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Continental News

Sudan's ex-president 'given millions from Saudis'

A detective has told a court in Sudan that former President Omar al-Bashir admitted to receiving millions of dollars from Saudi Arabia.

Mr Bashir appeared in court on Monday to face corruption charges, which his lawyers say are baseless. He was ousted in April after months of protests, bringing an end to his nearly 30 years in power. In June, prosecutors said a large hoard of foreign currency had been found in grain sacks at his home.

On Sunday, pro-democracy activists and the country's military leaders, who had removed Mr Bashir, signed a deal paving the way for elections. The former president, dressed in white robes and a turban, appeared behind a cage. He made no comment on the allegations, Reuters news agency reports. He spoke to confirm his name and laughed when asked about where he was living, Reuters adds. He replied: "Formerly the airport district at army headquarters but now Kobar prison." Police investigator Ahmed Ali

Mohamed told the court that Mr Bashir admitted to receiving \$25m (£21m) from Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman. He also said the 75-year-old former president got other money from Saudi Arabia.

Reuters quotes Mr Bashir's lawyer Ahmed Ibrahim as saying that "there is no information or evidence with

regards to the accusations of illicit gains aimed at Bashir". Mr Bashir faces charges related to "possessing foreign currency, corruption and receiving gifts illegally".

In April, Sudan's military ruler General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan said more than \$113m (£93m) worth of cash in Sudanese pounds and foreign currency had been seized from

Mr Bashir's home.

The ousted leader had been due in court in July - but the trial was postponed for security reasons. In May, Sudan's public prosecutor charged Mr Bashir with incitement and involvement in the killing of protesters.

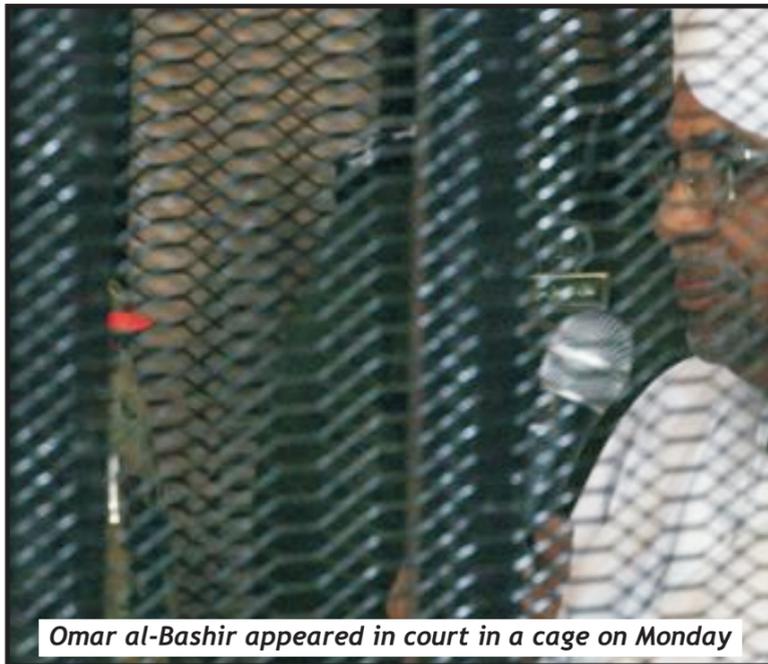
The charges stem from an inquiry into the death of a doctor killed during protests that led to the end of Mr Bashir's rule in April. The doctor had been treating injured protesters in his home in Khartoum, when police fired tear gas into the building.

A witness told the BBC that the doctor had walked out with his hands in the air, told the police he was a doctor and was instantly shot. Mr Bashir's trial will be seen as a test of whether the new authorities are able to deal with the

alleged crimes of the previous regime.

On Saturday, Sudan's ruling military council, which took over after Mr Bashir's ousting, and a civilian opposition alliance signed a landmark power-sharing deal. The agreement ushers in a new governing council, including both civilians and generals, to pave the way towards elections and civilian rule. Mohamed Hamdan "Hemeti" Dagolo, widely regarded as Sudan's most powerful man, has pledged to abide by its terms.

The members of the new sovereign council were supposed to be sworn in on Monday, but the ceremony has been postponed after a request from pro-democracy activists, the Reuters news agency quotes a military spokesman as saying. BBC



Omar al-Bashir appeared in court in a cage on Monday

Zimbabwe deploys security forces over protest march

Troops and police were out in force in Zimbabwe's second city of Bulawayo on Monday in a bid to block a planned opposition march, three days after brutally dispersing a banned protest in the capital Harare.

Soldiers and armed police on horseback and in trucks patrolled the central business district and most of the high density suburbs.

Using loudhailers, police warned people against joining the demonstration, which was called to protest at

deteriorating economic conditions.

One of the city's usually busy areas, the precincts of Tredgold Magistrate Courts, where illegal forex changers ply their trade, was cordoned off. Police also set up checkpoints on most roads leading to the city centre. The authorities banned the protests, organised by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), after police routed protesters who had defied a similar order in Harare on Friday. "The move by the government to ban the demonstration shows they are running scared," Mbuso Fuzwayo, of the rights pressure group Ibhethu Likazulu, told AFP as military helicopters hovered over the city, an opposition stronghold.

"They don't have confidence in themselves. This is like Rhodesia. This is primitive," he said referring to the British colonial rule era. The MDC is challenging the ban in court, which is expected to issue a ruling at 1400 GMT.



Police in Zimbabwe used loudhailers to warn people against joining the demonstration

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The protesters are angry over the country's floundering economy and the jailing of a well-known government critic, tribal chief Felix Ndiweni.

The chief, who is revered in the western region of Matabeleland, was last week jailed for 18 months for allegedly destroying a villager's property. Police fired teargas and beat up several demonstrators in Harare on Friday after they gathered in a square. Those protests were the first since President Emmerson Mnangagwa's decision to double fuel prices sparked nationwide demonstrations in January that were crushed by police with the loss of at least 17 lives. Mnangagwa took over from long-time ruler Robert Mugabe in November 2017.

He won disputed elections in July last year on a platform of change.

But many Zimbabweans say

the economy has gone from bad to worse with rocketing inflation, shortages of bread, fuel, medicines and other basics.

According to the UN, about five million Zimbabweans, or a third of the population, are in need of food aid. "We are deeply concerned by the socio-economic crisis that continues to unfold in Zimbabwe," UN Human Rights spokesman Rupert Colville said in Geneva on Friday. "We urge the government to find ways to engage with protesters, and to refrain from the use of violence".

MDC activist Mlondolzi Ndiweni, who was geared to protest, said there was no difference between the Mugabe administration and Mnangagwa's.

"We don't understand how this is a new dispensation, it smells worse than the old dispensation," he said. Router

EDITORIAL

Why CDC all the time?

REPEATED BLOODY VIOLENCE between supporters of the governing Coalition for Democratic Change and opposition supporters does not only undermine the strength of our growing democracy but threatens peace and unity in Liberia, thereby, leaving the economy vulnerable.

RULING PARTY SUPPORTERS and opposition supporters have been engaged in stone-throwing battles at various locations and time in Monrovia with several persons injured and properties destroyed.

THE LATEST VIOLENCE occurred Saturday, 17 August in Montserrado County District#15 where the National Elections Commission had quarantined and scheduled a rerun of the 29 July by-election in 20 polling places within 10 days following investigation conducted by NEC hearing officers in response to complaints of alleged "electoral fraud."

SPECIFICALLY, LOGAN TOWN Broad Street community in District#15 became a no-go area Saturday when rival party zealots engaged each other in stone-throwing, resulting to injuries and destruction of private properties. The violence was reportedly between supporters of ruling CDC Candidate Abu Bana Kamara and supporters of defeated candidate Kelvin Baryoh.

FOR UNEXPLAINED REASONS, it appears that members of the ruling Coalition believe that threats and violence are new strategies to winning elections or silencing their opponents. But violence is always counterproductive to tenets of democracy.

THE WEEKEND'S VIOLENCE in Logan Town is preceded by bloody encounter between rival supporters of CDC Candidate Kamara and Ms Telia Urey of the All Liberian Party (ALP) earlier last week adjacent headquarters of the National Elections Commission in Sinkor, Monrovia. The ALP is member of four opposition collaborating political parties here that have consolidated to battle the ruling party.

THAT VIOLENCE ALSO led to serious injuries of rival supporters, innocent people and private properties destroyed despite intervention by the police. Some of the victims are still nursing wounds in hospitals.

THE RULING CDC excepts to the ruling by the NEC hearing officers for rerun of election in the 20 polling places quarantined by the Commission, saying it would appeal to the NEC Board of Commissioners.

WE ARE NOT very surprised at all by the ruling party's focus on violence because party hierarchies had already mobilized zealot partisans, majority of them youth, to face opposition with "flesh and blood."

HOWEVER, THE RULING party should realize that it is shooting itself in the leg by embarking on or embracing violence as a strategy to keeping grip on power because said approach is counterproductive, as it would soon come to recognize.

The New Dawn
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COMMENTARY

By Jayati Ghosh

The IMF's Latest Victims

In 2013, the International Monetary Fund produced a report acknowledging that it had "underestimated" the effects that austerity would have on Greece's economy. Yet the Fund has made the same mistakes in its subsequent deals with Argentina and Ecuador.

NEW DELHI - The process of selecting the International Monetary Fund's next managing director must change. In particular, the tradition of choosing a European for the post - based on an unfair and anachronistic "gentlemen's agreement" reached with the United States when the institution was established 75 years ago - needs to be discarded. But even more important, the IMF's longstanding approach to lending should be transformed.

The Fund has a long history of policy mistakes. Yet, as Christine Lagarde's just-completed tenure showed, it has learned little from them. Consider the case of Argentina. In mid-2018, the IMF agreed to provide the country with a heavily frontloaded three-year loan worth nearly \$57 billion - the largest in the institution's history - following a series of reckless decisions by President Mauricio Macri.

One such decision, made soon after he took office in 2015, was to strike a deal with the holdout creditors who were still fighting in US courts to be repaid in full, following Argentina's 2002 debt default and subsequent restructuring. Another was Macri's subsequent borrowing spree, which caused public debt - mostly denominated in dollars - to swell by more than one-third, to \$321 billion in 2017.

By last year, Argentina's fiscal and current-account deficits exceeded 5% of GDP. In the ensuing economic and financial crisis, public debt ballooned to nearly 90% of GDP, capital flight caused the peso's value to collapse, and inflation soared. So, under pressure from US President Donald Trump (who had business ties with Macri), the IMF stepped in - with Lagarde's active support.

The loan may have been unprecedented in size, but it had all the familiar characteristics of past IMF financing programs. In exchange for the cash, Argentina was to implement massive budget cuts, in order to balance its primary budget in 2019 and significantly reduce its external deficit. Argentina complied - and the economy steadily deteriorated.

Today, inflation is running at over 55%, the poverty rate has surpassed 30%, and output and employment are shrinking. Argentina is nowhere near the IMF's targets for investment and GDP growth, which have already been revised twice. More downward revisions are undoubtedly coming.

The IMF has been here before. In 1998, when East Asia was in the throes of financial crisis, the Fund had to sign no less than five Memorandums of Understanding with Thailand, precisely because fulfilling all of the austerity requirements the Fund had imposed on it meant missing its macroeconomic targets.

Yet, far from learning from its mishandling of

the 1990s Asian financial crisis, the IMF made the same mistakes in Europe after the 2008 global financial crisis sent the eurozone into a tailspin. In particular, instead of allowing Greece to default on its massive debts to private creditors, the IMF - together with the European Central Bank and the European Commission - lent it the money. The accompanying austerity conditions made repayment of those debts - now held by official creditors - impossible. Greece continues to struggle to this day.

In 2013, the IMF produced a report acknowledging that it had "underestimated" the effects austerity would have on Greece's economy. It seemed like a promising portent. Yet, a mere five years later, the Fund's apparent realization was not reflected in its deal with Argentina. Nor is it reflected in a more recent financing deal with another Latin American country.

In March, the IMF approved a \$4.2 billion, three-year loan for Ecuador, as part of a plan to reduce public debt and reform the economy. In exchange, the Fund is predictably demanding rapid fiscal consolidation, through cuts to wages and public-sector jobs, hikes in energy prices, new charges for government services, and higher indirect taxes. As Mark Weisbrot and Andrés Arauz note in a report for the Center for Economic and Policy Research, these steps will likely lead to an immediate drop in GDP and cause the current recession to persist for the four years of the program.

Yet the IMF has somehow convinced itself that growth will decline only mildly in 2019, before recovering in 2020, as a huge boost in private-sector confidence - naturally brought about by fiscal restraint and privatization - leads to a surge in inward foreign investment. According to the Fund's logic, even if employment and consumption are falling, and the economy is in recession, net capital outflows of 1.9% of GDP will turn into net private capital inflows of 4.9% of GDP in 2020.

As usual, the folly of this logic will become apparent in due course. (Afloundering economy, it should be clear, is not attractive to private capital.) In the meantime, the people of Ecuador will suffer greatly, owing to rising unemployment, declining living standards, widening inequality, and greater poverty.

The IMF's bizarre belief in "expansionary austerity" would be laughable if it were not so damaging. How can the IMF justify an approach with such a poor track record? One explanation could be a lack of accountability that permeates the institution's bureaucracy, right up to the very top. If that's the case, boosting accountability should be the next IMF managing director's first order of business - that, and aligning the Fund's lending approach with economic realities.



By Camila Villard Duran

Global Money for the Poor

SÃO PAULO - In 2002, the Nobel laureate economist Thomas Sargent and François Velde, now a senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, published *The Big Problem of Small Change*. The book's title was inspired by the observations of economic historian Carlo Cipolla on the functioning of the medieval commodity-money system - particularly its persistent failure from the twelfth century onward to prevent shortages of small-denomination coins used mainly by the poor.

Today, the world faces the big problem of global small change. How, for example, can migrant workers in developed economies send money cheaply and securely to their families in developing countries? Remittances are too expensive, and it remains to be seen whether Facebook's Libra, or another global cryptocurrency, will be a viable and stable option for providing global money for the poor. Yet today's policymakers and technology firms can seek guidance from monetary history.

Cipolla argued that the medieval problem of small-coin shortages lay in the persistent differences in the exchange rate between large-denomination gold and silver coins and the smallest coins used in daily transactions, and in the higher cost of producing them. Only by the late 1800s, after centuries of trial and error, had most European countries found a solution: governments should issue high-quality token coins that were difficult to counterfeit and had little or no intrinsic value, but were convertible into commodities such as gold. This was the basis of the gold standard.

During the second half of the twentieth century, convertibility into gold eventually gave way to a fiat-money system of national currencies, and the US dollar became the key currency for large cross-border transactions. But providing the poor with access to "small-denomination" money in a globalized world proved more problematic.

More recently, private entities have issued new token coins using blockchain or mobile-phone technologies to help improve access to money in poor areas (and to respond to declining public trust in governments following the 2008 financial crisis). Yet there is still a recurring "shortage" of global money for the poor.

Remittances remain the most common type of small-denomination financial transaction. The 2019 United Nations report on the world's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) shows that personal remittances from migrant workers are becoming the largest source of external financing for developing countries. Remittances totaled \$689 billion in 2018, more than three times the amount of official development assistance to those countries in that year. And remittances to low- and middle-income countries rose by 9.6% compared to 2017.

Yet remittances are too costly and inefficient to tackle the persistent economic problem of global money for the poor. In the first quarter of 2019, the average cost of sending \$200 was 7% of that sum. In Africa and small Pacific islands, it was as high as 10%. The SDG target of 3% (on average) by 2030 is thus a long way off.

Perhaps remittances today are what the small-coin debasement was for the medieval monetary system: an incomplete and temporary cure for the shortage of money. What is really needed is an effective and reliable means of international payment to provide cross-border liquidity for the poor.

At present, the lack of competition among financial actors and the uncertainties of money markets in developing countries are impeding the establishment of such a system. And globally, about 1.7 billion adults remain unbanked.

Moreover, traditional banks and financial institutions seemingly lack the economic and legal incentives to establish a payment system for the poor at low cost. If merchant bankers pushed financial innovations in medieval times, technology firms are in the driver's seat now, and policymakers and regulators should prepare accordingly.

Although blockchain and mobile-phone technologies can provide global money for the poor, some fear that they could create global financial instability. Commentators including Katharina Pistor of Columbia Law School have warned of the possible financial and other risks associated with Facebook's Libra, and have called for governments to intervene before it takes off.

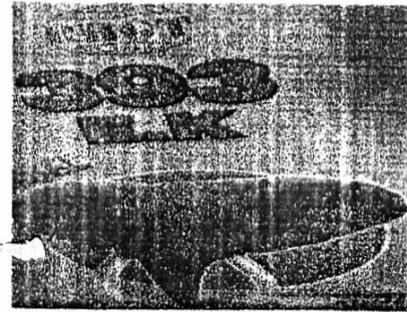
Nobel laureate economist Joseph E. Stiglitz, meanwhile, has stressed the importance of trust in money: every fiat currency is based on confidence that it will be redeemable on demand. Unlike other cryptocurrencies, Libra would be fully backed by reserves, and its value would be fixed in terms of a global basket of currencies. Yet even this might not be enough to make it viable.

I would rather put the question another way: who can provide global money for the poor, and under which regulatory conditions? National central banks may soon issue digital currencies. And as Harold James of Princeton University notes, new technology has brought within reach the possibility of a global currency not connected to any national sovereign power. This could be an opportunity for the International Monetary Fund, or even the Bank for International Settlements, to help the world's poor.

Providing a cheap, reliable payment system for the less well-off is a centuries-old challenge, but the technology to solve the problem is available. What the world needs now is new monetary ideas and institutions to make this a reality and help realize the SDGs.



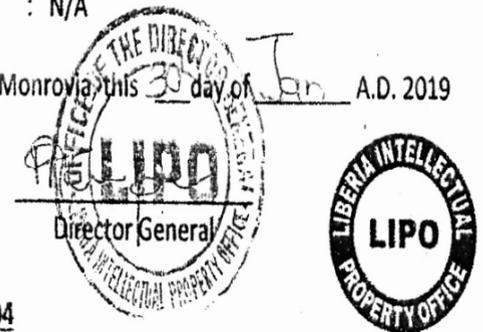
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Name of Applicant (s) : National Hardware Center
 Address : Vai Town, Bushrod Island
 International Classification : 04
 Application number : AP/M/2019/00002
 Registration Number : LR/M/2019/00002
 Filing Date : January 8, 2019
 Priority Date : N/A

Signed and Seal in Monrovia this 30 day of Jan A.D. 2019



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Class 4 Industrial oils and greases; lubricants; dust absorbing, wetting and binding compositions; fuels (including motor spirit) and illuminants; candles and wicks for lighting

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LIBERIANS DEBATE

With Sally Gaye

Saturday, August 18, 2019 bloody violence in Logan Town, Montserrado County District#15 that left scores of persons wounded and properties destroyed has left peace-minded Liberians angry with many citizens expressing emotional outbursts, as compiled below.



Gloria Sewn

“Personally, I don't feel bad how Mr. Benoni UREY feels about yesterday's attacks on our candidate; hope it was him but my feelings are with my age mate T-Urey for such a bad experience she continues to go through in her first year in politics. As for Mr. Urey, who created or made President Weah to feel he could become President of Liberia, knowing within himself this dude wasn't equipped as compared to his daughter financially and academically,

but did it for his personal interest at the time. You knew Weah was financially depressed but you spent your money on him. Now he's claiming to have been value 85 billion dollars before becoming President of Liberia. Where on earth such rich dude will have all his kids enrolled in public schools in America with such wealth? I challenge Weah and his supporters to name the private or Catholic schools his children attended in this great land America or in the world.”

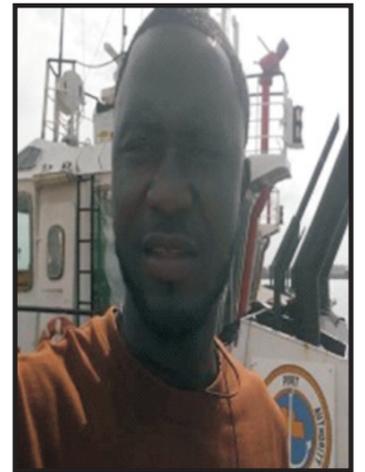


James Toe

“You go and arrest him after you were part of the violence which occurred yesterday. You people instigated violence yesterday. You people had no reason for provoking violence right near Abu Kamara's residence. Telia's vehicle was used as a cover-up so that her supporters can keep stoning at Abu's residence. You were there as a senator, what did you do then? Those people are doing this to undermine this government. That same senator lied that Jefferson was carrying a fire arm.”

Michael Young

“The acts of violence are a threat to the peace, democracy and the economy of the country. Violence has no place in our politics, irrespective of the scale and tone of our political differences. We call on partisans of the Coalition for Democratic Change and of the four collaborating political parties to refrain from violence,



whether in District 15 or in future elections. The Committee enjoins all partisans of political parties to renounce violence and show restraint even when provoked by political opponents.”

George Morlu

“My President, H.E. Dr. George M. Weah, please say something to the Motherland; things are not going fine. And it will only take you as the Father of the Nation to ice these tensions! My President, you are a "Man of Peace," that everyone knows, but please do not allow all these exigencies to happen under your watch. If a District Election will yield such hate, such gansterism, and such barbaric violence, what will the 2020 elections be? My President,



kindly launch a speedy investigation into this Electoral Violence and if need be, let's get to the very bottom and take hold of all those who instigated such violence. Let's go back to our state actors, let's hear what they say and how they say it and if need be, let's hold them accountable for their statements, if we must maintain our fragile peace.”



Rufus Villizu

“Telia Urey is under attack, if anything goes wrong in this country, President George Weah should take the blame. The CDC is undermining our country's peace and stability, we should not sit and watch. It's time the legislature, churches, Muslim council, traditional leaders, permanent citizens and our international friends hold the government accountable for election violence... it's escalating in every election and nobody is speaking or taking it serious.”

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Dillon dares Chie

By Winston W. Parley

Newly indicted Montserrado County Sen. Abraham Darius Dillon is warning Senate President Pro - Tempore Albert Chie to rethink his "foolhardy" decision to threaten him (Dillon) with removal from the Liberian Senate for declaring his assets and reducing his salary to give back to the people.

"To threaten a Senator with the most popular mandate in the country was foolhardy on the part of the President Pro - Tempore. I'm sure he will rethink that," Sen. Dillon warned Monday, 19 August in Monrovia.

In response to Chie's threat, Dillon reminds the Pro - Tempore that the boss of the executive branch is the president, while at the legislative branch, the bosses are the people who elect the lawmakers.

Dillon ponders how declaring assets and reducing one's money to give back to the people can warrant a

person's removal from the Senate.

"There is no law that says when they expelled you, you can't contest in the by - election that is supposed to fill your vacancy. Every time they attempt that thing and do it here politically I will contest again and the people will elect me again," Dillon asserts.

On the day Mr. Dillon was being inducted into office at the Liberian Senate on Thursday last week, Grand Kru County Senator Albert Chie shockingly threatened the opposition lawmaker with expulsion from the Liberian Senate if he does not follow the Senate's rules.

That threat came from Mr.

Chie just minutes after Mr. Dillon who won the Montserrado County Senatorial by - election on the ticket of Liberia's four collaborating opposition political parties had declared his assets and challenged other senators and public officials to follow his example.

Liberia's Code of Conduct for public officials requires declaration of assets and liabilities prior to taking office and thereafter, do the same at the end of every three years, among others.

But officials here appear to defy public pressure to respect the law and declare their assets in support of the fight against corruption and to reduce public perception of public officials' lack of transparency.

Sen. Chie warned last week that while the people of Montserrado County elected Mr. Dillon, the power to remove him from the Senate is not with the people, but the Senators alone have that power.

He told Dillon that legislative politics is practical and different from textbook politics.

In addition to declaring his assets and promising to publish them, Sen. Dillon says he will only accept a salary of US\$5,000.00, instructing that any amount above this should be deposited into an escrow account for social development

purposes.

He promises to cooperate with his colleagues at the Senate and respect them, because it is cooperation that will bring about progress.

However, Dillon assures Liberians that where he needs to stand up for the country and the people, he will do so even if he will have to stand alone.

Additionally, Mr. Dillon announces that he will be encouraging the formation of the Collaborating Political Parties Legislative Caucus comprising of the Unity Party (UP), Liberty Party (LP), Alternative National Congress (ANC) and the All Liberian Party (ALP).

He notes that these four parties have legislators, announcing plans to bring them together to form a collaborating legislative caucus that will speak with one voice both in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Mr. Dillon wants the formation of this union so that the political parties will not be issuing one statement against something, while the caucus members will be doing something else at the Legislature.

"If we say Elton deal is bad, then no lawmaker from any of the four parties supposed to support or vote for Elton deal. It means we are contradicting ourselves," he says.

He assures Liberians that the caucus members will stand together.



Photographers warned of big challenge

By Winston W. Parley

The National Photographers Union of Liberia (NAPUL) has been warned of a big challenge posed to them by the digital world which has made many amateur photographers to obstruct the work of professional photographers by the use of smartphones and other cameras at occasions.

Serving as keynote speaking at the World Photography Day celebration on Providence Island Monday, 19 August, the president of the Liberia National Cultural Union (LINCUN) Mr. Kekura M. Kamara challenged Liberian

photographers to be creative to be able to face the challenges of today.

"You got so many now, it's a big challenge to you because everybody now taking picture," Mr. Kamara warns. He asserts that these days when photographers go to an occasion, they encounter everybody there taking pictures, using smartphones and other cameras.

According to Mr. Kamara, amateur photographers would stand in any position to take photos, even if they will be obstructing the professional photographers in the process.

In the wake of the challenge facing the sector,

Mr. Kamara however encourages photographers here to emulate experienced photographers, including James Fasuquoi who he says has published to photo books and earns money from them.

Mr. Kamara indicates that photography has lots of money, but everything depends on photographers.

"Somebody said the government is not recognizing us. You got to make yourself, you got to begin to put yourselves together and do things. Invite them to workshop. Invite them to exhibition - photos exhibition. Invite them, let [them] see your creativity," he says.

Mr. Kamara who also has a background in photography, explains that no newspaper sells without picture, adding that in a society like Liberia where many people do not like reading, nobody will buy a book when it is just written without putting pictures in it.

He encourages photographers here to know their worth, as he calls for the need to do their business with an agreed set price so as to stop having one group charging customers less prices while professional photographers charge more money.

He warns that division in prices for photos will undermine the business because customers will often go for the less prices offered by the amateur photographers.

ECC condemns electoral violence

The Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) strongly condemns the wave of electoral violence that has continuously marred the Montserrado county by-elections. This trend and pattern of violence and lawlessness has the propensity to undermine the rule of law and the country's fragile democracy. These trends of violence is an early warning indication that our democracy is under threat.

The ECC calls on the government to move beyond condemnation of the violence and to take concrete actions to ensure that those who perpetrate acts of violence

leading to injuries and the destruction of property are held to account. The rule of law begins with the criminal justice system and the police has a critical role to play in building public trust in the manner in which it deals with citizens.

ECC also calls on all political parties and their leaders to demonstrate leadership in the conduct of their activities. Our country must be guided by the experience of the past so that we can never go down that path again.

The ECC calls on the government and security entities to take on strict measures that will prevent subsequent electoral violence.



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Mr. Kamara tells the photographer union here that it is a very important institution that is needed in the society.

Additionally, he calls on the

Government of Liberia to look at the photographers union as an institution that is capable of generating its own money and employing more young people.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Supreme Court requests judge's impeachment

Liberia's Supreme Court has ordered its clerk to forward the name of Associate Commercial Court Judge Richard S. Klah to the House of Representatives for possible impeachment proceedings against the judge for receiving bribes amounting to USD\$19,700.00.

According to a press release, the High Court's order was contained in an Opinion handed down on Friday, 16 August based on recommendations by an Investigative Report on a complaint against Judge Klah.

The complaint was submitted against the judge to the Court by the Judicial Inquiry Commission (JIC), a body setup within the Judiciary Branch of Government to investigate complaints against judges.

The complaint was filed with Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. by Mr. Swansey Fallah.

Mr. Fallah accused Judge Klah of soliciting and receiving bribes from him (Mr. Fallah), amounting to

USD\$19,700.00 in order to decide a case in his (Mr. Fallah's) favor.

The Supreme Court, in its August 16, 2019 Opinion, said Judge Klah's action amounted to perjury when he denied under oath before the JIC that he called and sent text messages to Mr. Mousa Abdul Karim and Mr. Swansey Fallah, plaintiff and defendant.

The court says Judge Klah later conceded that he did

communicate with the parties after calls and SMS records from Lonestar Cell MTN were admitted into evidence.

The incident occurred in a debt action which Judge Klah presided over.

The Supreme Court notes that his subsequent concession that he did communicate with the parties only after the production and admittance into evidence of calls and SMS records from the

Lonestar Cell (MTN), amount to perjury, a crime punishable under Liberian law.

The court finds that the judge did not only bringing his sincerity and honesty into question, but also casting serious aspersions on the integrity of the entire judiciary.

The High Court held that the actions of Judge Klah are in direct violation of Judicial Canon 24 which forbids judges from engaging in private interviews, communicating with parties appearing before them with the intent of influencing their judicial action.

The release also states that, the full bench of the

Supreme Court also empowers the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to take the administrative action to inform Judge Klah not to preside as an Associate Judge of the Commercial Court of Montserrado County to afford him the opportunity to defend himself at the Legislature.

"The High Court, having determined that Judge Klah's handling of the debt case between Mr. Mousa Abdul Karim and Mr. Swansey Fallah was influenced by gross impropriety and irregularity, declared the judgment rendered by the judge null and void and the trial ordered denovo (started anew).--Press release



Clinic subpoenaed over Yekeh Kolubah's health report

By Winston W. Parley

The Criminal Court "A" in Monrovia has subpoenaed Ahmidyya Muslim Clinic Chief Medical Director Dr. Abdul Hellm Aram for a hearing relating to Montserrado County District #10 Rep. Yekeh Kolubah's medical report which the lawmaker uses to request the court's approval for a medical trip to Ghana.

The court's order comes

following Rep. Kolubah's request that was filed on 15 August, informing the Court that he had a medical condition for which his physician has requested that he seek further medical attention that is not available in Liberia.

The staunch critic of President George Manneh Weah, Mr. Kolubah and his bodyguards were indicted here by prosecution over claims that the lawmaker

ordered his bodyguards to beat and wound one Emmanuel Sherman who had allegedly rejected T-shirts and leaflets printed for the June 7 Save the State peaceful protest.

Rep. Kolubah is indicted along with defendants Oliver C. Konneh, Abu Keita, Mohammed S. Keita, Johnson Kpor and Mohammed A. Kaba for alleged aggravated assault, criminal attempt to commit murder, kidnapping and criminal facilitation/solicitation.

The indictment says defendants Oliver Konneh, Abu Keita, Mohammed Keita, Johnson Skpor illegally arrested Emmanuel Freeman in Gay Town, Old Road Community on 5 June at 4:30, stripped him naked, handcuffed him and severely beat him with sticks, rocks and piece of iron on his head and other parts of the victim's body.

In his request which was served on Thursday, 15 August, Rep. Kolubah's lawyers informed the court that for the medical emergency, the lawmaker had arranged a medical trip to Accra, Ghana for the period of August 15 to 30, 2019 to enable him obtain

Local groups angered by claims against SEGAL boss

A local group here called Liberia Youth Network in collaboration with the Progressive Youth Alliance has expressed anger over allegations levied against Mr. Cyrus Momo, the Chief Executive Officer of private security firm SEGAL.

In a statement issued

unjustifiable.

The group gives a 72 - hour ultimatum to the talk show hosts to retract the allegations against Mr. Momo, or risk a law suit any time soon.

"As a journalist, you must be investigative and balanced in your reportage in order to establish the truth to the public, because the act of



Mr. Momo T. Cyrus, CEO of SEGAL

Monday, 19 August, the group threatened a lawsuit against some talk show host here for allegedly making claims of sexual harassment and seducing of female workers at the Security Expert Guard Agency of Liberia (SEGAL).

The group argues that the claims against Mr. Momo are untrue, and further brands the allegation as misinformed and

blackmailing to gain public relevance is unacceptable in the field of journalism and the society," the press release says.

Additionally, the group has called on the Press Union of Liberia (PUL) to launch an independent investigation into the allegation levied against Mr. Momo. --Press release



Rep. Yekeh Kolubah

treatment.

The hearing to Rep. Kolubah's request was initially scheduled for Friday, 16 August at 9:00 A.M.

But based on prosecution's argument that it was not given sufficient time or notice to review Rep. Kolubah's Bill of Information to make an opinion in the form of resistance before the court, the judge

reassigned the hearing for Tuesday, 20 August.

The court indicates that while it is true that the Bill of Information had attached to it a medical report from Ahmidyya Muslim Clinic, it however orders the Clerk to subpoena Dr. Aram to appear on Tuesday for the hearing of the case.

Français

L'opposition ne fait pas de cadeau au président Weah

Le président Libérien George Manneh Weah essuie pour une fois des critiques acerbes de la part du bloc de l'opposition qui le traite d'égoïste et l'accuse de semer la division entre les Libériens.

En croire l'opposition, le président Weah est un homme « grossier, vindicatif, diviseur et égoïste dont le succès consiste à ériger des monuments et à conserver ses statuts ».

Ces propos négatifs à l'égard du président font suite aux violents affrontements qui ont opposé des partisans de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique au pouvoir et ceux de l'opposition, suite à l'annonce de la reprise de l'élection législative partielle du district 15 du comté de Montserrado.

Mlle Telia Urey, la candidate de l'alliance de quatre partis politiques de l'opposition, et M. Kamara, le candidat de la Coalition au pouvoir, se livrent un combat sans merci pour le contrôle du pouvoir dans le district 15 à

l'élection partielle.

S'exprimant lors d'une conférence de presse dimanche soir au siège du parti de la Liberté à Monrovia, en présence du chef politique du Congrès national alternatif, Alexander Cummings, et du chef de l'ALP, Benoni Urey, Steven Zargo a déclaré que le 17 août 2019, une réunion de

campagne des partis politiques de l'opposition qui se tenait dans les bureaux de Telia Urey a été perturbée à la suite d'une attaque perpétrée par des partisans du candidat du parti au pouvoir, Abu Kamara.

Il a fait croire que l'attaque a été lancée en présence des agents de la police nationale du Libéria, « qui étaient restés

les bras croisés et ont regardé les assaillants lapider le siège de la campagne où se tenait la réunion ». « Ces attaques ont eu lieu à deux pas du dépôt de police de Logan Town.

Selon lui, le même jour vers 18 heures, la candidate Telia Urey, lors d'une réunion au domicile de M. Kelvin Bayoh (l'un des candidats à l'élection partielle controversée du district n° 15), a été attaquée par des partisans de M. Abu Kamara.

AM. Zargo de préciser que le bâtiment dans lequel ils se s'entretenaient a été gravement vandalisé et il y a eu plusieurs blessés, dont Mme Telia Urey et le vice-président du parti libérien, Momo Sambola.

« L'attaque était une atteinte directe à la vie de la candidate Urey. Dans une tentative d'évacuation de la candidate Urey, son véhicule a été attaqué et gravement endommagé par ces "CDcians" qui jetaient des pierres. Ces attaques étaient si rudes que de nombreuses personnes ont été blessées à nouveau. Malheureusement, ces ravages perpétrés contre Telia et ses partisans ont été perpétrés sous les yeux de la police nationale du Libéria », a expliqué le sénateur du comté de Lofa.

Il est donc clair, selon lui, que la police, chargée de la responsabilité légale d'assurer la sécurité de tous les Libériens, a fait preuve de complaisance dans les violences du samedi 17 août 2019.

Zargo déplore que la police permette que des tentatives de meurtre aient lieu sous ses yeux sans intervenir : "Notre

confiance en la police s'est érodée."

« C'est cette honte et cette tentative de subvertir la volonté de la majorité qui ont conduit à l'orchestration de la violence pour intimider, menacer et harceler des citoyens pacifiques dont le seul crime a été de s'être rassemblés d'avoir exercé leur droit de vote de façon pacifique. C'est un cas évident de violence électorale ».

Mais le comité exécutif du parti au pouvoir a condamné les violences qui ont eu lieu dans le district.

Dans une déclaration, le comité a souligné que « de tels actes de violence constituent une menace pour la paix, la démocratie et l'économie. La violence n'a pas sa place dans notre politique, quels que soient l'ampleur et le ton de nos différences politiques ».

Selon le parti au pouvoir, les dirigeants des partis politiques ont la plus grande responsabilité d'assurer la discipline de leurs partisans respectifs et de réduire les messages de haine, de colère et d'amertume qui tendent à empoisonner le discours politique.

Il met en garde contre les rhétoriques vitrioliques de toute part qui engendrent la violence. Il préconise plutôt les débats d'idée intellectuelle entre civils, le dialogue et la recherche du consensus, qui sont des moyens traditionnels de propagande électorale et d'autres formes de politique.

Le CDC appelle à une enquête rapide et impartiale afin que les personnes qui se sont fait justice soient confrontées à tout le poids de la loi.



Côte d'Ivoire : Alain Lobognon défie Ouattara : "la Constitution ne sera pas révisée"

Alain Lobognon a pris part au meeting des soroistes qui a eu lieu à la place Laurent Gbagbo de Port-Bouët, le samedi 17 août 2019. Au cours de son allocution, le député de Fresco s'est dressé contre Alassane Ouattara dont le souhait est de modifier la Constitution avant la présidentielle de 2020.

"La modification de la Constitution doit être un

processus qui dépend de l'opinion. Nous avons une Constitution depuis 2016. On l'a pratiquée. Il est clair qu'il y a des choses qu'il faut modifier dans la Constitution, mais ce n'est pas pour recaler des candidats. Non", déclarait le président Alassane Ouattara le 6 août 2019 à la veille de la célébration du 59^e anniversaire de l'indépendance de la Côte

d'Ivoire.

Moins d'un mois après cette annonce du chef de l'Etat, Alain Lobognon, un proche de l'ancien président de l'Assemblée nationale, Guillaume Soro, a apporté la réplique au numéro un ivoirien. C'était le samedi 17 août 2019 à l'occasion d'un meeting organisé par des soroistes (proches de Soro). Le député de Fresco, ville côtière du sud de la Côte d'Ivoire, sans langue de bois, a mis Alassane Ouattara au défi.

"Le président de la République l'a dit. Nous allons modifier la Constitution. Non. La Constitution ne sera pas modifiée. L'Assemblée nationale et le Sénat réunis ne peuvent pas modifier la Constitution. Maintenant, si on vient devant le peuple pour un referendum, le peuple décidera. Mais celui qui a perdu devra démissionner", a martelé Alain Lobognon.

Devant une foule acquise à la cause de Guillaume Soro, l'ex-ministre de la Promotion de la jeunesse, des Sports et Loisirs a abordé ce qu'il a appelé la question des trois C,

notamment la Constitution, la CEI (Commission électorale indépendante) et la carte nationale d'identité.

Selon Alain Lobognon, "la Constitution doit être juste, la Constitution ne doit pas être écrite contre une seule personne. Et si la Constitution doit être écrite contre une seule personne, nous allons nous opposer".

En ce qui concerne la Commission électorale indépendante, le député a estimé que la CEI "doit être indépendante". "Le président de la République ne peut pas

désigner un représentant et le RHDP (Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix, NDLR) va désigner un représentant parce que, qui dit président de la République, dit président du RHDP", s'est opposé Alain Lobognon.

Pour le porte-parole du Mouvement pour la promotion des valeurs nouvelles en Côte d'Ivoire (MVCI), "la carte nationale d'identité est un droit pour chaque Ivoirien", et précise-t-il, "l'Etat de Côte d'Ivoire a le devoir de donner une CNI à chaque Ivoirien".



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Français

Éditorial

Pourquoi c'est le CDC tout le temps ?

Les violents affrontements récurrents entre partisans de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique au pouvoir et les partisans de l'opposition et des candidats indépendants ne font pas que miner la force de notre démocratie croissante, menacer aussi la paix et l'unité du Libéria et fragiliser ainsi l'économie.

Les militants du parti au pouvoir et ceux de l'opposition se sont affrontés à coups de pierres et de projectiles maintes fois à divers endroits à Monrovia. Plusieurs personnes ont subi des blessures et des biens ont été détruits.

Les dernières violences ont eu lieu le samedi 17 août dans le district 15 du comté de Montserrado, après que la Commission électorale nationale ait annoncé la reprise de l'élection partielle du 29 juillet dans 20 bureaux de vote à la suite d'une enquête qui a été menée par les enquêteurs de la NEC sur des plaintes pour « fraudes électorales présumées ».

Plus précisément, la communauté de Broad Street de Logan Town dans le district 15 était devenue une zone interdite samedi lorsque des partisans des partis rivaux se sont affrontés à coups de pierres, entraînant des blessures et de la destruction de propriétés privées. Les violences auraient eu lieu entre les partisans du candidat parti au pouvoir, Abu Bana Kamara, et les partisans du candidat vécu, Kelvin Baryoh.

Pour des raisons inexplicables, il semble que les membres de la coalition au pouvoir estiment que les menaces et la violence sont de nouvelles stratégies pour gagner des élections ou réduire au silence leurs opposants. Hélas la violence va toujours à l'encontre des principes de la démocratie.

Les affrontements du week-end à Logan Town Broad ont été précédés d'autres affrontements qui avaient éclaté entre les partisans du candidat du parti au pouvoir Kamara et ceux de la candidate de l'opposition Mme Telia Urey plus tôt la semaine dernière au siège de la Commission électorale nationale à Sinkor, Monrovia. Mlle Telia Urey est membre de L'ALP (All Liberians Party) qui est membre de l'alliance des principaux partis politiques de l'opposition.

Ces affrontements ont également entraîné de graves blessures de part et d'autre. Des innocents ont également subi des blessures et des propriétés privées détruites malgré l'intervention de la police. Certaines des victimes pansent encore leurs plaies dans des hôpitaux.

Le Congrès pour le Changement Démocratique (CDC) du président George Weah rejette le verdict de la Commission Electorale qui appelle à une reprise de l'élection législative partielle dans les 20 bureaux de vote dont les résultats avaient été gelés par la Commission pour se pencher sur des allégations de fraudes. Le parti au pouvoir avait indiqué qu'il ferait appel de la décision devant le Conseil des commissaires de la NEC.

Nous ne sommes pas du tout surpris de la focalisation du parti au pouvoir sur la violence, car les hiérarchies du parti avaient déjà mobilisé des partisans zélés, la majorité des jeunes, pour faire face à une opposition aussi déterminée.

Cependant, le parti au pouvoir devrait comprendre qu'il se tire une balle dans la jambe en adoptant la violence comme stratégie pour garder le contrôle du pouvoir, car cette approche est contre-productive. Il s'en rendra compte tôt ou tard.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Jayati Ghosh

Les dernières victimes du FMI

NEW DELHI - Le processus de sélection du prochain directeur général du Fonds monétaire international doit changer. En particulier, la tradition de choisir un Européen pour ce poste - basée sur un « gentlemen agreement » injuste et anachronique conclu avec les Etats-Unis lorsque l'institution a été créée il y a 75 ans - doit être abandonnée. Mais, plus important encore, l'approche suivie de longue date par le FMI pour accorder ses prêts devrait être transformée.

Le Fonds a une longue histoire d'erreurs politiques. Et pourtant, comme l'a démontré le mandat de Christine Lagarde qui vient de s'achever, peu de leçons ont été tirées. Prenons le cas de l'Argentine. À la mi-2018, le FMI a accepté d'accorder au pays un prêt de trois ans d'une valeur de près de 57 milliards de dollars, déboursés en grande partie en début de période - le plus important dans l'histoire de l'institution - suite à une série de décisions téméraires du président Mauricio Macri.

Une de ces décisions, prise peu de temps après sa prise de fonction en 2015, avait pour but de trouver un accord avec les créanciers récalcitrants qui se battaient encore devant les tribunaux américains pour être remboursés intégralement suite au défaut sur la dette de 2002 et la restructuration qui s'en est suivie en Argentine. Une autre décision de Macri a ensuite été d'emprunter de manière frénétique, ce qui a provoqué une augmentation de la dette publique - principalement libellée en dollars - de plus d'un tiers, pour atteindre 321 milliards de dollars en 2017.

L'an dernier, les déficits budgétaire et courant de l'Argentine ont dépassé 5% du PIB. Lors de la crise économique et financière qui a suivi, la dette publique a bondi à près de 90% du PIB, une fuite des capitaux a causé l'effondrement la valeur du peso et l'inflation est montée en flèche. Ainsi, sous la pression du président américain Donald Trump (qui avait des liens d'affaires avec Macri), le FMI est intervenu - avec le soutien actif de Lagarde.

Le prêt est certes sans précédent concernant son montant, mais il avait toutes les caractéristiques connues des anciens programmes de financement du FMI. En échange de l'argent, l'Argentine s'est engagée à mettre en œuvre des réductions budgétaires massives, afin d'équilibrer son budget primaire en 2019 et de réduire considérablement son déficit extérieur. Ce que l'Argentine a fait - engendrant une détérioration constante de l'économie.

Aujourd'hui, l'inflation s'élève à plus de 55%, le taux de pauvreté a dépassé 30% et la production et l'emploi sont en diminution. L'Argentine est loin des objectifs du FMI en termes d'investissement et de croissance du PIB, qui ont déjà été révisés à deux reprises. De nouvelles révisions à la baisse viendront sans aucun doute.

Le FMI est déjà passé par là. En 1998, lorsque l'Asie orientale était dans les affres d'une crise financière, le Fonds a dû signer pas moins de cinq protocoles d'entente avec la Thaïlande, précisément parce que remplir toutes les exigences d'austérité imposées par le Fonds impliquait de manquer ses objectifs macro-économiques.

Pourtant, loin d'apprendre de sa mauvaise gestion de la crise financière asiatique des années 1990, le FMI a fait les mêmes erreurs en Europe après la crise financière mondiale de 2008 qui a envoyé la zone euro en chute libre. Au lieu, en particulier, de permettre à la Grèce de faire défaut sur ses dettes massives auprès de créanciers privés, le FMI - en collaboration avec la Banque centrale européenne et la Commission européenne - lui a prêté l'argent. Les conditions d'austérité accompagnant ces prêts ont rendu impossible le remboursement de ces dettes - maintenant détenues par des créanciers officiels. La Grèce continue de lutter à ce jour.

En 2013, le FMI a produit un rapport reconnaissant qu'il avait « sous-estimé » les effets de l'austérité sur l'économie de la Grèce. Cela semblait un présage prometteur. Pourtant, à peine cinq ans plus tard, la prise de conscience apparente du Fonds ne s'est pas reflétée dans son accord avec l'Argentine. On n'en trouve non plus aucune trace pas dans un accord de financement plus récent avec un autre pays latino-américain.

En mars, le FMI a approuvé un prêt de 4,2 milliards de dollars sur trois ans à l'Equateur, dans le cadre d'un plan pour réduire la dette publique et réformer l'économie. En échange, le Fonds exige, comme d'habitude, une consolidation budgétaire rapide grâce à des réductions des salaires et des emplois du secteur public, une hausse des prix de l'énergie, l'introduction de services gouvernementaux payants et des impôts indirects plus élevés. Comme Mark Weisbrot et Andrés Arauz le notent dans un rapport du Center for Economic and Policy Research, ces mesures entraîneront très probablement une baisse immédiate du PIB et provoqueront une persistance de la récession actuelle pendant les quatre années du programme.

Malgré tout, le FMI s'est en quelque sorte convaincu lui-même que la croissance ne diminuerait qu légèrement en 2019, avant de se redresser en 2020, grâce à l'énorme regain de confiance du secteur privé - naturellement provoqué par les restrictions budgétaires et la privatisation - qui conduira à une forte augmentation des investissements étrangers à l'intérieur du pays. Selon la logique du Fonds, même si l'emploi et la consommation sont en baisse, et l'économie est en récession, les sorties nettes de capitaux de 1,9% du PIB vont se transformer en entrées nettes de capitaux privés de 4,9% du PIB en 2020.

Comme d'habitude, la folie de cette logique deviendra apparente en temps voulu. (Il devrait être clair qu'une économie qui patauge n'est pas attrayante pour les capitaux privés.) En attendant, le peuple de l'Equateur souffrira beaucoup, en raison de la hausse du chômage, la baisse du niveau de vie, l'accroissement des inégalités et une plus grande pauvreté.

La croyance bizarre du FMI dans « l'austérité expansionniste » serait risible si elle n'était pas si dommageable. Comment le FMI peut-il justifier une approche avec un historique tellement mauvais ? Une explication pourrait être un manque de responsabilité qui imprègne la bureaucratie de l'institution, jusqu'au sommet. Si tel est le cas, le renforcement de responsabilité devrait être la première tâche du prochain directeur général du FMI - tout somme l'alignement de l'approche de prêt du Fonds avec les réalités économiques.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Democracy on Retrial under George M. Weah – Terror Is Back In The Land

By Martin K. N. Kollie, Youth and Student Activist
martinkerkula1989@yahoo.com

Our democracy was on trial under Doe and Taylor. It is now on retrial under ex-Soccer Star George M Weah. Things are falling apart so quick. Lawlessness is hitting the roof. Violence and Vandalism have become the new normal. The debris and scars of our dark past are fast evolving. Terror is back in the land.

president of Liberia”, I knew that our Republic was heading for trouble. The burning of your vehicle today is as a result of such premature decree from an ill-visionary leader. We are now under a newborn fascist. Imagine you were even stoned and you had to run for your life. Is this the Liberia we voted for in 2017?

this national nightmare that is vitiating or damaging our land. Yes, I believe so and we must not afford to be divided during such a time as this. Remain resilient - focused - fearless - courageous - peaceful - and most importantly loyal to your country and conscience. Women too deserve a space to serve. You to deserve an opportunity to lead. March on with pride, tolerance, patriotism and maturity, for victory is certain.

You were born to WIN and you will WIN. The PEOPLE are with you in this worthy pursuit. You must uphold their trust and confidence. Never stop inspiring them to soldier on. Let your willpower convince them to remain hopeful because all is not yet lost.

It will soon be over and victory shall be all yours as you take charge of the gavel to lead the great people of District #15 to triumph. Like it was in D13 and D10, so it is in D15. Take courage and solace in this Latin refrain “Ne Desperes” meaning in English “Do not give up”.

As a youth and student activist, I want to vehemently condemn the wave of violence in Liberia and call for an independent investigation into all violent incidents. I call on ECOWAS, AU, UN, US Embassy, EU and the host of other international organizations/partners to immediately intervene because things are actually going out of hand.

The Liberia National Police (LNP) under Inspector General Patrick Sudue has lost public confidence and trust. As a result, the people could take matter into their own hand if caution is not taken by the Weah-led government. This is my initial reaction to D15’s violence which took place on August 17, 2019.

About The Author: Martin K. N. Kollie is a Liberian youth and student activist, an emerging economist, a columnist, and a stalwart of SUP who hails from Bong County. He is an avowed proponent of social justice, academic freedom and peace. You can reach Kollie via martinkerkula1989@yahoo.com



This is an incipient warning of a breakdown in governance and a crackdown on democracy. No rule and order. LNP has become a partisan police force. The judiciary is corrupt and toothless. The Legislature is rubber-stamped and houses a group of racketeers. Both branches are controlled and manipulated by a domineering and an inept Executive.

But remain STRONG Telia Urey, like I have always known you to be. Do not give up because you are the real choice of the people in Electoral District #15. This is an attempt to scare you and your supporters from continuing your campaign in Logan Town.

Today's violence against you serves as a rallying call for solidarity forces to hurriedly unite and confront

The State is fast ruining and our fragile peace has become vulnerable more than ever before. The new ruling clique has no cure to prevailing crises and growing tension. Protest is everywhere as George Weah runs out of time to show leadership and exert control. He may go down in history as The Worst President of Liberia and perhaps Africa.

In less than 4 days, vehicles of opposition figures have been vandalized while fierce critics have become prime targets of repression. Yesterday, it was Mo Ali of UP and Jestina Taylor of ANC. Today is Representative Candidate Telia Urey of ALP. Who's next? The forefathers of our democracy MUST be crying out. Our nation appears to be on "time bomb". This wreckage is too inconceivable.

An Encouragement To Candidate Telia Urey:

In difficult times like these when a sitting Head of State who should be a national symbol of unity goes all out to spread messages of hate and bigotry, I can only imagine and conclude that Liberia is fast speeding in a reverse gear. Hence, the rise of a Gangster Republic under GMW.

When Weah publicly divulged on June 22, 2019 that “A Urey can never be elected as long as he is

TELIA UREY
District #15

Making Things Happen

Weah graded poorly

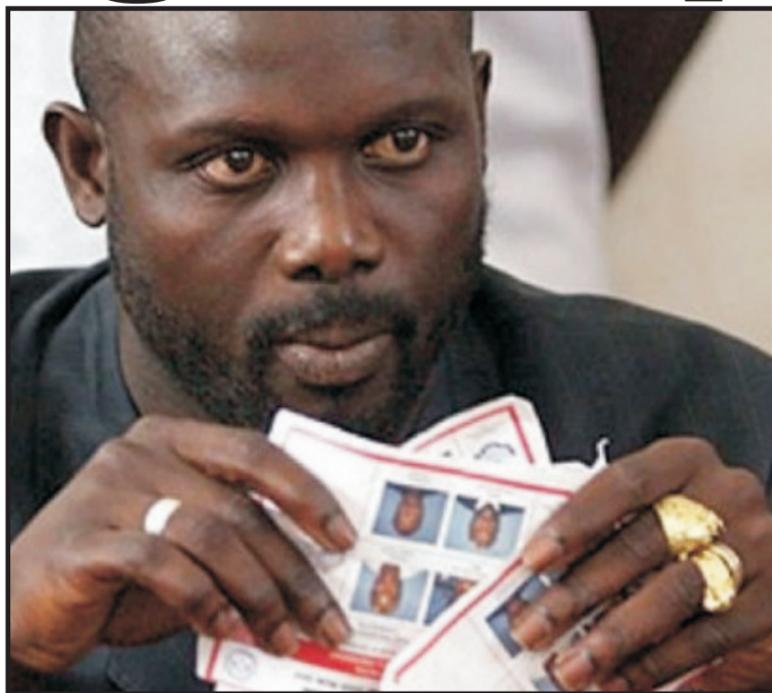
The government of President George Manneh Weah has been graded poorly by the United States for lack of fiscal transparency.

The U.S. State Department 2019 Fiscal Transparency Report (FTR) covering the period, January 1 to December 31, 2018, places Liberia among poorly performed countries in Africa.

The Report officially published 15 August notes that fiscal transparency informs citizens how government revenues and tax revenues are spent and is a critical element of effective public financial management.

According to the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia, transparency provides citizens a window into government budgets and helps hold governments accountable.

It details that during the review period, Liberia's budget documents and information on debt obligations were widely and easily accessible to the general public, including online, but discloses that



foreign assistance receipts, largely project-based, were neither adequately captured in the budget nor subject to the same audit and domestic oversight as other budget items.

"Liberia's supreme audit institution did not make its audit reports publicly available within a reasonable period of time. The criteria and procedures for awarding natural resource extraction

licenses and contracts were outlined in law, although there have been reports of corruption and inconsistent application of regulations in practice."

Meanwhile, the FTR recommends several steps that should be taken to improve Liberia's fiscal transparency, such as ensuring the budget is substantially complete and off-budget accounts are subject to adequate audit and

oversight.

It also suggests making supreme audit institution audit reports publicly available within a reasonable period of time, and ensuring criteria and procedures used to award natural resource extraction contracts and licenses are consistent with requirements set by law as well as making basic information on all natural resource extraction awards publicly available.

In a news post, the embassy further notes that it helps build market confidence and sustainability, adding, "The Congressionally mandated Fiscal Transparency Report (FTR) is a tool to identify deficiencies and support needed changes."

According to the post, the Office of Monetary Affairs (OMA) of State's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB) prepares the annual FTR in consultation with State's Bureau of Energy Resources (ENR) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

"As directed by Congress, EB/OMA evaluates data on the

fiscal transparency collected by our posts in 141 countries (those that could receive U.S. foreign assistance) against minimum requirements and publishes the results on the Department's website annually."

The document says for countries to meet minimum requirements, governments must make key budget documents publicly available within a reasonable period of time, and they must be substantially complete and generally reliable.

Besides, governments must also follow a transparent process for awarding government contracts for natural resource extraction. "In the report released in August 2019, 74 countries met minimum requirements and 67 did not. Additionally, the FTR identified 13 countries that made significant progress towards meeting requirements.

Fiscal transparency refers to the publication of information on how governments raise, spend, and manage public resources, says the Report published by Deputy Secretary of State, John J. Sullivan. - *Story by Jonathan Browne*

Hold perpetrators accountable

Liberia's international partners, namely the United Nations and the sub-regional grouping-Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have urged the George M. Weah Government to hold the perpetrators of the weekend electoral violence in Montserrado District #15 accountable.

On Saturday August 17, while attending a meeting with one of the contestants in the Montserrado County District #15 Representative by-election race, Ms. Telia Urey and those with her at that meeting were reportedly attacked as the latter

escaped near death at the hands of attackers believed to come from ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) in the politically tense district.

Telia, the daughter of the four collaborating opposition political parties chairman Mr. Benoni Urey, is the leading candidate in the by-election in which President Weah told a campaign rally that under his rule the Ureys will not win election here.

In a joint statement issued Sunday August 18, the UN and ECOWAS condemned the incident and urged the Ministry of Justice and the Liberia National Police to carry out a prompt and

impartial investigation into the fracas so that those that are responsible can be held accountable, regardless of their political affiliations.

"We deplore the violent attacks that have taken place during the Senatorial and Representative by-elections and reiterate that electoral violence in all its forms and manifestations is criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, and constitutes one of the most serious threats to peace and security of Liberia. We condemn the violence that occurred on Saturday, 17 August in District #15, Montserrado County, between supporters of the Coalition for Democratic Change and supporters of the Opposition Collaborating Political Parties.

We commend the Government of Liberia's swift move to defuse tensions and foster dialogue between antagonists. We urge all Liberians in general and political parties in particular to reject violence and avoid using inflammatory language or hate speech that could further increase tensions. We appeal to Liberians to safeguard the hard-won gains made in consolidating peace and democracy and urge them to address electoral complaints in a peaceful manner and through legal means.

LCC descends on government

The Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) calls on the government of President Weah to exhibit governing authority over the State by protecting lives and properties and upholding tenets of good governance.

The call comes in the wake of increased political violence in Monrovia and parts adjacent, leading to injuries and destruction of properties as a result of stone-throwing battles between supporters of the ruling party and the opposition.

In a press statement here Sunday, 18 August the LCC condemns weekend's (Saturday, August 17, 2019) bloody violence in Logan Town, Montserrado District#15 where rerun by-election has been scheduled in 20 contested polling places by the National Elections Commission between opposition All Liberian Party (ALP) Candidate Telia Urey and Abu Bana Kamara of the governing Coalition for Democratic Change.

The Council proposes a meeting with both candidates in the rerun by-election in the district to get them commit to

running violent-free campaign and be willing to accept results of the poll. "The LCC will appreciate if the candidates can sign a Non Violent Declaration to affirm such commitment and support to maintaining peace and strengthening democracy in Liberia."

President George Weah has reportedly instructed the Minister of State Nathaniel McGill to arrange a meeting with the rival candidates, according to the Executive Mansion.

The LCC laments with victims of the violence and terms as unacceptable barbaric attitude that continued to be exhibited by ruthless people under the canopy of support for political candidates.

The Council of Churches warns that these actions do not represent the hard earned characteristics of Liberians and therefore notes, there are still more good people than bad people in Liberia.

The release says Liberians struggling to survive in a tough economy deserve to live in peace and tranquility.



The United Nations (UN) and the Office of the Special Representative of the ECOWAS Commission in Liberia (ECOWAS) wish to renew our

continued support to peaceful, credible and inclusive elections," the joint statement said.

Guardiola: No need to suspend VAR



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola believes VAR is here to stay but feels the Premier League must adapt how it applies the use of technology. City found themselves on the wrong end of a marginal call on review during their 2-2 draw against Tottenham on Saturday.

Gabriel Jesus' stoppage-time winner was disallowed after replays showed the ball deflected off team-mate Aymeric Laporte's arm before the Brazilian controlled and thrashed past Hugo Lloris - sparking jubilant celebrations at the Etihad Stadium. But, as was the case when City were eliminated from the Champions League last season

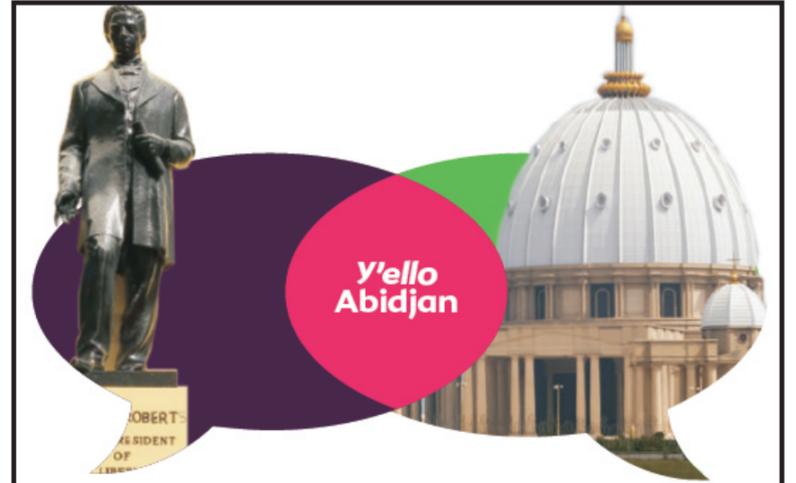
against Spurs, the joy proved short-lived.

During the first half versus Mauricio Pochettino's men this time, Rodri was not awarded a penalty despite replays appearing to show he was man-handled by Erik Lamela in the area - with Guardiola joking "VAR was taking a coffee".

But, despite that complaint, he cited an initial hard line against shirt-pulling during the 2016-17 season and the subsequent relaxation as evidence the Premier League can plot its own path as it plays catch-up with the rest of Europe's major leagues in implementing VAR.

Asked whether use of technology should be suspended in the wake of the latest controversies, Guardiola replied: "No, no, no. We have to continue.

"I remember the first season when I arrived here that in the boxes when you touched like this [pulled a shirt] it was a penalty. After they re-adapted.



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Messi, Ibrahimovic lead Puskas Award nominations for best goal

Lionel Messi and Zlatan Ibrahimovic lead the names nominated for FIFA's Puskas Award, given to the scorer of the best goal of the season. A panel of FIFA and external football experts selected 10 goals to put to a public vote, with the efforts ranging from the sublime to the outrageous. Barcelona icon Messi is nominated for the fourth time in five years, while

three female players are included after there were none up for the award last year. All goals selected for consideration were scored between July 16, 2018 and July 19, 2019, and we have the low down on each one, with voting open until September 2. Lionel Messi (Barcelona) v Real Betis - March 17, 2019. Ajara Nchout (Cameroon Women) v New Zealand Women - June 20, 2019



Fabio Quagliarella (Sampdoria) v Napoli - September 2, 2018
 Juan Fernando Quintero (River Plate) v Racing Club - February 10, 2019
 Amy Rodriguez (Utah Royals) v Sky Blue FC - June 16, 2019
 Billie Simpson (Cliftonville Ladies) v Sion Swift Ladies - August 9, 2018
 Daniel Zsori (Debrecen) v Ferencvaros - February 16, 2019

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