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Continental News

The Ghanaian artist building a parliament with train seats

Dozens of worn plastic train seats and dilapidated wooden lockers that were destined for the dump in Ghana have ended up in a Manchester art gallery, in a work by one of Africa's most exciting young artists.

When hundreds of hard, scratched second-class train seats were abandoned after their clapped-out carriages were scrapped several years ago, only one man was likely to be interested in them.

Ibrahim Mahama has made his name by collecting objects other people would dismiss as junk, but which he thinks can help him tell a story.

After salvaging the seats, the artist has repurposed 120 of them - plus several dozen old lockers once used by train workers - to create a four-sided imitation of Ghana's parliament chamber at the Whitworth gallery in Manchester. It's called Parliament of Ghosts. The ghosts, he says, are the opportunities his home country failed to grasp over the years, and the train seats and railway workers' lockers symbolise that story.

Ghana's train system was built under British colonial rule and was due to be expanded after the optimism of independence in 1957, with the railway workers instrumental in the independence movement. But the optimism faded, economic growth struggled to take off and a series of military coups hampered progress. The

railways were neglected for decades.

Parliament of Ghosts represents the "potential of a country that was yet to manifest itself, but never came to be, in a way", Mahama says. The seats and other objects carry the memories of everything they have witnessed and been through, he believes. "They

embody all of it."

The same goes for the lockers. "A lot of these cabinets were used to store workers' clothes and tools and things. So there's a lot of grease from the restoration of trains and the dismantling.

"The cabinets almost become these living organisms that witness the entire life cycles of generations upon generations of how a certain system has somehow been maintained - but at the same time the flaws of it. I like to think they are living things that somehow can speak in a language that the workers themselves cannot."

Parliament of Ghosts doesn't just represent the flaws of Ghana's government, but is meant to highlight the failures of parliaments around the world - not least, at a time of Brexit deadlock, the UK's. "Parliament of Ghosts is a question of what potential lies within the failures of the world," Mahama says.

The train seats are actually thought to have been manufactured in Manchester or Leeds, adding to the story of their return. This is the Ghanaian artist's first major UK exhibition - commissioned by the Manchester International Festival - and people are invited to go and use his parliament chamber to host their own debates, performances and screenings.

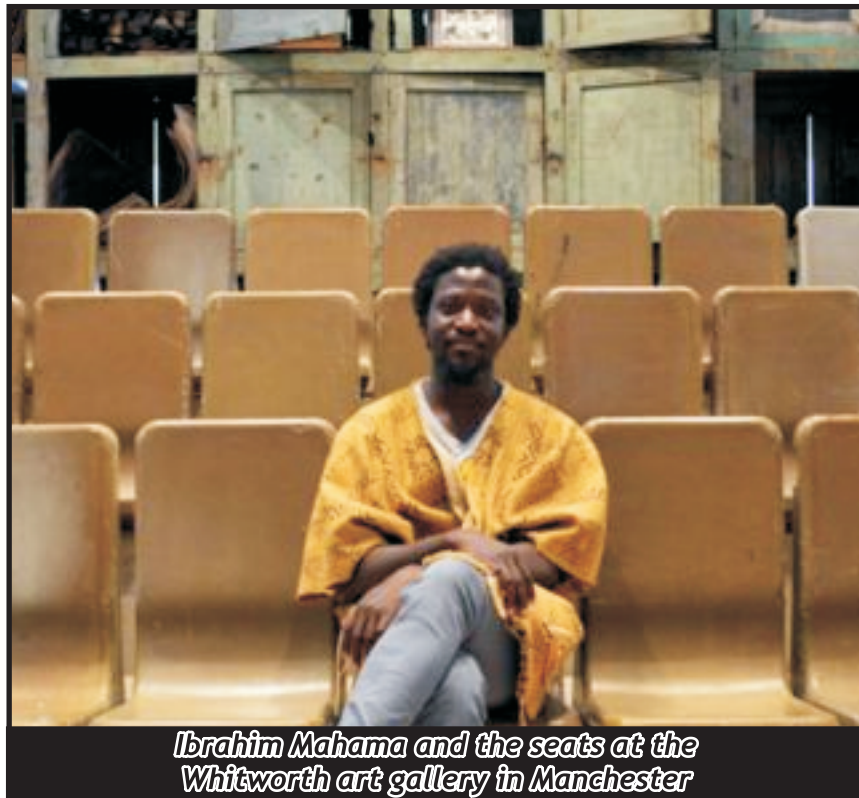
He has many more train seats back home, and is planning to create a much larger version of the parliament at the arts centre he opened in his home town of Tamale in March.

"When I propose a work, I always make sure I have one maybe three or four times larger in Ghana which we can somehow use to create permanent spaces for the local community to experience," he says. "Because

that's the point. I guess I'm quite tired of seeing how we as artists produce works which end up going to Europe and other places, whereas locally our own people don't get to experience these ideas that we're working with." Mahama also talks about how his institute - the Savannah Centre for Contemporary Art - is working on initiatives to help with agriculture, housing and education. But he is also in demand in Europe and beyond. At the age of 32, he is represented by the prestigious White Cube gallery in London and earlier this year was the youngest of six artists to exhibit in the first Ghanaian pavilion at the Venice Biennale. He has previously made artworks out of hundreds of wooden tool boxes used by shoe shiners, and by covering buildings in jute sacks that had been used to carry cocoa, maize and charcoal. He recently also used the sacks to replace the flags outside the United Nations' headquarters at the Rockefeller Center in New York. Replacing national flags with decaying food sacks "reminded us of the global condition in a way", he says.

The Manchester exhibition also includes a replica of the concrete silos that were built in Ghana in the late 1950s to store cocoa beans before they were processed, but which remained empty. There are also battered Ghanaian wooden school bookcases that Mahama obtained after offering to make new furniture for the schools to replace them.

"The older the objects, with the decay and the stains, that's what I find a value in," the artist says. "The memory and the pattern is something that speaks to us - rather than when a thing is very new, and it almost has no soul to it." BBC



Ibrahim Mahama and the seats at the Whitworth art gallery in Manchester

South Sudan's leader sorry for government's failures

In a candid speech on South Sudan's independence day, President Salva Kiir has apologised for the "failures" of his government.

After a long civil war, South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 to great fanfare. That optimism was shattered following the start of South Sudan's own civil war in December 2013.

Mr Kiir said that the war had led to "very serious financial challenges".

He added that he was "fully aware that our people are angry because of the difficult living conditions imposed upon them by insecurity and economic hardship.

"This is further exacerbated by the failure of my government to pay salaries of our civil servants on time...

"I want to sincerely

apologise to you my people on my own behalf and on behalf of the government for those failures."

The president tried to strike an optimistic tone by saying that despite it not yet being fully implemented, last year's peace deal has meant that "peace is holding throughout the country".

He added that when a unity government was created the "economy will thrive". BBC



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EDITORIAL

Liberia's democracy suffocates

JUST AS VOTERS and candidates in Montserrado County were gearing up for Monday, July 08 by-elections, they received the disappointing news that the polls have been postponed for the second time, raising serious skepticism about the readiness of the National Elections Commission to conduct the elections.

THE NEC IN a press statement late Thursday, 04 July cited "technical and operational reasons" for the second postponement, leaving candidates who have been campaigning across the county and in electoral district#15 respectively in a state of uncertainty as to when the polls will be actually held.

The second delay raises constitutional argument about the NEC's mandate to schedule or reschedule the by-elections outside the 90-day timeframe provided by the Constitution of Liberia since this period elapses effective July 9, 2019.

UPON RECEIPT OF an official communication from the National Legislature to the National Elections Commission, declaring a vacant seat in either House, the NEC is by law to conduct a by-election within 90 days to refill said vacant seat, but the Commission seems to have gone outside of this stipulation.

Therefore, it would have to return to the Legislature in order to get a new electoral date for the by-elections, something, that some opposition candidates and political parties are already suspecting is a deliberate attempt by the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change to rig the polls.

THE LEAST OUR democracy wants is for voters and candidates to go to the polls, questioning the credibility of the process. The onus is on the government, particularly the NEC, to do everything within its powers to erase every doubt about the process and its outcomes.

IN ITS PRESS statement Thursday, the NEC also cited "professional considerations" for the second postponement without clearly spelling out in ABC what those "technical, operational and professional" reasons are.

NOW THE PUBLIC is left to guess and self-interpret whatever the Commission means by those statements, politics inclusive. Who should be blamed?

WE ARE HEARING that July 20 has been announced as new date for the by-elections in Montserrado County. If this is true, fine, but officials should exercise caution in their public statements or pronouncement, so as to avoid wrong impressions and interpretations.

WE ALL SEEK free, fair and peaceful elections to sustaining our current democracy rather than proceeding in ways that leave room for mistrust and fears.

The New Dawn
TRULY INDEPENDENT

COMMENTARY

By Stefan Gerlach

The ECB Needs to Explain Itself

Ambiguity is hampering effective policymaking by the European Central Bank and leaving market participants wondering what to expect. A review of the ECB's policy framework would help to eliminate such ambiguity - and place the Bank on much sounder footing for a new era of leadership.

ZURICH - Finland's central bank governor, Olli Rehn, has reiterated his call for the European Central Bank to conduct a long-overdue review of its policy framework. The upcoming change of leadership at the institution - with Christine Lagarde, the International Monetary Fund's managing director since 2011, likely to succeed Mario Draghi as president - offers an important opportunity to heed that call.

When the ECB was established 20 years ago, central banks were generally not too clear about the details of their policy frameworks. At that time, some ambiguity may have been helpful, because of the flexibility it offered when the ECB started operating. Furthermore, it allowed central bankers with different experiences and perspectives to agree on a framework, even though they may not have agreed on its precise details.

But the world has changed considerably since then, and the public is now demanding far more clarity. How can the ECB offer that, 16 years after the last review of its monetary-policy framework?

Since that review, conducted in 2003, the global financial crisis, and the ensuing European debt crisis, prompted the ECB to adopt a plethora of new policy instruments. These crisis measures - which have been deeply unpopular, particularly in Germany - can be justified only to the extent that they have been effective, and this must be evaluated. Moreover, as Rehn, who sits on the ECB's governing council, has noted, long-run structural trends - such as population aging, lower long-term interest rates, and climate change - must be considered.

The effectiveness of ECB policy requires the members of the governing council to be singing from the same song sheet. They need a shared understanding of Europe's long-term goals and the strengths and weaknesses of various policy instruments. And, in order to strengthen accountability and support smart decision-making, they need to be able to spell out the details of their monetary-policy strategies in ways that the public can understand.

As it stands, such clarity is at times hard to find, even when it comes to some of the most fundamental elements of the ECB's policy strategy. Price stability - the ECB's primary objective - is currently expressed as "inflation below, but close to, 2%." Does 1% inflation meet that condition, or is it too low, demanding more monetary-policy accommodation? Different members of the ECB's governing council may well have

different answers to this question, and thus support different policies.

The same goes for the questions of whether the ECB's inflation target is symmetric - with the authorities intervening as vigorously when inflation is too low as they do when inflation is too high - and whether inflation should be measured over time or at a given moment. If, over some period, the inflation rate ranges from 0% to 4%, but averages to "below, but close to, 2%," has the objective been achieved?

The answer has major policy implications. If inflation is measured over time, the ECB could accept, or perhaps even aim for, a somewhat higher inflation rate in the medium term, to compensate for the excessively low inflation of recent years. If the public came to believe that a period of above-target inflation was likely, the expected real interest rate would fall, giving a jolt to the economy.

Of course, Draghi has established in speeches and press conferences that, in his view, the inflation target is symmetric; 1% inflation is too low; and the inflation rate should be measured over the "medium term." But it is not clear whether this view is broadly shared within the ECB's governing council.

Inflation targeting is hardly the only area where ambiguity is hampering effective policymaking and leaving market participants wondering what to expect. The ECB's outright monetary transactions (OMT) scheme - whereby the ECB promises to purchase bonds issued by eurozone member states on secondary sovereign-bond markets - is also generating significant uncertainty.

OMT, Draghi's chosen tool for fulfilling his 2012 vow to do "whatever it takes to preserve the euro," was controversial from the moment it was announced, with Bundesbank President Jens Weidmann - one of Lagarde's main rivals for the ECB presidency - arguing fiercely against it in public. But that was seven years ago, and OMT has never actually been used. Is the governing council still committed to it? Or have the events - and council membership changes - of the last few years rendered that commitment obsolete?

With public debt in Greece and Italy still far too high, the eurozone still at risk of slipping into a recession that would significantly worsen both countries' fiscal positions, and Italian politics as volatile as ever, it would pay to know. A review of the kind Rehn demands would provide the needed answers - and put the ECB on much sounder footing for a new era of leadership.

O-PED

By Jonathan Woetzel
& Jeongmin Seong

The Value of Global China

SHANGHAI - Over nearly 40 years of economic reform, China has reaped extraordinary rewards from opening up to the world. Integration into the global economy - albeit a supporting element of the country's broader historic turn to the market mechanism - has enabled millions of China's citizens to escape poverty, while transforming China into the world's largest economy in purchasing power parity terms. And the potential of such engagement is far from depleted, our new research shows.

For example, while China commands 11% of global merchandise trade, it accounts for only 6% of global trade in services. Moreover, while China's banking, securities, and bond markets all rank among the world's top three in size, foreign entities account for less than 6% of their value. And though China has 110 Global Fortune 500 companies, less than one-fifth of their revenue is earned overseas, compared to 44% for S&P 500 firms.

Even before today's trade tensions, the relationship between China and the world had been changing. China's relative exposure to the rest of the world - in terms of trade, technology, and capital - peaked in 2007, and has been declining ever since, producing an overall decline from 2000 to 2017. This partly reflects the economy's growing emphasis on domestic consumption - a trend that accelerated after the global financial crisis sharply reduced foreign demand for China's exports.

Over the same period, however, the rest of the world's exposure to China increased, highlighting the country's growing importance as a market, supplier, and provider of capital. This divergence arguably reflects the unbalanced dynamic that is fueling trade tensions with the United States. The sheer scale of China's impact may also be a factor. Closer economic ties with the world have fueled China's growth, as the country learned best practices from global players and provided cost-competitive products. But there have been losses, too, notably in the form of manufacturing jobs in both China and advanced economies.

In any case, China and the world face important questions about the trajectory of their mutual engagement. At stake, according to our simulation, may be some \$22-37 trillion in economic value - or 15-26% of world GDP - by 2040. We note that these estimates are the result of a simulation based on a specific set of conditions and assumptions, and they should not be taken as forecasts. For example, for the scenarios, we have made assumptions about how various factors could affect the economy's total factor productivity. Our analysis is sensitive to the degree of liberalization that would occur in the Chinese services sector, increases in capital productivity as a result of greater financial globalization, and productivity improvements from technology transfer. The simulation focuses on long-term impact. We are not attempting to predict the outcome of current debates on trade and tariffs.

While less predictions than possibilities, our simulation provides insight into the implications of the choices for China and the world in five key areas.

1. Growth as an import destination: China may either pull back from international trade, and the world may fail to reform the multilateral trading system, causing total global trade flows to decline. Conversely, China could push forward, establishing itself as a major destination for exports from emerging and advanced economies. The total value at stake, according to our simulation, is \$3-6 trillion between now and 2040.

2. Liberalization of services: China may maintain current restrictions on its services sector, which create a productivity gap vis-à-vis the developed economies, or it could roll back these restrictions, attracting more foreign players and thus boosting the sector's growth and global competitiveness. Here, \$3-5 trillion could be at stake.

3. Globalization of financial markets: China and the world can integrate their financial markets, thereby broadening investor choice and improving capital allocation, or they can maintain the status quo, risking more volatility and low productivity growth. We estimate that \$5-8 trillion of value could be at stake.

4. Collaboration on global public goods: Global challenges, such as climate change, and provision of adequate public goods, such as infrastructure, depend on China and the world collaborating. Greater or less collaboration could put about \$3-6 trillion of value at stake, and potentially much more, as climate change's impact is likely to be much greater after 2040.

5. Flows of technology and innovation: Increased technology (and knowledge) flows between China and the rest of the world would support the development of globally competitive, productivity-enhancing solutions; decreased flows would undermine global productivity. The world can also decide how to facilitate more or fewer flows of technologies that are increasingly subject to security reviews. According to our simulation, \$8-12 trillion could be at stake, depending on the extent to which technology flows unleash innovation and productivity growth.

It is important to note that these choices are not just China's; the world also has decisions to make. For example, by working together to reform the global trading system in ways that strengthen dispute resolution and boost inclusiveness, countries could ensure that the benefits from increased Chinese (and other) trade are shared broadly.

Furthermore, if China moves to globalize its financial sector further, the rest of the world must be open to Chinese investment. And, of course, all countries should play a role in delivering global public goods; on climate change, in particular, they must commit to reaching specific milestones in line with their capabilities and their contributions to the problem. Finally, countries should ensure that their trade and investment policies are conducive to continued transfer of technology and knowhow.

There is still much to be gained from China's continued integration into the global system. The question is whether world leaders will do what it takes to bring about that outcome. All sides should now take a breath and try to figure out where and how to advance further integration, and how to deal with the more complex or contentious aspects of that challenge.

OPINION

By Dani Rodrik

What's Driving Populism?

CAMBRIDGE - Is it culture or economics? That question frames much of the debate about contemporary populism. Are Donald Trump's presidency, Brexit, and the rise of right-wing nativist political parties in continental Europe the consequence of a deepening rift in values between social conservatives and social liberals, with the former having thrown their support behind xenophobic, ethno-nationalist, authoritarian politicians? Or do they reflect many voters' economic anxiety and insecurity, fueled by financial crises, austerity, and globalization?

Much depends on the answer. If authoritarian populism is rooted in economics, then the appropriate remedy is a populism of another kind - targeting economic injustice and inclusion, but pluralist in its politics and not necessarily damaging to democracy. If it is rooted in culture and values, however, there are fewer options. Liberal democracy may be doomed by its own internal dynamics and contradictions. ¹

Some versions of the cultural argument can be dismissed out of hand. For example, many commentators in the United States have focused on Trump's appeals to racism. But racism in some form or another has been an enduring feature of US society and cannot tell us, on its own, why Trump's manipulation of it has proved so popular. A constant cannot explain a change. ¹

Other accounts are more sophisticated. The most thorough and ambitious version of the cultural backlash argument has been advanced by my Harvard Kennedy School colleague Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart of the University of Michigan. In a recent book, they argue that authoritarian populism is the consequence of a long-term generational shift in values.

As younger generations have become richer, more educated, and more secure, they have adopted "post-materialist" values that emphasize secularism, personal autonomy, and diversity at the expense of religiosity, traditional family structures, and conformity. Older generations have become alienated - effectively becoming "strangers in their own land." While the traditionalists are now numerically the smaller group, they vote in greater numbers and are more politically active.

Will Wilkinson of the Niskanen Center recently made a similar argument, focusing on the role of urbanization in particular. Wilkinson argues that urbanization is a process of spatial sorting that divides society in terms not only of economic fortunes, but also of cultural values. It creates thriving, multicultural, high-density areas where socially liberal values predominate. And it leaves behind rural areas and smaller urban centers that are increasingly uniform in terms of social conservatism and aversion to diversity.

This process, moreover, is self-reinforcing: economic success in large cities validates urban values, while self-selection in migration out of lagging regions increases polarization further. In Europe and the US alike, homogenous, socially conservative areas constitute the basis of support for nativist populists.

On the other side of the argument, economists have produced a number of studies that link political support for populists to economic shocks. In what is perhaps the most famous among these, David Autor, David Dorn, Gordon Hanson, and Kaveh Majlesi - from MIT, the University of Zurich, the University of California at San Diego, and Lund University, respectively - have shown that votes for Trump in the 2016 presidential election across US communities were strongly correlated with the magnitude of adverse China trade shocks. All else being equal, the greater the loss of jobs due to rising imports from China, the higher the support for Trump.

Indeed, according to Autor, Dorn, Hanson, and Majlesi, the China trade shock may have been directly responsible for Trump's electoral victory in 2016. Their estimates imply that had import penetration been 50% lower than the actual rate over the 2002-14 period, a Democratic presidential candidate would have won the critical states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, making Hillary Clinton the winner of the election.

Other empirical studies have produced similar results for Western Europe. Higher penetration of Chinese imports has been found to be implicated in support for Brexit in Britain and the rise of far-right nationalist parties in continental Europe. Austerity and broader measures of economic insecurity have been shown to have played a statistically significant role as well. And in Sweden, increased labor-market insecurity has been linked empirically to the rise of the far-right Sweden Democrats.

The cultural and economic arguments may seem to be in tension - if not downright inconsistent - with each other. But, reading between the lines, one can discern a type of convergence. Because the cultural trends - such as post-materialism and urbanization-promoted values - are of a long-term nature, they do not fully account for the timing of the populist backlash. (Norris and Inglehart posit a tipping point where socially conservative groups have become a minority but still have disproportionate political power.) And those who advocate for the primacy of cultural explanations do not in fact dismiss the role of economic shocks. These shocks, they maintain, aggravated and exacerbated cultural divisions, giving authoritarian populists the added push they needed.

Norris and Inglehart, for example, argue that "medium-term economic conditions and growth in social diversity" accelerated the cultural backlash, and show in their empirical work that economic factors did play a role in support for populist parties. Similarly, Wilkinson emphasizes that "racial anxiety" and "economic anxiety" are not alternative hypotheses, because economic shocks have greatly intensified urbanization-led cultural sorting. For their part, economic determinists should recognize that factors like the China trade shock do not occur in a vacuum, but in the context of pre-existing societal divisions along socio-cultural lines.

Ultimately, the precise parsing of the causes behind the rise of authoritarian populism may be less important than the policy lessons to be drawn from it. There is little debate here. Economic remedies to inequality and insecurity are paramount.

PERSPECTIVES PERSPECTIVES

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

NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION'S (NEC) CREDIBILITY A REFLECTION ON PAST HISTORY AND PREVAILING ACTIVITIES

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr.
July 3, 2019

Introduction

Firstly, author Raymond Leslie Buel's epic book (*Liberia: Century of Survival, 1847-1947*) published on the 100th birth anniversary of the Liberian Nation was, and is perhaps, the best assessment of the social, cultural, economic and political activities of the Republic during its first one hundred years.

Secondly, the *FrontPageAfrica* newspaper questioned the credibility of the National Elections Commissions (NEC) in its instructive Editorial, entitled "*NEC's Credibility (is) on the Line*" (*FrontPage Africaonline*, July 2, 2019). While we concur, we add that there had never been any reason for this (NEC) very important public (government) service agency to enjoy public trust or earn credibility since the founding of the Republic in 1847, up to this day of our times.

But, space, time and the required resources do not permit exhaustive citation of the available massive, relevant supporting facts of history. However, **truth, posterity and "credibility"** demand some level of examples; therefore, we present below excerpts from our Article entitled, "*NEC is not sacred cow . . .*", with several communications between the NEC and ourselves regarding the prevailing critical issues with profound critical impact on our Republic of Liberia.

THE NEC IS NOT "SACRED COW" MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ELECTORAL FRAUD January 10, 2015

The Saturday, January 3, 2015 hurry, hurry certification, by the NEC, of newly-elected senators while there are allegations of electoral fraud before the Supreme Court that the "*elections were, in fact, not free and fair*" and that Justice Philip Banks, in Chambers of the Supreme Court, was right on target with a stay order *Writ of Injunction* are the critical cases in point.

To capture the nature, essence and profound impact of Presidential Power of appointments on individuals appointed and the nation, we gave these examples - judges, the police, military and related law enforcement agencies, specialized committees, commissions of enquiries, boards of directors of state institutions and state-owned enterprises, including the NEC.

Regarding the NEC, we held that it is a very powerful, reasonably well-funded Public Policy Agency, the Referee of the nation's Electoral Process by which acquisition of the nation's Presidency, the most powerful position of the land is determined. On this, we observed that "*Indeed, the electoral process is seen by Liberian people as being manipulated and controlled by ruling, political parties. The recent, unusual abandonment of the position of chairman of the nation's NEC and the secret, un-announced departure out of Liberia by the then Honorable Chairman of the Commission while in the midst of several allegations of electoral fraud, were a cases in point . . .*"

Now, after the Hala-hala for postponement/holding of the October, 2014, Senatorial Elections, characterized and with results, apparently, influenced, by the on-going Ebola Crisis (Cllr. Varney Sherman's Grand Cape Mount County reported 35 new Ebola deaths and additional infections after the elections) with stunning up-sets and expected shoo-ins, we went back to our files to compare the reported results with our cordial, friendly, but critical communications with the National Elections Commission:

The Year 2014

During this year, we wrote a total of six letters to the NEC, with the first dated February 19 and the last on December 3, 2014. The first letter went like this:

The Honorable Chairman, and Members
National Elections Commission, R. L.
N/N 9th Street at Tubman Boulevard, Sinkor/Monrovia

Sir/Madam:



It is our honor to present compliments and sincere greetings, and to commend you for the bold, reasonable action taken in seeking revocation of the charters of some political parties found to be in violation of relevant governing, constitutional provisions.

Not only that this action is in fulfillment of your constitutional obligation, but also, that it is consistent with national imperative of a (reasonable) reduction of the prevailing proliferation of political parties (20-something or more, and counting) in our small nation of less than 4 million people of 17 ethnic/tribal groups . . . some of these political parties were and are being organized and managed *not* in accordance with traditionally-accepted and practiced convention of "shared beliefs" or commonality of beliefs, policy and political philosophy, *but mainly in accordance with and along ethnic/tribal lines.*

Moreover, we invite, respectfully, your attention to Article 30 of the Constitution, in light of forthcoming (October, 2014) Senatorial elections for members of the Honorable, National Legislature. This article provides that only "*Citizens of Liberia . . . are eligible to become members of the Legislature . . .*"

It is an open secret that there are (Liberians who are) citizens of foreign countries - individuals whose loyalty and allegiance are exclusively made and mortgaged to foreign countries - are now members of both Houses of our National Legislature, in flagrant violation of Article 30 of the Constitution.

We ask, therefore, that the Commission require sworn statements, made under oath, from candidates seeking election to the Legislature, that *he/she is not citizen of a foreign country.* This requirement is in fulfillment of the Commission's constitutional obligation; it requires no additional, legal coverage".

Faithfully,

Bai M. Gbala, Sr.

After, approximately, four months (February, March, April and May, 2014) without response from the Commission, we wrote and published the same letter of February 19 above, but as an Open Letter dated May 8, 2014. Then the Commission responded by this letter dated June 18, 2014 by the letter below:

Republic of Liberia
NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION
TUBMAN BOULEVARD, 9th & 10th STREETS, SINKOR - P.O.
BOX 2044
MONROVIA, LIBERIA
Email: info@necliberia.org
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
F--:23177226245

June 18, 2014
RLINEC/JGKI079I' 14

Honorable Bai M. Gbala

Eminent Citizen
Kakata Highway
Paynesville, Liberia

Dear Honorable Gbala:

I present compliments on behalf of the National Elections Commission (NEC) and acknowledge receipt of your open letter of May 8, 2014, by which you reminded the Commission to observe and apply Article 30 of the Constitution of Liberia during the ensuing Special Senatorial Election.

The Commission appreciates your interest in its work and is profoundly grateful for the timely reminder about the need to ensure that very critical constitutional requirements are enforced.

Your recent commendation of the Commission's decision to ask the Civil Law Court to revoke the registration of delinquent political parties is well noted. While other citizens take delight in Criticizing the Commission without making any meaningful-suggestions, you preferred to document your suggestions to the Commission for which we are grateful.

The Commission would like to encourage you, as a prominent citizen of this country, to continue to proffer suggestions on issues that are relevant to the improvement of our electoral process.

Regarding the requirement for aspirants to present sworn statements on their citizenship, please permit me to inform you that in keeping with Section 2.9 of the New Elections Law, the Commission has, since 2005, always included in its guidelines the requirement for aspirants to present sworn statements/affidavits of their citizenship during the nomination of candidates in every election.

This requirement has similarly been developed and incorporated in our Candidates Nomination Procedures to govern the candidates' nomination for the ensuing 2014 Special Senatorial Election.

Once again, thank you for your interest in the work of the Commission and please do not hesitate to let us know of any area of the electoral process we could improve on.

Please accept the assurances of my highest esteem
Sincerely,
Jerome G. Korkoya, J.D.
CHAIRMAN

To this letter, we replied, dated July 31, 2014:

Honorable Jerome G. Korkoya, J. D.
Chairman, National Elections Commission, R. L.
N/N 9th Street at Tubman Boulevard, Sinkor/Monrovia

Dear Honorable Korkoya:

We present sincere greetings and compliments in continuation of this healthy dialogue, while we emphasize that the



MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Senate begged to reconsider CBL nominees

By Ethel A. Tweh

A motion to reconsider the rejection of three officials nominated to positions at the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) has been filed before the Liberian Senate.

Sen. Jonathan Kaipay of Grand Bassa County filed the motion on grounds that the rejected officials are educated and experienced.

Mr. Timothy Thomas, Mr. Richard A. Dolley and Mr. James Dennis were recently rejected by a committee on Finance and Banking at the Liberian Senate following their nominations by President Weah to serve on CBL's Board of Governors.

They committee further asked the Plenary of the Senate to reject the three officials because none of them was convincing in their testimonies in terms of proactiveness and robustness to take head on the crippling threat the economic status of the country poses to its

citizens in this contemporary dispensation.

However, Sen. Kaipay says nominee Timothy E. Thomas has served for 42 years in the service of Government, which gives him experience in business, administrative procurement, finance and academia.

According to Sen. Kaipay, nominee Thomas served as member on the Board of Directors at the National Security and Social Welfare Cooperation, Director at the General Services Agency, Ambassador at large to the United States to carry on special mission, General

Manager at T&T, dealing with buying and selling petroleum products and mining and trading of gold.

The Senator argues further that nominee Thomas was assistant professor and chairman in the Department of Management at the State run - University of Liberia.

Concerning nominee Richard A. Dolley, Sen. Kaipay explains that the official has vast experience in the banking sector, describing him as one of Liberia's best.

According to him, Mr. Dolley earns a BSc in Economics from the University of Liberia and Masters of Arts in Economics.

He adds that the nominee

holds a certificate in Government Budgetary Analysis, among others.

The Bassa Senator also says nominee James Dennis should be reconsidered because he has 20 years of senior level experience in financial management, Accounting and about 10 years of direct experience in the day - to - day bank operations, systems and controls.

Kaipay believes that Mr. Dennis is competent for the position because he served in different capacities as junior auditor, National Bank of Liberia from 1978 - 1980.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



House summons LEC, Mines and Energy

By Bridgett Milton

The House of Representatives summons the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) alone with the Ministry of Mines and Energy to appear before full plenary next Tuesday to account for moneys received from the Government of Liberia and to explain why the electricity program in the country is very poor and slow.

Montserrado County District#7 Representative Solomon C. George, in a communication to House Speaker Bhofal Chambers, writes that after many months of observing and discussing with the Management Team of the Liberia Electricity Corporation, it has come to his understanding that the LEC Management Team headed by Pascal Buckley is yet to provide requisite service to its customers.

Rep. George notes that it can be proven that there are many communities in central Monrovia and it envious which are connected to the LEC grid that are being grossly disrespected by the way they are being served.

He continues that members

of the Management Team are living in Monrovia for these years and their homes are not connected to the LEC grid.

He specifically reveals that government had spent a total of US\$11.9 million on upgrading a generator at the Corporation for the past three years, yet this generator is not being used.

The CDC lawmaker says there are many issues that can't be explained while investigation is ongoing about the actual work the Management Team is doing on behalf of the Liberian people.

"It can be recalled that a little over a month ago, the Government of Liberia gave the Management Team the amount of US\$6million, which we as the people's deputies must know how that money was spent", he asserts.

"It is in this light, that we request for the Management Team to appear before the plenary of the House and inform the Liberian people how their money is being spent and why the Electricity program in our country by the LEC is so very poor and slow", the communication concludes. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne

World Bank, EU handover 13 trucks to MCC, PCC

BY Lewis S. Teh

The Monrovia City Corporation or (MCC) and the Paynesville City Corporation (PCC) have received 13 trucks from the World Bank and the European Union (EU) as a help aimed at keeping the two cities clean and safe for citizens.

During the formal presentation of the donation to the MCC and PCC the Tuesday, 9 July, World Bank Operation Officer Ms. Esther Rojas-Garcia said the handing over of the 13 trucks by the World Bank, and the EU is to support the government through the MCC and PCC in its efforts to reduce the huge mountain of garbage in Montserrado and its environs.

She indicates that there

are group of donors who have been financing the waste collection here in Liberia including the World Bank for decades.

According to her, initially the support was more than an emergency response support, adding that the goal of their financing is to support the development of a sustainable waste sector that can finance itself and operates over a long term.

She congratulates the MCC and PCC for preparing their five years strategic financial and sustainable plans, assuring that the donors will continue their support to the government in every area where their support is needed.

For his part, Monrovia City Mayor Jefferson T. Kojjee extolled the World Bank and

the EU for their support given to the government through the two institutions.

Mr. Kojjee encourages every citizen in the country to take ownership of the donated equipment.

"We may continue to have these kinds of support, but it will come to a point where everyone will take ownership of these supports," he says.

Mayor Kojjee narrates that the donation coming from the World Bank wasn't the first given to the government of Liberia.

However, he admits that the problem has been the maintenance of the equipment or procuring its own equipment.

According to Kojjee, "we must not only seek support, but we must also be able to sustain them whenever they are giving to us."

He explains that the MCC and the PCC have developed a five - year strategic plan which he says is not about collecting donors' money, but will see citizens here to begin paying for waste.

Mayor Kojjee notes that when the community is clean, it gives a decent face.

He indicates that this plan will focus on dealing with the challenges that the two cities are confronted with.

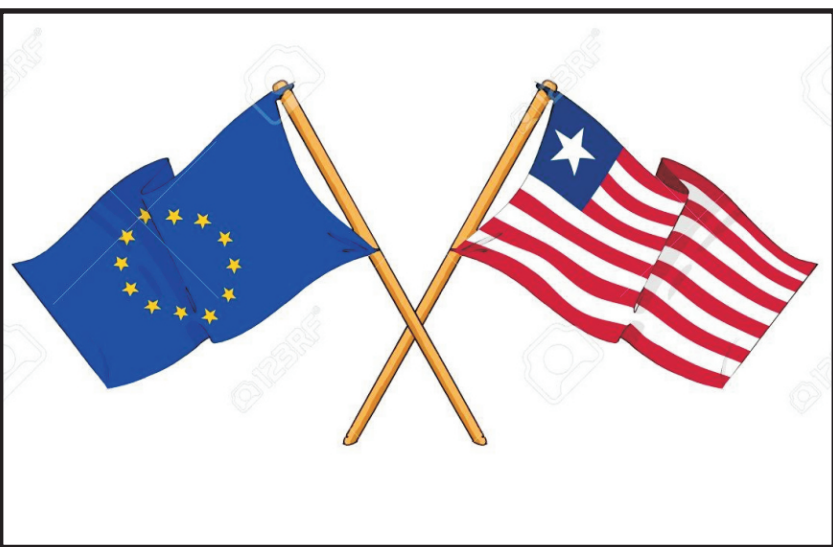
Also speaking, the EU Head

of Cooperation to Liberia Mr. Theodor Kaspers says it is a great pleasure to hand over today 13 additional waste trucks to the cities of Paynesville and Monrovia provided under the Cheesemanburg Landfill Urban Sanitation project.

Mr. Kaspers explains that the Monrovia City Corporation received six dump trucks and three skip trucks, while the Paynesville City Corporation received two dump trucks and two skip trucks.

According to him, both cities should be able to collect waste regularly with these trucks together with the pickups, front-end loaders, skip trucks and tricycles that have been handed over in November last year.

"Our aim is not only to reduce the rental costs but even more importantly to make the cities own the waste management," he explains further.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Construction of 2 overhead bridges starts soon

-as Chinese Government turns over Ministerial Complex

The Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) pledges continued support to the Liberian Government and its five-year strategic plan, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

As expressed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Foreign Minister Wang Yi says China is committed to the concept of sincerity, real results and the value of friendship and shared interests, all geared towards win-win cooperation.

implementation of projects agreed to during the bilateral meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and President George Weah at the latter's visit to Beijing for the FOCAC Summit in September 2018.

This first tranche has been transferred into a joint account at China Development Bank to be administered by both governments for the implementation of these projects, including two overhead bridges to ease vehicular traffic around the

Mano River Union countries - Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea; as well as the important role played in the post-Ebola reconstruction efforts.

Minister Findley also emphasizes Liberia's preparedness to work with China in promoting the objectives of FOCAC, expressing thanks to China's deep interest in building strong ties with Africa, particularly Liberia.

He notes that in April, both countries concluded a memorandum of understanding at which time Liberia formally joined the

Sherdrick Jackson, signed on behalf of the Liberian Government; while the Deputy Director General of the Agency for International Economic Cooperation at the Ministry of Commerce, Zeng Huacheng, signed on behalf of the Chinese Government. Minister Findley and Ambassador Dudley McKinley Thomas observed the ceremony.

The construction of a ministerial complex as a China-aided project to Liberia first commenced with an Exchange of Letters signed between both governments on September 11, 2012. Another supplemental letter was signed on October 9, 2014. The China Jiangsu Provisional Construction Company, Limited, was commissioned to implement the project, which commenced on October 25, 2016 and completed on April 20, 2019.

After a joint acceptance inspection, both governments

agreed that the project has met the requirement for acceptance and handover; with the Chinese fully fulfilling its obligations as stipulated in another Exchange of Letters and a Project Implementation Agreement signed with the Liberian Government on March 8, 2016.

Following a successful Coordinators' Meeting in Beijing, Minister Findley joined his Chinese counterpart and other African colleagues where he attended the first China - Africa Economic and Trade Expo held in Changsha, Hunan Province.

The expo, launched under the framework of FOCAC, was attended by more than 1,500 foreign guests, over 5,000 Chinese as well as over 3,500 exhibitors from 39 African countries. The Expo established a new mechanism for economic and trade cooperation between China and African countries. - *Press Release*



Foreign Minister Gbehzohngar Findley and State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi pose for a handshake after bilateral talks.

He reiterates that China's cooperation with Africa is sincere; noting that they have always followed the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, engaged Africa under the framework of South-South cooperation.

A dispatch from Liberia's Embassy near Beijing, China re-echoes China's commitment when Liberia's Foreign Minister Gbehzohngar Milton Findley, held bilateral discussions with his Chinese counterpart, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on the fringes of the Coordinators' Meeting on the Implementation of the Follow-up Actions of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing recently.

With this commitment to further strengthen cooperation, the two countries signed an agreement in which China provided a "gratuitous assistance" of two hundred million Chinese Yuan (¥200,000,000), approximately US\$29.5 million to Liberia as the first tranche for the

new ministerial complex and the SKD Boulevard, respectively; the provision of food aid to be monetized and used for development purposes; among others.

The Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councilor promises to increase cooperation and to solidify the exceptional friendly ties existing between China and Liberia.

Mr. Wang Yi further pledges two million Chinese Yuan (¥2 million), approximately US\$300,000, - "In Kind" - to Liberia's Foreign Ministry to enhance its productivity and to build capacity.

Responding, Foreign Minister Findley thanks State Councilor Wang Yi on behalf of President Weah and the Liberian Government for China's continued support to Liberia's development agenda. He re-emphasizes Liberia's adherence to the "One-China" policy, which has deepened the relations between both countries.

He also thanks the Chinese Foreign Minister, specifically highlighting China's enormous assistance in the fight against Ebola that ravaged the three

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Minister of State Nathaniel McGill signed the MOU on behalf of Government when he attended the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in Beijing.

The Coordinators' Meeting, which brought together ministerial officials from 53 African countries and their Chinese counterparts, discussed the implementation of the 2018 FOCAC agenda on trade, security and development.

At last September's FOCAC Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping committed US\$60 billion in a mix of grants, loans and special funds to African countries. He also encouraged Chinese companies to make at least US\$10 billion investment in Africa through 2021.

In another development, the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) has officially turned over the China-aided Ministerial Complex to the Government of Liberia. Meanwhile, China shall be responsible for the project's quality warranty for the next 24 months.

Assistant Minister for International Cooperation,

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Rep. Yekeh Kolubah
Starts from back page

the court and was ordered to file a bond which he did and included the other defendants.

But on 2 July, the prosecution filed a bail of information solely based on the fact that the court had not rearrested the defendants in view of the ruling of 26 June wherein the court [set aside the defendants'] property valuation bail bond.

However, Judge Roosevelt Z. Willie notes that when the ruling was made and court was in the process of re-arresting the defendants, Rep. Kolubah later filed a bond that included the defendants whose bail bond had earlier been set aside.

In the interim, Judge Willie says the prosecution filed a Bail of Information to the court, reminding it that its order had

not been implemented because the defendants were not rearrested and incarcerated.

But the court says Mr. Kolubah's bond includes the other defendants whose bond was earlier set aside, and the court is satisfied that whenever they are needed they will be present in court.

Besides, the Judge notes that the Court is not embarrassed because the defendants have been signing in the Sheriff's records [as ordered by the court].

Judge Willie assures that as far as the defendants are concerned, the court is satisfied as the law requires and whenever they violate any of the provisions as laid down by the bond, they shall be arrested and incarcerated.

Français

Des démarches pour blanchir les accusés ?

Des démarches sérieuses seraient en cours pour blanchir les accusés dans l'affaire Sable Mining, selon les informations qui nous sont parvenues.

Les informations font suite à la visite du Juge Joseph Nagbe, l'un des juges associés de la cour suprême du Libéria, à la cour criminelle vendredi, où trois de ses anciens collègues, les accusés Sénateurs Varney Sherman, Morris Saytuma et l'ancien Président de la Chambre des Représentants, Alex Tyler, ont commencé à témoigner dans le cadre de l'affaire Sable Mining.

Le sénateur Sherman et d'autres responsables sont jugés pour corruption. On leur reproche d'avoir reçu des pots de vin d'une valeur de 950 000 dollars américains pour modifier une loi minière en faveur d'une société minière britannique, Sable Mining.

Le juge Nagbe a rendu

visite au tribunal vendredi, contraignant le juge Peter Gbenewelehde suspendre l'audience pendant près de 25 minutes, les deux hommes ayant eu un tête à tête dans son bureau.

Revenu du bureau du juge président, le juge associé a

salué de la main les accusés avec un sourire avant de sortir de la salle d'audience.

Selon certaines informations, le spécialiste informatique qui a authentifié les courriers électroniques envoyés par l'ordinateur du défendeur

Sherman devrait également témoigner, ce qui explique pourquoi le secrétaire du Sénat, NanborlorSingbeh, a été invité à comparaître devant le tribunal pour témoigner.

L'affaire a attiré l'attention de la communauté internationale, des ambassades étrangères près de Monrovia ayant détaché des représentants au procès suite aux spéculations non confirmées selon lesquelles des efforts visant à blanchir les accusés sont en cours. Les spéculations se sont intensifiées au cours du week-end à la suite de la visite du juge associé Nagbe.

Le jeudi 4 juillet, l'ancien procureur principal dans cette affaire, le représentant FonatiKoffa, a tenu une conférence de presse, au cours de laquelle il a répondu à certaines des allégations contenues dans le témoignage de l'accusé Sherman.

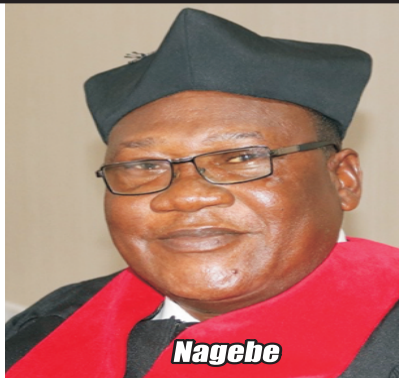
« Depuis trois jours, le sénateur Varney Sherman recherche les sentiments du public dans le cadre du procès en cours. Au cours de ces trois jours, Sherman a fait des commentaires non fondés contre la réputation bien méritée des membres du groupe de travail spécial présidentiel chargé d'enquêter sur les allégations de corruption rapportées par Global Witness, mettant en cause des fonctionnaires,

actuels comme anciens, comme quoi ils auraient reçu des pots de vin pour accorder un contrat de concession, en particulier la chaîne de montagnes Wologizi, dans le comté de Lofa », a dit MeKoffa, qui préside actuellement le comité législatif sur les affaires judiciaires. Selon lui, Me Sherman raconte des mensonges et diffuse des informations erronées sur les activités du groupe de travail présidentiel. A noter que Me Sherman avait traité le groupe de travail de rien d'autre qu'un système mis en place pour procéder à la chasse aux sorcières et faire des dépenses inutiles. Le sénateur Sherman proteste contre l'exclusion de la société minière britannique Sable Mining et Andrew Grooves du procès pour sabotage économique alors que ce sont eux qui auraient donné des pots de vin à des hauts responsables libériens pour modifier les lois sur les concessions.

« Celui qui donne et celui qui reçoit un pot-de-vin sont tous deux coupables. C'est simple », a déclaré Sherman dans son témoignage. Il estime que c'est un procès politique manigancé par l'ancienne Présidente Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf, « après qu'elle ait perdu sa cause contre la société et M. Grooves, qui aurait corrompu les accusés dans l'affaire ».



Sherman



Nagbe



Saytumah



Gbeneweleh

Le sang du petit Abraham Tumay réclame justice

Les circonstances qui ont poussé la police anti-émeute à tirer sur des manifestants en colère à Kingsville le lundi 24 juin font toujours l'objet d'une enquête.

Des éléments de la brigade anti-émeute ont ouvert le feu sur des manifestants à Kingsville, près de la communauté de FifteenGate le long de la route reliant Monrovia à

Kakata, le 24 juin, faisant un mort et plusieurs blessés.

Abraham Tumay, un garçon de 17 ans a reçu une balle dans la tête et est mort. Son sang réclame aujourd'hui justice.

Selon plusieurs sources, y compris le père du défunt, le regretté Tumay n'a pas pris part à la manifestation, car il s'était rendu sur la route pour vendre du maïs grillé quand il a reçu une balle perdue à la

tête. Il a immédiatement perdu conscience et a été déclaré mort à l'hôpital de Du-Side à Harbel, dans le comté de Margibi.

La police nationale libérienne a confirmé le décès et a affirmé avoir ouvert une enquête sur l'incident qui a fait deux autres blessés graves.

Pendant que la police mène une enquête dans son propre camp, nous nous associons aux parents pour exiger que l'enquête débouche sur l'inculpation du coupable qui doit faire face à la justice pour le meurtre d'un enfant innocent.

Nous espérons qu'il ne s'agira pas d'une autre enquête policière sans fin qui ne fera que viser à atténuer la gravité de la situation et à détourner l'attention du public.

La police devrait informer le public de qui a donné l'ordre aux agents des forces de l'ordre d'ouvrir le feu sur des civils non armés qui ne faisaient qu'exprimer, mains nues, leur agacement face aux meurtres présumés de deux de leurs fils, qui

seraient victimes des meurtres rituels.

Il est très regrettable qu'une population qui se sent déjà privée de justice perde un autre enfant tué par les forces de l'ordre et de sécurité qui étaient sensées protéger les vies et les biens. L'enquête en cours devrait expliquer en quoi les éléments des forces de l'ordre se sentaient-ils menacés pour faire usage des balles réelles contre des civils sans armes.

Abraham Tumay ne méritait pas cela, pas plus que le peuple de Kingsville # 7. Le sang de Tumay ne cessera de pleurer que si quelqu'un est tenu responsable de l'avoir envoyé

dans sa tombe de sitôt.

Il est important que les agents des forces de l'ordre et de sécurité apprennent à utiliser les armes à feu de manière responsable. On ne peut pas faire usage de son arme comme bon le sent sur des civiles sans armes. Les balles récupérées sur les lieux de l'incident proviennent des armes de la police.

Nous croyons fermement que la police aurait pu employer d'autres moyens pour disperser les manifestants qui bloquaient la route, au lieu de leur tirer dessus. Ce n'est pas bon et professionnel de la part de la police. La vie des gens compte, en particulier les citoyens lésés.



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Français

Les leaders d'Afrique Sub-Saharienne joignent leurs forces pour accélérer l'élimination des MTN

La manifestation parallèle de haut niveau a été organisée dans le cadre du Sommet de l'Union Africaine par l'organisation Speak Up Africa, en partenariat avec le Ministère de la Santé Publique du Niger et la Fondation de Son Excellence, Madame Aïssata Issoufou, Première dame du Niger, Guri Vie Meilleure. Tenu sous le Haut-Patronage de Son Excellence M. Mahamadou Issoufou, Président de la République du Niger, et présidée par Mme la Première Dame du Niger [photo], cette rencontre a été l'occasion pour les intervenants de débattre des défis à relever et des stratégies de collaboration à mettre en œuvre pour accélérer les progrès dans la lutte contre les maladies tropicales négligées.

Plus de 100 participants ont assisté à l'événement, notamment Son Excellence Mme Sika Kaboré, Première Dame du Burkina Faso, Son Excellence Mme Hinda Deby Itno, Première Dame du Tchad, Son Excellence Mme Antoinette SassouNguesso, Première Dame du Congo et Présidente actuelle de l'Organisation de Premières Dames d'Afrique pour le Développement (OPDAD), la Reine de Eswatini, Dr Matshidiso Rebecca Moeti, Directrice régionale de l'OMS pour l'Afrique, Dr Abdourahmane Diallo, Directeur Général du Partenariat RBM pour en finir avec le paludisme, Mme Joy Phumaphi, Secrétaire Exécutive de l'Alliance des dirigeants africains contre le paludisme, Dr Idi Illiassou Mainassara, Ministre de la Santé du Niger, Mme Françoise Vanni, Directrice des Relations Publiques du Fonds mondial de lutte contre le VIH/SIDA, le paludisme et la tuberculose.

L'événement a fourni aux décideurs présents une plateforme pour évaluer les progrès accomplis en matière d'élimination des MTN sur le continent et tirer des enseignements des meilleures pratiques permettant de prendre des décisions éclairées en vue de la création de partenariats durables pour la couverture sanitaire universelle.

Son Excellence M. Mahamadou Issoufou a souligné l'importance que son gouvernement accorde à la santé, notamment à travers la mise en œuvre du programme de Renaissance du Niger, qui aidera le pays à atteindre ses objectifs de couverture sanitaire universelle.

S.E Mme Aïssata Issoufou, Première Dame du Niger a déclaré : « Tout progrès, en particulier dans les pays les plus touchés par les maladies tropicales négligées, dépend d'un leadership fort et cohérent au niveau national et d'une coordination régionale afin de garantir à toutes les personnes, en particulier les plus vulnérables et les plus marginalisées, l'accès à des services de santé de qualité et à des méthodes de prévention des MTN ».

Les maladies tropicales négligées constituent un groupe

diversifié de maladies transmissibles qui touchent plus de 1,5 milliard de personnes dans le monde, dont 39% vivent en Afrique. Les MTN affectent les populations les plus vulnérables de la société et malgré les progrès réalisés ces dernières années, force est de constater qu'il est nécessaire d'intensifier les actions en faveur de la lutte contre ces maladies. L'illustre assemblée a souligné que le fait de ne pas renforcer nos efforts contre les MTN maintenant, y compris en développant de nouveaux outils et ressources, aura des conséquences importantes pour les générations futures en Afrique.

Au Niger, les MTN, notamment la filariose lymphatique, la schistosomiase, le géo helminthiases et le trachome, sont endémiques. L'événement a été aussi marqué par le lancement officiel d'un nouvel outil de suivi et de redevabilité pouvant induire une meilleure gestion des initiatives de prévention et de traitement des MTN au Niger. Lancé par le gouvernement du Niger, cette « carte de score » mesurera les progrès nationaux contre les MTN, notamment le nombre de cas signalés dans chaque région, le nombre d'interventions fournies pour prévenir les cas, et le taux de traitement offert aux personnes concernées.

Dr Matshidiso Rebecca Moeti, Directrice régionale de l'OMS pour l'Afrique, a déclaré : « Alors que nous progressons dans la lutte contre les maladies tropicales négligées, la dynamique offerte par la couverture sanitaire universelle est une occasion unique d'exploiter nos synergies pour nous assurer que personne ne soit laissé pour compte. »

Mme Yacine Djibo, Directrice exécutive de Speak Up Africa, a déclaré : « L'élimination des maladies tropicales négligées est à portée de main. Nous tous ici, dans cette salle et au-delà, avons la responsabilité d'agir pour l'accélération de l'élimination de ces maladies, d'ici 2030. Plus que jamais, nous avons besoin de mobiliser nos ressources financières et techniques. L'engagement et l'appropriation de cette lutte par les communautés reste cruciale pour venir à bout de ces maladies. »

Lors de la réunion, S.E. Mme la Première Dame du Niger Aïssata Issoufou a souligné la nécessité d'adopter de nouvelles approches novatrices. Trois jours avant la réunion, le gouvernement du Niger a lancé une coalition nationale de la lutte contre les MTN au Niger qui vise à renforcer la coordination entre les partenaires afin de maximiser les ressources financières et techniques disponibles et de diversifier les partenaires luttant pour l'élimination des MTN. Cette activité a marqué le lancement du mouvement « Non aux MTN » au Niger, mis en œuvre en partenariat avec Speak Up Africa. La campagne vise à accroître l'engagement et l'appropriation de l'élimination des MTN à tous les niveaux de la société.

COMMENTAIRE

By Stefan Gerlach

La BCE doit s'expliquer

ZURICH - Le gouverneur de la banque centrale de la Finlande, Olli Rehn, a réitéré son appel à la Banque centrale européenne pour qu'elle procède à un examen de son cadre de politique, qui est attendu depuis longtemps. Le prochain changement à la tête de l'institution - Christine Lagarde, la directrice exécutive du Fonds monétaire international depuis 2011, devrait succéder à Mario Draghi en tant que présidente de la BCE - offre une occasion importante de donner suite à cet appel.

Lors de la création de la BCE il y a 20 ans, les banques centrales n'étaient généralement pas très claires quant aux détails de leurs cadres politiques. A cette époque, une certaine ambiguïté a pu être utile, en raison de la flexibilité offerte à la BCE lorsque cette dernière a commencé à fonctionner. En outre, elle a permis à des banques centrales avec des expériences et des points de vue différents de se mettre d'accord sur un cadre, même si elles n'étaient pas d'accord sur les détails précis.

Mais le monde a considérablement changé depuis et le public exige aujourd'hui beaucoup plus de clarté. Comment la BCE peut-elle répondre à cette demande, 16 ans après le dernier examen de son cadre de politique monétaire?

Depuis cet examen, effectué en 2003, la crise financière mondiale et la crise de la dette européenne qui a suivi, ont incité la BCE à adopter une pléthore de nouveaux instruments de politique. Ces mesures de crise - qui ont été profondément impopulaires, en particulier en Allemagne - ne peuvent être justifiées que dans la mesure où elles ont été efficaces, et cela doit être évalué. De plus, comme Rehn, qui siège au conseil d'administration de la BCE, l'a fait remarquer, les tendances structurelles de long terme - telles que le vieillissement de la population, les taux d'intérêt à long terme plus bas et les changements climatiques - doivent être prises en considération.

L'efficacité de la politique de la BCE exige que tous les membres du conseil d'administration soient la même longueur d'onde. Ils ont besoin d'une compréhension commune des objectifs à long terme de l'Europe, ainsi que des forces et des faiblesses des différents instruments de politique. Et, afin de renforcer la responsabilité et soutenir la prise de décision intelligente, ils doivent être en mesure de préciser les détails de leurs stratégies de politique monétaire de façon intelligible pour le public.

En l'état actuel, une telle clarté est parfois difficile à trouver, même quand il s'agit de quelques-uns des éléments les plus fondamentaux de la stratégie de la politique de la BCE. La stabilité des prix - l'objectif principal de la BCE - est actuellement exprimé comme « une inflation en dessous, mais proche de 2% ». Est-ce que 1% d'inflation remplit cette condition, ou est-ce trop faible, exigeant davantage de politique monétaire accommodante ? Les différents membres du conseil d'administration de la BCE pourraient bien avoir des réponses différentes à cette

question et donc soutenir des politiques différentes elles aussi.

Il en va de même pour les questions de savoir si l'objectif d'inflation de la BCE est symétrique - impliquant que les autorités doivent intervenir aussi vigoureusement lorsque l'inflation est trop faible que lorsqu'elle est trop élevée - et si l'inflation doit être mesurée au fil du temps ou à un moment donné. Si, sur une certaine période, le taux d'inflation a fluctué entre 0 et 4% mais que la moyenne se situe effectivement à un niveau « sous, mais proche de 2% », est-ce que l'objectif été atteint ?

La réponse a des implications politiques majeures. Si l'inflation est mesurée au fil du temps, la BCE pourrait accepter, ou peut-être même viser, un taux d'inflation légèrement plus élevé à moyen terme, pour compenser l'inflation trop faible de ces dernières années. Si le public venait à penser qu'une période d'inflation supérieure à la cible était probable, le taux d'intérêt réel attendu chuterait, ce qui stimulerait l'économie.

Bien sûr, Draghi a établi dans des discours et des conférences de presse que, selon lui, l'objectif d'inflation est symétrique; que 1% d'inflation est trop faible; et que le taux d'inflation devrait être mesuré sur le « moyen terme ». Mais on ne sait pas si cette opinion est largement partagée au sein du conseil d'administration de la BCE.

Le ciblage de l'inflation est loin d'être le seul domaine où l'ambiguïté entrave l'élaboration de politiques efficaces et complique la formation des attentes des acteurs du marché. Le régime des opérations monétaires sur titres (OMT) de la BCE - par lequel la BCE promet d'acheter des obligations émises par les Etats membres de la zone euro sur les marchés secondaires des obligations souveraines - génère également une incertitude importante.

Les OMT, l'outil choisi par Draghi pour réaliser son vœu de 2012 de faire « tout ce qu'il faut pour préserver l'euro », ont été controversées dès leur création. Le président de la Bundesbank Jens Weidmann - l'un des principaux rivaux de Lagarde pour la présidence de la BCE - s'y était farouchement opposé en public. Mais c'était il y a sept ans et les OMT n'ont jamais été réellement utilisées. Est-ce que le conseil d'administration est toujours prêt à y avoir recours ? Ou est-ce que les événements - et les changements des membres du conseil - des dernières années ont rendu cet engagement obsolète ?

Alors que la dette publique en Grèce et en Italie est encore beaucoup trop élevée, que la zone euro risque toujours de tomber dans une récession qui aggravera considérablement la situation budgétaire de ces deux pays et que la politique italienne est plus volatile que jamais, il serait utile de le savoir. Un examen comme celui demandé par Rehn fournirait les réponses nécessaires - et mettrait la BCE sur des bases beaucoup plus solides pour une nouvelle ère de leadership.

PERSPECTIVES PERSPECTIVES

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

cont'd from page 5

problem of the impact of dual citizenship on our small, poor Nation may not be over-emphasized.

That impact is critical to the very survival of the Nation and people with, particular, respect to foreign policy (national security) and economic development. *In that, it will be unreasonable, indeed dangerous, to entrust the well-being and life of our Nation and people to an "Alien Liberian", a dual citizen, one who has renounced/denounced and mortgaged his/her loyalty, allegiance and patriotism, exclusively, to a foreign (nation) power.* For this and several, other reasons, Liberian Law forbids dual citizenship in general and, in particular, forbids dual citizens to become members of our National Legislature (Article 30 of the Constitution).

In your response, dated June 18, 2014 to our letter, you wrote that *"the Commission has, since 2005 . . . included in its guidelines the requirement for . . . sworn statements/affidavits . . . of citizenship . . . This requirement has been . . . incorporated . . . to govern . . . nominations for . . . 2014 Special Senatorial Elections"*. But, there are, at the present, known dual citizen-members of the Legislature as the direct result of the NEC-supervised, 2005 elections, in flagrant violation of your Guidelines and Article 30. Also, there are others holding sensitive, national positions in government, including commissioners of your National Elections Commission. Reasonably, lawfully, therefore, un-verified and un-supported "sworn statements/affidavits" are worthless.

The NEC is obligated, specifically, by law (Article 30 & the Guidelines), to verify sworn statements/affidavits and to enforce/penalize violations. There is no need for new law or for the NEC to wait for private complaints to verify "sworn statements/affidavits".

Moreover, we note from press reports (*FrontPage & New Dawn, July 28, 2014*) that "the NEC cleared Mr. Robert Sirleaf and others . . ." however, some candidates "cleared" by the NEC had been and are accused of dual citizenship, while others are known dual citizens, based upon documentary evidence.

Please permit us to note that our (Republic's) socio-political mentor and all-time benefactor, the country from which we borrowed, almost, all of our laws and upon whose system of political organization/management ours are modeled, and indeed, one of the most powerful nations on this planet - the United States of America - is caught and entangled in the web of dual citizen-activities, particularly, regarding its domestic (political/economic) and foreign (national security) policies. The USA is now involved in a frantic effort to extricate itself from or find a way out of nuclear confrontation with some developing/developed nations, due to disloyal acts by dual citizens. *We, Liberians, should and must learn to benefit from the US experience.*

While we pause for your response to the issues and questions raised. Also, attached herewith is our self-explanatory Rejoinder (datelined Pennsylvania, USA, 2005) on dual citizenship, relevant to the NEC and our nation, for your information.

Kind Regards,
Bai M. Gbala, Sr.

Elsewhere, however, we wrote, based upon experience, that there is a "Conspiracy of Silence", a sort of "let-them-write-and-talk, while-we-do-our-thing" in Liberian officialdom, in terms of an open, truthful, reasonable, civil and cordial debate and exchange of views on the critical challenges facing our country. So, the clamed-up by the NEC was and is a reasonable expectation, not surprising. Therefore, we fired off the last of our six letters, a somewhat summary of our views, to the NEC, dated December 3, 2014, some 17 days before the Senatorial elections. For the information and benefit of our readers and fellow compatriots, we present the letter hereunder:

OPEN LETTER TO NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION (NEC)

The Chairman and Members

National Elections Commission, R.L.
N/N 9th Street at Tubman Boulevard
Sinkor/Monrovia

Ladies & Gentlemen of the Commission:

It is our honor to present sincere greetings and compliments in continuation of the "healthy dialogue" on the critical issues of our time, affecting our troubled nation.

Deeply concerned and troubled about the prevailing atmosphere of election campaign violence - "Weah Vs. Sirleaf" (*FrontPageAfrica, New Democrat & New Dawn, November 27, 2014*), the "Siege of Monrovia" (*New Dawn, New Democrat & Heritage, December 1, 2014*) and the possibility of more violence ahead, we pen this Letter with the hope that it will provoke you to respond with information for the Liberian voters, although you did not treat, in detail, the issues raised in many of our previous letters

In our response (of July 31, 2014) to your letter dated June 18, 2014, ". . . we emphasized that the problem or impact of dual citizenship on our small, poor nation may not be over-emphasized"; that "that impact is critical to the very survival (like the on-going Ebola Epidemic) of the nation with, particular, respect to foreign policy (national security) and economic development; and that it will be unreasonable, indeed dangerous, to entrust the well-being and life of our Nation and people to an 'Alien Liberian' dual citizen, one who has renounced/denounced and mortgaged his/her loyalty, allegiance and patriotism, exclusively, to a foreign power", during these days of violence - international, political/economic, religious and ethnic/tribal bigotry and hatred.

"Because of these, and several, other reasons", we noted



that "Liberian Law forbids dual citizenship in general and, in particular, forbids dual citizens from becoming members of our National Legislature (Article 30 of the Constitution)".

By your letter dated June 18, 2014, you declared that "the Commission has, since 2005 . . . included in its guidelines, the requirement for . . . sworn statements/affidavits . . . of citizenship . . . This requirement has been . . . incorporated . . . to govern . . . nominations for the . . . 2014 Special Senatorial Elections". We responded but you have not answered, "Honorable Chairman & Members of the Commission, that there are, at the present, known dual citizen-members of the Legislature as the direct result of the NEC-supervised, 2005 elections, in flagrant violation of your Guidelines and Article 30. Also, there are others holding sensitive, national positions in government, including (possibly) commissioners of your National Elections Commission . . . The NEC", we continued, "is obligated, specifically, by law (Article 30 & the Guidelines) to verify sworn statements/affidavits and to enforce/penalize violations. There is no need for new law or laws, and that it is not necessary for the NEC to wait for private complaints to verify "sworn statements/affidavits".

Now, comes Mr. Robert A. Sirleaf, Independent candidate for the Senate, approved by the NEC. However, Mr. Sirleaf has been accused of US citizenship. According to the Honorable, Mr. Melvin Snowe's press statement: "Fellow Liberians . . . Mr. Robert A. Sirleaf, son of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Senior Advisor to the President of the Republic of Liberia . . . (is) a taxpaying citizen of the United States of America, with US Passport number 2181983813, issued June 7, 2006 . . .". Additionally, a group of concerned Liberians submitted a complaint to the NEC, in which they challenged Mr. Robert Sirleaf's Liberian citizenship, that he, Mr. Sirleaf, is a US citizen with a US passport, presented in evidence . . . But Mr. Robert Sirleaf is now, on the campaign trail with NEC approval.

The NEC Ruling on Allegations of 2005 Elections

These complaints/allegations . . . against several individuals, sought to bar the so-called "high-profiled, big shots", some of Liberia's "traditional untouchables", from standing for office on the allegation that they are guilty of acts of political infidelity by allegedly denouncing and renouncing their Liberian citizenship and taking on foreign citizenships. Many of today's "Honorable", awarded this earned title, fall into this class of "political infidelity" to the Republic.

The National Elections Commission, then headed by Counselor-at-Law, Madam Frances Johnson-Morris-Allison, treated these critical charges and counter-charges of national significance, apparently, . . . "with kid gloves", by a ruling in favor of, almost, all of the most important and challenged defendants, based, primarily, on emotional arguments of "short-term peace", seemingly not to "rock the boat" . . . but not on the critical issues of national security and the survival of the state. To this Ruling . . . we responded, datelined Philadelphia/Lancaster, Pennsylvania, USA, August, 2005, that:

"The rest is now left in the fragile hands of the Liberian Voters, an overwhelming majority of which is poor, hungry, relatively uninformed and lacks the ability to reflect, analyze and interpret the critical issues of this general elections, with particular respect to the requisite qualities desirable for political leadership - the social, economic and political impact of their votes in these crucial elections".

"The Voters will now be, and are, asked to select/elect leader(s) from a mosaic of Liberian 'politicians': some come from the traditional, conservative school of Liberian politics who refuse to rock the boat, but stay the course', whatever that may portend, while oppressive, dishonest and corrupt; others are 'progressives' who crossed carpet to become traditional, carpet-baggers, hypocritical to their principles; still some are utopian socialists, with activities a la Karl Marx and authoritarianism; while there are others who are purely democratic, political theorists, but with tyrannical tendencies; and others who are ethnic or tribal patriots, who refuse or reject the inclusion of other ethnic groups, particularly, the so-called Congo- and Americo-Liberians in national, political affairs".

"The unfolding political circumstances create, will continue to create, a condition of anger, frustration, hopelessness, helplessness and the perception of betrayal, with what Liberians call "mango-mango, dee-dee-bah or cro-cro-gee".

This scenario is highly likely to explode with a devastating impact on the entire, socio-political landscape of our, Liberian society". That prediction appears to be unfolding today!!

Honorable Commission, may we invite your attention to the much-talked about and reported notion of "consultations" that the NEC had with the Senate, political parties and other "stakeholders" on postponement or holding of the Mid-Term, Senatorial Elections now, during the on-going, Ebola Crisis. The decision - to postpone or to hold the elections now - should, will, is and must be based only, and only, on the Liberian Constitution, reason, ethics and morality, upon which law is based and from which Law draws its majesty, and the facts or falsity of the deadly impact of the Ebola Epidemic upon the Nation.

The Senate, political parties and the so-called "stakeholders" have and already declared interest in holding the elections. Therefore, "consultations" of the Senate, political parties and the "stakeholders" . . . is and will be to add formal, lawful support for holding the elections and constitutes patent violation of the Liberian Constitution, reason, ethics and morality. Either way, the Commission will be held responsible!!

The Liberian People, your employers, are entitled to a full, public disclosure on this issue of the citizenship of these prominent Liberians. Your credibility is on the line - at stake.

Respectfully,

Bai M. Gbala, Sr.
Bai M. Gbala, Sr.

Budget hearing delays

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Information from the corridors of the Capitol especially, the House of Representatives indicates that the 2019/20 draft national budget is far from being brought on the floor, as lawmakers reportedly renege on commencing hearings on the financial instrument for fear of cut in their respect allowances and salaries.

This pare gathers from inside sources that the executive branch of government is in close discussion with the leadership of the House headed by Speaker Bhofal Chambers for salary harmonization, currently ongoing in all agencies of the executive branch; but individual lawmakers are contesting that salary and allowance cut cannot help the present dismal economic environment.

The executive is proposing that all representatives and senators' monthly allowances be cut from US\$8,000 to US\$6,000 for representatives and US\$10,000 to US\$7,000 for senators, respectively, while government settles



their back pay for the past four months.

Four months now, no member of the 54th session of the Liberian Legislature has taken pay due to low revenue generation.

The George Manneh Weah administration promised to settle lawmakers' financial obligations to commercial banks, but lawmakers are arguing that the arrangement is not in the interest of their various electoral districts, as many of them are engaged in

community initiatives from their monthly income.

Based on the bottleneck between the executive and lawmakers, members of the Ways, Means, and Finance and Budget Committee of the House of Representatives are yet to commence hearing into the budget thereby, creating suspicions that the budget is far from being passed by the House for onward submission to the Liberian Senate for its possible concurrence.

When the budget

committee headed by Montserrado County Electoral District#5 Representative Thomas Fallah was contacted Tuesday, July 09, on the grounds of the Capitol, he dismissed the speculation.

Rep. Fallah says he has no idea where the information is coming from, adding that his committee is putting mechanisms into place to jumpstart the budget hearing process.

Members of the Liberian Legislature are among highest paid officials of government since the administration of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Madam Sirleaf is on record of saying that legislators increased their salaries, allowances and benefits at their will and pleasure and she as president then only endorsed their proposal.

On June 30, which is after 57

days of delay, President George Weah through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) submitted the 2019/2020 Draft National Budget to the House of Representatives in the tune of US\$532,906,966.

Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah, Jr. and his Deputy Minister for Budget Tanneh Brunson on Friday, June 28, 2019, submitted the 2019/2020 Fiscal Year Budget on Capitol Hill to House Speaker Bhofal Chambers, in accordance with Article 34(i) of the 1986 Constitution.

According to executive summary of the budget expenditure, compensation for employees is US\$296,992,913, which is well over 55 percent of the total budget. However, this expenditure item is about US\$30 million less than the previous 2018/2019 budget, which was in the tune of US\$322,672,329. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Tyler denies US\$75k bribe claim

By Winston W. Parley

Deposed former House Speaker Jenekai Alex Tyler denies allegation that he received US\$75,000 as his share bribe for the passage of a concession law allegedly intended to favor British mining firm Sable Mining during former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's regime.

Mr. Tyler, who like co-defendant Sen. Varney G. Sherman broke political alliance with Mrs. Sirleaf nearing the end of her second term, are facing economic sabotage trial along with several top officials for an alleged US\$950,000 bribe received to change the Public

Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC) Act of 2005.

Serving as the third witness for the defendants, Mr. Tyler terms the allegations as "baseless, unfounded and have no iota of truth."

He goes further terming the allegation as "blatant and calculated lie," because he did not receive any money of US\$75,000 from defendant Cllr. Sherman or any person for that matter for the passage of any law.

"To even state or allege that I demanded US250, 000.00 to pass it through the Senate [says] to me that those ... making the allegations do not understand the workings of the

National Legislature. I was never the presiding officer of the Senate," he argues.

The witness read the concluding portion of a communication he says was addressed to him as Speaker by former President Sirleaf in which he says she gave the history of the Amendment and Restatement of the PPCC Act of 2005.

According to him Mrs. Sirleaf wrote that the Restated and Amended Act was duly informed by national professionals, Liberia's international partners and international best practices around the world.

He adds that Mrs. Sirleaf indicated that the instrument concerned has been successful in ... [enhancing] the code value of transparency in the bidding and concession process to ensure value for money in public procurement and economic value for concession rights.

He says Mrs. Sirleaf wrote that the instrument harmonized bidding processes with concession granting and licensing procedures in the mining and other sector legislations (forestry, agriculture and hydrocarbon).

Additionally, former Speaker Tyler says ex-President Sirleaf wrote that the instrument rationalized thresholds established in the 2005 Act, removing it from the law and placing them in

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regulations since they may be subject to change periodically.

According to him, Madam Sirleaf indicated that the instrument strengthened the complaint process under the law by clearly defining and articulating the functions of the Complaints, Appeals and Review Panel (CARP) and Complaint Review and Disposal process.

"Mr. Speaker, I believe this revised Act is best for Liberia and in the interest of our Country and people and recommend that you submit to the Honorable Legislature for enactment," Tyler concludes with reading of the letter.

According to Mr. Tyler, both the draft and the enacted law, Section 75 [are] the same under the caption "Scope Application and General Principles.

He testifies that no "i" was dotted or any "t" crossed in both the draft and the enacted law.

"...So, if a Section 75 was changed in the law, I would be the first to know because at that time, I do not know about now, the debates were conducted before the

presiding officer," he narrates.

"In short, there is no change in both the draft and the enacted copy of the Amendment and Restatement of the Public Procurement and Concession Act of 2005, approved September 16, 2010 and published September 18, 2010," Tyler adds.

The trial of the Liberian officials comes as a result of a Global Witness report titled The Deceiver, claiming that the Liberian authorities received bribes provided by Sable Mining for the passage of an amended PPCC Act of 2005 the containing the provision for the Minister of Lands, Mines and Energy (now called Mines and Energy) to have power to declare a concession area "non-bidding area."

The accusation specifically cites Section 75 of the Act which prosecution here claims is intended to create ease for the awarding of the concession agreement on the Wologisi Mountain where Sable Mining had interest in the iron ore deposits.

Mr. Tyler continues with his testimony today at 10Am at Criminal Court "C".



Rep. Yekeh Kolubah's bond granted



By Winston W. Parley

The Criminal Court "A" at the Temple of Justice has granted Montserrat County Rep. defendant Yekeh Kolubah's bail bond which include the names of other defendants against whom prosecution was seeking re-arrest and incarceration.

Taking the decision Tuesday, 9 July, presiding Court "A" Judge Roosevelt Z. Willie ruled that [he] is satisfied that whenever the defendants are needed, they will be present in court.

"We have said continuously that as far as the court is concerned, the conduct so far of the defendants to include

Rep. Yekeh has not affected this court because even Yekeh Kolubah has sureties to his bail bond attached..., " Judge Willie rules.

Rep. Kolubah is on trial along with some of his supporters/private guards including co-defendants Mohammed A. Keita, Oliver C. Konneh, Johnson Kpor, Vamah Kulubah and Mohammed S. Kaba.

The government here accuses the defendants of allegedly flogging and wounding a man who allegedly refused T-shirts offered him for the June 7 peaceful protest.

Following the indictment and appearance before the Court, Judge Willie set the defendants' bond aside because it did not meet the requirements as provided by law in the Civil Procedure Law Chapter 3.

However Rep. Kollubah did not appear immediately at the time, but he later submitted himself to



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Don't come back! Brazil better off without disruptive Neymar

The Selecao's triumph was achieved with Neymar sitting in the Maracana stands, with his club strife proof he has become a distractive influence

It was the crowning moment of this Brazil side, reward for three years of hard work and consolidation following their brush with rock-



bottom.

Having endured a humiliating first-round exit under dour Dunga in 2016, the Selecao were back with a vengeance this time to take the Copa America trophy and break their 12-year drought. And while this may not have been a vintage Brazil team, from Alisson to Roberto Firmino and from veteran Dani Alves to the youthful verve of Everton they boasted

heroes across the pitch.

One man was conspicuous by his absence, however. While his team-mates - and, rather bizarrely, President Jair Bolsonaro, who took a front-row spot in the photos, trophy in hand - celebrated on the Maracana pitch following Sunday's 3-1 defeat of Peru, Neymar watched from the stands recovering from the ankle injury that ruled him out of contention.

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