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# The New Dawn

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VOL.9 NO. 075

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019

PRICE LD\$40.00

# Weah, protesters in deadlock



Pres. Weah



Mr. Dillon



Sen. Johnson



Sen. Naatehn

**P11**



# NEC wants electoral budget passed

**P11**





# Continental News

## Several die in clashes at sudan protest

**A**t least five Sudanese protesters and a member of the security forces have died in clashes in the capital, Khartoum.

They were killed in gunfire at a sit-in outside military HQ where demonstrators are demanding full civilian government. Dozens have also been injured. Protesters said soldiers were responsible, but the army blamed it on "unidentified elements".

Sudan has been ruled by a transitional military council since last month's toppling of President Omar al-Bashir.

It is unclear exactly what happened but activists have been talking about how they were targeted by a gunman. "He shot a bullet at me, he was 20 metres away from me, at most," Raed Mubarak told the Reuters news agency.

"He saw me, and he meant to shoot me. It was intentional. He did not even

shoot at my leg or up in the air, he shot at my chest, at the left, intending to hit the heart. He meant to kill me." The US embassy in Khartoum has said actions by the military council resulted in the violence.

"The tragic attacks on

protesters yesterday... were clearly the result of the Transitional Military Council (TMC) trying to impose its will on the protesters by attempting to remove roadblocks," it said on its Facebook page.



*Protesters have been demanding that the army hand over power to civilians*

"The decision for security forces to escalate the use of force... led directly to the unacceptable violence later in the day that the TMC was unable to control." Military and civilians agree

Demonstrators have been occupying the square in front of the headquarters since 6 April, five days before the president was overthrown by the military. Initially, talks between the ruling generals and the protest organisers had shown little sign of progress.

However, just before Monday night's violence, both sides announced they had agreed on the structure of a new administration. The gunfire on the streets may point to a division within the military and an attempt to destabilise this process, says the BBC's Alastair Leithead.

Some generals may feel frustrated that the sit-in continues despite major concessions from the military, while demonstrators feel they cannot leave the streets until they get what they want, our reporter adds.

The transitional military council pointed the finger at people trying to sabotage

talks.

"Behind this are groups that... are working hard to abort any progress in negotiations," it said, Reuters reports. In December, protesters started demonstrating against a government decision to triple the price of bread. The protests soon morphed into widespread anger against the president's 30-year rule, led by doctors.

Five weeks into the protests, on 17 January, witnesses said state forces fired live ammunition at protesters and killed a doctor.

He had been treating injured protesters in his home in Khartoum when police fired tear gas into the building.

A witness told the BBC that the doctor had walked out with his hands in the air, told the police he was a doctor and was instantly shot.

He is one of dozens of people killed during the anti-government protests.

The protesters later staged a sit-in outside the military headquarters to demand the military force the president out. A military council assumed power of the country on 11 April, but demonstrators are insisting that it hands over to a civilian administration. BBC

## Somalia to shut social media for exams

**S**omalia has postponed national high school exams after discovering that papers were being sold and shared on social media.

Any exams that have already been taken have been invalidated, Education Minister Abdullahi Godah

Barre said during a broadcast on national TV.

The cancellation has sparked student protests in the capital, Mogadishu.

The exams will now take place over five days at the end of May and social media will be shut down to avoid leaks.

It is unclear how the

blockade would be implemented and if it will be for the whole country.

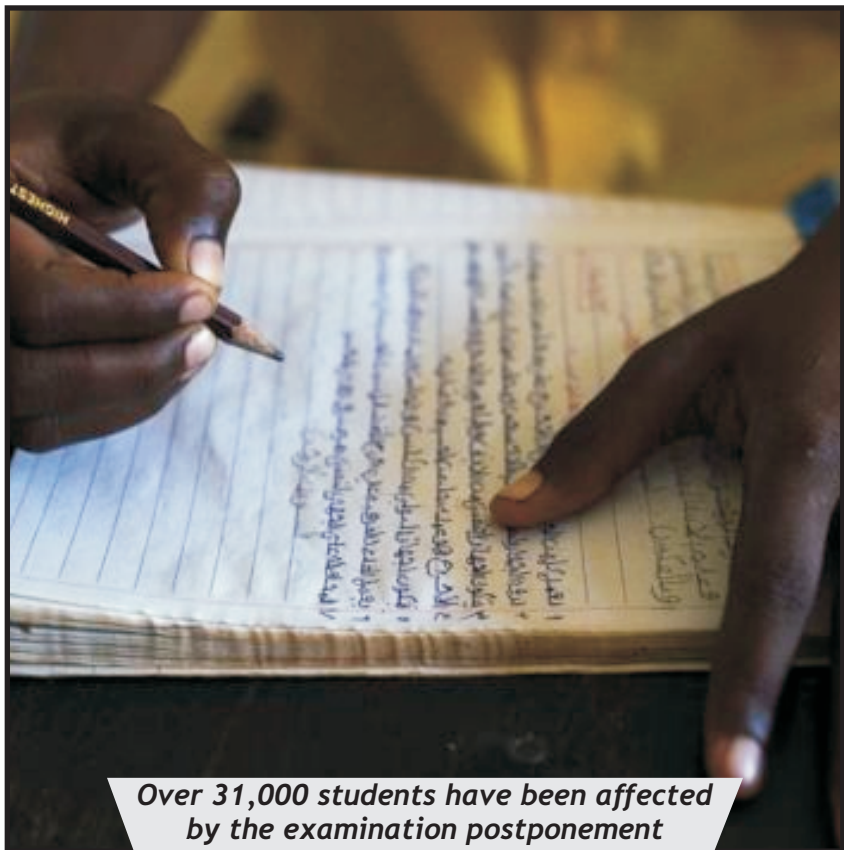
Mr Barre also did not say which social media platforms had been used to post the papers in the first place. The exam papers were being sold and shared on social media by a criminal network, according to local Radio Dalsan.

Students have been sitting their final year exams since Saturday and they were supposed to end on a week's time, but Mr Barre said the postponement was necessary.

"It's unfortunate that a cheat sits with a hardworking student in a class. So the ministry decided to invalidate the papers already done by students and cancel the remaining," he said during a briefing on state TV on Monday.

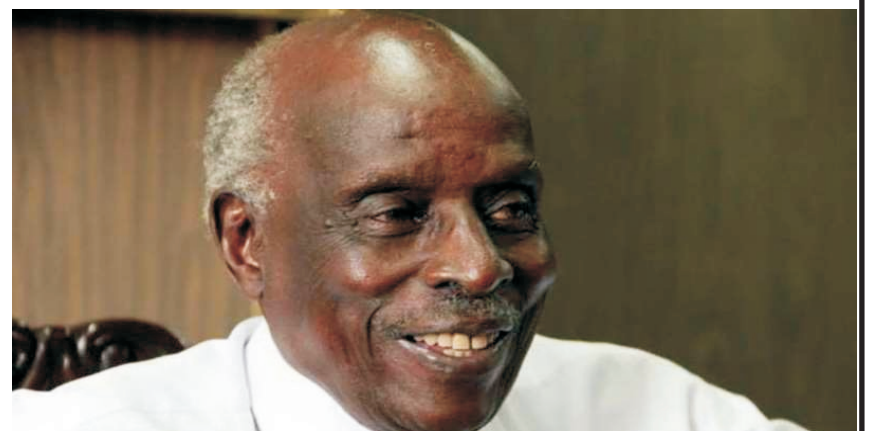
Over 31,000 students, across five of Somalia's regional states, will be affected by the postponement.

A video has been shared online of Mr Barre and the police boss trying to calm down students who were protesting against the postponement. BBC



*Over 31,000 students have been affected by the examination postponement*

## kenyan billionaire Kiereini dies



**F**ormer head of civil service and secretary to the Cabinet Jeremiah Kiereini is dead.

Kiereini's family confirmed the 90-year-old city billionaire passed on at his home on the evening of Monday, May 13.

Prior to his appointment as head of civil service, the former Makerere University graduate held various positions in the Kenya Civil Service for nearly 30 years. The deceased was the chairman of CMC Motors for 10 years until 2011 when he bowed out following ownership wrangles between principal shareholders which came in the wake of steady decline of the company's fortunes.

His business interests range from real estate, insurance, coffee farming to hotel industry.

In his condolence message, President Uhuru Kenyatta mourned him as a towering reform minded public servant and patriotic Kenyan who served his country with distinction. "Kiereini remains an important part of Kenya's public service history due to his many achievements key among them being the role he played in the modernization of the Kenyan military when he served as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Defense," he eulogised. AFP



# EDITORIAL

## Rise to the challenge, Mr. President

A LIBERIAN INTEGRITY group, Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia or CENTAL, urges President George Manneh Weah to be practical and impartial in dealing with corruption, and make good on earlier promise made to clean his administration of corruption.

CENTAL WANTS TIMELY and impartial implementation of outcomes of ongoing investigation into the US\$25 million mop-up exercise, and asks President Weah and his Coalition-led government to timely act on grave concerns raised by development partners regarding use of donors' funds.

IT WARNS THAT not doing so may limit donors' confidence in the government and have serious implications for future funding and support to Liberia.

WE BELIEVE THESE are serious concerns that should claim the attention of not only the President, but the entire government, if Liberia should continuously enjoy trust and support of our international partners, including the United Nations, ECOWAS, AU, the United States, European Union, France, Britain and others.

THE BUCKS START with the President, because he is the head of government and the Head of State. He should and must be seen taking practically well-intentioned and comprehensive steps to re-assuring our partners that the government is responsible and it means well for the people.

EVER SINCE PRESIDENT Weah called on the General Auditing Commission to audit the Technical Economic Management Team or TEMT headed by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel Tweah of the usage of the US\$25, not much has been heard or said in public. In fact, the GAC is on record as saying, it has never received a written request since the President made that pronouncement.

WE WONDER HOW the government can be trusted, particularly in the eyes of international partners when it cannot properly manage or account for its own funds. Here is US\$25 million that was withdrawn from our national reserves to mop up excess liquidity in our market in order to help stabilize the exchange rate and prices.

BUT INSTEAD, THE exchange rate is now heading for 200LRD for One United States Dollars, and could even go beyond with exacerbating economic consequences for the already suffering masses. Yet, there is no proper accountability up to now.

PRESIDENT WEAH SHOULD move from lip service and muster political will to take decisive actions that would demonstrate leadership. He can't be seen pampering missteps of his officials and expect to enjoy public trust. No! It does not work this way.

GOVERNANCE OR LEADERSHIP should be about looking at the bigger picture or the whole country; how we proceed to maintain the respect of our partners, because we need them to succeed as a member of the comity of nations.

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# COMMENTARY

By Janjira Sombatpoonsiri

## Weaponizing Cyber Law

*In recent years, autocratic regimes have increasingly relied on legal and bureaucratic tools - from restrictions on foreign funding to draconian sedition laws - to impede civic activism. Now, they are adding cyber legislation to their arsenals of repression.*

BANGKOK - Having watched popular protests, from the color revolutions in the former Soviet Union to the Arab Spring, challenge their counterparts' power, the world's autocrats have been adopting legal measures aimed at incapacitating civic groups, including pro-democracy movements and human-rights NGOs. Among the most sweeping measures are those enabling officials to monitor and punish activists' online activities.

Though overt crackdowns by security forces remain a serious concern, in recent years, autocratic regimes have increasingly been relying on legal and bureaucratic tools to impede opponents. For example, many countries - including Cambodia, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Russia, Tanzania, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela - have tightened restrictions on organization registration, foreign funding, and public assembly.

Autocratic governments have also made liberal use of existing laws prohibiting vaguely defined crimes like defamation and sedition, as well as anti-terrorism legislation. And, now, they are adding cyber laws to their arsenals of repression.

Of course, most countries have enacted laws addressing cybercrimes, privacy protection, and online financial transparency, and, for good reason. But autocratic regimes often craft such laws to keep their opponents in check - in particular by keeping the language ambiguous.

For example, in identifying who poses a cyber threat, such laws might refer to groups or individuals with "malicious intent," or those who seek to "oppose the state," "endanger national security or ideology," "distort information which causes public panic," "advocate homosexuality or lesbianism," or "generate anti-state social movements." Such broad definitions enable autocrats to portray virtually any dissident as a security threat, thereby providing an excuse - and even galvanizing public support - for repression.

Southeast Asia offers many examples of this trend. Various forms of autocracy prevail in seven of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations's ten member countries: competitive authoritarianism (Cambodia, Singapore, and Myanmar), single-party rule (Laos, Vietnam), absolute monarchy (Brunei), and military government (Thailand). Until 2018, Malaysia was in the competitive authoritarian category.

Over the last decade, these countries have augmented their dissent-stifling legislation with computer-related and cyber-security laws, all of which follow a similar script. Cambodia's cyber law, enforced by a new cybercrime unit, uses ambiguous language to facilitate the suppression of free speech. In Singapore, this function is served by the Internet Code of Practice and recently the Protection from Online Falsehood and Manipulation law. In Myanmar, it is achieved with the 2000 web regulations, which limit what can be posted online; the 2013 Telecommunications Law, which criminalizes online defamation; and the 2004 electronic transactions law (amended in 2013), which imposes heavy penalties for a long list of nebulous offenses.

Similarly, laws purportedly aimed at preventing the spread of false information - such as Article 65 of Laos's criminal code - have been used against opponents. During the 2018 election campaign in Malaysia, the ruling party enacted an anti-fake-news

law to emasculate the opposition, which won anyway.

A key component of these repressive cyber-strategies is expansive surveillance. Thailand's recently-enacted cyber-security bill - which complements the Computer Crime Act, adopted in 2007 and revised in 2016 - authorizes the state to expand surveillance and strengthens its hand against vaguely defined cyberattacks. The Thai government - like those in Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Morocco, and Qatar - has reportedly purchased spyware from companies, including the Italy-based Hacking Team, that would allow them to hack into citizens' computers, mobile phones, and even GPS systems.

Data-localization requirements - which compel tech firms to store their citizens' data on local servers - facilitate these efforts. Vietnam - along with China, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Russia - recently introduced such requirements, supposedly to prevent data theft. But keeping data within a country also allows governments to exercise control over it.

Vietnam's cyber-security law, which took effect in January, allows the government to access locally-stored social media data and remove content deemed to oppose the state. China takes this a step further: with its vast resources, it is able to use advanced artificial intelligence to analyze the data that flow in, and thus to monitor its citizens.

In addition to legal repression, the use of fake videos ("deepfakes") and troll armies helps governments propagate their agenda and discredit activists. Cyber trolls in Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam reportedly engage in systematic bullying of online dissidents.

Activists across Southeast Asia and in autocracies worldwide are feeling the effects of these initiatives. Malaysia's Communications and Multimedia Act was used to prosecute individuals for criticizing the authorities or monarchy in at least 38 cases in 2017. In Myanmar, more than a hundred cases have been litigated under the Telecommunications Law since 2013, and in 2016 alone, 54 people were prosecuted and eight imprisoned for dissension on social media.

The Thai junta has jailed several dozen citizens for sharing "sensitive" information on social media sites. With the 2019 election approaching, it has used the Computer Crime Act to press unfounded charges against opposition parties, while turning a blind eye to its trolls' fake news. In Vietnam, where hundreds of dissidents were charged in 2017-18 for alleged anti-state activism both online and off, the new cyber-security law will only make matters worse.

For activists, pushing back against draconian cyber laws and other forms of digital repression will not be easy, not least because it remains uncharted territory. But that has not stopped some from trying. And, already, protests such as those in South Korea have had some success in inducing increased legal oversight. Many civic education groups have also been promoting digital literacy, so that citizens can help monitor the abuse of cyber laws.

At the international level, advocacy networks have lobbied democratic governments and international organizations to put pressure on autocratic regimes. But there is also a broader need for a coordinated global response aimed at protecting civic space. Only through sustained public pressure can we hope to persuade autocratic regimes to revise, or reverse, their cyber policies.



## O-PED

By Maciej Kisilowski  
& Wojciech Przybylski

## Democratic Lessons from the EU

**W**ARSAW - Criticizing European Union institutions, and demanding that they be reformed, is a popular pastime. But as the EU's unified front in the never-ending Brexit negotiations has made clear, European institutions are remarkably effective in managing political diversity. Perverse as it may sound to some, nation-states can learn from Europe in addressing their own democratic deficits.

Such shortcomings are especially apparent in Poland, where a highly centralized political system creates a pernicious winner-take-all dynamic. Because the party in power relies on a fleeting majority, it has a strong incentive to lock in its legislative achievements through constitutional overreach. This has left the electorate highly polarized and Poland mired in an ever-deeper political crisis, owing to a lack of consensus regarding basic institutions.

Both of us are outspoken opponents of what we believe has been an unconstitutional takeover of independent institutions by Poland's ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party. But we also acknowledge the genuine popular support that PiS continues to enjoy.

In attempt to help defuse political tensions, we co-founded a non-partisan initiative to reform Poland's system of governance. About 100 of the country's public-policy experts have now developed a proposal that seeks to decentralize the political system by incorporating the best elements of the EU's decision-making structures.

This decentralization debate is by no means limited to Poland. In a letter to the French people in January, President Emmanuel Macron pointedly asked whether the country's famously centralized state should devolve more decision-making powers to subnational governments. In more decentralized Germany, meanwhile, Bavarian Minister President Markus Söder - who also leads the Christian Social Union (CSU) - has warned the central government against further eroding the powers of the country's Bundesländer.

Britain's opposition Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, has said a Labour government would consider replacing the House of Lords with an elected federal senate. And the Democratic Party in the United States, faced with an increasingly conservative Supreme Court, is suddenly warming to the idea of states' rights.

We believe some form of decentralization could help Poland - and possibly other democracies - to manage political conflict better and become less polarized. And here, the EU's governance system offers an appealing practical model.

Our reform proposal for Poland draws inspiration from two key EU institutions: the European Council, where heads of state or government set the EU's general political direction, and the Council of the EU, where member states' ministers decide on European legislation. This ministerial Council acts primarily as a powerful European senate - the legislative "upper chamber" approving all EU laws.

We envision Council-like institutions at two levels in Poland. The national Senate would become a chamber comprising the elected governors of Poland's 16 regions, while regional senates would consist of all the mayors from a particular region. The votes of governors and mayor-senators would be weighted in accordance with the population each represents. Furthermore, both the national and regional senates would have the power to veto legislation.

The national Senate would be politically diverse, encompassing the country's conservative southeast and progressive northwest. Regional senates would contain a similar mix, given that Poland's cities tend to be more progressive and the countryside more conservative. Moreover, the executive responsibility of governors and mayors would give them an incentive to seek constructive compromises on important policy proposals.

As with the European Council, membership of the national Senate would change only gradually, because regional elections would be staggered. Such continuity is particularly important given that the Senate would confirm members of independent institutions such as the Constitutional Tribunal, the Supreme Court, and the National Bank of Poland. Our proposal would therefore strengthen these institutions' democratic accountability by tying it to a much more stable and politically diverse body, rather than to the prevailing national majority.

Even Poland's current PiS-led government has reason to be grateful for the EU's governance system. The European Commission's inability to pursue so-called Article 7 action against Poland and Hungary, for alleged serious transgressions against EU values, may frustrate defenders of the rule of law. Yet it also shows how the EU's structure protects even highly controversial member states from the political overreach of the majority.

At the same time, the EU is not powerless to act against member states that violate common rules, because Council members select the judges of the powerful European Court of Justice. The ECJ, which is hearing numerous cases concerning the PiS government's alleged constitutional excesses, is arguably the last line of defense for the rule of law in Poland, given the depleted legitimacy of the country's own institutions.

Europe may be politically polarized and suffering from democratic deficits, but the EU's governance system is not the primary cause. On the contrary, the effectiveness of European institutions shows Poland and others how they can better manage their national political systems.

## OPINION

By Jeffrey D. Sachs

## America's Illusions of Growth

**N**EW YORK - National politics in the United States has become enslaved to macroeconomic indicators that have little bearing on true wellbeing. For many commentators, the snapshot growth rate of 3.2% for the first quarter of 2019, coupled with a decline in the unemployment rate to 3.6% in April, implies that President Donald Trump's economic policies have been vindicated, and some suggest that his re-election chances have improved as a result.

But this interpretation overlooks what these indicators fail to measure. And what they fail to measure happens to be what really counts for the public.

In defending the 2017 tax cut, to which he attributes an additional 1.1% annual GDP growth for 2018-2019, Harvard economist Robert J. Barro writes, "I take it as self-evident that faster economic growth is better than slower economic growth," because "millions of people benefit from higher growth rates, which are typically accompanied by higher wages and lower unemployment, which especially help the worse-off."

Yet we should be on guard against "self-evident" truths. As a firm believer in the rationality of the public, Barro should consider what the public actually says. According to the most recent Gallup survey, 40% of the public approve of the 2017 tax cuts, while 49% disapprove - a net negative assessment confirmed by several other recent polls. The public is looking beyond any temporary boost in spending and is concerned about growing income and wealth inequality and the soaring budget deficit. Following Barro himself (via Ricardo), they most likely surmise that future tax hikes are on the way.

Continuing opposition to the tax cuts is not the only sign of public dismay. Others are even more notable. The country is evenly divided on overall economic conditions, with half describing them as "excellent" or "good," and half describing them as "only fair" or "poor." Some 49% of Americans believe the economic situation is improving, while 50% feel that it is worsening or staying the same. Overall, only 31% are satisfied with the direction of the country, while 67% are dissatisfied.

Macroeconomic indicators hide much about the quality of life. For example, even while the US economy has expanded during recent years, America's public health crisis has continued to mount. The US has experienced two consecutive years of declining life expectancy, in 2016 and 2017 - the longest consecutive decline since World War I and the subsequent flu epidemic. Yet the current decline is caused by despair, not by illness. Suicide rates and opioid overdoses are soaring.

Another alarming epidemic not captured by GDP or unemployment rates is the sharp rise in anxiety among Americans. Gallup put it this way: "Even as their economy roared, more Americans were stressed, angry, and worried last year than they have been at most points during the past decade. Asked about their feelings the previous day, the majority of Americans (55%) in 2018 said they had experienced stress during a lot of the day, nearly half (45%) said they felt worried a lot, and more than one in five (22%) said they felt anger a lot." Stress, worry, and anger all hit ten-year US highs in 2018. The US was the seventh-most stressed population in the world in 2018, less stressed than Greece, the Philippines, and Iran, but more stressed than Uganda, Turkey, and Venezuela.

These stress measures are consistent with another notable finding: Americans' self-reported happiness also declined in 2018. Asked by Gallup how they would rate their life on a scale from zero (worst life) to ten (best life), Americans in 2018 responded with an average of 6.9, down from 7.0 in 2017, and 7.3 during 2006-2008. Self-reported life satisfaction has declined during the past decade, even as per capita GDP has risen. For the year 2018, the US ranked 20th worldwide and in the bottom half of the OECD countries, down from 19th in 2016-2018.

Even in their own terms, the GDP and employment data are much less impressive than the headlines suggest. First-quarter GDP growth, for example, showed a surge in inventories, which might portend slowing output growth in future quarters. And it is, in any event, a preliminary estimate. Likewise, while a lower unemployment rate is certainly heartening, part of the reported decline in April reflected a reduction in the labor force. Even more to the point, the employment rate remains far below its earlier peak. The civilian employment rate in April 2019 stood at 60.6% of the working-age population, down from its annual peak of 64.4% in 2000. Much of America's currently low unemployment rate reflects the withdrawal of many low-wage Americans from the labor force.

A majority of Americans are neither happy with the way things are going in their country nor naive enough to believe that the 2017 tax cut is a solution to their woes. Unlike many macroeconomists, they know there is more to life than a short-run increase in GDP growth or decline in the unemployment rate. These are at best blurred snapshots that neglect the future, overlook inequalities of outcomes, and fail to reflect the high and rising anxieties of Americans living with overpriced healthcare, massive student debts, and lack of job protection. Nor do they reflect falling life expectancy and the rising burdens of substance abuse, suicides, and depression.

It's time that economists, pundits, and politicians start looking holistically at life in our times, and take seriously the long-term structural changes needed to address the multiple crises of health care, despair, inequality, and stress in the US and many other countries. US citizens, in particular, should reflect on the fact that many other countries' people are happier and less worried, and are living longer. In general, those other countries' governments are not cutting taxes for the rich and slashing services for the rest. They are attending to the common good, instead of catering to the rich while pointing to illusory economic statistics that hide as much as they reveal.



# UNECA-SRO-WA, partners launch 22nd ICE meeting here

The Sub-Regional Office for West Africa (SRO-WA) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Government of Liberia launch the 22nd Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of senior officials and Experts (ICE) for West Africa in Robertsfield, Margibi County.

According to a press release from the Ministry of Commerce, the 22nd Meeting is being held under a regional context marked by the entry of the United Nations, African Union, and ECA and ECOWAS reforms in their decisive phases. It is also marked by the continuation in planning by various States, aimed at improving a slow-paced development despite the decade of economic growth in West African countries.

The release says the main objective of the meeting is to discuss recent developments likely to impact economic and social development in West African countries, with a view to identifying major challenges to be addressed and to proposing guidelines for accelerating

Development Planning, Samuel D. Tweah hopes that strong recommendations in terms of education, agriculture and finances will be made by the participants at this important meeting.

"I call for an advocacy for these recommendations to be made at the level of the parliaments so that they have an impact on the national policies", says Minister Tweah.

The Acting Director of ECA in West Africa, Bakary Dosso, notes that three reasons justify choosing the theme of the meeting. "First, it is a strategic choice. Demographic Dynamics for Development is the new area of specialization of the ECA Sub regional Office for West Africa. Secondly, the West African region is at the forefront of issues related to population dynamics and development. Lastly, the current momentum. There is a worldwide agenda to identify and seize the windows of opportunity of



sustainable development in the region through economic transformation.

In this light, participants will have to review the statutory reports prepared by the Secretariat.

The Ministry further notes that during the ongoing Meeting, delegates will review and report on implementing the SRO-WA Work Program in 2018 and prospects for 2019, including Report on the Regional Profile of West Africa and the Report on Progress in Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in West Africa, respectively.

Held under the theme: "Demographic dynamics for sustainable development in West Africa: challenges and policy measures," the 22nd West African meeting of the ICE is taking place as plenary sessions and a round table, during which reports drafted by the bureau and communications from experts are being tabled and discussed.

In an extemporaneous statement, Liberia's Minister of Finance and

demographic dividend in Africa", explains Mr. Dosso.

He says besides being home to 377 million people or 30 percent of the population of Africa in 2018, the region is the most populated region of the continent. growing at a pace of 2.7 percent per annum, will double every 25 years, Ceteris Paribus, or holding everything else constant.

At the same time, the Representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Liberia, Pa Lamin Beyai, notes that challenges faced by sub-region are immense, but the United Nations, "working as one in each of your countries, is ready to support you to benefit from the demographic dividend. For that to happen, the progress made in regional integration needs to be sustained in the short, medium, and long terms to ensure that youthful population is a true force for development, peace, and security."

Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA)

20<sup>th</sup> Street Sinkor, Monrovia, Liberia

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING - NCB

Invitation for Marine Sensitivity Survey

IFB NO.LiMA/NCB/010/18/19



7 May 2019

The Government of Liberia through the Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA), has allocated a portion of its Corporate Budget funding for its **Marine Sensitivity Survey**. The Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA) now wishes to invite sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the provision of the **Marine Sensitivity Survey** of Liberia

Interested firms that are fully qualified and capacitated to perform this service are required to obtain Bid Documents at no cost from the Procurement Section of the Liberia Maritime Authority 20<sup>th</sup> Street office between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00p.m., Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> May to Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

All qualified bidders should have a Current Business Registration, Current Tax Clearance, Business Profile and a list of previous clients, and a permit to operate from the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia. Discount will be an added advantage.

Final submission date is 1:30p.m. on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019, to be followed by the bid opening ceremony at 2:00 p.m. on the same date.

All interested entities should submit a sealed bid to the Procurement Section of the Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA), 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Sinkor.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE

## Cyclists welcome accident prevention dialogue

By Lewis S. Teh

The President of the Federation of Motorcycle and Tricycle Union of Liberia, John A.F. Kenyor stresses that Accident Prevention dialogue on road safety will help curtail road tragedy in the country, pointing out that lack of education and prevention are some contributing factors to road accident.

"We from the Federation of Motorcycle, and Tricycle Union of Liberia are excited to be in this national

Motorcycle and Tricycle Union of Liberia and other relevant institutions.

In an exclusive interview with this paper, Mt. Kenyor expresses delight to have sat in the dialogue to discuss issues relating to accident prevention, saying, "As you may be aware, a good number of our citizens lost their lives as the result of road accident, and for the government thru this Ministry to put accident



accident prevention dialogue, because we believe to save our people from the many road accidents, these kinds of dialogue must be held", he says.

Mr. Kenyor was speaking over the weekend at a local hotel in Monrovia during the national accident prevention program under the auspices of the Ministry of Transport. The event brought together stakeholders, including Federation of Road Transport Union, the

prevention on their ladder brings us so much joy."

The National Road Accident Prevention program is a government's social intervention introduced by the Ministry of Transport to prevent road accidents and save lives with the premise that human capital is the most important and precious resource of Liberia hence, the need to save lives.



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## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# Independent Lawmakers call for audit

By Bridgett Milton

A group of lawmakers from the House of Representatives under the banner Independence Legislative Caucus wants the entire Legislature audited.

The ILC says it is befitting that the books of the Legislature be audited, including a vigorous payroll vetting and audit exercise that will set a benchmark for a transparent and accountable Legislature.

In a statement read on behalf of the group, River Gee County district#3 Representative Francis S. Dopoh, explains the exercise will give the public a clearer understanding of the actual remunerations of members of the Legislature and could help to prevent any possible waste and abuse in the National Budget.

He notes that the Executive is taking steps in these directions, so the Legislature and the Judiciary should be of no exception.



According to him, it has come to their attention that members of the House have elected to begin a very serious debate on the need for cut in salaries and benefits of legislators as a way of addressing the current economic condition of the

Country.

He continues that these debates are welcoming only if they are premised on the facts and seek to address the situation from a pronounced approach as opposed to creating a pool of sentiments only to mislead the public and

cloud them with half-baked propositions.

The River Gee lawmaker emphasizes that it is in the interest of the Independent Legislative Caucus and other members of the House of Representatives to ensure that Government has adequate resources to address developmental challenges of the State.

Rep. Duopo says if the argument is that Government needs to take on austerity measures to address the developmental needs of the Country, then it makes sense to reduce the Operational and Committee Hearing Budgets of the House by 75 percent to save about US\$2.57million, and that the Speaker's Budget be reduced by 40 percent, which should be standardized for each member's budget calibration,

courtesy of Speaker Chambers' Standardization bill in the 53rd Legislature.

"These and other measures, when taken by the National Legislature, could save about US\$9.0 million for the Government as opposed to a US\$1.5million saving as be tokenized by our colleagues" the ILC statement notes.

The ICL says while it welcomes the debate, there has been no Budget performance review to assess the actual Fiscal Stance of the Government. Besides, it notes

gain from the Executive salary cut is yet to be accounted for and distinguished in terms of its impact in reducing the Government wage bill.

"It is unarguable that the budget lines other than wages and salaries that seek to impact the entire country at once are the Legislative Support Project and legislative Scholarship fund. As we speak, there is no significant discussion to increase the appropriations of the Legislative Support Project which was reduced from about US\$78,000 to US\$31,000 to accommodate Government budget constraints."

A release signed by 14 members of the House of Representatives reveals the Speaker of the Honorable House of Representatives receives the budgeted amount of US\$29,700 as special allowance per month, inclusive of discretionary budget of US\$1.22 million, while each member of the House with no discretionary role in the Budget execution process receives as budgeted, US\$7,450 or US\$5,500 net of taxes per month, while the House of Representatives appropriated to itself US\$1.6million for Operations and US\$1.8million for Committee Hearings at the discretion of the Speaker, amounting to US\$3.4 million. -Statement

## As vehicle inspection intensifies

### -Several vehicles grounded in Ganta

By Thomas Domah/Nimba

Normal activities along the Ganta-Yekepa road project are at a standstill since 10 May 2019 to present due to Phase II of a vigorous joint motor vehicle inspection involving the Ministry of Transport, the

trucks, specifically inspecting driver's License, compliance enforcement.

It's ongoing in five counties including Bong, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Grand Gedeh and Nimba, respectively.

The Ministry of Transport is involved with what it terms

are grounded. Some of Guinean drivers, who asked for anonymity, alleged that when the inspection team arrests their vehicles, they are required to pay money before being allowed to enter Ganta to carry out normal business.

Road construction equipment of the Senegalese company and vehicles are parked due to failure to register and obtain driver's licenses, among other requirements thus, halting construction work on the Ganta-Yekepa road.

The CSE Company entered into an agreement with the Government of Liberia to pave the road which connects Ganta thru Sanniquellie City to the mining town, Yekepa.

The Ministry of Transport is expected to order the vehicles and equipment parked at the facility of the mining company ArcelorMittal and Cocopa plantation until full compliance, including payment of taxes.

License plates of some of the CSE vehicles impounded are: -A61214, A-61418, A-61412, A-60612 and the manager's car with plate# A-65349, respectively.

When contacted, the head for the joint inspection team refuses to comment on allegation of extorting money from Guinean truck drivers and others, instead, referring this paper to speak with head office in Monrovia. -Editing by

domestic revenue generation for socio-economic and infrastructural development for government.

Guinean trucks and equipment belonging to the Senegalese-based road construction company [CSE]



Liberia National Police and the Liberia Revenue Authority [LRA] in Nimba County.

The exercise covers motor vehicles, motorcycles and tricycles, yellow machines, heavy duty

## Cyclists welcome accident

Cont'd from page 5

He describes the venture as welcoming and notes that it is now left with "us who are leaders to attach value to it by sensitizing our people on the importance of accident. I think it is about time that we leaders avail ourselves to improve whatever system that national government wants to undertake."

"Many at times we see cars break down in the middle of the road creating huge traffic, but with this new venture that talks about bringing in tow trucks that will deal with any vehicle, we think it will ease down traffic congestion."

Assistant Transport Minister for Administration and Insurance, Nuwoe A.D. Scott, lauds stakeholders for showing interest in the dialogue, and adds that though they have not seen the tow trucks, yet they attended the dialogue, which is something that should be commended.

"You the partners, stakeholders we want to register our heartfelt sentiments because you are

the ones who are dealing with the people, the motorcyclists, if we don't have your support, we won't be able to make this program a success."

She says government alone can't do all but with support of the people, all can be achieved. Minister Scott says as the trucks are being anticipated, the public should be inspired with the spirit of readiness to work cooperatively for the development of the country.

She notes that Liberians themselves are the answers to their own problems, adding that today, we have all of the partners and investors who will bring recourses and are willing to help us eliminate accident deaths that occurs in our country; it how we maintain it as a people, because if the government provides the trucks, it is left with the people to do their part."

Road safety across Liberia remains a serious challenge with accident-related deaths occurring almost daily here. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## CEMESP MFWA host media capacity assessment forum

A study commissioned by Media Foundation for West Africa working in partnership with the Center for Media Studies and Peace-building to assess the capacity of Liberia Media has released a preliminary report that among other things underscored the issue of reputational risk as a consequence of the under-resourced media challenge that fraught the yearnings for professional standards in the sector.

Key recommendations emanating from the study included: the need to revisit the collective bargaining agreement and enforce it, specialized training for journalists, strategy to recruit and retain journalists with passion for the profession, strengthening the capacity of managers, media legal defense fund to be set up and raising seed fund to support the advancement of good journalism.

At a CEMESP's organized Media capacity Assessment



CEMESP Executive Director, Malcolm Joseph

dissemination Forum held on Friday in Monrovia and attended by media stakeholders, Deputy Information Minister for Technical Services, Boakai Fofana, reaffirmed government's commitment in providing an unfettered space for journalists to operate in

advancing democratic values.

He referenced the passage of the K. Abdullai Kamara Freedom of Expression Act by the Government of President Weah as a mark of commitment to freedom of the press, cautioning that the media must therefore lend itself to self-regulation and

adherence to regulations and ethical codes as a basis of dealing with some of the challenges that abound.

He disclosed that most of the media outlets operating in the country have not regularized their status and could not acquire tax clearance as one requirement for advertisers.

PUL Secretary General Daniel Nyakonah paid tribute to innovation which makes it possible to embark on this critical enquiry of assessing the strength, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for independent media practice in Liberia. He described the exercise as a self-check process intended to identify gaps that must be bridged in developing a media amidst a challenging economy that is having knock on effect on the quality of media in Liberia. He used the occasion to announce the need for media ownership disclosure so that those pseudo politicians infiltrating the ranks of journalism can be identified and the public will know how to relate to them.

Veteran Journalist Aaron Kollie of Infinity Broadcasting Corporation also made the connection between the national economy and the media economy. He argued that if poverty and corruption are pervasive in the country, there is every possibility that it will have trickle-down effect on the media industry. He decried media development programs in trainings that have not succeeded to address the perennial problems lingering in the sector. He said with the transition from analogue to digital technology, many media outlets are still not equipped to catch with the revolution. He said media developers must refrain from crafting and imposing templates but should rather create the forum for media stakeholders to sit and discuss and find durable solutions to the problems. In an opening courtesy, Executive Director of CEMESP Malcolm Joseph earlier disclosed that this exercise is funded by OSIWA and covers other sub-regional context with the overarching aim of using the findings to craft solutions in promoting quality and sustainable independent media. Lead Researcher Frank Sainworla said the report is work in progress that sampled some fifteen media houses print and broadcast to arrive at the picture that has portrayed a range of problems and solution areas to be addressed. Based on two objectives of assessing the capacity of the media for

sustainable support and identifying media outlets that deserve support in upholding professional standard, the methodology of administering questionnaires that were semi structured succeeded to come out with qualitative data informing key findings.

These findings among other things noted that media ownership has vested political and commercial interest, weak management, under capitalization, journalists being least paid, unpredictable funding for the sector and incidences of inducement dictating ethical transgression.

The next layer of the event was the question and answer session with other speakers adding their voices to the conversation. There were suggestions to provide support in equipment to selected media houses to enhance their effectiveness. The point was raised that the media are public entities and must not be considered as personal investment to be run on the whims and caprices of those who set up newspapers, Television and radio stations.

It was also noted that the pre requisite for enrolment in communication and journalism schools must be streamlined and made more up to date with the evolving realities.

The problem of poor writing skills of many journalists was also pointed out as something that has to be worked on.

Whilst workshop training that donors are supporting was lauded it was also established that this intervention must be augmented by other supports to private media. It emerged that the banking sector in Liberia can hardly capitalize media in loans because it has been pointed out that the sector is not performing.

Another suggestion for media advertisement to improve was the need for journalists to improve on their content and forms.

Community radio input in the discussion restated the challenge with sustainability of electricity, repairs of equipment and retention of professional staff.

With spectrum regulation controversies of ten miles limit for community radio forming a talking point, the Liberia Telecommunication Authority Director of Public Affairs Jarsea Burphy used the occasion to announce a planned meeting where stakeholders can be apprised about the rationale behind such policies meant to avoid clashed and interference in the airwaves.

Starts from back page

## Solidaridad to

Saygbe disclosed that the engineer will be coming in this week to do some assessments to the various sites, adding that the strategy is to work through the Small and Medium - Sized enterprises, which will give their own contributions towards the mills.

While Solidaridad provides the mills, he says SMEs are providing the shelter and the labor.

According to Saygbe, the overall portfolio for the implementation of the SWAPP program in Liberia, Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire and Sierra Leone is 17.4m Euros, with a duration of 2018 to 2021.

Funding is coming from the Dutch and Swiss Embassies in Ghana, he says, and adds that the Swiss funding of 4.3m Euros is for Ghana only.

He discloses that the objective is to upscale successful innovations from SWAPP - I in the four West African countries

However Mr. Saygbe notes that Liberia is little bit behind because it just started running the engine this year with A. Kefi Conteh from neighboring Sierra Leone jumpstarting the activities here.

He underscores that access to agriculture finance is a difficult thing in Liberia.

Due to the use of a small freedom mill which is labor intensive, Mr. Saygbe notes that small holders suffer poor extraction rate, adding that

that Solidaridad is looking at what kind of intervention can be made to give the farmers the right kind of mills that will process at least from one metric ton per hour to 10 metric tons, skills and employment for the youth, among others.

Further, he says they are looking at what programs can be introduced so that farmers have access to finance, perhaps through village savings, community banks and providing opportunities that enable locals to tap into commercial savings banks.

Saygbe reveals here that most of the big investments [in the oil palm sector] indicated that by 2020, the only palm oil they will buy will be RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) certified, which means smallholder farmers must start thinking about meeting this condition.

Making comment, Deputy Minister Wolokollie suggests the need to make the interest rate very low to motivate farmers when giving loans.

Concerning counties chosen by Solidaridad for the program including Lofa, Nimba, Bomi, Bong and Grand Bassa, she comments that "we" cannot continue to chose the same counties over and over.

She wants these kinds of programs to also be directed to undeveloped counties that

do not have farms like Grand Kru, Sinoe, River Cess and others.

She fears that if "we" continue to take counties that are developed, "we" will not be moving forward.

She however expresses confidence that with Liberians' willingness and commitment to work, Solidaridad can achieve its target of producing 17 metric tons of palm oil, up from 4 metric tons, once they have the right mills.

For his part, A. Kefi Conteh says the objective is purely for the SWAPP program in Liberia, expressing believe that the participants will help to shape the program in Liberia.

He underscores that the biggest motivation is money, suggesting that if the farmers see that they can really make money from farming, more farmers will enter the industry.

He says the program is design in a way that the locals will take ownership which also looks at impact investment.

While Solidaridad works with the banks, Mr. Conteh says it will also work with the businesses to quantify what they do to gain the banks' interest on how they will get back their investments.

In remarks, the Special Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Randolph R. Kolleh says the program is in line with the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture.



# Français

## Le pouvoir se tire une balle dans le pied

Il semble qu'il règne une divergence de vue au sein de la coalition au pouvoir au sujet de la mise en œuvre des nouveaux tarifs proposés par l'Autorité des télécommunications du Libéria (LTA) et qui aurait dû entrer en vigueur depuis le 15 avril de cette année.

L'année dernière, la LTA avait présenté une proposition qui, à en croire les autorités, visait à mettre fin à la guerre des prix entre les deux fournisseurs de services GSM afin d'améliorer les services et à redynamiser les investissements dans le secteur.

La nouvelle proposition qui, selon l'organisme libérien de régularisation des télécommunications, devrait entrer en vigueur le 15 avril 2019, veut décourager la promotion actuelle des appels gratuits de trois jours et introduire de nouveaux tarifs. Les consommateurs devraient payer désormais 0,0156 USD la minute pour les appels et 0,0218 USD la minute pour les données Internet.

Mais le président de la Coalition pour le Changement Démocratique (CDC, parti au pouvoir), MulbahMorlu, qui est farouchement opposé aux nouveaux tarifs, insiste sur le fait que la nouvelle mesure ne fera que mettre de l'argent dans les poches de M. Benoni Urey, le leader politique du All

Liberians Party (ALP) et président du Lonestar. Le conseil d'administration de MTN va remplacer le gouvernement Weah au lieu de relancer l'économie.

Pourtant, les autorités de la LTA estiment que leurs nouveaux tarifs permettront principalement de renforcer

l'économie libérienne. Selon la LTA, une taxe de 5% serait imposée sur la vente totale de biens et services de télécommunications nationales ou sur la TPS, ce qui devrait augmenter les recettes de l'Etat de 20 millions USD par an.

Les documents dont dispose ce quotidien indiquent que les deux entreprises de téléphonie mobile, LonestarCell MTN et Orange, sont d'accord avec les nouveaux tarifs et la taxe réglementaire de 5%. Mais la question des taxes supplémentaires reste un sujet de discorde.

La section 4.1 de l'ordonnance de la LTA : 0016-02-25-19, stipule : « À compter du 15 octobre 2019, à la date anniversaire de six mois de cette ordonnance, il sera imposé une taxe supplémentaire de 0,008 USD sur chaque minute d'appel téléphonique ».

4.2 Il est indiqué ce qui suit : "Le 15 octobre 2019, à la date anniversaire du sixième anniversaire de cette commande, un montant supplémentaire de 0,0065 USD sera appliqué aux données mobiles. 4.3 Déclare que : « Les taxes supplémentaires entreront en vigueur immédiatement à la date spécifiée sans préavis ni ordre

supplémentaire, sous réserve de toute décision résultant d'un examen et d'une analyse des indicateurs de marché pouvant être conformes aux sections 5.1 et 5.2 à la seule discrétion de la LTA. »

Selon des informations rapportées par les autorités de la LTA, les taxes supplémentaires augmenteront les recettes publiques de 20 millions de dollars par an. Mais ce qui est plus triste, c'est que cela entraînera une réduction importante du trafic des clients à faible revenu. Selon une source, Orange pourrait voir une baisse de 86% du nombre de clients à faible revenu, tandis que Lonestar MTN enregistrera une baisse d'environ 42% du nombre de clients à faible revenu en raison du coût des données.

Les taxes supplémentaires réglementaires allègeront la charge de paiement liée à la réduction des frais imposés aux clients élités, tout en rendant très difficile le paiement des données pour les clients figurant dans les fourchettes inférieures, ce qui pourrait augmenter leur coût de 10%.

Certains responsables du gouvernement de la CDC s'opposent farouchement aux taxes supplémentaires car, d'après le rapport, cela sapera les mesures annoncées récemment par le gouvernement pour stimuler l'économie.

## Une attaque contre une église fait six morts dans le nord du Burkina Faso

Au Burkina Faso, une église catholique a été la cible d'hommes armés, ce dimanche 12 mai, à Dablo, un village situé à 90 km de Kaya dans le centre nord du pays. Six personnes dont le prêtre ont été tuées. Les assaillants sont arrivés alors que débutait la messe et ont fait feu sur les fidèles. C'est la première fois dans le pays qu'une église catholique subit une attaque terroriste.

Il était 9h00 et les fidèles chrétiens étaient à l'intérieur de l'église. La messe venait juste de commencer lorsque des hommes armés sont arrivés sur près de 17 motos, selon le maire Zango Ousmane, qui raconte : « Ils sont venus à une vitesse infernale et quand ils sont arrivés, ils ont laissé tomber les motos et ils ont commencé à tirer. Ils ont brûlé une boutique et un restaurant puis sont revenus pour brûler

l'église. C'était la débandade pour ceux qui étaient dehors » et « vers les différentes sorties de l'église ».

Les assaillants ont alors commencé à tirer en l'air et intimidé l'ordre à tous ceux qui étaient à l'intérieur de l'église de ne plus bouger. « Ils ont fermé les portes et demandé à voir les responsables de l'église », selon notre source, qui explique que « les fidèles avaient d'abord pensé à une prise d'otages ».

C'est ainsi qu'ils se saisissent du prêtre et de cinq autres fidèles qu'ils font coucher et tirent sur eux, relate cette autorité. Une source sécuritaire confirme qu'au moins six personnes ont été tuées au cours de cette attaque.

Avant de partir, les assaillants ont mis le feu à l'église. Sur leur chemin, ils ont incendié un maquis et un véhicule au centre de santé de la commune de Dablo. Le dépôt pharmaceutique du centre de santé a été également saccagé. « Ils sont venus très nombreux comparativement à nos forces de sécurité », dit le maire.



Articles traduits  
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C'est la première fois que la commune de Dablo est victime d'une attaque. « Il n'y avait aucun signe d'une quelconque menace sur cette commune », souligne un habitant. Le maire plaide pour que les renforts restent autant que possible afin de soutenir les habitants encore sous le choc. Ce qui s'est passé à l'église paroissiale de Dablo était une prise en otage des fidèles avec des séances de prêche. Une situation qui a rendu difficile l'intervention des forces de défense et de sécurité intérieures, selon Siméon Sawadogo, le ministre de l'Administration du territoire : « Vous imaginez une quarantaine d'assaillants qui prennent l'église d'assaut. À l'intérieur, quelle intervention vous pouvez faire ? Le problème n'est pas d'intervenir mais la vie des personnes qui sont dedans. C'était difficile de faire une intervention qui ne mette pas en danger la vie des personnes

qui assistaient à la messe. »

Après les attaques contre les chefs coutumiers et des responsables communautaires, les groupes armés prennent désormais pour cible les temples et églises. Tout en condamnant cette dernière attaque, le ministre d'État Siméon Sawadogo souligne que l'objectif des groupes terroristes est de mettre à mal la cohésion sociale : « Il ne faut pas que l'on cède à cette nouvelle intimidation, projet funeste de nous opposer entre catholiques, protestants, musulmans, etc. Il faut que l'on reste forts. Le peuple doit rester soudé. J'ai parlé au pasteur, j'ai parlé aux évêques, j'ai parlé aux musulmans. Tout le monde est unanime pour condamner les actes ignobles de ces gens. »

Du côté de l'Église catholique, on préfère ne pas faire de commentaire sur cette attaque afin d'éviter tout amalgame ou confusion qui pourrait raviver des tensions.



# Français

## Éditorial

### Relevez ce défi, Monsieur le Président !

Le Centre pour la transparence et la responsabilité au Libéria (CENTAL) exhorte le président George MannehWeah à faire preuve de réalisme et d'impartialité dans la lutte contre la corruption et à tenir sa promesse de débarrasser son administration de tout acte de corruption.

Le CENTAL souhaite la mise en œuvre rapide et impartiale des conclusions de l'enquête sur la gestion des 25 millions de dollars injectés dans l'économie pour freiner l'inflation. L'organisation demande au président Weah et à son gouvernement de donner suite aux graves préoccupations exprimées par les partenaires au développement concernant l'utilisation des fonds des donateurs.

Elle dit craindre que l'habitude du gouvernementne puisse amener la confiance des donateurs dans le gouvernement à s'amenuiser, d'autant plus que cela risquerad'avoir de graves conséquences en matière de financement et d'aides au développement au Libéria.

Nous pensons que ce sont là des préoccupations sérieuses et légitimes qui devraient retenir l'attention non seulement du président, mais aussi de l'ensemble du gouvernement, si bien sûrle Libéria tient à bénéficier continuellement de la confiance et du soutien de ses partenaires internationaux, notamment des Nations Unies, de la CEDEAO, de l'UA, des États-Unis, de l'Union européenne, de la France, de la Grande-Bretagne et des autres.

Tout commence par le président, car il est à la fois chef du gouvernement et chef de l'État. Il devrait et doit prendre des mesures concrètes et bien réfléchiespour rassurer nos partenaires.

Depuis que le Président Weah a appelé la Commission Générale des Audits à auditer l'équipe technique de gestion économique (TEMT) dirigée par le ministre des Finances et de la Planification du développement afin de faire la lumière sur l'utilisation des 25 millions de dollars américains, il n'y a eu aucune suite. En fait, la GAC a déclaré publiquement qu'elle n'avait jamais reçu de demande écrite de la part du président.

Nous nous demandons comment ce gouvernement peut inspirer confiance en particulier aux yeux des partenaires internationaux quand il ne peut pas gérer correctement ses propres fonds. Il s'avère incapable de rendre compte des 25 millions de dollars US qui avaient été retirés de nos réserves nationales pour éponger les excès de liquidités sur notre marché afin de contribuer à la stabilisation du taux de change et des prix.

Aujourd'hui, le taux de change se dirige maintenant vers 200 LRL contre 1 dollar américain et pourrait même aller au-delà, ce qui pourrait exacerber la situation économique au grand dam des masses qui croulentdéjà sous le joug de la cherté de la vie. Pire, jusqu'à présent, aucune responsabilité n'a été située.

Le président Weah devrait maintenant joindre l'acte à la parole en faisant preuve de volonté politique en prenant des mesures décisives qui reflètent un bon leadership. Il ne peut pas continuer à fermer les yeux sur des crimes économiques délibérément commis par ses proches et espérer gagner la confiance du public. Non ! Ça ne marche pas comme ça.

La gouvernance ou le leadership devrait consister à regarder la situation dans son ensemble et à se poser la question de savoir comment allons-nous procéder pour maintenir le respect et la confiance de nos partenaires, car nous en avons cruellement besoin pour réussir en tant que membres du comité des nations.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Janjira Sombatpoonsiri

### L'arsenal répressif des cyber-législations

BANGKOK - Confrontés à des soulèvements populaires - des révolutions de couleur dans les pays satellites de l'ancienne Union soviétique aux mouvements de contestation du Printemps arabe - mettant en cause la légitimité de leurs homologues, des autocrates au pouvoir ont entrepris d'adopter des mesures législatives relatives au cyber-espace visant à neutraliser les groupes de la société civile, dont les mouvements pro-démocratie et les ONG de défense des droits humains. Les mesures les plus radicales permettent aux autorités de suivre et de sanctionner les activités en lignes des activistes.

Si la répression délibérée des manifestations exercée par les forces de sécurité étatiques reste extrêmement préoccupante, ces dernières années, les régimes autoritaires ont de plus en plus utilisé des outils juridiques et bureaucratiques pour museler leurs opposants. De nombreux pays - dont le Cambodge, la Chine, l'Égypte, l'Éthiopie, la Jordanie, l'Ouzbékistan, la Russie, la Tanzanie, la Thaïlande et le Venezuela - ont par exemple durci les restrictions relatives à l'enregistrement des organisations de la société civile, au financement extérieur et au droit de réunion.

Ces gouvernements autocratiques se sont aussi abondamment appuyés sur les lois existantes sanctionnant des infractions définies de manière floue, comme la diffamation et la sédition, et sur les législations promulguées pour lutter contre le terrorisme. Ils ajoutent aujourd'hui les cyber-législations à leur arsenal répressif.

La plupart des pays se sont dotés, à juste titre, de dispositifs juridiques de lutte contre la cybercriminalité, de protection de la vie privée et de transparence des transactions financières en ligne. Les régimes autoritaires légifèrent toutefois souvent pour contrôler leurs opposants - en ayant recours à des dispositions assez floues pour être instrumentalisées et appliquées arbitrairement.

Par exemple, ces lois peuvent définir les entités représentant une cyber-menace comme des groupes ou individus ayant une « intention malveillante », ou qui « s'opposent à l'État », « mettent en péril la sécurité ou l'idéologie nationale », « déforment l'information et causent une panique publique », « font la promotion de l'homosexualité ou du lesbianisme », ou qui « génèrent des mouvements sociaux préjudiciables à l'État ». Des définitions aussi larges permettent aux autocrates de présenter à peu près n'importe quel dissident comme une menace pour la sécurité, et d'utiliser ces dispositions comme prétexte pour accentuer la répression - et même pour mobiliser le soutien du public.

L'Asie du Sud-Est présente de nombreux exemples de cette tendance. Sur les dix pays membres de l'Association des nations de l'Asie du Sud-Est (ASEAN), sept sont gouvernés par diverses formes d'autocratie : l'autoritarisme compétitif (Cambodge, Singapour, et Birmanie), le régime du parti unique (Laos, Vietnam), la monarchie absolue (Brunei) et un gouvernement militaire (Thaïlande). Jusqu'en 2018, la Malaisie entrait dans la catégorie de l'autoritarisme compétitif.

Au cours de la dernière décennie, ces pays ont musclé leurs législations visant à étouffer l'opposition, au moyen de diverses lois sur l'utilisation d'internet et la cybersécurité, qui suivent toutes le même scénario. Au Cambodge, la loi sur la cybercriminalité, appliquée par une nouvelle unité spécifiquement chargée de cette question, contient des dispositions ambiguës qui facilitent la restriction de la liberté d'expression. À Singapour, ce rôle est rempli par le code de bonnes pratiques à l'usage des fournisseurs d'accès à Internet (Internet Code of Practice) et tout récemment par la nouvelle loi sur la protection contre les fausses nouvelles et les manipulations en ligne. En Birmanie, le contrôle étatique est incarné par la loi sur l'internet de 2000, qui restreint les contenus pouvant être postés sur la toile, la loi sur les transactions électronique de 2004, qui prévoit de lourdes peines pour une longue liste

d'infractions très vaguement définies et par la loi de 2013 sur les télécommunications, qui criminalise la diffamation.

De même, les lois dont le but affiché est de lutter contre la propagation de « fausses nouvelles » - comme l'article 65 du code pénal du Laos - ont été utilisés pour réprimer les dissidents. Lors de la campagne électorale de 2018 en Malaisie, le parti au pouvoir a promulgué une loi contre les infox pour tenter de couper l'herbe sous le pied de l'opposition, qui a quand même remporté les élections.

Un élément clé de ces stratégies répressives liées au cyberspace est la surveillance de masse. La loi sur la cybersécurité, récemment adoptée par le Parlement thaïlandais - qui complète la loi sur les crimes informatiques entrée en vigueur en 2007 et révisée en 2016 - autorise l'État à élargir le champ de la surveillance et à renforcer les sanctions contre des cyberattaques dont la définition reste vague. Le gouvernement de la Thaïlande - comme ceux de l'Azerbaïdjan, de la Malaisie, du Maroc et du Qatar - auraient acheté des logiciels espions auprès de diverses sociétés, dont l'entreprise italienne de technologie informatique Hacking Team, qui leur permettent de pirater les ordinateurs, téléphones portables et même les systèmes GPS de leurs citoyens.

Les obligations de localisations des données - qui astreignent les entreprises du numérique à conserver les données des internautes sur des serveurs locaux - facilitent ces activités de surveillance. Le Vietnam, comme la Chine, le Nigeria, le Pakistan et la Russie, ont récemment adopté des lois sur la localisation territoriale des données, supposément pour empêcher le vol de ces données. Mais conserver les données au sein d'un pays permet également aux gouvernements de les contrôler. La loi sur la cybersécurité entrée en vigueur au Vietnam au 1er janvier 2019 permet au gouvernement d'accéder aux données des médias sociaux stockées localement et de supprimer tout contenu jugé préjudiciable à l'État. La Chine va plus loin : grâce à ses vastes ressources, elle a recours à des avancées de l'intelligence artificielle pour analyser les flux de données et ainsi surveiller et contrôler ses citoyens.

Les militants de l'ensemble de l'Asie du Sud-Est et d'autres autocraties dans le monde subissent aujourd'hui les répercussions de cette évolution législative. En Malaisie, la loi sur les communications et le multimédia de 1998 a été utilisée pour engager une action en justice contre des personnes ayant critiqué les autorités ou la monarchie, dans au moins 37 cas depuis 2017. En Birmanie, plus d'une centaine d'affaires ont été portées devant les tribunaux en vertu de la loi sur les télécommunications depuis 2013 et rien qu'en 2016, 54 personnes ont été jugées et 8 d'entre elles emprisonnées pour avoir exprimé des vues dissidentes sur les médias sociaux.

La junte militaire thaïlandaise a jeté plusieurs dizaines de citoyens en prison pour avoir partagé des informations « sensibles » sur les médias sociaux. À l'approche des élections 2019, elle a eu recours à la loi sur les crimes informatiques, avec des chefs d'accusation sans fondement retenus contre les partis d'opposition, tout en ignorant les infox dissimulées par les trolls à son service. Au Vietnam, où des centaines de dissidents ont fait l'objet de poursuites judiciaires en 2017-2018 pour « diffusion de propagande contre l'État », en ligne ou autrement, la nouvelle loi sur la cybersécurité ne fera qu'aggraver leur situation.

Au niveau international, divers réseaux de défense des droits exercent des pressions sur les gouvernements démocratiques et les institutions internationales pour qu'ils interviennent auprès des régimes autoritaires. Il existe toutefois la nécessité plus générale d'une réponse coordonnée au niveau mondial visant à protéger les droits civiques. Ce n'est que par des pressions publiques constantes que nous pourrions inciter les régimes autocratiques à réviser ou abroger leurs politiques numériques.



## FEATURE

## FEATURE

# Is There Any Cause to Protest On June 7 in Liberia? An Assessment of the Impacts and Consequences of Protests around Africa

By: Josephus Moses Gray  
Assistant Professor of International Relations

**A** francophone philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his social contract theory revealed that: “Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains; people who know little are usually great talkers, while men who know much say little”. The concept of a “social contract” in general terms means that people give up some of their rights to some form of authority - a government in exchange for social order and political participatory, economic, social, and political security and inclusiveness. In the interest of lasting peace and stability for the state and its peace loving people, President George Weah's administration and organizers of the June 7 protest must dialogue, which is a way of exploring the roots of the many crises that face humanity today. It enables inquiry into, and understanding of, the sorts of processes that fragment and interfere with real communication.

This article, among other things, examined and critically reflects on the wave of protests that is associated with the spread of democracy across the globe, and protest again economic, political and social injustices. It goes further to catalog the major protests that occurred on the African continent in recent time and also remind the Liberian populace that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and privileges. They are endowed with reasons and consciences, and should act towards one another in the spirit of unanimity, toleration of opinions of critical and restrained voices of both opposition and government.

But the question: Is there any cause to protest on June 7 in Liberia? What are the reasons for such planned protest across the country considering the fact that protests are interpreted and carried out in different ways? Another question is: Under what primarily contexts- is the much publicized 7 protest is being triggered? Is it against economic concerns that squally bordered on the livelihood of the ordinary masses or political decisions or by transnational issues which are unknown, or the combination of all?

Amidst ongoing political disunity in the country, there are pressing important elements that the nation need to focus on in order to move forward and offer better opportunities for the survival of all Liberians, and not to invent conditions that have the potential to create more division in the country. Liberians are war exhausted and conflict fatigue; let us not repeat the past mistakes regarding critical national issue, which can properly be handled and amicably resolved than to drag this nation into another prolonged national divergence.

However, in the interest of lasting peace and stability for the state and its peace loving people, President George Weah's administration and organizers of the June 7 protest must dialogue, which is a way of exploring the roots of the many crises that face humanity today. It enables inquiry into, and understanding of, the sorts of processes that fragment and interfere with real communication. Frantic efforts should also be made at the national levels by policy makers, politicians, state actors, religious and traditional leaders, scholars, to ensure national peace and security in the country, and find the root causes of conflicts and finding solutions to issues that affect the nation's growth and well-being.

Unlike the last major global wave of protests that was associated with the spread of democracy in the 1980s and 1990s, protests are increasing now in every region of the world and in every type of political context. The current wave of protests is triggered primarily by economic concerns or political decisions, not by transnational issues animated some previous protests across the world in the 80s and 90s... The forms, methods, and aims of the current wave of protests do not overall represent a new form of democracy or better living standard; in some cases the protestors profoundly regret their actions, while in some instances help to diminish economic and political injustices and inequality.

Major demonstrations have occurred around the world with increasing frequency since the second half of the 2000s. Given the superficial resemblance of such events to each other especially the dramatic images of masses of people in the streets from one region to another, from one state to another is a defining characteristic. The spike in protests on the African continent is becoming a major trend in international politics, but what have been the impacts of this new phenomenon across the globe especially in Africa, a continent divided into five regions and 55 states with competing national interests? Has the new phenomenon of incessant brought about any true economic, social and political benefits?

Some protests have failed to translate protest dynamism into sustainable institution building or political contestation; others have led to the creation of new political parties or economic impact in states where the phenomenon occurred. Protests have flared in many countries recording comparatively high rates of economic growth and political advancement but socioeconomic troubles have sometimes been present, but usually less consequentially than political ones. In most recent, oppositions and civil society movements were successful to force some of the longest serving African leaders and dictators to be forced from office.

The list of countries that have been hit by major protests since 2010 to present is remarkably long and diverse including Algeria, Libya, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Brazil, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Iraq, Japan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Malaysia, Moldova, South Korea, and Venezuela. It includes more than 80 states that span every region of the world. By region, the greatest number of protests has taken place in higher-income countries, followed by Latin America, then East Asia, then sub-Saharan Africa.

The number of protests in North Africa and the Middle East has fluctuated more than elsewhere, with the most dramatic spike of any region in 2011, and most recent



protests in Sudan and Algeria. Many of these protests have been profoundly important events in the countries where they have taken place. They are often large-scale gatherings of citizens who are determined to challenge fundamental policies or structures of power. Protesters have been prepared to confront harsh treatment by security forces and sometimes brutal repression

It appears that political factors also show to have been the main cause of most recent protests across African especially in Algeria, Libya, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Guinea and other semi authoritarian contexts. In a number of cases, specific political issues served as triggers bringing out protesters angry about unworkable policy and bad governance; economic factors appear to have played only a secondary role in many of these cases, except in the political contexts. The multiplication of citizens' protests have significantly erupted governance in states where the phenomenon has occurred in recent time; in certain instance the situation deteriorates while in some cases the situation turned out for better reason. .

The tensions that are building up in the country must be harmoniously resolved and handled peacefully. Considering the nation's ugly past to the present where Liberians and foreign resident can sleep in peace without the echoes of guns and other deadly weapons, or without the country being divided between factional lines, the nation especially state actors must sustain the peace.

As a recall of the recent political melees and reflection of events which have torn the nation apart, it is time that the authorities of the organizers of the planned “June 7” demonstration in the country soberly reflects on the nation's ugly and blood-driven darker past. Seeking a peaceful means to resolve our disagreements is unity in strengths; let the critical and restrained voices of both opposition and government calm down the words since unusable words are most destructive than bullets, let try to discipline our disagreements especially on issues that concerns national interest and wellbeing of the struggling messes.

Civil society is dynamic, vibrant and influential in the contemporary world's politics; it is recognized as a diverse and ever-wider ecosystem of individuals, communities and organizations and have been effective in protects to force leaders to abandon their lucrative offices. Civil society networks are built across geographical, social and physical divides. These networks allow greater numbers of people to aggregate and collectively address societal challenges. Across the globe there are examples of civil society exhibiting an energetic voice in promoting the principles of fair and equitable economic development, gender equality and human rights; in many countries including Africa.

In early 2011, amid a wave of popular protest in countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa, largely peaceful demonstrations against entrenched regimes brought quick transfers of power in Egypt and Tunisia. For instances, April 2019, thousands of protesters held a sit-in outside Sudanese former President Omar al-Bashir's residence in central, having camped there overnight following the biggest demonstration in months of protests against his 30-year rule. As a result of the protest, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir was removed by the military after months of anti-government protests against his three-decade rule.

**TO BE CONTINUE**



# Weah, protesters in deadlock

By Winston W. Parley

A dialogue between Liberia's President George Manneh Weah and protest organizers Council of Patriots (COP) ended in a deadlock in Monrovia Tuesday, 14 May, amid growing panic among Liberians over the pending June 7 assembly.

The COP which organizes the planned protest endorsed by Liberia's four collaborating opposition political parties told President Weah at the dialogue held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tuesday May 14, that they want their right to protection guaranteed under the Constitution, meaning they are not aborting the protest.

They insist that they will make their grievances known during their planned protest beginning June 7.

President Weah held the dialogue with the COP in Monrovia, graced by Liberia's international partners, religious leaders and traditional chiefs on Unification Day to try to ascertain and perhaps address the protesters' grievances that are prompting the planned protest.

But President Weah



glaringly appeared unhappy with the outcome of the dialogue at which the COP did not make known its concerns immediately, saying it is unfortunate that they cannot give their statement now.

Allegations of corruption, the poor state of the economy and a US\$25m mop - up exercise are among many other reasons why opposition and critics of

President Weah's regime are saying they will protest and make demands for some reforms here.

Panic has been growing among Liberians over the pending June 7 Protest, prompting suggestions from different quarters of the society for a dialogue between the government and the protesters.

However, the first dialogue

with the COP did not see the discussions ending now, as the group's official spokesperson and official of opposition Liberty Party Abraham Darius Dillon briefly asks President Weah at the dialogue for protection of the protesters comes June 7.

ECOWAS, the AU, UN, Christian leaders, Muslim leaders, and the traditional council graced the dialogue and made remarks.

On behalf of the COP, Dillon urges the president to kindly commit to uphold the Constitution "and guarantee our rights for protection beginning June 7 during which period we will present our grievances" in a petition to the president and the government.

Dillon says the COP went to the meeting in honor of President Weah's invitation to state its concern regarding June 7 (planned protest).

According to Mr. Dillon, it is disrespectful "in our culture" when the highest office of the land or someone who is older than you, invites you and you fail to attend.

The COP's delegation at the meeting included Dillon, Sen. Sando Johnson (Bomi), Amb. Rufus Neufville, and a female clergy.

Opening the meeting, President Weah thanked the Council of Patriots for honoring his invitation to a dialogue, saying he thinks it is in the right direction to dialogue.

He says he called the meeting to listen to what the organizers of the protest had to say in the interest of the country, as well as to listen to comments from the religious leaders, the diplomatic corps and the traditional leaders.

President Weah assures that he remains opened to further dialogue in the interest of the state, but he adds that if protesters insist on going in the street which is their constitutional right, he will instruct Justice Minister Frank Musa Dean to provide protection both for the protesters and non-protesters.

In exercising their rights to protest, President Weah urges Liberians that their past should remind them to protect the peace.

Concerning lists of issues he received after a meeting at the Senate regarding the current political situation here, President Weah notes that some of the issues are general issues while others are

personal.

He notes that the general issues, some of which are economic issues will be gradually addressed.

Based on the previous meeting at the Senate, President Weah says he called for the dialogue at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, anticipating hearing the concerns of the COP.

"But it is unfortunate that today they couldn't make a statement; that they want to give a concern during the protest," President Weah says.

Vice President Jewel Howard - Taylor urges the COP to give government a chance to look at some of the issues it is raising, noting that the issues are not personal issues but national issues.

She informs the COP that the government is instituted to look at the challenges, the opportunity, and threat and find solution to those problems.

ECOWAS Envoy to Liberia Amb. Babatunde Ajisomo says the dialogue is important because it takes ECOWAS back to its role in Liberia, recalling how men and women serving the regional bloc lost their lives while trying to rescue their Liberian brothers and sisters during a conflict they did not know anything about.

UN Resident Coordinator Yacoub El Hillo says the dialogue sends a message to the world that today, Liberians are choosing the force of logic to solve their difference, and not the logic of force.

He says "June 7 is a good thing," and actually a demonstration that the Government of Liberia [recognizes] at all time that there is an enshrined right in the Constitution for peaceful protest.

"That's why June 7 is actually supported, and June 7 should be allowed to take course, June 7 should be given to the people of this country to actually petition their government in a peaceful, orderly and organized way that is conducted in close coordination with the appropriate authorities in the country," says Yacoub El Hillo.

The African Union representative at the dialogue says protest is a right, but "we need" to look at what Liberia has been through, citing the 14 years of brutal civil war and the recent Ebola crisis, among others.

## NEC wants electoral budget passed

By Emmanuel Mondaye

As nomination process for aspirants wanting to contest in the pending Montserrado County Senatorial and Representative by-elections intensifies in Monrovia, the National Elections Commission (NEC) anxiously awaits the National Legislature to pass its US\$2.5 million budget submitted for both elections.

This paper gathers that while the NEC awaits the budget passage, political parties are already submitting names of would-be

candidates, likewise individuals contemplating contesting as Independent candidates are doing same.

Under the elections law, candidates are required to submit copies of their supporters' listing to the NEC and to publish same in several local dailies before being qualified to contest in an election.

The pending by-election is necessitated by the death of Montserrado County Senator Geraldine Doe-Sherif, who died in Accra, Ghana, on 10 February following a

protracted illness.

NEC Information Officer Prince Dunbar says the commission is working along with political parties and Independent candidates, while patiently awaiting the National Legislature to pass the budget submitted recently for the poll.

Dunbar reveals that while this is going on, NEC continues to interact with key stakeholders involved in the electoral process to stay in time for the conduct of the election without any hindrance whatsoever.

He says the commission would be pleased were the Legislature to give timely consideration to the budget to ensure the process is held on July 2, 2019 as scheduled.

He adds that the commission also has a vacant seat for the House, which was created by the death of Montserrado County Electoral District #15 Representative, the late Adolph A. Lawrence, who died in car crash on 25 March on the Roberts International Airport highway in Margibi County.

Dunbar notes that considering the rainy season, which is already ongoing, it would be expedient for the Legislature to fast track passage of the budget to ensure these elections are conducted as planned.

Editing by Jonathan Browne



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## Cagliari escape sanctions for fans' racist abuse of Juve's Kean



Serie A has decided not to sanction Cagliari for their fans' racist abuse of Moise Kean despite admitting their actions were "reprehensible".

The Juventus forward, 19, suffered racist abuse from the stands during his side's 2-0 win at Cagliari on 2 April.

"It emerged the chants in question, although certainly

reprehensible, had an objectively limited relevance to race," the body said.

Juventus sealed their eighth consecutive Serie A title last month.

Kean held his arms aloft after scoring Juve's second goal of the match, seemingly in response to the chants, and was subjected to further abuse.

After the match the Italy international wrote on Instagram: "The best way to respond to racism."

But Juve manager Massimiliano Allegri and defender Leonardo Bonucci both said Kean should take some of the blame for the way he celebrated.

"He shouldn't have celebrated in that manner," said Allegri. "He is a young man and he has to learn, but certain things from the crowd also shouldn't be heard."

Italy international Bonucci - who scored the opening goal - told Sky Sport Italia: "I think the blame is 50-50. Moise should not have done that and the Curva [fans] should not have reacted in that way."

However, Allegri later said Bonucci "expressed himself badly" in reacting to the racist abuse suffered by his teammate and said: "Racism must always be fought and is never justifiable."

Following the incident, Italy manager Roberto Mancini called the racist abuse "intolerable".

## Hon. Kuku Y. Dorbor in the rearview mirror



Hon. Dorbor inspects the Diamond Creek bridge project in its early stage

Former Representative Kuku Y. Dorbor of Montserrado County District#6 is a development-oriented leader, who extraordinarily impacted lives of the people of the district in so many ways. In this photograph, Hon. Dorbor inspects a community bridge project, one of many projects she successfully executed during her six years tenure in former 52nd Legislature.

## Solidaridad to introduce modern mills for palm oil

By Winston W. Parley

International civil society organization Solidaridad Liberia says engineers are coming in this week to assess sites for the introduction of the first five modern mills to boost the production of oil palm here by smallholder farmers.

"And hopefully between June, July, we are bringing in the first five modern mills. And this mill will be able to process one metric ton per hour of fresh fruits," Solidaridad Program Manager for Oil Palm, Cyrus Saygbe, Sr. said Monday, 13 May.

Ahead of the introduction of the modern mills to Liberia



which target Nimba, Bong, Bomi, Lofa and Grand Bassa Counties, an Advisory Committee for the Sustainable West African Palm Oil Program (SWAPP) launch was performed in Monrovia by Deputy Commerce Minister Jamima Wolokollie at Solidaridad office in Sinkor.

During a presentation, Mr.



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