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Senators snub session

Bong reports 6 suspected cases



Superintendent Esther Yamah Walker

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Continental News

Mozambique villagers 'massacred' by Islamists

Islamist militants have killed around 52 people in northern Mozambique, police say.

The police say that the villagers in Cabo Delgado province were "massacred", with some beheaded, after some people refused to be recruited into the militant group.

Hundreds have been killed and thousands displaced during the three-year insurgency in Cabo Delgado. No group has said it was behind the attack. A militant group calling itself al-Shabab operates in the area and last month briefly seized control of the town of Mocimboa de Praia.

It is unclear whether it is linked to the significantly larger Somali movement of the same name. The Islamic State Central Africa Province (Iscap), affiliated with the Islamic State group, has said it was behind some previous attacks in Mozambique. The attack took place in the village of Xitaxi in Muidumbe

district on 7 April but only came to light late on Tuesday.

"Recently, the criminals tried to recruit young people to join their ranks, but there was resistance on the part of the youths. This provoked the anger of the criminals, who indiscriminately killed - cruelly and diabolically - 52

young people," police spokesman Orlando Mudumane told state media.

Cabo Delgado is one of Mozambique's poorest regions, but is rich in untapped mineral resources. In 2010, Mozambique discovered huge gas reserves in Rovuma

Basin, off the Indian Ocean coast of Cabo Delgado.

Last Wednesday, national police commander Bernardino Rafael denied that any parts of the province were under the control of insurgents, reports Reuters news agency.

There is conflicting information about the number of people killed in this incident, which happened two weeks ago. There have been reports that 14 local people were massacred. The Mozambique government - which rarely offers information about this sort of attack - has now announced a much larger figure.

The timing and context of the police statement may be significant.

The so-called Islamic State group - which has sought to

take credit for recent insurgent attacks in northern Mozambique - has just put out a video claiming responsibility for the downing of a military helicopter in the region. The helicopter is reported to belong to one of several foreign security companies allegedly hired by the Mozambique government to support its counter-insurgency operations in Cabo Delgado province.

There is speculation that the Mozambique authorities are now highlighting the 7 April incident in order to deflect attention from what is widely considered a propaganda coup for IS, which is actively seeking to build "franchise" operations in conflict zones across Africa. BBC



Troops have been battling to defeat the militants in Mozambique

South Africa to deploy 70,000 more troops to enforce lockdown

More than 70,000 extra troops will be deployed in South Africa to help enforce a lockdown intended to stop the spread of coronavirus, national broadcaster SABC

says. Opposition leader John Steenhuisen has tweeted a letter that President Cyril Ramaphosa wrote to parliament saying that he had decided to deploy an extra 73,180 soldiers because of an

increase in reported cases across the country. Initially, the president had approved the deployment of just under 3,000 soldiers to assist in the implementation of a strict lockdown.

Jogging, dog walking and alcohol sales have all been banned. But security officers have found it hard in some places to enforce the measures.

Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula confirmed the letter's details on local radio, the AFP news agency reports.

"If you look at the numbers and the rate at which the infection has gone up, you will realise that at some point we may actually need the kind of human deployment which has never been seen before," AFP quotes her as saying.

There are 3,465 confirmed coronavirus case in South Africa and there have been 58 deaths. -BBC



Africa 'could lose \$37bn in remittances'



Remittances have become a vital source of income for some on the continent

Global remittances are forecast to decline by about 20% this year as the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic shuts down business activity, the World Bank says.

This is the sharpest decline on record for what has become a lifeline for many people in Africa and elsewhere.

Migrant workers will not send as much money home because their employment and pay is vulnerable.

Globally money sent home

by workers abroad to low and middle-income countries is forecast to fall by about \$445bn (£360bn).

The decline for sub-Saharan Africa is predicted to be 23% and amount to \$37bn this year.

The World Bank report also highlights how the cost of sending money to the region is about a third more expensive than the global average.

The average commission charged for sending \$200 is 9%, but for southern Africa it can cost as much as 20%. 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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COMMENTARY

By Bassem Awadallah
& Adeel Malik

Shelter from the Middle East's Perfect Storm

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens every region in the world, none more so than the Middle East. With oil prices plummeting and public-health costs poised to skyrocket, the Arab world must use this tragic occasion to forge a new cooperative regional order.

OXFORD - The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a public-health emergency and a steep reduction in oil prices, which represents a perfect storm for the Middle East, where everything from salaries to subsidies are dependent on oil revenues. As in the past, the oil-price shock will inevitably spill over to non-oil-producing countries through reductions in official aid transfers and lower worker remittances, further eroding the fiscal cushions needed to cope with COVID-19.

Worse, the pandemic has hit the region at a time when it was already reeling from multiple crises. The Syrian tragedy continues, civil wars have been raging in Libya and Yemen, and the "Arab street" has been remobilizing. From Algeria and Sudan to Iraq and Lebanon, protesters are speaking out in unison against a development model that has produced only corruption and social instability.

The public's perceptions are not unfounded. Though it is still characterized as a middle-income region, the Middle East has witnessed a worrying uptick in poverty and income inequality. A recent World Bank report shows that the share of the region's people living in close proximity to violent conflicts increased from 6% to 20% between 2007 and 2017 - far exceeding the global average of 3%. The region now accounts for 40% of the world's displaced people. With the world's highest youth-unemployment rate, its bloated public sectors were already becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. Whether Iraq can even pay its civil servants' salaries next month remains to be seen. And it is not alone.

Now that COVID-19 is upon us, the Middle East faces an extraordinary challenge that will require an extraordinary response. Though there is a growing chorus calling for global efforts to deal with the pandemic, the first thing the Middle East needs is a targeted regional strategy. The crisis should be recognized as an opportunity to build a new political order for the region. Now is the time for the Arab world to work toward common solutions, embrace a shared destiny, and launch a new development model to address its increasingly interconnected socioeconomic challenges.

The post-World War II regional order had already reached its breaking point by the end of 2019. The United States is no longer the sole arbiter of Middle Eastern affairs, owing to its declining reliance on oil imports and its growing fatigue with external military engagements. And while Russia, the European Union, and regional powers have shown an increasing willingness to intervene in the region, none has the resources or desire to fill America's shoes.

As a result, Arab countries can no longer rely wholly on global powers for assistance in confronting the existential challenges they face. While some Middle Eastern countries are in talks with the International Monetary Fund for emergency financial assistance, most governments lack the political bandwidth to adhere to IMF conditionality. And even if the Fund relaxed its usual requirement of tight fiscal

consolidation, its assistance would help only with funding short-term social protection. After the immediate crisis, it will be up to the region's policymakers to devise a more sustainable development model.

That task cannot be carried out by any one government, even one that has the support of international donors. Because the region's economic problems are so interconnected, only an integrated approach can address them.

Among the most pressing issues, public health is and will remain high on the agenda. But the Middle East also needs to expand the availability of water, gas, oil, and transportation, as well as strengthen its environmental protections. All of these issues involve cross-border dynamics, and therefore require regional coordination. Likewise, to revive economic growth, Middle Eastern countries need to boost regional integration in tourism, trade, services, and other major sectors.

Such a holistic growth strategy cannot be achieved through existing cooperative frameworks. The traditional model of Arab regionalism is now defunct. The Arab League's regular summits are increasingly viewed as useless gatherings - all talk and no action. Sub-regional structures such as the Gulf Cooperation Council have become equally irrelevant, owing to internal discord among member states. While such divisions will certainly pose difficulties in creating a new multilateral framework for cooperation, the question we must ask is whether there is any hope for the Middle East without it.

As matters stand, feuding Arab countries are fighting a war of attrition that yields no individual victories, only collective losses. Never before has there been a greater need for collective effort. As the pandemic lays bare the region's fault lines, Arab leaders must recognize that a strategic vacuum never remains unfilled. Absent coordinated action, those pursuing their interests unilaterally will seize the initiative, ensuring still more conflict and instability. While the world struggles to flatten the contagion curve, Arab countries have the additional task of flattening the conflict curve. If they fail, neither health nor wealth will lie in the region's future.

To end the conflicts and chart a new, unified approach to the region, Arab leaders must abandon old assumptions and confront new realities head-on. The global pandemic offers an opportunity to imagine a different future. Partnerships are easier to forge in the crucible of a crisis. Now is the time to come together and start drafting a minimum agreeable agenda, focusing on core humanitarian concerns: the cessation of hostilities, support for refugees, post-conflict reconstruction, and market access for firms affected by the latest wave of disruptions.

Long after the COVID-19 crisis is over, the rest of the world will be preoccupied with other concerns. Only by helping each other can Arabs help themselves. Their leaders should start now.

O-PED

By Chris Patten

Dealing with China After COVID-19

In the midst of a fire, it makes no sense to point fingers at the principal arsonist. But knowing how the COVID-19 pandemic started is central to learning how to prevent similar disasters in the future.

LONDON - With the coronavirus continuing its brutal global rampage, it takes a particular sort of malign genius to put the United States in the political dock as the death toll mounts and economic devastation spreads. Yet, that is what President Donald Trump is doing.

But first things first. In every country, medical workers and support staff have been on the front line fighting the pandemic on behalf of the rest of us. Beginning with the brave Chinese doctors and nurses who risked their lives and were muzzled by local political bosses when they tried to sound the alarm, we have seen similar examples of professional courage everywhere. And we should also salute those who try to keep normal life going by providing our food, operating our public transport, and cleaning our streets.

In the midst of a fire, it makes no sense to point fingers at the principal arsonist. The top priority must be getting the hoses to work and extinguishing the fire. But knowing how the COVID-19 pandemic started is central to learning how to prevent similar disasters in the future.¹

First, the outbreak began (like SARS in 2002) in China, probably in a so-called wet market in Wuhan, although some have pointed to allegedly lax biosecurity at a nearby virology research center. (Although these suspicions have been widely debunked, they have been given greater credibility in some people's eyes by the systematic destruction of the published outcomes of the research undertaken there and elsewhere in China.)

Second, the Communist Party of China (CPC) initially failed to disclose not only the outbreak, but also the ease with which the novel coronavirus could be transmitted between humans.

Third, some critics believe that the World Health Organization was hoodwinked about what exactly was going on in China. At the very least, they argue, the WHO was extraordinarily uncritical about the extent to which the CPC's secretiveness appeared to limit China's transparency and willingness to fulfill its reporting obligations.

Fourth, life in Wuhan appeared to go on as normal in the early stages of the outbreak. And during the Chinese New Year festivities, thousands left Hubei province (where Wuhan is the main city) to visit other parts of China or travel abroad.

Soon, some of these issues began to dominate the international agenda, with the CPC facing heavy criticism as a result of the fatal consequences of its secrecy. Chinese officials responded by attacking their critics and blaming the COVID-19 outbreak on the US military and even Italy.

All this is bound to affect other countries' attitudes toward China - or rather, toward Chinese communism - and shape the lessons learned for preventing similar global catastrophes. But recent events cannot, and should not, wholly determine the outside world's stance.

That is because China is for the time being the world's most populous country and a major economic power, regardless of the immoral and dangerous nature of its regime. To recover from these horrors and their aftermath, we must try to persuade China to work with us, and we must strengthen the institutions that are essential for effective international cooperation.

Yet, Trump, long incensed by China's economic and trade practices, opted for protectionism and China-bashing. At the same time, he has picked fights with most of America's main trading partners, all of whom have similar criticisms of China. By preferring chest-thumping isolationism to building partnerships, Trump damaged America's interests and encouraged nationalist prejudice in China.

And now he has done the same with COVID-19.

To be sure, Western liberal democracies should require honesty and openness from China in dealing with the pandemic and helping to prevent similar episodes. And under no circumstances should open societies surrender their values to try to curry favor with China. Nor should they fall for the self-seeking blandishments of Chinese leaders, whose agenda is hostile to what most of the world stands for.

Furthermore, liberal democrats must never fail to call out China when it is wrong - as it is, for example, in using the cover of the current health crisis to arrest some of Hong Kong's leading democracy campaigners. And the West should continue to oppose the international isolation of Taiwan, a policy to which the WHO, to its shame, has been a party.

But Trump's approach - attacking China at every opportunity and now announcing the suspension of US funding for the WHO - seems to put America in the wrong in the eyes of many who should be its friends. After all, we need a better and more effective WHO, not a bankrupt and toothless one. For example, the WHO's leadership role will be vital in preventing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) from causing up to ten million deaths annually by 2050, as a UK-government-commissioned review chaired by the distinguished economist Jim O'Neill warned in 2016. Moreover, because China is one of the world's largest producers and heaviest users of antibiotics, addressing the AMR threat also requires us to work with President Xi Jinping as long as he is in power.

But cooperating with China does not mean subservience. Rather, it calls for good sense alongside determination.

For the time being, Chinese communism is a reality and a challenge, and the regime's construction of a highly effective surveillance state would seem to entrench it further. But, like every other sort of authoritarian ideology in history, it will give way to something better, both for the Chinese people - who deserve a political system that embodies the best of China's great civilization - and the rest of humanity.

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OPINION

By Victor K. Fung

The Trade Cure for the Global Economy

As world leaders work to revitalize multilateralism to confront the COVID-19 crisis, they must also reshape it in a way that recognizes and reflects the many dimensions of global interdependency. This means, first and foremost, ensuring an open and sustainable global trading system.

HONG KONG - The COVID-19 pandemic has sent the world into perilous, uncharted territory from which no country will emerge unscathed. Over half of the global population is under some form of lockdown. All economies, rich and poor, are falling into recession and can limit the fallout only by working together.

China - the pandemic's first epicenter - offers insight into the need to work together. The months-long lockdown of Hubei province, together with strict movement restrictions across the country, caused a nearly 40% drop in year-on-year industrial profits in January and February. Factories began to reopen in March, but have faced order cancellations, postponements, and payment delays, as overseas buyers struggle to cope with the pandemic's effects.

So, even as public health is recovering, the speed of China's economic recovery will depend at least partly on the rest of the world. Given how deeply interconnected the global economy is, this will be true for every country: even as the pandemic is controlled at home, disruptions elsewhere in the world - and, potentially, additional waves of outbreaks - will impede recovery.

Global supply chains tell a similar story. Even before the pandemic, supply chains were absorbing the impact of two years of trade disputes between China and the United States. Now, they are dealing with a combination of production stoppages, transportation disruptions, and plummeting global demand. The World Trade Organization estimates that global trade may fall by as much as 32% this year. Meanwhile, unemployment is skyrocketing in many economies: in the last four weeks, a record 22 million unemployment claims have been filed in the US alone.

It is high time we recognized how irrevocably connected and interdependent the world has become. No country can win on its own, despite what some may think. As the world confronts a severe recession and humanitarian catastrophe, nationalist political posturing is the last thing anyone needs.

The only way to minimize the pandemic's fallout is with solidarity: to protect their own people, national governments must collaborate to develop solutions that benefit all people. The first step is to remove protectionist tariffs and other trade barriers, thereby ensuring that critical goods - especially medical supplies and equipment, and food and other essentials - are delivered wherever they are needed. Nobody is safe until everybody is safe.

Solidarity also means protecting jobs, incomes, and livelihoods everywhere. Among other things, this demands practical measures to keep small and medium-size enterprises afloat - a point that the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) recently underscored. SMEs account for a significant share of jobs in most major economies, and provide many of the goods and services we use daily. To ensure that a general slowdown does not cause lasting structural damage, these firms must be protected.

But the imperative extends beyond propping up existing firms long enough to return to business as usual. As we chart a pathway out of the COVID-19 crisis, we should aim to create a better future, shaped not by competition, with countries weaponizing the trade and other ties that underpin shared prosperity, but by mutually beneficial cooperation.

As we work to revitalize multilateralism, we must also reshape it in a way that recognizes and reflects the many dimensions of global interdependency. This means, first and foremost, ensuring open and sustainable global trade, which is a proven means of enabling all countries - large and small, rich and poor - to achieve economic growth and alleviate poverty. Trade also underpins global peace and stability, by giving everyone a stake in the same world system.

Establishing such a system requires more than removing the tariffs, administrative impediments, and "behind the border" measures that encumber the movement of basic consumer products, industrial goods, and especially technology. Countries must recognize that either we all win - with people everywhere gaining access to the tools they need to improve their quality of life, develop industries, and innovate - or we are all worse off.

That means drastically improving access to trade finance, especially in the emerging economies, where there is a funding gap of over \$1 trillion. Insufficient trade and investment finance hits SMEs especially hard, hampering their ability to expand or innovate in good times, and to survive in bad times. That is why the ICC has called on banks to boost bridge funding to companies to mitigate the worst effects of the COVID-19 crisis, and allow companies to continue to trade through a financial shortfall.

But much more needs to be done. While boosting trade finance during the 2008 global financial crisis helped to catalyze the global recovery, progress has since stalled. To ensure a sustained recovery from this crisis, and the development of a more resilient and inclusive global economy in the longer term, trade finance must occupy a permanent place on the global agenda.

Reviving multilateralism and ensuring open trade are entirely achievable objectives. They require no new laws or additional resources, only commitment and solidarity. The payoff - equitable and sustainable development - would be massive.

Humanitarian aid has long proved critical in times of crisis. Now, in the midst of a crisis gripping the entire world, all of us must recognize the importance of "humanitarian trade."

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UNDP Makes Donation To Gov't.

... Gives Anti-Coronavirus Materials, Communication Software

Monrovia, Liberia; April 21, 2020: The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has donated a consignment of anti-coronavirus materials and communication software to the Government of Liberia through the Executive Committee on Coronavirus (ECOC).

Making the donation Tuesday 21, April 2020 on the compound of the UN office in Liberia, UNDP Resident Representative Dr. Pa. Lamin said his Agency was concerned about the growing threats of the coronavirus disease which is currently affecting the world including Liberia.

Dr. Beyai lauded the efforts of the Government and the Liberian people for the steps taken to mitigate the situation, urging the population to continue to stick to those health

commitment to ensuring that Liberia responds, and recovers through specific and urgent actions that focus on the most vulnerable groups, an eye to the future and strengthening institutions across all sectors.

“UNDP’s support will aim at making progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of leaving no one behind, by being equitable and inclusive,” Beyai stressed.

For his part, the Project Coordinator of the UNDP’s COVID-19 Response Team, Robert Dorlaie, said, the consignment included 250 cartons of Clorax, 500 hand washing buckets and 300 Zoom licenses.

The preventive materials are for health teams in five (5) counties; Nimba, Lofa, Grand Kru, Grand Cape Mount, and Grand Gedeh.

The licenses are to be used to enhance the Government’s

provide training on the use of the software.

Mr. Dorlaie further stated that there was more substantive programmatic support to follow to address some of the urgent needs that the Government will be faced with during this health emergency.

Meanwhile, the head of the Government of Liberia COVID-19 Taskforce and Director General of the General Services Agency (GSA) of Liberia, Mary Broh has lauded the UNDP for the donation.

Receiving the items, Madam Broh promised that the items will be used for its intended purposes.

“We are pleased to thank the UNDP for their contribution. You are Liberia’s true friend and partner and we are going to use these items for the intended purpose,” she stated.



protocols. He called on those still denying the existence of the virus to stop, adding, that being in denial will only make things worse for the country, mainly poor families.

The spread of COVID-19 is just not a health crisis but one that is social, economic and political. According to the UNDP Resident Representative, the pandemic is one that has crashed systems and peoples least able to cope and will leave deep scars.

He pledged UNDP’s

communication arm and boost social distancing during the COVID-19 period and beyond.

Beneficiaries include the President’s office through the Ministry of State and 300 Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) across the country.

The software will be used for video conferences with international partners, diplomats, cabinet discussions/meetings and for webinars.

Each license can host up to 500 people/participants. The Head of UNDP ICT unit will

The GSA Boss further stated that the Government and the COVID-19 Response Team will do all it can to cover the entire country at least to enforce Government’s State of Emergency (SEA).

“We are doing everything possible to cover the entire country, with the level of support we are receiving, there is a need for us to go in all of those counties to see how best we can implement Government’s mandate,” she stated.

The entire package is worth over US\$10,000 dollars.

Liberia Albino Society regrets government’s neglect

By Lewis S. Teh



Some members of the Liberian Albino Society (LAS) are unhappy with the Weah administration for its alleged failure to lend more support to the institution amid the coronavirus pandemic.

“This is unacceptable; we too deserve better living, despite we make up a minute portion of the country’s population but people with albinism are being marginalized in every sector of this country”, the group laments.

It says since President Weah pronounced that coronavirus has entered Liberia, they are yet to receive anti-coronavirus materials from the government, something, they term as gross insensitivity to their plight.

Chief administrator, Clarence Clay, made the charges Wednesday via mobile to a local radio station, stressing that people with albinism are Liberians, so they should be treated with equal rights and have access to every necessary support.

According to him, since the index case of the pandemic in Liberia, LAS has been soliciting support to cater to the needs of its members without the authorities coming to their aid.

“Our people have been complaining; asking us on a daily basis to solicit help, and as a small organization that takes care of a minute portion

of this population, we are doing our best through the instrumentality of our Executive Director Madam Patricia Logan to see reason to take care of people with albinism, but this is not enough.”

Like other human beings, people with Albinism are entitled to the same fundamental rights as others. “The United Nations Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights adopted resolutions (HRC resolutions 23/13, 24/33 and 26/10, ACHPR resolution 263) in 2013 and 2014, respectively, calling for the prevention of attacks and discrimination against persons with albinism.”

Mr. Clay calls on national government, specifically state institutions such as the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company, National Port Authority, General Services Agency and humanitarian organizations, including well-meaning Liberians to come to their aid so that the organization may reach out to its members across the country.

LAS is a Liberian NGO established in 2009 to advocate for people with albinism and work to restore their dignity and build capacities of vulnerable minority groups through empowerment programs aimed at improving their lives. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

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Armed robbery rocks Palala in Bong

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Palala Town in upper Bong County came under heavy armed robbery attack early Tuesday morning, 21 April, wounding a security personnel posted at Lonestar Cell MTN's sub-

\$27,000 Liberian Dollars, over 60 Cell Phones and LoneStar scratch cards worth over \$30,000 Liberian Dollars.

He explains that the armed robbers threatened to take his life if he refused to give them money.

The Lonestar Cell MTN

made away with several items and cash. The victim of the Palala armed robbery attack is calling on the Bong County security apparatus to institute measures to immediately put an end to the alarming wave of criminal activities in Palala and its surroundings.

The Lonestar substation security wants the Liberian government through the police to launch a vigorous security operation aimed at dislodging the criminals from their hideouts.

A survey conducted by this paper reveals that citizens and residents of Palala and its environs are now going to bed as early as 8:00PM due to the armed robbery fear that has engulfed the entire city.

Over the last few weeks, the wave of armed robbery incidents have increased in the county, thus leaving several residents to live in constant fear.

In many instances, residents sustain injuries while attempting to resist the robbers' demands.

Meanwhile, several residents have expressed serious concern over the constant wave of armed robbery and criminal activities in the County.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley



station in the area and stealing money and phones.

Victim Charles Porlornore says the armed robbers allegedly broke into the Lonestar Cell MTN's Towel in Palala and made away with

security who received cutlass wounds on his head and hands during the attack has told our correspondent in an interview that the armed robbers allegedly broke into the Lonestar Cell MTN Towel and

MNG Gold donates to major towns

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Turkish mining company MNG Gold has distributed hand washing materials to 37 towns in its operational communities in Kokoyah District, Bong County.

During the distribution on Tuesday, 21 April, the company's government liaison manager, Eugene Kollie, said that the campaign against the coronavirus pandemic will be taken to every nook and cranny of Kokoyah Statutory District.

Kollie explains that with the support of MNG Gold,

of the virus.

Duo advises his people to take personal hygiene seriously.

In another development, the company also donated 2,740 liters of fuel with 30 bags of rice to the Bong County Joint Security in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Receiving the fuel oil, Bong County Attorney Jonathan Flomo says the intervention by the company is rewarding. He promises to use the rice to motivate



measures have been put in place to fight the scourge of the virus. Items distributed are buckets, soaps, chloride, thermometers and hand sanitizers to five clinics.

The distribution of the materials, according to Kollie, is aimed at encouraging hand washing and preventing the spread of the disease.

Receiving the materials, the Town Chief of David Dean's Town, Philip Duo, commended the company for the proactive steps taken to avoid the spread

securities on the frontline against the spread of the virus.

"I want to be very thankful to the management of MNG Gold for this donation. I can assure the company that whatever thing it has given to me will be presented directly to those officers who are on the frontline in the fight against this pandemic," he concludes.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley

Phebe receives fuel donation

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

A Liberian from Bong County who is based in the United States of America, Francis Gotokai, has donated one drum of fuel to the Phebe Hospital as part of efforts to enhance the operations of the health facility.

Making the presentation on behalf of his junior brother, David Gotokai said his brother Francis is always focused on helping the Phebe Hospital, especially in a situation where the hospital faces serious financial constraints.

Mr. Gotokai says even though the fuel is not much, he explains that the one drum containing 60 gallons will contribute to the upkeep of electricity at the hospital for a while.

"Today we have come in the name of our brother who is in the United States of America to donate to the Phebe Hospital this one gallon of fuel as a means of contributing to the hospital that is greatly helping our people in Bong County to save lives," he says.

Mr. Gotokai says his family

will always stand by Phebe in making sure that the hospital is supported to the fullest.

Receiving the donation on behalf of the hospital, Phebe Chief Medical Director

contribution back to the place they came from, describing the donation as very timely.

According to him, many people are now focused on the livelihood improvement of



Jefferson Sablay applauded the United States - based Liberian for the gesture and promised to use it for the function intended.

Dr. Sablay says it takes very few people to make a

their families, noting that seeing Francis Gotokai's contribution to the hospital is something that deserves commendations.

"Lot of people right now

are only focused on helping their family, it is very difficult to see someone who will come at this time to give such huge donation to Phebe. So I want to be very grateful to the Gotokai family for this timely donation," Dr. Sabley

continues.

The Phebe Medical Director uses the platform to call on others to follow the example of Mr. Gotokai by donating the fuel.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

14 Military Hospital lacks basic equipment

-former Sen. Ballout alarms

The government of Liberia main quarantine center here to fight the novel coronavirus, the 14 Military Hospital lacks Intensive Care Unit (ICU), standard laboratory, Oxygen and X-ray machine, among other vital

immediately after he left quarantine yesterday, the former senator also disclosed that while at the facility, some of the nurses fell ill and they were hospitalized, stressing, "We need to have serious working on the health sector."

He wants the 54th

reported as of 11:00PM Monday, April 20th, two new confirmed cases, bringing total confirmed cases in the country to 101, including eight deaths.

Ballout stresses the need to train more personnel for the health sector, warning, "If we reach cases of 3,000 to 4,000, we don't have the workers; it's time to train people."

"I raised the issues with some of my colleagues at the senate; whatever we do in preparing that place could be for some of us", he continues.

He details that from an initial total cases of 13, two weeks later, the number of confirmed cases at the 14 Military Hospital reached about 100.

The former ruling party lawmaker came down with the virus recently while preparing to visit his home in Maryland County, southeast Liberia.

"I was on my way to the county to join a coronavirus awareness campaign and to have some political meetings; considering I will be interacting with people, I decided to check my status; my status was kind of mild, meaning I wasn't demonstrating any of those symptoms but I quarantine myself immediately."

Mr. Ballout is member of the former governing Unity Party. He is seeking reelection from his people to return to the Liberian Senate. **-Story by Jonathan Browne**



tools to treat COVID-19 patients, according to former senator John Ballout.

Mr. Ballout was discharged from the 14 Military Hospital Wednesday, 22 April along with several others after 21 days surveillance.

Speaking to JOY FM

Legislature to call in the Minister of Health to brief the nation about the status of the health sector in the wake of the spread of the coronavirus with new confirmed cases reported almost every 24 hours.

The National Public Health Institute of Liberia or NPHIL

Charity to benefit from 25% of J Slught album sales

By Ben P. Wesee

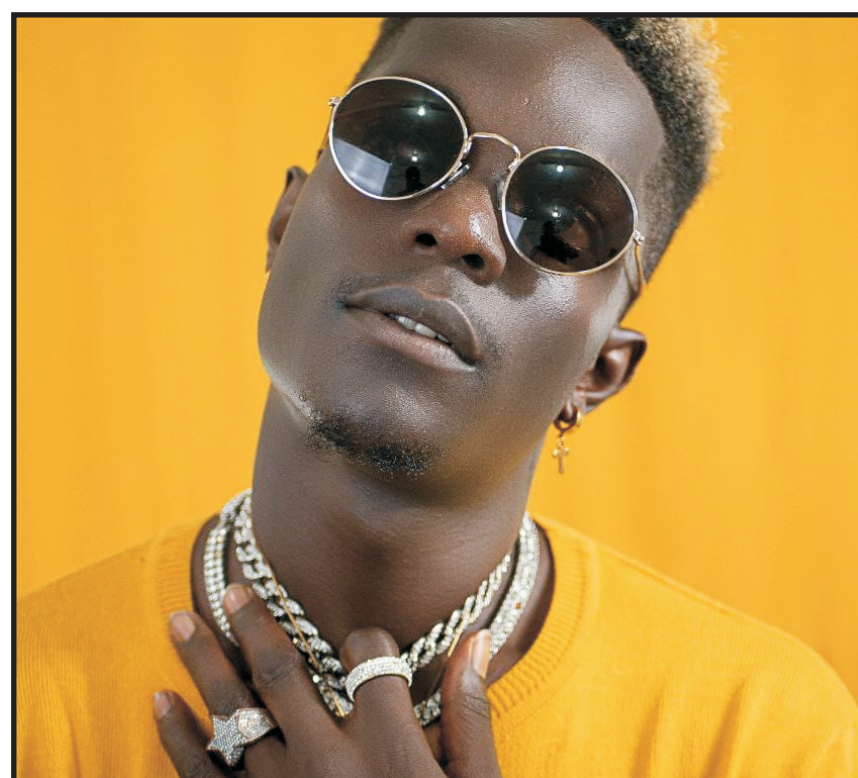
As Liberia look out for more support towards the fight against coronavirus, young Liberian musician Joseph Teh popularly known J Slught has committed 25% of proceeds from sales of his album titled Home & Beyond to the fight against the coronavirus.

According to the management of J Slught, since the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus in the country, the less fortunate children have

notes that his Home & Beyond album is a ten-track masterpiece produced by top Liberian Afro-pop artist, J Slught.

He continues that his album features songs suitable for both international and local requirements of excellent sound and music, revealing the artist's readiness to take his sound to the international stage.

"The Home and Beyond EP



been infected more, noting that donors have not been in the position to support these less fortunate children as it was before the outbreak.

"This is my first major project and with the current condition of my country and the world it's just right to help stop this virus," J Slught says, appealing to the public to join him and stop this virus by pre-ordering his album.

The award winning artist

was birthed from the desire to stretch the unique experience of Liberian sounds beyond boundaries and imagination," J Slught discloses.

J Slught, who is popular for thinking outside the box, has dedicated every inch of his heart towards making the Home and Beyond album a timeless compilation of good music.--**Edited by Winston W. Parley**

I can't question Weah's judgment

-Blama responds to his suspension

By Lewis S. Teh

Liberia's index case of the novel coronavirus, Nathaniel Blama, who survived the virus recently after 21 days in quarantine says he can't question the judgment of President George M. Weah for suspending him indefinitely after he was tested positive by health authorities.

"All of us work at the will and pleasure of the President and in his decision following the news that I was tested positive he thought it was prudent to suspend me and I wholeheartedly welcome that decision because it help me go through and to focus more on my treatment than people calling me on job matter while I'm going thru treatment so, I don't have that liberty to question the President's judgment on why

he suspended me."

Blama, who is executive director for the Environmental Protection Agency, spoke with State Radio ELBC Wednesday,

April 22, via mobile saying, "I was never stressed up; what I did was to remain calm and stable for myself, while seeking treatment at the treatment center, and I didn't



Nathaniel Blama

receive any preferential treatment; the doctors and I respected each other."

"My story was a story of resilience, because I became a victim of circumstances - people would call me instead of comforting me; I would comfort them but I'm grateful that we came out safely".

According to him, he could have stay home and infect others, but wouldn't just do it to himself. "If I were to do that, it would have affected the entire country, so I really don't want to dwell on the issue regarding my suspension, who's wrong or right, what I think is important now is my success story of going in sick, and coming out well and this should focus our discussion that everyone must learn

from, to combat this virus; we need community support to help eradicate this virus from Liberia."

"Let us continue to be our brother's keepers; let us not ostracize people who are tested positive of this virus, if people are tested positive that community should rally support to help that person come true, and in doing this, we must not forget to continue to practice social distancing."

Meanwhile, the suspended EPA boss has called on citizens, who are still in denial of the virus to accept the reality that coronavirus is real, saying, "even though we don't trust our government in this country, but with this, we must believe

Français

180 000 \$ US, c'est ce que les sénateurs auraient empoché pour approuver l'état d'urgence

Les sénateurs du Capitol Hill seraient de bonne humeur en ce moment pour avoir reçu la bagatelle de 180 000 dollars américains de l'exécutif rien que pour approuver l'état d'urgence et le plan de relance que leur a soumis le Président George Manneh Weah.

On ignore pour le moment si les membres de la

Chambre des représentants ont également reçu un tel montant pour la même raison. Mais habituellement, les deux chambres du parlement libérien reçoivent le même montant dans les cas pareils.

Des sources ont révélé que le retard accusé par les législateurs pour agir sur l'état d'urgence et le plan de relance était dû à la lenteur du décaissement des fonds.

Vendredi dernier, les

membres de la 54^e législature ont voté à une écrasante majorité en faveur du prolongement à 60 jours de l'état d'urgence.

La Chambre des représentants et le Sénat libérien ont tous deux adopté une résolution commune, approuvant les deux documents du

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Senator Abraham Darious Dillon

Coronavirus : l'Afrique face à la pandémie mardi 21 avril

L'Afrique comptait, ce mardi 21 avril, 23 716 cas confirmés de coronavirus. Le Covid-19 a déjà coûté la vie à 1 160 personnes sur le continent, selon le Centre pour la prévention et le contrôle des maladies de l'Union africaine. L'Égypte est désormais le pays le plus touché du continent, avec 3 333 cas, devant l'Afrique du Sud, le Maroc et l'Algérie.

• L'épidémie « s'accélère » en Afrique, mais reste pour l'instant sous contrôle, selon l'OMS

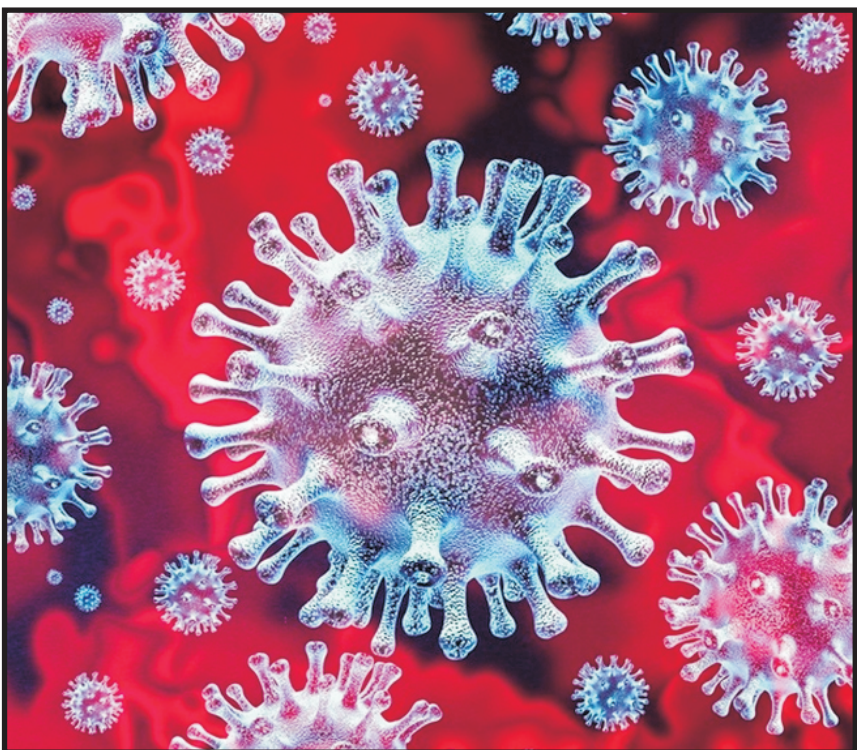
Le responsable des opérations d'urgence de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) en Afrique, Michel Yao, était l'invité de Priorité santé sur RFI. Selon lui, si l'épidémie s'accélère sur le continent, elle reste encore sous contrôle. « Vingt et un pays

restent dans une transmission sporadique. Cela donne encore l'espoir de contrôler l'épidémie dans ces pays, si tous les efforts sont fournis et si l'on a une approche beaucoup plus rapide et complète impliquant tous les secteurs et toutes les couches socio-culturelles », explique-t-il. Parmi les mesures nécessaires pour endiguer la pandémie, Michel Yao insiste notamment sur l'importance du dépistage et de la prévention. Il annonce également que quatre pays, l'Afrique du Sud, le Togo, le Kenya et le Rwanda sont sur le point de lancer leurs essais cliniques.

• État d'urgence : prolongement de la mesure au Congo-Brazzaville et saisine du Parlement en RDC

Le président du Congo-Brazzaville, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, a décidé par décret de prolonger de 20 jours l'état d'urgence sanitaire instauré le 31 mars. Avec 160 cas, la pandémie de coronavirus touche désormais six des douze départements du

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Le remboursement des dettes des commerçantes en stand-by

Les législateurs semblent avoir mis à l'écart la proposition du président George Manneh Weah portant remboursement de l'intégralité des dettes des commerçants des comtés touchés par le coronavirus, jusqu'à ce que le pouvoir exécutif présente un plan quant aux modalités, c'est en tout cas ce qu'a révélé le représentant du comté de Bomu, l'honorable Edwin Melvin Snowe.

Au cours d'une interview téléphonique avec une radio locale mardi matin, M. Snowe a expliqué que le Parlement a approuvé la demande du président Weah qui porte décaissement de 25 millions de dollars pour soutenir la distribution de nourriture aux ménages dans les comtés touchés. Mais pour ce qui concerne le paiement des dettes accumulées par les commerçantes auprès des banques commerciales, il a exigé que le pouvoir exécutif présente un budget bien détaillé afin que les législateurs en savent plus.

Selon M. Snowe, les législateurs voudraient que les responsables de la Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL) et du ministère des finances leur disent combien reste dans les caisses de l'état et donnent des explications quant à savoir si le budget permettrait de payer d'abord les fonctionnaires et les travailleurs de la santé. Le parlement craint que les travailleurs de la santé ne se mettent en colère au sujet de leurs salaires et de leurs primes qui restent impayés et n'abandonnent leurs postes. « On ne peut pas s'aventurer sur cette voie sans savoir de combien nous disposons dans nos caisses et ce qu'il y a dans le budget.

« En ce moment, je me concentre sur les travailleurs de la santé », a dit Snowe, avant d'ajouter que « personne ne sait combien de temps ce virus va durer ». Il a en outre mis un accent sur la nécessité de payer les dettes dues aux médias qu'ils puissent jouer un rôle actif dans la lutte contre la propagation du coronavirus.

A la question de savoir si le gouvernement a l'intention de faire un geste en faveur des enseignants des écoles privées qui sont désormais confinés dans leurs maisons en raison de l'épidémie de coronavirus, M. Snowe a fait part de son doute, tout en indiquant qu'on ne peut pas prendre des engagements sans savoir ce qu'on a actuellement dans les caisses de l'Etat.

Dans une communication qu'il a envoyée récemment à l'Assemblée législative, le président Weah a rapporté que plusieurs commerçantes et propriétaires d'entreprises informelles qui ont des dettes envers des banques commerciales et d'autres créanciers enregistrent des pertes énormes en raison du couvre-feu d'où la nécessité pour le gouvernement de payer ces dettes afin de les soulager. Mais le député a fait savoir que le gouvernement travaille actuellement avec les prêteurs afin que l'on puisse en savoir plus sur les emprunteurs vulnérables, car le chef de l'état a fait état du paiement de l'intégralité des dettes.

« Ce sera un puissant stimulant pour ces personnes. Elles ont bâti leur entreprise à partir de zéro avec peu ou pas d'aide du gouvernement et méritent d'être protégées en ces temps difficiles. Ce programme aidera davantage les banques à accroître les prêts aux nouveaux emprunteurs », a écrit M. Weah pour persuader les législateurs de son plan.

Cet aspect de son plan de relance a suscité des réactions mitigées, car certains législateurs principalement issus des partis politiques de l'opposition craignaient que la proposition n'ait pas fait preuve de clarté et pourrait ouvrir la porte à de graves malversations et abus comme dans le cas des 25 millions de dollars américains décaissés il y a deux ans pour éponger l'excès de liquidité du dollar libérien en circulation.

Français

180 000 \$ US, c'est ce que les sénateurs auraient

président. Plus tôt, des sources avaient affirmé que chacun des parlementaires aurait reçu 9 000 dollars américains. Mais s'adressant aux journalistes dans son bureau au Capitole, le sénateur du comté de Montserrado, Abraham Darios Dillon, a déclaré que chaque sénateur avait plutôt reçu 6 000 \$ US et que le montant était destiné à couvrir les frais de fonctionnement des législateurs.

Aux rumeurs selon lesquelles les membres de la 54^e législature n'ont signé la

résolution qu'en raison du paquet qu'ils ont reçu, le sénateur Dillon a répondu que le plan de relance et l'état d'urgence sont utiles aux citoyens et à l'état et que c'est pour cette raison qu'ils les ont approuvés.

A la question de savoir si le fait d'avoir reçu cet argent ne constituait pas un acte de corruption, il a répondu que l'argent était nécessaire pour l'adoption rapide des deux documents. Il ne s'agit pas, selon lui, d'un acte de corruption. « C'est plutôt un coût opérationnel », a-t-il dit sans donner plus de détails.

Coronavirus : l'Afrique face

Congo. La capitale Brazzaville demeure l'épicentre de la maladie dans le pays.

En RDC, le président Félix Tshisekedi a officiellement saisi les deux chambres du Parlement qui doivent statuer sur sa demande de prorogation de l'état d'urgence qui doit expirer cette semaine. Le chef de l'État a signé une ordonnance pour permettre aux députés et sénateurs de se réunir, malgré l'interdiction des rassemblements de plus de 20 personnes en vigueur dans le pays. Les parlementaires ont jusqu'au 23 avril pour voter cette prolongation.

• L'Afrique du Sud renforce ses mesures de restrictions dans les foyers du coronavirus

Les mesures de confinement ont été renforcées dans la ville portuaire de Durban et dans sa province, le KwaZulu-Natal. Les personnes testées positives seront désormais immédiatement hospitalisées afin de les empêcher d'enfreindre leur placement en quarantaine. Depuis le début du confinement, il y a trois semaines, 1 500 personnes ont été arrêtées dans cette province pour avoir enfreint les mesures de restrictions.

Le KwaZulu-Natal est l'un des épicentres de l'épidémie de coronavirus en Afrique du Sud : la région a enregistré 600 cas avérés et 21 décès. Les personnels soignants sont particulièrement touchés : plus de 50 d'entre eux ont été testés positifs depuis le début de la pandémie, causant la fermeture temporaire de trois hôpitaux à Durban.

• Le Gabon lance une campagne de dépistage massif

Après l'instauration du confinement de la capitale

Libreville et de trois communes limitrophes, après l'obligation du port du masque dans les lieux publics, une campagne de dépistage massif commence cette semaine au Gabon. Les premiers concernés seront les personnels de santé, en première ligne face à l'épidémie de coronavirus : 24 d'entre eux ont été contaminés jusqu'à présent. « L'intérêt de cette action, c'est de faire en sorte qu'on puisse détecter à temps ceux qui sont atteints et les prendre en charge assez rapidement. C'est un geste simple qui protège non seulement l'environnement immédiat du malade mais aussi l'ensemble de la population », explique le ministre de la Santé, Max Limoukou.

Deux cent mille tests ont été importés par le Gabon. Le pays a également reçu un don de 100 000 tests supplémentaires de la part du milliardaire chinois Jack Ma, fondateur du site d'achats en ligne Alibaba.

• À Niamey, des violences éclatent contre le couvre-feu et l'interdiction des prières collectives

Dans la capitale nigérienne, isolée du reste du pays pour limiter la propagation du coronavirus, des habitants se sont révoltés contre les mesures de confinement. Ils protestent notamment contre le couvre-feu en vigueur entre 19h et 6h du matin, et l'interdiction des prières collectives. Barricades et pneus enflammés ont été installés sur les artères de Niamey et des échauffourées ont eu lieu entre la police et les manifestants. « Nous nous sommes révoltés parce que lorsque vous priez en groupe, Dieu accepte mieux vos prières », raconte un marabout du quartier Boukouki. En tout, une centaine de personnes ont été interpellées par les forces de l'ordre, et dix ont été placées en détention.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Bassem Awadallah & Adeel Malik

S'abriter d'une vraie tempête au Moyen-Orient

OXFORD - La pandémie de Covid-19 entraîne une urgence sanitaire et fait plonger les prix du pétrole, en somme lance un avis de tempête sur le Moyen-Orient, où tout, des salaires aux aides sociales, dépend de la recette pétrolière. Comme par le passé, les répercussions du choc pétrolier sur les pays non producteurs sont inévitables, puisque les transferts, qu'ils soient assurés par l'aide publique ou par les envois d'argent des travailleurs à l'étranger, se réduisent, resserrant un peu plus les marges budgétaires qui permettraient d'affronter la crise.

Pire : la pandémie touche la région alors qu'elle est déjà ébranlée par de multiples crises. La tragédie syrienne se poursuit, les guerres civiles font rage en Libye et au Yémen, tandis que la « rue arabe » se remobilise. De l'Algérie et du Soudan à l'Irak et au Liban, les manifestants dénoncent un modèle de développement ne produisant qu'instabilité sociale et corruption.

Les perceptions de l'opinion ne sont pas infondées. Si le Moyen-Orient est encore considéré comme une région à revenu moyen, il n'en connaît pas moins une augmentation de la pauvreté et des inégalités de revenu. Un récent rapport de la Banque mondiale montre que la part des populations de la région vivant à proximité de conflits violents est passée de 6 % à 20 % entre 2007 et 2017 - proportion très supérieure à la moyenne mondiale (3 %). La région compte aujourd'hui 40 % des personnes déplacées dans le monde. Avec le taux de chômage des jeunes le plus élevé de la planète, il devenait déjà difficile de maintenir son secteur public hypertrophié. Il n'est pas certain que l'Irak puisse payer, le mois prochain, ses fonctionnaires. Et ce pays est loin de faire exception.

Le Covid-19 est là, et le Moyen-Orient fait face à des difficultés sans précédent, qui appellent une réponse sans précédent. Si les voix qui réclament une action mondiale pour lutter contre la pandémie sont de plus en plus nombreuses à se faire entendre, le Moyen-Orient a d'abord besoin d'une stratégie régionale bien définie. La crise devrait apparaître comme l'occasion de construire un nouvel ordre politique dans la région. Il est temps aujourd'hui que le monde arabe œuvre à des solutions communes, qu'il assume un destin partagé et lance un nouveau modèle de développement qui lui permette de relever des défis socio-économiques de plus en plus interconnectés.

L'ordre régional issu de la Seconde Guerre mondiale était déjà parvenu, à la fin de 2019, à un point de non-retour. Les États-Unis, moins dépendants des importations de pétrole et de plus en plus las de leurs engagements militaires extérieurs, ne sont plus l'unique arbitre des affaires moyen-orientales. Et si la Russie, l'Union européenne et les puissances régionales ont montré leur volonté d'intervenir dans la région, ni les uns ni les autres n'ont les moyens ni le désir d'endosser l'ancien habit américain.

En conséquence de quoi les pays arabes ne peuvent plus s'en remettre entièrement à l'aide des puissances mondiales pour relever les défis auxquels ils font face. Alors que certains pays du Moyen-Orient sont en pourparlers avec le Fonds monétaire international dans le but de débloquer une aide financière d'urgence, la plupart des États n'ont pas la bande passante politique qui leur permettrait de remplir les conditions du FMI. Et quand bien même le Fonds assouplirait ses exigences ordinaires de consolidation budgétaire, l'aide apportée ne consisterait qu'à financer une

protection sociale à court terme. Après la crise, c'est aux décideurs politiques de la région qu'il reviendra d'inventer un modèle de développement plus durable.

Aucun gouvernement, même avec le soutien des donateurs internationaux, ne pourra s'acquitter seul de cette tâche. Les problèmes économiques de la région sont tellement interconnectés que seule une approche intégrée peut les résoudre.

Parmi les questions les plus pressantes, celle de la santé publique est prioritaire et le restera. Mais le Moyen-Orient doit aussi étendre l'accès à l'eau, au gaz, au pétrole et aux transports, tout en renforçant la protection de l'environnement. Toutes ces questions appellent des dynamiques transfrontalières, et nécessitent par conséquent une coordination régionale. De même, pour rétablir la croissance économique, les pays du Moyen-Orient devront accélérer l'intégration régionale du tourisme, des échanges, des services et des autres principaux secteurs d'activité.

Cette stratégie globale de croissance ne peut être suivie dans les cadres existants de coopération. Le modèle traditionnel du régionalisme arabe a vécu. Les sommets réguliers de la Ligue arabe sont de plus en plus considérés comme des réunions inutiles - des paroles que ne suivent pas les actes. Et les structures sous-régionales, comme le Conseil de coopération du Golfe, deviennent, elles aussi, désormais, inadaptées, étant donné les désaccords internes entre les États membres. Ces divisions poseront certainement problème dans la création d'un nouveau cadre multilatéral de coopération. Mais existe-t-il en dehors de ce dernier un espoir pour le Moyen-Orient ? C'est la question que nous devons nous poser.

Dans l'état actuel des choses, des pays arabes en rivalité mènent une guerre d'usure qui ne conduit à aucune victoire de l'un ou de l'autre mais à la perte de tous. Jamais le besoin d'un effort collectif n'a été plus fort. Tandis que la pandémie met à nu les fractures de la région, les dirigeants arabes doivent comprendre que tout vide stratégique est appelé à se combler. En l'absence d'action coordonnée, ceux qui défendent unilatéralement leurs intérêts prendront l'initiative, créant à coup sûr plus de conflit et d'instabilité. Alors que le monde peine à aplatir la courbe des contaminations, les pays arabes doivent en plus aplatir celle des conflits. S'ils échouent, ils ne recouvreront ni la santé ni la prospérité.

Pour mettre un terme aux conflits et dessiner une nouvelle vision, unifiée, de la région, les dirigeants arabes doivent abandonner leurs vieux préjugés et faire front devant les réalités nouvelles. La pandémie mondiale offre une chance d'imaginer un avenir différent. Dans l'épreuve d'une crise, il est plus facile de forger des partenariats. Il est temps aujourd'hui de nous unir et de commencer à dérouler un agenda sur lequel nous puissions trouver un accord minimum et qui répondra questions humanitaires essentielles : cessation des hostilités, aide aux réfugiés, reconstruction après-guerre et accès aux marchés pour les entreprises touchées par la dernière vague de perturbations.

Tant que la crise du Covid-19 ne sera pas terminée, et longtemps encore après elle, le reste du monde aura d'autres soucis que le Moyen-Orient. Les pays arabes ne parviendront pas à s'aider eux-mêmes s'ils ne s'aident pas les uns les autres. Et leurs dirigeants doivent commencer dès à présent.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

World Bank predicts sharpest decline in global remittances

Global remittances are projected to decline sharply by about 20 percent in 2020 due to the economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic and shutdown, The World Bank has predicted.

The projected fall, which would be the sharpest decline in recent history, is largely due to a fall in the wages and employment of migrant workers, who tend to be more vulnerable to loss of employment and wages during an economic crisis in a host country. Remittances to low and middle-income countries (LMICs) are projected to fall by 19.7 percent to \$445 billion, representing a loss of a crucial financing lifeline for many vulnerable households.

The Bank opines studies show that remittances alleviate poverty in lower- and middle-income countries,

countries, we are working to keep remittance channels open and safeguard the poorest communities' access to these most basic needs."

The World Bank noted that it is assisting member states in monitoring the flow of remittances through various channels, the costs and convenience of sending money, and regulations to protect financial integrity that affect remittance flows. It is working with the G20 countries and the global community to reduce remittance costs and improve financial inclusion for the poor.

Remittance flows are expected to fall across all World Bank Group regions, most notably in Europe and Central Asia (27.5 percent), followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (23.1 percent), South Asia (22.1 percent), the Middle East and North Africa (19.6 percent), Latin America and the Caribbean (19.3 percent), and

remittances have been counter-cyclical, where workers send more money home in times of crisis and hardship back home. This time, however, the pandemic has affected all countries, creating additional uncertainties.

"Effective social protection systems are crucial to safeguarding the poor and vulnerable during this crisis in both developing countries as well as advanced countries. In host countries, social protection interventions should also support migrant populations," said Michal Rutkowski, Global Director of the Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice at the World Bank.

The global average cost of sending \$200 remains high at 6.8 percent in the first quarter of 2020, only slightly below the previous year. Sub-Saharan Africa continued to have the highest average cost, at about 9 percent, yet intra-regional migrants in Sub-Saharan Africa comprise over two-thirds of all international migration from the region.

"Quick actions that make it easier to send and receive remittances can provide much-needed support to the lives of migrants and their families. These include treating remittance services as essential and making them more accessible to migrants," said DilipRatha, lead author of the Brief and head of KNOMAD.

Regional Remittance Trends

Remittance flows to the East Asia and Pacific region grew by 2.6 percent to \$147 billion in 2019, about 4.3 percentage points lower than the growth rate in 2018. In 2020, remittance flows are expected to decline by 13 percent. The slowdown is expected to be driven by declining inflows from the United States, the largest source of remittances to the region. Several remittance-dependent countries such as those in the Pacific Islands could see households at risk as remittance incomes decline over this period. A recovery of 7.5 percent growth for the region is anticipated in 2021.

Remittance costs: The average cost of sending \$200 to the East Asia and Pacific region dropped to 7.13 percent in the first quarter of 2020, compared to the same quarter in 2019.

The five lowest cost corridors in the region averaged 2.6 percent while

Humanity is at stake

-AfDB President

African Development Bank Group President Akinwumi Adesina says an accelerated global health and economic effort is needed to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

Stating that "one death is one too many" and that "our collective humanity is at stake," Adesina urged U.S. and African government officials and corporate executives to forge new and sustainable partnerships that would endure beyond the pandemic.

He made the call during a global Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) webinar. The CCA is a leading U.S. business association that promotes business and investment between the United States and Africa.

Urging participants to be their brother's and sister's keepers, Adesina said there was a compelling need to pay

Bank's recent \$3 billion "Fight COVID-19" bond, the largest ever US dollar-denominated social bond. The bond, oversubscribed at \$4.6 billion, is listed on the London Stock Exchange. The Bank also launched a \$10 billion COVID-19 Response Facility to assist African governments and businesses.

The Bank's response package includes \$5.5 billion earmarked for African governments, \$3.1 billion for countries that fall under the Bank's concessionary African Development Fund and \$1.4 billion for the private sector.

Fielding several questions about Africa's healthcare system, Adesina said the region needs to more than double spending in the sector. He cited the acute shortage of facilities and pharmaceutical companies on the continent as development and investment opportunities.

While China is home to 7,000



improve nutritional outcomes, are associated with higher spending on education, and reduce child labor in disadvantaged households. A fall in remittances affect families' ability to spend on these areas as more of their finances will be directed to solve food shortages and immediate livelihoods needs.

"Remittances are a vital source of income for developing countries. The ongoing economic recession caused by COVID-19 is taking a severe toll on the ability to send money home and makes it all the more vital that we shorten the time to recovery for advanced economies," said World Bank Group President David Malpass. "Remittances help families afford food, healthcare, and basic needs. As the World Bank Group implements fast, broad action to support

East Asia and the Pacific (13 percent).

The large decline in remittances flows in 2020 comes after remittances to LMICs reached a record \$554 billion in 2019. Even with the decline, remittance flows are expected to become even more important as a source of external financing for LMICs as the fall in foreign direct investment is expected to be larger (more than 35 percent). In 2019, remittance flows to LMICs became larger than FDI, an important milestone for monitoring resource flows to developing countries.

In 2021, the World Bank estimates that remittances to LMICs will recover and rise by 5.6 percent to \$470 billion. The outlook for remittance remains as uncertain as the impact of COVID-19 on the outlook for global growth and on the measures to restrain the spread of the disease. In the past,



attention to underlying global inequalities, and the impact on rich and poor countries.

Corporate Council on Africa President and CEO FlorieLiser lauded the African Development Bank's proactive leadership role in responding to the crisis in Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to erase Africa's unprecedented growth and economic gains over the last decade, she said.

The webinar was moderated by Citi Bank's Peter Sullivan, who said the pandemic was unprecedented in terms of its health, social, economic, and financial impact. "The crisis has significantly hurt economic activity across multiple sectors, including tourism, transportation and commodities."

Adesina highlighted the

pharmaceutical companies, and India 11,000, Africa by contrast has only 375, even though its population is roughly equal to half of the combined population of both Asian giants.

Adesina urged multilateral institutions to align and step up their collective efforts with regard to Africa's debt, manage their ratings, and work together with rating agencies.

While COVID-19 infection rates are relatively low compared to the rest of the world, there is a growing sense of urgency given the acute absence of healthcare infrastructure on the continent.

With an eye on the present crisis and beyond, Adesina called for urgent, new and resilient partnerships that will help leave no one behind. - Press release

Senators snub session

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Despite chopping US\$6,000, as stated by Montserrado County Senator Abraham Darius Dillon, to approve the State of Emergency, members of the Liberian Senate

by the 1986 Liberian Constitution which requires the Legislature to remain in session during the entire period of the state of emergency.

Since the passage of the two instruments, members of the Senate have refused to foot on

Some staffers were angered by their respective bosses' absence on Capitol Hill, as they complained about the cost of transporting themselves on a daily basis to go to work, unknowing that the lawmakers would not appear to perform their duties for which they are being paid for.

Some senators mainly from the leadership met with the Senate Pro - Tempore Albert Chie in a close meeting for hours, though the outcome of the meeting was never disclosed to the media.

Information gathered from the corridors of the Capitol suggests that the Senate is to come up with a timetable for its sessions.

On Friday last week, members of the Legislature overwhelmingly voted extending the State of Emergency declared by President George Manneh Weah from 21 days to two months.

Both the House of Representatives and the Liberian Senate passed a joint resolution, endorsing the stimulus package and extending the State of Emergency to 60 days.--
Edited by Winston W. Parley



snubbed session on Wednesday, 22 April.

Since they endorsed the State of Emergency and the stimulus package, senators have reneged on going to legislative session as required

the grounds of the Capitol.

The Chambers of the Liberian Senate and the House of Representatives remained empty on Wednesday, 22 April, as only a few lawmakers drove to the Capitol Building.

20 patients

Starts from back page

members of the Liberian Legislature did not only approved the President's state of emergency which was initially put at 21 days but extended it to 60 days, with stimulus package attached.

On Saturday, the country reported 10 new confirmed cases 9 of which were reported in Montserrado County alone with one from Nimba County which brings the total number of confirmed cases to 91, with

76 active cases and over 489 contacts listed to follow up.

Liberia's increasing death rate compares to its west African neighbors has raised the cause for concern amidst predictions by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) that Africa could see anywhere between 300,000 and 3.3 million deaths from the coronavirus. -*Othello B. Garblah writes*

I can't question

Cont'd from page 7

that this virus is real and keep practicing all of the health protocols."

On March 16, 2020, President George Manneh Weah suspended for time indefinite, the EPA executive director for violating

prescribed health protocols and endangering public health, after he imported the virus from Switzerland and objected to being quarantined at the Roberts International Airport upon arrival here.

SURVEY NOTICE

April 17, 2020

In keeping with the private land regulations MLME - 87 and in accordance with the Liberia Land Authority (LLA). The undersigned registered land surveyor have been duly authorized by the administrators of the late Joseph V. Gaye to survey "3" lots of land situated in Congo Town, Montserrado County.

The survey will be conducted on Thursday, the 24th of April 2020 at the precise hour of 2:30pm.

Therefore; all adjoining properties owner are asked to be present with their deeds, diagrams or any other relevant document to substantiate their claims. They should also come along with their technical representatives.

This notice goes to the following individuals:

1. Mr. Mamadou D. Bah
2. Mr. & Mrs. Moses Wonsiah
3. Dominion Church
4. The Gaye Estate

Signed:

Yarkpawolo T. Kollie
Reg. Land Surveyor
Cell: 0777732799

Cc:

1. Land Commission - Congo Town
2. Police Depart

Bong reports 6 suspected cases

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Bong County Superintendent Esther Yamah Walker has announced six suspected coronavirus cases in the County, saying specimens have been taken to Monrovia for testing.

Making the pronouncement Tuesday, 21 April, Superintendent Walker said one of the suspected cases is in Bong Mines, involving a 38 - year - old man who recently died, but did not state the specific location of the other cases.

According to her, the man firstly went at the Bong Mines Hospital and reported that he had chest pain and fever, but later left due to alleged abandonment by health workers at the facility.

Superintendent Walker tells journalists that the man died upon his return from the health facility.

She however says it is yet to be confirmed whether he died of the virus, adding that health authorities in the county are investigating the matter.

When contacted concerning the suspected cases in Bong County,



Liberia's Chief Medical Director Dr. Francis Ketehe says he is not focused on reporting suspected cases of coronavirus, but confirmed cases.

Superintendent Walker's revelation has however received a condemnation from former Electoral District #3 representative candidate Jerry Kerkulah Kollie.

Mr. Kerkulah in an interview with this paper on Tuesday opined that it is not the responsibility of Superintendent Walker to declare suspected or confirmed

Covid-19 cases.

According to him, the Superintendent needs to focus on lobbying with the government to ensure the provision of anti-coronavirus materials instead of playing the role of the County Health Team.

Mr. Kollie tells our Bong County correspondent that Superintendent Walker's statement brought fear to the people of Bong County, urging her to immediately refrain from misinforming the citizens.

CHANGE OF NAME



From: Quieeyah Juma Korkor

To: Juma Quieeyato Korkor

All documents bearing Quieeyah to Korkor or Juma Quieeyah to Korkor are legitimate.

"You know, it is quite frustrating that a whole Superintendent will forget her duties and start to act as health worker. I can altogether tell you that the superintendent does not know her function," Kollie alleges.

He claims that the superintendent does not investigate information before giving mandate, as he urges the joint security in the county

to take serious instructions from the Ministries of Defense and Justice, or document every instruction from the superintendent before implementation.

Meanwhile, Superintendent Walker has declined to comment on Mr. Kollie's allegation, saying every citizen can go ahead and say whatever they want to say.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

20 patients recovered

-as Liberia records zero infection



Liberia on Wednesday reported that as at Tuesday April 21, 2020 it has recorded a total number of 20 recoveries from its COVID-19 treatment center at the 14 Military Hospital.

Liberia on April 20, 2020 reported a total of 101 confirmed COVID 19 cases. Out of this number health authorities here reported 7

recoveries and 8 deaths.

But on Tuesday April 21, 2020, the country reported zero case with 13 recoveries bringing the total number of recovered patients to 20.

Health authorities posted that as at Tuesday April 21, the country had reduced its active case from 6 to 73.

As at Saturday April 18, the tiny West African nation had recorded the highest COVID 19

death rate in the sub-region and beyond.

The country which was founded by freed American slaves as at Saturday April 18, reported 91 confirmed COVID 19 cases with 7 recoveries and 8 deaths among the confirmed cases so far are about 18 health workers one of which died on Saturday at the 14 Military Hospital.

At 91 cases and 8 deaths, it puts the death rate at 8.8 percent, higher than the rest of the countries in the sub-region most of whom have reported more cases than Liberia.

The situation here appears gloomy. President George Weah on April 8, declared a state of emergency locking down the country for 21 days. Under the Liberian Law, the Legislators have up to one week to either approved or reject the President's declaration.

On Friday April 17, **▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9**

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Lukaku apologises for coronavirus claim

Romelu Lukaku has apologised to Inter Milan after claiming that 23 out of 25 players had suffered coronavirus symptoms in January.

Former Manchester United striker Lukaku made his claims during an Instagram Live conversation with Belgian TV presenter Kat Kerkhofs on Tuesday.

Inter were stunned by the suggestions as they completed their January games with virtually a full

squad of players.

The club are understood to have reprimanded Lukaku.

Sources have told BBC Sport that because the Belgium international apologised, the matter is now regarded as closed.

Lukaku is reported to have said: "We had a week off in December, we returned to work and I swear that 23 out of 25 players were ill. I am not kidding.

"We played against Radja Nainggolan's Cagliari and after



about 25 minutes, one of our defenders [Milan Skriniar] had to leave the pitch. He could not continue and almost fainted.

"Everyone was coughing and had a fever. When I was warming up, I felt a lot hotter than usual. I hadn't suffered from a fever in years.

"After the game there was a planned dinner with guests from Puma, but I thanked them and went straight to bed. We never did the Covid-19 tests at that moment, so we will never know for sure."

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