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TRULY INDEPENDENT

Public Service Announcement

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND ALL OUR CLIENTS & READERS THAT THE BUSINESS AND NEWSPAPER OFFICES OF THE NEW DAWN NEWSPAPER HAVE BEEN RELOCATED ON UN DRIVE OPPOSITE THE NATIONAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION (NIC), BEHIND PUBLIC WORKS MINISTRY.

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Sen. sends nominee for psychiatric check



Deputy Defense Minister for Operations-designate Tarpleh Davis



Agriculture Minister-designate, Jeanine Cooper

Banks to give agro loans

-Agriculture minister-designate promises



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Continental News

Lesotho first lady faces charge of murdering rival

The wife of the prime minister of Lesotho is to be formally charged in court with murdering his previous wife.

First Lady Maesaiah Thabane handed herself in to be questioned by police in the southern African mountain kingdom.

Prime Minister Thomas Thabane has also been questioned about the killing.

His estranged wife, Lipolelo Thabane, was shot dead outside her home in the capital Maseru two days before his inauguration in 2017.

The couple were involved in bitter divorce proceedings at the time. The attack was originally blamed on unknown armed men, but recent court papers filed by the country's police commissioner, Holomo Molibeli, have raised further questions.

An arrest warrant was issued for 42-year-old Maesaiah Thabane on 10 January after she disappeared.

She was "picked from the border" with South Africa on Tuesday after an arrangement

between her lawyers and police, police spokesman Mpiti Mopeli told AFP news agency.

Police Commissioner Holomo Molibeli told the BBC that she was being held in custody and would be formally charged in court on Wednesday. It is not clear if Maesaiah Thabane will apply for bail at the court appearance. Mr Molibeli said police will oppose her bid if she does, as she is believed to be a

flight risk.

Maesaiah Thabane's lawyer, Rethabile Setlojoane, told the BBC he could not comment on the case. Eight others in Lesotho and South Africa are also reportedly facing charges over the murder. Last month, Mr Thabane agreed to be questioned by the police. On the day he was questioned, hundreds of opposition supporters marched through the streets of the capital,

Maseru, demanding his immediate resignation. As pressure over the case mounted, Mr Thabane announced his intention to resign on 16 January, but did not specify a date when he would do so. Mr Thabane framed the decision to step down as retirement, making no reference to the allegations against him and his wife.

The governing party and the opposition have accused the leader of hindering the investigation into his previous wife's murder.

Mr Thabane and his current wife have not yet commented on the case. Lipolelo Thabane was killed just two days before Mr Thabane was sworn in as prime minister in June 2017. The 58-year-old had been living apart from her husband since 2012.

One evening while returning home, she was ambushed, shot several times at close range and died on the side of a road. The murder shocked the nation. Mr Thabane described it as a "senseless killing" in his inauguration speech. Initially, unknown armed men were blamed for the murder, but new evidence filed in court papers surfaced in early January.

The evidence, seen by AFP news agency, included a copy of a letter that the police chief wrote to Mr Thabane.

The letter, dated 23 December 2019, read: "The investigations reveal that there was a telephonic communication at the scene of the crime in question... with another cell phone. The cell phone number belongs to you." BBC



Thomas Thabane (centre) at his inauguration in 2017 with Maesaiah Thabane, while King Letsie III (right) looks on

Malawi president to contest election ruling

Malawi's president Peter Mutharika says he will contest a court ruling that overturned his election last May. Mr Mutharika, Malawi's president since 2014, won the election with a 38.5% share of the vote. Opposition party leader Lazarus Chakwera came second with 35.41%

On Monday, judges

annulled the vote citing irregularities and ordered a new election within 150 days. There have been regular anti-government protests since the election.

Mr Mutharika said he will lodge an appeal against the ruling by five judges.

This was the first time a court had annulled an election in Malawi, creating further

uncertainty in the southern African state.

Presidential spokesman Mgeme Kalirani said the ruling "cannot be allowed to stand... it will create a lot of problems in the country's jurisprudence."

"It is a great miscarriage of justice," he added in a statement. On Tuesday, Mr Chakwera told tens of thousands of his supporters that the ruling was a victory for democracy.

"It is Malawi that has won. It is Africa that has won," he added.

In essence, the judges argued that Malawians deserve, and should expect, an A-grade election - not perfect, perhaps (who can boast that?) but free of systemic abuse. They should not have to make do with the more familiar C+ election that some nations and institutions still seem to tolerate or encourage.

Secondly, the court directed Malawi's parliament to consider recalling the current electoral commission to "ensure the smooth conduct of fresh elections".

In so doing, they sent a

signal that the supposedly neutral bureaucrats in charge of organising such flawed elections should be thrown out. They also implied that a slap on the wrist was not enough, and that Malawi's precious democratic institutions needed to be properly defended. This was an important blow against a widespread culture of impunity.

Thirdly, the judges said the current first-past-the-post system of picking a new president was unconstitutional. In future, they said, the winner needed to gain more than 50% of the vote, which could mean a second-round run-off. That could have dramatic political implications for Malawi and is, above all, sure to encourage opposition candidates and parties to enter into strategic coalitions, giving them an unanticipated boost.

Fundamentally, the court ruling weakens the power of incumbency - a power that is often stronger, and more open to abuse, in relatively young

democracies. Lawyers for Mr Chakwera and Saulos Chilima, another losing candidate, said correction fluid - known by the brand name Tipp-Ex - had been used on some of the tallying forms sent in by polling stations.

The changes were made after they had been signed by party agents, they said.

The lawyers also said that in some cases polling officials sent in the wrong copy of the results sheet to the main tallying centre.

They also found some mathematical errors in a small number of cases. Though in each case there were not a huge number of errors, the lawyers said that the evidence pointed to a flawed process.

Since the disputed results were announced last May, there have been regular anti-government protests. Some of these have resulted in looting and the destruction of property, including government offices. Two people - one police officer and one civilian - are known to have been killed during the demonstrations. BBC



Malawi president Peter Mutharika will lodge an appeal with the Constitutional Court

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EDITORIAL

Hailing the Indian gov't for the 5 fire trucks

THE GOVERNMENT OF India in a profound gesture to the Government and people of Liberia on Monday, 3 February donated five (5) fire trucks to the Liberia National Fire Service.

THE DONATION WAS graced by President George Manneh Weah and his Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Nathaniel F. McGill along with senior officials of the LNFS and other members of the Liberian government.

THE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY & Plenipotentiary of India to Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, Y. K. SailasThangal, who officiated the formal ceremony, said the donation from his government and people demonstrates that Liberia/India relations is at another level. Accompanied by the Honorary Indian Consul General to Liberia, Mr. Upjit Singh Sachdeva, popularly known as Jeety here, Amb. Thangal appraised the bilateral ties between the two countries, which he notes, is being strengthened by the day.

THE DONATION of the fire trucks comes barely two months after the Government of India similarly donated 45 buses to its counterpart here for public transport to ease transportation services in Liberia.

WE APPLAUD THE Government and warm-loving people of India for the gesture to the people of Liberia. Both donations are not only needed, but timely.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES in Liberia is a serious challenge and the 45 buses would go a long in easing difficulties faced by travelers in commuting from one point to another across the country. More particularly however, the fire trucks to the Liberia National Fire Service are a life-saver, for a country of nearly 5 million people without a public fire truck, which is a serious national security concern.

EVEN HEADQUARTERS OF the Liberia National Fire Service in Monrovia is without a functioning fire truck to cater to the more the 1 million residents. Due to this situation, the capital has lost hundreds of lives and properties estimated millions of dollars to fire disasters.

THIS IS why we call on all ordinary Liberians, including the Government of Liberia to laud the Government and people of India for the donations that will impact lives here significantly.

LIBERIA'S FIRE CHIEF, Alex K. Dickson disclosed at the ceremony that because of the lack of fire trucks, fire fighters had resorted to using buckets to help citizens in putting off fire, lamenting that this is the first time since 1949, the LNFS has received five fire trucks at once.

WE CAN BUT only hope these donations would be utilized wisely to serve the purpose for which they are provided. This would serve as motivation for future gestures from friendly governments and nations.

COMMENTARY

By Raphaël Hadas-Lebel

The Battle for French Pension Reform

In a country with 42 different pension schemes and deep-seated stakes in maintaining the status quo, it is no surprise that a proposed overhaul of the French retirement system would be met with strong public resistance. And yet, reform is both necessary and inevitable, given France's demographic realities.

PARIS - A year after a proposed fuel tax triggered the gilets jaunes (yellow vest) protests, France faces another crisis, this time over pension reform. Mass demonstrations have now gone on for more than 50 days, not letting up even for Christmas and New Year's Eve. Strikes have disrupted the operations of both the French National Railway Company (SNCF) and the RATP bus and subway network, leading to more than €1 billion (\$1.1 billion) in losses for those companies. The strike in the transportation system has now ended, but the confrontation is far from over.

French President Emmanuel Macron's proposed pension reforms are both far-reaching and needed. Under the current mandatory-pension system, the accounting schemes for determining benefits are all over the map, differing substantially by sector and occupation. The system is the outcome of a long-going historical process aimed at extending social protections in old age, based on the prevailing principles of the immediate post-World War II era.

The Macron government's proposals are bold. But they are not intended to disrupt pay-as-you-go schemes, nor do they undermine the broader principle of intergenerational solidarity. The total pension payments for a given year will still be financed by social-security contributions from active workers' earnings in the same year. The legal minimum retirement age of 62, most recently set in 2010, will remain for now. And the new system will still cost around 14% of GDP (which is much higher than in most other European countries).

But Macron's proposals for a "systemic" overhaul are entirely different from previous reforms, the main goal of which was to balance the books by tweaking certain "parameters" across the 42 existing pension schemes. The new program would create a universal system in which, as Macron stated, "a contribution of one euro will give the same rights to all." The same rules would apply to all working individuals, whatever their profession or employment status. And the contribution rate would stay the same for total earnings up to €120,000 per year, providing a €1,000 minimum monthly pension benefit for those who spent their careers at the minimum wage.

Clearly, the reform would require the gradual elimination of special pension plans, which currently allow some railway employees to retire ten years earlier than most other workers. The government has stood firm on phasing out privileged schemes in the name of equality; but it has agreed to a very gradual transition, such that 60% of current eligible employees would not be affected.

It is generally agreed that a points-based scheme is the most transparent option, because benefits follow directly from contributions, which is not always the case with basic annuity schemes. As such, the system enhances job mobility, and is more in step with workplace realities. By assigning additional points, the government can encourage a more seamless integration of other redistributive arrangements such as child credits, unemployment benefits, or minimum monthly pensions.

But reforming how benefits are calculated will change the entitlements that some beneficiaries

receive. There are still questions about which groups will be most affected, and how, and this has contributed to the general climate of distrust. Not surprisingly, those benefiting from privileged schemes are standing tall on the picket lines. But many civil servants - not least schoolteachers - will also be affected, because their benefits will be determined by average lifetime pay instead of their earnings upon retirement.

Moreover, French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe has made the pill harder to swallow by insisting that the reform package include a new "equilibrium age" of 64 (to be reached in 2027), which would reduce benefits for people who retire early, and increase benefits for those who postpone retirement. Philippe is correctly concerned about the financial sustainability of the whole system. But by pushing for this measure, he appeared to break an earlier promise by Macron that the retirement age would remain 62. As a result, the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), the main reformist union, turned on the government, forcing another round of negotiations. Philippe eventually withdrew his proposal, provided that a special conference addresses the financial issue within a period of three months.

The challenge now is clear. Without budging on the principles of universality and equality, the government needs to undermine opposition to the broader reform package. On the issue of the transition period, it has stated that the new provisions will apply only to workers born in or after 1975. It has also agreed to exceptions for early retirements linked to arduous and hazardous working conditions, and it may offer some additional compensation for teachers and a few other groups. None of these changes will make the reform program simpler; but they are necessary.

The larger crisis over pension reform reflects longstanding divisions in French society. The current conflict has featured the usual confrontation between those responsible for reforming existing institutions and those fighting to preserve their vested rights. It has also exposed a rift on the left, between unions that reject the reform proposals outright and unions that are open to negotiation.

The more radical unions see the fight as part of a broader ideological struggle against economic neoliberalism; accordingly, they suspect that the Macron government is pursuing a funded system. The more moderate unions acknowledge (albeit not publicly) that demographic realities - longer life expectancies, declining birth rates - require a higher retirement age.

Public opinion reflects these divisions. The public supports the principle of equality, but is suspicious of the proposed changes. Because so many French citizens have a stake in preserving the status quo, the strikers have enjoyed somewhat strong public support. Looking ahead, the government has been waiting for commuters and others who rely on public transportation to lose patience with service disruptions. Strikes cannot continue forever.

At the end of the day, the government has a parliamentary majority with which to pass a reform package, possibly one that includes a few concessions that will reduce its overall consistency. Having campaigned on the promise of reform, Macron cannot afford to abandon the effort now. Nor can France.

O-PED

By Luciano Huck

Brazil Needs a Fresh Start

Since the restoration of democracy in 1985, Brazil has made notable gains when it comes to taming inflation, expanding welfare assistance, and even reducing poverty. But unless the country can tackle rising inequality and restore faith in its political leadership, these gains could be lost.

RIO DE JANEIRO - "I pray that my family will one day attend fewer funerals and more graduations." These words, spoken by Douglas, a Brazilian from São Gonçalo, resounded in my ears like a gunshot. Douglas's father died in a hail of bullets before Douglas was born; his mother was gunned down on his 11th birthday. Like so many Brazilian children his age, he was forced to drop out of school to pay the bills for his siblings.

After spending time with Douglas in São Gonçalo, one of the poorest and most violent cities in the state of Rio de Janeiro, it became obvious to me that he was a victim of the "zip code lottery." Douglas lives in one of the most unequal cities in one of the world's most inequitable countries. Statistically, it will take another nine generations before someone from his neighborhood ascends to the middle class.

Douglas is not alone. As an entertainer for Brazil's largest television network, I have spent two decades sharing the stories of people living in the country's biggest favelas and most remote Amazonian communities. And as a social entrepreneur, I am constantly looking for new ways to unlock the potential of the tens of millions of Brazilians living in poverty.

For as long as I can remember, Brazil has been ridiculed as a country eternally waiting for the future to arrive. The biggest obstacle to progress is inequality, which is tied to Brazil's legacy of colonialism, slavery, and exclusionary institutions, and perpetuated by Brazilian elites' cynical disregard for the poor. Although successive presidential administrations since the restoration of democracy in 1985 have tamed inflation, expanded welfare assistance, and even reduced poverty, inequality has remained stubbornly high.

Worse, recent evidence shows that inequality in Brazil has started widening again, potentially wiping out much of the progress of the previous three decades. The primary culprit is a regressive system of taxes and subsidies that disproportionately benefits wealthier people like me. Brazil has low income- and property-tax rates relative to other OECD countries, yet it imposes a bevy of indirect taxes on the poor.

If Brazil is going to have any chance of curbing inequality, it needs drastic improvements in the coverage and quality of basic public education. While wealthy citizens receive high-quality educations, poorer ones like Douglas are routinely forced to leave school prematurely, owing to violence and crippling financial pressures. This helps to explain why there are still over 11 million Brazilians aged 15 or above who can neither read nor write.

Brazil desperately needs to improve the effectiveness of its 200,000 public schools. Instead of building new facilities, we should find ways to spend more efficiently, with a focus on teacher training and career development, early childhood education, and curricula for the twenty-first century. Recent improvements in educational outcomes in Ceará, Piauí, and Espírito Santo show that rapid progress is possible.

Brazil's fight against inequality cannot be won unless the country's social safety net serves all citizens. There are an estimated 43 million Brazilians currently living in poverty, more than 13 million of whom live in extreme poverty, the highest level in seven years. Fortunately, artificial intelligence and big data technologies can help improve the quality and coverage of services, and at a lower cost than at any time in the past.

But to improve education and social inclusion, Brazil will need new leadership. Today, most Brazilians are frustrated and desperate. In 2013, well before the mass protests that flared up in Chile and Ecuador, Brazil experienced one of the largest demonstrations in its history. The 2018 presidential election that brought Jair Bolsonaro and his far-right government to power revealed the extent of polarization and dissatisfaction among the electorate. Exhausted by widespread corruption and economic stagnation, Brazilians voted for change. Needless to say, opinions are divided on whether Bolsonaro's presidency will unify Brazilians and transform the country for the better.

For many in my generation, politics is seen as a dirty business that is best avoided. But, looking back, I now recognize that I share the blame for this outcome. Because politics does not come naturally to me, I was insufficiently involved in this critical domain.

But my generation can no longer accept things as they are. The time has come for Brazil to renew its social contract. The country needs a broad political coalition to curb inequality, borrowing the best ideas from both the left and the right. Ideological purity and uninformed policies will not resolve Brazil's most pressing problems. Moreover, we need politicians and civil servants who are technically and ethically qualified for the job. But we cannot expect policymakers to succeed without outside help.

In 2017, these challenges prompted me to join Agora, a civic movement dedicated to mobilizing a new generation of young leaders who have pledged to devote at least two years of their careers to public service. Soon thereafter, I helped launch RenovaBR, a non-partisan training school for prospective political leaders. In our first call for applications, we attracted more than 4,600 submissions from people who had never been involved in politics. They were drawn by our appeal "to be the candidate whom you would want to vote for." Of the more than 120 successful applicants, 17 were elected to federal office in 2018. In a recent call for applications ahead of Brazil's upcoming municipal elections, we received more than 31,000 submissions.

Candidates supported by groups like Agora and RenovaBR offer an inspiring and positive vision of a more open and pluralist Brazil. They are focused on what really matters: closing the massive gap between rich and poor. Because of them, I am still bullish on Brazil. If we target inequality with the tools at our disposal, Douglas and millions of children like him will live to attend more graduations and fewer funerals.

OPINION

By Aryeh Neier

China's Global Human-Rights Whitewash

Under President Xi Jinping, China has forcibly detained hundreds of thousands of Uighurs and stepped up its violations of human rights at home. And now Xi is using China's international clout to prevent censure of other governments' abuses, effectively building a coalition of the willing against the international human-rights regime.

NEW YORK - To those who follow international affairs, it is clear that China has become increasingly repressive under President Xi Jinping. Over the past eight years, electronic surveillance in China has become more pervasive, intolerance for freedom of expression has grown, and many lawyers have been disbarred or imprisoned simply for defending their clients' rights. Moreover, Xi has eliminated the two-term limit on the presidency, withdrawn protections for civil liberties in Hong Kong, and overseen the detention and forcible re-education of hundreds of thousands of Uighurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang province.

Much of this has been reported in the world's press. What is less well known is that China is using its immense economic power and international clout to undermine human-rights protections at the global level, too.

To be sure, China has long relied on its economic strength to head off international condemnation of its human-rights record. Because so many countries fear antagonizing China, they have refused to sign on to resolutions criticizing it at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Likewise, after sentencing the dissident writer Liu Xiaobo to 11 years in prison in 2009 (for the offense of collecting signatures on a petition for rights), the Chinese government grew worried that Liu would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. So, it threatened Norway, the home of the prize, with economic reprisals. In this case, however, China's efforts failed: Liu received the prize in 2010. Having carefully managed its income from the sale of North Sea oil, Norway has the world's largest sovereign wealth fund and is not particularly susceptible to economic strong-arming. But, more important, Norway does not do much business with China, leaving it well positioned to withstand the pressure campaign (which largely involved purchases of Norwegian salmon).

Nonetheless, according to Human Rights Watch's newly released World Report 2020, China has since stepped up its efforts, and is no longer content merely to avert criticism of its own human-rights record. "At the UN Human Rights Council," notes HRW Executive Director Kenneth Roth, "China routinely opposes virtually every human rights initiative that criticizes a particular country unless it is watered down enough to secure that government's consent."

In this way, China has managed to bring many other governments over to its side. "In recent years," Roth explains, "China has opposed resolutions condemning human rights violations in Myanmar, Syria, Iran, the Philippines, Burundi, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Yemen, Eritrea, and Belarus." In the case of Myanmar, for example, "Beijing has been clear that it will not tolerate pressure on Myanmar, despite a UN fact-finding mission's conclusion that Myanmar's top military leaders should be investigated and prosecuted for genocide" against the country's Rohingya minority. Perversely, although Islamophobia has been a key factor in the persecution of the Rohingya, China's broader stand on human rights has also helped many predominantly Muslim countries avoid censure for their own abuses.

Making matters worse, Roth shows that China's ability to silence other governments extends even to those that have positioned themselves as champions of human rights. "French President Emmanuel Macron visited China in November 2019 but made no public mention of human rights," Roth writes. "Visiting leaders have typically excused such public silence by insisting that they raise human rights with Chinese officials in private discussions. But little if any evidence exists that this behind-the-scenes approach does any good."

The case of the United States is somewhat more complicated. In October 2019, President Donald Trump's administration, to its credit, imposed sanctions on the Xinjiang Public Security Bureau for its abuses against the Uighurs, and on several Chinese technology companies for their involvement in human-rights violations. And some administration officials have openly denounced Chinese human-rights practices.

The problem is that the administration's own dismal human-rights record - from the travel ban targeting Muslims to the separation and caging of migrant families at the border - has significantly undermined its credibility. Trump can scarcely condemn China for its human-rights record when he publicly praises strongmen and dictators, from North Korea's Kim Jong-un to Russian President Vladimir Putin and Xi himself.

Meanwhile, China has extended its assault beyond governments to target private institutions, too. Last year, for example, it suspended a lucrative broadcast agreement with the US National Basketball Association in retaliation for one team manager's tweets in support of the protesters in Hong Kong. China has also threatened to bar tuition-paying Chinese students from attending Western universities that sponsor programs critical of Chinese rights violations.

Given that Xi has made it even more dangerous for Chinese citizens to express concerns about human rights, it is all the more important that external voices not be silenced. All those who care about human rights must stand up to China's expanding pressure campaign. To that end, the HRW report offers a set of recommendations for confronting China's challenge to the international human-rights system; most involve greater forthrightness and outspokenness.

Public exposure, after all, is almost always the best way to counter gross rights violations. The worst abuses of the twentieth century - including the Armenian genocide, Stalin's gulag, the Nazi death camps, Mao's "great leap forward," and the Cambodian killing fields - were largely hidden from the world until after the fact. Exposing and denouncing them while they were underway would have been the best means of mitigating the horrors. The same is true of China's abuses today.



February 4, 2020

The remains of William Tamba Sahr commonly called "TM" will be removed from the Samuel Stryker Funeral Service on Saturday, February 8, 2020 at 8:30am and taken to the Mount Nebo Baptist Church on Airfield New Road for funeral service. After the funeral service, burial takes place at the Kingsville Number 7 Cemetery, Careysburg District, Montserrado County.

William Tamba Sahr died on January 25th at the ELWA Hospital. He was a former employee of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

He is survived by the following siblings: Julius Sahr, Mildred Sahr Munyeneh, Kumba Sahr Herron, Benjamin Sahr and Michael Sahr. The late TM is also survived by several nieces, nephews, cousins and a host of other relatives and friends at home and abroad.

This announcement was brought in by Michael Sahr, Julius Sahr and Benjamin Sahr, brothers of the deceased on behalf of the family.

Weah issues Executive Order suspending tariff on rice

The President George Manneh Weah has with immediate effect suspended tariff on rice, Liberia's staple food.

According to the Executive Mansion, President Weah's action, which is contained in Executive Order #98 issued February 4, 2020, manifests his Government's

1006.40.00 (broken rice) under Revenue Code of Liberia Act 2000.

President Weah believes Executive Order 98, as part of exigent measures intended to achieve the desired objectives of easing economic burden on citizens and residents, will enable them to access the nation's staple at all times.



commitment to reducing the prices of essential [commodities], including rice, as to make them available and affordable on the local market.

The Executive Order suspends import tariff on rice as classified under tariff numbers 1006.30.00 (packing of more than 5kg or in bulk); 1006.30.00 (packing at least 5kg); and

This order was necessitated by an assessment and evaluation conducted on the causes of the increase in the price of various strategic commodities including rice, and serves as one of many measures meant to ameliorate the situation.—Press release

Chinese engineers

Starts from back page

requires collaboration of every Liberians, noting that many people during games throw garbage and destroy facilities on the stadium, which is not good for the country.

"I do not understand why people will come to watch game and break the things that can make the stadium beautiful; why will they throw garbage on the stadium,?" he asks.

Mr. Shao calls on Liberians to exhibit moral discipline, while watch games at the stadium, indicating that moral

challenged in doing more electrical work during the rainy season because of security concern which is a major obstacle at the facility.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shao calls on the Government of Liberia to employ more people at the SKD in order to clean the stadium after games, adding that they also want government to increase security during matches to protect the equipment there.

He lauds the Liberian government for a fruitful relationship and extends



discipline sets the platform to put the country on par with international standard.

He discloses that a total of six Chinese technicians and 10 Liberians are executing the renovation of the complex. "We used six months period to renovate the complex and work very hard to keep the complex at the level it is today."

He explains that most of the jobs are done during the dry season, including upkeep of equipment but they are

gratitude to the Liberian staff for cordial relationship over a year.

The Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex is a 35,000 capacity multi-purpose stadium in Paynesville, a suburb of Monrovia. It was built by the Chinese in 1986, used mostly for football matches and has an athletics track, though it has also been used for a reggae concert, political rallies, to host IDPs, and Ebola treatment centers.

Criminals burglarize Voice of Hope Fm in Pleebo

By Gareyson Neufville, Maryland Co.

Unidentified persons have burglarized a community radio station, Voice Of Hope FM 103.2 in Pleebo City, Maryland County, making away with US\$260 plus 16,000 Liberians Dollars.

The station reportedly belongs to Speaker Bhofal Chambers, who represents Pleebo Solocan district in Maryland County.

The burglary occurred on late Sunday, February 2nd. The money allegedly stolen belongs to Emmanuel Wilson, a staff of the station and corresponding for the state-run Liberia Broadcasting System in

Monrovia.

Victim Williams, also resident manager for Voice Of Hope, disclosed that he received call early Monday, February 3 from a security officer, Harris Doe, informing him of the incident, which happened around 2:00 A.M.

No arrest was reported, but in 2019, criminals attacked several local journalists who were on nightshift and took away valuables, something, which drew serious attention from residents and authorities of the district.

Meanwhile, police have launched an investigation in the county to bring the unknown perpetrators to book.



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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

House constitutes specialized committee -over shortage of gasoline



By Bridgett Milton

In the wake of gasoline shortage on the Liberian market, the House of Representatives has set up a specialized committee to investigate the petroleum crisis here.

The House took the decision on Tuesday, 4 February after the Minister of Commerce Prof. Wilson Terpeh along with Liberia Petroleum Refining Company

(LPRC) Managing Director appeared before the House and informed lawmakers that there were enough gasoline in the country that could go for the month of February.

The decision to invite the Minister of Commerce and LPRC was reached based on a communication from River Gee County District #1 Representative Alex Poure.

Representative Poure had demanded answer to questions

regarding the shortage of petroleum products on the market for the past weeks.

He said the shortage of gasoline on the Liberian market had caused a serious increase in transportation fares across the country and has caused difficulties for people to get to work.

Appearing before the House of Representatives Tuesday, Minister Terpeh said the statement made by him ten days prior to his appearance was based on the data he collected.

Based on that data, he tells lawmakers that there should not have a problem, though he says the actual situation pointed to a problem.

As such, Minister Tarpeh indicates that a meeting was held with LPRC and the importer, following which it was discovered that indeed the level of product that was expected did not come in.

He says in spite of all that is ongoing, the price of gas still remains the same.

For her part, the Managing Director of LPRC Madam Marie U. Coleman expresses apology to the body and the Liberian people for the embarrassment they have been going through

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Fishermen in Montserrado protest

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Credible information reaching this paper indicates local fishermen in Montserrado County have boycotted the trade in protest of taxes levied on them by the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority or NaFAA.

Some of the local fishermen who have laid down their nets, explain that the tax imposed by the regulatory agency is exorbitant, adding that unlike the past, they are not making enough catch on sea these days to be able to pay such taxes.

They said some of them are being required to pay between US\$250 and US\$300 and above for their canoes at the time business is slow.

Fishermen Aba Koko and Kwame Kofia say while they are not refusing to pay taxes, equally so government should understand the business environment is tough.

They plead with government for one year grace period that would enable them galvanize resources to pay their taxes.

The fishermen further lament the situation has pushed them to the wall,



considering the fact that besides paying taxes, they also have their children's tuition and rental to pay.

A tour of several beaches in Montserrado, including West Point, New Kru Town and Banjor, among others, uncovered that several fishermen have parked their canoes.

When the NaFAA head office on Bushrod Island, was contacted, staffers informed this reporter their bosses were out of office.

Local fish sellers who usually troop to these areas to buy fish, returned with empty pans due to lack of fish.

In January this year, the

Director-General of the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), Emma Glasco, announced a new fee structure for fishermen operating in Liberia's territorial waters, based on their engines' capacity.

Madam Glasco said the new measure is part of management's programs to resuscitate the sector and increase revenue generation.

She said under the new structure, which takes effect immediately, owners of paddling canoes will pay the sum of LRD2,000 annually, while operators of 1Hp (House power) to 14Hp will pay a

LoneStar MTN, UBA begin Push and Pull partnership

By Winston W. Parley

In furtherance of its support to government's digital financial inclusion strategy to ease liquidity crisis, telecommunication giant LoneStar Cell MTN and the United Bank of Africa (UBA) have launched the Push and Pull mobile money service in a partnership to link customers' bank accounts to their MTN mobile money numbers.

The launch of the MTN - UBA Push and Pull mobile money product held Wednesday, 5 February at a hotel up Mamba Point comes following similar launch of the service by MTN and one of its partner banks earlier on 27 December 2019 at LoneStar MTN's head office in

sick and hospitalized, but there's no way that patient can get access to his or her account at the bank.

Madam Ofodile draws the audience's attention to how the Push and Pull service can ease the worries of no cash to settle medical bills and others, saying you can stay right in the hospital and transfer money from your Push and Pull wallet.

At MTN, she says they allow people to have access no matter where they are or no matter where they sit.

With this partnership, UBA Liberia Managing Director Olalekan Balogun says employers can pay all their employees' salaries electronically and enable the staffers to assess their phones



Congo Town.

During the launch Wednesday, LoneStar Cell MTN Chief Executive Officer Madam UcheOfodile said the product allows people to have access no matter where they are, no matter where they sit.

She expresses appreciation to the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) for its work, recalling that last year the CBL indicated that it wants everybody to have access.

To further demonstrate the significance of the Push and Pull service, Madam Ofodile takes a moment urging the audience at the launch to just imagine someone being very

at their convenient time, saying it's actually a financial inclusion.

He adds that this is also going to address the issue of lot of people keeping money under their mattresses and the situation where there are complaints of no cash [in the banks]. Mr. Balogun thanks LoneStar MTN for the partnership with UBA.

On behalf of the CBL, Madam Miatta O. Kuteh says for a strategy that is supposed to be implemented over a period of four years, there is already such innovation in just one year.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

yearly fee of US\$200.

The previous fee was LRD5, 500 per canoe; while 15Hp to 40 Hp fees have been increased from LRD10,000 to US\$475.

Fishermen operating machines with capacity between 41Hp and 100Hp will now pay US\$1,000 annually, while operators of migrant or

seasonal canoes are being charged US\$1,250 yearly.

Director Glasco explained that this will allow government to provide subsidy to fishmongers and develop a robust semi-industrial program, including a value-added component such as processing facility. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Three Dynamite Fishermen Behind Bars

The issue of dynamite fishing has come to the fore as three fishermen are currently imprisoned at the Monrovia central prison, popularly known as “south beach” following their involvement into illegal fisheries activities, specifically dynamite and chemical fishing. According to the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) 2010 fisheries regulation, it is unlawful to use Dynamite, any form of explosives and chemical to fishing or chemical fishing in

are taking place along the rivers, lakes, lagoons and creeks in Liberia.

Director ZiziKpadeh noted that NaFAA is not taking kindly the used of dynamite and other chemical substances inland water bodies, therefore legal measures are being instituted to mitigate the situations.

Mr. Kpadeh disclosed that three fishermen are currently been detained at the Monrovia central prison awaiting court trial as a result of their involvement in dynamite fishing practice that has been banned by the government

Bernard Farm was arrested for his involvement into alleged dynamite fishing.

The Fisheries regulations of 2010 and the new fisheries management law of 2019 prohibit the use of explosive, firearms, chemicals and toxic substances and other illegal fishing methods which have the potential to damage fish habitat and human lives due to the poison the fish accumulate as the result of the dynamite and chemicals.

Employees of the Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries Division of the



both inland water bodies and the ocean. Currently most fishermen along rivers and creeks are heavily involved into dynamite fishing which has resulted into the damage of the fish and its habitat and also houses and other infrastructural in the environment.

Speaking Tuesday February 5, 2020 at the Temple of justice in Monrovia, the Director of the Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries Department at NAFAA disclosed that lots of violation

through the fisheries authority.

Director Kpedeh who named the three dynamite fishermen who are in detention as JusuSonii, Pecious P. Kings and Albert P. Hills confirmed that NaFAA with the help of the security groups will apprehend all fishermen involved into illegal fishing activities including dynamite fishing along with other chemical fishing activities.

It can be recalled earlier January 2020, fisherman Wolobah Gibson resident of the Kpelle Town Community in

National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority caught a fishermen and two fish mongers who were holistically involved into dynamite fishing.

The three individuals are all Liberians including Ezekiel Joe, the fishermen who blasted the dynamite in the Zangar Town river between Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties, near the Roberts International Airport and the two dynamite fish buyers Garmah Joe and Josephine Logan who were detained and later released.

House constitutes

Cont'd from page 6

over the past weeks.

She says LPRC received products from three importers including Total, SP and Amanita monthly.

However, she notes that the product that was scheduled to come in country in December for February did not come.

According to Madam Coleman, they were informed

by their importers that they could not bring product in the country due to the restriction from APM Terminals in relations to some ongoing works at the port. But she says as she speaks, they do have enough product in the country that will last for the month of February.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

LoneStar MTN, UBA

Cont'd from page 6

She gives credit to institutions that have the vision to push the agenda to ensure that the strategy is achieved at a very fast pace.

Madam Kuteh says the Central Bank of Liberia is super excited to see the partnership between LoneStar Cell MTN and the United Bank of Africa Liberia.

She assures users of the Push and Pull service that their funds are secured, revealing that just as the CBL regulates the commercial banks, it also regulates the eco - system which involves MTN and other providers of this service.

She urges MTN to engage stores, super markets and other businesses here to accept mobile money transactions so that customers can simply transfer money from their mobile money wallets to whoever they take goods from.

Mr. Prince Chesson, MTN Mobile Money Product and Strategy Manager expresses excitement on the lunch of the Push and Pull service with United Bank of Africa Liberia, saying MTN has again proven its dominance as the biggest

and best mobile financial services operator in the country.

For his part, Mr. Christopher Sali, Acting General Manager for Mobile Money says Push and Pull is a deposit and withdrawal service which customers can do remotely without having to go to the bank.

“And for us as MTN, our commitment to the people of Liberia, our commitment to support the Central Bank in digitizing Liberia, there’s no reason why our customers, why UBA customers still have to go to the bank when they have a LoneStar Cell fund,” he says.

He explains that when users of the Push and Pull service are at home and there’s no electricity and all they need is LD\$1,000, they can do the transaction right on their phone.

The Push and Pull service allows customers of MTN and UBA to move any amount from their accounts without restriction as to how much can be withdrawn, and this can be done remotely without having to go to the bank to do withdrawal or deposit.

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Wolokollie cautions that by women joining the military service, they are putting themselves on riskier ground considering some of their weaknesses.

She explains that there are plenty of factors to consider, but gender has nothing to do with love of country and the desire to render selfless service to country.

She recalls that the size of women in the military here had increased to 184 before the civil crisis, but the number reduced due to the war. She notes that there are seven females officers in the AFL and 82 enlisted officers which forms 4.3 percent of the Armed Forces today.

Also speaking at the symposium, Defense Minister Daniel Ziankahn lauds participants of the symposium

for the level of contribution and promises the commitment of the AFL in providing quality opportunity for women within the force. He says the AFL is encouraging women to join the Force, but cautions that the army will not lower its standards of recruitment program.

He assures the audience that the issue of gender will be within the Liberian military.

For her part, Deputy Army Chief of Staff Brigadier General Geraldine George states that those wishing to join the army, including women will be treated equally.

She stresses the need for females to compete with their male counterparts, saying those in other security institutions should seek to attain new heights.

Adjust military training

Starts from back page

Officer Miss Facia Harris and Swedish Ambassador to Liberia Madam Ingrid Wetterqvist, among several others.

The Ministry of Defense here says it is not just encouraging females because it wants to have women in their numbers within the Armed Forces of Liberia; but it is encouraging qualified women to sign [up] for the Armed Forces of Liberia.

It stresses on “Women whose capacities are built,

women who believe in the forward movement of our country; women who have the requisite educational background; women who live up to standard in terms of human rights, those are the kinds of women that we want to join the Armed Forces of Liberia.”

According to Justice Wolokollie, recruiting and incorporating women into the AFL will help to change the perception about the Armed Forces and bring respect instead of fear of the force.

She notes that citizens will now consider running to the army for protection instead of running away from it, adding that the image of the AFL can be enhanced by recruitment of females.

“A female recruit may not necessarily serve in combats, but with modern technology, technical expertise and decision making are increasingly more valuable than simple brute strength,” Justice Wolokollie continues.

In the same vein, Justice

Français

La nomination de Charles Gibson rejetée pour la seconde fois par le Sénat

Me Charles Gibson, l'homme qui avait été précédemment rejeté par le Sénat à la suite de sa nomination au poste de ministre de la Justice aux premières heures suite à la prise du pouvoir par ce régime, a de nouveau été rejeté mardi par ce même organe, cette fois en tant que président désigné du conseil d'administration de la Société

d'Electricité du Libéria (LEC).

Me Gibson faisait partie de la première vague de personnes nommées par le président George Weah le 22 janvier, mais sa nomination a été immédiatement retirée à la suite d'allégations selon lesquelles il aurait détourné 25 322 \$ US appartenant à un client.

Me. Gibson avait, à la suite de cette affaire, été suspendu

de la pratique directe et indirecte du droit sur toute l'étendue du territoire national du Libéria, puis été gracié par la Cour suprême qui a dû écorcher la justice au nom de la miséricorde.

Cependant, mardi, il s'est retrouvé rejeté pour la deuxième fois. Il n'est pas cette fois le seul à avoir fait les frais de la réticence des sénateurs, l'autre candidat étant Me Anthony Toga Nimely, également nommé par le Président Weah au poste de président de la Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Le comité statutaire du Sénat sur les terres, les mines, l'énergie, les ressources naturelles et l'environnement a voté à une écrasante majorité contre les candidats Gibson et Nimely. Ce comité est dirigé par le sénateur George Tengbehdu comté de Lofa, membre du Parti de l'Unité, ancien parti au pouvoir.

Les sénateurs semblent douter de la crédibilité de l'avocat Toga Nimely dont la gestion calamiteuse du Millennium Challenge Account,

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Les députés libériens à l'assaut du sénat

Les informations qui nous sont parvenues font état de l'intention de la quasi-totalité des députés du parlement libérien de briguer des sièges sénatoriaux lors des élections sénatoriales spéciales de 2020, ce qui pourrait occasionner d'autres élections législatives partielles en cas de victoires de certains d'entre eux.

Déjà, certains législateurs

en exercice ont fait l'objet de pétition pour se présenter aux élections sénatoriales spéciales. Ils ne semblent pas tenir compte de l'énorme coût associé à l'organisation de plusieurs autres élections partielles qui s'imposeront pour combler les postes vacants qu'ils auront créés en cas de victoire, ce, dans une économie en décadence.

Parmi ceux qui logneraient

le Sénat figure la représentante Munah Pelham Youngblood du district électoral ? 9 du comté de Montserrado, députée de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique au pouvoir. La représentante Youngblood veut renverser le sénateur Darius Dillon du Parti de la liberté (opposition).

Dans le comté de Bong, le vice-président de la chambre des représentants Prince Moya veut affronter le sénateur Henry Yallah. Selon les observateurs, Prince Moya a de meilleures chances.

Le représentant du comté de Nimba, Jeremiah Koung, veut quant à lui se mesurer au sénateur sortant Thomas Grupee, qui avait été élu au Sénat libérien sur le ticket de l'Union nationale du progrès démocratique, ancien parti du sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson, ancien seigneur de guerre.

Quant au comté de Grand Gedeh, le représentant Zoe Emmanuel Pennue veut récupérer un siège sénatorial. A noter qu'il avait été battu

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Éditorial

Nous saluons le gouvernement indien pour le don de 5 camions de pompiers

Le gouvernement indien a fait don, lundi 5 février, de cinq (5) camions aux sapeurs-pompiers du Liberia National Fire Service (LNFS), un geste magnanime profondément salubre à l'endroit du gouvernement et du peuple du Liberia.

Le don a été reçu par le président George Manneh Weah et son ministre d'État aux Affaires présidentielles, Nathaniel F. McGill, en présence de la haute hiérarchie du LNFS et d'autres membres du gouvernement libérien.

L'ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire de l'Inde en Côte d'Ivoire et au Libéria, SM Y. K. Sailas Thangal, qui a présidé la cérémonie officielle, a déclaré que le don de son gouvernement et de son peuple est la preuve des bonnes relations qu'entretiennent le Libéria et l'Inde. Accompagné du Consul général honoraire des Indiens au Libéria, M. Upjit Singh Sachdeva, populairement connu sous le nom de Jeety ici, l'Ambassadeur Thangal a évalué les relations bilatérales entre les deux pays, qui, selon lui, se renforcent de jour en jour.

Le don des camions pompiers intervient à peine deux mois après que le gouvernement indien a également fait don de 45 bus à son homologue afin de faciliter les services de transport au Libéria. Nous saluons le Gouvernement et le peuple indien pour ce geste chaleureux à l'endroit du peuple libérien. Les deux dons sont non seulement nécessaires, mais opportuns.

Les services de transport public au Libéria sont un défi sérieux et les 45 bus permettront pendant longtemps d'atténuer un petit peu les difficultés auxquelles sont confrontés les voyageurs en se déplaçant d'une localité à l'autre à travers le pays.

Plus particulièrement, les camions de pompiers sont une bouffée d'oxygène pour le Libéria, un pays de près de 5 millions d'habitants qui ne disposait d'aucun camion de pompiers, ce qui constituait un grave problème de sécurité nationale.

Même le siège du Service national des incendies du Libéria à Monrovia est dépourvu de camion de pompiers en état fonctionnel pouvant desservir plus d'un million d'habitants. Conséquence : plusieurs centaines de pertes en vie humaine ont été enregistrées dans la capitale et des biens estimés à des millions de dollars américains ont été détruits par des incendies.

C'est pourquoi nous appelons tous les Libériens ordinaires et le gouvernement du Libéria à féliciter le gouvernement et le peuple de l'Inde pour les dons qui auront un impact significatif sur nos conditions de vie.

Le chef des pompiers du Libéria, Alex K. Dickson, a révélé lors de la cérémonie qu'en raison du manque de camions de pompiers, les sapeurs-pompiers avaient souvent eu recours à des seaux pour aider les habitants à éteindre le feu. D'après lui, c'est la première fois depuis 1949 que le LNFS reçoive cinq camions de pompiers.

Nous espérons cependant que ces dons seront utilisés à bon escient pour servir le but pour lequel ils sont fournis. Cela servirait de motivation aux futurs gestes des gouvernements et des nations amis.

Français

La nomination de Charles Gibson

parrainé par les États-Unis, a laissé un goût amer.

Ces rejets soulèvent des questions quant aux choix du président Weah pour occuper des postes de responsabilité au sein de la fonction publique, sur fond de rumeurs de corruption généralisée au sommet de l'Etat.

« Le comité a soigneusement examiné les candidats Me Charles H. Gibson et l'avocat Anthony Toga Nimely à travers leur exposé, leur curriculum vitae et les autres titres de compétences qu'ils ont présentés. Dans sa sagesse, le comité a pris en compte les efforts déployés par les partenaires internationaux

pour accroître l'efficacité et les possibilités de faire progresser l'efficacité énergétique au Libéria. Le comité a conclu à l'unanimité que les candidats n'étaient pas éligibles et qualifiés pour occuper les postes auxquels ils ont été nommés », indique le rapport.

Le comité a dit juger nécessaire de recommander à l'assemblée plénière du Sénat libérien de rejeter la demande de confirmation des deux individus.

Par contre, le Sénat libérien a confirmé le candidat Michael Kporokpor comme commissaire de la Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Les députés libériens

par le maréchal Dennis en 2014. Des rumeurs en provenance du comté indiquent que le sénateur actuel Alphonso Gaye ne veut pas se porter candidat pour une réélection pour des raisons personnelles. Le sénateur Gaye a lui-même confirmé ces rumeurs récemment dans son bureau au Capitole.

Dans le comté de Lofa, les deux représentantes, Mme Mariamu Fofana et Julia Fatorma Wiah, veulent affronter l'actuel sénateur George Tengbeh, membre du Parti de l'Unité (ancien parti au pouvoir).

Le sénateur Tengbeh sera également confronté à l'ancien ministre de la Défense du Libéria, Brownie Samukai. Samukai fut ministre de la Défense pendant 12 ans sous l'administration Sirleaf.

Si tous ces législateurs en exercice arrivaient à gagner les prochaines élections sénatoriales spéciales, l'Etat sera obligé de trouver des millions de dollars pour organiser des élections législatives partielles d'ici 2021 pour combler les postes vacants qu'ils auront créés.

Par ailleurs, en plus des membres de la Chambre basse qui lorgnent le Sénat, des dizaines d'anciens

législateurs, dont l'ancien président de la chambre des représentants J. Alex Tyler (comté de Bomi) et l'ancien sénateur Pro-Tempore Gbehzohngar Milton Findley (comté de Grand Bassa) auraient l'intention de se lancer dans la bataille. M. Findley est actuellement ministre des Affaires étrangères.

M. Tyler, qui est leader politique du Parti démocratique du peuple libérien (membre de la coalition tripartite au pouvoir), fut inculpé par le régime de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf pour avoir prétendument accepté des pots-de-vin afin de modifier la loi sur la Commission des concessions en matière de marchés publics en faveur d'une société minière britannique, Sable Mining. Il aurait reçu 75 000 \$ US. Mais il a récemment été acquitté par la Cour suprême du Libéria.

C'est aussi le cas de l'ancienne ministre des Finances et de la Planification du développement, Amara Konneh qui viserait le sénat. M. Konneh est actuellement aux prises avec l'administration Weah qui le soupçonne d'avoir détourné 13 millions d'euros de l'Union européenne pour la mortalité infantile.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Raphaël Hadas-Label

Réforme des retraites : une nouvelle bataille française

PARIS - Un an après la crise des « gilets jaunes », la France doit faire face à un nouveau conflit, lié cette fois à la réforme des retraites. Plus de quarante-cinq jours de conflit - un record - ponctués par des manifestations à répétition, et surtout par de graves perturbations du système des transports publics, notamment dans la région parisienne. Il n'y aura même pas eu de trêve pour Noël et les fêtes de fin d'année. Pour les deux sociétés nationales concernées, celle des chemins de fer (SNCF) et celle du métro et bus parisiens (RATP), les pertes cumulées dépassent le milliard d'euros. Le manque à gagner est lourd pour plusieurs secteurs de l'économie française. La grève a cessé dans le secteur des transports, mais le conflit n'est pas encore achevé. A l'origine de ces perturbations, la protestation contre l'ambitieux projet d'Emmanuel Macron tendant à la refondation du système français de retraites.

De fait, l'architecture actuelle du système des retraites est caractérisée par une multiplicité de régimes utilisant des techniques de calcul de droits différents et des paramètres encore plus variés, surtout si l'on y inclut les régimes de la fonction publique et une douzaine de régimes spéciaux, encore plus dérogatoires, en vigueur notamment dans les entreprises publiques de transport en commun. Aboutissement d'un long processus historique d'extension de la protection de vieillesse, le système français, dont les principes ont été mis en place au lendemain de la seconde guerre mondiale, est organisé en régimes structurés sur une base socio-professionnelle. Il en résulte une inévitable complexité et bien des inégalités de situation.

Le nouveau système proposé par le gouvernement, sur la base des engagements électoraux d'Emmanuel Macron, est particulièrement audacieux. Il ne revient certes pas sur le principe de la retraite par répartition, fondé sur la solidarité entre générations, et selon lequel les prestations de retraite d'une année donnée sont financées par les cotisations sociales prélevées la même année sur les salariés en activité. Il maintient l'âge d'ouverture des droits à la retraite, fixé depuis 2010 à 62 ans. De même, le nouveau système ne devrait pas faire baisser le poids élevé - nettement plus élevé qu'ailleurs en Europe - des retraites dans le PNB français, soit environ 14 %. Mais la réforme proposée, dite « systémique », est profondément différente de toutes les réformes précédentes, qui visaient surtout à équilibrer financièrement le système par des mesures dites « paramétriques ». Elle conduit à la mise en place d'un système universel dans lequel, selon le propos du Président, « un euro cotisé doit donner les mêmes droits à tous ». Ainsi, les mêmes règles devraient s'appliquer à tous les actifs, quels que soient leur profession ou leur statut : salariés du privé, fonctionnaires, salariés des entreprises publiques, agriculteurs, membres de professions indépendantes, élus politiques et jusqu'au président de la République. Le même niveau de cotisation est prévu pour la totalité des revenus jusqu'à 120 000 € par an, une pension minimale de 1 000 € étant prévue pour une carrière complète au salaire minimum.

La réforme implique évidemment la suppression progressive des régimes spéciaux, qui permettent à certains salariés des chemins de fer et du métro, dont certains peuvent prendre leur retraite près de dix ans plus tôt que dans les régimes de droit commun. Au nom de l'égalité, le principe de cette suppression est un point sur lequel le gouvernement reste très ferme. Il a en particulier refusé la « clause du grand-père », qui aurait renvoyé l'application de la réforme aux seuls nouveaux embauchés. Il a toutefois accepté une transition très progressive, au point que 60 % de salariés actuels de ces entreprises ne seront pas concernés par la réforme.

Emmanuel Macron a incontestablement fait le choix d'une solution extrêmement ambitieuse. Il aurait pu se contenter d'une fusion partielle des régimes, limitée au seul secteur privé, ou encore aux seuls régimes de base. Le principe d'universalité retenu conduit en fait à la fusion à terme de tous les quarante-deux régimes existants - de base et complémentaires, privés et

publics - en un seul système.

De l'avis général, un régime en points apparaît en principe plus lisible, dans la mesure où tout droit à pension, accordé en contrepartie de cotisations, donne lieu à un supplément de pension, ce qui n'est pas toujours le cas dans les régimes en annuités. Dès lors, ce système favorise la mobilité professionnelle, plus conforme aux réalités du marché du travail. Il permet aussi d'intégrer de manière plus transparente, grâce à l'affectation de points supplémentaires, les dispositifs de solidarité, tels que les droits liés à la famille, aux périodes de chômage ou aux minima de pension.

Toutefois, le changement du mode de calcul des retraites conduit nécessairement à une modification des droits des assurés. Or, la concertation sur le projet, qui avait pourtant duré plus de deux ans, a laissé bien des zones d'ombre et manifeste une certaine impréparation : ainsi, peu de simulations incontestables ont été présentées sur les effets concrets des mesures envisagées. Dans le climat de défiance qui caractérise aujourd'hui les rapports entre citoyens et décideurs publics, il n'est pas surprenant que le projet ait suscité les inquiétudes de ceux qui craignent de voir leur pension diminuer. Au premier rang de ceux-ci, les bénéficiaires des régimes spéciaux, souvent regardés comme privilégiés, mais qui invoquent le « pacte moral » conclu avec les entreprises concernées lors de leur recrutement. Mais la réforme affecte aussi les fonctionnaires, notamment les enseignants, dont la pension est actuellement calculée sur la rémunération de leur fin de carrière, alors que le nouveau système institue le calcul de la pension sur la moyenne de l'ensemble de la carrière.

La question des retraites est de celles qui font que chacun se sent concerné. Le gouvernement a beau faire valoir que la réforme apportera des avantages à de nombreuses catégories de retraités, comme les agriculteurs, les commerçants, les titulaires de pensions modestes, les travailleurs précaires et certaines femmes. L'opposition des « perdants » n'en reste pas moins vigoureuse, surtout s'ils peuvent manifester leur ressentiment en perturbant l'activité du pays.

La difficulté a été accrue par la volonté du Premier ministre d'introduire dans la réforme, dès 2025, un « âge pivot », fixé à 64 ans, assorti d'un malus pour les assurés qui prendraient leur retraite avant cet âge et d'un bonus pour ceux qui retarderaient leur départ. Edouard Philippe avait en effet le souci légitime d'assurer ainsi l'équilibre financier du système. Toutefois, ce faisant, il semblait revenir sur la promesse du Président de ne pas toucher à l'âge de départ de 62 ans, perdant ainsi l'appui de la CFDT, principal syndicat réformiste, pourtant favorable au nouveau système universel. Après trois semaines de tensions, le gouvernement aura dû retirer ce dispositif, sous réserve qu'une négociation permette de parvenir à un accord dans les trois mois sur les moyens de parvenir à l'équilibre recherché.

La crise suscitée par la réforme des retraites illustre nombre de traits spécifiques à la réalité française. Elle aura mis en lumière l'affrontement traditionnel entre ceux qui ont le souci de réformer les situations existantes et ceux qui se battent pour la sauvegarde des droits acquis. Ainsi, un clivage a été constaté entre les organisations syndicales d'extrême gauche, qui réclament le retrait pur et simple du projet, et des syndicats plus modérés, ouverts à une stratégie de négociation.

Le gouvernement, qui dispose d'une majorité au Parlement, devrait pouvoir réussir à imposer sa réforme, même si c'est au prix de certaines concessions qui en réduisent quelque peu la cohérence. En s'engageant dans un processus de réforme qui modifie aussi profondément des situations acquises, on allait inévitablement au devant des difficultés. Dans l'enthousiasme qui a suivi l'élection présidentielle de 2017, ces difficultés ont manifestement été sous-estimées. Mais Emmanuel Macron ne peut se permettre de renoncer à une réforme emblématique, annoncée lors de la campagne présidentielle. Le pays non plus.

Articles traduits

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ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Back to Liberia – a tale of George Weah, the people and the future

By SulaimanMomodu

My recent visit to Liberia brought flashbacks of Liberia's long journey from war to peace and the ultimate sacrifices many people had made for the land of liberty to once again live in peace.

Liberians are loving people, but over the years, the country has experienced untold tests and trials. The question? What does the future hold for Liberia?

During my sojourn in Liberia for nearly a decade, I covered the visits of high-level delegations, the country's huge debt cancellation process, the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration activities, as well as the country's peace and recovery process. Another question - is Liberia making any progress?

Over the past two years, Liberia has been battling with crisis after crisis. As I write this piece, the country is contending with a fuel shortage. What's going on in Liberia brings back memories of what one of my teachers used to say

especially among the football-loving population, some Liberians had argued that some of those who surrounded him did not come across as people who would provide any meaningful leadership for a country that is yet to fully recover from the throes and trauma of a civil conflict. Weah's contributions as a senator did not also impress many people.

While working in Liberia, I was privileged to meet or interact with the country's leaders, including Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (when she was president). I also met some members of the opposition, and above all the ordinary people from Zwedru to Zorzor. Let me also add that I visited all the 15 counties of the largely lush green country from Montserrado to Maryland as the United Nations and other partners did what they could to contribute to the peace and development of a country of about 4.5 million people that was once battered by civil strife with two of its presidents tragically murdered. William Richard Tolbert was killed in 1980. A decade later, another president Samuel K. Doe was horribly butchered as his naked remains were paraded on the



to the school's footballers in our class. "Whether you dribble in the air and score in heaven, if you fail my exams, I will fail you," he warned. Essentially, the teacher stressed on performance in class and not popularity.

Liberia's president is George MannehOppong Weah. He is a football legend. During his career, he was a striker. Speed? Yes. Dribbling skills? Superb. For about 15 years, Weah played for clubs in Europe - France, Italy, and England. On the pitch, he dribbled and thrilled football enthusiasts. For his skills, he won several awards. Some Liberians called him King George.

From very humble roots, in 2018, after some years of preparations, including returning to the classroom to improve on his education, something his critics were always excited to cite as his deficiency, Weah became president defeating then Vice President Joseph Boakai.

Prior to becoming president, Weah had also served as a senator. While Weah may be popular,

streets in the struggle for power.

In Zwedru, Grand Geddeh County, I had visited an unfinished mansion by Doe. Absolutely massive. It was never completed when civil war broke out. Today, the palace lies in ruins. After Doe, Charles Taylor, who lived dangerously, entered the stage amid singing and dancing by some Liberians - "You kill my ma, you kill my pa, I will vote for you". Today, Taylor is behind bars albeit not for crimes committed in Liberia, but in neighbouring Sierra Leone.

During my recent brief visit to the impoverished West African state, I stayed in a hotel where the receptionist had assured that I could pay my hotel bills using my visa credit card. I was delighted. However, when it was time to check out, it turned out that the machine was dead.

Depressing! Although this was clearly a system failure, I had an obligation - to pay. To compound a potential embarrassment, at the nearest ATM to my hotel was a very long queue where many people were

waiting for hours to get what little they could to keep their pots boiling. In Monrovia, long queues outside banks are a common sight. "How will I get out of this situation?" I wondered. In short, I managed to pay my hotel bills and left the country. Clearly, not all is well in Liberia. The Liberian government says "it inherited a collapsed economy" but some people put the blame squarely on Weah's government.

As a footballer, Weah demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that he is a patriot. He supported the country from his own resources and won the hearts of the people. Over the past months, Liberia has been going through serious challenges, including delays in payment of salaries, inflation, protests, strike actions, scandals, cuts in salaries, issues with donors - the list is endless.

Recently, amid bitter disagreements between Weah and some executives of his ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), Weah's foremost critic, Henry Costa aired a recording on his talk show in which the chairman of the president's party, MulbahMorlu, was accusing his boss of extramarital affairs with female government officials. Morlu later said it was "beer talk". Weah himself downplayed it saying it was "mere angry talk" and that it was the work of "blackmailers and racketeers". Some Liberians say the situation in the country has gone from the toilet into the septic tank. The situation no more smells, it stinks.

A few weeks ago, the Government of Liberia described Henry Costa a "fugitive from justice" on allegations that he used fake traveling documents. Costa, who has been organising protests in Liberia, was briefly arrested in Sierra Leone while returning to USA and set free.

Beset by woes and reports of corruption, Weah has asked his people, most of whom are running out of patience, to give him chance to fix the country. Although efforts have been made to construct and rehabilitate some roads, during my visit, I saw roads such as in Bushrod Island riddled with potholes making vehicular traffic a complete nightmare.

In a nearly two-hour annual address to the 54th National Legislature in late January this year, Weah renewed his pledge to fight corruption and that there "will be no sacred cows". Many people are not impressed.

Liberia is a "God-fearing" nation. Weah is a Christian. I have personally been in church services which he had attended. Also, during the presidential elections, he visited the Synagogue Church of All Nations in Lagos where believers are usually reminded to make the Word of God the standard for their lives. As a footballer, Weah was loved, and he knows that as a believer, God usually tests people's character when in power or when they have acquired wealth. Will Weah remain the darling of his people?

I love the lyrics of the Liberian national anthem. All hail, Liberia, hail... Long live Liberia, happy land! The truth? Liberia is not a happy land. Weah, who has now served for about two years as president, has a mammoth task to fix the economy and once again inspire his people through servant leadership and leading by good examples in both words and deeds. But can he? I wish Weah and the people of Liberia all the best.

About the author: SulaimanMomodu lived and worked in Liberia for the United Nations as the country transitioned from war to peace. He had also worked for the UN in Ethiopia and Switzerland.

Sen. sends nominee for psychiatric check

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

River Gee County Senator Conmany Wesseh, has told Liberia's Deputy Defense Minister for Operations-designate Tarpleh Davis, to go for detraumatization first before appearing before the Liberian Senate for confirmation.

The confirmation hearing for Davis on Wednesday, February 05, in the chambers of the Senate turned dramatic when senators, including Montserrado County Senator Darios Dillon and River Gee Senator Wesseh quizzed the nominee about his social media post on Facebook, threatening to kill protesters, who will temper with his properties during the January 06, 2020 protest organized by the Council of Patriots.

Sen. Wesseh recalls them Mr. Davis posted on his Facebook page, the pledge to



'restructure' security sector-focuses on the National Security Agency, the Liberia National Police and the Armed Forces of Liberia, without mentioning the

Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agency or the Liberia Immigration Service.

Wesseh quoted Davis as saying the three security

institutions -AFL, NSA and LNP are a risk to Liberia's security because they have tentacles of influence over the regime and do not support President Weah.

He further quoted the deputy minister-designate as saying, the change within these organizations are slow! Too slow, a post Davis allegedly made a week to his nomination by President Weah.

But Davis explains that he served in the United States army and suffered from post traumatic stress disorder due to his involvement in combat while serving in the U.S. army, something, that led Sen. Wesseh to say he should seek treatment before facing the senate for confirmation.

Senator Wesseh's assertion created tension and led to fistfight among supporters of Mr. Davis and staffers of the Liberian Senate. It took the intervention of police assigned at the Capitol to calm the situation.

For his part, Bomi County Senator Sando Johnson, asked Mr. Davis to appeal to President Weah to revoke his nomination, as members of the Liberian Senate are not willing to confirm him because of his 'terrible' utterances.

Last December, some members of the House of Representatives wrote the Senate, urging that august body not to confirm Mr. Davis, as doing so could result to killing of Liberians on his order.

The lawmakers, led by Montserrado County Representative Henson Kaizolu noted that "David Tarpleh sometime in May and June 2019, promised to kill any of his fellow Liberians should any of them, in a protest, damage or cause to damage his property during such peaceful protest."

The Representatives, in their statement to Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert Chie, said, "We believe [that]

if Mr. Davis could make such a statement when he was not in an official position, he would, if confirmed, believe that he has full authority to execute his plan against peaceful citizens.

"Mr. Pro-Tempore and members of the Senate, we, the independent Legislative Caucus within the Unity Party, pray your indulgence not to confirm Mr. Davis. Such confirmation," they warned, "would be to the detriment of the Liberian people."

On Tuesday, 04 February, the Liberian Senate rejected two presidential nominees here following their respective confirmation hearings at the Capitol in Monrovia.

The Senate statutory Committee on Lands, Mines, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment took the decision.

The committee, headed by Lofa County Senator and stalwart of the former ruling Unity Party, George Tengbeh, voted overwhelmingly against nominees Cllr. Charles Gibson, chairman-designate for the Liberia Electricity Corporation and Atty. Anthony Toga Nimely, chairman-designate, for the Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission, respectively.

President George Manneh had appointed Cllr. Gibson as Minister of Justice, immediately after taken office in 2018, but withdrew the nomination under serious public pressure due to integrity issues.

Attorney Toga Nimely faces serious integrity questions at the American-sponsored Millennium Challenge Account where he served previously.

The rejection raises question about President Weah's choice of nominees for public offices, amid widespread corruption in his government.

The full plenary of the Senate voted behind closed doors, endorsing the nominees' rejection. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

Banks to give agro loans

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Liberia's Agriculture Minister-designate, Jeanine Cooper says she is in close discussions with eight commercial banks here to provide loans to farmers and for agriculture activities.

Appearing for confirmation hearing in the chambers of the Liberian Senate, Wednesday, February 05, at the Capitol in Monrovia, Madam Cooper said it seems challenging and it would take longer for the Liberian government to reopen the former Agriculture Cooperative and Development Bank, but working existing banks will fast track smooth running of agriculture activities across the country.

Delivering his third Annual Message to the nation a week ago, President George Manneh Weah stressed that agriculture remains a major pillar of his government's

development agenda and that he needed to find an individual who possesses not only the knowledge of agriculture but practical skills to match his vision for agricultural transformation.

It is in this regard that the President recently appointed Madam Jeanine Cooper, founder and chief executive officer of Fabrar Liberia, as his new agriculture minister-designate.

Madam Cooper notes the major problem with agriculture in Liberia is not government's inability to increase budget for the sector, but failure to strictly monitor supports from external sources.

"The past Government did mobilize enough resources to support agriculture but the problem is that projects have never been well supervised. We must ensure that assistance from international partners address basic constraints to its fullest to have transformation.

Many projects come into the country without the Government insisting what is needed to be addressed by our partners. If confirmed, I will ensure that we inform our partners on those areas we are lacking for necessary assistance," she vows.

Commenting on her involvement with Fabrar-Liberia Company, Madam Cooper says upon confirmation by the Liberian Senate, she will resign her post as founder and chief executive officer.

Commenting on the improvement of agricultural extension and research, the nominee stressed that farmers should be introduced to improved technologies to access data that can address their constraints.

"The World now depends on mobile technologies to enhance agricultural extension for farmers although this does not rule out human labor. We shall teach our farmers to improve their knowledge through technologies and other means."

She notes though the rice sector experiences low productivity, subsidy for rice farmers and processors are something she can work toward in her capacity as minister.

"We cannot boost the local production of rice if the farmers are not subsidized. The Government must encourage commercial banks to invest in the farming sector to improve production, mainly for rice," says the woman has spent a part of her in the private sector besides working with the United Nations. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne



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Adjust military training to suit women

-Justice Wolokollie cautions



By Winston W. Parley

Associate Justice Jamesetta Wolokollie says it is possible to adjust recruitment and training standards to suit women, in the wake of Liberian officials' call for more female participation in the military

and other security services, but with the bar set high for the recruitment of females into the military.

Delivering a keynote speech Wednesday, 5 February in Monrovia as part of activities leading to the Armed Forces Day celebration due 11 February, Justice Wokollie suggests that

when women are recruited in the army, they can better relate and empathize with women and children in crisis and serve as protectors of these vulnerable groups.

"A blanket restriction for women limits the ability of commanders in theatre to pick the most capable person for the job; it is possible to calibrate/adjust recruitment and training standards to suit women," she says at the Monrovia City Hall.

This year's Armed Forces Day will be observed under the theme: "Strategies to incorporate more Females in the Security Sector: AFL in Perspective."

Discussants listed for the symposium include Deputy Army Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. Geraldine J. George; International Rescue Committee Liberia Country Director Madam Faith A. Cooper; Independent Information Commission Media

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Chinese engineers want sports complex maintained

The Chinese construction firm that is renovating the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex (SKD) in Paynesville outside Monrovia, pleads with Liberians to maintain the stadium.

The Project Manager of Hebei Construction Group, Shao Kaipeng says Liberians should keep the beauty of the sports complex alive.

Hebei Construction Group is a state-owned enterprise in Hebei province, China

established in September 1997. It is a provincial state-owned assets authorized management agency under the state assets supervision and administration commission of direct regulation of the People's Government of Hebei province.

On August 29, 2019 the Government of Liberia and the People's Republic of China signed a Technical Agreement for extension of the Chinese-assisted project at the SKD.

New facilities added to the complex include; electronic or



Project Manager Shao Kaipeng and staff

fire control system, monitoring and sound systems, among others.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with reporters here on Tuesday, 04 February Mr. Shao said, "We are calling on all the people to work and maintain the beauty of the complex because this is where you play big matches and practice sports."

He underscored for the complex to be unique, it

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