to get money from a foreign company. What for? That would be a bribe and he would be answerable."

The president however added, that the New York court decision would not determine the fate of his minister, saying 'we are going to investigate ourselves'. The president is himself reported to have received gifts and donations from Ho, for his 2016 re-election campaign. AFP



photo, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni

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# EDITORIAL

## Pro-Poor Rice is not sustainable

THE WEAH ADMINISTRATION, like several previous administrations before it believes subsidizing rice importation is the prudent way to maintaining food security in the country, but this strategy is foolhardy, because it has never been sustainable.

THE LATE PRESIDENT William R. Tolbert, Jr. ventured into it and his government got entangled in citizens' protest that dragged it into the April 14, 1979 Rice Riot characterized by insecurity, anarchy and deaths. Slain President Samuel Kanyon Doe, guided by experiences from the rice riot, launched and spearheaded the Green Revolution that saw Liberia's food basket swelled with exportation of cash crops such as cocoa and coffee, among others.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH Lebanese businessman George Haddad, jailed former President Charles Ghankay Taylor maintained rice on the local market at affordable price, and created the impression that he had solved the nation's food insecurity problem. But that was very far from reality. Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf brought in best qualified and experienced agriculture technicians, who only talked the talk and wrote policy papers; nothing else.

ALL THREE FORMER presidents were fully aware that rice is Liberia's staple. But they sought quick fix solutions except for President Doe, who took the bull by the horn thru his Green Revolution campaign that led to government officials investing in farms. A farm of the late Senator Kerkula B. Kpoto of the Doe regime was never fully harvested due to its large size and the civil war.

DESPITE LEADING A vague slogan of 'power to the people' President Weah seems to be seeking the same quick fix solution by importing rice rather than prioritizing the agricultural sector. Immediately after he took office early this year, the President met with importers in the country and struck a deal to reduce price, but it did not work due to the fact that we don't grow our staple ourselves.

NOW THE GOVERNMENT has established partnership with a so-called private importer, TRH Trading, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to import rice and sell at a reduced price of US\$950 and US\$10, respectively below the current price of US\$17.

PRESIDENT WEAH HIMSELF went at the Bong Mines Pier near the Freeport of Monrovia on Bushrod Island last week and launched the Pro-Poor Rice with an initial consignment of 80,000 25kg bags already in country.

"WE ARE NOW happy. When I took over, our people were on the streets because the rice was expensive and I called all rice importers to find a way around the issue and to let them know they need to do their best to reduce the price or government will compete", the President asserts.

THE GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTION looks like nothing but the same old "cow pupu" story that appears dried on the surface, but inside is watery. How long can this partnership sustain the Pro-Poor Rice on the market is the "61 million dollar question" everybody is asking.

WE BELIEVE STRONGLY that the real solution to our insatiable taste for rice is to grow rice ourselves. Any intervention apart from growing what we eat as a people is temporary, because we don't control the market outside our borders.

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# COMMENTARY

By Kenneth Rogoff

## Betting on Dystopia

*The right way to think about cryptocurrency coins is as lottery tickets that pay off in a dystopian future where they are used in rogue and failed states, or perhaps in countries where citizens have already lost all semblance of privacy. That means that cryptocurrencies are not entirely worthless.*

CAMBRIDGE - With the price of Bitcoin down 80% from its peak a year ago, and the larger cryptocurrency market in systemic collapse, has "peak crypto" already come and gone? Perhaps, but don't expect to see true believers lining up to have their cryptocurrency tattoos removed just yet.

At a recent conference I attended, the overwhelming sentiment was that market capitalization of cryptocurrencies is still set to explode over the next five years, rising to \$5-10 trillion. For those who watched the price of Bitcoin go from \$13 in December 2012 to roughly \$4,000 today, this year's drop from \$20,000 is no reason to panic.

It is tempting to say, "Of course the price is collapsing." Regulators are gradually waking up to the fact that they cannot countenance large expensive-to-trace transaction technologies that facilitate tax evasion and criminal activity. At the same time, central banks from Sweden to China are realizing that they, too, can issue digital currencies. As I emphasized in my 2016 book on the past, present, and future of currency, when it comes to new forms of money, the private sector may innovate, but in due time the government regulates and appropriates.

But as I also pointed out back then, just because the long-term value of Bitcoin is more likely to be \$100 than \$100,000 does not necessarily mean that it definitely should be worth zero. The right way to think about cryptocurrency coins is as lottery tickets that pay off in a dystopian future where they are used in rogue and failed states, or perhaps in countries where citizens have already lost all semblance of privacy. It is no coincidence that dysfunctional Venezuela is the first issuer of a state-backed cryptocurrency (the "Petro").

The ultimate obstacle for any cryptocurrency is that eventually there has to be a way to buy a range of goods and services beyond illicit drugs and hit men. And if governments ever make it illegal to use coins in retail stores and banks, their value must ultimately collapse.

Many crypto-evangelists insist that Bitcoin is "digital gold," in part because the long-term supply is algorithmically capped at 21 million. But this is nutty. For one thing, unlike gold - which has always had other purposes and today is employed widely in new technologies from iPhones to spacecraft - Bitcoin has no alternative use. And even if Bitcoiners manage to find a way to lower the phenomenal energy cost of verifying transactions, the very nature of decentralized ledger systems makes them vastly less efficient than systems with a trusted central party like a central bank. Take away near-anonymity and no one will

want to use it; keep it and advanced-economy governments will not tolerate it.

The evangelists dismiss such concerns: Bitcoin can still be incredibly valuable as long as enough people perceive it as digital gold. After all, they argue, money is a social convention. But economists (including me) who have worked on this kind of problem for five decades have found that price bubbles surrounding intrinsically worthless assets must eventually burst. The prices of assets that do have real underlying value cannot deviate arbitrarily far from historical benchmarks. And government-issued money is hardly a pure social convention; governments pay employees and suppliers, and demand tax payments in fiat currency.

But it is too soon to say how the new world of digital currencies will play out. Central banks will get into the game (their reserves are already a form of wholesale digital currency), but that is not the end of the story. US Treasury Direct, for example, already offers retail customers an extremely low-cost way to hold very short-term Treasury debt for amounts as little as \$100, tradable to others in the system. Still, heavy security makes the system relatively cumbersome to use, and just maybe governments might adopt one of today's private digital technologies.

For the moment, the real question is if and when global regulation will stamp out privately constructed systems that are expensive for governments to trace and monitor. Any single large advanced economy foolish enough to try to embrace cryptocurrencies, as Japan did last year, risks becoming a global destination for money-laundering. (Japan's subsequent moves to distance itself from cryptocurrencies were perhaps one cause of this year's gyrations.) In the end, advanced economies will surely coordinate on cryptocurrency regulation, as they have on other measures to prevent money laundering and tax evasion.

But that leaves out a lot of disgruntled players. After all, many today - including Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, and Russia - are laboring under United States financial sanctions. Their governments will not necessarily care about global externalities if they encourage cryptocurrencies that might have value as long as they are used somewhere.

So, while we shouldn't be surprised by this year's cryptocurrency price bust, the price of these coins is not necessarily zero. Like lottery tickets, there is a high probability that they are worthless. There is also an extremely small outside chance that they will be worth a great deal someday, for reasons that currently are difficult to anticipate.



## O-PED

By Leon Willems

## Condemning Khashoggi's Killers

**A**MSTERDAM - The details of the brutal, premeditated murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi are astonishing. For starters, there is the location: not some dark alley but inside his country's consulate in Istanbul. Next, there are the alleged perpetrators: a 15-member team that included a forensic doctor who once worked in Australia and brought a bone saw, and a body double who put on Khashoggi's clothes - probably while they were still warm - and casually slipped out the back door. But the most shocking revelation may be this: the Saudis knew they could get away with murder.

Recent figures published by UNESCO, the United Nations organization that is tasked, in part, with promoting the safety of journalists worldwide, show that in nine of ten cases, perpetrators are never punished for murdering a journalist. Because impunity is the norm, Saudi authorities took the gamble that even if the killing came to light, the consequences would be minor. And they were right: although prosecutors in Saudi Arabia are seeking the death penalty for five of the suspects, the international response has so far been meek.

Despite the global attention the murder has received, most leaders have only promised to "consider" sanctions against Saudi Arabia; others have dismissed the idea outright. US President Donald Trump, for example, has said that although the official Saudi explanation is unsatisfactory, he has no intention of responding by curbing arms sales or trade. Leaders in France and Spain have expressed similar sentiments.

Such bluntness illustrates that when economic interests are pitted against human rights, the former always take precedence. It is not only the loss of a journalist's life that needs to be mourned, but also the erosion of civil liberties and free speech - especially in the Middle East.

As the Committee to Protect Journalists reported last month, three of Saudi Arabia's closest regional allies - the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Bahrain - issued statements supporting the Kingdom's response to the Khashoggi killing. Saudi-owned domestic and pan-Arab media toed the line, too, while an army of online trolls quickly set to work to defend the Kingdom's rulers and smear its critics.

This type of whitewash is not limited to the Khashoggi case; it is even harder to find serious criticism in mainstream Arab media of the Saudi-led war in Yemen. With tens of thousands dead and a devastating famine threatening to kill millions more, the region's news outlets are virtually silent on the role of the Kingdom's interventionist crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman.

If the international community genuinely cares about defending human rights, the rule of law, and democratic values, it must denounce Saudi Arabia's brutality. One of the Middle East's most powerful countries is directly responsible for widespread death, destruction, and misery. And yet Western countries are not only condoning these activities; in some cases, they are actively facilitating them by supplying the weapons.

Whose interests are really served when Saudi Arabia is a strategic ally of the West? It is certainly not the marginalized people of Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. Nor is it anyone concerned with human rights, gender equality, and many other values Western leaders claim to uphold.

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of journalists like Khashoggi to a country like Saudi Arabia. Without these purveyors of truth, institutional and political corruption would never be challenged. That is why Saudi officials' extrajudicial killing of a journalist overseas must not go unpunished; governments must urgently reconsider their alliance with the Kingdom. Simply condemning human-rights violations without applying meaningful sanctions will not change its behavior.

Beyond that, the international community must stop delegating the responsibility to investigate and prosecute the murder of journalists to the governments that wanted them dead. In most instances, the rule of law is too weak, and the very people in charge are those who ordered the executions.

Justice may never be served in Khashoggi's case, but his murder must not be in vain. Governments that value transparency and free speech must work together to create an international tribunal to prosecute cases of slain journalists in countries unable or unwilling to do so themselves. The alternative - allowing impunity to prevail - will let criminals off the hook and erode the very values that journalism is meant to defend.

## OPINION

By Dani Rodrik

## China's Boldest Experiment

**B**EIJING - Forty years ago this month, China's leaders set the country on a path of reform that has produced the most dramatic economic transformation in history. Mao Zedong had died two years earlier, in 1976, and the newly rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping succeeded in stamping his vision of economic development and modernization on the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee held in December 1978. In the four decades since, China has transformed itself into an economic powerhouse, portending an equally momentous makeover of the global economy and geopolitics.

China's reforms started in agriculture, where the crushing burden of state controls was relaxed. Through the dual-track pricing mechanism, farmers were given market incentives. The household responsibility system allowed them greater control over the land they worked. Farmers responded quickly, increasing their efficiency and output.

Reforms were subsequently broadened and extended into other areas. Non-agricultural production incentives were bolstered through a hybrid form of ownership called Township and Village Enterprises (TVEs). As the reforms spread to cities, state enterprises gained more autonomy and were encouraged to become entrepreneurial. Incentives were created for provinces and localities to invest and spur economic growth. And the growth of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in the 1990s turned China decisively toward integration with the world economy.

The general thrust of these reforms was to increase the economy's market orientation and external openness. But while China's share of international trade and private investment grew and that of the state sector steadily shrank in relative terms, the authorities retained a firm hand in managing the economy. Economic restructuring and diversification were promoted through a range of industrial policies. Foreign investors were required to enter into joint ventures with domestic firms and to increase the use of local inputs. The exchange rate and international financial flows remained controlled for the most part.

Through it all, China's leadership did not follow any guidebook and resolutely marched to the beat of its own drummer. Reform was guided by neither communist teachings nor free-market dogma. If senior policymakers followed one overarching principle, it was what might be called "pragmatic experimentalism." As Deng famously said, what mattered was not the color of the cat, but whether it caught the mice.

Given the peculiarities of China's experience, it is not surprising that there remains considerable debate about the lessons to be drawn from it. For many in the West, China demonstrates the benefits of reliance on markets and economic liberalization. Yet if China were an economic basket case today, I suspect the same voices would be quick to attribute the failure to the continued intrusiveness of the Chinese state. For others, China demonstrates the intrinsic superiority of the state-led model. Yet many of the same policies, such as dual-track pricing or domestic content requirements, have failed in other settings.

These opposing perspectives can be reconciled. China has not violated the tenets of mainstream economics so much as it has offered a master class in applying them creatively in complicated political and economic terrain. Dual-track pricing provided market incentives at the margin without undermining the fiscal revenues. TVEs spurred private entrepreneurship, despite weak frameworks for property rights and contract enforcement. SEZs spurred exports and foreign investment without undermining employment among protected state enterprises. Industrial policies allowed infant industries to internalize learning spillovers. In short, China represents the triumph of practical economics - in which second-best strategies, market failures, general equilibrium, and political economy prevail - over the simplistic reasoning of Econ 101.

The biggest test for the Chinese model may be yet to come. Throughout the country's economic transformation, the political primacy of the Communist Party of China was never in question. But outside observers expected that continued economic development would eventually lead to political liberalization. Instead, under President Xi Jinping, China has taken a decidedly more authoritarian turn. That is bad news for the hundreds of millions of Chinese whose political freedoms are being ever more tightly circumscribed.

Political repression could be bad news for the economy as well, for at least two reasons. First, people's ability to speak freely provides an advance-warning mechanism for policies that might eventually fail, enabling the authorities to change course before more damage is done. Second, political competition provides institutional mechanisms for channeling opposition, which otherwise might spill over to the streets and fuel civil disorder.

China's leaders seem to be betting that they can avoid both types of problems. They believe they have their ears sufficiently to the ground that they can remain responsive to any brewing discontent. And they hope they can exercise social control through facial recognition and other new technologies, which they have taken the lead in deploying.

The conventional wisdom among social scientists is that the demands of advanced economies and growing middle classes can be met only through greater political freedoms and competition. The Chinese political elite are skeptical, and not without reason. When they look at the West nowadays, they see populism, demagoguery, and deep divisions, rather than harmonious, inclusive societies. Their attempt to combine a high-growth, technologically sophisticated economy with reinforced authoritarianism is perhaps their most ambitious experiment to date.



# PERSPECTIVES

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr.  
November 21, 2018

Public Policy . Economics . Democratic Politics . Political/Economic Decentralization . Public Dishonesty . Dual Citizenship

## “LIBERIANS ARE RELATED”



**T**he Liberian electronic and written media is inundated by debates regarding “Liberians are related”.

Indeed, that Liberians are related is a profound, very powerful traditional Truth and reality; but has become, in 21st century Liberia-Africa, a total cope-out and cesspool of corruption for the very few dishonest, graft & greedy, extremely materialistic, disloyal and unpatriotic, so-called “politicians”, a colonial inheritance based upon race and/or socio-cultural segregation-discrimination.

The Liberian-African traditional social, cultural super-structure of the household, the family, village, clan, tribe and nation-state is held together by the Liberian-African Maxim, “be thy brother’s/sister’s keeper” - that is uphold, defend and protect him/her against physical danger, poverty, hunger and other related social calamities for the survival of society and the individual citizen.

It is for these reasons that laws are proposed, debated and passed in the interest of society as a whole and persons as individuals, not only for the very few, as in the cases of the day - of those who build mansions, castles, buy top-of-the-line vehicles, salary/wage allowances of portable electricity generators with fuel and service, foreign/domestic travel, foreign health trips, etc., etc. The laws are diligently enforced, in the past, fairly and openly with possible punishment of the death penalty; for, the survival of society is greater than any criminal individual.

This tradition, therefore, should and must continue; Liberians should and must go back to the drawing table, back to basics, and elect, as their political leaders, individuals who demonstrate commitment to honesty, loyalty and patriotism to the Liberian-African tradition. This, is doable; for, there are many Liberians so-committed.

## UL announces death and funeral of Dr. Dominic N. Tarpeh

**T**he University of Liberia announces with deepest regret the sad passing of the President of the UL Board of Trustees, Dr. Dominic Nmah Tarpeh, who served the Board with distinction, dedication and commitment from 2006 until his death.

A release issued by the University says from 1987 to 1990, Dr. Tarpeh also served as Vice President for Administration, University of Liberia. In that capacity, he was responsible for the supervision and coordination of administrative support services, including student affairs and advisory services, personnel, transportation, procurement and general services. News of Dr. Tarpeh’s death was first disclosed to the University family by UL President Dr. Ophelia Inez Weeks on December 6, 2018 in a communication. Meanwhile, the following arrangements in honor of the late President of the UL Board of Trustees are as follows:

On Thursday, December 13, a Book of Condolence will be opened on the



Capitol Hill campus in the conference room, where the UL Board meetings are regularly held.

On Saturday, December 15, the body of Dr. Tarpeh will be removed from the Stryker Funeral Home at 8:00 in the morning and conveyed to the University of Liberia at 9:30 A.M. for the traditional one-hour vigil in the UL Auditorium, and subsequently taken to the St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, Stella Maris Compound, for a one-hour songsperation. Tributes follow by a Requiem Mass for burial. Burial follows at the Kaiser Memorial Cemetery in Brewerville, Montserrado County, Liberia. Press Release

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# AMEU president wants higher education prioritized

The president of the African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU), Dr. Joseph Isaac says higher education must be prioritized as a way of allowing graduates to contribute positively to the socio-economic, technological and developmental advancement of Liberia. Speaking when he attended the week-long Intergovernmental Meeting on Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, Dr. Isaac underscored the significance of Liberia to make use of the opportunities that avail themselves internationally on higher education.



Dr. Joseph Isaac

Dr. Isaac says the higher education section of Liberia must include professional and academic experts into the system as a way of harnessing the skills, talents and professionalism of Liberian students through an exchange of knowledge between Liberians and foreign professors.

He states that higher

education qualification reviews are essential to setting the standards as to how certain qualifications can be accessed and reviewed, and at the same time making sure that they meet the basic requirements acceptable globally.

Since its creation in 1945, UNESCO has served as a global platform for discussion on the

recognition of higher education qualifications and the promotion of academic mobility.

UNESCO has therefore established a number of regional conventions in higher education.

Globally academic mobility is said to be sharply on the increase with the overall

population of mobile students doubling since to more than four million students studying outside their home country and it is estimated that by 2020 around eight million students will be studying abroad.

This significant growth in mobile tertiary students calls for a global regulatory framework for the recognition of higher education qualifications.

This framework will reduce the obstacles faced by students, teachers, researchers and job-seekers outside their countries of origin.

In March 2016, following a General Conference decision,

UNESCO established a Drafting Committee in consultation with its Member States.

This committee will elaborate a draft text of a Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications.

Dr. Isaac holds an Associate's Degree in architecture from the University of the District of Columbia, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Construction Engineering.

He also obtained his graduate education from Morgan State University, with Masters in City and Regional Planning, and Doctor of Education in Higher Education Leadership.

## Liberia gets female FIFA Referee after 8 years

By Sally Gaye

After eight years, the Liberia Football Association (LFA) and the Committee of football's world governing body (FIFA) have approved a Liberian female referrer as center FIFA batch for 2019.

Saylvina Walma Carnett will take on the center for 2019 in the local legend and international games as a lone female from Liberia to join other assistant referees from Africa.

Saylvina has been

training.

Mr. Montgomery calls on young referees to put time into training, saying Saylvina has a great task ahead and she needs to stand up and show other young females the way.

Names of referees and assistant soccer referees approved by the FIFA Referee Committee for 2019 including Montgomery, Jerry S. Yekah, George S. Rogers, Jr., and Hassan Corneh.

## Pres. Weah Commissions Liberia's Ambassador To Court Of Saint James

President George Manneh Weah has commissioned Liberia's Ambassador to the Court of Saint James, Madam Gurlu Teta Gibson.

According to a press release issued by the Executive Mansion Tuesday, 11 December, President Weah cautions Amb. Gibson to be effective and responsible in executing her duties.

He says he looks forward to seeing Ambassador Gibson justify the confidence reposed in her with diligence and commitment.

"Before I commission you,

let me say that I have reposed confidence in you on behalf of the people and the state of Liberia whose interest you are expected to serve during your time at the Court of Saint James," he said on 7 December at his Foreign Ministry office.

He requests that Amb. Gibson demonstrates diligence and patriotism in every step she takes while representing Liberia.

He expresses best wishes and for the Liberian envoy, assuring her of the country's support and prayers. He encourages her to exercise a great deal of patience even in

the face of tough times as a good virtue.

President Weah calls on Amb. Gibson to use her expertise and experience in diplomacy to explore all necessary avenues toward bolstering the bilateral relationship between Liberia and United Kingdom.

"You are going to be representing Liberia in one of the world's influential countries," he says, adding: "You therefore have to make sure that our bilateral relationship remains intact and thriving."

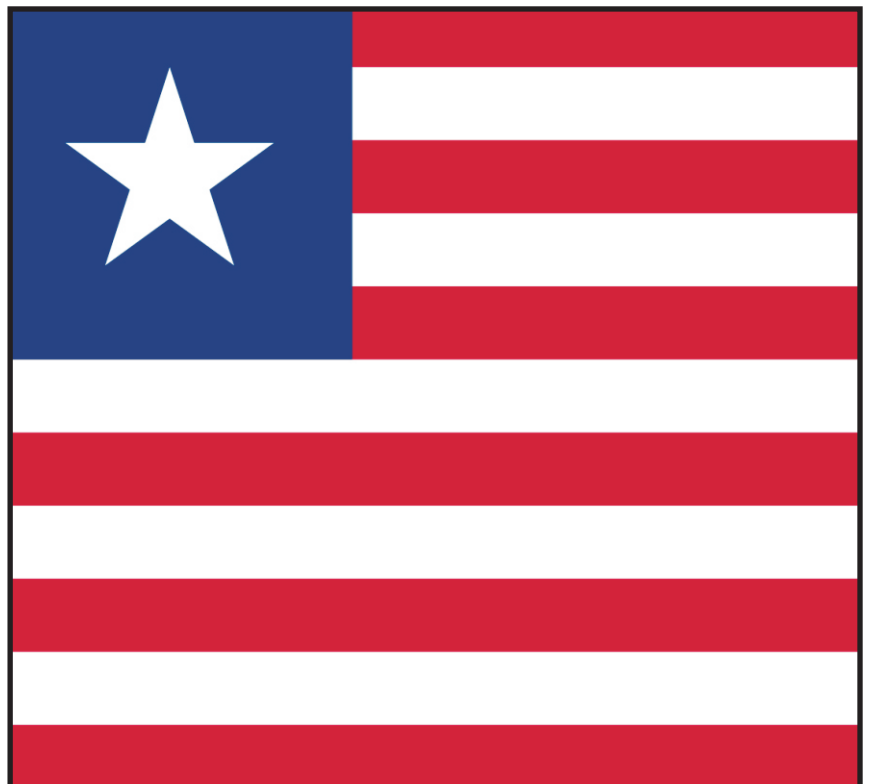
Responding, Amb. Gibson expresses appreciation to President Weah for the confidence reposed in her.

She says President Weah's vision and strong leadership has enabled the international community to take a favorable look at Liberia.

"There is a strong need for all Liberians to work together to achieve economic growth," she says.

"The pro-poor agenda will propel Liberia to a level where the citizens will reap developments and peace, and thank God we do have a leader who is very passionate about this," Amb. Gibson continues.

Madam Gibson assures President Weah that she will use her assignment to promote the government's agenda and encourage investors into the country.--Press release



refereeing in the local leagues.

Speaking to the NewDawn, the Secretary General of the Liberia Football Association (LFA) Mr. Isaac Montgomery said this is a new beginning for Liberian female referees.

He says the list is open to females and they need to stand up for the game.

According to Montgomery, the problem most referees have is fitness and most of them don't want to do more

The LFA release names the Assistant Referees as Johnson Gbarte, Abraham Boye Fahnbulleh, Sekou S. Kanneh, Jr., and Joel Wanka Doe.

Joel Wanka Doe has replaced Elijah Johnson on the 2019 list for Liberia.

Mr. Johnson will now play in the local legend as formal international assistant referee.--Edited by Winston W. Parley



MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# LIPO restores artist's hope

**--Set to launch website on Friday**

By Lewis S. Teh

The Liberia Intellectual Property Office (LIPO) has vowed to restore the lost hope of musical artists, inventors and other individuals that are involved in artistical works here.

Addressing a news conference Tuesday, 11 December at her office on Capitol Hill, LIPO Director General Mrs. Adelyn Cooper announced the pending launch of LIPO's official website and Newsletter.

"The website portal is intended to protect local innovation, invention, creators, and users of IP rights," she says.

She calls it a great initiative undertaken by LIPO to promote, safeguard and create awareness about intellectual property (IP).

According to her, the website which is due to be launched on Friday, 14 December at the Liberia Chambers of Commerce will

contain features for IP online registration, IP database and the country's 2016 IP Law.

"This step will positively impact the IP ecosystem of Liberia, and it is a step forward in educating the future vigilant, and responsible citizens of the

country about their rights and their potential to explore the power of IP at its best," she says. The LIPO Director General further indicates that the move to transition from paper to online registration comes with lots of benefits which includes enhancing and fast-tracking IP registration process and the online

database that will handle the publication of IP titles for the public.

Madam Cooper says the IP database will serve multiple purposes including IP research and IP rights protection.

She says they have embarked on a lot of ICT projects to provide time-saving IP business processing, support the availability of IP information, to encourage IP rights protection and to create a functional and sustainable IP property system in Liberia.

According to her, LIPO is an embodiment of the erstwhile

Liberia Industrial Property and the Liberia Copyright Offices.

The office is responsible for the formulation of policies on intellectual property rights and/or intellectual property regulations.

These include granting applications for patents including utility models, copyright/related rights, trademarks, industrial designs, geographical indications; and layout-designs (topographies) of integrated circuits, among others.--Edited by Winston W. Parley



Mrs. Adelyn Cooper

## Samay Clinic OIC cries for erection of annex in Bong

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

The Samay Health Center in Jorquelleh District has indicated the need to erect an annex to the current facility.

Speaking to our correspondent on Tuesday, 11 December, Samay Clinic Acting Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Kollieyan K.C. Cooper says the clinic does not have a delivery and labour rooms for pregnant women. Madam Cooper states that when pregnant women are in labour at the clinic, they do not have specific wards in which they can be catered to.

She says this is hindering their work, putting the estimated cost of the annex at US\$5,000.00.

But according to Madam Cooper, the money will be generated through their planned year-end program at the clinic on Saturday, 15 December.

The professional Liberian nurse specifically calls on Deputy House Speaker Prince Moye, Senators Dr. Henrique Flomo Tokpa, Henry Yallah,

Representative Marvin Cole, Superintendent Esther Walker and Madam Dorothy Tooman [to give their support].

Madam Cooper also wants the collaborative efforts of goodwill institutions and individuals in Bong County for the speedy construction of the annex to the clinic to adequately deliver the needed health services to attendees in the area.

She also calls on Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor and President George Manneh Weah to support the Liberian health sector if the lives of the citizens must improve for the better.

Ms. Cooper further reveals that this year, Samay Clinic's year-end program will coincide with the raising of the US\$5,000.00 to build the needed annex to the center.

She praises her Boss Mr. Exodus Kermue for the level of management system he continues to carry on to improve the clinic.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

## Former Senatorial candidate alarms deception

Former Montserrado County Senatorial Candidate Bernard Benson alias DJ Blue has termed as unhealthy for the country's democracy the high level of deception on the part of politicians during campaign seasons.

He spoke recently in the Wood Camp Community of Paynesville while donating to residents of the community 20 bags of rice and \$20,000.00 Liberian Dollars in appreciation for the level of support they gave him during

the Montserrado Senatorial by-election conducted early this year.

Mr. Benson came second to the ruling party Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) candidate Saah Joseph, the winner of the polls.

The owner of Hott FM and TV station Mr. Benson says he has observed that most politicians do not fulfill their campaign promises made to electorate during election period.

He wants voters here to be mindful with politicians whom

he says are in the habit of preaching rhetorics to win the admiration of voters.

Mr. Benson makes specific reference to the by-election in which he says a lawmaker paraded with transports buses in Monrovia when passengers paid LD\$20.00 but could not continue with it after the election.

"I just came to show my appreciation to the Wood Camp Community in District #3. This is long overdue. I been promising them to come back and show gratitude. They did very well for me in the past election," Mr. Benson told reporters during the donation.

He discloses that he will be a formidable [candidate] in the 2020 elections in Montserrado County, expressing hope that Liberians will judge him by his believes, his works and contributions to the society and make a rightful choice. Bernard Benson, the Liberian International Disc Jockey (DJ) says his desire to enter the Legislature is to improve the tourism and entertainment sectors here to create jobs for young Liberians.

DJ Blue says he fears no one, but God, adding that CDC ran for about two times before winning state power.

"The people are seeing more sense in my platform as compared to the previous



DJ Blue

## #Revoke rock and sand mining licenses from Chinese and Lebanese#

election," he argues.

According to Mr. Benson, he intends to interact with more communities as means of strengthening his relation with the people before 2020.

The Montserrado County by-election in which Mr. Benson was defeated was created as a result of the election of President George Manneh Weah who was in the Senate when he contested the presidency and won.

Mr. Benson who ran as an independent candidate, attributes his defeat in the by-election against the CDC

candidate to the lack of finance and logistics.

In spite of his defeat, he praised the National Elections Commission (NEC) for professionally handling the by-elections, describing the entire process as free, fair and transparent.

He says he was overwhelmed by the huge number of young people who voted for him during the election in July. He urges his supporters not to be deterred by the defeat in the by-elections because he will be a formidable force comes 2020.



# Français

## Tribunal des crimes de guerre : le ministre adjoint de la défense se dit inquiet

Le vice-ministre de la Défense chargé des Opérations, M. Ernest Vafee, a mis en garde contre les conséquences imprévues de la création d'un tribunal des crimes de guerre ici, précisant qu'il ne s'agit pas seulement de rendre compte pour les crimes qui ont été commis.

« Envisagez-vous, par exemple, que si une émeute éclate à Nimba, si une autre émeute éclate à Bomi et encore une autre à Grand Gedeh à cause de la décision que nous aurions prise, avons-nous, en tant que pays, les moyens de faire face aux émeutes sur plusieurs fronts avec l'armée que nous avons maintenant ? », a-t-il demandé le lundi 10 décembre à Monrovia.

Les commentaires du ministre Vafee arrivent à un moment où les Libériens sont divisés sur l'appel en faveur de la création d'un tribunal des crimes de guerre qui sera chargé de tenir les criminels de guerre responsables des



atrocités commises lors de la guerre civile brutale qui a sévi dans les années 90.

Le régime actuel du président George Manneh Weah n'est pas favorable à l'instauration de la Cour, et le sénateur Yormie Johnson, sénateur du comté de Nimba, qui contrôlait une faction rebelle dissidente indépendante, le Front

patriotique national du Libéria (INPFL), est l'un des principaux opposants au tribunal.

« Lorsque vous examinerez le tribunal des crimes de guerre, vous devriez effectuer ce que nous appelons une analyse des coûts et des avantages », a déclaré le ministre Vafee au ministère de la Défense, où

les correspondants de la défense commençaient une session de formation de deux jours le lundi 10 décembre.

Avec les forces armées actuelles, il demande si le Libéria a la capacité de gérer des émeutes qui pourraient éclater dans plusieurs localités, précisant ce qui se passerait par exemple si des émeutes éclataient dans les comtés de Nimba, Bomi et Grand Gedeh à la suite d'une décision quelconque.

Il précise qu'il n'est pas opposé à la création d'un tribunal chargé de juger les auteurs des crimes de guerre, mais il recommande de faire une analyse des conséquences et des avantages, ce qui permettra de comprendre les implications en termes de sécurité associées à la décision. Il fait valoir que les lois sont faites pour la préservation des sociétés, notant que lorsqu'une loi menace l'existence d'une

société, cette loi devrait être extirpée.

Le ministre Vafee a ajouté qu'il souhaite que cela soit contextualisé et donne un tableau complet de ce qui se passera lorsque le tribunal sera créé.

Il souligne que rendre compte aux victimes de guerre est une bonne chose, mais il insiste sur le fait que si cela menace votre existence même, il doit être examiné attentivement.

Il se demande si des millions de dollars associés à la gestion d'un tribunal chargé de juger les auteurs des crimes de guerre pourraient être affectés à l'amélioration des forces armées afin qu'elles puissent acheter des bateaux pour patrouiller les eaux, améliorer les moyens de subsistance du personnel et construire des routes.

Le ministre Vafee se souvient qu'au cours de la crise Ebola, les soldats ont subi des sacrifices, ajoutant que « notre » lecture de l'histoire devrait permettre de dire quels ont été les avantages ou les conséquences associées à tout ce dont on parle.

« Pour nous, ce qui nous inquiète, si les gens ont faim, les gens ne sont pas payés, quand il y a une épidémie, cela nous concerne », dit-il.

On estime que plus de 250 000 Libériens ont été tués et d'autres contraints à l'exil dans la guerre civile qui a éclaté dans les années 90. La crise suivante qui a forcé le président Charles Taylor en exil en 2003 s'est également soldée par un bain de sang.

## Les politiques ivoiriens « s'organisent » pour la « paix chèrement acquise » (Soro)

Le président de l'Assemblée nationale ivoirienne, Guillaume Kigbafori Soro a fait, lundi, le point de la situation sociopolitique ivoirienne au Président Congolais, Denis Sassou N'guesso au cours d'une

audience, soutenant que « les acteurs politiques (ivoiriens) étaient en train de s'organiser pour que la paix si chèrement acquise soit maintenue ». S'exprimant à Brazzaville devant des journalistes, M. Soro a souligné que son entretien

avec le Président Congolais a porté sur la situation politique en Côte d'Ivoire et en Afrique.

« Je lui ai donné la situation politique en Côte d'Ivoire. Je lui ai dit que les choses se passaient très bien et que les acteurs politiques étaient en train de s'organiser pour que la paix si chèrement acquise soit maintenue », a-t-il expliqué.

Selon lui, les conseils de M. N'guesso ont été de dire que « l'Afrique travaille en général à la paix », par conséquent, « la Côte d'Ivoire qui est une sorte de locomotive de la sous-région ouest-africaine » doit travailler à maintenir la paix.

Par ailleurs, Guillaume Kigbafori Soro a été interrogé sur la situation de l'ex-président ivoirien, Laurent Gbagbo jugé à la Cour pénale internationale (CPI) pour crimes contre l'humanité commis pendant la crise postélectorale ivoirienne de 2010-2011.



### Articles traduits

Par Valéry G. Guhéna

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« En ce qui concerne la situation du président Gbagbo à la Haye, vous savez très bien que nous sommes dans un processus de réconciliation. Nous souhaitons que les choses s'apaisent et si M. Gbagbo est un élément de cet apaisement, nous souhaitons que les choses se passent bien pour lui à la CPI et qu'un jour, il puisse retrouver la

liberté et vivre tranquillement dans son pays », a dit M. Soro.

Le président de l'hémicycle ivoirien séjourne depuis samedi à Brazzaville à l'invitation du président congolais Denis Sassou N'guesso avec qui il dit avoir une relation « au-delà des postures institutionnelles et diplomatiques ».



# Français

## Éditorial

### Le riz pour les pauvres n'est pas une solution durable

L'administration Weah, comme plusieurs administrations précédentes avant, est convaincue que subventionner l'importation du riz est le moyen le plus sûr de maintenir la sécurité alimentaire dans le pays, mais cette stratégie est téméraire, car elle n'a jamais été durable.

Le regretté président William R. Tolbert Jr. s'y est aventuré et son gouvernement s'est empêtré dans une manifestation de citoyens qui a entraîné l'émeute du 14 avril 1979 caractérisée par l'insécurité, l'anarchie et la mort. Le président assassiné, Samuel Kanyon Doe, guidé par les expériences de l'émeute du riz, a lancé et dirigé la révolution verte qui a vu le panier d'aliments du Libéria grossir avec l'exportation de cultures de industrielles comme le cacao et le café, entre autres.

En partenariat avec l'homme d'affaires libanais George Haddad, l'ancien président emprisonné Charles Ghankay Taylor a maintenu le riz sur le marché local à un prix abordable et créé l'impression qu'il avait résolu le problème de l'insécurité alimentaire dans le pays. Mais c'était très loin de la réalité. L'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf a fait venir des techniciens agricoles qualifiés et expérimentés, qui se sont contentés de parler et de rédiger des documents d'orientation ; rien d'autre.

Les trois anciens présidents savaient pertinemment que le riz était l'aliment de base du Libéria. Mais ils ont cherché des solutions rapides, à l'exception du président Doe, qui a pris le taureau par la corne pendant sa campagne de la révolution verte, au cours de laquelle campagne des représentants du gouvernement ont investi dans l'agriculture. Le champ du défunt sénateur Kerkula B. Kpoto du régime de Doe n'a jamais été entièrement récolté en raison de sa taille et de la guerre civile.

Bien qu'il ait lancé le slogan vague : " le pouvoir au peuple", le président Weah semble chercher la même solution miracle en important du riz plutôt que de donner la priorité au secteur agricole. Immédiatement après son entrée en fonction au début de cette année, le président a rencontré des importateurs dans le pays et a conclu un accord visant à réduire les prix, mais cela n'a pas fonctionné car nous ne cultivons pas nous-mêmes nos produits de première nécessité.

À présent, le gouvernement a établi un partenariat avec un importateur privé, TRH Trading, qui travaille en collaboration avec le Ministère du commerce et de l'industrie pour importer du riz pour le vendre à un prix réduit de 10 dollars américains.

Le Président Weah lui-même s'est rendu la semaine dernière à Bong Mines, près du port de Monrovia, à Bushrod Island, et a inauguré le « riz pour les pauvres » avec l'arrivée initiale de 80 000 sacs de 25 kg dans le pays.

« Nous sommes maintenant heureux. Quand j'ai pris le pouvoir, notre peuple était dans la rue parce que le riz coûtait cher et j'ai appelé tous les importateurs de riz pour trouver un moyen de contourner le problème et leur faire savoir qu'ils devaient faire de leur mieux pour réduire les prix sinon le gouvernement se lancera dans la concurrence », a affirmé le président.

L'intervention du gouvernement ne ressemble en rien à la même vieille histoire des déchets de la vache qui, vue de surface, semble sèche, mais c'est de la boue à l'intérieur. La question majeure que tout le monde se pose est de savoir combien de temps ce partenariat peut durer pour maintenir « le riz pour les pauvres » sur le marché.

Nous croyons fermement que la vraie solution à notre goût insatiable pour le riz est de cultiver le riz nous-mêmes. Toute intervention, autre que la culture de ce que nous mangeons en tant que peuple, est temporaire, car nous ne contrôlons pas le marché hors de nos frontières.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Kenneth Rogoff

### Parier sur la dystopie

CAMBRIDGE — Alors que la valeur du Bitcoin est en baisse de 80 % depuis son pic il y a un an et que le plus grand marché en crypto-monnaie subit un effondrement systémique, le « pic crypto » a-t-il déjà fait son temps ? Peut-être, mais ne vous attendez pas à ce que ses partisans les plus fervents fassent la queue pour faire effacer de sitôt leurs tatouages de crypto-monnaie.

Lors d'une récente conférence à laquelle j'ai assisté, l'impression dominante était que la capitalisation boursière de crypto-monnaies doit encore exploser au cours des cinq prochaines années, en passant de 5 à 10 mille milliards de dollars. Pour ceux qui ont regardé le prix du Bitcoin passer de 13 USD en décembre 2012 à environ 4 000 USD aujourd'hui, la baisse de cette année de 20 000 USD ne doit pas nous faire paniquer.

On est tenté de dire : « Bien sûr le prix s'effondre. » Les uns après les autres, les organismes de réglementation prennent conscience du fait qu'ils ne peuvent accepter des technologies de transaction coûteuses à dépister, qui facilitent l'évasion fiscale et les activités criminelles. Dans le même temps, les banques centrales en Suède et en Chine réalisent qu'elles aussi, peuvent émettre des devises numériques. Comme je l'ai souligné dans mon livre de 2016 sur le passé, le présent et l'avenir des devises, quand il s'agit de nouvelles formes d'argent, le secteur privé peut innover, mais avec le temps, les pouvoirs publics réglementent et s'approprient ces nouveaux supports.

Mais comme je l'ai également souligné à l'époque, le simple fait que la valeur à long terme du Bitcoin soit plutôt de 100 \$ que de 100 000 \$ ne veut pas nécessairement dire que sa valeur doit absolument être zéro. La bonne façon de penser aux pièces de crypto-monnaie est de les considérer comme les billets de loterie qui paieront dans un avenir dystopique, où ils sont utilisés dans les États défailants, ou peut-être dans les pays où les citoyens ont déjà perdu tout semblant de vie privée. Ce n'est pas un hasard si l'État dysfonctionnel du Venezuela est le premier émetteur d'une crypto-monnaie soutenue par l'État (le « Petro »).

L'ultime obstacle pour toute crypto-monnaie est de finalement permettre d'acheter une gamme de produits et services plus étendue que les drogues illicites et les tueurs à gages. Et si jamais les gouvernements décident d'interdire l'utilisation de ces pièces dans les magasins de détail et dans les banques, leur valeur risque finalement de s'effondrer.

De nombreux crypto-évangélistes insistent sur le fait que le Bitcoin est « de l'or numérique, » en partie parce que l'approvisionnement à long terme est algorithmiquement plafonné à 21 millions. Mais ça ne tient pas debout. D'une part, à la différence de l'or - qui a toujours eu d'autres utilisations et qui est aujourd'hui largement employé dans les nouvelles technologies, allant des iPhones aux vaisseaux spatiaux - le Bitcoin n'a aucune autre utilisation. Et même si les Bitcoiners parviennent à trouver un moyen de réduire les coûts énergétiques phénoménaux des opérations de vérification, la nature même des systèmes de comptabilité décentralisés les rend beaucoup moins efficaces que les systèmes

équipés d'un organisme central de confiance comme une banque centrale. Retirez-lui le quasi-anonymat et personne ne voudra l'utiliser ; conservez-le et les gouvernements des économies avancées ne pourront pas le tolérer.

Les évangélistes rejettent les inquiétudes de ce genre : le Bitcoin peut encore avoir une valeur incroyable tant qu'assez de gens le perçoivent comme étant de l'or numérique. Après tout, disent-ils, l'argent est une convention sociale. Mais les économistes (moi y compris) qui ont travaillé sur ce genre de problème depuis cinq décennies ont constaté que les bulles de prix autour d'actifs sans valeur intrinsèque doit finir par éclater. Le prix des actifs qui ont effectivement une valeur réelle sous-jacente ne peut pas s'écarter arbitrairement très loin des repères historiques. Et l'argent émis par le gouvernement n'est pas une pure convention sociale : les gouvernements paient des employés et des fournisseurs et exigent le paiement de l'impôt en monnaie fiduciaire.

Mais il est trop tôt pour dire quelle sera l'issue du nouveau monde des devises numériques. Les banques centrales vont entrer dans la danse (leurs réserves sont déjà une forme de vente en gros de monnaie numérique), mais ce n'est pas la fin de l'histoire. La Direction du Trésor américain, par exemple, offre déjà à sa clientèle de détail un moyen extrêmement économique de détenir de la dette du Trésor à très court terme pour des montants aussi bas que 100 \$, commercialisables à d'autres dans le système. Pourtant, de lourdes mesures de sécurité rendent ce système relativement difficile à utiliser, mais peut-être que les gouvernements pourraient adopter l'une des technologies numériques privées actuelles.

Pour le moment, la véritable question est de savoir si et quand la régulation mondiale permettra d'éradiquer des systèmes élaborés de façon privée, qui imposent des coûts importants aux gouvernements en matière de suivi et de surveillance. Toute grande économie avancée assez folle pour essayer tenter d'adopter les crypto-monnaies, comme le Japon l'an dernier, risque de devenir une destination mondiale pour le blanchiment d'argent. (Les coups suivants du Japon pour prendre ses distances vis-à-vis des crypto-monnaies ont peut-être été une des causes des tergiversations de cette année.) Au final, les économies avancées vont sûrement se coordonner sur la réglementation des crypto-monnaies, comme elles l'ont fait sur d'autres mesures visant à prévenir le blanchiment et la fraude fiscale.

Mais cela fait de nombreux mécontents. Après tout, un grand nombre de ces acteurs - notamment Cuba, l'Iran, la Libye, la Corée du Nord, la Somalie, la Syrie et la Russie - subissent les sanctions financières des États-Unis. Leurs gouvernements ne vont pas nécessairement s'inquiéter des externalités mondiales, tant qu'elles encouragent les crypto-monnaies qui pourraient avoir de la valeur tant qu'elles sont utilisées quelque part.

Ainsi, l'effondrement du prix des crypto-monnaies cette année ne devrait pas nous étonner. Pour autant, le prix de cette monnaie n'est pas nécessairement zéro. Comme les billets de loterie, il y a une forte probabilité qu'ils soient sans valeur. Il y a aussi une très faible probabilité que leur valeur soit énorme un jour, pour des raisons qui sont actuellement difficiles à prévoir.



## ARTICLES

# Analysis of the Tale of Liberian Media: The High Price Journalists Paid For Press Freedom in Liberia

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Also because journalists were inefficient and not schooled in conflict and peace reporting, the publics were left with nothing but to guess the true nature and cause of the civil crisis.

Reporting in conflict zone is very difficult and dangerous because as a journalist, the side you find yourself in either rebel or government controlled, well expected you to report in their favor, report only good happening, and not the ugly side. Anything on the contrary, you will be hunted. Also if you are reporting from one group controlled area and that side is overrun by the other side is a gun battle, if you are caught in the web, you either be killed or severely manhandled. For instance, in 1994 when Charles Taylor's NPFL former stronghold of Gbarnga fell to another rebel group, there was killing even where, a local journalist was captured and all his fingers were cut off

Some of the difficulties are based on the thinking or mentality of the executors of the conflict (soldiers, rebels and politicians) on the one hand and the public. The inability of the journalists under conflict to have access to communication vis-a-vis the outside world in many instances making it extremely difficult for journalists to fairly report since they are allowed to use the facilities of the authority (either government or rebels) on the side they are stationed.

For example: Journalist found it difficult to report fearlessly on the side of Charles Taylor and other hand on the side of the West African Peacekeeping Forces. Some journalists willing to brave the storm by reporting fiercely are at time appreciated by the public and at other time not appreciated. What happens usually in such a dilemma is those foreign journalists fill the gap by reporting unbiased as the conflict executors fear them far international reprisal.

## CRACKED DOWN ON JOURNALISTS

Under Taylor regime the media was "undersized" while the state-owned media attempts with much difficulty to dominate public opinion agenda-setting. The Liberian media were attacks on several occasions while some journalists were taken to a graveside to be killed but later released through the intervention of a member of the ill-regular forces. Death threats were regularly used to silence the independent media under Taylor regime, forcing Independent media houses to close down while security on several occasions victimized media personnel and attacked media houses.

During his six-year rule, Taylor ruthlessly cracked down on the political opposition and civil society including the independent media and journalists, limiting their activists in order to consolidate his grips on the presidency and power. The Liberian private media, which Taylor regarded with a mix of suspicion and contempt, was continually subject to government repression and his tactics for silencing critics especially the media were varied. Under his regiem, Police banned independent radio stations perceived to have an "antigovernment" editorial line, and, using pretexts such as tax evasion, they closed newspapers that exposed government corruption or rights abuses. As the 2003 war between government forces and LURD rebels intensified, the Taylor regime tightened its grip on information, imposing censorship policies that required all news stories on the war to be approved by the Ministry of Information. But in the case where it was impossible to subdue the media, journalists were either co-opted with bribes or cowed into self-censorship with threats of imprisonment or physical assault.

The tactics of intimidation culminated in brutal attacks against several journalists and the burning down of several media houses. The two most severely affected are Hassan Bility, former editor-in-chief of the independent Analyst, who was held for six months incommunicado and repeatedly tortured for alleged ties to LURD, while in December 2002, The INQUIRER Reporter Throble Suah was viciously attacked by agents of Taylor's notorious Anti-Terrorist Unit after.

Several media companies were attacked and looted during the war, and tens of thousands of dollars in

equipment was lost or damaged. As fighting hit a fever pitch in June 2003, and almost all of the Liberian media shut down, journalists went into hiding for fear of being targeted by either side or hit in the crossfire while only independent news source that operating in the capital in late July 2003 was the Radio Veritas. The broadcaster was finally forced off the air in the same month when a mortar shell hit its transmitter. Foreign journalists flocked to the war-torn capital after U.S. President George W. Bush ordered U.S. warships to the region and Taylor's departure drew near.

Several media companies were attacked and looted during the war, and tens of thousands of dollars in equipment was lost or damaged. Radio Veritas was unable to resume broadcasting until the end of August, 2003, and then only on the FM band, since the station did not have the funds to repair its shortwave transmitter. Good news for Liberian journalists seemed to arrive with the October 14, 2003 inauguration of Gyude Bryant as chairman of the former power sharing transitional government.

Though some "amateur" and community stations existed outside the capital, authorities banned at least five of them in the spring, because of fears that they were mobilizing the rural population against the government but Taylor allowed the state media service, the Liberian Broadcasting System (LBS), to deteriorate, preferring to disseminate propaganda through his private media empire, LCN.

Just like other professional organizations and institutions, the role of the Liberian media in the Liberian Civil War cannot be overemphasized, the media stood the test of time and paid a greater price, leaving dozens journalists killed, while large numbers of journalist family members were killed and properties destroyed. They were severely humiliated and harassed and on several occasion sentenced to detention. Besides the local journalists, some foreign journalists also paid high price, as was the case in 1990, went two Nigerian journalists who found themselves in the middle of the war were caught in the web and killed, by the disbanded NPFL rebels because of their country involvement in peacekeeping in Liberia.

During the late President William V. S. Tubman's Administration, a well and highly respected Liberian journalist who later turned political to contest the Liberian 1986 presidential elections, was arrested and humiliated because of a report on the Tubman's government. Journalist Tuan Wreh was humiliated and made to eat his own feces by government forces. Besides, he was script naked and carried feces on his hair through the principle of Monrovia. The jail was not the only means used to silence the opposition press.

## ATTACKS ON MEDIA HOUSES

During the heat of the civil war, journalists were divided into two groups as the belligerent forces through fierce battles succeeded splitting the country, set-up defacto governments, without reference to the Liberian constitution. These forces were tussling to reach the vulnerable and traumatized population and the only way to do so was to engage into media propaganda, something which Mr. Taylor used effectively to prosecute the war.

Mr. Taylor, to achieve his goal, used several techniques including the confiscation rural radio broadcasting radio stations and loot the equipment of the ones that the NPFL couldn't seize; sometime destroy items that could not be moved. In certain instances, several broadcast houses out of the range of control were set ablaze. This was never limited to only radio stations but other private institutions and business houses. The ELBS and ELWA, just to name few, suffered seizure of broadcast equipment or destructions.

Just like Taylor, almost all the heads of the belligerent groupings wanted to create and operate their own media propaganda machinery to influence the population both under their controlled territories and other areas. People who resided in these areas were forced to listen to radio stations in their areas, but were they wanted news and radio programming



from area out of factions controlled, they would locked themselves in their homes and lower the volume of their radios. The other factions were unsuccessful in matching resources and scope of the propaganda brutal empire that the NPFL leader created.

Mr. Taylor former Liberia Broadcasting Cooperation and KISS FM were effective in the propaganda to mislead the masses. In the rebels' territories, especially the one under Taylor's NPFL, it was a serious crime to listen to news and programming on radio stations operating from Monrovia. The city was governed by the Interim Government head by University of Liberia Professors, Dr. Amos Sawyer and Cllr. David Kpormakpor. The interim government was fully supported by peacekeepers. They succeeded in dislodging the various factions.

The 14-year war, started on the eve of Christmas 1989 between former president Doe's regime and the NPFL, with Prince Johnson's Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia coming into the picture, left media institutions destroyed and journalists victimized. Several radio stations, newspaper houses and printing presses were destroyed; comparing most media institutions seize operations. After the peacekeepers took controlled of greater part of Monrovia, the Torchlight, THE INQUIRER and the *Footprints Today* Newspapers appeared on the newsstand, while LBS, funded by ECOMOG was the first radio station to resume operations. However, all these institutions were restricted to Monrovia and its surroundings, under the security control of ECOMOG. **Brutality against Journalists**

Several reports obtained show that inhumane crimes against journalists took place in all the areas that were under either factions or ECOMOG but the greatest of these crimes were carried out by Taylor's NPFL fighters who carry out summary executions of journalists. The ECOMOG peace-keepers also manhandled journalists and attempted to impose censorship on newspaper institutions that were operating into Monrovia during the heat of the war. There were time when ECOMOG soldiers arrested and detained editors and reporters apparently for publishing stories against the interests of the peacekeepers. The international standard and ethics the practice of journalism were grossly highly violated and abused, as journalists allowed themselves to be used by heads of warring factions to propaganda hate messages. The gross human rights violations against journalists during the 14 years' war remain difficult to mention every crime perpetrated against them by soldiers former president Doe's soldiers, fighters of Charles Taylor's NPFL and rebel fighters of LURD, LDF, ULIMO-K/J, MODEL and LPC. The arbitrary detention of journalists who published articles or broadcast programming critical of Taylor NPFL was also a common practice under Taylor regime. This was also the case of ECOMOG and Samuel Doe. However, here are some of the crimes that have been documented under each faction heads.

*Continue from last edition*



# Weah mocks false prophets

President George Manneh Weah speaks of prophets of doom here, calling on Liberians especially, church goers or worshippers to keep away from such preachers.

He did not mention names, but the President emphatically stresses that Liberia is a country that had suffered civil war, so a message from a pastor or a prophet or a man of God should be positive rather than spewing out negative thoughts to the people.

Speaking to a church congregation recently at the City of Hope Church in Congo Town outside Monrovia when he returned from a State visit to Senegal, President Weah mounted the pulpit and referred the congregation to Ezekiel 13:1-8

Verse three of Ezekiel Chapter 13 reads, "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!"



Pres. Weah

"What this text is saying to you", the President explains, "is like we have real prophets and we have false prophets; those false ones will tell you, your mother is a witch. They see revelations everyday and

God is talking to them. They would run at the altar and run back and tell you revelations."

He recalls that during the 2017 elections, a prophet claimed that if George Weah

won the presidency, blood would be all over the city!

"And people are still sitting down in that church. The man raised an alarm, emergency and you're all still sitting down. If somebody tells [told] you soldiers are coming; they are shooting! He told you it is not possible. This government that is coming, the George Weah

government, there will be blood and your still sitting down."

He says sometimes, it is not those who bring the false message, but those who sit and listen, adding, "That's where we go wrong."

President Weah emphasizes that it is time Liberian change their ways, noting that reasons why false prophets are controlling people is because they refuse to change their minds.

"When we see something bad, we rather die there, and then we are looking for God's grace."

"So my advice you, those that are coming everyday and telling you this or that, you need to leave them alone so they can know that when you lied to a congregation, God isolates you", he adds.

The President says the only way to isolate false prophets is by walking away from their presence.

"I think that's the only way the preaching from those prophets will be real. Because every time they lied and you sit there, they will continue to lie." *Story by Jonathan Browne*

## No militia

claim that the AFL was training "militias secretly," but they have already addressed the Legislature and provided information to counter the claim.

According to Minister Dickson, Liberia is still fragile and it is the responsibility of everyone to ensure the security of the state, which includes journalists as critical partners.

"So that partnership is not a partnership of choice that we have to build, it's a partnership that we have to build despite you, whether you like me or you don't like

me; whether I don't like your newspaper or I like your newspaper, it's a partnership we have to build for the sake of our people and our country," he says.

Minister Dickson argues that Liberia has "one of the most professional military right now on the African continent," particularly referencing the army's human resource capability.

According to him, AFL Generals, Operational Commanders, and Counter Terrorism Specialists go to the same schools that the U.S. Generals and others go to for

advanced training, adding that the AFL's Engineering Command is building roads, personnel earning law degrees, and a professional Coast Guard is built.

Closing a defense correspondents training session on Tuesday, 11 December, Minister Dickson expressed hope that the discussions with the media will provide value for the relationship going forward.

Due to the unique character of the Defense Ministry and the AFL, he states that information sharing is of a much guided

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nature. However, he assures the Ministry and the Army's accessibility to the media on their operations.

Minister Dickson indicates that there will be time when they will engage the media to the extent that they will understand why a particular information cannot be released at the moment when the media want it.

"But generally, we can assure you that the Ministry of Defense Family and the AFL will do everything we can to ensure that we provide you all the information necessary so that you properly inform our people," he explains.

Minister Dickson concludes that the mandate of the Defense Ministry is to ensure as civilian overseer that the Commander-in-Chief has a "ready, robust and capable military at all times to

execute national policies to ensure the safety of this country and its people."

On day two of the training, Captain Thomas Bombo, Attorney-at-Law and Deputy Judge Advocate General at the Military made presentation on the legal operations of the Army and how cases involving its officers are dealt with.

The Secretary General of the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) Mr. Daniel Nynkonah describes the interaction between the media and the defense family as essential and in the interest of the country.

He encourages his colleagues at the training that the kind of journalism that they must do must project Liberia's side of the globe, and to also specialize in their profession.



Minister Dickson



# No militia training here



## -Defense clarifies

By Winston W. Parley

The Ministry of Defense has clarified that the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) has not conducted secret training for militias, warning that information of this kind spread by a representative can scare

away investors and also affect job creations.

Deputy Defense Minister for Administration Mr. Olandrus Dickson told a training session with defense correspondents Monday, 10 December that the U.S. and other partners were fully aware that the AFL was

training Executive Protection Service officers at the military facility and ECOWAS advisors helped with the training.

"The military was training EPS [Executive Protection Service] personnel ..., and that was not the first time and some members of the National Legislature were there at some of these graduations, they were there and they spoke," he says.

Minister Dickson says maybe people think they're doing this against the government due to political reasons, but he warns that it is the ordinary people that suffer.

"Our people been through a lot in this country, right, we can't afford to give them other problem," he says, and cautions that when wrong information is put out, it has the propensity to cause chaos.

Deputy Minister Dickson recalls how a lawmaker from the House of Representatives said in a recent



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## Public Service Announcement

The New Dawn will take its usual annual break beginning December 24, 2018 to return on the newsstand immediately January 4, 2019. We thank our many loyal readers and subscribers for standing by us in 2018 despite a rather tough business climate. We look forward to a very peaceful and prosperous New Year. Merry Christmas.

The Management

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