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President George Manneh Weah

# Weah receives lashes

# Korkpor's bench risks reputation?



Chief Justice Francis Korkpor



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# Continental News

## Ethiopian Airlines: Flight recorders recovered from crash site

Investigators have found the flight data recorders from an Ethiopian Airlines plane that crashed on Sunday.

The devices recovered at the crash site were the Boeing 737 Max 8's cockpit voice recorder and digital flight data recorder.

The plane was en route from Addis Ababa to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, when it crashed six minutes after take-off, killing all 157 people on board.

Several airlines have grounded the Boeing model following the disaster.

The months-old aircraft came down near the town of Bishoftu, 60km (37 miles) south-east of the capital at 08:44 local time (05:44 GMT).

There were more than 30 nationalities on board the flight, including Kenyans, Ethiopians, Canadians and Britons.

Do we know how it happened?

The cause of the disaster is

not yet clear. However, the pilot had reported difficulties and had asked to return to Addis Ababa, Ethiopian Airlines said.

"At this stage, we can't rule out anything," CEO Tewolde Gebremariam said.

"We can't also attribute the cause to anything because

we'll have to comply with the international regulation to wait for the investigation."

Visibility was said to be good but air traffic monitor Flightradar24 reported that the plane's "vertical speed was unstable after take-off".

The pilot was named as Senior Capt Yared Getachew

who Ethiopian Airlines said had a "commendable performance" with more than 8,000 hours in the air.

There were 32 Kenyans, 18 Canadians, nine Ethiopians and seven Britons on the flight, according to a passenger list published by Ethiopian officials.

Eight Italians, eight Chinese, eight Americans, seven French citizens, six Egyptians, five Germans, four Indians and four people from Slovakia were also on board.

A number of passengers are also believed to have been affiliated with the UN and were travelling to a session of its Environment Assembly in Nairobi.

"It is one of the biggest catastrophes we have had in years," Michael Moller, director-general of the UN Office in Geneva, told the session on Monday.

David Beasley, the executive director of the World Food Programme, said seven members of the agency's staff had died in the crash, including Irish and Italian nationals. -BBC



Media caption The BBC's Emmanuel Igunza, at the scene, said there was a huge crater at the site of the crash

## DR Congo's Bemba seeks 68 mln euros from war crimes court

Former DR Congo vice-president Jean-Pierre Bemba is demanding 68 million euros in compensation from the International Criminal Court following his war crimes acquittal last year, his lawyer said Monday.

Lawyers said Bemba's assets -- including seven planes and three villas in Portugal -- were "simply allowed to rot" by the court while he spent a decade behind bars in The Hague.

Last June, Bemba was acquitted of charges of murder, rape and pillaging committed by his private army in the neighbouring Central African Republic in 2002-3. A conviction for bribing witnesses was upheld.

"An innocent man lost 10 years of his life," lawyer Peter Haynes said in a document sent to the ICC.

"The aim is to try to repair some of the damage done to this man and his family by his

arrest, his detention and the related actions by the court and certain parties," Haynes added. Bemba returned to his homeland after his acquittal but was barred from running for the opposition in Congolese elections because of the bribery conviction.

The compensation demand adds to the troubles of the ICC, which was set up in 2002 to try the world's worst crimes but has faced recent setbacks including the acquittals of Bemba and, in January, former Ivory Coast leader Laurent Gbagbo.

Haynes pointed out that the demand for 68 million euros (\$76.5 million) "is just less than half the annual budget of the court".

But Haynes said Bemba was willing to donate 22 million euros -- should he be awarded the full compensation -- "to provide reparations to the people of the Central African Republic."

This amount would come from the compensation claimed "for the loss of 10 years of his life." -AFP



Jean-Pierre Bemba was acquitted last June of charges of murder, rape and pillaging committed by his private army in the neighbouring Central African Republic in 2002-3 (AFP Photo/JOHN THYS)

## Sudan opposition leader jailed for protest

A Sudanese emergency court Sunday sentenced an opposition leader to a week in jail, as police detained several people intent on marching on parliament to protest a state of emergency.

Mariam al-Mahdi said she will spend a total of three weeks in jail after refusing to pay a fine of 2,000 Sudanese pounds (\$42).

Deputy chief of the opposition Umma Party, led by her father and former premier Sadiq al-Mahdi, she and her sister Rabah were among those arrested earlier on Sunday.

Protest organisers had

"As some of our leaders came out of the party office to lead the march, security agents arrested them," said Mohamed al-Mahdi, a party leader who is not related to the former premier's family.

Riot police fired tear gas at those who had gathered outside the party offices, witnesses said, prompting the crowd to disperse before the march could begin.

"Protesters have now launched demonstrations in some areas of Omdurman. Many of them have been arrested," one onlooker said.

Later on Sunday, protesters also rallied in some areas of



Sudanese protest in Khartoum's twin city of Omdurman on Sunday, despite a nationwide state of emergency (AFP Photo/-)

called for a march to challenge the state of emergency, imposed nationwide by President Omar al-Bashir on February 22.

Bashir's move came after a crackdown on rallies against his iron-fisted rule failed to deter demonstrators.

The president has ordered a slew of tough measures to quell the protests, including banning all unauthorised rallies and setting up the emergency courts to probe offences.

Sunday's procession was to start at the Umma Party offices in the capital's twin city of Omdurman.

Khartoum, including in the eastern district of Burri that has become a regular site of demonstrations, according to witnesses.

- Other leaders fined -

Alongside the two daughters of the former prime minister, "five other leaders of our party have also been taken away by security agents," Mohamed al-Mahdi said.

After her sentencing, Mariam al-Mahdi was taken to a women's prison in Omdurman. -AFP

# EDITORIAL

## Audit for US\$25 Million is noteworthy

PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH WEAH last Thursday ordered the General Auditing Commission (GAC) to conduct an investigative audit into how US\$25 Million earmarked by the government to mop-up excess Liberian dollars in the economy was expended.

THE MONEY WAS withdrawn in 2018 from the country's reserve with the United States Fed for this particular purpose. But the procedure employed by a Technical Economic Management Team or TEMT, chaired by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel Tweah and co-chaired by Executive Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia Nathanie R. Patray, has received public criticism and mounting suspicions whether the pronounced objective was achieved.

LAST WEEK FOUR collaborating opposition political parties here called for the arrest of the two TEMT leaders to account for the money similarly as several officials of the Central Bank of Liberia, including former Executive Governor Milton Weeks and Acting Governor Charles Sirleaf, son of ex-President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and others are in court to account for printing excess Liberian banknotes, totaling over LRD2 million.

BUT BOTH MINISTER Tweah and Executive Governor Patray argue that they did not wrong, detailing in a press statement last week that US\$17.0 million used in the exercise is fully accounted for, while the remaining US\$8.0 million is with the CBL.

AMID THE PUBLIC suspicion, President Weah believes the right thing to do is to conduct an investigative audit to establish the veracity of the transaction involving the US\$25 million.

WE BELIEVE THE President took a wise decision in this matter, aimed at establishing the truth. In the coming two weeks, the General Auditing Commission will go through the files to authenticate whether the US\$17.0 million was actually used to mop-up excess banknotes in the economy and the balance US\$8.0 is with the CBL as claimed.

IT IS THEREFORE important that both Minister Tweah and Executive Governor Patray avail themselves and cooperate with auditors from the GAC in a spirit of transparency and accountability.

IF BOTH OFFICIALS would put away pride and demonstrate a cooperative posture in getting to the bottom of this matter, they will not only redeem their own integrity, but the entire government, particularly the President, who reposed the confidence in them to serve the Liberian people.

A MARK OF a good leadership is willingness to listen to the people. President Weah has demonstrated that he listens to the concerns of Liberians by this singular act of calling the two officials to transparency and accountability.

THE CDC-LED GOVERNMENT, including the country generally is facing an integrity test. How we proceed in these challenging times will go a long way in building a positive image not only for this current generation, but generations to come.

**New Dawn**  
FULLY INDEPENDENT

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# COMMENTARY

By Barak Barfi

## The Pharaoh-Friendly West

*Considering Egypt's history, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's current effort to remain in office until 2034 is not surprising. And the US and European response to Sisi's power grab suggests that the West has not abandoned its belief that tacitly supporting repressive Arab regimes will secure stability.*

WASHINGTON, DC - Last month, Egypt's parliament overwhelmingly approved draft constitutional changes that would allow President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to remain in office until 2034. And the West - fixated on upholding political stability and maintaining access to lucrative weapons markets - is content to let it happen.

Amending Article 140 of the 2014 constitution - approved by 485 of 596 MPs - will extend the two allowed presidential terms from four to six years, and permit Sisi to run for two additional terms when his current one ends in 2022. Parliament will hold a second vote within 60 days. The decision would then need to be ratified by a public referendum.

Sisi's desire to remain president is unsurprising. To be sure, he displayed humility upon coming to power. In an interview in 2013, he claimed that he did not "aspire for authority." In 2017, he vowed, "I am not for any amendments to be made to the constitution ... the one who is in the president's seat will not be able to stay after the term allowed by law and the constitution." Likewise, in his first speech to parliament in 1981, former President Hosni Mubarak - ousted in the Arab Spring uprising in 2011 after clinging to his position for 30 years - said, "God knows I never dreamed of this job."

In the land of the pharaohs, presidents tend eventually to become enthralled by myths touting their longevity, infallibility, and even divine right to rule. Mubarak displayed that mindset in 2003, for example, when a writer asked him if it was true that Saudi Arabia had attempted to persuade Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to step down, to prevent an American-led invasion. "Impossible!" Mubarak declared, "No president ever steps down!"

As for Sisi, his messianic pretensions were revealed in leaked recordings, in which he declared that former President Anwar Sadat informed him in a dream that he would be president. In another dream, Sisi reportedly heard a voice promising, "We will give you what we have given to no other."

Westerners may scoff at such claims, but Egyptians take them very seriously. In the Judeo-Islamic tradition, dreams are considered a low stage of prophecy. In the Book of Genesis, Joseph saved Egypt from famine and drought by divining the true meaning of the pharaoh's dreams.

The timing of Sisi's announcement, however, was determined not by a dream, but by political conditions. The socioeconomic turmoil unleashed by the 2011 revolt is finally subsiding. After several years of economic growth that barely kept up (if it all) with population increases, the economy grew by 5.3% in the fiscal year that ended last June.

Moreover, an International Monetary Fund-mandated austerity program - which required energy and food subsidies to be slashed, even as incomes fell - is reaching its denouement. As it winds down, so will the likelihood of economic protests. Already, labor and student demonstrations have abated, owing to a security-services clampdown and a lack of support from other segments of society. And though Egypt's power structure is opaque, frequent military and security-service purges suggest that Sisi has

consolidated his position behind the scenes.

Sisi's foreign-policy credentials have also lately received a much-needed (though largely undeserved) boost from the pause in construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Nile, Africa's longest river. Ethiopia initiated the project to alleviate domestic and regional energy shortfalls. But Egypt - which receives just 51 millimeters of precipitation per year, the lowest amount in the world - depends on the Nile for its water supply, which would be reduced by an expected 10% annually as the dam's reservoir is filled.

Though negotiations failed to assuage Egyptian concerns, recent political changes in Ethiopia have done so. The election of a new prime minister more focused on enacting widespread economic reforms and rooting out corruption than building a dam - together with funding shortages and faulty electromechanical work - have brought the project to a virtual halt. Egypt's pro-government media have spun this development as an example of Sisi's acumen.

In his relations with the West, however, Sisi actually has shown acuity. Whereas Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan engaged in a war of words with his American counterpart, Donald Trump, before releasing the American pastor Andrew Brunson, Sisi quietly freed an American aid worker, Aya Hijazi, who had been held for three years on false charges. Add to that America's trade surplus with Egypt - which amounted to \$2.4 billion in 2017 - and Trump is more than pleased with Sisi. This has blunted the US State Department's influence, thereby mitigating any potential backlash against the proposed constitutional amendment.

As for Europe, despite paying lip service to democracy and human rights, its leaders are far more concerned with preventing migrants from landing on their shores, supporting a bulwark against terrorism, and selling their military wares abroad than they are with protesting repression in distant lands. When Sisi visited France in October 2017, French President Emmanuel Macron declared, "I believe in the sovereignty of states, and therefore, just as I don't accept being lectured on how to govern my country, I don't lecture others."

During a visit to Cairo in January, Macron expressed concern that Sisi's crackdown on opponents is undermining stability, but emphasized that he would not cut off dialogue. Egypt is, after all, an important strategic partner to France in the region, including in Libya. From 2014 to 2017, when Egypt was the world's third-largest arms purchaser, France was Cairo's main weapons supplier (\$2.4 billion), while Germany was fourth with \$389 million.

What Western countries fail to recognize adequately is that the jihadists and migrants they so fear are being incubated by the authoritarian regimes they prop up. Before 9/11, many of al-Qaeda's senior leaders were Egyptian. And while then-US President George W. Bush doted on his Yemeni counterpart, Ali Abdullah Saleh, a virulent al-Qaeda affiliate was taking root in that country.

The US and European response to Sisi's likely power grab suggests that the West has not abandoned its belief that tacitly supporting authoritarian Arab regimes will secure stability. Some illusions die very hard indeed.

## O-PED

BY Ban Ki-Moon

# Governing Geoengineering

**N**EW YORK - Climate change poses an unprecedented threat to humanity, one that appears increasingly likely to reduce global standards of living dramatically within our lifetime, and cause untold damage in the longer term. And, because addressing such a daunting planetary challenge requires radical approaches, there have been wide-ranging discussions about what the world must urgently do to limit the rise in global temperature to less than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

Although reducing greenhouse-gas emissions must remain the highest priority, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says this is not enough. Some now suggest that we also need to remove huge amounts of carbon dioxide from the air. Others argue that we may also need to reflect sunlight back into space, to buy the world more time to reduce and remove emissions.

Taken together, these two approaches are known as geoengineering. And as the effects of climate change worsen, a growing number of policymakers, scientists, and entrepreneurs are considering such options more seriously.

But at present, we have no idea what unforeseen and unintended consequences deploying these new technologies might have. The unknown unknowns - especially with solar geoengineering - could be just as bad as the known challenges presented by climate change.

What's more, as with global warming, the impact of these technologies will transcend national borders. This puts those who have the least say - the vulnerable and the poor - on the front line. It also risks exacerbating wider threats to international peace and security, such as resource scarcity and forced climate migration.

This is why the Elders, a group of independent global leaders, is calling on the international community to agree on a rigorous governance framework for geoengineering, and to put it in place without delay. Such a decision-making system must be transparent, participatory, and accountable. It should include the voices of those most affected and enable all governments and non-governmental stakeholders to gain the fullest possible understanding of these new technologies for more informed decision-making.

Since the Industrial Revolution, we have known that technology is not a panacea, and that it advances human wellbeing only if all those affected are given the chance to participate in its development. This consideration is all especially relevant to geoengineering, because our knowledge of these technologies and their impact remains limited.

Fortunately, efforts are underway to address this. This week, the UN Environment Assembly - the world's highest-level decision-making body on environmental issues - will consider whether to initiate a global learning process on both the science and governance of geoengineering. To this end, the UNEA would call for a worldwide assessment of these emerging technologies, giving all countries a common platform of knowledge.

This shared understanding is an important first step toward ensuring that decisions concerning the use or non-use of geoengineering are based on the principles of equality, justice, and universal rights. These are the values underlying the 2015 Paris climate agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, both of which were adopted during my tenure as UN Secretary-General.

The UN is best placed to accommodate the governance framework requirements we now need. Only through the UN's multilateral processes can we ensure that geoengineering technologies, and how they might be applied, are not the preserve of individual states. This is vital for environmental sustainability, international security, and the wellbeing of future generations around the world.

Many people are wary of this debate, particularly in international fora. They fear that it could be a foot in the door for highly dangerous ideas, and that the very act of drawing attention to these technologies could reduce pressure to cut emissions.

I understand these concerns, and I agree that our main collective priority must still be to cut emissions; end the use of fossil fuels; and promote a zero-carbon, climate-resilient, and people-centered economic transition.

But we also need to acknowledge that the geoengineering genie is already out of the bottle. The likelihood of unilateral deployment of solar geoengineering increases every year. The global community must decide whether to engage now, by setting clear governance rules and guardrails, or allow individual actors to take the lead, creating a fait accompli for the rest of us.

Ignoring this debate would be a mistake. Instead, the world should focus on learning more, including via the process at the UNEA, in order to understand the full range of options and assess their risks with the best information available.

How to understand and potentially harness disruptive new technologies for the benefit of all humanity is one of the defining questions of our age. Future generations will not forgive us if we fail to answer it convincingly.

## OPINION

By Dani Rodrik

# The Case for a Bold Economics

**C**AMBRIDGE - At the end of 1933, John Maynard Keynes sent a remarkable public letter to US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. FDR had taken office earlier that year, in the midst of an economic slump that had pushed a quarter of the labor force into unemployment. He had launched his ambitious New Deal policies, including public works programs, farm subsidies, financial regulation, and labor reforms. He had also taken the US off the gold standard to give domestic monetary policy freer rein.

Keynes approved of the general direction of these policies, but also had some sharp criticism. He worried that FDR complicated the economic recovery effort by broadening his policy agenda unnecessarily. FDR was doing too little to increase aggregate demand and too much to change the rules of the economy. Keynes took particular aim at the National Industrial Recovery Act, which, among other things, greatly expanded labor rights and fostered independent unions. He fretted that the NIRA would sap business confidence and weigh on the federal bureaucracy, without making a direct contribution to recovery. He wondered whether some of the advice FDR was getting "is not crack-brained and queer."

Keynes did not think much of FDR's economics, but at least he was a sympathetic critic. Because much of the New Deal ran against the prevailing economic orthodoxy, FDR's policies had little support from leading economists of the day. For example, as Sebastián Edwards explains in his fascinating recent book *American Default*, the predominant view among economists was that breaking the dollar's link with gold would create havoc and uncertainty. The only bona fide economist in FDR's "brain trust" was Rexford Tugwell, a little-known 41-year old Columbia professor who did not even teach graduate students.

Will economists prove more helpful today, at a time when the challenges we face are nearly as pressing as those during the Great Depression? Unemployment may not be a severe problem in most advanced countries currently, but large segments of the labor force seem cut off from economic progress. Record levels of inequality and poor earnings prospects for younger, less educated workers are eroding the foundations of liberal democracies. The rules that underpin globalization are badly in need of reform. And climate change continues to pose an existential threat.

These problems demand bold responses. Yet, for the most part, mainstream economists seem preoccupied with marginal fixes - a tax-code tweak here, a carbon tax there, perhaps a sprinkling of wage subsidies - that leave untouched the structures of power underwriting the rules of the economic game.

Economists can rise to the challenge by adopting a broader vision. Last month, I joined a group of prominent economists to launch an initiative that we have called "Economics for Inclusive Prosperity" (EfIP). From labor markets and finance to innovation policies and electoral rules, the goal is to advance ambitious policy ideas that pay much closer attention to inequality and exclusion - and to the power imbalances that produce them.

As Suresh Naidu, Gabriel Zucman, and I explain in our "manifesto," neither sound economics nor convincing evidence support many of the dominant policy ideas of the last few decades. What has come to be called "neoliberalism" is in many ways a derogation of mainstream economics. And contemporary economic research, appropriately deployed, is in fact fully conducive to new ideas for creating a fairer society. Economics can be an ally of inclusive prosperity. But it is up to us economists to convince our audience of the merits of these claims.

Our network is made up of academic economists who believe new ideas can be developed without abandoning scientific rigor. The catchphrase of our day is "evidence-based policy." Accordingly, our policy briefs are based on empirical analysis, using tools of mainstream economics. But, for us, an "evidence-based" approach is not one that reinforces a conservative bias in favor of policies at the margins of existing institutional arrangements; it is one that encourages experimentation. After all, how can we develop new evidence without trying something new?

Markets rely on a wide range of institutions to create, regulate, and stabilize them. These institutions do not come with predetermined forms. Property and contracts - the most elementary institutions required to make markets work - are legal constructs that can be designed in any number of ways. As we grapple with new realities created by technological innovation and climate change, questions about the allocation of property rights among different claimants become crucial. Economics does not provide definite answers here, but it supplies the tools needed to identify the relevant tradeoffs.

A common theme running through our initial set of policy proposals is the power asymmetries that shape the functioning of the contemporary global economy. Many economists dismiss the role of such asymmetries because there is little scope for power under conditions of perfect competition and perfect information. But in the real world that we examine, power asymmetries abound.

Who has the upper hand in bargaining for wages and employment benefits? Who dominates markets and who must submit to market forces? Who can move across borders and who is stuck at home? Who can evade taxation and who cannot? Who gets to set the agenda of trade negotiations and who is excluded? Who can vote and who is effectively disenfranchised? We argue that addressing such asymmetries makes sense not only from a distributional standpoint, but also for improving overall economic performance. Economists have a powerful theoretical apparatus that allows them to think about such matters.

Although economists are well positioned to develop institutional arrangements that go beyond what already exists, their habit of thinking at the margin and sticking close to the evidence at hand encourages an aversion to radical change. But, when presented with new challenges, economists must envision new solutions. Imagination is crucial. Not everything we try will succeed; but if we do not rediscover the value of FDR's credo - "bold, persistent experimentation" - we will certainly fail.

# LIBERIANS DEBATE

With Sally H. Gaye Cell#: 0886726282 Email:sh0770291004@gmail.com



**The Liberia National Police announced an immediate investigation into the death of 48-year-old Matthew J. Innis, a resident of 72nd Community in Paynesville City. The deceased was Deputy Director for Micro-Finance at the Central Bank of Liberia, who allegedly died in a hit and run road accident on 3rd March.**



**Sunday Johnson**

“The police haven't concluded with the investigation but the body has already been worked on. What investigation are the police conducting? The police can't provide death certificate; I hope when it happens to your family, you should make the same statement. I think there is more to this than just killing him. Have the police produced death certificate?”

Was the police right by taking the body to the funeral home in the absent of his family? According to the public health law of Liberia, whenever there is a homicide or suspicious death especially, when the deceased can't be recognized by anybody, the law states the dead body should remain on the spot for at least not more than 48 hours for the information to go across. But the body has been worked on, even the criminal procedure law of Liberia talks about suspicious death.



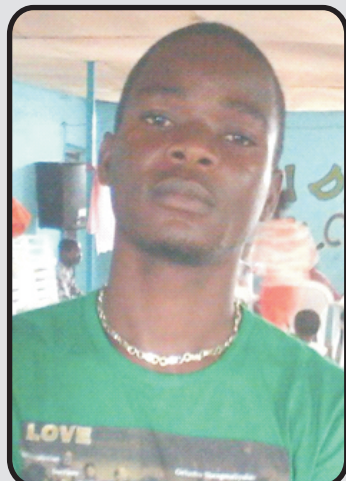
**Milton Hagba**

“Well, to be perfectly honest, in my humble opinion, without offending anyone, who thinks differently from my point of view, but also looking at this matter from different perspective and without condemning anyone's view, I honestly believe I forgot what I had to say that money report is already out and we all know that nothing will be done to the main criminals. We also know that

instead, they will be looking for scapegoats. Poor Innis may never see justice even if the doer came forward because we all know our system.”

**Mark Gaye**

“While the LNP is conducting her investigation, we are urging our friends within the less busy opposition to stop unfairly rendering conclusion to the investigation thereby, creating an unhealthy environment for those trained and credible investigators, as they go about gathering those pieces of evidence for a logical conclusion of the case. Or should we invite the FBI to help with this investigation again or should our President, I mean the fighter of corruption, constitute another [Presidential Investigative Team] PIT? You [people] know to your very self if any foul is being played with the death the late Matthew Innis, as being propagated, it will be from your block.”



**Sara Singbeh**

“The Liberia National Police are jokers. You are now starting investigation after damaging evidence for forensic? Why LNP took the body immediately without public consumption and pronouncing him dead. Is the LNP now a licensed doctor? Have the police concluded on the investigation surrounding the death of Harry Greaves and Michael

Allison? This will be one of the never-ended investigations by the LNP.”

## 8 Civil society groups restart campaign for CSDF bill

**E**ight Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the country reiterate call for the passage of the bill seeking the establishment of a national county social development fund otherwise referred to as 'stand alone law'

The bill, currently before a joint committee of the 54th Legislature, also seeks to promote accountability and development.

The CSOs are implementing partners of the USAID-funded Liberia

Accountability Voice Initiative or LAVI, which are also members of the Natural Resource Management (NRM) that advocate for and monitor policy and accountability reforms for the CSDF.

They include the Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD), Sustainable Development Institute (SDI), Liberia Media Center (LMC), Citizens United to Promote Peace & Democracy in Liberia (CUPPADL), Development Education

Platform for Dialogue and Peace (P4DP), Rural Human Rights Activists Program (RHRAP) and NAYMOTE.

At the first public hearing of the CSDF's Stand Alone Law, held last Friday, March 8, at the House of Representatives Mr. Harold Aidoo, Executive Director of IREDD said the CSDF Law is a revolution for the people of Liberia because for the first time in 160 years, Liberians are deciding what they want in terms of development.

He said when approved, the bill will ensure effectiveness in utilization of the County Development Fund (CDF) and the Social Development Fund (SDF) which are jointly known as the County Social Development Fund (CSDF).

“We want to the House to expeditiously pass it into law, so as to enable the desired impact of the CSDF dawn on the lives of Liberians, as was initially envisaged,” Mr. Aidoo added.

In further support of the bill, National Program Assistant of SDI, Sampson Williams, and Mr. Lorma Baysah, Executive Director of RHRAP in separate statements note their

respective organizations are part of the

advocacy and investigation, which showed that most Liberians want the CSDF to be amended as a Stand Alone Law.

Mr. Augustus Zayzay of LAVI, told lawmakers that the proposed CSDF Law promotes accountability, women participation, CSOs representations and monitoring roles, guidelines as well as strengthen Legislative oversight.

According to the CSDF Law, the foremost standing amendment in the Stand Alone Law is “All funds allocated in the budget directly to a county as National County Social Development Funds (CSDF), and any other funds collected in the name and on behalf of the county, directly or indirectly, shall first be transferred to an Escrow Account.” CSOs claimed that all funds allocated in the budget directly to a county as National County Social Development Funds, in the tone of US\$3m (US\$200,000 for each county), and any other funds collected in the name and on behalf of a county, directly or indirectly, must be in the

**MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

**Police arrest woman for kidnapping new born baby**

By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

A report emanating from Bong County says, a thirty five year old woman identified as Beatrice Moses has been arrested by the Liberia National Police for kidnapping a one day old baby from the CB Dunbar Maternal Hospital in Gbarnga.

Beatrice is currently behind bars at the Gbarnga Central Police Station awaiting court trial.

According to the report, the incident occurred earlier Monday morning at the CB Dunbar Hospital, when the mother of the missing new born baby left her baby with the unknown visitor to use the bathroom.

The Mother of the child (Bendu Karmoh), told reporters that the accused on Monday Morning around 6 to 7 AM entered the maternal wall and pretended to be in search of another mother who had just given birth to a child.

During the exchange she (the accused) requested to hold Bendu's baby, saying that she

was in love with the new born. It was based on this pretended affection that Bendu explained, she left the accused holding her child and asked for few minutes to use the bathroom. Bendu said she was accompanied to the bathroom by her sister who had also come to visit her.

She said upon her sister's

returned to the room, she realized that the stranger, who is said to be a resident of Monrovia had escaped with her new born baby in route to Gompa City Nimba County.

She said upon hearing the news from the bathroom, she horribly ran out of the hospital compound and informed the

police that her child is missing and she was in search of the baby.

Our correspondent said Bendu, a resident of Grand Cape Mount County had gone to the hospital to give birth.

The Superintendent of the Liberia National Police Bong Detachment, Col. Fredrick Nappy who confirmed the incident told reporters that on Monday morning he received a call from the Head of the Nursing Department alarming about the missing child at the government health facility.

He said they immediately placed phone calls to members of the Liberia Immigration Service at the border point in Gompa City Nimba County about the situation.

Col. Nappy said at noon hours, they finally received call from the Immigration Officers that the perpetrator had been arrested around Gompa, which

prompted the police to dispatch a team of Police Officers on the scene to rescue the one day old baby.

According to our correspondent the accused told reporters that she stole the child because she has given birth four times but the four children were all dead.

She requested for mercy from the government through the Ministry of Justice to set her free stating that her action of kidnapping the young child was to replace her own which past off recently in Monrovia this week while giving birth.

"I am really in need of child that's the reason I stole my friend child at the CB Dunbar Hospital this morning," she adds.

The accused confirmed that she resides in Monrovia with her boyfriend who is not aware of her arrest in Gbarnga Bong County. -Edited by Othello B.



Liberia National Police Headquarters in Monrovia

**Weah visits NIR**

-Urges Liberians to enroll

President George Manneh Weah has urged all Liberians to register and obtain their National Identification Cards, stating that this is good for the country.

President Weah said the national registry is useful in many ways including the establishment of a database on the citizens and residents of Liberia, identification of people for various reasons and delivery of government services across the county.

According to a release issued by the National Identification Registry, The President made the remarks

Friday March 8, 2019 when he paid an acquaintance visit at the head office of the National Registry in Congo Town.

During the visit, President Weah toured the premier enrollment center, the national biometric data-center and the printing facilities. He sought understanding on the registration process, especially circumstances under which applications can be rejected. The Presented also shared strategies with the NIR's management to help drive up registration and secure the database.

The Executive Director of the NIR, Hon. Tiah Nagbe explained that there were two

major conditions under which an applicant can be rejected. The Executive Director named the rejection conditions as an 'Oath of Allegiance' as requires by law in the case where one of the applicant's parents is a non-Liberian and if there was no proven evidence that the applicant is a Liberian.

Taking the President on the tour, were the Executive Director of the National Identification Registry, Hon. J. Tiah Nagbe and the Deputy Executive Director for Technical Services, Hon. Zeze R. Reed along with Hon. Haja Liberty, the Deputy Executive Director for Administration.

The tour was graced by the presence of the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Hon. Nathaniel F. McGill and the Minister of Internal Affairs and Chairman of the NIR Board of Registrars, Hon. Varney A. Sirleaf.

The National Identification Registry is an autonomous agency of Government, established by an Act of the National Legislature in 2011, to register all Liberians and foreign residents. The agency has registered more than 100,000 Liberians since it started full operations in November 2017. Currently, registration of citizens is taking place in all 15 county capitals, using mobile registration teams. -press release



President George Manneh Weah

**Greedy officials warned**

Crozierville Township Commissioner in Lower Montserrado County, Ms Ruth James, warns her colleagues in government who want all for themselves to stop, adding that such attitude is not in the interest of the Weah administration.

Speaking with reporters recently in the township,

She warns that if officials obsessed by greed are caught in misdeeds they should not go with impunity.

At the same time Commissioner James called for the establishment of a vocational school in the township to avoid students coming to Monrovia before graduating from high school,

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Commissioner James emphasized that public officials should first seek interest of the state, because it is the only thing that will drive the government's Pro-Poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity, including education, health, infrastructure, provision of safe-drinking water, among others.

which is cost intensive for parents.

Crozierville Township was established in 1865 by free slaves or settlers returning from America and other parts of the world. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

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**Weah reaffirms Juli Endee as Culture Ambassador**

President George M. Weah has reaffirmed Madam Juli Endee as Liberia's Culture Ambassador.

The title was initially conferred on her by jailed ex-President Charles G. Taylor through the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism over two decades ago.

According to a release, the reaffirmation of the Culture Ambassador title on Madam Juli Endee was made Friday evening at the Monrovia City Hall by Presidential Advisor and Special Envoy of the President, Dr. Laurence K. Bropleh, during the official launch of Amb. Endee's new musical album entitled 'Prevenient Grace'.

Dr. Bropleh, who served as proxy for President Weah, narrated that the President reached the decision because he was convinced that Amb. Endee still remains the beacon of the Liberian culture as she has over the years used culture and other forms of traditional engagements to reach out to Liberians with messages of peace and reconciliation.

Dr. Bropleh, who pledged the President's unwavering support to Madam Endee's endeavors and initiatives aimed at fostering peace and



Madam Juli Endee

reconciliation in the country, noted that most of her activities are geared towards fulfilling aspect of the government's Pro-Poor Agenda that has to do with peace, reconciliation and development.

He reiterated that Amb. Endee will continue to serve as Culture Ambassador of Liberia because of the confidence President Weah has in her for said endeavor; noting that over

the years, she has worked across all barriers and segments of the Liberian society, spreading messages of peace through dramas, songs, community engagement and public outreach, a characteristics that have distinguished her from all others having the desire to serve in such position.

He maintained that her passion for the Liberian culture

and tradition as being exhibited through her engagement and collaboration with traditional leaders across the country in many instances was used to

solve potentially explosive conflict with notable organizations and institutions over the years.

Reflecting on his days as Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism during the first term of former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Dr. Bropleh narrated that on several occasions some women came to his office, asking him to convince Madam Sirleaf to have Amb. Endee replaced. He said he could not accept their request because after quizzing and evaluating them, he did not find anyone among them that could match Julie's creativity, innovation and tenacity when it comes to promoting and accelerating the Liberian

cultural values and engendering peace among the population.

In response, Amb. Endee thanked all institutions and organizations, including the UN system, AU, ECOWAS, representatives of foreign missions accredited to Liberia and the Government of Liberia for

supporting her effort to produce her latest album, which is primarily focus on peace and reconciliation in the country.

She explained that although the album is being officially launched in Monrovia, five counties, including Margibi, Bong and Nimba had already being thrilled by the songs of peace and reconciliation in the album during the launch and public performances of her group, the Liberia Crusaders for Peace close to two months now.

-Press Release

**Strike at Abi Joaudi Supermarket**

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Normal working activities at the premises of Abi Jaoudi Supermarket's Fresh Frozen Food (FFF) Company came to a complete halt Monday, 11 March for over ten hours when workers stormed the company's office in demand of their wages and benefits.

The workers from different departments of the company were led by their chief spokesperson Augustine Johnson and co-spokesperson Tejaneh Doepla.

They besieged the front entrance to the main office chanting slogans: "We want our money; We are tired suffering under Abi Jaoudi and FFF."

The protesters included drivers of light and heavy duty vehicles, and cold room operators, among others.

The protesters claim that the management of the company is supposed to pay their wages and benefits, but they have allegedly refused.

According to Spokesman Augustine Johnson, the workers and the management

went through legal battle at which time the Labour Ministry requested Abi Jaoudi management to pay off workers who decided to leave the entity.

Since that decision was allegedly reached by the Ministry, the protesters claim that nothing has been done to resolve the situation.

Mr. Johnson explains that the management owes the workers over US\$200,000.00.

He laments that the workers are compelled to abandon their assigned duties in demand of their money.

He accuses the company of allegedly deducting the money in question from their salaries over the years.

Mr. Johnson lamented further that workers are responsible for their own medications.

In alleged violation of the Labour Law of Liberia, Mr. Johnson alleges that the company fired some of their co-workers.

During the protest, the management of the company invited the workers' leadership to resolve the situation.

According to Mr. Johnson, the company has scheduled a meeting with the protesters for Tuesday, 12 March to address their concerns.

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He discloses that as head of the workers, he is under obligation to ensure that there exists peaceful working environment between the workers and the management.

He therefore appeals to his colleagues to listen to him by waiting until the meeting on Tuesday is held.

When contacted, the Administrative Manager of the company, Mr. Jason Weni says the management of the company has no direct discussion on the claim being made because the workers and management went through a legal battle at the Ministry of Labour.

Mr. Weni who preferred not to be recorded, explains that the Ministry resolved that the

management of Abi Jaoudi pay-off workers who do not want to work with the entity.

According to him, workers that decided to leave the company were paid-off with all of their benefits as prescribed by the Ministry of Labour.

Mr. Weni observes that most of the workers that are protesting do not really want to leave the company, but they expect to be paid - off while still working.

Meanwhile, Mr. Weni urges protesting workers to go back to the Ministry of Labour if they have any grievances, warning against inciting their colleagues to abandon their duties.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

# Français

## Charles Sirleaf et Milton A. Weeks libérés sous caution

Le fils de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Charles Sirleaf, et l'ancien gouverneur de la Banque centrale, Milton A. Weeks, ont été libérés sous caution.

M. Sirleaf et M. Weeks ont tous deux été mis liberté conditionnelle par le tribunal correctionnel «C» présidé par le juge Boimah Kontoe le vendredi 8 mars après que les deux hommes ont déposé leur caution.

Les conditions fixées pour leur libération exigent que MM. Sirleaf et Weeks ne se rendent pas hors du comté de Montserrado sans l'approbation du tribunal. Ils sont aussi tenus de remettre tous leurs documents de voyage au shérif du tribunal «C» et de se représenter au tribunal deux fois par mois.

Cinq anciens dirigeants de la CBL ont été inculpés le 4 mars de "sabotage économique" à la suite de la publication de l'audit de Kroll Associates et des investigations d'une commission d'enquête présidentielle. Il leur est notamment reproché d'avoir fait imprimer sans autorisation un excédent de billets pour un

montant de 2,645 milliards de dollars libériens, dont ils ne peuvent justifier l'utilisation, selon l'accusation.

Mais les trois autres coaccusés doivent encore rester en prison. Ils n'ont pas bénéficié d'une libération sous caution pour la simple raison qu'ils n'ont pas pu payer leur caution.

Ils font face à plusieurs charges dont sabotage économique, utilisation abusive des fonds publics,

versement illégal de fonds publics à une association de malfaiteurs et facilitation de la procédure pénale.

Le rapport d'enquête de 68 pages contient une seule bonne nouvelle pour les finances du pays : non, un conteneur rempli de 15 milliards de dollars libériens (102 millions de dollars américains, 89 millions d'euros) imprimés à l'étranger n'a pas disparu entre son arrivée sur le territoire et les

coffres de la Banque centrale, contrairement à ce qu'affirmait une rumeur, à l'origine de l'enquête.

La polémique était née mi-2018 de déclarations du ministre de l'Information, Lenn Eugene Nagbe, indiquant que la nouvelle administration n'avait pas été informée de l'arrivée de ces billets par l'ancienne présidente Sirleaf.

Alors que des manifestants scandaient "Rendez l'argent des conteneurs", George Weah, élu sur un programme de lutte contre la pauvreté et la corruption, avait promis de faire la clarté sur cette affaire, avec l'aide du gouvernement américain.

Le tableau dressé par Kroll est accablant pour les banquiers centraux de ce pays pauvre d'Afrique de l'Ouest, ravagé par une guerre civile (1989-2003) qui a fait quelque 250.000 morts.

L'audit souligne l'existence de problèmes "à tous les niveaux du processus de contrôle des billets entrants et sortants de la CBL" sur la période étudiée (janvier 2016 - décembre 2018), qui correspond aux deux dernières années de la présidence de Mme Sirleaf et au début du mandat de George Weah.

- 'Formulaires écrits à la main' - Dans le détail, il explique que la CBL a commandé en 2016 et 2017 - sans appel d'offres et sans l'aval préalable du Parlement - des nouveaux billets pour 15 milliards de dollars libériens

(LRD) à la société américaine Crane Currency, qui les a imprimés en Suède.

Si 15 milliards de dollars libériens ont bien été commandés, ce sont finalement 15,506 milliards qui ont été imprimés, livrés et payés, poursuit l'audit. Certains documents évoquent même un montant de 17,450 milliards, mais cela pourrait relever d'erreurs, souligne Kroll, qui juge d'une manière générale "inadéquante" la comptabilité de la banque.

Une tranche de 10 milliards de dollars libériens a en outre été injectée dans l'économie sans que les économies coupures ne soient retirées de la circulation, alors qu'une augmentation de la masse monétaire entraîne inéluctablement une hausse de l'inflation et une dévaluation de la monnaie.

Pour enrayer ces phénomènes apparus depuis deux ans au Liberia, George Weah a ordonné en juillet à la CBL le rachat de billets libériens pour 25 millions de dollars américains. Mais cette opération a été mise en oeuvre "sans stratégie clairement définie" par la Banque centrale, selon Kroll.

Enfin, le rapport souligne que le relevé des entrées et sorties des coffres de la Banque centrale à Monrovia se fait "sur des formulaires écrits à la main" et que la comptabilité de la CBL ne reflète pas la réalité de ses réserves.



## Côte d'Ivoire – Littérature : Bernard B Dadié a rangé sa plume

L'écrivain ivoirien Bernard Dadié, est décédé samedi à l'âge de 103 ans. Il est l'auteur de plusieurs ouvrages, dans lesquels il a abordé divers genres littéraires.

Dictée : "Climbié" ! Les élèves congolais du primaire

ou collègue dans les décennies 60,70, voire 80, se souviennent encore de ces dictées dont les accords se révélaient être des pièges susceptibles de conduire aux fautes grammaticales.

Entre accord du participe

passé se rapportant au sujet réel ou sujet apparent, le complément d'objet direct ou indirect et bien d'autres, Bernard B. Dadié apparaissait comme un auteur "difficile" pour les candidats devant passer une épreuve de dictée.

L'homme maniait la langue française avec une aisance subliminale qui a accompagné des générations d'élèves et placé l'auteur dans le livre des souvenirs scolaires douloureux, pour ceux qui redoutaient l'épreuve de dictée, surtout quand "le nombre de fautes équivalait du nombre de coups", notamment pour les "dictées préparées". C'est bien loin tout cela et depuis, la rigueur dans l'écriture n'est plus qu'un lointain souvenir, tant pour les élèves que même pour bien d'enseignants. Mais cela est un autre débat...

Bernard Binlin Dadié ou Bernard Abou Koffi Binlin Dadié à l'état-civil, est né en 1916 à Assinie (sud-est de la Côte d'Ivoire), il se fait connaître dès 1934 avec une pièce de

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théâtre satirique, "Les Villes".

En 1950, il publie un recueil de poèmes engagés, "Afrique debout !" qui dénonce les relations de domination entre Blancs et Noirs dans l'Afrique coloniale. Son autobiographie romancée, "Climbié", parue en 1952, est sans doute son œuvre la plus célèbre, également très critique vis-à-vis du colonialisme.

En 1980, son roman "Les jambes du fils de Dieu" remporte aussi un franc succès. Bernard Dadié a reçu deux fois le grand prix littéraire d'Afrique noire avec "Patron de New York" (1965) et "La ville où nul ne meurt"

(1968).

Militant pour l'indépendance, il a été le ministre de la Culture de 1977 à 1986 du premier président ivoirien Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

"Bernard Dadié est l'écrivain le plus fécond de la littérature néo-africaine (...) et avec Léopold Sédar Senghor, le plus traduit", selon Nicole Vincileoni, universitaire et auteure d'un ouvrage d'analyse de référence sur son œuvre.

Bernard Dadié a abordé presque tous les genres littéraires, poésie, roman, chroniques, contes traditionnels et théâtre.



# Français

## Éditorial

### Affaire 25 millions : Nous saluons la décision du président Weah

Le président George Manneh Weah a ordonné jeudi dernier un audit sur la manière dont les 25 millions de dollars US débloqués par l'Etat pour éponger l'excès de liquidité du dollar libérien ont été dépensés.

Dans un communiqué de presse publié le jeudi 7 mars, dans la soirée, la présidence a indiqué que le président Weah a donné instruction à la Commission générale d'audit de procéder à l'audit des fonds débloqués et de présenter ses conclusions dans un délai de deux semaines.

Le ministre libérien des Finances, Samuel Tweah, a présidé avec Nathaniel Patray, gouverneur exécutif de la Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL), l'équipe de gestion technique économique (TEMT) dont la mission était d'éponger l'excès de liquidité sur le marché des changes avec un montant de 25 millions de dollars américains mis à sa disposition par l'Etat du Libéria.

Mais depuis que cinq responsables de la banque centrale, dont Charles E. Sirleaf, l'un des fils de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson, ont été arrêtés, inculpés et incarcérés à la prison centrale de Monrovia dans le cadre de l'enquête sur la disparition présumée de plusieurs milliards de dollars libériens, le président Weah fait l'objet de pressions croissantes de la part de l'opposition qui réclame l'arrestation d'autres suspects, dont le ministre des finances et de la planification du développement et le gouverneur exécutif actuel de la banque centrale. Ces derniers, selon l'opposition, doivent rendre compte des 25 millions de dollars US dont le décaissement avait pour objet le freinage de la dépréciation rapide de la monnaie locale en raison de la circulation d'un excès du dollar libérien.

L'appel de l'opposition fait suite au rapport d'enquête de l'équipe d'investigation présidentielle qui fait état de ce que le ministère des finances et la banque centrale ont fait fi des meilleures pratiques conventionnelles, à savoir l'utilisation des institutions bancaires légitimes et des bureaux de change agréés, en injectant les 25 millions de dollars dans l'économie.

La commission d'enquête indépendante reproche au ministère des finances et à la banque centrale le fait d'avoir injecté les fonds dans l'économie de façon directe en ne faisant appel qu'à des bureaux de change et des entreprises locales méconnues, sans associer les banques commerciales au processus.

Selon la commission, le ministère des finances et la banque centrale ont échangé en tout 14 millions de dollars américains contre plus de 2, 15 milliards de dollars libériens du 17 juillet au 18 septembre 2018.

« C'est à partir du rapport de l'équipe d'enquête présidentielle, qui préconise une enquête judiciaire sur l'ensemble de l'opération menée par la Banque centrale du Libéria visant à éponger l'excès de liquidité de la monnaie locale, c'est aussi suite au rapport de Kroll - une institution de réputation internationale recommandée par le gouvernement des États-Unis - qui appelle à « mieux comprendre » la manière dont l'opération a été menée - que le ministère de la Justice, sur directive du président George Manneh Weah, a demandé à la Commission Générale des Audits de mener un audit complet sur la manière dont les 25 millions de dollars américains affectés à cette opération ont été utilisés », indique le communiqué.

En juillet 2018, l'Etat du Libéria décaissait 25 millions de dollars américains en vue de l'injecter dans l'économie libérienne afin de stabiliser la monnaie locale qui connaissait une dépréciation fulgurante et soudaine.

Mais le ministre Tweah et le gouverneur exécutif Patray soutiennent qu'ils n'ont rien fait de mal, précisant dans un communiqué de presse de la semaine dernière que 17 millions de dollars US ont été utilisés dans le cadre de l'opération, tandis que les 8 millions de dollars US restants ont été déposés à la banque centrale.

Vu les suspicions du public, le président Weah a jugé bon de procéder à un audit d'investigation pour établir la véracité en ce qui concerne les transactions effectuées avec les 25 millions de dollars américains.

Nous croyons que le président a pris une sage décision dans cette affaire, surtout qu'il s'agit d'établir la vérité. Au cours des deux prochaines semaines, la Commission générale d'Audit examinera tous les dossiers pour vérifier si les 17 millions de dollars US ont été effectivement utilisés pour éponger l'excès de liquidité de la monnaie locale et si le reste des 8 millions de dollars US sont effectivement à la CBL.

Il est donc important que le ministre Tweah et le gouverneur exécutif, M. Patray, coopèrent avec les auditeurs de la GAC dans l'intérêt de la transparence et de la reddition des comptes. Si les deux responsables mettent de côté leur orgueil et affichent un certain niveau de coopération pour permettre aux auditeurs d'aller au fond des choses, ils auront racheté non seulement leur honneur, mais aussi celui de tout le gouvernement, et en particulier l'honneur du président qui leur a fait confiance et leur a donné l'opportunité de servir le peuple libérien.

La volonté d'écouter le peuple est une marque de bon leadership. Le président Weah a démontré qu'il écoute les préoccupations des Libériens par cet acte qui consiste à appeler les deux responsables à faire preuve de transparence.

Le gouvernement dirigé par la CDC et l'ensemble du pays font face à un test d'intégrité. Notre façon de procéder en ces temps difficiles contribuera grandement à créer une image positive non seulement pour la génération actuelle, mais aussi pour les générations futures.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Barak Barfi

### L'Occident s'accommode du nouveau pharaon

WASHINGTON, DC - Le mois dernier, le Parlement égyptien a approuvé à une très large majorité un projet d'amendements à la Constitution qui permettrait au président Abdel Fattah al-Sissi de rester en fonction jusqu'en 2034. Et les pays occidentaux - obnubilés par la préservation de la stabilité politique et l'accès à un marché de l'armement très lucratif - n'y voient aucun inconvénient.

L'amendement à l'Article 140 de la Constitution de 2014 - approuvé par 485 députés sur 596 - portera la durée du mandat présidentiel à deux fois six ans alors qu'il est actuellement limité à deux fois quatre ans. Ce changement permettra à M. Sissi de se représenter en 2022, à l'échéance de son mandat actuel. Le Parlement doit voter une deuxième fois à ce sujet dans les deux mois à venir et la décision devra ensuite être ratifiée par un référendum.

Que M. Sissi veuille rester au pouvoir n'est pas une surprise, même s'il s'est montré humble lors de son accession à la présidence. Lors d'une interview en 2013, il avait affirmé qu'il « n'aspirait pas à un poste d'autorité ». En 2017, il l'avait juré : « Je ne suis pas favorable à des amendements constitutionnels... celui qui occupe la présidence ne pourra pas rester en poste à l'échéance du mandat prévu par la loi et la Constitution ». Lors de son premier discours au Parlement en 1981, l'ancien président Hosni Moubarak - contraint à la démission par le soulèvement populaire du Printemps arabe en 2011 après être resté au pouvoir pendant presque 30 ans - avait lui aussi affirmé que « Dieu sait que je n'ai jamais rêvé de ce poste ».

Au pays des pharaons, les présidents finissent par être fascinés par les mythes qui font l'apologie de leur longévité, infailibilité et même de leur droit divin à gouverner. Moubarak a dévoilé un tel état d'esprit en 2003 lorsqu'un écrivain lui demandait s'il était vrai que l'Arabie saoudite avait tenté de convaincre le dictateur irakien Saddam Hussein de se démettre de ses fonctions pour prévenir une invasion menée par les États-Unis. « Impossible ! » avait-il déclaré, « un président ne démissionne jamais ! ».

Pour ce qui est d'al-Sissi, ses prétentions messianiques ont été révélées par des enregistrements qui ont fuités dans lesquels il raconte que l'ancien président Anouar el-Sadate lui aurait dit dans un rêve qu'il serait président. Dans un autre rêve, al-Sissi aurait entendu une voix lui promettre « Nous vous donnerons ce que nous n'avons donné à nul autre ».

Si les Occidentaux peuvent se moquer de telles assertions, les Égyptiens les prennent très au sérieux. Dans la tradition juive et islamique, les rêves sont considérés comme étant porteurs de messages prophétiques. Dans le livre de la Genèse, Joseph sauva l'Égypte de la famine et de la sécheresse en devinant la signification véritable des rêves du pharaon.

La manœuvre de Sissi n'a toutefois pas été dictée par un rêve, mais par le contexte politique. Les troubles socioéconomiques engendrés par la révolution égyptienne de 2011 commencent enfin à s'estomper. Après plusieurs années de croissance économique correspondant tout juste au rythme que l'accroissement de la population, l'économie a enregistré une progression de 5,3 pour cent au cours de l'exercice fiscal qui s'est clôt en juin dernier.

De plus, le programme d'austérité du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) - qui imposait de réduire les subventions énergétiques et alimentaires, réduisant ainsi considérablement le pouvoir d'achat des Égyptiens - arrive à son terme. La fin de ce programme réduit la probabilité de contestation sociale. Les manifestations des syndicats et des étudiants ont déjà nettement diminué, en raison notamment de la répression exercée par les forces de sécurité et l'absence de soutien de la part d'autres segments de la société. Et même si la structure du pouvoir en Égypte est opaque, les purges répétées au sein des forces armées et de sécurité laissent à penser que Sissi a consolidé sa mainmise sur le pouvoir dans les coulisses.

Au plan de la politique étrangère, la position d'al-Sissi a aussi bénéficié d'un sérieux coup de pouce (quoique largement immérité) du à la pause marquée dans la construction du « barrage de la grande Renaissance éthiopienne » sur l'un des affluents du Nil, le plus grand fleuve du monde. L'Éthiopie a lancé ce projet pour répondre aux pénuries d'énergie, à la fois nationale et régionale. Mais l'Égypte - dont la pluviométrie est l'une des plus basses au monde, avec 51 millimètres seulement par an - dépend du Nil pour son approvisionnement en eau et celui-ci devrait être réduit de 10 pour cent environ par an lors du remplissage du réservoir du barrage.

Si les négociations n'ont pas répondu aux préoccupations du gouvernement égyptien, de récentes évolutions politiques en Éthiopie sont allées dans ce sens. L'élection d'un nouveau Premier ministre plus soucieux de mettre en œuvre d'importantes réformes économiques et de combattre la corruption que de construire un barrage - en sus d'un manque de financement et d'équipements électromécaniques déficients - ont interrompu l'achèvement des travaux. Cette nouvelle conjoncture a été présentée par les médias égyptiens proches du gouvernement comme un exemple de la sagacité d'al-Sissi.

Dans le cas de ses relations avec les pays occidentaux, il n'y a par contre aucun doute qu'il a fait preuve de perspicacité. Contrairement au président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan qui s'est livré à une guerre verbale avec son homologue américain Donald Trump avant de libérer le pasteur américain Andrew Brunson, al-Sissi a discrètement ordonné la libération de l'humanitaire égypto-américaine Aya Hijazi, emprisonnée depuis trois ans sur la base de fausses accusations. Si l'on y ajoute l'excédent commercial des États-Unis avec l'Égypte - qui s'est élevé à 2,4 milliards de dollars en 2017 - il n'y a aucune raison pour laquelle Trump ne serait pas ravi par al-Sissi. Ces circonstances ont entravé l'influence du Département d'État américain et par là même les critiques potentielles des propositions d'amendements constitutionnels du président égyptien.

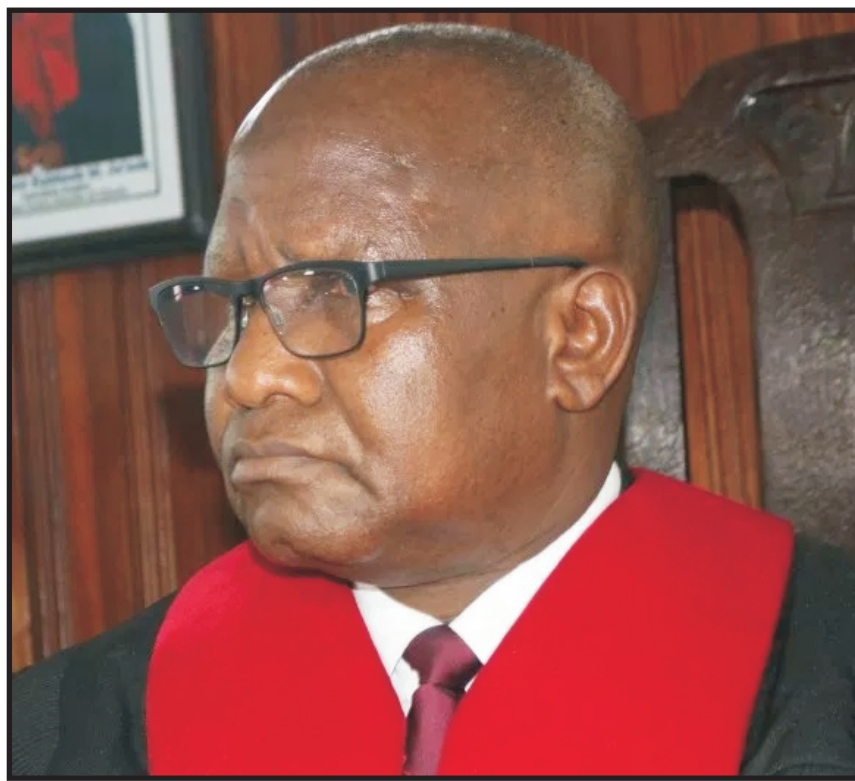
En ce qui concerne l'Europe, en dépit d'une défense de pure forme de la démocratie et des droits humains, ses dirigeants sont bien plus soucieux d'empêcher les immigrés d'arriver sur leurs côtes, d'ériger un rempart contre le terrorisme et de vendre des armes et du matériel militaire qu'ils ne le sont de protester contre la répression dans des contrées lointaines. Lorsqu'al-Sissi s'est rendu en France en octobre 2017, le président français Emmanuel Macron a déclaré : « Je crois à la souveraineté des États et donc de la même façon que je n'accepte qu'aucun autre dirigeant ne me donne des leçons sur la manière de gouverner mon pays, je n'en donne pas aux autres ».

Et lors d'une visite au Caire en janvier dernier, Macron s'est inquiété de ce que la répression contre les opposants au régime puisse saper la stabilité et l'État de droit, tout en soulignant qu'il ne romprait pas le dialogue. L'Égypte est après tout un partenaire stratégique important de la France dans cette région, y compris au sujet de la Libye. Entre 2014 et 2017, alors que l'Égypte était le troisième acheteur mondial d'équipements militaires, l'industrie d'armement française se plaçait en tête des ventes d'armes à ce pays, pour un montant proche de 7 milliards d'euros. L'Allemagne arrive en quatrième position, avec des contrats à hauteur de 389 millions de dollars.

Le paradoxe que les pays occidentaux n'apprécient pas à sa juste mesure est que les djihadistes et migrants qu'ils craignent tant sont engendrés par les régimes autoritaires qu'ils soutiennent. Avant les attentats du 11 septembre 2001, de nombreux cadres d'Al-Qaïda étaient égyptiens. Et à l'époque où l'ancien président américain George W. Bush chantait les louanges de son homologue yéménite, Ali Abdullah Saleh, un groupe virulent affilié à Al-Qaïda a pris racine dans ce pays. Les réactions américaine et européenne au coup de force parlementaire du président Sissi laissent à penser que les pays occidentaux sont toujours persuadés que soutenir tacitement des régimes arabes autoritaires est un gage de stabilité. Certaines illusions ont la vie dure.

# Korkpor's bench risks reputation?

By Winston W. Parley



Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA) president Cllr. Tiawan Gongloe says the ongoing impeachment hearing of Associate Justice Kabineh M. Ja'neh is challenging because the Supreme Court "avoided, refused, failed and neglected" to interpret Article 43 of the Constitution of Liberia regarding the procedure for impeachment.

Cllr. Gongloe's comment is in response to Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor's address Monday, 11 March that "the Supreme Court is going through a challenging time" due to an ongoing impeachment trial at the Liberian Senate of Justice Ja'neh, a member of the Court.

Article 43 of the Constitution as referenced by Cllr. Gongloe partly says "The Legislature shall prescribe the procedure for impeachment proceedings which shall be in conformity with the requirements of due process of law."

This constitutional provision has been the basis for the argument being put forward by lawyers representing Justice Ja'neh and few Senators who made

representations before the superior country seeking interpretation. The both parties argued that the "Legislature" did not prescribe any procedure for impeachment proceedings.

Associate Justice Ja'neh has been accused by lawmakers of abuse of power, using his influence as Associate Justice to secure ruling in his favor in a property case involving a private citizen, one Madam Annie Yancy Constance at the Supreme Court to take possession of a land.

One of the Justices on the Supreme Court Bench that signed the ruling which favored Justice Ja'neh in the land case, Chief Justice Korkpor is the presiding officer in the ongoing impeachment trial.

However, Cllr. Gongloe says what makes Justice Ja'neh's impeachment more challenging is that the bill of impeachment on which he is being tried is a product of defiance by some members of the House of Representatives, of the alternative writ of

prohibition issued by a Justice of the Supreme Court sitting in Chambers, acting under the authority of the law.

He indicated that the ongoing impeachment is also challenging because "the full bench of the Supreme [Court] did not consider this defiance of the presiding Justice's order as a defiance of the entire Bench."

Minority of the justices had dissent, but their majority colleagues including Chief Justice Korkpor determined that as at the time of the filing of the writ of prohibition, the House of Representatives had done nothing in violation of the due process right of Ja'neh to warrant the granting of the writ of prohibition.

But Cllr. Gongloe argues that the failure of any individual, group ... or branch of government to honor an order of the Supreme Court "undermines the rule of law and threatens the peace, security and development of this country."

He believes that this is where the real challenge lies.

"We must always remind ourselves, that this Court shares the blame for the more than 250,000 people that were killed in Liberia during the civil conflict," he continues as the justices on the bench look on disturbingly.

"Had this Court [played] its part well, in the past, Liberia would not have descended into conflict. We urge the current bench not to allow itself to be similarly judged in the future," Cllr. Gongloe adds.

Cllr. Gongloe says the impeachment of Justice Ja'neh began with the listing of actions or conducts which do not qualify as impeachable offenses.

He says two of the actions listed have direct links to this Court.

In one case, Cllr. Gongloe notes that Justice Ja'neh was a party in a case decided by the Supreme Court.

In the other, he was performing a judicial duty in which his decision was subject to review by the entire Bench.

"Yet, Justice Ja'neh is being subjected to a hearing for matters that both the bench and a justice in chambers are protected by the Constitution of Liberia for," he says.

In concluding, Cllr. Gongloe warns that the proceeding is challenging because Liberia's

history will record that Chief Justice Korkpor whose bench was disrespected by some members of the House of Representatives chose to preside over an impeachment proceeding which was based on a total disregard for the authority of the Supreme Court.

Earlier, Chief Justice Korkpor says as presiding officer in Ja'neh's impeachment trial, he sees his role as ensuring that the trial is held in keeping with the due process of law as mandated by the Constitution.

"The Liberian Senate tries the proceedings and is the sole judge of whether or not the justice has committed an impeachable offense," he argues.

Chief Justice Korkpor says he has no doubt that at the end of the trial, the Senators will "make a fair and just determination based on the findings."

"But I have heard, and read and continue to hear and read many accusations, innuendos and speculating views about my role in the process," he says.

Chief Justice Korkpor indicates that some of these [views] come from people who ought to know better.

But he notes that as the matter is being tried, he will for now refrain from making any substantive comment regarding his own role.

He says it is no secret that the Supreme Court is going through a challenging time that cannot be ignored, terming the ongoing impeachment trial of Justice Ja'neh as unprecedented in the history of Liberia.

The opening of the Supreme Court was unusually not crowded as vacant seats were visible.

The five Justices of the Supreme Court inclusive of embattled Associate Justice Ja'neh were present and the latter gave instruction to the Marshall to maintain perfect decorum throughout the Court while the Chief Justice speaks.

The Speaker of the House Bhofal Chambers, Senate Pro-tempore Albert Chie, Minister of State Nathaniel McGill, Justice Minister Cllr. Musa Dean, River Gee Sen. Comany Wesseh and U.S. Amb. Christine Elder, among others were in attendance. -*edited by Othello B. Garblah*

## Opposition tactics will not deter govt.

**-Commerce Minister**

The Minister of Commerce and Industry, Professor Wilson K. Tarpeh, says the CDC-led administration will not be deterred by opposition tactics to distract the current government from doing its work.

He says President Weah will translate his vision for the country into reality through workable and achievable programs rather than erection of attractive and costly bill boards that will have no

meaningful bearing on the lives of Liberians, especially ordinary citizens.

Speaking in Ganta, Nimba County at the close of a two-day Business Climate Forum, Minister Tarpeh notes that taking the lives of Liberians from several years desolation to appreciable level entails a lot, including job creation, keeping the peace and reuniting the entire citizenry.

According to a press release issued by the Commerce Ministry, the Forum was organized by the Business Climate Working Group, under

the theme: "Resolving Constraints to Trading across Borders."

He says organizing gatherings of such nature is a timely idea that will always be supported by the government.

Minister Tarpeh also calls on fellow political appointees not to get at each another's throat, but rather combine their respective efforts to translate government's Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development into reality by offering their best in terms of services to country.

He says the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will ensure that quality goods are always available on the Liberian market, at stable and affordable prices.

Minister Tarpeh continues that Liberia is cognizant of the World Trade Organization (WTO's) provisions and will continue to uphold them.

Notwithstanding, he stresses that the Liberian government will equally ensure that its programs, policies and decisions are people-driven, adding that emphasis will continue to be placed on quality goods than quantity. "Let it be very clear that the greatest interest of the CDC-led government of President George Manneh Weah is the Liberian people," he adds. -*Press Release*



Professor Wilson K. Tarpeh

**#Stop prioritizing foreign businesses over Liberian businesses!#**

# Weah receives lashes

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

President George Weah is said to be receiving more lashes here after his called for a second audit into the US\$25m mop up fund.

The four collaborating opposition political parties here say President George Manneh Weah's mandate for the General Auditing Commission (GAC) to conduct a forensic audit into how a controversial US\$25m was expended is an alleged attempt to circumvent justice and shield his Finance Minister and the Central Bank Governor from prosecution.

"We believe that this is an attempt to circumvent justice and shield Finance Minister Samuel Tweah, Central Bank Governor Nathaniel Patray and other members of the TEMT [Technical Economic Management Team] from prosecution," the opposition parties said Monday, 11 March in Monrovia.

The parties including former ruling Unity Party, Liberty Party, Alternative National Congress and the All Liberian Party suggest that if government relied on findings from the Presidential



Investigative Team (PIT) and the Kroll Associates' reports to arrest other officials, these same reports should be used as reliance for the arrests of Minister Tweah and Governor Patray.

Finance Minister Tweah chaired a Technical Economic Management Team that spearheaded the controversial US\$25m mop - up exercise, with the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Executive

Governor Nathaniel Patray as co-chair.

Since the arrests, indictments and detentions of five central bank officials, including former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's son Charles E. Sirleaf, for printing excess billion Liberian Dollars, pressure has been mounting here for President Weah to ensure that other suspects, including Minister Tweah and Executive Governor Patray are

questioned how the US\$25m was used in the mop-up exercise, which was conducted outside the banking system.

The calls for their investigation result from PIT's report which determines that the TEMT and CBL deviated from the conventional best practice, which calls for the use of legitimate banking institutions and licensed foreign exchange bureaus or sale auction.

According to the PIT, the TEMT and CBL sold a total of US\$14m in exchange for a total of L\$2,151,363,898.00 between the periods July 17, 2018 to September 18, 2018.

The four collaborating political parties say they and the majority of Liberians are baffled by the government's decision to arrest some Liberians based on these two reports, and yet calls for audit when it comes to President Weah's confidants - Tweah and Patray.

"We are not comfortable with this decision and believe that this is yet another attempt by President Weah to shield his confidants for the crimes they might have blatantly committed," the parties indicate.

Mr. Benoni Urey who currently chairs the collaborating parties says it is a glaring fact that audit reports are not normally the basis for prosecution here.

He argues that audit reports create room for a further criminal investigation to be conducted by either the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) or the Ministry of Justice (MOJ).

According to Mr. Urey, while audit reports of the GAC are subject to criminal investigations by the LACC, criminal investigations conducted by the LACC are not

subject to audits by the GAC.

The collaborating parties say government needs to use the same PIT report to prosecute those responsible for allegedly stealing the US\$25 million.

They suggest that if the government chooses to do further investigation, any such investigation must be a continuation of the PIT investigation and could incorporate the GAC to give technical support.

They believe that by requesting the GAC to exclusively conduct the forensic investigation without LACC and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU's) involvement, government is only inserting another layer in the process that could create the basis for unnecessary delay to bring to justice all those who allegedly bear culpability for the misuse of the US\$25 million during the mop-up exercise.

They further remind President Weah of his commitment to serve the Liberian people irrespective of their financial, social or political positions in society.

Additionally, the opposition parties caution President Weah that the rest of the three officials that remain incarcerated for their roles in Liberia's billions of local currency scandal have health challenges too that in some instances, may be even worse than Deputy Governor Charles E. Sirleaf's case.

Mr. Sirleaf and Mr. Weeks were bailed out from central prison on Friday, 8 March following review of their respective bonds.

Criminal Court "C" Judge Boima Kontoe said the rest of the three defendants had not tendered their bonds.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

## Make education lifeline priority

-US-based Liberian clergy urges government

By Lewis S. Teh

An American-based Liberian prelate, Rev. Dr. Patrick F. Taylor, urges the Government of Liberia to invest in primary education for the future of the country and its youth.

"If we must eradicate problems of the 15 years of civil unrest that took place in this country, then the government must see education as a lifeline priority for the future of the youth", he recommends.

Reverend Taylor made the call at the formal launch of the Borbor Taylor Education Foundation for underprivileged kids. The ceremony was held over the weekend at the God's Glory Pentecostal Church in Paynesville outside Monrovia.

Speaking to reporters following the launch, Dr. Taylor says the proposed the foundation is in recognition of his late father, who didn't have an opportunity to sit in classroom to acquire formal education, but was passionate about his children getting education to sustain themselves.

He notes the foundation is his

father's vision, who wanted to make sure his own children and every other child get an education. Dr. Taylor continues that as a result of this vision, he get involved in providing educational materials to less fortunate kids, so it is against this backdrop the foundation was launched.

"Our vision and mission is impacting lives through education, and the reason for this vision is because education has changed our lives; if it wasn't for education, my brothers and I wouldn't have been able to continue this vision of our father."

He says education is among Liberia's many problems. "We need to do away with illiteracy, if people get the real education they need most, the problem here in Liberia would not have been huge; citizens' action will change; they will now see things from different perspectives."

Dr. Taylor notes the education system of Liberia lacks policies and needed support to improve the system.

"And our government has forgotten to know that education is a priority of the

world, but here it's downplayed."

At the same time Reverend Taylor discloses the foundation has provided 40 scholarships to underprivileged kids and youths in Montserrado County, explaining that out of the 40 scholarships, 21 beneficiaries are from elementary to high school, some of whom are attending the Candle Light Academy, besides 10 college students four of who are in Philippines while six are attending universities in Liberia, including the University of Liberia, African Methodist Episcopal University, United Methodist University, and Smyth Institute, among others.

Meanwhile, one of the beneficiaries from the A.M.E. University on Camp Johnson Road, Monrovia Ms Miatta Fallah, expresses sentiments to the Borbor Taylor Foundation for the gesture being provided under-privileged youth in the country.

"The launch of this foundation is remarkable; for a group of Liberians to travel abroad and come back to invest their resources in education is something that needs to be commended by not only the beneficiaries, but national government", she underscores.

The education system here is faced with numerous challenges, including staff, infrastructure, learning facilities, and low performance among students. -*Editing by Jonathan Browne*

## NP Liberia opens

Starts from back page

establish the company.

He boasts that NP is taking over West Africa, and calls on the Government of Liberia through the Liberia National Police (LNP) to speedily apprehend a former staff of the company that is allegedly on the run after stealing from the NP.

Representing the government of Liberia at opening program, Commerce Minister Wilson Tarpeh extends thanks and appreciation to the management of the National Petroleum for investing in Liberia and helping the government to achieve the Pro - Poor vision through job creation for Liberians.

Minister Tarpeh continues that the government of Liberia

remains committed to creating the enabling environment for more investments in the Country.

He assures that government will continue to work with all investors to ensure good business atmosphere.

According to him, government depends on the private sector to keep the economy booming.

The official opening program was graced by the banking sector, diplomatic missions, officials of government, the petroleum sector, National Petroleum Sierra Leone, National Petroleum Ivory Coast, and civic society organizations, among others.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

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# NP Liberia opens US\$2.5M headquarters



By Ben P. Wesee

At a well-attended program over the weekend, the National Petroleum (NP) Liberia Limited opened its US\$2.5 million dollars headquarters in Congo Town.

During the program, NP Liberia Executive Director Kobi Walker says the company is here to support the government's economic development and the people of Liberia, expressing its enduring determination to

stay.

While dedicating the facility, Mr. Walker said the new NP Headquarters is just a structure that cannot give customer service, but notes that the company relies on its employees to infuse its vision and passion that guide the company's work.

Mr. Walker further pointed out that the management of National Petroleum is extremely grateful to the Liberian government and the people of Liberia for creating

the enabling atmosphere for such an investment.

He used the occasion to dispel a rumor that the National Petroleum is owned by some past and present government officials.

Mr. Walker states that the National Petroleum is the leading oil marketing company in Sierra Leone and it is exclusively owned by some 35 ordinary Sierra Leoneans that saw reason to come together to



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# Zidane makes sensational return to Real Madrid

Zinedine Zidane has been reappointed as Real Madrid's head coach after the club held a board meeting on Monday evening to discuss the ongoing issues at the Spanish capital club - the French boss joins on a deal that ties him to the club until 2022.

Los Blancos have endured a

calamitous season thus far, first seeing Julen Lopetegui given his marching orders after a failed stint at the helm following a controversial move from the Spain national team on the eve of the 2018 World Cup.

Former youth coach Santiago Solari was called in to stop the rot at the Santiago Bernabeu, and at first it seemed the

Argentine trainer had managed to do just that.

Two recent Clasico losses to eternal rivals Barcelona and a shock exit in the Champions League at the hands of Ajax have effectively ended Madrid's hopes of silverware this term, however, prompting yet another managerial shake-up.



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