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FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



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P11

World Bank steps in

-Dishes out US\$40m to GOL

SN Brussels suspends flights



P11



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CMYK



Continental News

Hundreds stranded on ships off Cape Town

More than 1,700 people are stranded on a cruise liner and a cargo ship off the coast of Cape Town in South Africa over fears that some of them are infected with coronavirus.

Concerns were raised by the port authorities after a member of the cargo ship's crew, who had flown in from Turkey on 9 March, began to show symptoms of the virus.

He has been isolated on board the MV Corona along with another crew member he was with on the flight with from Turkey

Contact tracing has revealed that six other people on that flight went on to board the luxury cruise liner Aida Amira.

It set sail the next day, visiting Lüderitz and Walvis Bay in Namibia before recently returning to Cape Town. The vessels are mainly carrying German and Austrian nationals.



The Aida Amira set sail to Namibia on 10 March, returning to Cape Town a few days ago

The health authorities are now awaiting the results for the seven people traced to the MV Corona crew member who is ill.

They have all been tested for the virus.

"We are prioritising the testing," health ministry

spokesperson Popo Maja told the BBC

South Africa has so far recorded 116 cases, most of them involving people who had

been in Europe. However, the country is now beginning to report cases of local transmission. BBC

Nigeria virus cases rise as travel bans announced

Nigeria has placed a travel ban on people coming from 13 countries worst affected by the coronavirus outbreak as five new cases were recorded in Africa's most-populous nation.

That brings the country's total number of patients with Covid-19 to eight.

Health Minister Osagie Ehanire said contact tracing for the new cases was ongoing. All the five had

travelled to the UK and/or the US.

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) tweeted about the cases, urging Nigerians to remain calm: Travellers from China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Japan, France, Germany, the US, Norway, the UK, the Netherlands and Switzerland will not be able to come to the West African from Saturday 21 March.

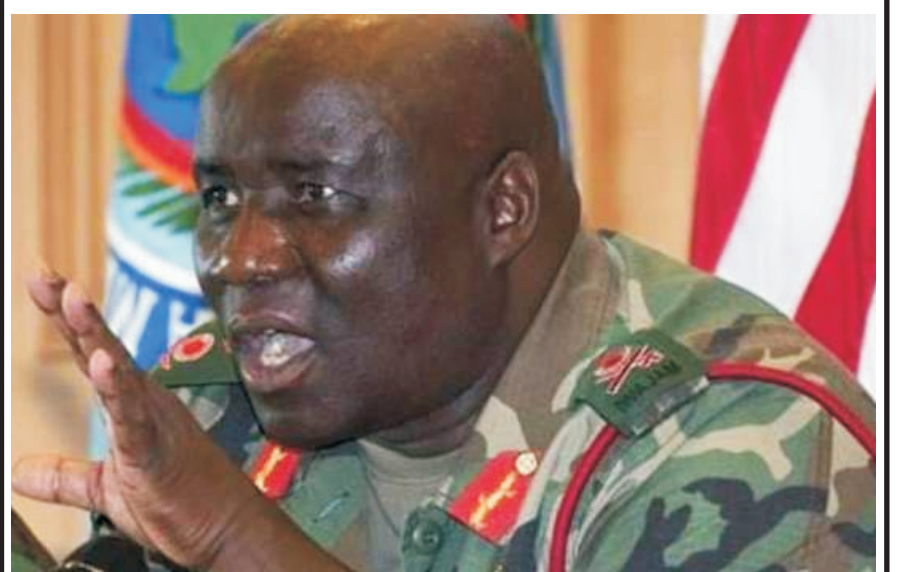
Nigerians have also been

advised to cancel or postpone all non-essential travel to these countries, which all have reported more than 1,000 cases.

The BBC's Chris Ewokor in the capital, Abuja, says Nigerians returning to the country must now self-isolate for 14 days.

On Tuesday, the government also placed an indefinite ban on all public officials from embarking on foreign trips, he says. BBC

Malawi leader sacks country's military chief



Vincent Nundwe was appointed as army commander last June

Malawi's President Peter Mutharika has sacked the country's military chief, General Vincent Nundwe.

It came just hours after the president refused to ratify changes to the electoral laws which had been approved by parliament, and were meant to pave the way for fresh elections in May. Last month, the courts annulled Mr Mutharika's victory in last

year's election, citing irregularities. He's filed an appeal against the decision.

Correspondents say Mr Mutharika is increasingly being accused of doing everything he can to frustrate the holding of a new presidential vote.

A spokesman said in the president's opinion the proposed electoral laws went against the country's constitution. BBC



The travel restriction will come into effect from Saturday 21 March

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EDITORIAL

Beyond the closure of schools

THE GOVERNMENT OF Liberia announced closure of schools for one week after President George Manneh Weah confirmed Liberia's first case of the Coronavirus Monday. He is the executive director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Nathaniel Blama, currently quarantined at the Redemption Hospital. Health authorities subsequently tested Mr. Blama's domestic worker, Johnny Phillips, similarly quarantined.

THE GOVERNMENT, THRU the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia has in place series of preventive and public safety measures, including regular hands washing, decongesting public transport, and sending home non-essential staff from public offices, among others.

BUT WE WONDER after the one-week closure of schools here, what other steps or options does the Ministry of Education has to ensure students' safety as they look forward to returning to classes next week. This is a serious concern. It should claim immediate attention of both school authorities and the ministry.

SOME CHURCHES IN the country have similarly suspended public worship for one to two weeks. While these initial responses are welcomed, they could become short-live. What other steps are we considering as a people to keep safe amid the Covid-19?

SOCIAL DISTANCING IS easily applicable among adults, but not with children. Whether in homes, in schools or in communities, children have an instant to assemble and play regardless of potential health risks, particularly if left unguarded.

TRUTH OF THE matter is government has very limited options in regulating families at home except the public measures. This means Liberians should be the first security for themselves. They must adhere to all public safety measures announced.

NOTWITHSTANDING, WE THINK government should go a step further in not just decongesting public transport and offices, but entertainment centers such as video clubs, drinking spots, and restaurants, among others where people converge to socialize.

GOING BACK TO the question of schools, we think government should provide thermometers or temperature testing tools to school authorities and deploy health teams on school campuses if classes would resume next week.

MUCH NEEDS TO be done in terms of logistics to curtail infections in the public, and remain on top of the Coronavirus. It is not enough to just provide regular update on the situation, but pro-active measures are needed.

AS THE ONE-WEEK closure of schools elapses, we think government should consider some of these pro-active steps in keeping both students and the public at large safe and healthy.

COMMENTARY

By Federica Mogherini

Listening to the Pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to call some of the political mistakes of recent years by their name, and adjust our trajectory according to the compass of reality. Seizing it will require people around the world - starting with institutional and political leaders, but, ultimately, all of us - to put reality first.

MILAN - As of a few weeks ago, no one would have disputed that the most relevant and evident trend in the global politics of our times is "go national." Unilateralism and "zero-sum game" logic seemed to be the new normal: "For me to win, I need you to lose" and "Me first."

These phrases seemed to be the unequivocal and almost uncontested trademark of this century. Moreover, it was a trademark that had almost no limits in terms of geography and ideology: you found it in many different shades, but on each and every continent, in each and every political orientation (including many varieties of unlabelled political movements), across a wide range of institutional systems, and even within some international organizations. This trend seemed to consolidate by the day, with very few voices trying to argue for a cooperative international approach, multilateralism, win-win solutions and a search for common ground, and community-based policies rather than a purely individualistic vision of society.

Today, as the coronavirus pandemic spreads across the entire world, putting at risk so many of our lives and shaking the foundations of our everyday way of life, we need to ask if this paradigm is likely to remain the predominant one. Is the pandemic going to strengthen, or are there lessons we will learn?

Can a virus challenge some of the assumptions on which the current global political landscape is based? Is it going to make us focus on what really counts, on what unites us as humanity, or is it going to fuel the sense of fear and suspicion among and within communities, dividing us even more, increasing the level of toxic rhetoric and behaviors that has already poisoned our societies, and partially paralyzed our collective capacity to act efficiently? Are we going to use this crisis as an opportunity to call some of the mistakes of recent years by their name, and adjust our trajectory at last to the compass of reality?

This pandemic is telling us a number of things loud and clear. If we are willing to listen, these are a few very simple ones.

First, the global community exists. What happens far away has an impact (even a vital one) here and now. A sneeze on one continent has direct repercussions on another. We are connected, we are one. All attempts to consider borders as dividing lines, and to classify people by nationality, ethnicity, gender, or religious belief - all of this loses meaning at once, as our bodies are all equally exposed to the virus, no matter who we are.

Second, I do have an interest in my neighbor's wellbeing. If my neighbor has a problem, it is also my problem. So, if I do not care for the sake of my neighbor, I'd better care for my own sake. Because in an interconnected world like ours, the only effective way to take care of yourself is to take care of others. Solidarity is the new selfish.

Third, global coordinated solutions are needed, desperately needed, and this requires an investment in international multilateral organizations. If you think you can respond effectively to a crisis like this just by adopting national measures, you do what in Italian is

referred to as "trying to empty the sea with a spoon": a lot of work with no results.

In order to be effective, you need a systematic, coordinated effort at the global level, with adequate political and financial collective investments in the international multilateral setup that is required to monitor developments, respond to them, and prevent them from getting even worse. If you dismantle the credibility and capacity to act of international organizations, they will be less likely to be effective when you need them, and you will be the one paying the price.

Fourth, science-based political decisions are the only rational and useful way to go. Evidence is the only reliable point of reference we have. Luckily, we have been investing in science for thousands of years - across the world, no civilization excluded, and for very wise reasons. Any distortion from scientific evidence-based decisions, due to short-term political or economic considerations, is simply dangerous.

Fifth, health is a public good. It is not just a private issue. It is a matter of national - and even international - security, and of economic prosperity. As such, it requires both adequate and sustained public investments, and a collective sense of responsibility that each and every citizen is called to exercise. Avoiding contagion is not only a life-saving must for individuals, it is also a vital contribution to the survival of communities and the functioning of public health services, and ultimately, of the state.

Sixth, the global economy needs human beings to stay healthy. Investment in public health, science, and research is an investment in prosperous economies worldwide. Production, consumption, trade, and services - the basis of our economic system - need people to be healthy and safe. It's the economy, stupid!

Seventh, well-functioning democratic institutions are literally vital to our lives. We take things for granted until we risk losing them. The way in which decisionmaking functions (or not) is the ultimate test in times of crisis. If democracy is perceived as a burden that slows or even impedes effective and fast measures, the argument in favor of more authoritarian systems of governance will grow stronger, with all the negative implications this would have on our rights and freedoms. Making democratic institutions work is an investment in our health, our security, and our freedoms and rights.

Last, but not least, nothing is more precious and valuable than life. We sometimes forget, especially when it's our own life in question. This is sound common sense - maybe it's time to go back to basics.

Every crisis can be used as an opportunity to learn lessons from the mistakes of the past, adjust policies, change course, and fix things that we were not even admitting were broken. It all depends on what individuals across the world decide to do, starting with those who have institutional and political responsibilities. But ultimately, all of us will need to decide. Will this crisis be used for short-term individual gains, with the usual scapegoat exercise, or will it be a wake-up call to reality? It's not idealism, it's pure realism.

The New Dawn
FULLY INDEPENDENT

O-PED

By Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg

A Silent Hero of the Coronavirus Crisis

Sometimes, no matter how hard one tries, and no matter how selflessly one sacrifices, one stands no chance against a more powerful enemy. The new coronavirus, COVID-19, has proved to be such a foe, and were it not for technology, the battle against it would have been lost by now.

NEW HAVEN - Not to diminish the superhuman efforts of nurses, doctors, and health-care workers worldwide, but sometimes, no matter how hard one tries, and no matter how selflessly one sacrifices, one stands no chance against a more powerful enemy. The new coronavirus, COVID-19, has proved to be such a foe. Were it not for technology, the battle against it would have been lost by now.

Math and technology, to be more precise. I say math, because understanding a concept as basic as “exponential growth” proved crucial for attacking the enemy head-on.

The successful containment of the epidemic in China, South Korea, and Japan has been attributed to strong governments and cultures that put society’s good ahead of private convenience. I would add that these countries also stand out for their students’ high math literacy. In the 2019 PISA rankings, produced by the OECD, China ranks first in math with a score of 591 out of 600, Japan ranks 6th, and South Korea is 7th. By contrast, Italy is in 31st place, Spain places 34th, and the United States ranks 37th.³

PISA scores may have their shortcomings, but they do provide a rough idea of the math literacy of the average citizen in the countries that take part. And the fact that the countries with the highest rankings seem to have adopted the most effective containment strategies serves as a reminder that, ultimately, the reason we want better training in math and logic is not to land more lucrative jobs, but to make better decisions regarding our lives.

Technology has been the true champion in the fight against the spread of COVID-19. Here, I don’t mean the ICUs and respirators without which severely ill patients would not stand a chance. I mean the new data-driven technologies that enabled responsible governments to track the infected, contact them, and quarantine them early. These technologies have been the target of much criticism in recent years. Now, when they are helping us save lives, they deserve our praise.

South Korea’s achievement is truly impressive. As of March 17, the country has had 8,320 cases and 81 deaths, despite an early bad start. Contrast this with Italy, which at the same time reports 27,980 cases and 2,158 deaths.

Technology’s contribution to pandemic management goes beyond tracking and quarantines. As the US and countries in Europe move toward near-complete lockdown, with potentially disastrous consequences for the world economy, technology offers a glimmer of hope.

Many firms, especially in tech, have closed their offices, mandated that employees telecommute, and provided them with computing and video technology to work remotely. Not only does this keep an important part of the economy going, but it also has had unintended positive consequences. Vehicle congestion, for example, has vanished. The hours harried commuters previously lost in traffic can now be dedicated to work and family. Corporate travel is disappearing, and video conferences are the new norm, with associated reductions in airplane pollution and huge savings in time.

Likewise, educators at nearly every level are scrambling to find online alternatives to in-classroom instruction. Whereas in earlier times, school closings would have implied loss of instruction time, technology is allowing students to continue learning. And the current crisis will advance that process, as a relatively modest group of early adopters in producing online courses is joined by whole universities that have been forced to move to the web.

Obviously, there are challenges to adapting a curriculum intended to be taught in person to the online setting. But with entire faculties experimenting, we are certain to see innovation and rapid improvement in the effectiveness of distance learning. Once students finally return to the classroom, we should continue to leverage these innovations, not only in the developed world, where necessity has forced our hand, but also in developing countries hungry for cost-effective education.

In the retail sector, digital platforms can fill the gap when supermarket shelves empty or self-quarantine makes in-person shopping impossible. And film and music streaming, video chats, and social media have offered avenues to reduce isolation, stay connected, and preserve mental health while locked down.

In these and other ways, the pandemic is accelerating existing technological trends and revealing important benefits, which we should embrace, both now and after the crisis abates. But when normalcy returns, we are also likely to confront once again some tough questions about technological innovation.

The COVID-19 crisis has revived the tension between privacy and effective targeting. In recent years, we often encountered this debate with respect to major tech platforms using granular information about users to deliver micro-targeted news and advertising. But the same kinds of technology have been used to identify those infected by or most vulnerable to the coronavirus.

Of course, the tension between privacy and health outcomes is not new: the desire to protect individual histories prevents medical researchers and clinicians from mining the full set of health data to achieve better outcomes. COVID-19 reminds us that we may want to think carefully about the relative benefits of data sharing, as they may sometimes dominate the value of preserving privacy.

Absent intervention, technological trends will inevitably generate winners and losers. Brick-and-mortar stores that were already losing market share to digital platforms are likely to be decimated wherever self-quarantine and mandatory lockdowns are in effect. And though increased telecommuting, reduced business travel, and distance learning will increase productivity for some, they are significantly disrupting the livelihoods of others, and that disruption will accelerate in the next few months.

So, more than ever, it will be imperative to provide support and adjustment assistance to individuals, firms, or entire communities hit by the crisis. But we should resist the urge to resume our relentless, if fashionable, tech bashing. If there is a silver lining in the current crisis, it is the realization that knowledge - primarily math, science, and technology in this case - is our best weapon.

OPINION

By Walter D. Valdivia
& Diego Escobari

Bolivia’s Electoral Fraud Reckoning

While the preponderance of evidence indicates that Bolivia’s October 2019 presidential election was marked by rampant fraud, a recent study by two researchers suggests otherwise. But the study’s assumptions are questionable, and, even if correct, the authors’ results do not show absence of fraud.

WASHINGTON, DC/EDINBURG, TEXAS - Bolivia finds itself at a critical juncture. After its long-serving president, Evo Morales, resigned and fled the country last November in the wake of a presidential election marred by alleged irregularities, a transitional government scrambled to fill the power vacuum, stopped violent clashes, and swiftly called for new elections.

Although Bolivia could have descended further into chaos and violence, the warring political parties somewhat miraculously reached a fragile détente and agreed to hold an electoral do-over in May. But the controversy surrounding the October 2019 presidential election recently reignited after researchers John Curiel and Jack R. Williams (C&W) claimed in *The Washington Post* to have “found no reason to suspect fraud.”

Given its narrow scope, the C&W study cannot, in fact, dispel doubts about the election’s fraud. Nonetheless, the researchers’ widely publicized blanket statement detonated in Bolivia like a cluster bomb, rekindling antagonisms and encouraging agitators. It is therefore imperative to scrutinize the study’s analysis and conclusions.

For starters, the C&W study lacks recent historical context. Morales’s ascent to the presidency in 2006 was indisputably democratic, and represented a victory for Bolivians who had been politically and economically marginalized throughout the country’s history. But as Morales tightened his grip on power, he started undermining democratic institutions.¹

Flouting term limits and using a questionable interpretation of the constitution, Morales won a third term in 2014. Emboldened, he called a referendum in 2016 to allow him to run for a fourth term. Although he lost, Morales, defiant, called for a repeal of term limits and the Constitutional Court caved in, thus invalidating the plebiscite and allowing him to run again. Only the most credulous believe that his party did not try to prevent a repeat of the referendum result. Indeed, the fact that Morales was even on the ballot at all last October indicated that fraud was afoot.

In addition, the preponderance of evidence that has since emerged points to rampant electoral fraud. An audit by the Organization of American States (OAS) revealed major irregularities and manipulation, including falsification of poll officials’ signatures, altered tally sheets and databases, and a broken chain of custody. Most damning of all, the transmission of voting data was redirected to two unauthorized hidden servers. European Union election monitors also noted worrisome irregularities. But despite all these red flags, C&W focused instead on the vote-reporting blackout on election night - a single event that had little to do with structural fraud.

When Bolivia’s preliminary vote-counting system - called TREP - reported that Morales’s lead was insufficient to avoid a run-off, the Electoral Court shut down all further reporting. Yet, when reporting resumed a day later, the margin had grown large enough for Morales to declare victory.

C&W purport to show that there was no fraudulent intervention during the blackout - that the votes reported after it were similar enough to those reported beforehand to make fraud unlikely. But even if their analysis were convincing, it would not counter or discredit the ample evidence of fraud in other aspects of the electoral process.

The one claim for which C&W offer empirical support is that there is no evidence of a change in voting trends after the TREP blackout. However, we question their findings, for three reasons.

First, their results are suggestive, not conclusive. Both the OAS’s audit and the organization’s later response to C&W highlight an observable trend change after 84% of the TREP tally, and a remarkable break in trend at 95% of the tally.

Although C&W reject these observations, alternative methods of analysis corroborate the OAS’s findings. In a recent working paper with the University of Oklahoma’s Gary Hoover, one of us tested the null hypothesis of no electoral fraud during the blackout, and validated the results with pseudo-outcomes using a placebo analysis. Unlike C&W, we allowed for heterogeneous voting preferences across different regions of Bolivia without making assumptions regarding patterns among precincts. And we found statistically significant evidence of fraud.

Consistent with our results and the OAS report, Rómulo Chumacero of Universidad de Chile found that the TREP blackout produced an inexplicable margin in favor of Morales. C&W’s study therefore should be regarded skeptically in view of the robust evidence at variance with their results.

Second, lack of evidence of trend-change after the TREP blackout is not evidence of an absence of fraud. If fraud was already baked into the 84% of votes reported before the interruption, then C&W’s results suggesting no shift in trend when reporting resumed are incapable of shedding light on the existence of fraud before the blackout.

Third, C&W estimate voting behavior in a critical subset of small precincts not reported before the blackout (accounting for 2.2% of total ballots) by sampling precincts of similar size included in the 84% batch. If electoral fraud is easier to engineer in small precincts, C&W are unwittingly extrapolating artificially wide margins to Morales’s advantage.

C&W have produced a clever but inconclusive analysis that fails to address both relevant history and evidence of widespread fraud. Above all, they have stretched their conclusions beyond credibility. Given Bolivia’s delicate political situation, researchers participating in this debate should proceed with great caution.



SOLICITATION NUMBER: VA-669-20-00004

ISSUANCE DATE: 02/26/2020

CLOSING DATE/TIME: 03/25/2020 (17:30 local time)

SUBJECT: Solicitation for the AID Procurement Agent, Cooperating Country National Personal Service Contract (CCNPSC).

Dear Prospective Offerors:

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is seeking offers from qualified persons to provide personal services under contract as described in this solicitation.

Offers must be in accordance with Attachment 1, Sections I through III of this solicitation. Incomplete or unsigned offers will not be considered. Offerors should retain copies of all offer materials for their records.

This solicitation in no way obligates USAID to award a Personal Services Contract, nor does it commit USAID to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of the offers.

Any questions must be directed in writing to the Point of Contact specified in the attached information.

Sincerely,
/s/
Robert W. Appiah
Supervisory Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT 1

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

SOLICITATION NO: VA-669-20-00004

1. **ISSUANCE DATE:** 02/26/2020
2. **CLOSING DATE/TIME FOR RECEIPT OF OFFERS:** 03/25/2020 at 17:30 Monrovia time
3. **POSITION TITLE:** Procurement Agent
4. **MARKET VALUE:** \$24,064.00 to USD \$38,498.00 equivalent to CCN-08 in accordance with AIDAR Appendix J and the Local Compensation Plan of the US Embassy in Monrovia, Liberia. Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value.
5. **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** Initial two years with possibility of extension depending on need, performance, and availability of funding. This is considered a permanent position.

Employment under any contract issued under this solicitation is of a continuing nature. Its duration is expected to be part of series of sequential contract; all contract clauses, provisions, and regulatory requirements concerning availability of funds and the specific duration of the contract shall apply.

6. **PLACE OF PERFORMANCE:** Monrovia, Liberia with possible travel as stated in the statement of duties.
7. **SECURITY LEVEL REQUIRED:** Facility and computer access
8. **STATEMENT OF DUTIES**

A. BACKGROUND

USAID and Liberia maintain a long-standing partnership to support economic stability and growth, strengthen democratic governance, and improve health and education systems. USAID/Liberia fosters a spirit of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, building and supporting local systems so there is no longer a need for external support. USAID/Liberia is the first bi-lateral program to have an approved 2019-2024 Country Development Cooperation Strategy; the Mission is in the midst of designing and procuring a significant number of new activities, and the Mission fully embraces the Agency's newly issued Acquisition and Assistance Strategy as well as the Effective Partnering and Procurement Reform Initiative.

B. BASIC FUNCTION OF THE POSITION

This position is in the Office of Acquisition and Assistance (OAA), USAID/Liberia. The incumbent is under the direct supervision of the Supervisory Contracting Officer (SCO) or his/her delegate. H/she performs procurement duties within the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT) for both commodities and services, including international and local consultants; as well as a limited amount of clerical and secretarial duties on behalf of the SCO and the rest of the OAA team.

Serving as the OAA advisor on simplified acquisitions, h/she is responsible for the operational expense and program related procurement activities for OAA (which includes support to other offices in the Mission), and procures a variety of commodities by contract, purchase order, or other available instrument. The position fully complies with all relevant US Government laws, regulations, policies and procedures; liaises with the Financial Management Office (FMO) and the Executive Office (EXO) to ensure the availability and accounting of funds, proper equipment inventory, etc., and monitors how well the contractors and service providers perform towards achieving a contract's purpose.

H/she is principally responsible for planning and coordinating the procurement of goods and services throughout the year, and will be the technical liaison between the contractor(s) and the Contracting Officer; this will include monitoring services and activity implementation, receiving goods and services, and verifying contractor performance.

The incumbent also serves as the principal administrative support person for the Office Director, ensuring that administrative functions are performed effectively, efficiently, and in a manner that promotes harmony and problem-solving, so that other office staff members may be more effective.

The incumbent is expected to work primarily in accomplishing the specific tasks as outlined below. Given the nature of the position, the Procurement Agent will also be expected to respond to any changes in priorities that emerge during the contract period to provide efficient, timely, and effective services to the Mission.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| PROCUREMENT DUTIES | 60% |
|---------------------------|------------|
- A. Performs all OAA local and off-shore procurement actions that are within the Simplified Acquisition Procedure (SAP) threshold for both program and operational expenses (OE) funded requests; from receipt of requests to preparation of purchase order (PO) or contract, and fully close out of the action. Procurement actions may use the full range of procurement instruments available for SAP.
 - B. Provides assistance to support and technical offices on how to prepare appropriate documentation such as statements of work, statement of duties, government estimates (IGCE), evaluation criteria, and single source justifications. Works with Mission personnel to resolve questions related to budgets, classification of terms, reporting/deliverables requirements, market research and developing sources, and special conditions to be included in the solicitation document.
 - C. Develops solicitations and assists the Contracting Officer in screening and reviewing bids and quotations and negotiating contracts. Reviews responses and recommends the best offers based on knowledge of availability, delivery schedules, reliability of suppliers, and cost/price analysis.
 - D. Prepares and reviews final contract language, supplier's bill, and paperwork prior to submission to the Contracting Officer. Writes memorandum of negotiation and justification notes; has the responsibility for planning and organizing work, setting priorities, and making the most efficient use of available resources.
 - E. Conducts periodic informal market surveys to allow reasonable control of prices offered. H/she is knowledgeable of the local and international market and the customs and shipping practices for delivery of commodities. Keeps abreast of market conditions, including price and availability of important commodities and services, and maintains contracts with officials of local supply firms to facilitate resolving procurement problems.
 - F. Prepares contract amendments, negotiates revisions to various contract provisions; writes memoranda of negotiation and prepares other required documentation as needed.
 - G. Monitors contractors' performance to ensure total compliance with the FAR, AIDAR procedures, policies and regulations, and Mission needs.
 - H. Works with the Financial Management Office on financial reviews or audits of implementing partner awards. Analyzes findings and recommends courses of action regarding questioned and ineligible costs to the Contracting Officer.
 - I. Closes out purchase orders, task orders, etc., when deliveries and payments are complete. Maintains a computerized database for generating special, quarterly and annual reports of Mission's procurements. Maintains an updated file of vendors, and all documentation associated with procurements and incoming and outgoing correspondence.
 - J. Maintains contract files and records, prepares reports on closing out purchase orders and contracts which have ended. Maintains an up-to-date filing system (orders, catalogues, magazines), and a contractor/vendor's database.
 - K. Performs contract management support and administrative functions in the review, termination and close-out of government contracts and delivery orders for awards both above and below the simplified acquisition threshold.

ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES	40%
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- A. The Agent takes messages in the absence of the supervisor and other staff, directing calls to appropriate staff members, receives and assists visitors, answers questions from the public and/or mission members, ensures that attendees are briefed or provided proper background material for meetings; and arranges for conference room space as required by OAA.
- B. The Agent receives and places phone calls, sends and receives E-mails, and sets up working meetings, workshops, conferences, and makes appointments at the request of the supervisor and other office staff within OAA with the Government of Liberia, donors, implementing partners, non-governmental organizations, private-sector, and other contacts; responds on behalf of the office director as needed, and takes minutes at meetings when requested.
- C. The Agent schedules appointments based on knowledge of the supervisor's commitments, maintains the office calendar, maintains and develops leave plans, weekly travel reports, emergency database and the USAID cascade list for emergency contacts. The incumbent will have expertise in word processing and spreadsheet development in the performance of a variety of assignments such as typing correspondence and other documents in draft and final form, proof-reading for format and consistency with standard Mission and Embassy requirements in advance of the supervisor's signature.
- D. The Agent maintains control of all correspondence for the OAA, is responsible for organizing OAA electronically located project/activity folders ("P" drive and subsequent filing systems), establishing and maintaining computerized tracking systems to track office actions, providing weekly reports to the SCO, drafting non-technical responses to routine correspondence and letters in English, and searching files and records to assemble background information for correspondence and other pending actions. The Agent reviews outgoing mail for proper address, routing, attachments, etc., prior to dispatch, reviewing outgoing correspondence for accuracy and conformance with Mission formatting procedures and special instructions. The Agent distributes internal policies and procedures

- E. The Agent establishes and maintains files according to standards set by USAID/Washington and the Mission Communications and Records Technician/Supervisor in EXO, and according to ADS provisions related to file and records retention. Marks correspondence and other documents for filing, and files accordingly. Reviews all correspondence prepared in OAA or elsewhere in advance of the supervisor's signature, corrects errors by drafters and edits correspondence, and assures that responding correspondence fully meets the requirements posed by incoming correspondence to which it pertains. The Agent maintains and updates documents such as visitors' lists, telephone listings, personnel rosters, vacation schedules, etc.
- F. The Agent may assist, in his absence, the subject matter expert (SME) or principal point of contact for multiple internal procurement related systems; such as GLAAS-the Agency's world-wide web-based acquisition and assistance system that manages awards throughout the procurement life cycle, ASIST-the Agency's official electronic filing system, CPARS-the USG's contractor performance and assessment system, etc. As assistant to the SME, the incumbent will be expected to become familiar with how the systems work, and be designated open/close accounts, troubleshoot issues and solve problems, liaise with USAID/W SMEs, etc.
- G. H/she will make travel arrangements for OAA staff using the Agency's electronic travel system (E2) to prepare travel authorization (TA) requests, submit and track travel approvals by the Regional Security Office when necessary, make hotel and airline reservations through the travel agency and arrange for transportation to and from the airport. The incumbent will prepare travel vouchers after completion of travel. Also, s/he will provide assistance making vehicle requests, apartment and hotel reservations for temporary duty (TDY) arrivals and departures, and ensures welcome kits are ready (if needed) and pre-arrival information is sent to incoming staff. Also, liaises with RSO for security passes, airport passes, emergency contact list, and in-country travel request coordination.
- H. The incumbent is designated as POC for Country Clearance submissions and approvals through the eCC system, as well as File Custodian for OAA, responsible to upload documents and approved eCCs using ASIST. The incumbent is the primary timekeeper for OAA, collecting Time and Attendance (T&A) sheets from all the OAA staff, compiles these sheets and sends a consolidated report to the USAID main timekeeper. S/he will need to become proficient with WebTA, and other systems as needed.
- I. Arranges and submits MyServices requests for office related equipment needs, office and cell phone issues, updates/maintains phone lists, and supports USDH and TCN staff with official residential maintenance requests and needs.

9. POSITION ELEMENTS:

- a. **Supervision Received:**
The Supervisory Contracting Officer or her/his delegate assigns work in terms of objectives and priorities. Assistance is provided on assignments. Employee exercises initiative and judgment in developing and coordinating the procurement actions from beginning up to award, in accordance with standard practices and established procedures.
- b. **Supervision Exercised:**
None.
- c. **Available Guidelines:**
Guidelines include Federal (FAR) and Agency (AIDAR) procurement regulations, USAID Automated Directives System, Mission Orders, and other Agency and Mission policies and procedures as applicable.
- d. **Exercise of Judgment:**
Sound judgment is required to identify problems, provide guidance and make recommendations. A considerable degree of sound judgment is required in the analysis of costs, budgets, financial status and other characteristics of prospective contractors; in deciding what questions need to be asked to project officers and proposed contractors to ensure achievement of the acquisition objectives, purchase request or other instrument.
- e. **Authority to Make Commitments:**
The Procurement agent will participate in discussions and negotiations with potential vendors for related to simplified acquisition procedures. Purchase orders and all obligation documents will be reviewed and signed by the Contracting Officer. The job holder is not authorized to commit or obligate USG funds.
- f. **Nature, Level, and Purpose of Contacts:**
Daily contact with Mission staff, especially with the FMO, office chiefs, and team leaders or other technical team members including COR/AORs; may require occasional contact with Embassy procurement, mailroom services and shipping and customs staff; regular contact to be expected with counterparts, implementing partners and contractors, as well as with GOL officials and private sector business executives as needed.
Contact is maintained with the Financial Management Office and other Mission officials to obtain statements of work/scopes of work, financial data, clarification on terms, conditions and specifications of proposed purchase orders and contracts. Frequent and continuing contact is maintained with present and potential contractors, vendors, and suppliers to clarify terms and conditions of contracts and other procurement documents.
Time Expected to Reach Full Performance Level: One year.

10. AREA OF CONSIDERATION: Open to All Interested CCNs (Cooperating Country Nationals).

AIDAR, Appendix J. 1 (b) Definitions:
(6) "Cooperating country" means the country in which the employing USAID Mission is located.
(7) "Cooperating country national" ("CCN") means an individual who is a cooperating country citizen, or a non-cooperating country citizen lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the cooperating country.

11. PHYSICAL DEMANDS
The work requested does not involve undue physical demands.

12. POINT OF CONTACT:
All application packages are to be submitted:

Procurement Agent
USAID/Liberia, C/O American Embassy Service Entrance,
Gibson Street, Mamba Point, Monrovia
Or by email to: Agatha W. Mangou, Human Resources Assistant, email: amangou@usaid.gov and
Sylvester Browne, Human Resources Specialist, email: sbrowne@usaid.gov

11. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THIS POSITION

- a. **Education**
Completion of a four year university degree in administrative areas to include but not limited to accounting, business administration, finance, marketing, procurement systems, or a related technical/liberal science (agronomy, computer science, ecology, education, environmental sciences, mathematics, political science, etc.) is required. Specialized training in U.S. Government and USAID acquisition and assistance is desirable.
- b. **Prior Work Experience**
Three to five years of progressively responsible work experience, of which two years could be in procurement, logistics, international development, or related field with other donor organizations, international development organizations, civil society or community-based organizations, private sector, or host-government organizations.
- c. **Language Proficiency**
Level IV (fluent) English skills are required with demonstrated fluency in both written and spoken English.
- d. **Clearances**
The ability to obtain medical and security clearances (Public Trust level –building access) in a timely manner is required.

III. EVALUATION AND SELECTION FACTORS

- A. **Education—20 points**
USAID will assess educational qualifications that increase the candidate's competitiveness for the position.
- B. **Relevant Work Experience – 40 Points**
USAID will assess relevant work experience that increases the candidate's competitiveness for the position.
- C. **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities – 20 Points**
Must possess strong analytical, communication and interpersonal skills. H/she must have strong command of the English language as well as strong computer, writing and speaking skills, including keyboarding/typing skills. Incumbent must possess highly developed organizational and task prioritization/tracking skills.
Demonstrated ability to establish and maintain effective relationships at all levels within the Mission personnel, vendors, contractors, and high-level Embassy Officers. Incumbent must possess the ability to shift priorities as required and excellent customer service skills and be able to respond sympathetically to all staff in a timely and positive manner.
H/she must possess excellent negotiation and persuasive skills. Ability to evaluate the capability of a contractor in terms of adequate productive facilities, current commitments, and financial status is desired. Incumbent must be skilled in determining the responsiveness of price and/or cost proposals, through analysis of cost elements. Must be able to speak authoritatively before USAID's personnel and counterparts to negotiate and represent the U.S. Government's best interests to both U.S. and host country individuals.
- D. **Communication and Computer Skills – 20 Points**
Applicant skills in oral and written communication in the English language, including the ability to obtain, evaluate, and interpret reports, and to effectively communicate organizational mission and policies to staff and partners will be evaluated. USAID will evaluate the applicant's computer skills, including ease and skill in using MS-Office Suite of Applications and Google G Suite applications, and in using the internet to solve problems and conduct research on matters such as regulatory guidance and compliance.

Total possible points = 100

ADDITIONAL SELECTION CRITERIA
Management will consider potential nepotism/conflict of interest, and visa status when determining successful candidacy.

SELECTION PROCESS
After initial screening of applications, only short-listed applicants will be contacted and invited for an interview and a written exercise. Applicants selected for interview will also be evaluated on their reference checks.

- HOW TO APPLY**
Applications shall be submitted no later than the closing date specified, and should include the following:
1. A clearly typed application cover letter that briefly summarizes why you believe you are qualified for this position.
 2. Resume or CV.
 3. The names and contact details of three references that can attest to your procurement management experience.
 4. Documentation (e.g. copies of certificates or degrees) that address the minimum requirements of the position.
 5. One to two-page writing sample broadly related to procurement development in Liberia.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: The U.S. Mission provides equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Yekeh Kolubah gets separate trial

By Winston W. Parley

The Criminal Court “A” in Monrovia has granted Montserrado County District 10 Representative Yekeh Kolubah the permission to be placed on severance which will enable him to face separate trial from others who were jointly indicted along with the lawmaker last

Konneh, Johnson Kpor, Vamah Kulubah and Mohammed S. Kaba for alleged aggravated assault, criminal attempt to commit murder, kidnapping, criminal solicitation and criminal facilitation.

Ruling on the motion for severance at the Temple of Justice Wednesday, 18 March, Judge Roosevelt Z. Willie indicated that justice will be

“So the as to whether [justice] will be prejudice against him were he to be tried along with these defendants the answer is YES,” the judge rules.

At the commencement of the hearing Wednesday, defense lawyers for defendants Mohammed S. Kaba and Mohammed A. Keita informed the court that the two accused were out of the bailiwick of Montserrado County facilitating a workshop and that they would hopefully be present in court at the next hearing.

Since the trial commenced, Judge Willie notes that Mr. Kolubah has attended most of the hearings, but the rest of the defendants have not been present all of the time to commence the trial.

Mr. Kolubah and other defendants were jointly indicted here by prosecution over claims that the lawmaker ordered his bodyguards to beat and wound one Emmanuel Sherman who had allegedly rejected T-shirts and leaflets printed for the June 7, 2019 Save the State peaceful protest organized by the Council of Patriots (COP).

The indictment says defendants Oliver Konneh,



year. Mr. Kolubah, a staunch critic of President George Manneh Weah, was indicted along with Mohammed A. Keita, Abu Keita, Oliver C.

prejudiced against Mr. Kolubah were he to be tried along with these defendants because the rest of the defendants have not been present all of the time to commence the trial.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

Double fight on corruption -British Parliamentarian warns

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

visiting British parliamentarian Dam Holloway has called on President George Manneh Weah and his administration to double the fight against corruption and change the perception that people get rich only by working in government.

“It is a huge perception out there that many rich people got rich at the expense of government, that is by serving in the government at a very top level and such thing is wrong and horrifying for a country that is down in terms of development,” Holloway said recently at the Capitol in Monrovia.

He however praised the Coalition for Democratic Change administration for investigating past officials of government for alleged corruption allegation, but added that effort should be doubled up if the country is to move forward and compete with other nations.

Holloway, who was once an investigative journalist in the

United Kingdom, suggested that the perception that almost rich people in the country got their wealth from government is horrifying news that should be changed in order to encourage investors here.

He continued that the major challenge of all government officials is to improve the living condition of the people and people should support investigation into previous administration.

“You come to government to serve and not to be rich,”



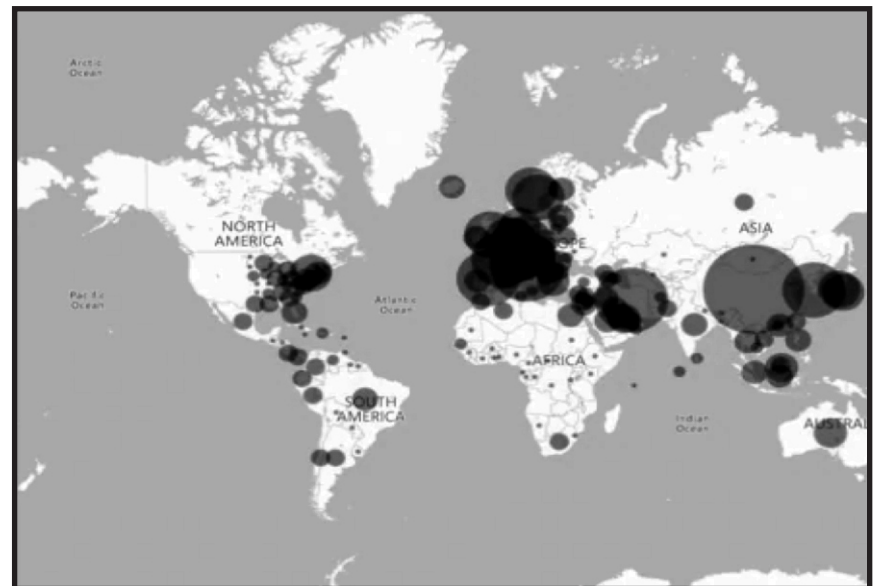
He intimated that single dollar stolen from the national coffers causes a lady to die from child birth, denies children of better education, and slows down development.

he cautioned, as he encouraged those who want to be rich to focus on business because government is nothing but service to humanity.

COVID-19 - Statistics in Perspective

Over the 90 days that the virus has been infecting the population in China and, progressively, the rest of the World - the number of consequent deaths have totaled over 8,000.

During the same period the FedEE Statistics Unit estimates that:
The number of global deaths from all causes to have been 13.68 million;
The number of child deaths alone from malnutrition to have been 775,000;
The number of deaths from motor accidents to have been 315,000;
The number of deaths from influenza to have been 125,000;
The number of murders to have been 110,000;
The number of deaths from unintentional poisoning in the USA alone to have been 16,200;
The number of deaths from snake bites in India alone to have been 2,750.



If the same resources devoted to COVID-19 were directed to child malnutrition, then the number of lives saved would readily amount to over 500,000. This excludes any allowance made for \$billions lost from production and share values because incompetent governments have taken action too late and far too ineptly. Assisting China in early January 2020 would have undoubtedly severely limited the global spread of the virus.

According to Robin Chater, Secretary-General of the Federation of International Employers (FedEE) “There is a huge moral dilemma here which no-one seems strong enough, or unselfish enough, to confront. It is the

responsibility of everyone in the advanced and developing economies that children starve to death in vast numbers whilst everyone outside the third world frets about COVID-19. Do the children not count because they are not from our street, or because they are mainly black? What price civilization?”-Source DedEF

What is FedEE?

The Federation of International Employers (FedEE) is a leading corporate membership organisation for multinational companies. It was founded in 1988, with financial assistance from the European Commission. Today it is an independent body with corporate members all around the globe.

Advertise with us!

“The perception of coming to government to get rich is wrong and is something those in government to work on,” he said.

Also speaking at the news conference, Lord David Hannay said Liberia and Britain shared lot of historical facts together and now is the time to reawaken that spirit.

Lord Hannay explained that their visitation is great way of engaging the British parliament to help Liberia both in the health and education sectors.

He pointed out that Liberia is a country that needs lot of support and Britain stands better to jump start the process.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Monrovia residents take Mayor to task -Over coronavirus fight

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Amidst Monrovia City Mayor Jefferson Kojjee's call on Liberian to join the fight against the Coronavirus in the country, many residents of the capital have taken Mr. Kojjee to task over the filthiness of the city.

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, 17 March in Sinkor, suburb of Monrovia, some Liberians including entrepreneurs, students and marketers, disclosed that while they welcome the Mayor's invitation to fight the coronavirus, they equally want him to take action and stop feces from overrunning some streets in Monrovia.

They indicate that the

fight against the Coronavirus would be more difficult in the wake of the dirtiness of Monrovia, especially with feces taking over several major streets here.

According to businessman Washington Dixon Thomas who sells on Water Street, the city mayor is not serious about fighting the coronavirus because of the huge presence of feces that provide pollute the environment and put Liberians' health at risk.

Also, Mrs. Marie Klah Jackson, seller at the intersection of New Port Street, notes that since 2019, they have been selling in feces while students of the New Port High School also walk through feces to enter their campus.

She discloses that fighting the coronavirus is one thing and cleaning the feces of some streets in Monrovia is another serious embarrassment to the city of Monrovia.

She challenges the city mayor to walk around Monrovia streets and see the kind of feces that people are getting in contact with before encouraging them to fight the coronavirus.

She adds that the feces are directly coming from some private buildings occupied by foreign nationals without any action being taken against the owners of these buildings.

Recently, the Representative of Electoral District 7 Solomon George spoke about the presence of huge feces on several streets in Monrovia that, seriously threatening the people of Monrovia.

Rep. George made the assertions while appearing on a radio talk-show in Monrovia, as he made specific reference to the New Port, Water Street, and Front Street as areas where feces remain a serious threat to the people especially students, marketers, and pedestrians.

He maintained that up to present, there is nothing being done by the relevant authorities responsible to clean the city in the wake of the presence of the coronavirus.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



Monrovia City Mayor Jefferson Kojjee

Non-essential government employees told to stay home

All non-essential employees of the Government of Liberia have been directed to stay home until further notice as part of the Liberian Government ongoing response to COVID-19, Civil Service Agency Acting Director-General, James Thompson announced on Wednesday.

The move follows President George Weah's directive on Monday March 16, 2020 that all non-essential public servant should be granted paid leave, upon confirming the first case of the coronavirus here.

Mr. Weah said the measure is intended to



minimize physical contacts and possible transmission of the virus.

The CSA Acting Director-General says the issue of essential or non-essential

employees should not alarm any Civil Servants or heighten any apprehension about job security during this period.

"Non-essential employees will be paid as usual and this

LINU regrets Blama's fate

The political party, Liberia National Union or LINU regrets news that its national chairman, Nathaniel Blama, tested positive of the Coronavirus.

In a press statement issued in Monrovia Tuesday, March 17, LINU notes that despite chairman Blama demonstrated high degree of patriotism to the nation by voluntarily availing himself to testing and sharing his results with the general public, the truth of the matter could still not be revealed to President George Manneh Weah.

The statement signed by the national executive committee of LINU states Mr. Blama kept very close contact

However, it condemns call by the opposition Alternative National Congress for the dismissal of Blama from the Environmental Protection Agency and notes the ANC has never and does not intend to provide anything positive in moving Liberia's development agenda forward.

"We think that the call by the ANC to dismiss the EPA boss at this time when he is traumatized and mustering courage to recover from this deadly virus is wicked, diabolical and evil at the highest beyond human comprehension", reads the statement.

It cautions Liberians that this global menace has transcended political lines



LINU national chairman, Nathaniel Blama

with authorities of the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia through Chief Medical Officer Doctor Francis Karteh and the Acting Head of the National Public Health Institute Masoka Fallah, respectively for their professional guidance relative to his unfortunate situation up to and including the point of his evacuation to the quarantine center.

The statement, read by LINU national secretary general Aaron Wesseh, discloses that chairman Blama, upon returning from Switzerland on 13th March, 2020 went through screening protocols at the Robert International Airport.

everywhere in the world and would like to therefore request all well-meaning citizens to join hands in praying for the country at large and the recovery of chairman Blama and those who have come out as well as others yet to be identified.

LINU thanks President Weah for action taken to arrest the spread of the corona virus in the wake of Liberia recording two confirmed cases and joins the President in urging Liberians coming in the country and those residing within its territorial limits to observe all precautionary measures put in place by the requisite government's functionaries. Press Release

label in no way diminishes your importance in the Civil Service. We need at most 25 percent of the overall personnel of the Entity to be at work, ONLY" he said.

"We also encourage strongly the recommended procedures announced by

Heath authorities. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer. Avoid large gathering, touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands and keep safe" Thompson added.

Français

La LINU apporte son soutien au premier patient du coronavirus au Libéria

L'Union nationale du Libéria, un parti politique, a exprimé sa solidarité et son soutien à son président national, Nathaniel Blama, qui a été testé positif au Coronavirus et mis en quarantaine.

Dans un communiqué de presse publié à Monrovia le mardi 17 mars, la LINU a indiqué que, « bien que le président Blama ait fait preuve d'un haut degré de patriotisme envers la nation en acceptant de se faire tester volontairement, il a été victime d'une campagne de désinformation. Selon le parti, toute la vérité n'a pas été dite au président George MannehWeah.

A en croire le communiqué signé par le comité exécutif national de la LINU, M. Blama est resté en contact permanent avec les autorités du ministère de la Santé et de l'Institut national de santé publique du Libéria par l'intermédiaire du médecin-hygiéniste en chef, le docteur Francis Karteh et du chef par intérim de l'Institut national de santé publique, M. MasokaFallah, dont les conseils auraient été suivis à la lettre concernant sa



Suspended EPA Executive Director Nathaniel Blama

situation malheureuse jusqu'au moment de son évacuation vers le centre de quarantaine.

Le président George MannehWeah a déclaré lundi 16 mars dans un discours national que le Libéria avait enregistré son premier cas confirmé de COVID-19. Il s'agit du directeur exécutif de l'Agence de protection de l'environnement, Nathaniel Blama, qui aurait refusé d'être mis en quarantaine après avoir été testé positif par les autorités

sanitaires à l'aéroport international Roberts dans le comté de Margibi dès son arrivée.

M. Blama est arrivé ici le vendredi 12 mars dans la soirée via Air Brussels. Il avait pris part à une conférence internationale en Europe. Les autorités disent que d'autres fonctionnaires qui étaient avec lui sur le même vol sont recherchés. Il faut les mettre

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Le Libéria enregistre son deuxième cas, il s'agit du domestique du directeur de l'EPA

Le Libéria, un pays pauvre de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, vient d'enregistrer son deuxième cas du coronavirus. Johnny Philip, l'un des domestiques du directeur de l'Agence de la Protection de l'Environnement (EPA), Nathaniel Blama, a été testé positif 24 heures après que

son patron s'est rendu aux autorités sanitaires pour être mis en quarantaine. L'annonce a été faite par le gouvernement du Libéria le mardi 17 mars dans un communiqué.

Le directeur de l'Agence de la Protection de l'Environnement, qui est désormais sous le coup d'une suspension indéfinie, a été le

premier à avoir été testé positif à l'aéroport international Robert dès son arrivée de l'Europe. Mais il aurait refusé qu'on le mît en quarantaine et s'est rendu chez lui à la maison, infectant ainsi son domestique qui, selon le ministre de l'information, Lenn Eugene Nagbe, était considéré comme ayant été en contact direct avec M. Blama.

Dans une brève adresse à la nation lundi dernier, le président George MannehWeah avait déclaré que M. Blama était arrivé dans le pays le week-end dernier et avait refusé qu'on le mît en quarantaine et avait regagné son domicile. Il a expliqué que des agents de santé l'ont suivi par la suite à son domicile avec une ambulance pour l'emmener dans un centre de quarantaine.

Des recherches et des tests actifs sont en cours pour retrouver des contacts primaires et secondaires. Plus d'une centaine de contacts directs et indirects ont été établis, dont 23 à haut risque.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Éditorial

L'affaire du COVID-19 n'est pas un jeu d'enfant

L'incapacité du gouvernement libérien de gérer de manière efficace le premier cas officiellement confirmé de coronavirus au Libéria est très inquiétante. C'est un acte irresponsable de la part des autorités.

Le président George MannehWeah a déclaré lundi 16 mars dans un discours national que le Libéria avait enregistré son premier cas confirmé de COVID-19. Il s'agit du directeur exécutif de l'Agence de protection de l'environnement, Nathaniel Blama, qui aurait refusé d'être mis en quarantaine après avoir été testé positif par les autorités sanitaires à l'aéroport international Roberts dans le comté de Margibi dès son arrivée.

M. Blama est arrivé ici le vendredi 12 mars dans la soirée via Air Brussels. Il avait pris part à une conférence internationale en Europe. Les autorités disent que d'autres fonctionnaires qui étaient avec lui sur le même vol sont recherchés. Il faut les mettre en quarantaine afin d'éviter la propagation de la maladie dans le pays.

Nous sommes déçus d'apprendre que le patron de l'EPA a également refusé de monter dans une ambulance qui s'est rendue à son domicile pour l'emmener dans un centre d'observation. Il aurait préféré monter dans son véhicule officiel. Le ministre de la Santé, le docteur Wilhemina S. Jallah, qui a informé les journalistes lundi, a déclaré que M. Blama avait « violé » le règlement sanitaire à l'aéroport et était rentré chez lui.

Sommes-nous sérieux dans la lutte contre le COVID-19 et pour la protection du public contre les infections de masse qui pourraient détruire ce pays dont le système de santé est déjà défaillant en raison d'un manque de capacités ? Ou est-ce une mise en scène afin d'attirer la sympathie, la solidarité et le soutien de la communauté internationale ?

Pourquoi un gouvernement qui se dit soucieux du bien-être de ses citoyens, qui ne veut pas qu'ils soient infectés et meurent permettrait volontairement à ses responsables de violer les réglementations et les mesures de sécurité publique ? Le président Weah devrait aller au-delà de la simple suspension et faire inculper et poursuivre M. Blama pour son comportement grossier et son arrogance malveillante.

L'Institut national de la santé publique du Libéria devrait renforcer et appliquer ses mesures de surveillance sans crainte ni faveur, car la maladie ne connaît pas de frontière. Depuis Wuhan, en Chine, le COVID-19 s'est propagé à plus de 10 pays dans le monde, y compris aux États-Unis. Le nombre de morts aux États-Unis est de plusieurs centaines, tandis que l'Italie a perdu plus de 1000 personnes.

Le gouvernement du Libéria doit mettre en place des mesures et se montrer ferme dans la gestion de la crise actuelle. Qu'il s'agisse de Nathaniel Blama ou toute autre personne qui présente un risque grave pour le public, il faut qu'ils soient mis en quarantaine pour éviter de contaminer tout le pays entier.

A part Blama, nous ne savons pas combien d'autres personnes ont pu « glisser » entre les mailles à la RIA et aux autres portes d'entrée. Cela représente un risque pour le public.

Ebola a tué plus de 4 000 personnes, détruit l'économie et fait des orphelins. La question de COVID-19 n'est pas une plaisanterie car ses impacts se font sentir dans le monde entier.

Français

La LINU apporte son

en quarantaine afin d'éviter la propagation de la maladie dans le pays.

24 heures plus tard, le ministère de l'information a fait l'annonce de l'enregistrement d'un second cas, à la personne de Johnny Philip, l'un des domestiques du leader politique de la LINU.

Mais le parti dénonce une tentative de diffamation et accuse l'ANC (Alternative National Congress) de diaboliser son leader politique. L'ANC, l'un des principaux partis politiques de l'opposition, avait appelé au limogeage du directeur général de l'Agence de la Protection de l'Environnement pour avoir mis le pays en danger.

"Nous pensons que l'appel de l'ANC à licencier le patron de l'EPA à ce moment où il est traumatisé est méchant,

diabolique et démoniaque au-delà de la compréhension humaine", a dit le parti dans son communiqué.

« Cette menace mondiale ne respecte pas les clivages politiques partout dans le monde. Il faut donc que tous les citoyens se joignent à nous pour prier pour le pays dans son ensemble et pour un prompt rétablissement du président Blama et de ceux qui seraient infectés.

LINU remercie le président Weah pour les mesures prises pour arrêter la propagation du coronavirus à la suite de l'enregistrement de deux cas confirmés au Libéria et se joint au président pour exhorter les Libériens venant dans le pays et ceux qui résident dans ses limites territoriales à observer toutes les mesures de précaution mises en place par les autorités sanitaires.

Le Libéria enregistre

Le gouvernement a mis en place plusieurs mesures de prévention afin d'empêcher que la maladie se propage dans le pays. Il s'agit entre autres des mesures comme le lavage des mains, la fermeture de toutes les écoles et l'interdiction des

rassemblements.

Les autorités exhortent tous les habitants à continuer de respecter les mesures de prévention mises en place par le Ministère de la santé et l'Institut national de santé publique du Libéria.

Côte d'Ivoire : Alassane Ouattara réussit son coup

Le président ivoirien aura réussi à réviser la Constitution de son pays malgré tous les remous créés par cette initiative. Ce mardi 17 mars, la loi fondamentale de la Côte d'Ivoire a été modifiée par le Sénat et l'Assemblée Nationale réunis en Congrès. Au total, 246 voix ont été enregistrées en faveur de la révision constitutionnelle proposée par le président de la République, Alassane Ouattara alors que deux voix ont voté contre.

L'opposition fait l'option de la chaise vide

Ce vote a eu lieu dans un contexte où l'opposition a décidé de protester contre le processus de la modification de la Constitution. Elle a ainsi boycotté les assises ayant abouti à la révision de la loi fondamentale ivoirienne déjà modifiée en 2016. Les responsables de l'opposition ont notamment fait savoir qu'ils étaient foncièrement contre le fait que la modification de la constitution ait lieu à quelques mois de la tenue des élections présidentielles

ivoiriennes.

Comme changement majeur enregistré dans le texte adopté ce mardi, on peut noter la suppression du « ticket président-vice-président ». Le vice-président ivoirien sera donc désormais connu après les élections. La Cour suprême a été supprimée et le Conseil d'État et la Cour des comptes ont été institutionnalisés. L'autre changement apporté dans la nouvelle loi est la prolongation systématique du mandat des députés en cas d'impossibilité d'organiser un scrutin.

Le dauphin de Ouattara connu

Notons que la modification de la constitution intervient près de deux semaines après l'annonce faite par le président de la République, Alassane Ouattara. Il déclarait notamment qu'il ne comptait pas se présenter pour un troisième mandat. Il annonçait le 5 mars dernier à la face du monde qu'il passerait le témoin à la jeune génération. Quelques jours plus tard, il a présenté le Premier ministre Amadou Gon Coulibaly comme son candidat.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Federica Mogherini

Entendons ce que nous dit la pandémie

MILAN - Il y a encore quelques semaines, personne n'aurait contesté que la tendance la plus évidente dans la politique mondiale du moment résidait dans la priorité à la nation. Unilatéralisme et logique de « jeu à somme nulle » semblaient constituer la nouvelle norme : « Pour que je sois gagnant, l'autre doit être perdant », ou encore « Mes intérêts d'abord ».

Cette conception semblait constituer la marque sans équivoque et presque incontestée de notre siècle, une marque qui par ailleurs n'avait quasiment aucune limite géographique et idéologique : elle s'observait sous de nombreuses formes différentes, mais bel et bien sur chaque continent, sur tout l'échiquier politique (y compris dans de nombreux mouvements politiques sans étiquette), au sein de multiples systèmes institutionnels, et même de certaines organisations internationales. Cette tendance semblait se renforcer jour après jour, les voix étant rares à promouvoir l'approche internationale de coopération, le multilatéralisme, les solutions gagnant-gagnant, la recherche du bien commun, ou encore les politiques axées sur la communauté plutôt que sur une vision purement individualiste de la société.

Aujourd'hui, à l'heure où la pandémie de coronavirus se propage dans le monde entier, mettant en péril de si nombreuses vies humaines, et bouleversant les fondements de notre mode de vie au quotidien, ce paradigme restera-t-il dominant ? La pandémie continuera-t-elle de s'aggraver, ou les leçons nécessaires seront-elles tirées ?

Un virus pourra-t-il remettre en question les hypothèses sur lesquelles repose l'actuel paysage politique mondial ? Nous recentrerons-nous sur ce qui compte réellement, sur ce qui nous unit en tant qu'humanité, ou au contraire alimentera-t-il un sentiment de peur et de méfiance dans les communautés et entre elles, nous divisera-t-il encore davantage, en augmentant le degré de discours et comportements toxiques qui empoisonnent d'ores et déjà nos sociétés, ainsi qu'en paralysant partiellement notre capacité collective à agir efficacement ? Considérons-nous cette crise comme une opportunité d'exprimer clairement les erreurs commises ces dernières années, et ajusterons-nous enfin notre trajectoire à celle de la réalité du monde ?

Haut et fort, cette pandémie nous enseigne beaucoup de choses. Si nous voulons bien l'écouter, voici quelques-uns de ses enseignements très simples.

Premièrement : la communauté mondiale existe. Ce qui survient loin de nous exerce un impact (en l'occurrence vital) ici et maintenant. Un éternuement sur un continent engendre des répercussions directes sur un autre. Nous sommes reliés les uns aux autres, nous ne faisons qu'un. Toutes les tentatives consistant à considérer les frontières comme des lignes de séparation, à classer les individus par nationalité, origine ethnique, sexe ou croyance religieuse, toutes ces tendances n'ont soudainement plus aucun sens, puisque nos organismes sont tous exposés de la même manière au virus, qui que nous soyons.

Deuxièmement : le bien-être de mon voisin a pour moi un intérêt. S'il rencontre un problème, ce problème est également le mien. Si je ne me soucie pas du sort de mon voisin, je ferais bien de m'en soucier pour mon sort à moi. Car dans un monde interconnecté comme le nôtre, la seule manière efficace de prendre soin de soi-même consiste à prendre soin des autres. La solidarité est devenue le nouvel égoïsme.

Troisièmement : un certain nombre de solutions mondiales coordonnées sont nécessaires, cruellement nécessaires, ce qui signifie investir dans les organisations internationales multilatérales. Si vous pensez pouvoir répondre efficacement à une crise comme celle-ci en vous contentant d'adopter des

mesures nationales, vous ne faites qu'essayer de « vider la mer avec une cuillère », comme disent les Italiens : beaucoup d'efforts pour aucun résultat.

Pour être efficace, l'effort doit être mené au niveau mondial de manière coordonnée et systématique, accompagné d'investissements politiques et financiers collectifs dans le système international multilatéral nécessaire au suivi des évolutions, à la réaction qu'elles imposent, ainsi qu'à la prévention de leur aggravation. Si vous démantelez la crédibilité et la capacité des organisations internationales, celles-ci seront moins efficaces lorsque vous aurez besoin d'elles, et c'est vous-même qui en paierez le prix.

Quatrièmement : les décisions politiques fondées sur la science sont les plus rationnelles et les plus utiles. Les preuves constituent le seul point de référence fiable à disposition. Fort heureusement, nous investissons dans la science depuis des milliers d'années - partout dans le monde, quelle que soit la civilisation, et pour de très bonnes raisons. Tout éloignement par rapport aux décisions basées sur des preuves scientifiques, en raison de considérations politiques ou économique de court terme, est tout simplement périlleux.

Cinquièmement : la santé est un bien public, pas une simple affaire privée. Elle est une question de sécurité nationale - voire internationale - et de prospérité économique. En tant que telle, elle exige des investissements publics à la fois adéquats et soutenus, ainsi qu'un sens collectif de la responsabilité dont chaque citoyen est appelé à faire preuve. Éviter la contagion ne constitue pas seulement une exigence vitale pour les individus, mais également une contribution vitale pour la survie des communautés ainsi que pour le fonctionnement des services de santé publique, et en fin de compte de l'État.

Sixièmement : l'économie mondiale a besoin que les êtres humains restent en bonne santé. Investir dans la santé publique, la science et la recherche, c'est investir dans la prospérité des économies à travers le monde. Production, consommation, commerce et services - les bases de notre système économique - n'existent que si les individus sont en sécurité et en bonne santé. C'est l'économie, idiot !

Septièmement : le bon fonctionnement des institutions démocratiques est littéralement vital pour notre existence. Nous avons tendance à considérer les choses comme acquises, jusqu'à ce que nous risquions de les perdre. La manière dont le processus décisionnel fonctionne (ou ne fonctionne pas) constitue le test ultime en temps de crise. Lorsque la démocratie est perçue comme une charge qui ralentit ou qui entrave l'application de mesures efficaces et rapides, l'argument en faveur de systèmes de gouvernance plus autoritaires est voué à se renforcer, avec toutes les implications négatives qu'un tel choix signifierait pour nos droits et libertés. Veiller au fonctionnement des institutions démocratiques, c'est investir dans notre santé, notre sécurité, nos libertés et nos droits.

Enfin, et plus important encore : rien n'est plus précieux que la vie. Nous l'oublions parfois, notamment lorsqu'il s'agit de la nôtre. C'est là le bon sens le plus essentiel. Peut-être le moment est-il venu de renouer avec lui.

Toutes les crises peuvent être appréhendées comme une opportunité de tirer les leçons des erreurs du passé, revoir nos politiques, changer de cap, et réparer des failles dont nous n'admettions pas même l'existence. Tout dépendra de ce que déciderons les individus à travers le monde, à commencer par ceux qui exercent des responsabilités institutionnelles et politiques. Mais en fin de compte, nous devons tous décider. Cette crise sera-t-elle exploitée pour des avantages individuels à court terme, avec son lot habituel de boucs-émissaires, ou nous éveillera-t-elle à la réalité ? Il ne s'agit pas ici d'idéalisme, mais purement et simplement de réalisme.

LIBERIA 2019 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

CONT'D FROM LAST EDITION

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Abuse of Migrants, Refugees, and Stateless Persons: The government cooperated with UNHCR, other humanitarian organizations, and donor countries in providing protection and assistance to IDPs, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern.

The LRRRC did not record any cases of abuse or discrimination against refugees. UNHCR reported one case of a refugee being harassed and assaulted by an immigration official at an internal checkpoint.

Refoulement: The LRRRC and UNHCR reported seven Ivoirian refugees remained in custody in the MCP, pursuant to a 2013 request for extradition from the government of Cote d'Ivoire that alleged their involvement in "mercenary activities." The case has continued since 2013, and bail requests have been denied. Three of the seven refugees were brothers, the youngest 16 years old at the time of arrest. The LRRRC and UNHCR continued to provide subsistence allowances, legal support, and medical and psychosocial support to refugees in custody.

Freedom of Movement: Refugees enjoyed freedom of movement, since the country did not have a mandatory encampment policy. Government policy stated refugees wishing to receive material assistance should move to one of the three refugee camp locations in Bahn Town, Nimba County; Zwedru, Grand Gedeh; and Harper, Maryland County. The camps were in the process of being transformed into settlements intended for local integration of refugees.

Employment: The law generally prohibits non-Liberian citizens from obtaining work permits when Liberian citizens are available to perform the labor, but this law was generally not enforced. The LRRRC and UNHCR worked with partners to implement livelihood programs for Ivoirian refugees who wished to integrate. As of August 14, refugees requested work permits from the Ministry of Labor to work in the formal sector. UNHCR paid the requisite fee.

Durable Solutions: During the year the government resettled, offered naturalization, and assisted in the voluntary return of refugees. Voluntary repatriation of Ivoirian refugees continued. According to UNHCR, as of June approximately 715 Ivoirian refugees had voluntarily returned to Cote d'Ivoire. UNHCR and the LRRRC assisted those returning and supported 1,584 refugees who opted for local integration. As of August the government had begun the process of naturalizing five refugees.

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Temporary Protection: The government provided temporary protection to individuals who may not qualify as refugees. The government, with UNHCR and other implementing partners, continued to provide protection to Ivoirian refugees who entered the country after November 2010. According to UNHCR, as of June, 8,623 Ivoirian refugees remained in the country.

g. Stateless Persons

Not applicable.

Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

The constitution and law provide citizens the ability to choose their government in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal and equal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

Recent Elections: Legislative by-elections in July filled one Senate seat and one House of Representatives seat made vacant by the deaths of the incumbents. The NEC declared Liberty Party candidate Darius Dillon winner of the Senate race; on August 28, because of irregularities in voter registration, the NEC conducted a run-off in 20 voting precincts for the House seat. On the same day, the NEC declared CDC candidate Abu Kamara winner. There were incidents of violence, including stone-throwing and property damage, at campaign events.

Political Parties and Political Participation: There were reports new positions in government were created for members of the ruling CDC Party as a reward for, or benefit of, party affiliation without

regard to the need to create such positions and outside the standard hiring process of the Civil Service Agency. Some government officials who were not members of the CDC were harassed. A "blacklist" of nonparty members working in government circulated widely on social media. Newspapers reported in August a group of men associated with the ruling CDC Party stormed the office of National Bureau of Concessions director general Gregory Coleman after seeing his name on the blacklist; police intervention was required to restore order. Coleman resigned on November 24.

Participation of Women and Minorities: No laws limit participation of women or members of minorities in the political process, and they did participate. Some observers believed traditional and cultural factors limited women's participation in

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politics as compared with the participation of men. Women participated at significantly lower levels than men as party leaders and as elected officials. Election law requires that political parties "endeavor to ensure 30 percent" female participation. Seven candidates competed for a vacant Senate seat and six competed for a vacant House seat in July by-elections; of the Senate candidates, three were women (43 percent), and of the House candidates, one was a woman (17 percent). Overall, 31 percent of candidates in the by-elections were women. Similar by-elections in November 2018 saw just one female candidate of 16 total candidates (6 percent). The NEC had a policy to track voters by gender at all polling stations, but implementation during the July by-elections was uneven, and the NEC did not provide final data.

Muslim citizens were active participants in the by-elections. Unlike in the 2018 presidential and legislative elections, the Liberian Muslim Women Network reported no incidents of discrimination or harassment during the by-elections.

Section 4. Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government

The law provides criminal penalties for bribery, abuse of office, economic sabotage, and other corruption-related offenses committed by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption.

The mandate of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) is to prevent, investigate, and prosecute cases of corruption among public officials. As of September it had 41 active cases and had forwarded six to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution.

Corruption: In June a grand jury indicted 10 persons, including sitting representatives Edward W. Karfiah and Josiah M. Cole, following an investigation by the LACC into corruption related to construction of the Bong County Technical College. According to the press release, the individuals were accused of using fraud to embezzle approximately \$2.7 million in county development funds. In a press conference after the indictment was announced, Solicitor General Sagma Syrenius Cephus said he would keep the indictment sealed pending an investigation. As of November the indictment remained sealed. According to media reports, former speaker of the House Alex Tyler was listed in documents as owning 7.5 percent of the company contracted to build the college; Tyler was speaker at the time of the alleged scheme, and funds from the national budget were allocated to the project despite a lack of visible progress. Tyler was not included

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in the indictment, prompting further questions about transparency and accountability.

Financial Disclosure: By law all government officials "involved in making decisions affecting contracting, tendering or procurement, and issuance of licenses" must declare their income, assets, and liabilities before taking office, at the end of every three years, upon promotion or transfer to another position, and upon leaving office. Members of the legislature must submit their declarations to the secretary of the Senate and the chief clerk of the House, members of the judiciary must submit to the clerk of the Supreme Court, and members of the executive branch must submit to the General Auditing Commission, with receipt "notified" to the LACC. The law provides for dismissal in cases of false declaration but does not outline punishments for noncompliance. Financial disclosures are

not made public, and officials were reluctant to share them publicly.

As of December the LACC reported that approximately 67 percent of officials in the executive branch and 83 percent in the judiciary had submitted notification of their declarations. The Senate and the House of Representatives reported that 11 senators and 25 representatives had submitted asset declarations to their respective offices in the legislature. The LACC, for its part, reported it had undertaken to verify the assets of 49 individuals.

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials often were cooperative and responsive to their views.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The government has not implemented the majority of the recommendations contained in the 2009 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report. The law creating the commission requires that the president submit quarterly progress reports to the legislature on the implementation of TRC recommendations; however, since taking office in January 2018, President Weah has failed to submit quarterly reports.

The INCHR has a mandate to promote and protect human rights, investigate and conduct hearings on human rights violations, propose changes to laws, policies,

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and administrative practices and regulations, and counsel the government on the implementation of national and international human rights standards. Since coming to office in January 2018, President Weah has not appointed a commissioner to lead the INCHR, which observers reported hampered its effectiveness.

The Human Rights Protection Unit of the Ministry of Justice convened some coordination meetings that provided a forum for domestic and international human rights NGOs to present matters to the government, but it complained about a lack of funding. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights acted as an independent check on the actions of the government in line with its mission to monitor human rights violations in the country.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: Rape is illegal, but the government did not enforce the law effectively, and rape remained a serious and pervasive problem. The law's definition of rape does not specifically criminalize spousal rape. Conviction of first-degree rape--defined as rape involving a minor, rape that results in serious injury or disability, or rape committed with the use of a deadly weapon--is punishable by up to life imprisonment. Conviction of second-degree rape, defined as rape committed without the aggravating circumstances enumerated above, is punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

On May 22, 21-year-old Odell Sherman was discovered unconscious at a private residence in Duazohn, Margibi County, and then transported to a hospital, where she died. Confusingly, media reports indicated that the initial death certificate listed the cause of death as "sexual assault or falling." The case attracted numerous media reports over a period of months, as the family alleged foul play, said they did not trust the government to investigate the case, and requested an autopsy by an outside expert. Because of the length of time following the incident, the examiner was unable to establish if Odell had been sexually assaulted. A separate report by Front Page Africa found that a DNA analysis machine at the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, the only such machine in the country, was not in use, as there was no one qualified to operate it.

The government undertook some efforts to address the problems of rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence. A specialized sexual violence court (Court E) had

World Bank steps in

In the wake of challenging economic situation in Liberia, the World Bank and Liberian authorities have signed a financing agreement totaling US\$40 million dollars as direct budgetary support for FY2019/2020.

The signing ceremony took place at the World Bank Liberia's Country Office on Wednesday, 18 March.

Liberia's Finance and Development Planning Minister Samuel D. Tweah, Jr., represented the Government of Liberia, while Dr. Khwima Nthara, World Bank Country Manager, represented the Bank.

Minister Tweah expressed delight and appreciated the World Bank Liberia Country Team, Accra-Ghana Team and staffs in Washington DC for their well-coordinated approach, which led to the successful signing ceremony.

Mr. Tweah disclosed that the financing is a budget support, and not a "package" for the Corona Virus Pandemic.

"Today signing is part of 2019/2020 budget year and it is ... significant to buttress government's operations, but this arrived at a time where we're experiencing the virus," he says.

Mr. Tweah adds that the government is also planning to engage the International Monetary Fund through its Mission Chief for possible support for the country, given the economic situation as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.

For his part, World Bank Liberia's Country Manager, Dr. Khwima Nthara, affirms the bank's commitment to support the country's Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development.

Dr. Nthara explains that the financing agreement is in two

forms which includes US\$20 million as grant and US\$20 million as IDA credit.

He indicates that the signing was approved on March 17, 2020, by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors.

"The financing could not have come at a better time to Liberia, given the fiscal challenges that the country has faced due to many shocks," Dr. Nthara says.

He believes that fiscal challenges are likely to be exacerbated by the health

and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We also plan to go back to our Board soon to seek the approval of additional support under the recently announced Fast Track Facility to help Liberia fight the COVID 19 pandemic," he assures.

Dr. Nthara discloses that the Government of Liberia has been implementing and continues to implement various reforms, first of which was stabilizing the macro economy, which resulted in the approval of the program of International Monetary Fund (IMF) in December last year.

He points out that the second reform which underpinned the budget support focused on removing distortion and constraints on economic growth as well as

ensuring that the poorer and the most vulnerable people in Liberia are protected from adverse impact of economic shocks.

Moreover, he says, when these reforms are implemented, they will improve the availability of quality seeds in the country; and notes that the reforms are also critical to transformation of the agriculture sectors.

He also mentions the new business plan for the Liberia Electricity Cooperation.

In addition to the above mentioned reforms, he discloses that the government has informed the bank that it is in the process of establishing a national household social registrar which will be used as a platform for objectivity, identifying and targeting beneficiary of various social protection programs.—*Press release*



SN Brussels suspends flights

In the wake of the global spread of the coronavirus which has also hit some African countries, SN Brussels Airlines announces here that it will suspend flights from and to Freetown, Sierra Leone as of 21 March until further notice.

"Pleased be informed that Brussels Airlines will suspend flights from/to Freetown as of 21MAR20 until further notice," a notice issued by the airline says.

It says last flight will be SN241 on Friday, 20 March. The airline encourages

passengers willing to change their ticket to travel before 21 March to do so free of charge.

"Passengers willing to change their ticket to travel before the 21st of March, can change the ticket free of charge (fare difference to be paid, if any)," the notice says.

It indicates that full and formal communication will be sent 'asap,' [as soon as possible].

Due to the flow of demand, SN Brussels says priority is given to passengers who want to change their ticket to a date up to 20 March, adding that any

other request may be attended with delay.

Liberia has confirmed two coronavirus cases after Mr. Nathaniel Blama, a senior official of government returning from Switzerland was tested positive of the disease at the Roberts International Airport over the weekend.

Meanwhile, the government here on Wednesday announced that after health authorities conducted tests on five of the primary contacts from the first case of the Coronavirus in the country, four have tested negative.

Information Minister Eugene Nagbe says the contacts included the driver of the suspended boss of the Environmental Protection Agency, Nathaniel Blama, and another person, who is said to have accompanied Blama to Switzerland.

The only other contact whose result has come back positive is Johnny Phillips, the government says.

In spite of the negative tests, the National Public Health Institute has decided to keep all five primary contacts under special quarantine observation and will re-administer another round of tests in 7 days.



ANC expels Youth Congress vice chair

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) on Friday, March 6, 2020, voted to expel Mr. Wilbert E. Wade from the party with immediate effect. Mr. Wade prior to his expulsion served as the Youth Congress vice Chair for Interparty & Governmental Affairs.

The party explained that Mr. Wade's expulsion was based on recommendations from the Grievance & Ethics Committee coming out of its investigations into gross violation of the party's constitution and Code of Conduct.

It noted that the Committee in its report dated March 5, 2019 revealed that Mr. Wade admitted to and showed no remorse for frequent acts of

insults, threats, violence, physical attacks, open disrespect, fabricated social media publications against partisans and party leaders and disruption of party's activities.

It said consistent with the party's constitution and having been given due process, the Committee recommended the expulsion of Wilbert Wade for violation of Articles 24, Section 5, Article 1 & 2 and Chapter 1 Rule #2, 3, 4, & 6 (a & e) of the Code of Conduct.

The party has advised Mr. Wade to turn over all party's property in his possession, and asked to pick up his letter of expulsion from the ANC HQ between 12 noon and 5pm on working days as all efforts to have his letter delivered have proven futile.

Yekeh Kolubah gets

Cont'd from page 6

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

Prosecutors claim in the indictment that the bodyguards acted on Rep. Kolubah's order, with allegation made that Rep. Kolubah came out of this house

"with a pistol" in his hand and allegedly remarked: "This is the man, we'll zero him tonight."

The indictment alleges that Rep. Kolubah's statement motivated Oliver and the rest of the accused to further beat Emmanuel Freeman mercilessly with sticks and a piece of iron in plain view of the lawmaker and under his alleged instruction.

The case has been rescheduled for hearing on Friday, 20 March at 10:00 a.m.

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Gov't suspends issuance of passports



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has announced the suspension of the issuance of Passports to Liberian Citizens, hours after it said it would restrict the number of daily application to 55 persons.

According to the ministry, the latest decision is triggered by the mandate of President George Manneh Weah on social distancing to avoid the further spread of the deadly Coronavirus.

Liberia recorded her second coronavirus case on Tuesday after it reported the first case on Monday. The second case is a contact of the first index case.

The Ministry explained that Passport will only be issued to people based on emergencies cases to be determined by the authority of the Bureau of Passport of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Ministry noted that the these measures which will be reviewed periodically, are in no

way intended to deprive citizens of their right to travel document rather, it's in the interest of public safety and health of the citizens.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended its apologies to the general public for any inconvenience pronouncement may have caused as it is only intended to contain this dangerous monster (coronavirus) from further spreading.



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Germany International Stars Pledge to Donate €2.5m for Fight Against Coronavirus

Footballers earn incredible sums of money for doing what the best job in the world, and they are often heavily criticised for their lavish and luxurious lifestyles. Sometimes that's fair. But sometimes...

We're going to bring a feel-good story your way, in the midst of all this panic and fear. The German national team have decided to donate €2.5m to the fight against the coronavirus, which has made

its way around Europe and is forcing many countries to live in quarantine and under extreme conditions. And the players were keen to spread the word of how and where to donate funds to the company? Wir Helfen (We Help), whose sole focus is to help those in need during this time of crisis.

Bayern star Leon Goretzka spoke out about the pledge he and his teammates have made, explaining 'football is currently at a standstill and health is paramount', as cited by Bild.




"Football is currently at a standstill and health is paramount. Accordingly, in solidarity, I would like to ask you to contribute your part and to set an example," Goretzka said. "We as the national team went ahead and donated €2.5m to a good cause and hope that many of you will follow us."

Bayern teammate Joshua Kimmich also made an appeal to his followers on Instagram, encouraging everyone to 'show solidarity' in these troubling weeks.

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