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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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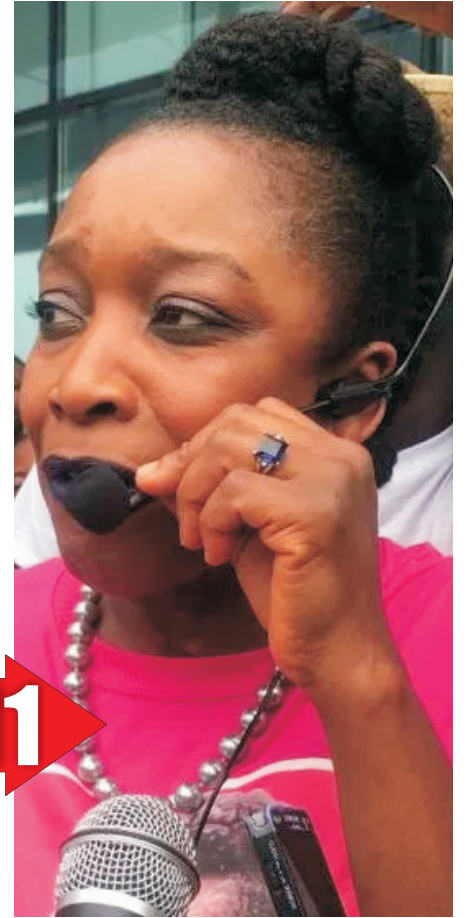
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Continental News

Ministry denies role in arms scam

Paris DennardMeet Trump's voice to blackAmerica
Rashid Echesa released on KSh 1 million bailArms scam: Echesa released on bail

The Defence ministry has denied involvement in the Sh40 billion military equipment scandal, that has seen the office of the Deputy President put on the spot and former Sports Cabinet Secretary Rashid Echesa arrested.

Mr Echesa allegedly used DP William Ruto's office to swindle Sh11 million as brokerage fees from directors of Echo Advanced Technologies LLC, claiming he could help them win the lucrative tender.

It is also alleged that he forged Defence Cabinet Secretary Monica Juma's signature to convince Echo representatives that it was a government deal.Mr Echesa was charged on Monday, alongside Daniel Otieno, Clifford Okoth and Kennedy Oyoo, with 12 counts of attempting to defraud the

organisation. They denied all the charges and were released on a Sh1 million cash bail each.Paris DennardMeet Trump's voice to blackAmerica

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billion military equipment scandal, that has seen the office of the Deputy President put on the spot and former Sports Cabinet Secretary Rashid Echesa arrested.Mr Echesa allegedly used DP William Ruto's office to swindle Sh11 million as brokerage fees from directors of Echo Advanced Technologies LLC,

claiming he could help them win the lucrative tender.

It is also alleged that he forged Defence Cabinet Secretary Monica Juma's signature to convince Echo representatives that it was a government deal.

During the visit, it was established that the complainants have never interacted with any official mandated to represent the Ministry of Defence," Public Communications Director Bogita Ongeru said in the statement.

He added: "All the documents and content displayed in the media, pertaining to the matter, never

originated from the Ministry of Defence."

The ministry accused the media of creating a "scandalous and libellous" narrative and said it would seek redress.

The documents in question include an end-user certificate, a non-disclosure agreement, letters of award and an extension of notification of award letter.

They were used to prepare a contract between the ministry and Echo, a company owned by American Koziowski Stanley Bruno.

Signed by Mr Echesa, his three co-accused and others, they were reportedly presented as the genuine ones from the ministry, the aim being to fraudulently obtain money from Mr Bruno.AFP



Kenya's William Samoei Ruto

Tunisia stalemate risks forcing new election

Tunisia's President Kais Saied has said he will dissolve parliament and call early elections if the new government line-up fails to win a parliamentary vote of confidence.

Elyes Fakhfakh, the prime minister-designate, presented his new cabinet

on Saturday but the biggest bloc in parliament, the Islamist Ennahda Party, rejected it.

Mr Fakhfakh has a deadline of Friday to form a cabinet and avoid his predecessor's fate.

Mr Habib Jemli, who was nominated by Ennahda, failed to get his cabinet

endorsed by parliament.

The new government will have the mammoth task of reviving the economy and fixing the high unemployment problem.

President Saied has called the stalemate Tunisia's worst political crisis since independence in 1956.BBC



President Saied (R) last month instructed former Finance Minister Elyes Fakhfakh to form a new government

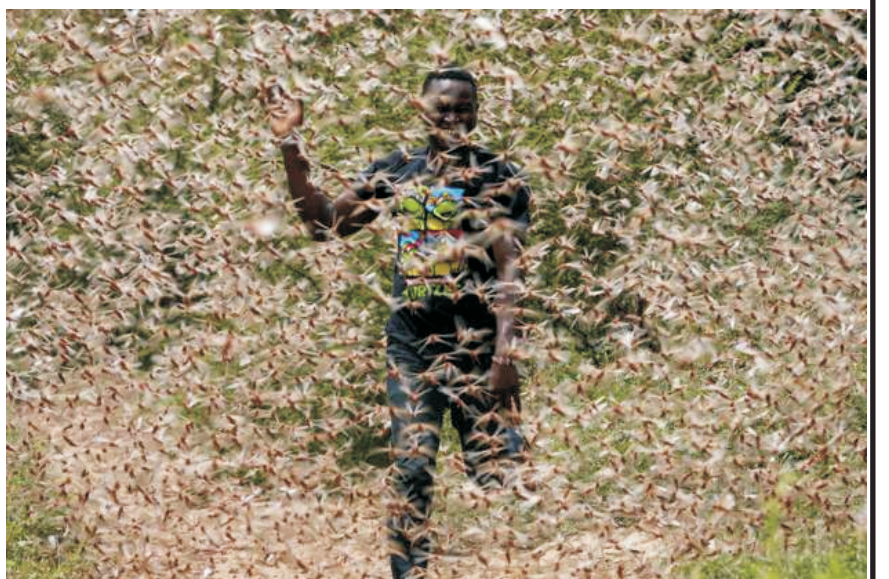
US pledges \$8m to fight locust plague

The US has pledged to provide \$8m (£6m) to control desert locusts in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced this support in a joint press

spraying of the affected areas with pesticide.

The UN agency warned that the East African region could be on the verge of a food crisis if huge swarms of locusts devouring crops and pasture are not brought under control.



conference with Ethiopian Foreign Minister Gedu Andargachew in Addis Ababa.

Last week the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) asked the international community to provide nearly \$76m (£58m) to fund the

There are fears that the locusts - already in the hundreds of billions - will multiply further.Efforts to control the infestation have so far not been effective.BBC

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EDITORIAL

Our hearts bleed for Journalist Miller

LIBERIAN JOURNALISTS CURRENTLY mourn the sudden passing of one of their very best, Kobo Zenu Miller of OK FM 99.5 on Saturday, 14 February after an cruel encounter with state security forces during a national county sports meet in January at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville.

A PROFICIENT BROADCASTER, talk show host and sports commentator, the late Zenu had gone to commentate or cover the match between Grand Kru and Nimba counties when he reportedly encountered ruthless officers of the elite presidential guard, Executive Protective Service who beat him on 26 January 2020, leaving him to complain of chest pains up to his abrupt demise.

"I WAS ATTACKED tonight at the SKD [“Samuel Kanyon Doe” Stadium] by EPS [Executive Protective Service] officers in the full view of the EPS director. Gosh!!!”, Zenu had posted subsequently on his Facebook page following the incident.

WHAT LEVEL OF investigation was conducted by the EPS following the alleged flogging is not clear but Zenu departed this world in pain, abandoning his loving family and relatives, friends and professional colleagues. He reportedly died at the ELWA Hospital in Paynesville.

THOUGH THE REAL cause of death may be established later, we demand a thorough investigation from the government, especially, authorities of the EPS to ascertain what transpired on 26 January that led to the brutal flogging of the deceased and his subsequent death.

NOTWITHSTANDING, THIS IS how much we know about security brutalities resulting to injuries and deaths under the Weah administration: On January 6, armed police dispersed peaceful protesters with teargas and water canisters, arresting at least 26 on the grounds of the Capitol where they had converged to demand answers from the government to earlier petitions, while on Tuesday, 15 October 2019 police teargassed protesting students in the streets of Monrovia, demanding their teachers to return to the classroom. Then on November 7, 2019 police shot and killed a teenager and wounded two others in Kingsville, Montserrado County while dispersing angry residents, who had erected a roadblock to demand the death of a juvenile. A year later, a police commander had chased a motorcyclist and shot him at point blank before shooting himself in his hand, portraying that he was attack. These are among some of the many excesses by state security forces against the civilian population over the period.

THAT THE LATE Journalist Miller wrote on his Facebook following his beating by EPS officers the incident happened in the presence of the director of the institution, Trokon Roberts, is of grave concern and should be investigated. How the EPS chief could allegedly allowed such inhumane behavior occurred in his presence without intervening?

EVEN AFTER THE incident, there was no official condemnation or comment because attacks against journalists in Liberia have become a norm. From time to time, journalists have been manhandled and their gadgets destroyed by state security officers without proper redress. This has to stop! These are patriotic citizens providing selfless contributions to the Motherland. They should be accorded due courtesies and respect.

ZENU DID NOT deserve to have died the way he departed - at the cruel hands of security officers protecting the President. This is why the authorities should conduct an investigation characterized by an autopsy to unearth nothing else but the whole truth.

THE JOURNALISM PROFESSION, the Press Union of Liberia and the entire country have lost one of the best species of ours while serving in the line of duty at the time he was needed more. Our hearts bleed for his early departure in a manner that is so despicable.

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COMMENTARY

By Nouriel Roubini

The White Swans of 2020

Financial markets remain blissfully in denial of the many predictable global crises that could come to a head this year, particularly in the months before the US presidential election. In addition to the increasingly obvious risks associated with climate change, at least four countries want to destabilize the US from within.

NEW YORK - In my 2010 book, *Crisis Economics*, I defined financial crises not as the “black swan” events that Nassim Nicholas Taleb described in his eponymous bestseller, but as “white swans.” According to Taleb, black swans are events that emerge unpredictably, like a tornado, from a fat-tailed statistical distribution. But I argued that financial crises, at least, are more like hurricanes: they are the predictable result of built-up economic and financial vulnerabilities and policy mistakes.

There are times when we should expect the system to reach a tipping point - the “Minsky Moment” - when a boom and a bubble turn into a crash and a bust. Such events are not about the “unknown unknowns,” but rather the “known unknowns.”

Beyond the usual economic and policy risks that most financial analysts worry about, a number of potentially seismic white swans are visible on the horizon this year. Any of them could trigger severe economic, financial, political, and geopolitical disturbances unlike anything since the 2008 crisis.

For starters, the United States is locked in an escalating strategic rivalry with at least four implicitly aligned revisionist powers: China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. These countries all have an interest in challenging the US-led global order, and 2020 could be a critical year for them, owing to the US presidential election and the potential change in US global policies that could follow.

Under President Donald Trump, the US is trying to contain or even trigger regime change in these four countries through economic sanctions and other means. Similarly, the four revisionists want to undercut American hard and soft power abroad by destabilizing the US from within through asymmetric warfare. If the US election descends into partisan rancor, chaos, disputed vote tallies, and accusations of “rigged” elections, so much the better for America’s rivals. A breakdown of the US political system would weaken American power abroad.

Moreover, some countries have a particular interest in removing Trump. The acute threat that he poses to the Iranian regime gives it every reason to escalate the conflict with the US in the coming months - even if it means risking a full-scale war - on the chance that the ensuing spike in oil prices would crash the US stock market, trigger a recession, and sink Trump’s re-election prospects. Yes, the consensus view is that the targeted killing of Qassem Suleimani has deterred Iran, but that argument misunderstands the regime’s perverse incentives. War between US and Iran is likely this year; the current calm is the one before the proverbial storm.

As for US-China relations, the recent “phase one” deal is a temporary Band-Aid. The bilateral cold war over technology, data, investment, currency, and finance is already escalating sharply. The COVID-19 outbreak has reinforced the position of those in the US arguing for containment, and lent further momentum to the broader trend of Sino-American “decoupling.” More immediately, the epidemic is likely to be more severe than currently expected, and the disruption to the Chinese economy will have spillover effects on global supply chains - including pharma inputs, of which China is a critical supplier - and business confidence, all of which will likely be more severe than financial markets’ current complacency suggests.

Although the Sino-American cold war is by definition a low-intensity conflict, a sharp escalation is likely this year. To some Chinese leaders, it cannot be a coincidence that their country is simultaneously experiencing a massive swine flu outbreak, a severe bird flu, a coronavirus epidemic, political unrest in

Hong Kong, the re-election of Taiwan’s pro-independence president, and stepped-up US naval operations in the East and South China Seas. Regardless of whether China has only itself to blame for some of these crises, the view in Beijing is veering toward the conspiratorial.

But open aggression is not really an option at this point, given the asymmetry of conventional power. China’s immediate response to US containment efforts will likely take the form of cyberwarfare. There are several obvious targets. Chinese hackers (and their Russian, North Korean, and Iranian counterparts) could interfere in the US election by flooding Americans with misinformation and deep fakes. With the US electorate already so polarized, it is not difficult to imagine armed partisans taking to the streets to challenge the results, leading to serious violence and chaos.

Revisionist powers could also attack the US and Western financial systems - including the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) platform. Already, European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde has warned that a cyberattack on European financial markets could cost \$645 billion. And security officials have expressed similar concerns about the US, where an even wider range of telecommunication infrastructure is potentially vulnerable.

By next year, the US-China conflict could have escalated from a cold war to a near-hot one. A Chinese regime and economy severely damaged by the COVID-19 crisis and facing restless masses will need an external scapegoat, and will likely set its sights on Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and US naval positions in the East and South China Seas; confrontation could creep into escalating military accidents. It could also pursue the financial “nuclear option” of dumping its holdings of US Treasury bonds if escalation does take place. Because US assets comprise such a large share of China’s (and, to a lesser extent, Russia’s) foreign reserves, the Chinese are increasingly worried that such assets could be frozen through US sanctions (like those already used against Iran and North Korea).

Of course, dumping US Treasuries would impede China’s economic growth if dollar assets were sold and converted back into renminbi (which would appreciate). But China could diversify its reserves by converting them into another liquid asset that is less vulnerable to US primary or secondary sanctions, namely gold. Indeed, both China and Russia have been stockpiling gold reserves (overtly and covertly), which explains the 30% spike in gold prices since early 2019.

In a sell-off scenario, the capital gains on gold would compensate for any loss incurred from dumping US Treasuries, whose yields would spike as their market price and value fell. So far, China and Russia’s shift into gold has occurred slowly, leaving Treasury yields unaffected. But if this diversification strategy accelerates, as is likely, it could trigger a shock in the US Treasuries market, possibly leading to a sharp economic slowdown in the US.

The US, of course, will not sit idly by while coming under asymmetric attack. It has already been increasing the pressure on these countries with sanctions and other forms of trade and financial warfare, not to mention its own world-beating cyberwarfare capabilities. US cyberattacks against the four rivals will continue to intensify this year, raising the risk of the first-ever cyber world war and massive economic, financial, and political disorder.

This list is hardly exhaustive, but it points to what one can reasonably expect for 2020. Financial markets, meanwhile, remain blissfully in denial of the risks, convinced that a calm if not happy year awaits major economies and global markets.

O-PED

By Anne O. Krueger

Trump's "Currency Manipulation" Con

The long-awaited "phase one" deal between the United States and China has not ended US trade warfare. Instead, President Donald Trump's administration has devised yet another tool with which to tilt the playing field against foreign competitors, all but ensuring that damaging and unnecessary trade conflicts will continue.

WASHINGTON, DC - Would you believe the following story if you heard it? Imagine a small, rural town with one general store that sells to, and buys from, the farmers living in the surrounding area. Owing to their large families, the farmers have been running up a tab at the store, and they now owe the store a great deal of money. So, they organize a protest to demand that the store raise its prices on seed, fertilizer, and the like, while reducing the price it will pay for the farmers' grains.

Obviously, the scenario is absurd. Paying even higher prices for agricultural supplies and receiving less for what they produce will not help the farmers pay off their tab. Indeed, either change would probably result in higher profits for the store, and greater losses for the farmers and their families.

In this nonsensical parable, US President Donald Trump's administration represents the farmers. By accusing China (or any other country) of "currency manipulation," the administration is effectively demanding that the Chinese appreciate their currency - that is, make each renminbi cost more in dollars.

To be sure, many politicians over the years have argued that China and other developing and emerging economies "manipulate their currency" to gain a competitive edge. By reducing the purchasing power of their own currencies, they can make their exports cost less to foreign buyers, while rendering imports more expensive to domestic buyers.

To account for such concerns, the United States has a law mandating that the Department of the Treasury prepare a biannual report for Congress specifying whether any currencies are being "manipulated." If the Treasury does so specify, the administration is then expected to carry on "talks" with the accused country. But, even then, the law mandates no penalties.

Congress has established three criteria to determine whether manipulation has occurred. The offending country must have a current-account surplus above 3% of GDP; it must have intervened in the foreign-exchange market to make its currency cheaper; and it must have a bilateral surplus with the US in excess of \$20 billion.

In August 2019, China's current-account surplus fell below 3% of GDP, and the Chinese government had previously been intervening not to devalue the renminbi but rather to prevent further depreciation following Trump's threats of additional tariffs. In the event, the US declared China a currency manipulator anyway, only to remove the designation as a part of the "phase one" trade deal agreed in January.

But, in the meantime, the Trump administration has discovered a new tool with which to bludgeon foreign competitors. The Department of Commerce this month issued a rule that allows for additional levies on imports from countries deemed to be currency manipulators, with the percentage increase in the tariff (in addition to the statutory tariff and the anti-dumping or countervailing duty margin) being equal to the estimated percentage by which the currency is deemed undervalued. Worse, under the new rule, there is no legal process that the department must follow when determining whether "manipulation" has occurred.

Accordingly, an American company that believes it is losing sales to a foreign company may now appeal to the Commerce Department (and the International Trade Administration) for special treatment. Even if a (profitable) German exporter charges the same prices for the goods it sells domestically as it does for the goods it sells in the US, an American firm can demand additional levies by citing "currency manipulation." And if no US firm acts, the Commerce Department can simply initiate such appeals on its own.

The US has long had one of the world's strongest economies, owing in no small part to its respect for the rule of law and its efforts to maintain a level playing field for competition - both foreign and domestic - within the US market. Given this tradition, it is puzzling that so many American politicians and businessmen are now terrified of other countries' economic strengths.

True, the US has also long championed extraordinarily loose criteria to justify anti-dumping measures and countervailing duties, and it has secured rules and procedures for determining such offenses within the World Trade Organization. But a finding of "currency manipulation" has never been among the relevant criteria. Most likely, the Trump administration's unilateral decision to add currency manipulation to the list will be contested in court and at the WTO.

More broadly, the Trump administration's currency politics will be felt everywhere. Trump has complained that both Argentina and Brazil are manipulating their currencies, even though those countries' exchange-rate depreciation is obviously a response to high inflation. The International Monetary Fund and others have recommended that both pursue devaluation in order to restore macroeconomic balance.

Meanwhile, Trump continues to call on the US Federal Reserve to lower interest rates and ease its monetary policy so that the dollar will depreciate. Apparently, the US is free to manipulate its currency - just so long as no one else does.

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OPINION

By Shlomo Ben-Ami

The Paradigm Shift on Palestine

The Trump administration's Israel-Palestine peace plan has undermined the belief that internationally agreed principles, such as the need to adhere to the pre-1967 borders, are unassailable. Given how willing the rest of the world seems to be to abandon the Palestinians, these losses will not be easy to reverse.

TELAVIV - Nobody should be surprised that US President Donald Trump's Middle East peace proposal is heavily tilted toward the Israelis. What is surprising is that, rather than rejecting Trump's proposal, the world has left the Palestinians largely on their own.

While dismissing the Palestinians' national yearnings with the patronizing promise to "improve their lives," the Trump peace plan embraces Israel's national narrative that it alone has valid historical claims to Judea and Samaria, the Jews' biblical homeland. So, while it would give the Palestinians their own state, it would be a fragmented territory covering Gaza and 70% of a West Bank dotted with Israeli settlements and surrounded on all sides by Israeli-annexed territory. Its capital would be located in a suburb of East Jerusalem, which would remain Israel's undivided capital.

The plan ignores Palestinian demands for the right of return to homes left when Israel was established in 1948 - a right that was recognized at the time by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194. Moreover, in line with Israel's far-right ethnocentric ambitions, the border would be drawn in a way that strips 300,000 Israeli Arabs of their citizenship, making them citizens of the Palestinian state.

The Palestinian territories would be connected by a maze of tunnels and bridges, and much like the Bantustans of apartheid South Africa, they would be subject to overwhelming Israeli military control. Anyone entering the new Palestine - by air, sea, or land - would have to go through Israel.

Meanwhile, Palestinians would be prohibited from creating their own armed forces or engaging in any activities "that adversely affect the State of Israel's security" - as determined by Israel's government. Likewise, the Palestinians would have to earn the right to this sham state by disarming Hamas and proving - not to any international body, but to Israel and the United States - that they have created a democratic system governed by the rule of law.

In presenting such a deeply unfair plan, Trump has destroyed any credibility that the US may have still had as an honest mediator. Moreover, he has undermined the belief - crucial for progress toward a fair deal - that internationally agreed principles of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, from the need to adhere to the pre-1967 borders to the illegality of Israeli settlements, are unassailable.

Given how willing the rest of the world seems to be to abandon the Palestinians, these losses will not be easy to reverse, even if Trump loses the November presidential election and his successor abandons the plan, as candidates like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren seem prepared to do. The fact that anyone is taking Trump's skewed plan seriously is a testament, first and foremost, to the radical transformation that the Middle East has undergone in recent years. Solidarity with the Palestinians used to be the glue that held together an otherwise fragmented Arab world; now, their plight is a nuisance, a burden, and above all an obstacle to rapprochement with Israel.

Yes, the Arab League repudiated the US plan at a meeting of its foreign ministers in Cairo. But the truth, as Lebanon's Hezbollah movement put it, is that Trump's "deal of shame" would not have happened without the "complicity and betrayal" of several Arab states.

The ambassadors of Bahrain, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates participated in the White House unveiling ceremony, implying these countries' approval. Moreover, despite "renewing its assertion" of support for the Palestinian people, Saudi Arabia noted that it "values the efforts" of the Trump administration in "developing a comprehensive peace deal between the Israeli and Palestinian sides." Given Trump's apparent loyalty to Saudi Arabia - based, not least, on lucrative arms deals - the Kingdom's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, was probably privy to the plan's contents before it was released.

In Jordan, King Abdullah initially warned that Israel's annexation of the Jordan Valley would have serious security consequences. But he subsequently advised other countries to "look at the glass half full." Judging by its ambiguous attitude toward Palestinian statehood, one must wonder whether Jordan would prefer having as its neighbor Israel, with which it has historically colluded to rein in Palestinian aspirations, rather than a Palestinian state.

Similarly, Egypt's foreign ministry called upon both sides "to carefully consider" the peace plan, and even claimed that creating an independent and sovereign state in the occupied territories would restore all the "legitimate rights" of Palestinians. And though Tunisia's president condemned the peace plan as "the injustice of the century," the country's ambassador to the UN was soon sacked for leading the challenge against it in the Security Council.

But it is not only the Arab world that is letting down the Palestinians. The European Union's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Josep Borrell, strongly condemned the plan. But his unilateral statement was needed precisely because some EU countries - including the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Italy - blocked a shared resolution. France, for its part, gave the plan a cautious welcome.

Beyond the EU, the United Kingdom's government hailed the Trump peace plan as "a serious proposal" and "a positive step forward." And despite officially condemning the plan for "contradicting UN resolutions," Russia stands to gain from what a Moscow Times editorial called the "unilaterally imposed humiliating terms" of the deal. This "provides a precedent for major powers dictating terms to weaker ones" and vindicates Russia's occupation of Crimea, "Russia's West Bank." In fact, "limited sovereignty" was exactly what the Kremlin wanted to give the former Soviet republics.

If, with the probable connivance of the Trump administration, Israel annexes its West Bank settlements, the paradigm shift in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process would be complete. Israel's status as an apartheid state would be officially confirmed. And the Palestinians will face a stark choice: submit or struggle. If they choose the latter, it had better be a diplomatic struggle: a third Intifada would be calamitous for their cause. Boycotting America, still an indispensable power for an equitable regional solution, proved to be a wrongheaded Palestinian policy.

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FEATURE

FEATURE

Poor in the Midst of Plenty: The Natural Resource Dilemma in West Africa

By Peter Quaqua

There is little doubt the West African sub-region is endowed with abundant natural resources. The region is home to some of the best and largest deposit of gold, bauxite, rutile, diamond, timber, oil and gas, iron ore, uranium, coal and rivers. It hosts the Upper Guinea Forest [the Lungs of West and North Africa], with a massive green fortress protecting the region from being overtaken by the Sahara Desert. Then factor in the rich marine resources including, eye popping lobsters, shrimps, crabs, fish in its oceans and the quixotic and scenic beaches, a tourist paradise of sort. These are the many alluring resources to behold in the milieu in focus.

This rich and sprawling natural endowment has always been an attraction and destination of some of the biggest corporations from around the world. There is paradox in the fact that the people and countries in the region are among some of the poorest and least developed in the world. How unfortunate that 'resource curse' ascription remains an ignominious tag on the region.

Bad governance and corruption easily come to mind when lamenting the woes of the people, but one should consider for a moment how multinational corporations, from countries that profess to champion rights, accountability, anti-corruption and justice, have been running to the region exploiting natural resources with no human face in the name of foreign direct investment.

There is a maxim that 'one who aids and abets a theft is equally a thief.' No wonder trillions are siphoned off the region in illicit flows from poor destitute communities to rich capitals in the West, joined recently by China, India and others.

"Being that it is the government that is inviting them (the multinational companies), they are sure of receiving protection. But we want these multinational companies to be accountable while tapping out our natural resources...", said the Board Chairman of the Sierra Leone Network on the Right to Food (SiLNoRF), Raymond Senesie.

Yes, governments in the region need investments to boost their economies and create jobs for their struggling people, so it goes without saying that the people had to survive at the mercy of their governments' pursuit of foreign investments regardless of the consequences for human rights and the environment.

Various accounts show how foreign companies, with the backing of their host and home governments, violate local community rights with impunity. Poor people suffer forceful displacement, denial of their livelihoods and destruction of their properties.

Saa Pascal Tenguiano, Guinean lawyer and Executive Director for the Center for Commerce and International Development (CECIDE) said "The scale and impact of the environmental degradation and abuses perpetrated by these companies, coupled with their failure to honor social corporate responsibilities to affected communities, make it hard to resist the feeling that, like their host and home governments, these concessionaires must be made to account."

Attorney Alfred Lahai Brownell, Sr. is the Founder and Lead Campaigner for Green Advocates International, the 2019 Goldman Prize [sometime referred to as the Green Nobel] Winner. He's all too aware that "communities in concession areas experience a range of negative impacts from the destruction of farmlands, to pollution of water sources, desecration of sacred sites and burial grounds and inadequate compensation for uprooting them from their livelihoods." He thinks by bringing vulnerable communities together in the Mano River Union Civil Society Natural Resources Rights and Governance Platform (MRU-CSO Platform), "there would be collective actions in brining much needed justice, accountability and relief to the suffering masses across the region who are most affected by multinational corporations - grabbing their land and destroying their habitats with impunity." Adding, "Governments in West Africa cannot and must not



A frontline village in Sierra Leone (Manonkoh, Port Loko District) affected by mining operations of London Mining Company

outsource their responsibilities to protect the rights of their citizens and the environment. It is time to ACT".

Alfred Brownell is one of four activists behind the formation of the MRU CSO Platform. The others are Abu Brima, Executive Director of the Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), Sierra Leone; Michel Yoboue, Executive Director, Group for Research and Advocacy on Extractive Industries (GRPIE), Côte d'Ivoire and Kabinet Sesay, then Executive Director, Center for Commerce and International Development (CECIDE), Guinea.

The idea was conceived in September 2012 at a meeting of civil society activists in Monrovia, organized by Green Advocates International (Liberia), to research and publish natural resource rights and governance profiles of countries in the Mano River Union (MRU) basin. The parties agreed in a communique to use the findings to design advocacy campaigns to ensure that land and natural resource laws and regulations are people friendly and that governments and corporations in the region will be held accountable to their obligations to protect, respect and fulfill rights.

Michel Yoboue, Executive Director, Group for Research and Advocacy on Extractive Industries (GRPIE), of Côte d'Ivoire could not hold back his enthusiasm about the achievement of forming a body that would fight to amplify the plight of the neglected and abused people in the region. He believes nothing works better in a democracy than the rule of law. That is why they resolved to use existing judicial and non-judicial mechanisms at the local, national and regional levels to promote corporate and government accountability. "This is simply victory for human rights," said Michel.

The network has since grown beyond the (four countries) MRU (i.e. Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire) to include five other countries across West Africa, (comprising of Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Niger). The potential of the remainder of the other West Africa countries joining is evident.

Among other things, the MRU CSO Platform is committed to strengthening collaboration around corporate and governmental accountability, undertaking solidarity actions and sharing experiences on how community dwellers and their livelihoods are being affected by government's infrastructure development and foreign direct investment involving (large-scale mining, oil and gas, forestry and agricultural) companies and their host and home governments.

Going forward from the Monrovia conference, the MRU CSO Platform organized its first "People's Forum" in Makeni, Sierra Leone from 18 to 21st March 2019. Sixty participants from indigenous communities and civil society groups from eight West African nations (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Niger) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (observer) as well as development partners were

in attendance.

While delivering the keynote address, the Deputy Secretary General, of the Mano River Union (MRU) Secretariat Abu-Bakarr Tarawalie (PhD), called for more collaboration and networking among the public and civil society organizations in ensuring that communities dwellers benefit from their natural resources.

Speaking earlier at the opening of the Makeni forum, the Executive Director of NMJD, Abu Brima, said the forum was designed to generate dialogue on the extent to which citizens and indigenous communities have been responding in terms of actions taken to counteract the bitter experiences that come with the extraction of their resources. He emphasized "We must pursue the development of alternative extractive mechanism beneficial to our countries and their people."

Fund for Global Human Rights' Program Officer for Thematic Initiatives, Dr. John M. Kabia, remarked that the gathering was overdue, stressing the need for communities to lead their own campaign. Dr. Kabia noted that the forum would not only give the people the opportunity to determine what happens to their land and natural resources, but it would also allow them to lead the process and map out strategies. GiZ's Sierra Leone representative, Mr. Patrick Macua, also contributed to the Forum.

For four days, delegates shared experiences, learned and discussed a range of issues common to countries across the region. A ten-count communique followed the deliberations, with the communities declaring among many things that: Multi-National Corporations have failed to observe international best practices in community entry protocols in most cases and cited instances of harassment and blacklisting of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs).

Prior to the Makeni people's forum, the MRU CSO Platform, working in collaboration with the Alternative for Community Advocates (ACA) based in Ghana; the Center for Public Interest Law (CEPIL), also in Ghana and Environmental Rights Action (Friends of the Earth Nigeria) based in Nigeria and Green Advocates based in Liberia to mobilize progressive young and public spirited lawyers and brought them together in Monrovia in September 2016.

That meeting gave birth to a community legal defense team named and styled, Public Interest Lawyering Initiative for West Africa (PILIWA). According to Veteran Ghanaian Lawyer, Augustine Niber, Executive Director of the Center for Public Interest Law (CEPIL), and one of the co-founders of the PILIWA, "The aim is to provide legal support to communities caught on the frontline of cooperate abuses by using national and international laws to hold governments and corporations accountable to their obligations to protect, respect and fulfill all rights."

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Legislature ignores Baptist Church's request?

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Liberia, a country founded by free slaves from America, seems to be neglecting its past, as request for financial support from the nearly 200 years old Providence Baptist Church where the nation signed its Declaration of Independence on July 26, 1847, goes unnoticed or virtually denied by lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

The church sits right on Broad Street, the heart of Monrovia, the capital, which is named in memory of James Monroe, fifth President of the United States of America. It is here, 17 former black slaves headed by Hilary Teage signed the Declaration of Independence, pronouncing Liberia to the world as a sovereign nation and member of the comity of nations.

When Liberia's Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor made a personal cash donation of US\$10,000 to the Church during Sunday worship Sunday, 16 February, she revealed that her personal effort in having the Baptist church included in the draft



national budget as was legislated in the 18th hundredth, didn't gain approval despite, leaving her with no alternative but to respond to a request for US\$10,000 from the Head Pastor, Rev. Dr. Samuel B. Reeves.

"Though I didn't manage to do what I had hoped but I will continue to try that God will open some hearts and doors so

that the responsibility of the nation for that shrine and many others across our nation will be taken in the manner it should. I have come with my contribution to that process in the amount of ten Thousand United States dollars (US\$10,000) to begin your work," Vice President Taylor noted.

Baptists here consider the

original edifice as a national shrine for being venue for the Declaration of Independence and hosting the first Legislature under late President Joseph Jenkins Roberts.

Madam Taylor explained that as head of the Liberian Senate and Vice President of the Republic, she had promised to use her office to ensuring that the church's request be considered in the fiscal year 2019/2020 draft national budget, which didn't materialize despite her efforts.

"I made my promise that I will do my very best because there was an actual legislation from the 1900s that the Government of the Republic of Liberia should be responsible to maintain that ancient land mark. Even though Providence

Baptist Church sits here on this hill, it is a national alter and the responsibility is not just for Christians such as you and those before you, who have kept it to this day", she asserted.

Receiving the money on behalf of the PBC, Rev. Dr. Reeves, thanked the Vice President and promised to use the fund for its intended purpose - to maintain the national shrine.

"We like to thank the Vice President for her personal contribution and this money goes to the maintenance of the national shrine, the old church. It is important and timely as we prepare for the two hundred (200yrs) anniversary of the church," Pastor Reeves revealed. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*



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Pleebo marketers to get modern building

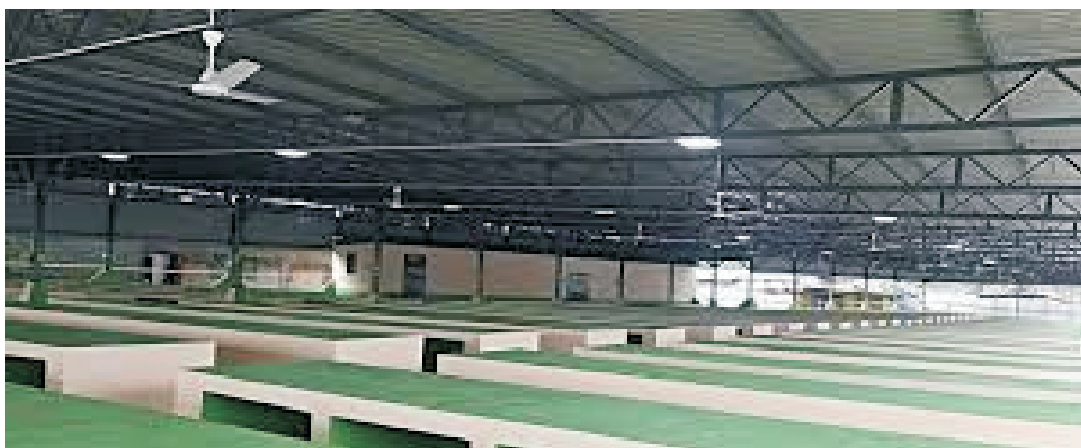
Marketers in Pleebo Maryland County, southeast Liberia are to shortly benefit a new market building being constructed by a local firm, Just Mart Construction Engineer Company (JMCEC).

The disclosure was made recently in Pleebo District by an official of the company, Moses Togba when

behalf of the Pleebo General Market, the chairman of the Wheelbarrow Association, Amos Tudeh said, the gesture was a means of cementing relationship with the Management of JMCEC as the project goes in full swing.

The project, which started in January 2019, is being sponsored by the African Development Bank and implemented by the LMA through the Government of Government.

Meanwhile, Mr. Togba has lauded the marketers for the donation and disclosed the project is set for completion early March, 2020.



marketers presented several traditional gifts to the company as a token of appreciation for the construction project.

Items presented include traditional kola nuts, palm wine, a locally-produced beverage, one beg of [25kgs] rice, and a gallon of Star Oil, among others.

Presenting the items on

When completed, the facility is expected to serve marketers from neighboring countries, including Ivory Coast.

Acting Superintendent for the market, Madam Cecelia Wilson noted that when news broke about the project, it was greeted in disbelief, because previous attempts had yielded no fruit, unlike the current one by JMCEC. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT

2nd & 3rd Floors, F & F Building
63 United Nations Drive, Coconut Plantation, Mamba Point
Monrovia, Liberia
Tel: +231 7701 44444 / 0888 828 988; Email: info@mca.gov.lr



PROCUREMENT NOTICE

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

4A1506/ME/023

Provision of a Hall, Two Breakout Rooms and Meals for the LEC ACMS Training Workshop Sessions (3 Lots)

Background and Context

The United States of America, acting through the Millennium Challenge Corporation ("MCC") and the Government of Liberia (the "Government" or "GoL") have entered a Millennium Challenge Compact for Millennium Challenge Account assistance to help facilitate poverty reduction through economic growth in Liberia (the "Compact") in the amount of approximately 256,726,000 USD ("MCC Funding"). The Government, acting through Millennium Challenge Account - Liberia (the "MCA Entity"), intends to apply a portion of the MCC Funding to eligible payments under a contract for which the Request for Quotation ("RFQ") is issued.

MCA-Liberia now invites priced quotation from eligible service providers for the Provision of a Hall, Two Breakout Rooms and Meals for the LEC ACMS Training Workshop Sessions (3 Lots).

The RFQ is for:

Provision of a Hall, Two Breakout Rooms and Meals for the LEC ACMS Training Workshop Sessions (3 Lots)

How to Participate in the Process:

Interested service providers should send an email to MCALiberiaPA@cardno.com requesting a copy of the RFQ, which is free of charge.

Important dates:

No.	Activity	Dates
1	Release of RFQ	February 12, 2020
4	Deadline for Submission of Quotations	February 24, 2020 at 4:00 pm

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Prosecutors act in bad faith

-Judge says in former gov't officials' trial

By Winston W. Parley

Prosecution lawyers in the trial of former Defense Minister Brownie Samukai and other co-defendants continue to upset the trial court with different excuses, with the latest on Tuesday, 18 February prompting Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay to threaten the imprisonment of prosecutors "when such frivolous excuse is attempted" by the State.

During hearing on Tuesday, Judge Gbeisay appeared to be angered by prosecutors' request for continuance (suspend hearing) of the case to be heard on Wednesday, 19 February because they are processing their witnesses for presentation in court.

Their request for continuance of the case on Tuesday came after the prosecution was on Monday, 17 February ordered by the court to pay a fine of US\$150.00 within 24 hours for having disrespected the court or risk the arrest of the County Attorney for Montserrado Cllr. Edwin Kla Martin.

In the mind of the court, Judge Gbeisay said on Tuesday, the application of the prosecution for continuance is made in bad faith and it is intended to waste the court's time and

hinder the administration of justice.

"The Court also considers the action of the State as a clear breach of duty to perform for which they have been paid. Time is of essence to this court for the benefit of prosecution, defendants indicted and the defendants' lawyer," Judge Gbeisay explains.

He continues that it must be noted that the case at hand is a case of concern, warning the prosecution that "for the very last time" the court will again bend over and backward to accommodate the State.

He gives a stern warning that when such frivolous excuse is attempted, "the prosecution will be seriously reprimanded to include maximum fine this court can impose together with imprisonment," adding that this should "be the final warning" to the state prosecutors.

The court appears unhappy with the way the prosecutors are proceeding, especially when they have more than 163 case on the docket and have prayed for the hearing of this case at hand which means they were prepared to proceed with it.

Following the issuance of these warnings, Judge Gbeisay says he reluctantly grants prosecution's request, assigning the further hearing of the matter to Wednesday, 19



February at 9 AM at the Criminal Court "C" at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia.

Judge Gbeisay's earlier decision to fine the prosecution on Monday was prompted by defense lawyers' complaint that the State had failed at the time to obey court's order to provide copy of all species of evidence to the defendants in line with the statute.

Former Defense Minister Brownie Samukai, co-defendants Joseph P. Johnson and J. NyumahDorbor and others are standing trial for allegedly embezzling funds generated in a compulsory saving scheme established in July 2009 for personnel of the

Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) during former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's rule.

The regime of her predecessor President George Manneh Weah drew an indictment against the

defense officials on 9 October 2019, accusing them of committing economic sabotage, theft of property, and misuse of public money, among others.

Through the compulsory savings funds, prosecutors allege that former Minister Samukai, former Deputy Defense Minister Joseph Johnson and former Defense Ministry Comptroller NyumahDorbor deducted the salaries of AFL officers from all ranks to serve as supplementary pension benefits for assistance to wounded soldiers and deceased soldiers' families.

Over US\$1.2m of the US\$1.9m deposited was allegedly misapplied by Mr. Samukai, the prosecution alleges, and claims further that the defendants made themselves the only signatories to the account, leaving out the then AFL Chief of Staff and other ranking officers.

Artisanal miners

Starts from page 6

in the mining sector has become alarming, stressing a need to reduce cutting down of trees especially, forest trees. The Minister explained that cutting down trees causes humans and animals' migration.

The refilling of pits, according to Minister Willabo, is meant to prepare the land for other uses after mining especially, agriculture and also provides safety for animals, human beings and the environment.

The Deputy Minister further warned participants to desist from using mercury because it is a dangerous chemical that negatively impact human beings especially, women, adding that it is a chemical that stays under the earth for

years when used to mine and may travel through creeks and rivers.

Also speaking, Deputy Mines and Energy Minister for Planning and Human Resources Development, Carlton S. Miller, re-emphasized the new regulation mandating miners to backfill their pits or risk not renewing their licenses.

He thanked the participants for undergoing the training and said government attaches great interest in formalizing the artisanal mining sector, so the ministry will do all it can to ensure the process succeeds.

During the training participants were taught various mining methods, including pit laying, benching, map reading and other safety methods. -Press Release

Nigerian held for placing girl in sealed container

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Police in Monrovia are investigating a Nigerian, named not disclosed, for allegedly kidnapping a three-year-old girl who was discovered suffocating in a plastic barrel owned by the suspect in Slipway community opposite

Water Street, Monrovia.

The incident occurred on Sunday, 16 February.

Witnesses told this paper that the child, whose name was not disclosed, went missing while she and her colleagues were playing in the community.

They disclosed that the minor was discovered after one

of her colleagues alerted the child's mother that their friend had been placed an empty barrel allegedly by a Nigerian National, also a resident of the same community.

Witness Noah Richardson explains further that thereafter the child's parents, including her dad, who is a security officer, arrive on the scene, accompanied by other security officers.

Noah continues that the accused was requested to open the barrel but he refused on grounds that his water was stored in it.

He says based on the suspect's refusal to act as requested, the security forcibly opened it only to discover the minor squatting in the barrel, sweating profusely.

There, the accused was immediately arrested and is now undergoing investigation at the National Police Headquarters on Capitol Hill.

Police sources informed

this paper the accused confessed during preliminary investigation that he committed the act because children usually climb play on his steps, despite warning them to stop.

However, some community residents, who also spoke to this paper say the act is an attempted kidnap.

They claim prior to the child's disappearance, they saw the accused bringing several barrels into the community, making to think it was for business purpose.

They call on the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to ensure the accused face full weight of the

law.

Efforts to get comments from the child's parents later proved fruitless as they were whisked up by the police along with the accused to the LNP headquarters.

Human trafficking, kidnapping, and ritualistic activities are common in Liberia, as many innocent people, including women and children have been murdered and body parts extracted by unknown individuals.

When the LNP public affairs department was contacted via mobile phone, there was no response up to press time. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne



Français

Le procureur du comté de Montserrado condamné à une amende pour outrage à la cour

Le procureur du comté de Montserrado, Me Edwin K. Martin, pourrait faire l'objet d'une interpellation sur ordonnance du juge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay de la Cour pénale "C", s'il refuse de payer dans les 24 heures une amende de 150 dollars US à laquelle il est condamné pour outrage à la cour.

Le juge Gbeisaya pris la décision le lundi 17 février au Temple de la justice après que des avocats de la défense dans une affaire de sabotage économique impliquant l'ancien ministre de la Défense Brownie Samukai et d'autres se sont plaints de ce que l'État ait refusé d'obéir à l'ordonnance du tribunal de fournir une copie de tous les éléments de preuves qui sont à la disposition de l'accusation.

Le Procureur n'ayant pas payé l'amende de 150 dollars US, le juge a ordonné qu'il soit arrêté « s'il ne paye pas le montant » et ordonne en outre au ministère public de mettre à la disposition de la défense tous les éléments de preuves le lundi, à 16 heures, au plus tard.

Selon le juge, l'ordonnance est conforme à la loi qui oblige

le ministère public à fournir une copie de toutes les espèces de preuves à l'équipe de défense avant le procès.

Le juge Gbeisay a rappelé que mardi dernier, le tribunal avait rendu une ordonnance, demandant à l'accusation de mettre à la disposition de chacun des accusés toutes les preuves documentaires au plus tard le 17 février à 16 heures.

« Le dossier de ce tribunal montre que le Procureur n'a pas pris l'ordonnance du tribunal au

sérieux ; conséquence, les avocats de la défense ne sont pas en possession des éléments de preuve qui auraient pu permettre à la défense de poursuivre ce procès », a déclaré la Cour.

Plusieurs responsables du régime précédent dont l'ancien ministre de la défense M. Samukai, Joseph P. Johnson et J. Nyumah Dorbor, ont été inculpés par le régime du

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Cllr. Edwin K. Martin

Le nouveau patron de la CBL préside sa première réunion de WAIFEM

Le gouverneur exécutif de la Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL), J. Aloysius Tarlue, a récemment été choisi pour présider la 38e réunion du conseil des gouverneurs de l'Institut ouest-africain de gestion financière et économique (WAIFEM), au nom de M. Godwin I. Emefiele, Gouverneur de la

Banque centrale du Nigéria.

Le Conseil est composé des gouverneurs des banques centrales de la Gambie, du Ghana, du Libéria, du Nigéria et de la Sierra Leone.

La réunion de la WAIFEM faisait partie des réunions statutaires conjointes de la WAIFEM, du WAMI (West African Monetary Institute) qui comprend le Collège des

superviseurs de la Zone monétaire ouest-africaine (CSWAMZ) et de l'Agence monétaire ouest-africaine (WAMA). Les réunions statutaires conjointes de fin d'année ont eu lieu au Centre international de conférences de Freetown, en Sierra Leone, du 6 au 14 février 2020. Les trois réunions ont été précédées de réunions techniques des États membres.

Les délibérations lors des réunions statutaires conjointes ont principalement porté sur les perspectives de création d'une monnaie unique ouest-africaine, telles que contenues dans la feuille de route révisée et approuvée par l'autorité des chefs d'État et de gouvernement, la promotion du commerce régional et l'harmonisation des politiques dans la région.

Les autres questions qui ont été discutées comprenaient l'évolution des taux de change des monnaies des pays membres de la CEDEAO, la proposition d'un Fonds de solidarité et de

L'ONU encourage l'UMF à œuvrer pour le renforcement de la démocratie dans la sous-région

La paix et la stabilité dans les États membres de l'Union du fleuve Mano (UMF) sont indispensables au renforcement de la démocratie, à la promotion de la bonne gouvernance et au soutien du développement dans la sous-région, a indiqué M. Kingsley O. Amaning, coordonnateur résident du PNUD (Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement).

M. Amaning a tenu ces propos à l'égard de la sous-région dans une déclaration au début d'une table ronde de trois jours le lundi 17 février dans un hôtel à Sinkor, en banlieue de Monrovia. La rencontre, qui a réuni des représentants des Nations Unies, de la CEDEAO, de l'UMF et du Gouvernement du Libéria, consistait à permettre aux participants de réfléchir à la planification des actions communes de l'UMF et du PNUD face aux questions d'actualité, dont la prolifération des épidémies, la pandémie du VIH / sida, le changement climatique et la bonne gouvernance.

Selon M. Amaning, « la propagation des maladies telles que le VIH / sida, le virus Ebola, la dégradation de l'environnement, le changement climatique et les défis gouvernementaux, en particulier les formes politiques sans concession qui sapent les principes et les valeurs démocratiques, mettent en évidence la vulnérabilité des populations de la sous-région ». Ce sont des questions qui, regrette-t-il, affectent chaque pays, polarisent les communautés, exacerbent les griefs, déstabilisent les régions, d'où la nécessité des efforts concertés de la part des gouvernants afin de parvenir à un développement durable inclusif dans la sous-région.

« Cependant, nous ne mettons pas en cause les succès et les progrès qu'ont enregistrés les pays de la sous-région. Nous ne sommes pas sans savoir que des transitions politiques, la promotion des droits de l'homme et de la croissance économique ont été enregistrées ces derniers temps », a-t-il dit.

« Permettez-moi à ce stade de féliciter d'ailleurs l'Union du fleuve Mano et le PNUD d'avoir organisé cet atelier de planification des stratégies et de lui avoir fourni des conditions optimales de réussite », a indiqué M. Amaning.

Il a aussi salué l'engagement du gouvernement du Libéria en faveur de la stabilité et de l'intégration sous-régionales.

Il s'est par ailleurs félicité du niveau de partenariat entre l'Union du fleuve Mano et le Bureau des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest pour l'organisation de la réunion de haut niveau sur la paix et la stabilité, qui portait sur l'unité conjointe de sécurité et le renforcement des frontières.

Pour sa part, Mme Medina Wesseh, secrétaire générale de l'Union du Fleuve Mano, a fait part de la satisfaction l'UMF d'avoir rejoint le Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement et tous les autres États étrangers pour tracer une voie claire pour l'action et les activités qui vont renforcer la paix, la démocratie, le dialogue, le développement économique et la bonne gouvernance.

Elle a remercié le Directeur Afrique du PNUD pour l'attention particulière qu'il a accordée au [plan] d'investissement des Nations Unies dans la sous-région avec la signature de son memorandum d'accord.



Articles traduits
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stabilisation de la CEDEAO pour faire face aux chocs externes dans l'union monétaire, et l'harmonisation des données / statistiques en tant qu'exigences importantes pour le programme de monnaie unique.

La libre circulation des capitaux dans la région de la

CEDEAO et l'harmonisation de leur environnement d'affaires ont été examinées, de même que les questions d'inclusion financière, les prêts non performants (NPL), et le risque de la cybercriminalité dans le système financier.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Français

Le procureur du comté

président George Manneh Weah de détournement de fonds générés dans le cadre d'un plan d'épargne obligatoire établi en juillet 2009 pour le personnel des Forces armées du Libéria (AFL) pendant le règne de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf.

A cause du système d'épargne obligatoire, selon les procureurs, les autorités du ministère de la Défense, dont Samukai, ancien ministre de la défense, Joseph Johnson et Nyumah Dorbor, respectivement ancien Ministre adjoint et ancien directeur financier, ont déduit des montants sur les salaires des officiers et des sous-officiers des Forces Armées du Libéria. Il s'agissait selon les autorités du ministère de la défense d'un système qui permettrait aux soldats de bénéficier des prestations de retraite supplémentaires et d'assister les militaires en cas de blessure et leurs familles en cas de décès.

Plus de 1,2 million de dollars sur les 1,9 million de dollars déposés auraient été détournés par M. Samukai et ses co-accusés, qui étaient les seuls signataires du compte, ce, à l'insu du chef d'état-

major des Forces Armées du Libéria de l'époque et d'autres officiers supérieurs, à en croire l'accusation.

Les accusés font face à plusieurs charges, dont sabotage économique, vol de biens et détournement de derniers publics, entre autres.

Lors de l'audience lundi, le juge Gbeisay a réservé sa décision sur la contestation de l'accusation du cautionnement des accusés.

Selon le juge, la défense a fait valoir qu'en ce qui les concerne, ils ont obtenu un certificat de la LRA (Liberia Revenue Authority) qui présuppose que l'autorité des revenus est satisfaite de l'évaluation.

Le juge a indiqué qu'il est maintenant important que les autorités de la LRA soient invitées à comparaître devant le tribunal pour dire si l'institution a évalué le bien en question ou si elle a accepté le montant indiqué comme valeur du bien.

Selon le juge Gbeisay, cette information placera le tribunal dans une position appropriée pour déterminer si la caution déposée par les accusés est suffisante ou non.

Le juge a donc réservé sa décision sur la requête pour le 24 février.

Le nouveau patron

WAIFEM, un institut de renforcement des capacités, a été créé le 22 juillet 1996 pour développer les compétences en gestion macroéconomique, de la dette et du secteur financier parmi le personnel des banques centrales membres, des ministères des finances et de la planification économique ainsi que d'autres institutions publiques et privées.

WAMI a été créé à Accra, au Ghana, en 2001 pour ouvrir la voie au lancement d'une monnaie unique pour la zone monétaire ouest-africaine (WAMZ) et à la création d'une banque centrale ouest-africaine dans le cadre du programme de coopération

monétaire de la CEDEAO (EMCP).

L'AMAA, quant à elle, a été créée en 1996 pour surveiller, coordonner et mettre en œuvre le PPCE pour les 15 États membres de la CEDEAO, y compris la création d'une monnaie unique et d'une banque centrale commune.

Le Collège des superviseurs de la zone monétaire ouest-africaine (CSWAMZ), qui fait partie du programme WAMZ, a été créé en 2010 pour promouvoir la stabilité financière dans la WAMZ par le partage d'informations, la surveillance transfrontalière, l'harmonisation des politiques et le renforcement des capacités.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Nouriel Roubini

Les cygnes blancs de 2020

NEW YORK - Dans mon livre de 2010, *Crisis Economics*, j'ai défini les crises financières non pas comme les événements de type « cygne noir » décrits par Nassim Nicholas Taleb dans son best-seller éponyme, mais comme des « cygnes blancs ». Selon Taleb, les cygnes noirs sont des événements qui apparaissent de manière imprévisible, comme une tornade, à partir d'une distribution statistique à queue épaisse. Mais j'ai soutenu que les crises financières, du moins, ressemblent plutôt à des ouragans : elles sont le résultat prévisible de vulnérabilités économiques et financières et d'erreurs politiques.

Nous devrions nous attendre parfois à ce que le système atteigne un point critique - le « Moment Minsky » - où un boom et une bulle se transforment en crash et en faillite. Ces événements ne concernent pas les « inconnues inconnues », mais plutôt les « inconnues connues ».

Au-delà des risques économiques et politiques habituels que redoutent la plupart des analystes financiers, un certain nombre de cygnes blancs potentiellement sismiques pointent déjà à l'horizon de cette année. Chacun d'entre eux pourrait déclencher de graves perturbations économiques, financières, politiques et géopolitiques, sans précédents depuis la crise de 2008.

Pour commencer, les États-Unis sont enfermés dans une rivalité stratégique croissante avec au moins quatre puissances révisionnistes implicitement alignées : la Chine, la Russie, l'Iran et la Corée du Nord. Ces pays ont tous intérêt à remettre en cause l'ordre mondial dirigé par les États-Unis : 2020 pourrait être une année décisive pour eux, en raison des élections présidentielles américaines et du changement potentiel des politiques mondiales américaines qui risquent d'en découler.

Sous le Président Donald Trump, les États-Unis tentent de contenir voire même de déclencher des changements de régime dans ces quatre pays par des sanctions économiques et par d'autres moyens. De même, les quatre révisionnistes veulent affaiblir le pouvoir de contraindre et de convaincre de la puissance américaine à l'étranger en déstabilisant les États-Unis de l'intérieur par une guerre asymétrique. Si les élections américaines dégénèrent en rancœur partisane, dans le chaos, dans des décomptes de voix contestés et dans des accusations d'élections « truquées », ce sera tout à l'avantage des rivaux de l'Amérique. Un délitement du système politique américain affaiblirait la puissance américaine à l'étranger.

En outre, certains pays ont un intérêt particulier à voir Trump s'en aller. La menace aiguë qu'il pose au régime iranien donne toutes les raisons d'envenimer le conflit avec les États-Unis dans les prochains mois - même si cela implique de risquer une guerre à grande échelle - au risque que la flambée des prix du pétrole qui s'ensuive ne provoque un krach du marché boursier américain, ne déclenche une récession et ne réduise à néant les perspectives de réélection de Trump. Oui, le consensus est que le massacre ciblé de Qassem Soleimani a découragé l'Iran, mais cet argument ne tient pas compte des motivations perverses du régime. La guerre entre les États-Unis et l'Iran est probable cette année : selon l'adage, le calme actuel est celui qui précède la tempête.

En ce qui concerne les relations entre les États-Unis et la Chine, le récent accord « phase 1 » n'est qu'une solution temporaire. La guerre froide bilatérale sur la technologie, les données, les investissements, la monnaie et la finance s'intensifie dès à présent très fortement. L'épidémie de COVID-19 a renforcé la position de ceux aux États-Unis qui plaident en faveur du confinement, et a renforcé le dynamisme

de la tendance plus large de « découplage » des relations sino-américaines. À plus court terme, l'épidémie sera probablement plus grave que prévu actuellement et la perturbation de l'économie chinoise aura des répercussions sur les chaînes d'approvisionnement mondiales - notamment sur les intrants pharmaceutiques, dont la Chine est un fournisseur clé - et sur la confiance des entreprises, qui seront toutes plus graves que ne le suggère la complaisance actuelle des marchés financiers.

Bien que la guerre froide sino-américaine soit par définition un conflit de faible intensité, une forte escalade est probable cette année. Pour certains dirigeants chinois, ce ne peut pas être une simple coïncidence que leur pays subisse simultanément une énorme épidémie de grippe porcine, une grippe aviaire aiguë, une épidémie de coronavirus, une instabilité politique à Hong Kong, la réélection du président indépendantiste et l'intensification d'opérations navales américaines dans l'Est et le Sud de la mer de Chine. Même si la Chine ne peut s'en prendre qu'à elle-même si elle cherche le responsable de certaines de ces crises, l'opinion dominante à Pékin est en train de tourner à une atmosphère de conspiration.

Mais l'agression ouverte n'est pas vraiment une option à ce stade, compte tenu de l'asymétrie de puissance conventionnelle. La réponse immédiate de la Chine aux efforts de confinement américains prendra probablement la forme d'une cyber-guerre. Il y a plusieurs cibles évidentes. Les pirates informatiques chinois (et leurs homologues russes, nord-coréens et iraniens) pourraient interférer dans les élections américaines en inondant les Américains de désinformation et de trucages vidéo élaborés. Alors que l'électorat américain est déjà si polarisé, il n'est pas difficile d'imaginer que des partisans armés descendent dans les rues pour contester les résultats, ce qui conduirait à de graves violences et au chaos.

En plus du changement climatique, il existe des preuves que des événements sismiques distincts profonds sont en cours, devant conduire à des mouvements mondiaux rapides dans la polarisation magnétique et l'accélération des courants océaniques. Chacun de ces développements peut laisser présager un événement environnemental de type cygne blanc, notamment des « points critiques » climatiques tels que l'effondrement des principales calottes glaciaires en Antarctique ou au Groenland dans les prochaines années. Nous savons déjà que l'activité volcanique sous-marine est en augmentation : que se passera-t-il si cette tendance se traduit par une acidification marine rapide et par l'épuisement des stocks de poissons mondiaux dont dépendent des milliards de personnes ?

En ce début d'année 2020, voilà où nous en sommes : les États-Unis et l'Iran ont déjà eu une confrontation militaire qui va probablement s'intensifier bientôt ; la Chine est en proie à une épidémie virale qui pourrait devenir une pandémie mondiale ; la cyber-guerre est en cours ; les principaux détenteurs de bons du Trésor américain poursuivent des stratégies de diversification ; les candidats aux primaires du Parti Démocrate révèlent des failles dans l'opposition à Trump et émettent déjà des doutes sur les processus de dépouillement des votes ; les rivalités entre les États-Unis et les quatre puissances révisionnistes s'intensifient ; et les coûts réels du changement climatique et d'autres tendances environnementales sont en train d'augmenter.

Cette liste n'a aucune prétention à être exhaustive, mais elle indique ce à quoi nous pouvons raisonnablement nous attendre en 2020. Les marchés financiers, quant à eux, restent totalement dans le déni des risques, convaincus qu'une année calme, voire heureuse, attend les grandes économies et les marchés mondiaux.

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FROM OUR FILES

FROM OUR FILES

The Problems with Patriotism in the Liberian Society

By Ambrues M. Nebo

From scrupulous observations, it is no argument to counter the urge for patriotism in the Liberian society. Both the electronic and print media continue to flex intellectual muscles on discourse or talk shows about the inclination of many Liberians of badmouthing and castigating the country. In the belief windows or minds of the radio talk show host and guests, this attitude has always been described as unpatriotic. Certainly, this concern suggests or speaks clearly about the problems with patriotism in Liberia.

Recently, I listened to the Patrick Honnah regular bumper show on the ELBC radio 99.9. Featuring Rev. Foley Emmet Karpeh and another Liberian writer, the show not only frowned on the pessimistic or unpatriotic attitude of many Liberians, but endeavored to proffer practical approaches or remedies to the problems of patriotism in Liberia. Citing the Ghanaian society as a model of patriotism, the studio discussants referenced the lack of one common dialect or vernacular as a unifier and perhaps a catalyst for what sociologists would call the "We Feeling" or the "We consciousness." Interestingly, Rev. Karpeh recounted one of his experiences in Ghana that exemplified patriotic attitude or consciousness. According to him, about two Ghanaians went for him to the airport. While on the vehicle enroute to his accommodation, they were speaking the popular local Twi language. He voiced out his uncomforted feeling. One of the Ghanaians who happen to be the driver apologized and told him that they were talking about their problem of electricity in Ghana. He further explained that it would have been an embarrassment or perhaps shameful to discuss their problem in the presence of a stranger. In other words, one could argue or infer that the Ghanaians were very conscious about the image of their society had they discuss the problem in English.

Though being taught in Liberian schools, the discussants re-emphasized the need to re-enforce the syllables for the subject civic as one of the practical remedies. By this assertion, you can possibly infer that this suggested approach may not work well for this present generation above grade school (Elementary -senior High) ages.

Admittedly, the discussants as evidenced by all of the callers' supportive comments and views did well to dissect the issues.

Premised on the assumption that we as mortal are limited that could justify the reasons why the discussants never thought or cover all of the problems with patriotism in Liberia, this write-up or article seeks to expose another problem that worth consideration or debate.

Arguably, one of the ways in which the spirit of patriotism can be instilled in members of the society is through the teaching of history. The history of every society not only focuses on the past and present. It influences the sense of pride, belonging

as well as direction. Moreover, it utilizes the pasts that have important lessons for the present and the future. More importantly, it records legacy that has an important bearing on the lives of society member. The patriotic assertion that also illustrates a sense of pride by Ghanaians "Ghana is the best" that Liberians often referenced doubtlessly derived from the history of Ghana taught in schools.

In our Liberian society, it worth saying that there is something fundamentally wrong about how is history taught in grade schools (Elementary and Senior High schools). This problem is historic. Take for instance; in our schools curricula the syllables for history emphasize Ghana Empire, Songhay (Mali) Empire, Oyo Empire, European history etc. Less emphasis has been placed on Liberian history. In support of this claim, before the civil war, foreign teachers were teaching history in high schools. I have a vivid memory of one Mr. Youku Luke from Kenya or Somalia that taught me history in D.Twe Memorial High school

to what extent the histories of these counties taught in our schools influence our children sense of pride, belonging for Liberia as their common patrimony? To what extent teaching Ghana, Mali, Oyo, World War I & II, Industrial Revolution, etc. are able to transmit patriotic consciousness from generation to generation?

This is not any way to imply elimination from our history curriculum if they exist. What is important is to devote more time on the history of Liberia in the class home. On the other hand, it justifies elimination from our history syllables if Liberia history is not taught in Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, European grade schools. In other words, what should we promote their history when ours has nothing to do with instilling or transmitting patriotic consciousness in their societies?

The third question is; in Ghana, Nigeria, Mali and Europe, do foreigners teach history? In absence of empirical evidence, it worth saying big "No" by virtue of the fact that it is through the teaching of history patriotism can be transmitted from generation to generation in society. In the case of Liberia, our system in past allowed foreigners to teach history in our schools. How possible for foreigners that have no allegiance, sense of pride or belonging of a society to inculcate patriotic values or consciousness through the teaching of history into our grade school going population? Tell us, we would desire the answer.

On the authority of valid research, we learned that history relates the story of cooperative actions of a large number of men and women in their quest for a better life that to a large extent influence or bring a sense of pride. Inarguably, a sense of pride can be equated to patriotism derived from history. It is part of the cultural embodiment of any society. I am sure that in the history of Liberia, the culture of cooperative actions of our ancestors prior to the arrival of the settlers for better life exists. In the history of Ghana often referenced, the quest for better life mainly during the

Asante Empire reflects cooperative action by ancestor that children learned in schools as legacy. Can we in Liberia revisit our history so that our lesson contents or syllables can reflect the culture of cooperative action as a legacy that will influence our children sense of pride? Ponder about it.

It is never late to think about experimenting the crux of the argument brought forth in this article. We have a promising generation who are grade school going age. The history of Liberia has so much to offer when it comes to instilling patriotic consciousness in our promising generation or children. Let us as educators, policy makers, technocrat in education, government and more importantly the Liberian society think about crux of this article. It our quest for instilling the spirit of patriotism in Liberians, this article may be of help in term of solution.



probably around 1994/96. There was nothing about the history of Liberia. All of the lesson contents were European history such as Industrial Revolution, World War I & II etc. Maybe you could argue that it was what the syllable says by then. About this claim, there are few fundamental questions to be asked.

The first is; in Ghana, Mali or Nigeria, etc. do they teach the history of Liberia just as we do here? It is part of their history syllables? To answer this question, you will want to be empirical. In absence of empirical evidence, it is inconvincible that Ghana considered by Ghanaians as the best teach Liberia history in their grade schools. Even if it is taught, to what extend is another question. As for Nigeria, it is also questionable seriously. Mali that is Francophone, it is also questionable as well.

The second question is; though the history of Ghana, Nigeria, Mali empires and European history are good or relevant just as the history of Liberia. But

Court rules in travel ban case today

Monrovia City Court Judge Jonah Jallah on Tuesday reserved ruling into the travel ban (case) filed against businessman Musa Bility, Liberia Bank for Development and Investment or LBDI and others following arguments and counter arguments between the state and defense lawyers.

The case is an offshoot of the economic sabotage case against former Liberia Airport Authority or LAA Managing Director Ellen Corkrum and others.

On Thursday, February 6, the Government of Liberia through its Solicitor General Cllr. Saymah Cyrenius Cephus filed a writ of Ne exeat republica at the Criminal Court 'A' against Ms. Corkrum and 28 individual-including Mr. Bility, LBDI president John B. S. Davies, III and others.

The writ came days after, Cllr. Cephus a former defense lawyer for Ms. Corkrum dropped charges against her just to order her re-arrest following public outcry.

However, Mr. Bility, John B. S. Davies President of LBDI



Musa Bility



Ellen Corkrum

and others recently filed a counter writ before the Civil Law Court challenging the legality of the government's travel ban order.

On Tuesday February 18, both the Solicitor General and Montserrado County Attorney Edward K. Martins failed to show up in court because both men served as defense counsels

in the case before ascending to state power.

Nonetheless, the government appointed a City Solicitor to argue in its stead after Wesseh A. Wesseh, the Assistant Minister of Justice declined to represent the government due to his closed connection with one of the defendants- according to

close sources.

However, during the arguments, lawyers representing the defendants argued that for there to be a case of Ne exeat republica there has to be a case pending. The defense lawyers further argued, assuming there is no pending case but an ongoing investigation, their claims were never served.

Moreover, the defendants who had separate lawyers for instance in the case of Musa Bility, argued that when the writ was issued Bility was in London and yet still ignored the fear of the writ and came, that alone proves that he is not a flight risk.

In the case of LBDI President Mr. Davies, his lawyers argued that LBDI is an institution that had been indicted and not Mr. Davies as an individual. They further argued that LBDI as an entity and can be sued. Therefore Mr. Davies could not be held personally liable.

The lawyers described the process as abuse of power and bogus.

They further argued though that assuming there was an indictment, the case in point has passed the statute of limitation since the alleged crime was committed.

They claimed that Cllr. Cephus being a defense counsel for Ms. Corkrum is only retaliating because the previous government were able to have these individuals and institutions entered plea bargains to testify against his client Ms. Corkrum.

The original case

In 2013, Ellen Corkrum, then Managing Director of the Liberia Airport Authority was indicted along with businessman Musa Bility then Board Chair of the LAA by the Grand Jury of Montserrado County on charges of economic sabotage, criminal facilitation, conspiracy to defraud the government, and making unauthorized transfers of funds from government accounts.

Others indicted were the Monrovia Diaspora Consulting, LLC, through Momar Dieng, a U.S. citizen; LBDI and the First International Bank; and all authorized representatives of the authority.

The First International Bank was indicted for allegedly conspiring with co-defendants Corkrum, Melvin Johnson & Associates, to make an unauthorized transfer of funds in the amount of US\$56,750 from the account of the Liberia Airport Authority when Corkrum was the Managing Director.

Corkrum was also accused of transferring US\$269,000 to a fictitious company, Diaspora Consulting, LLC and its CEO, Momar Dieng, through whom she reportedly attended the Kennedy Business School, Harvard University.

In 2015, efforts were made to secure Corkrum's extradition to Liberia. The Solicitor General at the time, Cllr. Betty L. Blamo, hire the service of a legal firm in the US to get Ms. Corkrum extradited to Liberia but failed.

I regret supporting CDC

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Controversial Nimba County Senator Prince Johnson, says he regrets supporting the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change during the 2017 Representatives and Presidential elections.

The Senate standing committee on Internal Affairs had invited Nimba County Superintendent-designate, Nelson Korquoi for confirmation hearing Tuesday, February 18, when Senator Johnson voiced his disappointment about President George Manneh Weah's handling of the

appointment of local officials without the knowledge of legislative officials.

Speaking in the chambers of the Liberian Senate, he says it was wasteful of his time and resources to have supported the candidacy of Mr. Weah for the presidency because he lacks governance skills, specifically frowning on the manner in which the President nominate citizens from Nimba without consultation with senators from the county, which he describes as unacceptable and total disrespect.

A former rebel leader, Johnson pledged support to the CDC both during the 2005 and

2017 Presidential elections, but laments that the President's handling of the state of affairs particularly; Nimba County, is disrespectful and unbecoming.

Nimba is the second political subdivision with highest number of registered voters, and Senator Johnson brands himself as political godfather for the county.

He is widely known here as kingmaker, having lending support to the candidacies of both former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and current President Weah.

However, Senator Thomas Grupee of Nimba disagrees with Johnson, saying he's in the know of the hearing for Korquoi but not through the presidency.

Grupee counters that it is not mandatory that the presidency informs the legislative officials of a county before nominating local officials, instead, the Constitution mandates the President to carry out nominations and the senate shall consent.

He explains the Liberian government has three branches, which are separate but coordinate and function shall be respected accordingly.

Grupee says he is baffled with the nomination, but notes the error did not come from the nominee, instead,



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the higher power, in this case, the President.

Adding his voice to the drama, Maryland County Senator James Gbleobo Brown, who chairs the committee on Internal Affairs, reveals both senators were consulted prior to the confirmation.

He notes that the best and expedient practice in the coordinating spirit of good governance, senators should be consulted before pronouncements on confirmation of nominees are

made, assuring that his committee will work along with all nominees from the Executive and the best candidates will be presented to the plenary of the Liberian Senate in due course.

Relations between President Weah and Sen. Johnson have been strained for sometime despite Johnson's Movement for Democracy and Reconciliation being a member of the President's ruling Coalition for Democratic Change. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



Artisanal miners risk losing licenses



Participants pose for photo after the training

The Ministry of Mines and Energy issues a new regulation, mandating all artisanal miners here to reclaim (backfill) holes dug during mining activities or forfeit renewal of their mining licenses.

According to a press release, Assistant Mines and Energy Minister for Planning, Research and Development,

Johnson S. Willabo, gave the mandate at the end of training of over 60 mining agents and mineral inspectors in Smarter Mining Techniques held in Tubmanburg City, Bomi County recently.

Giving an overview of the training, Minister Willabo, Focal Person of the Liberia Forest Sector Project (LFSP) said artisanal miners had been involved in a system of mining in

the past that negatively impacted the environment due to lack of training.

He cautioned the trainees to ensure miners desist from mining in protected areas, while thanking the Norwegian government for providing grant for the training.

Speaking further, he said the problem of deforestation

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Hamilton, Messi share men's Laureus award

Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton and football superstar Lionel Messi shared the Laureus sportsman of the year award at Monday's ceremony in Berlin. Hamilton, 35, a six-time world champion and Barcelona star Messi, 32, share the award for their achievements in 2019.

This is the first time a footballer has won the award and also the first occasion in the event's 20-year history

when the jury reached a tied decision.

"I am honoured to be the first to win this award being a sportsperson coming from a team sport," Messi said from Barcelona via a video message.

US gymnastics superstar Simone Biles, who won five titles at the 2019 world championships in Stuttgart to leave her with a record 25 world gold medals, took the Laureus sportswoman of the year award for the third time.

"It means the world to me,



this is my third Laureus award and I'm really grateful," said Biles in a video message.

South Africa, who won the 2019 World Cup, were named team of the year, beating Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool and the US women's football team.

Springboks captain Siya Kolisi was joined on stage by six South African team-mates to collect the trophy.

"We gave everything we had to win the trophy and hopefully inspire kids for generations to come."

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