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# *The* **New Dawn** TRULY INDEPENDENT

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## *-for endorsing State of Emergency*



Senator Abraham Darios Dillon



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# Continental News

## Virus fears in Tanzania parliament after MP diagnosed

**A** Tanzanian member of parliament has tested positive for coronavirus, triggering calls for a suspension of on-going House sessions.

Without naming the politician, Deputy Speaker Tulia Ackson said the MP had travelled to the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam, the country's epicentre of infections.

She believes that is where the MP contracted the virus.

Parliament's sessions started three weeks ago, albeit with fewer MPs in the chamber, shorter hours of discussions and some debates held over video conferencing facilities.

Speaker Job Ndugai has defended reconvening amid the epidemic, arguing that the country's important operations must continue.

Mr Ndugai, together with President John Magufuli, have disapproved of stricter measures such as a lockdown to curb the spread of the virus in the country.



Tanzania has less strict measures compared to its neighbours

But some politicians want parliament to be suspended to allow for disinfection of the chamber and testing of all MPs to identify and quarantine those who may be infected.

"There shall be no two set of laws - for MPs and for the

people. All MPs should be isolated, tested and contact-traced. Right from the beginning we advised that the parliament sessions should not be held. It's dangerous," said Zitto

Kabwe, an opposition MP and leader of the ACT-Wazalendo party.

Another opposition MP, Upendo Peneza, previously suggested a lockdown for Dar es Salaam city to curb the spread of coronavirus.

"Because Dar es Salaam has the largest number of cases, people from there shouldn't be allowed to go to other places so as to stop the spread of the infection to other regions. Only movement of basic goods and services should be allowed," said Ms Peneza in parliament.

The total number of coronavirus cases in Tanzania now stands at 254 and 10 deaths, with the virus spreading into close to half of regions of the country. BBC

## Sierra Leone president to self-isolate over virus fears

**A** bodyguard of Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio has tested positive for coronavirus.

The president on Monday night announced that he was in good health despite a staffer testing positive.

He also said that all his family members were in good health and none had shown coronavirus symptoms.

President Bio will self-quarantine for 14 days because of having contact with the bodyguard, according to BBC's Umaru Fofana.

Sierra Leone has to date confirmed 43 coronavirus cases.

The country's SLBC television channel shared a video of the president's announcement: BBC



The president announced that one of his security staff tested positive

## New Covid-19 patient enters Uganda despite closed borders



More and more people have been seen wearing masks

**U**ganda has confirmed two new cases of Covid-19, including a Burundian refugee who is said to have arrived into the country through Tanzania.

He arrived in Uganda on 12 April and had been in quarantine at the time of the test.

Though Uganda closed its borders a month ago, it is difficult to police all entry points, as many tend to be informal crossings through village paths.

Last week, Uganda also started testing all interstate long-distance truck drivers driving to or through the country.

Burundi, Tanzania and South Sudan are the only East African Community countries that have not introduced total lockdown as a pandemic control measure.

Uganda has conducted more than 13,700 tests for Covid-19, with 58 returning positive results. BBC

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# EDITORIAL

## Transparency matters in Liberia's COVID-19 fight

ANNOUNCING AN ADDITIONAL \$1million here for Liberia's COVID-19 fight, the Chargé d'Affaires at the United States Embassy in Monrovia, Alyson Grunder, warns both the Government of Liberia and civil society organizations the U.S. is partnering with to maintain the highest standards of accountability and transparency in this ongoing fight.

**"WE WANT OUR** resources to have maximum impact and to complement the efforts and initiatives of the government and of other donor partners and organizations", the U.S. Envoy underscores.

**THIS IS IMPORTANT** because when countries that are already devastated by the global pandemic are bending over to send their taxpayers' money here to help Liberians survive the pandemic, unscrupulous individuals both in government and civil society should not see this as an opportunity to siphon donors' funds, and therefore, deny those directly affected from benefiting.

**THE CALL COMING** from the United States should claim immediate attention of the government and people running civil society organizations in the country to be very careful in handling funds coming from foreign partners.

**IT WOULD SEND** a very bad image for us as a country when we cry out to friendly nations and humanitarian organizations for support, but when these assistance come, they are misused, wasted and deliberately pocketed.

**THE CORONAVIRUS IS** rapidly taking away lives in Liberia with just 99 confirmed cases. With the current death rate at 8.8 or 9 percent, more Liberians risk dying by the time our confirmed cases hit about 500 or more.

**WE NEED TO** equip our health workers and hospitals across the country to be able to withstand what probably lies ahead of us as a people. And we will heavily rely on our foreign friends and donor organizations to achieving this.

**HOWEVER, WHEN WE** begin to mismanage or pocket donors' money and ignore our people's plight, we are shooting ourselves in the leg.

**WE CALL ON** the Weah administration to take heed of the call from the U.S. Embassy and put its feet down firmly on funds coming to the country to help in fighting the COVID-19.

**FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS AND** partners would be glad in seeing impacts of funds coming to the country to help us, which could serve as motivation for increase funding and future support. A hint to the wise...

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+231-775407211 Managing Editor: Othello B. Garblah; Editor-In-Chief: Jonathan

# COMMENTARY

By Hans Bergstrom

## The Grim Truth About the "Swedish Model"

*As the coronavirus pandemic has swept the planet, Sweden has stood out among Western democracies by pursuing a "low-scale" lockdown. Whether this approach speaks to a unique strength of Swedish society, as opposed to bad judgment, can be determined by comparing Sweden's COVID-19 rate with its neighbors'.*

**S**TOCKHOLM - Does Sweden's decision to spurn a national lockdown offer a distinct way to fight COVID-19 while maintaining an open society? The country's unorthodox response to the coronavirus is popular at home and has won praise in some quarters abroad. But it also has contributed to one of the world's highest COVID-19 death rates, exceeding that of the United States.

In Stockholm, bars and restaurants are filled with people enjoying the spring sun after a long, dark winter. Schools and gyms are open. Swedish officials have offered public-health advice but have imposed few sanctions. No official guidelines recommend that people wear masks.

During the pandemic's early stages, the government and most commentators proudly embraced this "Swedish model," claiming that it was built on Swedes' uniquely high levels of "trust" in institutions and in one another. Prime Minister Stefan Löfven made a point of appealing to Swedes' self-discipline, expecting them to act responsibly without requiring orders from authorities.

According to the World Values Survey, Swedes do tend to display a unique combination of trust in public institutions and extreme individualism. As sociologist Lars Trägårdh has put it, every Swede carries his own policeman on his shoulder.

But let's not turn causality on its head. The government did not consciously design a Swedish model for confronting the pandemic based on trust in the population's ingrained sense of civic responsibility. Rather, actions were shaped by bureaucrats and then defended after the fact as a testament to Swedish virtue.

In practice, the core task of managing the outbreak fell to a single man: state epidemiologist Anders Tegnell at the National Institute of Public Health. Tegnell approached the crisis with his own set of strong convictions about the virus, believing that it would not spread from China, and later, that it would be enough to trace individual cases coming from abroad. Hence, the thousands of Swedish families returning from late-February skiing in the Italian Alps were strongly advised to return to work and school if not visibly sick, even if family members were infected. Tegnell argued that there were no signs of community transmission in Sweden, and therefore no need for more general mitigation measures. Despite Italy's experience, Swedish ski resorts remained open for vacationing and partying Stockholm.

Between the lines, Tegnell indicated that eschewing draconian policies to stop the spread of the virus would enable Sweden gradually to achieve herd immunity. This strategy, he stressed, would be more sustainable for society.

Through it all, Sweden's government remained passive. That partly reflects a unique feature of the country's political system: a strong separation of powers between central government ministries and independent agencies. And, in "the fog of war," it was also convenient for Löfven to let Tegnell's agency

take charge. Its seeming confidence in what it was doing enabled the government to offload responsibility during weeks of uncertainty. Moreover, Löfven likely wanted to demonstrate his trust in "science and facts," by not - like US President Donald Trump - challenging his experts.

It should be noted, though, that the state epidemiologist's policy choice has been strongly criticized by independent experts in Sweden. Some 22 of the country's most prominent professors in infectious diseases and epidemiology published a commentary in Dagens Nyheter calling on Tegnell to resign and appealing to the government to take a different course of action.

By mid-March, and with wide community spread, Löfven was forced to take a more active role. Since then, the government has been playing catch-up. From March 29, it prohibited public gatherings of more than 50 people, down from 500, and added sanctions for noncompliance. Then, from April 1, it barred visits to nursing homes, after it had become clear that the virus had hit around half of Stockholm's facilities for the elderly.

Sweden's approach turned out to be misguided for at least three reasons. However virtuous Swedes may be, there will always be free riders in any society, and when it comes to a highly contagious disease, it doesn't take many to cause major harm. Moreover, Swedish authorities only gradually became aware of the possibility of asymptomatic transmission, and that infected individuals are most contagious before they start showing symptoms. And, third, the composition of the Swedish population has changed.

After years of extremely high immigration from Africa and the Middle East, 25% of Sweden's population - 2.6 million of a total population of 10.2 million - is of recent non-Swedish descent. The share is even higher in the Stockholm region. Immigrants from Somalia, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan are highly overrepresented among COVID-19 deaths. This has been attributed partly to a lack of information in immigrants' languages. But a more important factor seems to be the housing density in some immigrant-heavy suburbs, enhanced by closer physical proximity between generations.

It is too soon for a full reckoning of the effects of the "Swedish model." The COVID-19 death rate is nine times higher than in Finland, nearly five times higher than in Norway, and more than twice as high as in Denmark. To some degree, the numbers might reflect Sweden's much larger immigrant population, but the stark disparities with its Nordic neighbors are nonetheless striking. Denmark, Norway, and Finland all imposed rigid lockdown policies early on, with strong, active political leadership.

Now that COVID-19 is running rampant through nursing homes and other communities, the Swedish government has had to backpedal. Others who may be tempted by the "Swedish model" should understand that a defining feature of it is a higher death toll.



## O-PED

By Ana Palacio

# Disunited States

*Long held up as a model for Europe, the United States is now also suffering from balkanization, internal competition, out-of-touch and short-sighted leadership, and narrow turf battles. Given the large number of pressing global challenges, the world must hope that America does not go further down that road.*

**M**ADRID - In 1946, with war-ravaged Europe exhausted and in disarray, Britain's wartime leader, Winston Churchill, gave a speech in Zurich in which he emphasized the need to "recreate the European fabric" in order to restore peace and freedom to the continent. "We must build a kind of United States of Europe," Churchill declared. It was a foundational moment for what would become the European Union, even if Churchill's views of the United Kingdom's place in Europe were rather more nuanced.

Subsequent attempts to construct a united Europe have never lived up to the grand vision that Churchill advanced that day. Indeed, in the 74 years since his speech, the United Kingdom first refused to take part in the European project, then grudgingly entered the bloc and secured numerous opt-outs and concessions, only finally to leave it in January this year.

Nonetheless, the idea of a cohesive Union remained, with the United States of America seen as the ideal model for what Europe might someday become. Indeed, in 2006, a year after French and Dutch voters rejected the ill-fated European Constitution, Belgium's then-prime minister, Guy Verhofstadt, published a manifesto for the continent's future that evoked the Churchillian dream. He titled it "The United States of Europe."

But after a decade of crises, sluggish growth, ineffectual leadership, and internal divisions, the idea of building such an entity has all but faded away, and Europe has taken a sharp turn toward intergovernmentalism. For all the talk of shared values and common approaches, robust unity is simply not feasible right now.

For the foreseeable future, Europe will remain politically constrained by the reality of parochialism - epitomized by member states' extreme difficulty over the last month in reaching agreement regarding pandemic-related recovery funds and how to share the additional debt burden. Rather than bridging divides, multiple meetings of EU heads of government and finance ministers have only highlighted and reinforced them. We cannot act together, because we do not think of ourselves as belonging to a single whole.<sup>1</sup>

There is no United States of Europe, but rather united blocs of states within Europe. We often hear about the "frugals," the Visegrád Group, the Nordics, and the Southerners, for example. A similar dynamic was evident during and after the 2008 financial crisis, in the EU's weak response to Russian aggression in Ukraine, and, devastatingly, during the 2015 migration crisis. And Europe lacks the leadership needed to align these blocs and push everyone in the same direction.

Worse, the US under President Donald Trump is taking a similarly troubling turn. In the absence of strong and effective national leadership, US states - and, more tellingly, groups of states - are going it alone.

On April 13, California, Washington State, and Oregon announced the formation of a "Western States Pact" to coordinate their coronavirus response, while seven northeastern states have established a similar grouping. With the federal government failing to coordinate procurement of medical supplies to combat COVID-19, state and local governments have reportedly been competing to purchase scarce personal protective equipment and ventilators, thus driving up prices. California Governor Gavin Newsom has even taken to referring to his jurisdiction as a "nation-state."

My intention is not to opine about US federalism or the extent of Trump's authority (although his recent claim that he wields "total" authority under the US Constitution was so roundly rejected by all sides that he backed down the following day). My point is to express real concern.

After all, it is precisely the dynamism resulting from America's unique marriage of diversity and cohesiveness that has made the country a model for many Europeans. US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once famously remarked that any state could serve as a "laboratory" for innovative policy experiments which could later be adopted nationally. And the US has been far more successful than Europe in achieving the delicate balance between empowering individual states and maintaining a sense of national unity.

Today, however, America, too, is falling victim to balkanization, internal competition, out-of-touch and short-sighted leadership, and narrow turf battles. Such warning signs suggest that the US is becoming more like Europe, rather than vice versa.

These developments are especially worrying because the coming years will be exceedingly difficult for a world fundamentally changed by COVID-19. The International Monetary Fund is now predicting that global real GDP will shrink by 3% in 2020 as a result of the virus, compared to a drop of -0.1% in 2009, in the depths of the Great Recession. That episode fueled the profound political polarization, populist surge, and instability that continue to hamper the world's ability to tackle pressing challenges such as COVID-19.

We will need global engines of creativity and economic growth. More than at any time since the end of World War II, the world needs America to be at its best and most effective, and to be a model to emulate again. For its own sake and ours, the US cannot become another Europe.

## OPINION

By Adair Turner

# Monetary Finance Is Here

*There is no doubt that monetary finance is technically feasible and that wise fiscal and monetary authorities could choose just the "right" amount. The crucial issue is whether politicians can be trusted to be wise.*

**L**ONDON - In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Federal Reserve will buy unlimited quantities of Treasury bonds, the Bank of England will purchase £200 billion (\$250 billion) of gilts, and the European Central Bank up to €750 billion (\$815 billion) of eurozone bonds. Almost certainly, central banks will end up providing monetary finance to fund fiscal deficits. The only question is whether they should make that explicit.

Monetary policy, on its own, is clearly impotent in today's circumstances. Central banks have cut policy interest rates, and bond purchases are depressing long-term yields. But nobody thinks that lower interest rates will unleash higher consumer expenditure or business investment. Instead, depressed economic growth will be offset (as best possible) by increased government spending on health care, direct income support for laid-off workers, and a reduced tax take. This will inevitably result in unprecedented fiscal deficits.

In theory, funding those deficits by selling government bonds could raise bond yields, potentially offsetting the stimulative effect. But with central banks buying bonds and depressing yields, governments can borrow all they need at rock-bottom interest rates.

When the United States used that policy during World War II, the Fed's role in facilitating debt finance was explicit: from 1942 to 1951, it committed to buying Treasury bonds in whatever quantity needed to keep bond yields flat. This time round, such explicit commitments have been avoided, but the effect is the same: central banks are making it easy to fund yawning fiscal deficits.

Whether this amounts to permanent monetary finance depends on whether the bonds are ever sold back to the private sector, with central banks' balance sheets returning to "normal" levels. In the US after WWII, such a reversal never happened.

In their book *A Monetary History of the United States*, Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz later estimated that about 15% of the war effort was financed with central-bank money rather than by taxes or with debt which was ever actually repaid. In Japan, where 25 years of large fiscal deficits have been matched by equally large purchases of government bonds by the Bank of Japan, it is also obvious that the central bank's bond holdings will never be sold: permanent monetary finance has occurred.

So, monetary finance need not be explicit to be permanent. All asset purchases by central banks over the past decade - so-called quantitative easing (QE) - might in retrospect entail some monetary finance.

That possibility terrifies those who believe that monetary finance must eventually lead to hyperinflation. But such fears are absurd. Friedman famously said that in a deflationary depression, we should scatter dollar bills from a helicopter for people to pick up and spend. Suppose US President Donald Trump ordered just \$10 million of such helicopter money: the impact on either real activity or inflation would be minuscule. But suppose he ordered \$1,000 trillion: obviously, there would be hyperinflation. The impact of monetary finance depends on the scale.

Fears about the long-term impact on central-bank balance sheets and commercial-bank profitability are also misplaced. Central banks do not directly create the money held by individuals or companies in the real economy; what they create is the monetary base held as reserve assets by banks. As a result, central banks, which pay interest rates on reserves, will face an ongoing cost if they create more such money.

But central banks can create costless money by paying zero interest on some commercial-bank reserves, even while paying a positive policy rate at the margin. And while such zero-rate reserves might impose an effective tax on credit creation when economic activity revives, that could be desirable, because it would prevent the initial stimulus from being harmfully multiplied by commercial bank's future money creation.

So, on close inspection, all apparent technical objections to monetary finance dissolve. There is no doubt that monetary finance is technically feasible and that wise fiscal and monetary authorities could choose just the "right" amount.

The crucial issue is whether politicians can be trusted to be wise. Most central bankers are skeptical, and fear that monetary finance, once openly allowed, would become excessive. Indeed, for many, the knowledge that it is possible is a dangerous forbidden fruit which must remain taboo.

They may be right: the best policy may be to provide monetary finance while denying the fact. Governments can run large fiscal deficits. Central banks can make these fundable at close to zero rates. And these operations might be reversed if future rates of economic growth and inflation are higher than currently anticipated. If not, they will become permanent. But nobody needs to acknowledge that possibility in advance.

Paradoxically, the only danger with this approach is that central banks will be too credible. If individuals or companies believe policymakers' promise never to allow monetary finance and that all QE operations will definitely be reversed, they will expect that all the new public debt must be repaid out of future taxes. And anticipation of that burden could depress consumption and investment today.

The alternative approach is honesty - while offsetting the danger that honesty will lead to excess. Andrew Bailey, Governor of the Bank of England, argued on April 5 that explicit monetary finance is "incompatible with the pursuit of an inflation target by an independent central bank." But former Fed Chair Ben Bernanke has shown why that is not true, proposing instead that independent central banks should determine the amount of any monetary finance while governments decide how to spend the money.

Independent central banks could make explicit decisions about optimal quantities of permanent monetary finance. But whether or not they do, a significant proportion of today's QE operations will in retrospect have financed expanded fiscal deficits.



**USAID Infectious Disease Detection and Surveillance (IDDS) Project**  
**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**ICF** For Supply of Laboratory Equipment, Reagents and Consumables

**BACKGROUND:**

For 50 years ICF has partnered with clients to transform their biggest challenges into even bigger opportunities. With a continued focus on innovation in areas including technology, policy, and engagement, we will keep making big things possible for our clients and the communities we serve.

Under the Global Health Security Agenda (GHTA) 2024 objectives (supporting adherence to international human and animal health standards, collaboratively identifying and addressing gaps and priorities in global health security, and advancing sustainable financing for global health security), the USAID Infectious Disease Detection and Surveillance (IDDS) project in Liberia plans to strengthen diagnostic networks which are critical to achieving the GHTA goal of disease detection and rapid response working in close partnership with other U.S. Government partners and relevant stakeholders. IDDS is providing technical support and participate in relevant One Health forums to help continue Liberia's efforts to develop multi-sectoral capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to priority zoonotic diseases.

**PURPOSE:**

ICF Macro, Inc. acting for and on behalf of USAID Infectious Disease Detection and Surveillance (IDDS) invites proposals from interested parties, companies/vendors on their ability as qualified vendors to provide quality assured laboratory equipment, reagents and consumables. The vendor should have demonstrated experience in supply, training and customer support for all equipment and supplies. They should also show records of abiding to industry standards. The vendor should have traceable references and be in good standing with wholesale supplier(s) or manufacturer(s) of medical equipment, reagents, and consumables. ICF Macro, Inc. intends to develop a strong professional relationship with the awarded supplier with an integrated and comprehensive diagnostic network approach.

**EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES REQUIRED:**

In an effort to improve service delivery to its clients, ICF Macro, Inc. is looking for the following laboratory equipment, reagents and consumables that meet the international standards: (1) Bacteriology equipment (2) Bacteriology culture media, (3) bacteriology test reagents and antisera, (4) Quality control strains, and antibiotic discs for susceptibility testing, and (5) Consumables and supplies.

**NATURE OF THE OFFER:**

The Request For Proposal (RFP) is divided into three lots. Offers should be submitted separately for each of the lot. A vendor can submit proposal(s) for one, two or all three lots.

Lot Number	Item Category	Item Description	County (Delivery Point)
Lot 001	Laboratory Equipment	Bacteriology equipment	Tellewoyen, Phebe and G.W. Harley Hospitals
Lot 002	Reagents	Bacteriology culture media, bacteriology test reagents and antisera, quality control strains, and antibiotic discs for susceptibility testing.	Tellewoyen and Phebe Hospitals
Lot 003	Consumables	Laboratory consumables and other medical and laboratory related supplies	Tellewoyen and Phebe Hospitals



**For RFP Documents, Questions and Responses Contact:**  
 Ellen Munemo, IDDS Liberia Team Lead  
 USAID Infectious Disease Detection and Surveillance (IDDS) Project  
 Between 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Streets (seaside), Payne Avenue,  
 Sinkor, Monrovia, Liberia  
 +231 778 163 510  
 Email: [Ellen.Munemo@icf.com](mailto:Ellen.Munemo@icf.com) | [www.icf.com](http://www.icf.com)

The Deadline for Submitting Proposals is @ 5:00 pm, Friday, May 8, 2020

**ARTICLE**

By Othello B. Garblah

**Did Nwabudike exploit the weakness in our system?**

There is a maxim in law that says “what is not done legally, is never done at all. Indeed, beyond all reasonable doubt, Cllr. Ndbusi Nwabudike has failed to provide proof of his Liberian citizenship-plain and simple.



His documents failed to support his claims, as the numbers and dates provided as his birth dates and time of arrival and naturalization either refused to add up or correspond.

One can imagine, the shame, the disgrace and the complete embarrassment he has brought upon himself and family walking away from the Capitol Building looking rejected and neglected.

At one point, I believe, he felt the entire nation has ganged up against him and that even his own evidences were now turning against him. The grounds were unfair to him as they declined to open under him and put him out of his miseries-that’s the price you pay when you failed to do it legally right.

But come to think of it, our system has not been fair to Cllr. Nwabudike and others like him either-trust me. And don’t get me wrong-Liberia has some of the best laws in the world comparatively with that of the United States of America, I mean since their Constitution was plagiarized to some extend by our forefathers, especially so when the first drafter was a Harvard Law Professor.

So how did our system help Nwabudike to come this far? Section 17.1 of the Judiciary Law restricts the practice of law in Liberia to only Liberian citizens. That means, Cllr. Nwabudike entered the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law as a Liberian.

So the question now is what sort of documents he presented to the law school. Bear in mind that his accent has never change up to date. Therefore one could imagine how strong it was when he made the enrolment.

Did the University of Liberia takes its time to verify his claim of naturalization then, something that certified that indeed he is a legally naturalized citizen and therefore was qualified to practice law in the country?

Okay, let say the University did not consider this for a man who could one day be appointed Chief Justice of the Republic of Liberia. Yes, every law student or lawyer is a potential future judge and can be promoted to the level of the Chief Justice. The University failed to establish that truly he is a Liberian based on the papers he tendered in.

Could it be the fault of the University alone? The answer is no. Let’s go back a little.

According to the naturalization certificate presented by Cllr. Nwabudike to the Senate hearing Committee on Monday he naturalized as a Liberian in 1982 at the age of 16, arguing that he was accompanied by an adult, something the country’s alien and naturalization law does not allowed-an applicant must be 21.

So, if the claim made by Nwabudike is true and if that is the document he has been using, them our Immigration System has a problem.

That means, the authorities then failed to implement the law accordingly. Further it would beat one imagination as to how a process which requires a two-step approach-that is first making a declaration of intent to naturalize before a Circuit Court, followed by the actual petition for naturalization which must be filed between the second and third anniversary dates of the declaration of intent. So it is either, Nwabudike lied or the system failed him. Could the Supreme Court done any better?

The Supreme Court of Liberia, whose opinion in admitting Nwabudike to the Bar, the subject now relies also did not help in the situation. It is confusing or difficult to understand how Nwabudike was able to present this same certificate he now parades with to the court and get admitted into the bar.

There are arguments though, that the very Senate has confirmed him for two different positions in Government and therefore asking the questions why now.

From the look of things, the Senate is now trying to correct the mistake the University of Liberia and the Supreme Court made, when someone sitting somewhere gave Nwabudike this flimsy paper, he now holds dearly.

Am strongly convinced there are dozens of immigrants with naturalization papers that are ever more questionable then Nwabudike and they all derived from our system- its highly corrupt and no one cares to ask the hard questions or even read.



# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Loan payment on hold

By Winston W. Parley

Lawmakers here seem to put on hold President George MannehWeah's proposal for government to fully pay loans owed by market women, and petty and small traders in

In a phone interview with a local radio Tuesday morning, 21 April, Mr. Snowe explained that the Legislature approved President Weah's request for US\$25 million to support food distribution to households in affected counties, but with

(CBL) and the Ministry of Finance to explain what is in the country's covers and give an idea if the budget could first address payments of civil servants and health care workers.

He notes that they do not want to reach a point where health care workers become unhappy over their salaries and incentives not being paid and abandon their posts, adding that it is not safe yet to make commitment outside without knowing what's in the budget.

"My focus right now is health care workers," Snowe says, and notes that nobody knows how long this virus is going to last.

Additionally, he stresses the need for the government to pay money it owes the media so that it gets the continued full support of the media in combating the spread of coronavirus.

In response to a call for the government to look in the direction of private school teachers who have been kept at home due to the coronavirus outbreak, Mr. Snowe says it's not yet safe to make a commitment outside without knowing what's in the

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



coronavirus - affected counties, as Bomi County Representative Edwin Melvin Snowe suggests that the Legislature asked the Executive to table the plan.

amendment to table loan payment and send the budget for lawmakers to know the details.

According to Mr. Snowe, lawmakers would want officials at the Central Bank of Liberia

## Sen. Zargo urges government to fast track stimulus package

By Ethel A. Tweh

Opposition Liberty Party Senator Stephen Zargo of Lofa County is calling on the Government of Liberia to fast track the stimulus package.

Speaking from his residence Tuesday, 21 April, Sen. Zargo suggested that Liberia needs to have on hand whatever money it intends to put into the package in advance of what international partners will contribute.

The Lofa Senator says the distribution of the package should be done quickly to enable residents here to have food in their homes before the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia can call for a total lockdown.

According to him, any decision that is to be made during these health crises should be scientific decisions and not political decisions.

He adds that the Legislature will definitely abide by health authorities' recommendation for a total lockdown, but urges that food and other supplies should be made available for the

people, as it would be very fearful to have a total lockdown when government has not yet distributed food to the people.

Senator Zargo says he

recommended 90 days extension of the state of emergency in the best interest of the Liberian people, but the entire



Senator Stephen Zargo

supports the use of face and nose masks of all citizens in Liberia before getting in public areas for their own safety and the safety of others.

He explains that the Senate

Legislature concluded on 60 days as recommended by the House of Representatives.

According to him, Representative Acarous M. Gray, a ruling party lawmaker,

## 2 new cases confirmed

-as Liberia registers 101 confirmed COVID-19 cases

Liberia, a country founded in 1847 by free slaves returning from America is racing with the novel Coronavirus here, confirming new cases every 24-hour.

The country holds the highest death rate in West Africa at 8.8 or nearly 9 percent. However, current deaths from the COVID-19 still stand at eight.

cases across in the country at 86, with seven (7) persons recovering from the virus after spending 21 days in quarantine centers.

Health authorities are tracing nearly 500 contacts or individuals who came in contact with infected persons out there in the public.

Liberians are observing a 60-day State of Emergency



The National Public Health Institute of Liberia or NPHIL reports that as of 11:00PM Monday, April 20th, two news cases have been confirmed, moving from 99 the previous day to 101.

The 101 confirmed cases include 19 health workers and one journalist, the first victim of the media in Liberia.

NPHIL also puts total active

and two weeks lockdown in four counties (Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Grand Kru) as part of measures instituted by the government to stop the virus from spreading besides closure of schools, mosques and businesses deemed non-essential during the crisis. -

Story by Jonathan Browne

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was in agreement with the Senate's 90 days proposal, but other representatives refused.

The Liberty Party Senator continues that a small portion of the opposition was added to the steering committee to distribute the stimulus package.

President Weah recently set

up a steering committee for the distribution of the stimulus package headed by the Ministry of Commerce, and consisted of other stakeholders including political parties, WHO and pressure group Council of Patriots (COP), among others.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# Gov't counters Yekeh Kolubah's claim for acquittal

By Winston W. Parley

Prosecutors here are urging the Court to deny and dismiss opposition lawmaker Yekeh Kolubah's motion to get acquitted of multiple criminal charges over the government's alleged failure to prove its allegations, as

witnesses in the case who failed to make up a prima facie case for aggravated assault, criminal attempt to commit murder, kidnapping, criminal solicitation and criminal facilitation which he is indicted for.

Following their argument Tuesday, Criminal Court "A"

Montserrado County Attorney Cllr. Edwin K. Martin urged the Court to deny and dismiss Representative Kolubah's motion, saying the prosecution was able to establish the sufficiency of the crime that was committed by the accused.

According to him, the State produced picture evidence, and also produced as evidence, the handcuff that was allegedly used by Mr. Kolubah's former security guards to handcuff one Emmanuel Freeman who the State alleges was beaten on the orders of the accused for refusing leaflet and T - shirt printed for the June 7, 2019 protest.

Cllr. Martin accuses Mr. Kolubah of giving the order for his former bodyguards to go and bring Freeman by all cause, saying: "We produced the handcuff that was used in the commission of the crime." Further, he says the State produced as its witnesses, the people that participated in the commission of the crime on the order of Yekeh Kolubah.

He narrates further to show commission of aggravated assault by the defendant, there is evidence to show bruises which were allegedly inflicted on Emmanuel Freeman's body when he was allegedly naked and handcuffed.

Cllr. Martin insists that Mr.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Rep. Yekeh Kolubah

State lawyers counter the motion saying they established the sufficiency of the crimes alleged.

Prosecution and defense argued Tuesday, 21 April over Mr. Kolubah's motion which opined Monday that government presented seven

Judge Roosevelt Z. Willie said ruling in the motion for acquittal filed by defendant Kolubah, the arguments put forth by the parties and all the law citations will be made on Thursday, 23 April at 10:45 AM prompt.

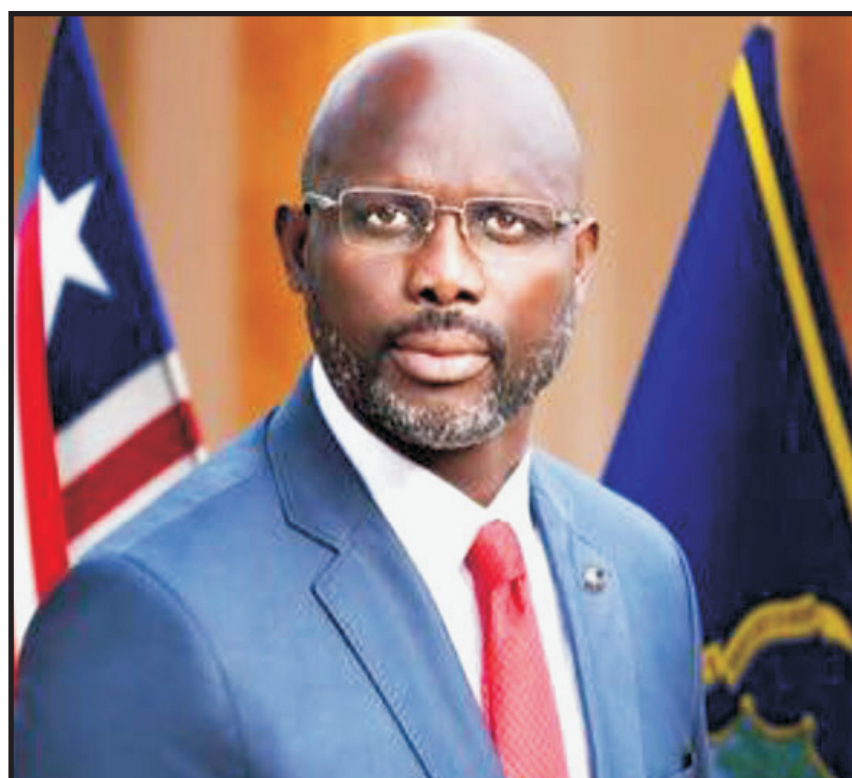
During the argument,

# President Weah applauds Togo, Sierra Leone on independence observance

President George Manneh Weah has warmly congratulated the Government and people of the Republic of Togo on the occasion marking the observance of the 60th Independence anniversary of that West African state.

According to a Foreign Ministry release dated 20 April, President George Manneh Weah, on behalf of Liberia, extended warmest felicitations and best wishes to the Government and people of Togo as they celebrate this historic milestone.

While expressing joy over the occasion, President George Manneh Weah recalled, with deep satisfaction, the relations between Liberia and Togo, which he said have evolved into strong partnership for



the mutual benefits of the two countries and peoples.

President Weah prayed that as the Togolese celebrate this great milestone in the midst of

the COVID-19 pandemic, the Almighty God will continue to shower His blessings of protection upon President Foure Gnassingbe and the

# UNDP restores electricity to Grand Bassa's largest hospital

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Liberia has restored electricity at Grand Bassa's largest hospital, after installing solar panels at the Government health facility.

The project comes in the wake of an agreement signed between UNDP under its Solar for Health Project and the Ministry of Health in December 2019 to electrify several hospitals and other health facilities across the country using solar energy.

According to the medical

pieces of batteries with a capacity of 3000amps each, and 6 inverters at 4000 watts each.

With the presence of the solar panels at the hospital, Jawara emphasized that nurses and doctors would no longer have to use phones and flashlights during operations.

The Liberian Government Hospital caters to patients from River Cess and Sinoe Counties, but due to the lack of stable electricity, major operations were being referred to the John F. Kennedy



director of the hospital, Dr. Abraham Jawara, the electricity will now allow departments such as the maternity ward, operating theater, and emergency room to function without hindrance.

"As you may know, the installation of the solar panel is going to have a significant reduction into the expenditures of the hospital. This will mitigate the cost of fuel," Dr. Jawara said.

The 24 kilowatt health facility received 150 pieces of panels (275 watts each), 63

Memorial Hospital in Monrovia.

Jawara says despite the installation of the solar panels, the hospital will still maintain its generator in case of emergencies.

"Now that we have electricity, we are going to do our best to save lives. We will be able to see our patients at all times," he added.

The Liberia Government Hospital was gutted by fire twice in 2018, which damaged the hospital's generators.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

people of Togo, during the fight against the deadly coronavirus disease.

President George Manneh Weah also expressed hope that succeeding anniversaries will further strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation, so happily subsisting between Liberia and Togo.

In a related development, President George Manneh Weah has also sent a congratulatory message to the Government and people of the Republic of Sierra Leone on the occasion marking the 59th Independence anniversary of

that sisterly republic.

In his message to President Julius Maada Bio, President Weah expressed confidence that, as both Liberia and Sierra Leone work together committing their peoples to the fight against the Covid -19 pandemic within the Mano River Union basin and Africa as a whole, succeeding anniversaries will witness the deepening of bonds of friendship that so happily subsist between the two countries and peoples.--Press release



# Français

## Les États-Unis font don d'un million de dollars supplémentaires pour combattre le COVID-19

L'ambassade des États-Unis près de Monrovia annonce un million de dollars supplémentaires pour financer les programmes de l'USAID au Libéria. Lesquels programmes consistent à apporter une aide essentielle aux 15 comtés libériens dans la lutte contre la pandémie mondiale.

Il s'agira de permettre aux comtés de répondre efficacement contre le virus par une identification rapide des cas grâce aux tests sur les cas suspects et la recherche des contacts.

Cependant, l'ambassade exige du gouvernement du Libéria et des organisations de la société civile qui y sont associées une transparence maximale dans la gestion de ce financement.

Dans un communiqué, l'adjointe du chef de mission, la chargée d'affaires de l'ambassade des États-Unis près de Monrovia, Alyson Grunder, a précisé que le fonds soutiendrait les campagnes de sensibilisation des communautés sur la gravité de la situation. Il conviendra, selon le

communiqué, de travailler en étroite collaboration avec des partenaires locaux qui pourront délivrer des messages sur la prévention et le dépistage le plus efficacement possible.

«Ce financement soutiendra également les efforts de quarantaine. Je note qu'au cours des deux dernières décennies, les États-Unis ont été le plus grand contributeur au secteur de la santé du Libéria, jetant des bases

solides pour la réponse COVID-19 du Libéria. Il y a eu plus de 4 milliards de dollars d'aide totale, dont plus de 675 millions de dollars pour l'assistance sanitaire », a-t-elle dit.

Mme Grunder a expliqué que l'équipe de santé de la mission américaine est composée de représentants de plusieurs agences et

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Chargé d'Affaires Alyson Grunder

## Un journaliste et des agents de santé testés positifs au coronavirus.

Les autorités sanitaires du Libéria ont dit avoir enregistré huit (8) nouveaux cas du nouveau Coronavirus, portant le nombre total de cas confirmés dans le pays à 99, dont huit (8) décès, le lundi 20 avril 2020, parmi eux 19 agents de santé et un journaliste.

L'Institut national de

santé publique du Libéria (NPHIL), l'institut gouvernemental chargé de la lutte contre la pandémie, a déclaré que le comté de Montserrado à lui seul comptait 95 cas confirmés, suivi par le comté de Nimba trois (3) cas et le comté de Grand Kru un (1) cas, avec un total de décès à huit (8).

Avec 99 cas confirmés et

huit décès, le taux de mortalité dans le pays est de 9%, le plus élevé d'Afrique de l'Ouest. Le taux de mortalité croissant du Libéria par rapport à ses voisins est une source de préoccupation pour la Commission économique des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique (CEA) selon laquelle l'Afrique pourrait voir entre 300 000 et 3,3 millions de décès dus au coronavirus.

Récemment, le directeur général de l'ENSP, le docteur Mosoka Fallah, a rappelé que la meilleure façon de stopper la propagation du virus est de procéder à un verrouillage total des comtés touchés : Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba et Grand Kru.

Le président Weah a récemment imposé un état d'urgence de 14 jours dans les quatre comtés.

La direction de l'Association des Reporters du Liberia (RAL) s'est dite troublée après avoir appris qu'un de ses membres dans

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



## Éditorial

### Il faut de la transparence dans la lutte contre le COVID-19 au Libéria

Lors de l'annonce du don d'un million de dollars supplémentaires au Libéria pour la lutte contre le COVID-19, la chargée d'affaires de l'ambassade des États-Unis à Monrovia, Alyson Grunder, a exhorté à la fois le gouvernement du Libéria et les organisations de la société civile à promouvoir la transparence dans cette lutte.

« Nous voulons que nos ressources aient un impact maximal et complètent les efforts et les initiatives du gouvernement et d'autres partenaires et organisations donateurs », a souligné la diplomate américaine.

Ce point est très important d'autant plus que quand des pays qui sont eux-mêmes déjà dévastés par la pandémie mondiale vous tend la main en vous envoyant l'argent de leurs contribuables pour vous aider à vous débarrasser de la pandémie, ils attendent de vous que vous fassiez bon usage des dons. Mais des individus sans scrupule, tant au sein du gouvernement que de la société civile, pourraient voir cela comme une opportunité de siphonner les donateurs et, par conséquent, empêcher les personnes directement touchées d'en bénéficier.

L'appel lancé par les États-Unis devrait attirer l'attention immédiate du gouvernement et des personnes qui dirigent les organisations de la société civile dans le pays et faire preuve de prudence dans le traitement des fonds provenant des partenaires étrangers.

Nous serons mal vus quand, en tant que pays, nous lançons des appels aux nations amies et aux organisations humanitaires pour nous apporter leur soutien, et quand cette assistance arrive, nous n'en faisons pas bon usage, ce, au profit des intérêts personnels et au détriment des populations.

Le coronavirus tue les Libériens à une grande allure, avec seulement 99 cas confirmés. Le taux de mortalité actuel se situe entre 8,8 et 9%. Plus de Libériens risquent de mourir si le nombre de cas confirmés atteint environ 500 ou plus.

Il est indispensable que nous équipions nos agents de santé et nos hôpitaux à travers le pays pour pouvoir résister à ce qui nous attend probablement en tant que peuple. Et nous comptons fortement sur nos amis étrangers et organisations donatrices pour y parvenir.

Continuer à mal gérer ou à empocher l'argent des donateurs et à ignorer la détresse de notre peuple, équivaut à se tirer une balle dans la jambe.

C'est pourquoi nous appelons l'administration Weah à prendre au sérieux la mise en garde de l'ambassade des États-Unis et à mettre les fonds qui arrivent dans le pays à la disposition de la lutte contre le COVID-19.

Comme les gouvernements et les partenaires amis seront fiers et heureux de voir leurs fonds avoir un impact positif sur les populations pour lesquelles ils font ces dons ! N'est-ce pas pour ça qu'ils viennent dans le pays pour nous aider ?

C'est à nous de faire preuve d'honnêteté pour les motiver et les encourager à augmenter leur financement et leur soutien à l'avenir.



# Français

## Les États-Unis font don d'un million de dollars

départements américains, dont l'Agence américaine pour le développement international (USAID), le Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of America, le National Institute of Health (NIH), le US Health Resources and Service Administration et le Department of Defense.

"Ces agences américaines acheminent certes des fonds vers des programmes destinés à renforcer le système de santé du Libéria et à améliorer la santé de tous les Libériens, mais il convient de souligner que notre assistance n'est pas que financière ou matérielle."

Selon elle, les experts américains de la santé fournissent aussi une assistance technique et demeure sur le terrain tous les jours et toutes les heures. « Je suis convaincue que les liens étroits entre nos professionnels de la santé et les institutions apporteront une contribution dans les efforts de réponse du Libéria au COVID-19, car ces professionnels ont eu par le passé à étayer les efforts du Libéria à bouter Ebola et d'autres maladies mortelles hors du pays.

Elle a fait savoir que la lutte contre le COVID-19 est actuellement la priorité absolue à l'ambassade des États-Unis, et ils attendent avec impatience les responsables et les experts de la santé libériens, y compris les médecins, les infirmières, les scientifiques et les techniciens de laboratoire, les spécialistes de la santé communautaire, les institutions de la santé publique et les professionnels, les administrateurs d'hôpitaux et de cliniques ainsi que le personnel pour leurs conseils et leur coopération.

« Nous comptons sur les

ministères et organismes gouvernementaux ainsi que sur les organisations de la société civile avec lesquelles nous travaillons pour maintenir les normes les plus élevées de responsabilité et de transparence. Nous voulons que nos ressources aient un impact maximal et complètent les efforts et les initiatives du gouvernement et des autres partenaires donateurs et organisations », a-t-elle plaidé.

Elle s'est félicitée du Libéria qui, selon elle, a de nombreuses meilleures pratiques et des structures institutionnelles déjà établies dans tout le pays, tels que des agents de santé communautaire et des professionnels de la santé publique qui sont expérimentés et capables.

Le lavage des mains et d'autres mesures de précaution sont bien connus des Libériens, tout comme la sensibilisation communautaire sur la santé publique, y compris la douleur de la stigmatisation due à l'infection et l'importance d'encourager, et non de dissuader, le dépistage, a-t-elle rappelé.

« J'exhorte tout le monde à toujours suivre les mesures de sécurité pour se protéger, et protéger sa famille et sa communauté : l'avez-vous les mains fréquemment et soigneusement, respectez les distances sociales d'au moins six pieds autant que possible, portez un masque facial si disponible et respectez les mesures de confinement. Ces mesures, quoi qu'elles soient difficiles, demeurent indispensables à l'éradication du COVID-19. Le Libéria, en travaillant en collaboration avec ses partenaires internationaux, est bien placé pour lutter contre COVID-19, pourvu que le gouvernement et le peuple soient unis et engagés. »

## Un journaliste et des agents de

le comté de Nimba est infecté par le coronavirus.

Dans un communiqué de presse, la présidente de RAL, Mme Cecelia Clarke, a déclaré que la direction procéderait à un suivi auprès des autorités du Jackson Fiah Doe Memorial Hospital de Tappita, dans le comté de Nimba, et observerait de près les autres journalistes qui sont actuellement mis en quarantaine pour obtenir

des informations détaillées dès que possible.

Madame Clarke appelle ainsi tous les journalistes à suivre à tout moment les protocoles de santé pour rester en sécurité.

Elle a indiqué qu'être testé positif au COVID-19 ne signifie pas qu'on est condamné à mort, exprimant son optimisme que le journaliste affecté se remettra définitivement de la maladie.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Hans Bergstrom

## La triste vérité sur le « modèle suédois »

**S**TOCKHOLM - La décision de la Suède de rejeter un confinement national offre-t-elle un moyen distinct de lutter contre le COVID-19 tout en maintenant une société ouverte ? La réponse peu orthodoxe de la Suède au coronavirus est populaire dans le pays et a reçu des éloges dans certaines régions du monde. Mais elle a également contribué à l'un des taux de mortalité du COVID-19 les plus élevés au monde, dépassant notamment celui des États-Unis.

À Stockholm, les bars et les restaurants sont bondés : les gens profitent des premiers rayons de soleil après un long hiver sombre. Les écoles et les salles de sport sont ouvertes. Les autorités suédoises ont donné des conseils de santé publique, mais n'ont imposé que de rares sanctions. Aucune directive officielle ne recommande le port du masque.

Au début de la pandémie, le gouvernement et la plupart des commentateurs se sont vantés d'avoir adopté ce « modèle suédois », en prétendant qu'il se fondait sur le niveau de « confiance » unique des Suédois, aussi bien envers leurs institutions que vis-à-vis de leurs prochains. Le Premier ministre Stefan Löfven a lancé un appel à l'autodiscipline des Suédois, en s'attendant à ce qu'ils agissent de manière responsable sans avoir besoin de recevoir des ordres des pouvoirs publics.

Selon World Values Survey, les Suédois ont tendance à faire preuve d'une combinaison unique de confiance en leurs institutions publiques et d'un individualisme extrême. Pour reprendre les termes du sociologue Lars Trägårdh, chaque Suédois a un policier perché sur son épaule.

Mais gardons-nous bien de prendre la cause pour l'effet. Le gouvernement n'a pas conçu consciemment un modèle suédois pour faire face à la pandémie, fondé sur la confiance dans le sens inné de la responsabilité civique de la population. Au contraire, les mesures conçues par les bureaucrates ont ensuite été défendues après coup pour mieux mettre en évidence cette qualité des Suédois.

Dans la pratique, la tâche principale de la gestion de l'épidémie a été celle d'un seul homme : Anders Tegnell, épidémiologiste d'État, de l'Institut national de la santé publique. Tegnell a abordé la crise avec son propre système de valeurs très orientées sur le virus, en estimant qu'il ne se propagerait pas depuis la Chine, et plus tard, qu'il suffirait de retracer les cas individuels venant de l'étranger. Par conséquent, on a fortement conseillé à des milliers de familles suédoises, de retour à la fin du mois de février de leurs vacances de ski dans les Alpes italiennes, de retourner au travail et à l'école si elles ne constataient aucun symptôme visible, même si les membres de la famille étaient infectés. Tegnell a soutenu qu'il n'y avait pas de signes de transmission communautaire en Suède et qu'il n'y avait donc pas besoin de mesures d'atténuation plus générales. Malgré l'expérience de l'Italie, les stations de ski suédoises sont restées ouvertes durant les vacances et pour les fêtards de Stockholm.

À mots couverts, Tegnell a indiqué que le rejet de mesures draconiennes pour enrayer la propagation du virus permettrait à la Suède d'atteindre progressivement l'immunité de groupe. Cette stratégie, a-t-il souligné, serait plus durable pour la société.

Durant tout ce temps, le gouvernement suédois est resté passif. Cela reflète en partie une caractéristique unique du système politique du

pays : une forte séparation des pouvoirs entre les ministères du gouvernement central et les organismes indépendants. En outre, dans ce « brouillard de guerre », il était également commode pour Löfven de laisser l'organisation de Tegnell assumer la responsabilité de la crise. Sa confiance apparente dans les démarches de ce dernier a permis au gouvernement de ne pas en assumer responsabilité durant plusieurs semaines d'incertitude. En outre, Löfven a probablement voulu démontrer sa confiance en la « science et les faits », en ne remettant pas en cause ses experts - contrairement au président américain Donald Trump.

Il convient toutefois de noter que le choix politique de l'épidémiologiste d'État a été fortement critiqué par des experts indépendants en Suède. Quelque 22 professeurs parmi les plus éminents du pays dans le domaine des maladies infectieuses et de l'épidémiologie ont publié un commentaire dans le journal Dagens demandant à Tegnell de démissionner et appelant le gouvernement à adopter une autre façon de procéder.

À la mi-mars, suite à une large contagion au sein de la communauté, Löfven a été contraint de jouer un rôle plus actif. Depuis lors, le gouvernement tâche de rattraper son retard. Depuis le 29 mars, il a interdit les rassemblements publics de plus de 50 personnes, contre 500, et a ajouté des sanctions en cas d'infraction. Ensuite, à partir du 1er avril, il a interdit les visites dans les maisons de retraite, une fois qu'il est devenu évident que le virus avait frappé environ la moitié des établissements pour personnes âgées de Stockholm.

L'approche de la Suède s'est avérée peu judicieuse pour au moins trois raisons. Que les Suédois soient vertueux ou non, il y aura toujours des gens pour faire cavalier seul dans toute société, et quand il s'agit d'une maladie hautement contagieuse, il n'en faut pas beaucoup pour causer des dégâts importants. En outre, les autorités suédoises n'ont pris conscience que progressivement de la possibilité d'une transmission asymptomatique, ainsi que du fait que les personnes infectées sont plus contagieuses avant qu'elles ne commencent à manifester des symptômes. Et, troisièmement, la composition de la population suédoise a changé.

Après des années d'immigration extrêmement forte en provenance d'Afrique et du Moyen-Orient, 25 % de la population suédoise - 2,6 millions d'habitants sur 10,2 millions - n'a pas de filiation suédoise récente. La proportion est encore plus élevée dans la région de Stockholm. Les immigrants venus de Somalie, d'Irak, de Syrie et d'Afghanistan sont fortement sur-représentés parmi les décès du COVID-19. On a attribué ce phénomène en partie au manque d'informations dans les langues des immigrants. Mais un facteur plus important semble être la densité du logement dans certaines banlieues fortement touchées par l'immigration, renforcée par une proximité physique plus étroite entre générations.

Il est trop tôt pour rendre compte avec exactitude des effets du « modèle suédois ». Le taux de mortalité du COVID-19 est neuf fois supérieur à celui de la Finlande, près de cinq fois supérieur à celui de la Norvège et plus de deux fois supérieur à celui du Danemark. Dans une certaine mesure, les chiffres pourraient refléter la population immigrée beaucoup plus importante de la Suède, mais les disparités marquées avec ses voisins scandinaves sont néanmoins frappantes. Le Danemark, la Norvège et la Finlande ont tous imposé des mesures strictes de confinement dès le départ, avec un leadership politique fort et actif.



## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

**COVID-19: The Economic and Social Impact on Ocean Islands**

By KesterKennKlomegah\*

As already known, Cape Verde, Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles, Vanuatu and the Union of Comoros depend mostly on the travel industry. Due to the outbreak of this coronavirus, all these governments have imposed restrictions on travel to the islands that have the best climate and attractive beaches. Travel restriction imposed, thus paralyzing tourism industry in all the four islands.

The Government of Maldives and the Tourism Ministry of the Maldives with the guidance of the Health Protection Agency of the Maldives (HPA) placed a temporary travel restriction for the following countries to control new cases. Since then, there are no passengers (traffic) originating from, transiting to or with a travel history of said country/province is to be permitted into the Maldives. Maldivians and spouses of Maldivians who are foreign nationals are allowed in, but subject to observe quarantine measures.

The Cape Verdean authorities have closed all sea borders and stopped internal flights between the islands. Travelers are required to comply with any additional screening measures put in place by the authorities. As a further step, the government has declared a state of emergency for the whole country until 17 April, the details of which can be found [here](#) (in Portuguese). This has activated a series of measures including significant restrictions on movement nationally and internationally.

However, all citizens have been instructed to remain at home unless they needed to carry out the following activities. These are: (i) to buy food or other essential items, (ii) to go to work if unable to work from home, (iii) to go to hospital or health centers, (iv) to carry out caring or similar duties or in case of real need, and (v) to walk pets. Cape Verde's Public Health National Institute pledged to help in cases of emergency.

Since the beginning of March, the Mauritian authorities have been conducting 'Contact Tracing': people who have been in contact with infected patients have been placed under quarantine, including doctors, nurses and police officers.

Seychelles banned any person from Seychelles from travelling to China, South Korea, Italy and Iran. These countries have high cases. An exception is made for returning residents, under similar rules taken by Cape Verde, Mauritius and Vanuatu.

The most significant remittances to Cape Verde, Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles, Vanuatu and the Union of Comoros as a source of financial stability come from the islanders who work as temporary laborers around the world, disappeared. The Union of Comoros depends heavily on remittances. For instance, there are between 200,000 and 350,000 Comorians in France. Official statistics are hard to find especially most of the government sources and international organizations become inaccessible for required information.

There have been a steady development or facelift in

the cities over the past years. A substantial process of urbanization is still unfolding in Cape Verde, especially to the cities of Praia and Mindelo. The same trend city; development and expansion in Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles, Vanuatu and the Union of Comoros.

Beyond all the points raised above, Dr Antipas Massawe, a former lecturer from the Department of Chemical and Mining Engineering, University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, East Africa, strongly insisted that "the scale of the challenges facing the health sector is tremendous, it requires extensive investment of resources and governments have to direct focus on the sustainable solutions."

Charles Prempeh, a lecturer in Africana Studies at the African University College of Communications (AUCC), and a doctoral candidate at University of Cambridge, also explains in an email that there are deficiencies - ranging from poor health policies through inadequate funding of health infrastructure to training and research - that have characterized the health sector in Africa. Ocean islands have similar pitfalls or problems.

islands. The islands hospitals need testing kits, basic materials for hygiene, personal protective equipment for the professional health workers, and equipment for assisted breathing. There is a global shortage of all of these and a shameful scramble among developed countries to get their own supplies - relegating Cape Verde, Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles, Vanuatu and the Union of Comoros to the backyard.

The islands absolutely have no pharmaceutical companies to produce the needed medicaments. The medical supplies, equipment and whatever have to be imported from the United States and Canada, Europe, Asian countries such China and India.

Media reports said Mauritius and Seychelles had received a few tons of medicine including thousands of hydroxychloroquine tablets from India to help in their fight against COVID-19. Hydroxychloroquine is an anti-malarial drug being used by some doctors to treat COVID-19 patients, though its efficacy is still being tested. Mauritius and Seychelles are favorite tourist posts, and have long-time close geopolitical relationship with India.

The COVID-19 epidemic is currently forcing governments to cut agricultural expenses and prioritize health-related expenditures. This will heavily affect the economy in the future if the restrictions continue, and further expected to bring additional economic hardship in the nearest future to these poor ocean islands. More than 80% of people in rural areas depend on subsistence farming for survival, restrictions on market activities would limit market access.

Repeat: Most of these people derive their livelihoods from the informal economy, small-scale farming, open market trading, livestock keeping and fishing. Workers in the formal sector have low incomes. Only a few of them

have social security, and some may not even have saving accounts. This means with the lockdown, they are likely and adversely affected.

The above scenarios complicate the situation for poor people, who have little resources or insurance to cushion the social and economic impact of the pandemic. These small islands are, indeed, in a quagmire both, at the state level and the individual. While much depends on post-pandemic internal policies directed at transforming the economy, strategies to expand practical collaboration with foreign partners, the islands still have to keep good diplomatic relationship with the world. Nevertheless, global leaders have called for a comprehensive approach to mobilizing support for least developed countries, and so it is time to show absolute solidarity with Cape Verde, Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles, Vanuatu and the Union of Comoros.

*\*KesterKennKlomegah is Special Representative of the Russian Trade and Economic Development Council on interaction with Africa. He is also an independent research writer on African affairs in the EurAsian region and former Soviet republics.*



Amid the fast spreading coronavirus in some regions, it is simply providential that the African continent has not recorded high numbers, compared to the so-called western countries. But it is also true that even with the relatively smaller number of cases that most countries in Africa have recorded, there are deep-seated doubts that the health system can match squarely with the debilitating effect of the virus, as they have come under disproportionate strain, according to him.

"The current situation is serious setback," both academics acknowledged. But further suggested that small island governments draw a long term development plan, make consistent efforts at mobilizing resources for realizing - support for education, health and employment generating sectors, - the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### Current Scenarios and Lessons for the Future

It is time for solidarity, to fight the end the global health mess. The key lessons for epidemic response are to act fast but act locally. That is exactly what Cape Verde, Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles, Vanuatu and the Union of Comoros are focusing on now.

But as the international response gains momentum, some financial assistance may be extended to these



# Senators net US\$180,000

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Senators on Capitol Hill may be in a joyous mood right now with reports coming from the corridors of the Liberian Senate, indicating that body received a total of US\$180,000 from the executive for the recent endorsement of the State of Emergency and stimulus package submitted subsequently by President George Manneh Weah.

earlier delay by legislators to have acted on the State of Emergency and the stimulus package was due to delay from the executive branch in releasing funds dubbed as lobbying fee.

Last week Friday, members of the 54th Legislature overwhelmingly voted that the 21 days State of Emergency be extended to two months.

Both the House of Representatives and the Liberian Senate passed a Joint

Resolution because of the financial package attached, but Dillon said, based on his conviction, the stimulus package and the State of Emergency are helpful for the citizenry and the State.

When asked if the money did not amount to clear bribery, he defended that it was for speedy passage of both documents. The opposition lawmaker, who is



Senator Abraham Darios Dillon

It is yet unclear whether members of the House of Representatives also received such amount for the State of Emergency and stimulus package endorsement. But it has been customary at the Legislature that in lobbying fees for legislative materials passage, the same amount is duly shared between both the Senate and the Houses.

Sources revealed that

Resolution, endorsing both documents from the President.

Earlier, sources claimed each received US\$9,000 for the deal, but speaking to reporters in his office at the Capitol, Montserrado County Senator Abraham Darios Dillon said each senator actually received US\$6,000 and that the amount is intended for operational cost for lawmakers.

There are speculations that

seeking re-election, maintained the amount has nothing to do with bribery, instead; it meant for operation.

However, he failed to explain what sorts of operational cost lawmakers have incurred or they expect to incur during the coronavirus pandemic. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne

# UNDP restores electricity

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The government recently renovated the health facility, but limited financial support has meant that it has not been able to fuel its generators.

The UNDP Liberia Solar for Health Project targets 12 health facilities in seven Counties, each with a different capacity level. Training of relevant staff also forms part of the package.

The aim is to help the government find innovative ways of cutting down on fuel consumption and reducing carbon emissions, as Liberia struggles with climate change issues.

UNDP is encouraging investment in renewable energy as part of efforts aimed at greening the environment and fighting climate change.

The agency is also exploring innovative and

sustainable options for increasing access to health services, more so, that the world is currently fighting the deadly corona virus pandemic (COVID-19) which is greatly impacting countries especially with very weak health systems.

This UNDP solar project couldn't have come at this critical time, when UNDP will both promote and implement a response to COVID-19 that supports countries to face the challenges beyond the health sector, to both limit the spread of COVID-19 and to mitigate the potentially devastating impact

it may have on vulnerable populations and economies.

The solar power being installed at these health facilities in Liberia, is being managed by a Liberian owned company called Eco-Power.

Its General Manager Vickson Korlewala describes the system as progressive and highly sophisticated and if managed well, can last more than 20 years.

As part of the arrangement, ECO-Power will maintain the system for one-year.

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# Loan payment

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government's envelope.

Through a communication sent to the Legislature recently, President Weah narrated that several market women and small informal petty traders, who had loans with commercial banks and other creditors, will suffer significantly from the loss of number of selling and trading days occasioned by the Stay-At-Home order he had imposed.

He indicated that the government was working with lenders to show some understanding to the vulnerable borrowers, as he proposed to the Legislature that the government fully pays the loans owed by market women, and petty and small traders in affected counties as part of the requested budgetary reallocation.

"This will be a strong stimulus to these individuals. They have built their businesses from scratch with little or no help from the Government and deserve protection during these trying times. This program will further help the banks to increase lending to new borrowers," Mr. Weah wrote to persuade the lawmakers on his plan.

This aspect of his stimulus package received mixed reactions, as some lawmakers mainly from the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) feared that the proposal lacked due diligence and could open the door to serious fraud and abuse like the controversial US\$25 million mop-up exercise which formed part of reasons for series of mass protests here.

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# Gov't counters

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Kolubah cannot argue that the State did not prove its case when it produced the handcuff, Abu Keita and others who used to testify in the case.

Also arguing, Defense lawyer Cllr. Finley Y. Karngar insists that the State produced insufficient evidence, saying to allow the case to continue it's going to violate the Criminal Procedure Law.

Cllr. Karngar notes that there is no link in the witnesses' testimonies to indict the accused, adding that it is therefore best that the court acquits Mr. Kolubah based on the facts and circumstances.

Mr. Kolubah, a representative for Montserrado County District #10 and a staunch critic of President George Manneh Weah has been facing trial

here after prosecution accused him of ordering his former security guards to beat Emmanuel Freeman last year.

He was jointly indicted with the security guards and supporters in person of Abu Keita, Johnson Kpor, Oliver Kanneh, Levi Blackie, Mohammed S. Kabah, Mohammed A. Kabah and Frank O. Morgan.

The state later dropped charges against the lawmaker's bodyguards and used them as state witnesses as he secured separate trial.

Kolubah subsequently lost a motion in which he wanted the court to rescind its decision of granting a nolleprosequi requested by the state in favor of his former bodyguards and supporters who had become state witnesses.



## UEFA to produce rules in case of leagues cancelled



UEFA Pres. Aleksander Čeferin

UEFA is to produce guidelines outlining qualification criteria for its competitions from domestic leagues that cannot be completed due to the coronavirus pandemic, but once again recommended that they should be finished if possible.

Coronavirus continues to wreak havoc with the footballing schedule, with the

2019-20 season suspended indefinitely across the majority of Europe, which resulted in Euro 2020 being pushed back by a year.

Both the Champions League and Europa League finals were postponed in March after it became apparent hosting them on their original dates was not feasible.

As yet there is no concrete date set for the resumption of a

suspended European league, while UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin conceded the campaign would likely be lost if seasons cannot resume by the end of June.

In a video conference with its 55 member nations on Tuesday, UEFA said any decisions taken will be announced after the executive committee convenes on Thursday.

A statement read: "UEFA met its 55 member associations via video conference and presented an update of the options being looked into by the two working groups that were created mid-March. A variety of calendar options were presented covering both national team and club competition matches.

"The funding of national associations through UEFA's HatTrick programme was also discussed with UEFA reiterating its commitment to meeting the payments to member associations as planned.



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## UK coronavirus vaccine to be tested on patients from Thursday

Clinical trials of a coronavirus vaccine will begin on people from Thursday, Health Secretary Matt Hancock has said.

The COVID-19 vaccine is being developed by scientists at the University of Oxford, who have said it has an 80% chance of success.

Mr Hancock told the government's daily briefing that the Oxford trial and another at Imperial College London would each get at

least another £20m of public money. The Jenner Institute team at Oxford is starting production before the trial is complete and wants about a million doses ready to be sent out by September.

Mr Hancock said developing a vaccine is an "uncertain science" but that the two teams were making "rapid progress" and would be backed "to the hilt".

He said: "At the same time we'll invest in manufacturing capability so if either of these



vaccines safely works then we can make it available for the British people as soon as humanely possible."

However, he cautioned that "nothing about this process is certain". The Oxford vaccine, called ChAdOx1 nCoV-19, is made from a harmless chimpanzee virus that has been genetically engineered to carry part of the coronavirus.

The technique has already been shown to generate strong immune responses in other diseases.

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