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# The New Dawn

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# Gov't mounts protest



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# Continental News

## Ethiopia mourns top general killed 'in coup bid'

Ethiopia has held a memorial for the army chief of staff, Gen Seare Mekonnen, who was shot dead in an alleged coup attempt on Saturday.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was pictured weeping at the ceremony in Addis Ababa to honour the general, a key ally. The assassination was reportedly part of a coup attempt in the Amhara region.

Officials say the alleged attacker, the general's bodyguard, is being treated for his injuries - contradicting an earlier claim that he was dead. The alleged ringleader behind the attempted coup, Brig Gen Asaminew Tsige, was shot dead on Monday, police said.

He was reportedly killed as he tried to escape from his hideout in the Amhara region's capital, Bahir Dar. Tuesday's memorial service took place at a large venue in the Ethiopian capital, amid tight security.

Mourners paid their respects before flag-draped

coffins bearing the bodies of Gen Seare and Gen Gezai Abera, a colleague who was assassinated with him. Mr Abiy was filmed wiping away his tears at the event, while soldiers eulogised the dead men. In a statement on state media on Monday evening,

Ethiopian federal police apologised for having earlier said that the alleged assassin, Gen Seare's bodyguard, had killed himself.

The latest statement from the police said the bodyguard, who has not been named, was being treated for gunshot

wounds in hospital. It is not clear if the injuries were self-inflicted.

The internet has been shut across Ethiopia, after a brief resumption in service that followed an unexplained blackout lasting more than a week. The attack on Gen Seare and Gen Abera on Saturday came hours after gunmen in Bahir Dar killed the governor of Amhara, Ambachew Mekonnen, along with two senior officials. The government described the events as a co-ordinated attempt to seize power in the northern region. State officials told local TV on Monday that Brig Gen Asaminew had been present at the killing of the governor. Mr Abiy has urged Ethiopians to unite against "evil" forces set on dividing the country. The weekend's assassinations represent the biggest challenge yet to his year-old government, which has undertaken sweeping reforms to the security apparatus. The BBC's Emmanuel Igunza says there is clearly still significant opposition within the military to the prime minister's style of leadership.

The US, a key ally, has

condemned the unrest, saying it was probably linked to "vestiges of the old regime" unhappy with Mr Abiy's reforms. While details are still emerging, news of Gen Asaminew's alleged bid for power was not a surprise for some Ethiopians.

He was a member of the Amhara, the country's second largest ethnic group. He had a reputation for hardline ethnic nationalism and had previously called for the Amhara people to have greater autonomy.

This month, in a video on social media, he openly advised the Amhara to arm themselves. He had been serving as Amhara's regional security chief and was said to have a significant following among young people.

He was among a group of high-ranking military officers released from prison early last year when the government moved to free political detainees in response to public pressure. The general had been in custody for nine years for allegedly plotting a coup.

Gen Asaminew had a bad relationship with the Tigray regional government as well. The government claimed that Gen Seare and Gen Abera had been killed because they came from the minority Tigray ethnic group. BBC



## Maraga urged to resolve MPs row

Chief Justice David Maraga has been requested to appoint a three-judge bench to determine the dispute over MPs' house allowance which the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) is contesting. Monday, High Court Judge Weldon Korir extended orders earlier obtained by the SRC stopping the Parliamentary Service Commission from further paying MPs the Sh250,000 monthly house allowance.

The judge said that following consent of all parties in the case, "the deputy registrar is hereby directed to forward the file to the Chief Justice for consideration of a bench of three or other uneven number." SRC, through lawyer Peter Wanyama, is seeking to stop implementation of the house allowance and recovery of the money already paid to the MPs. SRC wants the clerks of the Senate and National Assembly directed to recover from MPs any allowance paid,

"pursuant to the illegal and unconstitutional decision" to pay house allowance outside the constitutional structure of remuneration and benefits of State officers in Parliament. Alternatively, the commission wants the court to hold personally members of the PSC and secretary of the commission Jeremiah Nyegenye responsible for payment of the allowances to MPs. The PSC has also filed an application seeking to set aside the interim order obtained by SRC. Mr Korir however directed that the two cases, including another filed by activist Okiya Omtatah, be heard together. Parliament recently made good its threat to cut the budget of the SRC after the commission obtained a court order blocking MPs from earning Sh250,000 monthly house allowance.

The Budget and Appropriations Committee slashed Sh104.6 million from the SRC's budget for travel, entertainment, hiring professionals and new offices. The committee cut the SRC budget to Sh545.3 million from Sh649.9 million for the financial year starting July.



## Kagame criticises West's 'human rights superiority complex'



Rwanda's President Paul Kagame has termed criticism of his country's human rights record as "rubbish" and "ridiculous" in an interview with French TV broadcaster France24. He said that Rwanda was a different country compared to what it was 25 years ago.

He challenged the programme's host to look at what he called Europe's failing human rights record, especially its treatment of migrants.

"[Europe] is violating people's rights, with this problem of people being bundled and sent back to sink

in the Mediterranean and so many people being mistreated in your own country," he said.

Mr Kagame added that the West's criticisms was tinged with a superiority complex: "You really need to stop this superiority complex nonsense about human rights."

"You think you are the only ones who respect human rights, all others are about violating human rights. No, we've fought for human rights and freedoms for our people much better [than] you people who keep talking about this nonsense." BBC

# EDITORIAL

## Reform is necessary for peaceful, credible elections

THE CONSORTIUM, ELECTION Coordination Committee or ECC is advocating for reform of the Electoral Law of Liberia and other critical areas of the electoral process, including the date of election.

ECC CHAIR OSCAR Bloh, observes that Article 83 (C) of the Constitution of Liberia, which confers judicial powers to the National Elections Commission, places additional and unnecessary burden on the NEC besides its original mandate of organizing and conducting elections in Liberia thus, a need for amendment in the elections law to make the process peaceful and credible.

ARTICLE 83 (C) OF the Constitution reads, "The returns of the elections shall be declared by the Elections Commission not later than fifteen days after the casting of ballots. Any party or candidate who complains about the manner in which the elections were conducted or who challenges the results thereof shall have the right to file a complaint with the Elections Commission. Such complaint must be filed not later than seven days after the announcement of the results of the elections.

THE ELECTIONS COMMISSION shall, within thirty days of receipt of the complaint, conduct an impartial investigation and render a decision which may involve a dismissal of the complaint or a nullification of the election of a candidate. Any political party or independent candidate affected by such decision shall not later than seven days appeal against it to the Supreme Court.

THE ELECTIONS COMMISSION shall within seven days of receipt of the notice of appeal, forward all the records in the case to the Supreme Court, which not later than seven days thereafter, shall hear and make its determination. If the Supreme Court nullifies or sustains the nullification of the election of any candidate, for whatever reasons, the Elections Commission shall within sixty days of the decision of the Court conduct new elections to fill the vacancy. If the Court sustains the election of a candidate, the Elections Commission shall act to effectuate the mandate of the Court."

IF RESULT FROM the first round of the 2017 Presidential Election, which was heavily contested by one of the candidates, Cllr. Charles Walker Brumskine of the Liberty Party, and supported by other parties is anything to reflect on, then we agree with the ECC on the need for reform in the elections law, for how can the Commission that is charged with the responsibility of conducting the poll, be the one to hear and adjudicate disputes brought against its activities.

THEREFORE, THE ECC'S call for an independent electoral tribunal makes sense in order to reduce the burden on the NEC and prevent it from being a judge and a party at the same time.

CHAIRMAN BLOH NOTES that in the wake of weak political institutions and limited knowledge among Magistrates and Hearing Officers on the substantive and procedural aspects of the law, some consideration should be given for the establishment of an ad hoc body of judicial officials to hear complaints and make determinations on presidential and legislative elections.

AT AN ENGAGEMENT with editors organized Friday, 21 June by the Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding, ECC's Harold Aidoo unveiled a reform project, which he says has four objectives - to improve Liberia's electoral framework; refine and publicize National Elections Commission's reform; change the election date; design and execute advocacy and produce briefing materials that would serve as lessons learnt from the field.

He said the consortium, comprised of about seven civil society organizations, will also engage the Legislature, political parties and the National Elections Commission itself to see the need to amend the elections law.

It is very important that all Liberians support the campaign to reform the elections law so that we can conduct free, peaceful and credible elections to strengthen our democracy.

In the words of Chairman Bloh, elections do not guarantee democracy, but they are a fundamental requirement to give legitimacy to any democratic government, so the process in conducting one should be free of bottlenecks and disputes to give legitimacy to any government emerging out of such exercise.

# COMMENTARY

By Ismaël Emelien  
& David Amiel

## A Grassroots Antidote to Populism

*Across Western democracies, traditional parties are collapsing or assuming unrecognizable new forms, while populists have successfully exploited voter disaffection. But as French President Emmanuel Macron's La République En Marche ! shows, a grassroots progressivism that focuses on voters' real concerns is a viable alternative.*

PARIS - The political parties that once dominated Western democracies have been shaken to the core. Many have suffered electoral debacles, not least in France, Italy, Greece, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere. Others have changed so radically that only their name remains the same. The Republican Party of US President Donald Trump has little in common with that of former President Ronald Reagan.

These developments are similar across the West. Leaders of the once-dominant parties oscillate between denial and despair, while populists siphon off their traditional supporters. Some refuse to see any legitimate reason for their defeat, dismissing their opponents' supporters as "deplorables," as Hillary Clinton did shortly before losing to Trump in 2016; others are too petrified by the populist surge to mount a counteroffensive.

But neither denial nor complacency will break the political impasse. Progressives must rebuild, and that starts with diagnosing the traditional parties' shortcomings. Part of the problem is that traditional parties failed to recognize the real issues of the age. Still fighting on old ideological battlefields, they turned a blind eye to declining social mobility, mounting environmental crises, rising geographic inequality, tensions over multiculturalism, and other issues that actually matter to voters. Decades ago, they were the vanguard. Today, they are alone in the woods, wondering where everyone went.

The social sciences may hold an answer as to why the mainstream lost its way. The gap between their objective analysis of reality and government policies has become a chasm. In most Western countries, for example, economists have long known about the growing divide in terms of incomes and other indicators between some affluent cities - which benefit from globalization - and the rest of the country. Yet not until French President Emmanuel Macron's administration did a national leader enact tax cuts on the basis of where one lives. As a result, 1% of France's GDP is now being redistributed first to the poorest parts of the country.

Traditional parties could also learn something from listening to voters directly, rather than only through the filters of media and pollsters. Back in 2016, Macron's movement, En Marche !, started with the largest door-to-door listening tour in France's history. What voters told canvassers then became the foundation of Macron's presidential campaign.

For example, more than a year before revelations of Harvey Weinstein's alleged sexual predations, "La Grande Marche" had gathered innumerable testimonies from women about harassment, and Macron issued a pledge to fight the problem if elected. At the time, Macron's stance made him the butt of opponents' jokes; the laughter soon faded with the onset of the #MeToo era.

Still, an accurate understanding of society is not enough. Traditional parties also suffer from poor organization. They have long believed that modern politics should be organized around elections, with activists showing up periodically to hand out leaflets and cheer on the candidates. This was not cynicism, so much as a symptom of an

approach that treats democracy as a marketplace comprising government providers and citizen consumers. In this view, seizing and holding power is a party's sole raison d'être. It is little wonder that citizens and even party members feel ignored between elections.

Despite these weaknesses, established parties had a number of advantages that forestalled their collapse. In recent years, they have had a technological edge over less-established opponents, and they were the only political actors with organized constituencies that could mobilize people for elections, organize protests, and start petitions.

But this model is no longer sustainable. Citizens nowadays refuse to be mere consumers of public policies. With rising levels of education have come new demands for empowerment. Voters want to be treated as political actors in their own right, not as pawns in someone else's game.

Moreover, governments themselves are no longer the sole providers of policies. This is one of the hard lessons we learned during two years working alongside Macron at the Élysée Palace. The leading policy challenges today - climate change, religious extremism, digital disruption, gender equality - do not admit of solutions only by national governments. Such challenges demand deep cultural changes, and, in most cases, action at the sub- and supra-national levels.

Finally, technology has lowered entry barriers to political participation, such that traditional parties can no longer count on an incumbent advantage and entrenched support networks. When you have mastered Google, Twitter, and Facebook, you don't need a century-old party machine.

Political movements must be rebuilt accordingly. The focus should be on specific actions, not just elections. A party's formal management structure should serve as the administrative "back office"; the front office should be staffed by the people on the ground. At La République En Marche !, we refer to these as local citizen projects. They can include anything from after-class reading courses and migrant integration programs to cooperative vegetable gardens and digital training sessions for senior citizens. In each case, the point is to offer solutions tailored to local problems, thereby strengthening communities. Such projects should now be regarded as essential complements to public policies.

In the future, a party's ability to offer rewarding avenues for political and community engagement will be essential to its attractiveness. And by demonstrating progressivism in action on a daily basis, parties will have already laid the groundwork for success when election day arrives.

When voters refuse to hear what you have to say, shouting louder is not the answer. This is the hard lesson traditional parties learned. Only by demonstrating a commitment to improving lives, rather than simply winning elections, can you convince people to come to your side. Reconnecting with voters' concerns thus goes hand-in-hand with adapting party organizations. For a winning alternative to populism, we need grassroots progressivism.

## O-PED

By Mark Leonard

## The End of “Chimerica”

**B**ERLIN - The escalating rivalry between China and the United States is ushering in a bipolar world. While the past few decades have been defined mostly by cooperation among the world's leading powers, the next few will be marked by zero-sum competition. Already, globalization and the deepening of ties between countries is giving way to what has euphemistically been called “decoupling.” Countries and regions are sorting themselves into smaller economic and geopolitical units under the guise of “taking back control.”

All of these trends are on display in the fight over the Chinese technology giant Huawei, a multinational company that purchases components from the US, Europe, Brazil, and elsewhere, sells its products in 170 countries, and is leading the expansion of 5G networks in many parts of the world. Until recently, Western businesses welcomed Huawei's low-cost, high-quality products; its presence kept US and European tech firms on their toes.

But now, the Trump administration's ban on sales of key components to Huawei by US firms, and its pressure on US allies to do the same, seems to have triggered a full-scale reversal of globalization. If Huawei and other Chinese “champions” are to survive, they must end their supply-chain dependency on the US.

Moreover, the Trump administration's warnings about potential Chinese espionage have prompted many American universities to break ties with Chinese companies and educational institutions. US start-ups are refusing, or being blocked from accepting, Chinese investment. Not surprisingly, Huawei reports that its overseas smartphone sales have fallen by 40%. It now expects to lose \$30 billion in revenue over the next two years.

Behind the Sino-American conflict are two aspiring strongmen competing for primacy: US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping. Each has pursued an agenda of national rejuvenation and fundamentally changed his country's standing in the world.

Trump believes that the US is suffering relative decline because it benefits less than others from the current global order. Convinced that as China grows stronger, the US necessarily becomes weaker, he has launched a campaign of “creative destruction,” undermining institutions such as the World Trade Organization and NATO, and scrapping trade deals like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The idea is to force individual countries into bilateral renegotiations with the US while it is still in a position to set the terms.

For his part, Xi has radically recast the Chinese political system and put his stamp on economic and foreign policy. Through his Made in China 2025 policy, he hopes to elevate China from a low-tech manufacturing economy to a global leader in cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI). His plan seems to involve acquiring Western technology and knowhow, and then driving Western companies out of the Chinese market.

The technological revolution Xi envisions would consummate China's transformation into a Big-Data dictatorship. The Communist Party of China's power will be secured by a twenty-first-century surveillance state, currently being tested in Xinjiang Province, where at least one million Chinese Uighur Muslims are being held in concentration camps. And, beyond China's borders, Xi hopes to use \$1 trillion in transnational infrastructure investment - his signature Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) - to establish a sphere of Chinese influence stretching across Eurasia, Africa, and the Pacific Rim.

But while Trump and Xi have disrupted the domestic status quo in their respective countries, their geostrategic agendas have merely accelerated developments that were already underway. Economically, the global balance of power has long been shifting from Washington to Beijing, making competition inevitable. What has changed is that the US-China relationship is no longer a complementary arrangement between developed and developing economies. Now that China and the US are increasingly vying for the same prize, a zero-sum logic of competition has set in - “Chimerica” is no more.

This change has come as a shock to Europeans, who now must worry about becoming roadkill in a Sino-American game of chicken. Recent polling by the European Council on Foreign Relations suggests that most Europeans - including 74% of Germans, 70% of Swedes, and 64% of French - would prefer to remain neutral.

These findings will certainly suit the Chinese. Back in 2003, when the US invaded Iraq, China started looking for diplomatic inroads into Europe. The reason, the influential Chinese academic Yan Xuetong told me, was that, “When we go to war with the USA, we hope Europe will at least stay neutral.” It is thus little wonder that Xi and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang have been making the rounds in Davos and at the Munich Security Conference, pressing for multilateralism. The hope, clearly, is to drive a wedge between Europe and a US governed by Trump's “America First” administration.

But neutrality is not really an option for Europeans. As the US and China decouple, both sides will ask Europe to pick a side. Moreover, Europeans have begun to take note of the threat posed to their own companies by China's state-capitalist economic model and closed market. A recent European Commission paper refers to China as a “systemic rival” and proposes a new mechanism for screening Chinese investment.

The problem is that while Europe's relations with China are cooling, so, too, have its ties to the US. Europeans want to live in a multilateral world where decisions are guided by rules, and traditional alliances are observed. Trump and Xi want something else entirely.

Fortunately, although European voters have remained passive, the EU and key European governments have been thinking more about European sovereignty. There is a growing realization that if Europe does not have its own competencies in AI and other technologies, European values will scarcely matter.

The question, then, is how to protect European sovereignty in the face of US secondary sanctions, Chinese investments, and other external sources of coercion. The answer isn't obvious. But if Europe succeeds, it could become a coequal power in a tripolar world, rather than merely a pawn in a game played by Trump and Xi.

## OPINION

By M Niaz Asadullah  
& Theresa Chan

## Asia's Student-Debt Time Bomb

**K**UALA LUMPUR - Malaysia's year-old government, led by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, suddenly finds itself mired in a political scandal, following the online circulation of a sex video involving a cabinet minister and another man. Weaponized sodomy charges are nothing new in Malaysia, twice resulting in the imprisonment of People's Justice Party leader Anwar Ibrahim. Unfortunately, the latest drama, like those preceding it, risks obscuring more essential problems.

One of the most pressing issues is that Mahathir's government inherited a severely strained balance sheet. And part of its fiscal weakness is rooted in the RM39 billion (\$9.5 billion) in outstanding debt owed to the National Higher Education Fund Corp (PTPTN).

Malaysia is not alone in this regard. Fueled by rising economic prosperity and aspirations, the global higher-education sector boomed during the 1990s and 2000s. Many countries helped to fuel that explosion by liberalizing higher education. Fee-charging universities proliferated, to the point that the majority of university students in the Asia-Pacific region now attend private, not public, institutions. Globally, one-third of all tertiary-level students today are enrolled in private institutions.

Unsurprisingly, student-loan debt surged. Almost 12 years after the 1992 launch of its student-loan program, New Zealand's outstanding student debt stood at \$7 billion. In the United States, that figure has reached \$1.5 trillion - triple its level in 2007.

Asian countries with high tertiary-education participation rates have proved particularly vulnerable to this trend. In South Korea, where 90% of young people pursue higher education - nearly 81% of which is private - education debt in 2013 grew by 12%, or twice the pace of consumer debt. In Japan - where 76% of high-school graduates pursue tertiary education, over 78% of them at private institutions - high tuitions and loan-only financing exacerbate the debt burden.

But there is more to the story than privatization and rising tuition fees. After all, the wealthy Scandinavian countries are also facing rising student-loan debts, despite offering free tuition. In Sweden, some 70% of students leave university with an average debt of about \$20,000 (compared to \$37,000 in the US).

In many Asian countries, the surge in university enrollment in the last few decades overwhelmed education systems, causing the quality of instruction to decline and leaving graduates poorly equipped for the labor market. Graduates' employment prospects were further undermined in some countries by demographic shifts - specifically, growing working-age populations - and unfavorable economic conditions, which led to jobless growth. The result is a lot of low-quality employment, widespread unemployment, and many graduates who are struggling to repay their loans. India's double-digit youth-unemployment rate lies at the heart of its student-loan debt problem.

In Malaysia, approximately 28% of bachelor degree-holders were unemployed in 2015. Many others had jobs that barely paid enough to survive: nearly 50% of working adults in Kuala Lumpur earn far below the central bank's official living wage. This has forced a large share of graduates to default not only on their student loans (51% of borrowers are not making the required payments), but also on other debts, including credit-card debt and personal loans. Debtors aged 25-44 constituted almost 60% of the bankruptcy cases reported from 2013 to August 2017.

The good news is that Malaysia's government is taking action to address its student-loan problem. In its 2019 budget, the finance ministry introduced an income-contingent loan scheme that closely resembles the income-based payroll-deduction programs in Australia and the United Kingdom.

According to Malaysia's system, borrowers earning more than RM1,000 monthly can have between 2% and 15% of their salary automatically channeled toward loan payments. This is a promising short-term solution; but if wages remain depressed and living costs continue to rise, income deductions may not be economically feasible.

PTPTN will also allow borrowers earning less than RM4,000 per month to defer repayment, and waive all remaining payments for the 350 borrowers over age 60 who are earning less than RM4,000. Finally, a tax break will be introduced benefiting firms that assist employees with student-loan repayment, though it is unclear how this will affect employers' behavior, given that up to 36% of new graduates in Malaysia quit their jobs within one year.

If Malaysia is to overcome its student-loan arrears, it will need to do more. For starters, it should change loan-disbursement criteria, so that a larger share of student costs is covered by grants and scholarships.

Malaysia should also take on board lessons from developed countries. In Germany, for example, parents are required to support their children financially, even during post-secondary education; in June 2016, only 18% of German students were managing student-loan debt. It also helps that student loans are interest-free, borrowers get a five-year break before repayment begins, and high-performing students are rewarded with partial debt write-offs.

Given higher education's critical role in supporting competitiveness and prosperity, policymakers - especially in transition economies like Malaysia, India, and China - should encourage participation. But they can hardly afford to allow student-loan debt to continue to snowball. After all, it was a student-loan crisis that triggered the massive protests that nearly brought down Chile's government in 2011.

The goal must be to strike a balance between GDP and wage growth and growth in higher education. At the same time, governments must ensure that students are receiving high-quality educations that meet the needs of today's labor market and protect graduates against technological unemployment in the longer term. Creating a sufficient number of high-quality jobs for degree-holders is of course vital.

It is a tall order. But governments like Malaysia's must fill it if they want to avoid even higher youth unemployment, a heavier burden of debt arrears, and the risk of political unrest.

## FEATURE

## FEATURE

## Africa Awaits Russia's Investment

By KesterKennKlomegah\*

Russia has been looking to raise its existing relationship with African countries and Afreximbank is now providing huge support in realizing that long term goal. The bank, with the task of transforming Russia's trade with Africa, organized an economic conference for more than 1,500 participants from June 20-22 in Moscow. The economic conference and other Russia-African events in 2019 can be described as "the Year of Africa" in the Russian Federation.

The Afreximbank Annual Meetings included Seminar and Meeting of the Afreximbank Advisory Group on Trade Finance and Export Development in Africa and special meetings between Russian and African political and business leaders to discuss trade, industrialization, export, and the implementation of joint investment projects.

Russia continues to strengthen its relationship with Africa due to multiple factors such as untapped abundant natural resources, improvement of the business climate, the rise of the middle-level income class and economic growth, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev noted in his speech at conference. He further pointed to Africa's growing appeal to and demand for high-tech, telecom investors and other products that could make swift business connection with Russia.

"All these things have already made Africa attractive for investments, and not merely in producing industries but, which is of particular importance, in high technologies and telecommunications," Medvedev said.

According to certain estimates, about a half of the resource potential of the planet is in Africa, he argued "we therefore need to more efficiently use these resources and at the same time promote cooperation in this sphere, just like cooperation in other spheres."

Besides those factors, there is high desire for mutual-cooperation. "It is also important to have a sincere internal desire, and such a sincere desire is present from the side of the Russian Federation and from the side of African states. We see this at different levels, including the top levels of cooperation," Medvedev said.

Opening the conference, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reminded conference participants that while relying on the long-time accumulated experience of constructive partnership, Russia and Africa are confidently moving along the road of comprehensively expanding Russian-African ties.

According to the Foreign Minister, the long years of solid friendship, which has been created, gives a fresh impetus to cooperation in many spheres and provides necessary conditions for building up trade, economic and investment exchanges, as well as cooperation in banking, and for encouraging business communities to implement mutually beneficial projects in African countries.

These include the construction of the country's first nuclear power plant and the establishment of the Russian Industrial Zone in Egypt, as well as the projects that are being implemented in Africa by such leading Russian businesses as Rosneft, Lukoil, Rosgeo, Gazprom, Alrosa, Vi Holding, GPB Global Resources and Renova.

"We can report first achievements in this sphere. Mutual trade is growing - it exceeded US\$20 billion last year - and becoming more diversified. Large projects are being implemented in Africa with direct financial support from Russia," he assertively said, and added: "I am confident that cooperation with



Afreximbank, which the Russian Export Centre (REC) has joined as a shareholder, will help promote long-term trade and economic relations between Russian businesses and their African partners."

As expected, REC predicts the volume of Russian-African trade relations will double within the next 3-4 years. "The Russian Export Center maintains a close partnership with Afreximbank and has already entered the first deals that we are jointly implementing on the African continent. We intend to increase the volumes and we foresee the volume of the Russian-African trade ties in the next three to four years doubling," said the Russian Export Center's (REC) chief Andrei Slepnev.

"It goes without saying that the Russian Export Center sees the African region as an important area to promote Russian non-commodity export. Our objective is to use today's positive market environment to open the access to African markets to as many exporters as possible and expand our geography," he argued.

The African continent currently has enormous potential as a sales market. Many African countries are enacting economic reforms, demand is growing for high-quality, competitive products. Russian businesses are interested in this niche, and our goods are already competitive in terms of price and quality.

Basic financial instruments of supporting trade between Russia and Africa could be direct loans to foreign buyers (including those secured by the sovereign guarantee of the borrowing country) and loans to banks of foreign buyers under the insurance coverage Exiar, loans to sovereign borrowers, financing receivables against export earnings.

In 2018, for instance, the volume of export-supported Russian products to African countries amounted to US\$2.47 billion. The main partners are Egypt, South Africa, Zambia, Morocco, Algeria, Nigeria and Kenya.

Advisor to the President of the Russian Federation, Anton Kobaykov, noting the importance of multilateral cooperation between Russia and Africa: "The current situation in the world is such that we are witnesses to the formation of new centres of economic growth in Africa. Competition for African markets is growing accordingly. There is no doubt that Russia's non-commodity exporters will benefit from cooperating with Africa on manufacturing, technologies, finances, trade, and investment."

Afreximbank President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dr. Benedict OkeyOramah, presented the 2019 African Trade Report, an analytical survey of African trade. "As we gather in this historic city of Moscow, we will explore how we can shape the future of trade and how we can transform our continent," said Oramah. "Our collective endeavours will impact the economic future and wellbeing of Africans for

generations to come."

In the report, special attention was paid to practical cooperation in the spheres of finances, energy, mining, railway infrastructure, digital technologies, cybersecurity, healthcare, education, food security in Africa.

In 2017, the Russian Export Center became Afreximbank's third largest non-African financial institution or organization shareholder, which has allowed for the rapid acceleration of investment, trade, and economic relations between Russia and African countries. It's active in mining projects in Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone, and has expressed interest in attracting Russian partners to the implementation of projects in the oil industry in Africa.

Notable among the Russian-African foreign economic projects include the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between the REC and Joint company Afromet (Vi Holding) regarding the comprehensive development of the Darwendale platinum field project in Zimbabwe, which was signed during a visit by the President of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa, to the Russian Federation in January 2019.

According separate reports, Russia has been developing a number of projects in cooperation with Afreximbank, including a project concerning the shipment of Russian ground transport and projects to finance industrial infrastructure construction and modernization projects in Nigeria and Angola. At the end of 2018, REC, Russian Railways, and Afreximbank signed a memorandum of cooperation. As a result, a trilateral working group was created, tasked with studying export and investment project issues in the railway and related industries, as well as forms of project and investment financing.

The latest description of Africa, which consists of 54 states, to many experts and business investors, is the last frontier. It is the last frontier because it has huge natural resources still untapped, all kinds of emerging business opportunities and constantly growing consumer market due to the increasing population. It has currently become a new business field for global players.

That negative perceptions deeply persistent among political and business elite, middle class and the public towards Russia. For the two past decades, due to Russia's low enthusiasm, lack of coordinated comprehensive mechanism and slowness in delivering on skyline investment pledges have been identified as the key factors affecting effective cooperation between Russia and Africa.

London based Business Research and Consultancy firm published a new report about global players set to continue broadening economic and business engagement across Africa. The publication has become largely important as Russia with its recognizable global status and among BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) dominated headlines that it has played less visible role in sub-Saharan Africa after Soviet's collapse.

The Russian Export Center, as a state institution for the support of non-primary goods, providing Russian exporters with a wide range of financial and non-financial support, is also working on a number of projects with Afreximbank in various African regions. Afreximbank was founded in 1993 in Abuja, Nigeria, with the authorized capital of US\$5 billion. The main objectives of the bank are the development of trade between African countries and abroad. The bank's headquarters is located in Cairo, Egypt. \*KesterKennKlomegah writes frequently about Russia, Africa and the BRICS.

**MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

**Gov't agrees to establish corruption court**

**-Samuel Tweah**

By Lewis S. Teh

Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah has disclosed here that government has agreed to establish corruption court in the country to help in the fight against corruption.

Announcing the decision Monday, 24 June, Mr. Tweah explained that President George Manneh Weah remains committed to the fight against corruption.

He told a team of financial experts from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at a news conference that the establishment of the court to deal with corruption cases is something that the president is passionate about.

"In the fight against corruption the president is committed. We have agreed to establish, and the vice president has a legislation on that already, in the soonest possible time the court will be established," says Mr. Tweah.

According to him, the government has given more powers to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) to help carry out its duties.

Minister Tweah says he understands that the LACC

making significant progress as it relates to prosecution.

Mr. Tweah indicates that the fight against corruption must be a collective effort, saying "we" all have to fight waste and abuse in government.

According to Mr. Tweah, as part of the IMF program, government will continue to do all it can to put Liberia on the right trajectory.

He said the discussion with the team of experts from the IMF was centered around three cardinal areas of programs including credible budget, monetary policy and strong

governance measures.

He notes that there are negotiations that are still ongoing, but he reveals that the government has made significant progress in some areas of development.

The government's decision to establish a corruption in Liberia is as a result of the massive corruption here involving key officials of past and present government.

Solicitor General designate Cllr. SaymaSyreniusCephus recently issued a list in reference to the General Auditing Commission

(GAC) Audit report of people of interest.

Cllr. Sephus says past and present officials will be investigated by the LACC.

Protests have been held

here to demand President Weah's government to establish a war and economic crimes court in Liberia.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley

**LACC indicts Liberia-China Group CEO**

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Chief Executive Officer of the Liberia-China United Investment Group, LianZhi faces corruption charges here.

Mr. Lian was indicted along with several former and current Liberian officials, including former Bong County Representatives George Mulbah, Sr. and TokpahMulbah as well as current Representatives Edward Karfiah, Melvin Cole, former Superintendent Rennie Jackson, former President of the Bong County Technical College John Flomo; Thomas Cisco, Project Specialist at the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Kenneth Yao Awadjie, former Assistant Chief Architect at the Ministry of Public Works; Marcus Eastman, Project Engineer, Project

accused criminally converted to their own use and benefit, money from the Social and County Development Funds for Bong County Technical College in the amount of US\$2,681,491.30 through various fraudulent schemes, including deceptively selecting Liberia China United Investment Group as the qualified company to construct the BCTC in Gbarnga, Bong County, in violation of the PPCC Act.

The release quotes the Grand Jurors for Bong County, Republic of Liberia, as upon oath, do hereby find more probably than not that the defendants did do and violate Subpart 2, section 31, of the Amended and Restated Public Procurement and



Minister Samuel Tweah

**Pres. Weah eulogizes late Sen. Dagoseh**

By Ethel A. Tweh

President George M. Weah says the late Grand Cape Mount County Senator Edward B. Dagoseh was a kind man and he treated everyone with respect.

The President notes that he knew the fallen senator when he (Weah) was playing for the National Team, the

Lone Star and the late Senator Dagoseh was working at the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Signing the book of condolence Tuesday, June 25, 2019 at the Capitol in Monrovia, President Weah also recalls that he and the late senator served in the Senate together, saying, the fallen Senator treated everyone with great humanity.

"We are all hurt by his death; it's a great loss. I got to see him in the last days. I remembered when he came down to the Executive he talked about going to India", Pres. Weah laments.

He encourages the deceased's children, widow, brothers and other relatives to be strong, consoling that, "after life is death and there's nothing we can do; may his soul rests in peace."

The late Senator Edward B. Dagoseh died on June 1st in Monrovia, following a protracted sickness. He served as Chairman on the Committee on Ways, Means and Finance of the Liberian Senate.

He also worked on other committees at the senate prior to his demise. Meanwhile, His remains will be taken to the Capitol for state funeral on Thursday, June 27, to be followed by interment at his home town in Grand Cape Mount County.

Since January, the 54th Legislature has lost two senators as a result of sickness and one representative in a car crash. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



LGUIG CEO Mr. LianZhi indicted by the LACC



The late Senator Edward B. Dagoseh

Implementation Unit, Bong County.

A release from the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission discloses that the accused are charged with offenses of PPCC Act, Theft of Property, Fraud of the Internal Revenue of Liberia, Criminal Conspiracy and Criminal Facilitation, respectively, growing out of transactions they were involved with relative to the construction of the Bong College during the period of December 2009 up to January 2016, while serving and acting in various capacities, in total violation of the laws of Liberia.

The release details that the

Concessions Act, Part IV of the Public Procurement and Concessions Act and Section 24 (2) of the Public Financial Management Act, respectively.

That, during FY2009/2010 the citizens of Bong County agreed to undertake the construction of a Twin-wing two floor Administrative and Academic Building, two dormitories, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, a soccer pitch, reservoir, generator house and staff quarters to host the D o l o k e l e n G b o v e h C o m m u n i t y College, now Bong Technical



MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# Sen. Brown descends on Speaker, Pro-Tempore

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Maryland County Senator J. Ble-bo Brown descends on Speaker Bhofal Chambers and Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert Chie for allegedly serving as hindrance to good governance.

Speaking at a Legislative engagement organized by the Legislative Information Service and the National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections or NAYMOTÉ on Tuesday, June 25, in the conference room of the Liberian Senate, Senator Brown notes that the Legislative and Judiciary branches of government seem not to have the level of independence that is required to keep the Executive branch in check.

“The two houses of the legislature which are charged with the primary responsibility of exercising oversight over the executive are headed by individuals who are members and officials of the ruling party, including the House Speaker and the Senate Pro-Tempore,” Sen. Brown asserts.

He says despite the existence of laws for the

promotion of good governance, and integrity institutions, there seems to be lack of political will to implement these laws.

Sen. Brown notes that there are several institutions that have been established in post-conflict Liberia in support of the practice of good governance, but they need to be strengthened, rather than weakened.

“The free press is one of the major prospects in our governance system. We must continue to encourage free speech and freedom of the press. Liberians have bitter lessons learnt of many years of bad governance. These lessons should not only serve as deterrence to bad governance, but should give us many reasons

why we need to promote and implement needed reforms in the way and manner in which we govern.”

He stresses that the establishment of the Governance Commission that is constantly reviewing and making recommendations for the promotion of good governance is an opportunity that should be maintained and taken advantage of.

He says the dialogue came at the time when the people of Liberia are demanding, and rightfully so, greater responsibility and accountability of their government.

Sen. Brown, who chairs the senate committee on Internal Affairs recalls, “Few weeks ago, to be exact on June 7, thousands of Liberians converged on the Capitol, which is the seat of the Liberian government, to demand urgent reforms and to seek

answers to critical national issues relative to the governance of the Liberian Senate.”

He continues that while it may be true that the protest was largely influenced and supported by opposition political parties, the issues raised cannot be brushed aside, as such, the issues represent the core of the nation’s problems.

He points out that the three branches of government should summon courage in adopting strong political will to implementing serious reforms in the governance of the State.

Both Speaker Chambers and Pro-Tempore Chie, from the governing Coalition for Democratic Change, have come under increased criticisms from colleague lawmakers for poor leadership in the first branch of government. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Senator J. Ble-bo Brown

## EFFL withdraws from Council of Patriots

The Economic Freedom Fighters of Liberia (EFFL) announces its withdrawal from the Council of Patriots (COP), organizers of the June 7, 2019 protest with immediate effect, becoming the second to jump the boat after Margibi County Senator Oscar Cooper.

The EFFL, headed by Commander-In-Chief Emmanuel Gonquoi, is a leftwing, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist political organization that emerged after the departure of the administration of ex-president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. It is critical of the George Weah regime.

In a press statement issued

in Monrovia Tuesday, 25 June the movement among others, accuses the COP of failure to appropriately exonerate itself from alleged financial malpractices, alleged disrespect and wanton disregard for the popular will of the Liberian people; self-glorification and popularity seeking; failure of the current leadership to step down; and COP leadership’s alleged betrayal of Montserrado County district#10 Representative YekehKolubah.

It details that the COP failed thus far to have by now transparently clear itself of tons of allegations of corruption brought against it by multiple accusers from several quarters of the society.

“From since June 7, 2019, it has been more than two weeks, in our estimation, more than enough time, for the COP leadership to have made public a comprehensive and a proper financial report. Instead, what we have seen is a questionable report out of which oozes half-truths and smells with corruption as well”, the statement reads.

On the claim of disrespect and disregard for the will of the Liberian people, it says the COP leadership unjustifiably refused to have presented the petition statement to the Government of Liberia’s representatives present at the protest site that day or to the ECOWAS Ambassador and his team that turned out to monitor the protest, saying, “We see this act on the part of the leadership of COP as being disrespectful and anti-peace; undemocratic tendencies that the EFFL will not embrace, because what such tendencies do is to only send forth a message of undermining our country hard-earned peace that we continue to enjoy in this democratic space in spite of the current dingy and stuffy economic dilemma the country is engulfed in.”

According to the EFFL, there are some members in the COP leadership who think it’s because of their popularity that the Liberian people gathered on June 7, 2019, and that without their involvement the protest would have been a failure. Hence, it says those people see themselves as not being answerable to anyone, as regards issues of transparency,

## LACC indicts Liberia

Cont’d from page 6

College in Gbarnga City, at a construction cost of US\$4,394,776.97.

That, in August 2010 the County Development Management Committee of Bong County published advertisement in the Daily Observer and Chronicle Newspapers, inviting qualified bidders for the construction of the Bong Technical College (BCTC), in Gbarnga, Bong County, and that, the advert provided that bidding would be through International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedure specified in the

Public Procurement and Concession Act (PPCA) and approved by the Public Procurement and Concession (PPCC).

The advert further required that eligible and qualified bidders must have the capacity to do a 50% pre-finance and submit bids with professional and technical qualifications; proof of equipment availability, past performance; legal capacity, financial resources and condition; payment of taxes and social security contributions, among others.

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accountability and fair play.

“Let the word go forth that the EFFL says it is absolutely no single individual’s popularity that made Liberians to come out in their droves. As a matter of fact, the people assembled to register their dissatisfactions over bad governance and economic stagnation as a result of national leaders who are misfits and corrupt.”

On alleged failure of the current COP leadership to step down, the statement notes that On June 9, 2019, a meeting was held at the Old Road, Sinkor Headquarters of the All Liberian Party, out of which grew several decisions including an unanimous decision for the current COP leadership to step down and make way for a new team of leaders, but the current leadership is reneging.

Lastly, the EFFL says it is inconceivably scaring, how the COP leadership would have so cruelly omitted from the petition, issues concerning the matter of life and death of one of its founding members, in person of Montserrado County District

#10 lawmaker, Representative YekehKolubah.

The movement describes Rep. Kolubah, who has been indicted by the government on multiple charges, including terroristic threats, as a man, who has and continue to advocate for social justice, and has stood up to the Weah-led government in its wicked desire to entrench bad governance, to the point where he is a classic victim of witch-hunt by the very government he is a part of, but yet is standing up against.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the press, fellow leaders and fighters both in the Diaspora and Liberia, our Liberian people, it is for such deceit and hypocrisy from men in disguise as patriots but who are in reality schemers looking to take advantage of the people, that we today withdraw from the COP”, the statement concludes.

The Council of Patriots, thru its official spokesman Darius Dillon, has not officially responded to the barrage of allegations levied by the EFFL. *- Press Statement*



# Français

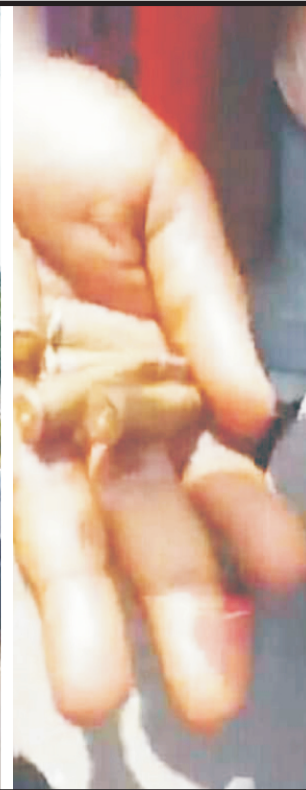
## Des heurts entre manifestants et forces de l'ordre font un mort et plusieurs blessés à Margibi

Des éléments de la brigade anti-émeutes de la police nationale du Libéria auraient ouvert le feu sur des manifestants lors d'un affrontement le lundi 24 juin dans le comté de Margibi, faisant un mort et plusieurs blessés graves, selon les informations parvenues de cette partie du pays.

La police se serait servi des balles réelles qui auraient entraîné la mort d'un garçon de 18 ans, tandis que deux autres victimes auraient reçu chacun une balle dans la jambe.

Le porte-parole de la police, Moses Carter, n'a pas pu être contacté car son téléphone portable était éteint, mais les stations de radio locales ont fait savoir que le porte-parole de la policier agirait par la suite.

Plus tard lundi, l'ambassade des États-Unis près de Monrovia a averti tous les citoyens américains



d'éviter le tronçon Monrovia-Kakata pour des raisons de sécurité.

« Une manifestation a lieu aujourd'hui, lundi 24 juin 2019, près de la communauté de FifteenGate sur l'autoroute Monrovia-Kakata. Les manifestants réclament

justice pour le meurtre présumé de deux enfants, il y a quelques semaines. Les manifestants auraient bloqué l'autoroute Monrovia-Ganta à Kingsville # 7, qui se trouve à un kilomètre et demi de la communauté de FifteenGate », a déclaré l'ambassade

américaine.

« Des informations font état de personnes blessées par balle et d'un décès », note l'ambassade américaine.

« Les membres du personnel du gouvernement des États-Unis, y compris les volontaires et les membres du personnel de Peace Corps, sont invités à éviter le secteur », a ajouté le communiqué de l'Ambassade.

L'ambassade conseille à tous les citoyens américains d'éviter le lieu de la manifestation et de suivre les

médias locaux pour rester informés de l'évolution de la situation.

L'ambassade a indiqué qu'elle émettrait des alertes supplémentaires en cas de modification de la liste des actions recommandées.

L'incident aurait eu lieu lorsque des résidents en colère de Kingsville # 7, rassemblés en masse au petit matin, ont demandé justice pour le meurtre présumé de deux enfants portés disparus.

Ces enfants auraient été retrouvés morts, certaines parties de leurs corps ayant été extraites, ce qui a provoqué la colère des habitants qui ont bloqué la route, empêchant ainsi la libre circulation des véhicules.

Selon certains manifestants, après avoir bloqué la route principale pendant la matinée, des agents de la police nationale du Libéria sont arrivés sur les lieux et ont enlevé barrage routier.

Mais les manifestants ont reconstruit plus tard le barrage routier. C'est à ce moment-là que des policiers auraient commencé à courir après les manifestants et auraient ouvert le feu contre les manifestants en fuite.

## Hélicoptère français abattu au-dessus du Mali : récit d'un sauvetage audacieux

Un hélicoptère de type Gazelle de l'opération Barkhane a bien été abattu par les jihadistes le 14 juin dernier à la frontière entre le Mali et le Niger. L'état-major français parlait

jusqu'alors d'un « atterrissage d'urgence ».

Vendredi 14 juin, dans la matinée, les militaires de Barkhane mènent des combats au cœur d'un repaire jihadiste à la frontière entre le Mali et le Niger, aidés par

les forces des deux pays. Un hélicoptère français de type Gazelle essuie alors des tirs de mitrailleuse Kalachnikov-PKM de calibre 7.62 qui provoquent un incendie puis une perte de puissance moteur, obligeant l'équipage à effectuer un atterrissage forcé à proximité des combats sur un terrain poussiéreux et avec une visibilité réduite.

Le pilote et le chef de bord, placés à l'avant de l'appareil, sont blessés dans le choc. À l'arrière, un commando tireur d'élite s'en sort un peu mieux. Il parvient à extraire ses camarades de l'appareil, avant qu'un hélicoptère d'attaque de type Tigre ne vienne leur porter assistance, au risque d'être à son tour abattu.

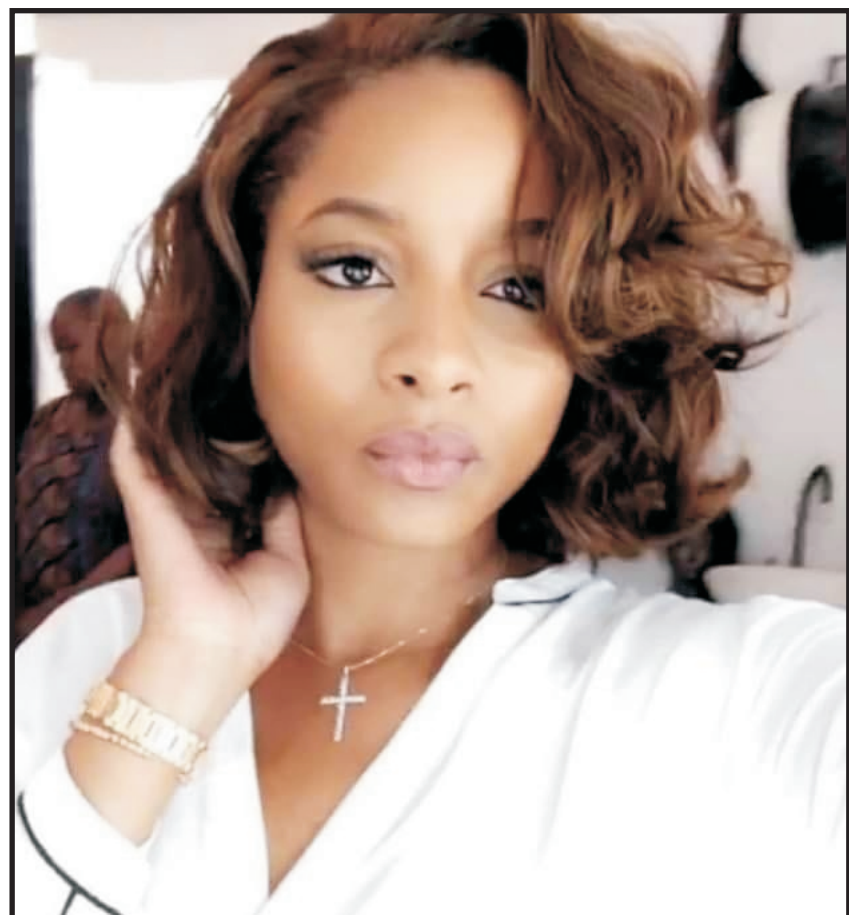
Mais cette machine biplace n'est pas conçue pour le transport. Les militaires de Barkhane appliquent alors une mesure d'extraction immédiate : les deux soldats les plus sérieusement blessés sont sanglés à l'extérieur de l'appareil, près du train d'atterrissage. Le commando

rejoint la machine accidentée, la fait sauter et s'exfiltre dans un autre appareil.

Cet événement témoigne de l'âpreté des combats qui se sont déroulés ces dernières semaines à la frontière entre le Mali et le Niger. Ce jour-là, 20 membres d'un groupe armé appartenant probablement au groupe État islamique pour

le Grand Sahara ont été tués ou faits prisonniers. Une vingtaine de motos, de l'armement et des moyens de communication ont été récupérés, a alors précisé l'état-major français.

Les trois soldats blessés dans le crash ont pu rejoindre un hôpital militaire en France.



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# Français

## Éditorial

### Une réforme de notre code électoral est plus que jamais indispensable

Le Comité de coordination des élections (ECC) plaide pour une réforme du code électoral du Libéria et d'autres domaines critiques du processus électoral, y compris la date des élections.

Oscar Bloh, président du CEC, estime que l'article 83 (C) de la Constitution du Libéria, qui confère des pouvoirs judiciaires à la Commission électorale nationale outre son mandat initial d'organiser et de réguler les élections au Libéria, impose une charge supplémentaire et inutile sur cette institution, d'où la nécessité d'une modification du code électoral afin de rendre le processus aussi pacifique que crédible.

La Constitution du Libéria stipule à son article 83 (C) que : « Les résultats des élections sont déclarés par la Commission électorale au plus tard quinze jours après le vote. Tout parti ou candidat qui se plaint de la manière dont les élections ont été organisées ou qui conteste les résultats de ces élections a le droit de déposer une plainte officielle auprès de la commission électorale. Cette plainte doit être déposée au plus tard sept jours après l'annonce des résultats du scrutin ».

« La Commission électorale doit, dans les trente jours suivant la réception de la plainte, mener une enquête impartiale et rendre une décision pouvant entraîner soit le rejet de la plainte ou l'annulation de l'élection d'un candidat. Tout parti politique ou candidat indépendant concerné par cette décision peut interjeter appel de son jugement devant la Cour suprême dans un délai de sept jours au plus tard.

Dans les sept jours suivant la réception d'interjection d'appel, la Commission électorale transmet tous les procès-verbaux à la Cour suprême qui, au plus tard sept jours après, doit rendre sa décision. Si la Cour suprême annule ou maintient l'annulation de l'élection de tout candidat, pour quelque motif que ce soit, la Commission électorale doit, dans un délai de soixante jours à compter de la date de la décision de la Cour, procéder à de nouvelles élections pour pourvoir le poste vacant. Si la Cour maintient l'élection d'un candidat, la Commission électorale s'acquitte de son mandat. »

Si le résultat du premier tour de l'élection présidentielle de 2017, qui a été fortement contestée par l'un des candidats, Charles Walker Brumskine du Parti de la liberté et soutenu par les autres partis est un sujet de réflexion, nous convenons avec le CCE de la nécessité de réformer la loi électorale. Comment peut-on imposer à la Commission chargée d'organiser les élections la responsabilité de régler les contentieux issus de ses activités.

Par conséquent, l'appel du CEC à la création d'un tribunal électoral indépendant est logique, car cela permettra de réduire la charge qui pèse sur la NEC et de l'empêcher d'être à la fois juge et partie.

Le Président Bloh a indiqué que, compte tenu de la faiblesse des institutions politiques et de la méconnaissance des magistrats et des agents d'audience sur les aspects de fond et de procédure de la loi, il conviendrait d'envisager la création d'un organe spécial de magistrats chargé d'examiner les plaintes et de statuer sur les élections présidentielles et législatives.

Lors d'une rencontre avec les rédacteurs en chef organisée vendredi 21 juin par le Centre pour l'étude des médias et la consolidation de la paix, Harold Aidoode la CEC a dévoilé un projet de réforme qui poursuit quatre objectifs: améliorer le cadre électoral du Libéria; affiner et faire connaître la réforme de la Commission électorale nationale; changer la date de l'élection; concevoir et exécuter des activités de plaidoyer et produire des documents d'information qui pourraient servir de leçons apprises sur le terrain.

Il a ajouté que le consortium, composé d'environ sept organisations de la société civile, impliquera également le pouvoir législatif, les partis politiques et la Commission électorale nationale afin de déterminer la nécessité de modifier la loi électorale.

Il est très important que tous les Libériens soutiennent la campagne visant à réformer la loi électorale afin que nous puissions organiser des élections libres, pacifiques et crédibles pour renforcer notre démocratie.

Selon le président Bloh, les élections ne garantissent pas la démocratie, mais constituent une exigence fondamentale pour légitimer tout gouvernement démocratique. Le processus de création d'un tel gouvernement devrait donc être exempt de goulots d'étranglement et de conflits pour donner une légitimité à tout gouvernement sortant d'un tel exercice.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Ismaël Emelien  
& David Amiel

### Vaincre le populisme par la base

PARIS - Les partis politiques qui ont alterné à la tête des démocraties occidentales sont profondément ébranlés. La plupart ont souffert de sévères défaites électorales - songeons à la France, à l'Italie, à la Grèce, au Royaume-Uni... D'autres ont presque tout changé sauf leur nom : le parti républicain de Donald Trump n'a plus grand-chose à voir avec celui de Ronald Reagan.

Partout, les dirigeants des partis autrefois dominants oscillent entre le déni et le désespoir, tandis que les populistes continuent de croître. Certains refusent de reconnaître la moindre cause légitime à leur échec, accusant les soutiens de leurs opposants d'être « déplorables », comme Hillary Clinton l'a fait peu avant sa défaite. D'autres sont tellement pétrifiés par la vague populiste qu'ils ne parviennent pas à concevoir une contre-offensive.

Aucune de ces deux attitudes ne peut nous sortir de l'impasse. La reconstruction d'un camp progressiste doit commencer par un diagnostic implacable des échecs des partis traditionnels. Il s'agit d'abord de leur incapacité à prendre en charge les plus importants problèmes de l'époque. Préférant s'affronter sur des terrains de bataille épuisés, ils sont restés aveugles au ralentissement de la mobilité sociale, à l'urgence environnementale, aux inégalités territoriales, aux tensions suscitées par le multiculturalisme, etc.

Une écoute plus attentive des sciences sociales serait une première étape. La distance entre l'analyse de la réalité et les politiques publiques menées par les gouvernements est devenue immense. Dans la plupart des pays occidentaux, par exemple, les économistes ont depuis longtemps alerté sur l'écart grandissant entre les métropoles qui bénéficient de la mondialisation et le reste du pays, en termes de revenus comme d'opportunités. Pourtant, il Emmanuel Macron est le premier dirigeant politique à avoir décidé d'une baisse d'impôt ciblée en fonction de l'endroit où l'on réside. Près d'1% du PIB est ainsi redistribué d'abord vers les endroits les plus pauvres du pays.

Les partis traditionnels devraient aussi écouter plus directement les électeurs, au lieu de s'en remettre exclusivement au filtre des sondages et des médias. En 2016, En Marche ! a lancé la plus grande opération de porte-à-porte jamais dédiée à l'écoute des citoyens. Les résultats sont instructifs. Plus d'un an avant l'affaire Weinstein, « La Grande Marche » avait par exemple recueilli d'innombrables témoignages de harcèlement, produits par des femmes de tous milieux sociaux, ce qui avait conduit Emmanuel Macron à promettre d'en faire la grande cause de son quinquennat. Cela avait à l'époque été tourné en dérision par ses opposants. Depuis le mouvement « Me Too », les rires ont disparu.

Toutefois, un bon diagnostic de la société ne suffit pas. Les partis traditionnels souffrent aussi d'une organisation inadéquate. Ils ont trop longtemps cru que la vie politique moderne devait tourner uniquement autour des élections et les militants, servir à peupler les meetings ou à distribuer les tracts pendant les périodes de

campagne. S'agit-il là de cynisme ? Plutôt d'un symptôme d'une vision étroite de la démocratie, perçue comme un « marché » où les gouvernements seraient les fournisseurs de politiques publiques et les citoyens leurs consommateurs. Fort logiquement, s'emparer ou conserver le pouvoir semble alors l'unique raison d'être d'un parti. Nul mystère à ce que les citoyens, et même les militants, soient négligés entre deux campagnes. D'ailleurs, malgré leurs fragilités, les partis traditionnels étaient relativement protégés et semblaient difficilement détronables. Ils possédaient, par leur ancienneté, un « avantage technologique » par rapport à des oppositions moins implantées, et étaient les mieux à même de mobiliser les citoyens, d'organiser des manifestations, de lancer des pétitions.

Mais ce modèle n'est plus soutenable. Les citoyens ne veulent plus être des simples consommateurs de politiques publiques. Le niveau croissant d'éducation s'est accompagné de nouvelles demandes d'autonomie : ils souhaitent être traités comme des acteurs à part entière. Par ailleurs, les gouvernements ne peuvent plus être les seuls fournisseurs de politiques publiques. C'est l'une des leçons que nous avons tirées de nos années à l'Elysée. Les plus grands défis auxquels nous faisons face - le changement climatique, l'extrémisme religieux, la transformation numérique, l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes - ne peuvent être résolus uniquement par les gouvernements nationaux. Ils réclament un changement culturel profond, et une action à tous les niveaux (en dessous des Etats, et au-dessus d'eux). Enfin, les nouvelles technologies ont réduit les barrières à l'entrée de la compétition politique : quand on maîtrise Google, Twitter et Facebook, nul besoin d'une machine électorale centenaire pour se lancer en politique.

Les mouvements politiques doivent être reconstruits à cette lumière. L'accent devrait être mis sur des actions, et pas seulement sur les élections. La direction devrait servir comme le « back office » d'un mouvement dont le « front office » est constitué par les adhérents sur le terrain. A La République en Marche, c'est ce que l'on appelle les « projets citoyens ». Il peut aussi bien s'agir de soutien scolaire, de programmes d'intégration de migrants, de jardins partagés, de formations au numérique pour les personnes âgées, etc. Dans chaque cas, l'essentiel est d'offrir une solution adaptée à des problèmes locaux. Cela renforce le lien social. C'est un complément essentiel aux politiques conduites par l'administration. Ces engagements aussi gratifiants sont devenus essentiels pour recruter des adhérents - comme pour démontrer, dans la perspective de futures élections, ce que le progressisme peut réellement et concrètement signifier.

En somme, pour reconquérir les électeurs dans tous les pays en proie au populisme, il faut témoigner sa volonté de transformer les vies, et non seulement de gagner les élections. C'est ce que les partis traditionnels ont appris à leurs dépens. Comprendre la société ne va pas sans adapter l'organisation des partis. C'est par la base que l'on pourra vaincre le populisme.

## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

# The Impact of China-Liberia Relations & Cooperation: What Are the Economic Benefits?

By: Josephus Moses Gray

Cont'd from last edition

All of these projects create opportunities (include jobs) for the current administration to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people. Chinese Government growing popularity Liberia is due to the soft power approach in the region and the speed of which it responds to developmental requests by unpunished countries like Liberia. The Chinese win-win diplomacy and soft power in Liberia have given the Beijing leverage in the country. Today, some of the Liberian political elites have concluded that China is not only a credible and willing international partner but also a strategic option for growth in Liberia. China sees a small window of opportunity to consolidate its influence and project in Liberia as a means to meaningfully contribute to Liberia's socio-economic and industrialization especially to support president Weah's pro-poor agenda aimed at lifting ordinary people out of abject poverty.

Whilst as the United States continues to debate the merits of aid to Liberia, China will continue to fill a major gap in several areas of interventions. While it is too early to predict precisely whether Chinese long-term rendezvous in Liberia will produce a positive influence, the impact of China in the country is highly visible in several developmental areas including roads rehabilitation, constructions of bridges, hospitals, schools, sports stadium, agriculture facilities, and investments projects.

Nowadays, China remains a shining and deeply admired posture in the realm of



mutual respect for others to be master of their own destiny and captain of their own future. Indeed, that's praiseworthy. For instance, during the outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus, China was the first to respond with medical aid and cash. In July 2011, the project of Bang Iron Mines in Liberia undertaken by Wuhan Iron and Steel (Group) Corporation was put into operation. In September 2011 China, for the first time, sent a 140-strong riot squad to Liberia for the UN peacekeeping operation.

The African continent has now become a vital arena of strategic and geopolitical competition for not only the United States and China but also the global south and east including India, Russia, Great Britain, France, and Japan as well as other new emerging powers. The main reason for this level of a new partnership with Africa states is that the continent is the final

frontier as far as the world's supplies of oil and energy are concerned with global competition for both oil and natural gas becoming just as intense.

As the United States continues to debate the merits of aid to Liberia on the basis of good governance, China continues to fill a major gap in several areas of interventions without many conditions besides the one-China policy.

While it is too early to predict precisely whether Chinese long-term rendezvous in Liberia will produce a positive influence, the impact of China in the country is highly visible in several developmental areas including roads rehabilitation, constructions of bridges, hospitals, schools, sports stadium, agriculture facilities, and investments projects. All of these projects create opportunities for the current administration to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people although minty percent was the making of the former regime.

In 1949, the birth of new China opened up a new chapter in Sino-African relations. Since 1950s and 1960s, as more and more African countries won independence and established diplomatic relations with China, the Sino-African relationship was ushered into a new era of all-round development that is having great impacts on the lives of millions on both fronts; the presence of China in Africa's development cannot be questioned.

China's robust economic growth in the past 40 years, which has lifted 600 million people out of extreme poverty, offers lessons for other regions, especially Liberia and African states. China has been consistently supporting African regional and sub-regional organizations like OAU, AU, SADC, and ECOWAS, in efforts to safeguard regional peace and security but the various competing interests along African governments and institutions make it difficult for development on the continent while rampant corruption and frequent changed of leadership also undermine Africa's development.

Let us not forget that China and the U.S. on one hand and Africa on the other hand "have always belonged to a community of shared values and fruitful future" and "have always been good friends who stand together through thick and thin, good partners who share weal and woe, and good brothers who fully trust each other despite changes in the international landscape.

*Authored by: Josephus Moses Gray, Assistant Professor of International Relations at the University of Liberia Graduate Studies Program. Email; graymoses@yahoo.com/ Mobile: 080330299*



# Gov't mounts protest

By Winston W. Parley

Prosecutors here are claiming that indicted Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) officials are making mockery of the ongoing trial at Criminal Court "C" in reference to bonds filed by the defendants, while also demanding defense lawyers from Heritage Partners and Associates (HPA) to be removed from the case.

The prosecution alleges in a petition for certiorari filed before Justice - in - Chambers Joseph Nagbe that presiding Criminal Court "C" Judge Peter W. Gbeneweleh has taken sides with the defendants in the case for allowing HPA's lawyer Cllr. Abraham Sillah to represent co-defendant Milton A. Weeks.

The State claims that the defendants chose "to make mockery of the entire process" when defendants Charles Sirleaf, Dorbor Hagba, Richard Walker and Joseph Dennis deliberately filed US\$60,000 bonds individually, while defendant Milton A. Weeks also filed a "purported property valuation bond" valued US\$909,318.88.

The government is contending that each of the defendants is required to post a bail bond of US\$3,306,250, or even more when the statute is applied by adding "one and half" of the amount they are charged for to raise



Mr. Charles Sirleaf



Mr. Milton Weeks



Mr. Dorbor Hagba

the bail bond to US\$4,959,375.00 each.

Former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's son and Deputy CBL Governor Charles E. Sirleaf, former CBL Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks, Dorbor Hagba, Richard A. Walker and Joseph Dennis are standing trial following two investigative reports over LD\$2,645,000,000,000 and US\$835,367.72 scandal.

The scandal is alleged to have occurred while Mr. Hagba worked as CBL's Director at the Finance Department, Joseph Dennis, Director for Operations and Joseph Dennis, Deputy Director for Internal Audit.

The financial scandal reports came following mass protest here in 2018 for government to account for

alleged LD\$16 billion printed by hired firm Crane Currency, AB and shipped to Liberia but could not be accounted for.

Following the investigations separately conducted by Kroll and the Presidential Investigation Team (PIT), it was discovered that while CBL reported that a total of LD\$15,506,000,000 was printed and received between July 2016 and April 2018, the actual amount printed and shipped by Crane Currency was LD\$18,151,000,000.

The reports indicated a variance of LD\$2,645,000,000 that is yet to be accounted for.

But the defendants have denied all charges of economic sabotage, criminal conspiracy and criminal facilitations and they have tendered various bonds before the Criminal

Court "C" to secure their release in the main time while the trial goes on.

However the prosecution filed the petition for certiorari before Chambers Justice Nagbe requesting him to correct alleged errors committed by Judge Gbeneweleh and his predecessor Judge Boima Kontoe.

The government has included Judge Boima Kontoe in its complaint to the Chambers Justice because he presided at Court "C" when the

defendants submitted their bonds following their arrests early this year, and Judge Gbeneweleh is also included because he made the decision granting the bonds this court term.

Concerning the State's resistance against Cllr. Sillah's representation of defendant Weeks, the prosecution says it produced evidence in the form of contract showing that the HPA and in particular, Cllr. Sillah is on the payroll of the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA).

The State claims there is a question of conflict of interest involving HPA and Cllr. Sillah because he is allegedly undermining government's fight against corruption while he is in the employ of the LRA.

Judge Gbeneweleh and the rest of the parties concerned appeared for a conference before Chambers Justice Nagbe on Monday, 24 June based on the Justice's instruction to the Judge that came on 19 June.

Progress in the case at Court "C" will depend on what will be the outcome of the conference before the Chambers Justice.

## 2019/2020 Budget

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commitment in terms of meeting benchmark, which will ensure its readiness for business.

The country's fiscal minister said that government is making significant effort to pay domestic vendors in the amount of 35M (Thirty-five million United States dollars).

Speaking on the wage-bill, he said, what government was doing is payroll harmonization, and not a wage cut as it has been speculated. "This is a revolutionary exercise, what we are doing is wage harmonization, not wage cut.

This is about paying people across government with same position with the same salary" Minister Tweah stressed.

The government wage-bill in 2018/2019 fiscal year was 330M (Three hundred thirty million); but with the harmonization, the new wage-bill for 2019/2020 will now be 297M (Two hundred ninety-seven million).

He added that government has put in place strong

revenue measures which will ensure 22M in new revenue, (Twenty-two Million United States dollars), during the new budget year.

According to him, macroeconomic stability could only be achieved when the fiscal and monetary institutions of government work together.

The IMF mission through Mika Saito, Deputy Division Chief, Western II Division African Department; also speaking, said during the visit, they observed that series of external shocks including key commodity prices, the lingering effects of Ebola, and the rapid depreciation of the exchange rate that followed the economic situation facing Liberia has proved challenging.

The mission stated that Macroeconomic stabilization, particularly a lowering of inflation, should be an immediate priority; while public sector is essential to supporting the reform agenda.

The mission discussion also included a package of growth-enhancing structural reforms to strengthen public financial management and improve the

business climate.

The mission noted the importance of rebuilding foreign exchange reserves to improve resilience to external shocks, which is one of the key objectives of fund supported programs, while also highlighting the importance of allowing the exchange rate to remain flexible and improving the transparency of CBL's foreign exchange operations.

However, the mission pointed out that securing enough resources to fund efficient government expenditure will require both additional revenue measures and reforms to reallocate expenditure, while reduction in the size of the public sector wage bill is necessary.

Growth, according to the mission has slowed, while inflation has accelerated and stands at 23 percent. The mission also held discussions with President Dr. George Manneh Weah, Speaker of the House of Representatives Dr. Bhofal Chambers, and President Pro Tempore of the Senate Albert Chie, Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah, Central Bank Governor Nathaniel R. Patray and Commerce Minister. -Press release

## Liberia observes International Drugs Day

President George Manneh Weah has by Proclamation declared Wednesday, June 26, 2019 as International Drugs Day and is to be observed throughout the Republic as a Working Holiday.

The Proclamation calls on all citizens, government ministries and agencies as well as international organizations concerned to join the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in executing appropriate programs befitting the occasion.

According to the

trafficking have posed major problems to the human race and millions of people worldwide continue to be affected directly and indirectly.

The observance of the day is intended to create awareness of the devastating effects of illicit drugs on individuals and families and to mobilize communities and other stakeholders against the use of such substances.

On December 7, 1987, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution



Proclamation, the Drugs Enforcement Agency (DEA) will join other international drugs enforcement institutions worldwide, the international community in the celebration of this Year's International Day Against Drugs Abuse and its Illicit Trafficking under the international theme: "Health for Justice, Justice for Health" and National theme: "Eliminate Drugs from Liberia", which will take place at the Monrovia City Hall, Sinkor, Monrovia.

Drugs abuse and its illicit

42/112, which set aside the 26th day of June of each year as International Day against Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and other Substances of Abuse to be celebrated worldwide.

In the same vein, the Government of Liberia, by an Act of the National Legislature adopted in 1999, created the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) with the authority to combat the importation, illicit trafficking and use of dangerous drugs.-- Press release

## 2019/2020 Budget will be credible



Liberia's Finance and Development Planning Minister Samuel D. Tweah Jr., has assured delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that the Government of Liberia is committed to credible budget execution during fiscal year 2019/2020.

Minister Tweah was speaking on Monday June 24, 2019, when the IMF mission led by Mika Saito concluded two weeks of discussions on possible financial support under the Extended Credit Facility.

The Liberia Finance Minister informed the IMF that

President Dr. George Manneh Weah government is committed to fighting fraud and abuse of resources.

He said the government has agreed to establish a 'Corruption Court.' He told the mission of government

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## Neymar fuels Barca rumours

Neymar has wished Lionel Messi a happy birthday on social media amid growing rumours the Brazil superstar will return to Barcelona.

Paris Saint-Germain are reportedly willing to sell Neymar with president Nasser Al-Khelaifi warning in a rare interview that the Ligue 1 champions will no longer tolerate "celebrity behaviour" in what was widely speculated to be a barb at the 27-year-old.



Real Madrid have long been linked with the forward but their capture of Eden Hazard from Chelsea, coupled with a spending spree that has seen Luka Jovic, Eder Militao and Ferland Mendy join, may scupper a switch to the Santiago Bernabeu.

Barca are reportedly considering bringing Neymar back to the club with talisman Messi said to be among those pushing for the deal to happen.

And on the Barca captain's 32nd birthday, Neymar posted

a message to his former teammate on social media.

"Happy birthday, brother," Neymar wrote on his Instagram Story. "May God bless you always."

Brazil team-mates Philippe Coutinho and Arthur have said they want Neymar, ruled out of the ongoing Copa America by an ankle injury, to return to Barcelona.

But a Monday report in UK newspaper the Independent claimed Neymar has been offered to Manchester United.

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