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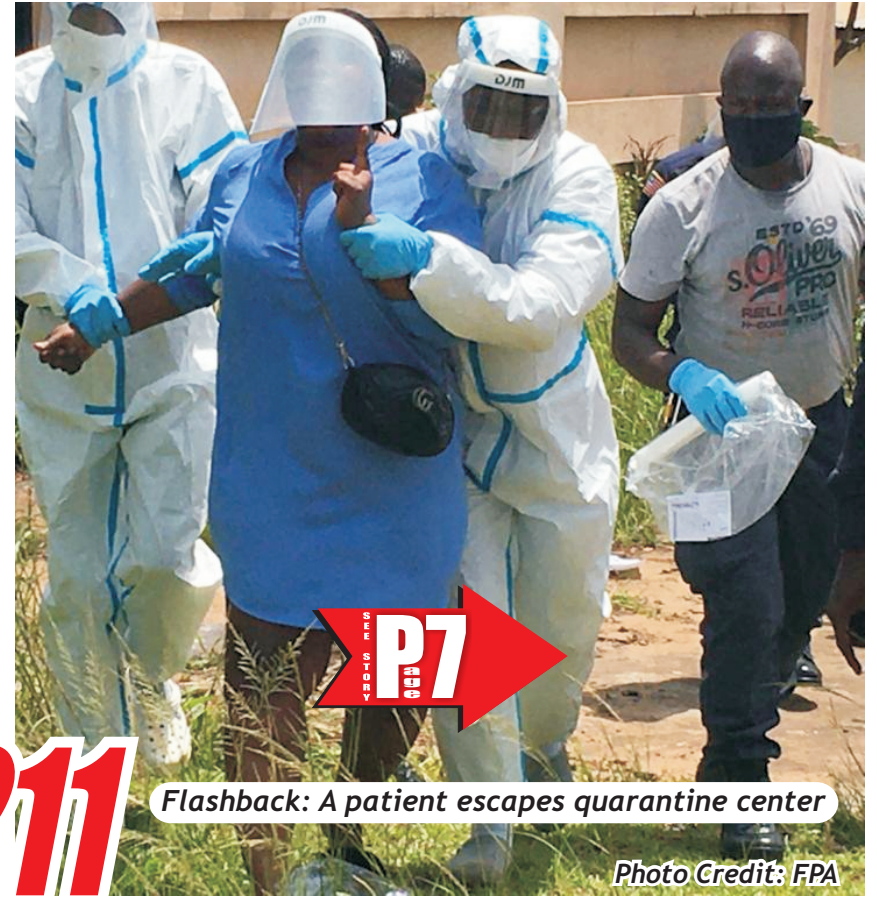
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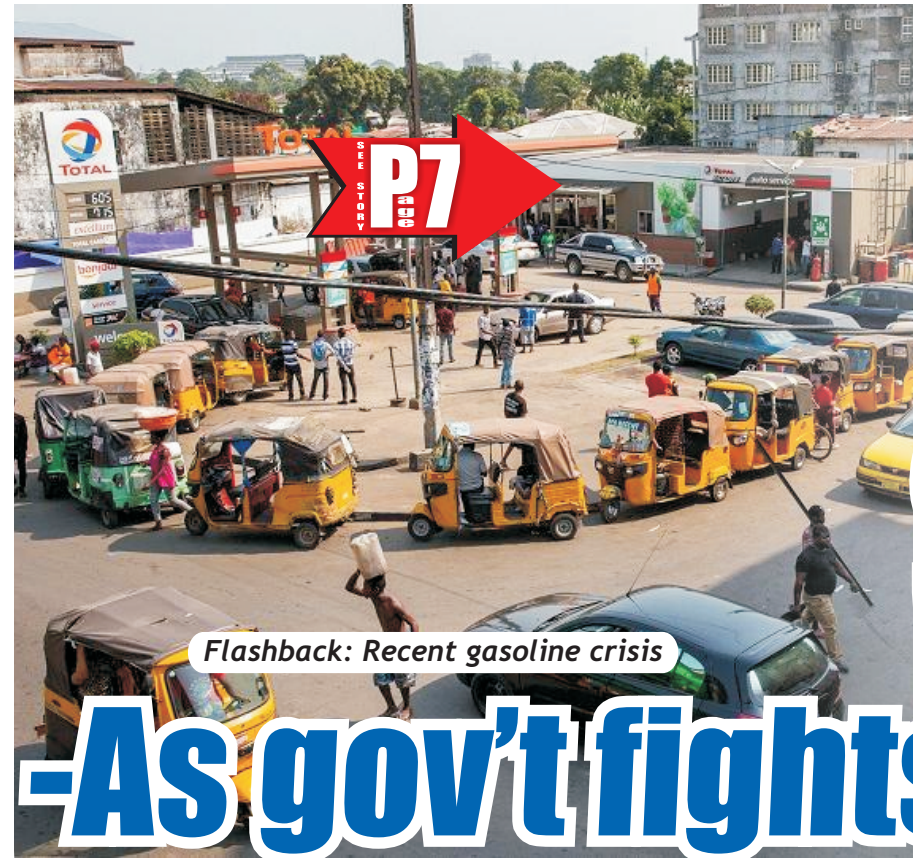
MORE infections

- Liberia covid-19 hits 211



Flashback: A patient escapes quarantine center

Photo Credit: FPA



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Continental News

At least 20 killed in Niger village attacks

At least 20 people have been killed in attacks by gunmen on several villages in Niger, local authorities say.

Tidjani Ibrahim Katiella, governor of Tillaberi region, said the assailants were riding motorbikes during the incidents on Saturday.

The unidentified group

reportedly looted shops, stole cattle and ordered village inhabitants to flee.

Since 2017 a state of emergency has been in place in Tillaberi, which borders Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin.

Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso are all struggling to cope with a jihadist insurgency, with numerous different militant

groups moving between the three countries.

Three UN peacekeepers were killed and four wounded in an attack in northern Mali's Kidal region on Sunday. Eyewitnesses told local media that the latest attacks in Niger took place at about 16:00 local time (15:00 GMT), with gunmen targeting

villages including Gadabo and Koira Teguo. The UN has a 13,000-strong peacekeeping force in Mali, which has been targeted by insurgent groups.

On Sunday, three Chadian peacekeepers were killed when their convoy hit a roadside bomb. No group has claimed responsibility for the deaths, but such explosives are a preferred tactic of jihadis in the area.

The head of the UN peacekeeping mission in the country, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, said those responsible for what he called a "cowardly terrorist act" must be apprehended and put on trial.

Militants affiliated to the

Islamic State and al-Qaeda continue to operate in the region, weakening control by national governments. Attacks by these groups have killed 170 government soldiers since December last year.

Last week the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, warned that jihadist groups in the Sahel were exploiting the coronavirus pandemic to step up attacks.

Combatting militants in the region is seen as important for maintaining security further afield, including Europe. Several African and European countries, along with the US, have set up a military task force to deal with the insurgency. BBC



A state of emergency has been declared in Tillaberi region since 2017 (file photo)

Zambia praises sex workers for 'coronavirus tracing'

Sex workers in Zambia are helping to trace people who have contracted coronavirus after a surge in new infections at the border town of Nakonde, the health minister has said.

Chitalu Chilufya said 76 of 85 reported new cases in the northern town were either sex workers or lorry drivers.

"Sex workers have been very co-operative and they are giving us all the leads we want," Mr Chilufya said.

Zambia has confirmed 267

Covid-19 infections, with seven deaths.

Last week, President Edgar Lungu announced the reopening of restaurants, casinos and gyms after a month-long shutdown to enforce social distancing measures. "The situation in Nakonde remains grave, and the president is concerned," Mr Chilufya said on Sunday, adding that Mr Lungu had ordered the border to be "temporarily closed."

Nakonde streets are usually lined by lorries leaving Zambia

or entering from neighbouring Tanzania, the BBC's Kennedy Gondwe in Lusaka reports.

Lorry drivers are seen as a high-risk group because they stop at several towns along the way and are known to have multiple sex partners, he added.

"They [sex workers] are being very co-operative in our investigations, and we don't want to stigmatise or discriminate against them. They are being very useful in contact tracing," Mr Chilufya said.

"We had a case where one of them appeared with symptoms and told us about a client who was a lorry driver of foreign jurisdiction and even gave us a contact number. We called that number and we were told the person we called had Covid-19," the minister added. Health authorities in East Africa have expressed concern that lorry drivers, listed as essential workers, could be spreading coronavirus.

Strict checks, including tests by Ugandan authorities, have caused long tailbacks at its border with Kenya. BBC



Lorry drivers are known to have multiple sex partners

Ghana extends ban on gatherings as infections rise

Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo has extended the ban on public gatherings until the end of the month as the country's coronavirus cases continue to rise.

Schools will remain closed while religious activities, conferences and festivals are banned during the period. All border crossings will also

The restrictive measures were first imposed two months ago to curb the spread of the virus.

On Thursday, more than 500 workers at a fish processing plant tested positive for the virus in the industrial city of Tema, which saw the country's total case count increase by nearly 30% - the highest in a single



Ghana has one of the highest rates of mass testing in Africa

remain closed.

The west African nation has so far confirmed 4,700 cases and 22 deaths.

In a televised address on Sunday night, President Akufo-Addo said extending the measures was necessary to contain the spread of the virus.

day.

This was days after health officials said infection rates had reached a peak.

The spike in cases has also been attributed to the clearing of a backlog of samples in laboratories. Ghana has tested around 160,000 samples so far. BBC

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EDITORIAL

Pres. Weah failed to provide progress report

PRESIDENT GORGE MANNEH WEAH is considering re-opening churches, mosques and perhaps schools after the country observed one month State of Emergency and 14 days lockdown with no progress in the ongoing COVID-19 fight.

ADHERING TO APPARENT pressure from religious leaders, President Weah has ordered Churches, Mosques and other worship centers in the country to resume activities beginning Sunday, May 17, but with 25 percent regular worship-hour occupancy for social distancing and other health protocols.

BUT WE ARE highly disappointed that one month and 14 days after the President declared a State of Emergency and lockdown the government cannot provide any progress in terms of reduction in confirmed and active cases and number of death.

WITH ONE MORE month to go under the State of Emergency, President Weah has extended the lockdown by another 14 days, rallying citizens and residents to observe all health protocols. But what other strategies does the government have to containing the rapid spread of the virus which started with an index case on March 16, 2020 imported from Switzerland to nearly 200 cases today and 20 deaths?

WE HAVE THOUGHT that both the lockdown and the State of Emergency were intended to give health authorities the opportunity to carry out vigorous testing among the population to prevent the virus from spreading. But from initially two affected counties (Montserrado and Margibi) COVID-19 has attacked a total of eight (8) counties with the two index counties topping the list of infections.

THE MOST UNFORTUNATE situation about our fight is that officials, doctors and nurses are contracting the virus with the Ministers of Information and Justice currently in quarantine at the 14 Military Hospital after the death of the head of the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency Marcus Soko from the virus.

"ALL OF WHAT this government, including those charged with the responsibility to enforce lockdown and health protocols, is doing is in the direct interest of the people; it is all in the interest of protecting and saving lives; it doesn't give undue advantage to some citizens over others but is intended to ensure that we are on course with measures that all other countries and peoples are taking to defeat the pandemic", President Weah argued when spoke on a local radio station recently in Monrovia.

IT IS NOT just about lockdown and state of emergency. Ghana also observed lockdown, but the Ghanaian government went further in executing street testing to identify possible contacts in the public, which the government of Liberia is not doing. Yes, we are aware of a testing center at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville, but there is no strategy in place to attract citizens for voluntary testing.

UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT and health officials return to the drawing board to assess their performance in the first one month and 14 days, the coming one month and 14 days could see the worst case scenario of our COVID-19 fight because Liberia seems to be losing the fight.

PRESIDENT WEAH SHOULD realize that the oath to protect lives and property requires practical actions on the ground, not just awareness by music production.

COMMENTARY

By Hannah Storm

Preventing a Media Mental Health Crisis

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, many journalists were burned out or on the brink. As the crisis both intensifies pressure on newsrooms and upends decades-old journalistic practices, the risks to their mental health are mounting.

LONDON - Nothing highlights the importance of reliable news quite like a crisis. And yet, as the COVID-19 pandemic puts journalists under intensifying pressure to deliver that news, it is also upending their industry and transforming their working conditions. The stress this is placing on their mental health should not be underestimated.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, many journalists were burned out or on the brink. The cycle of breaking news was relentless, income from advertising revenues was falling, newsroom budgets were strained, and public trust in media was declining.

The pandemic has compounded these challenges, while generating even more uncertainty. Most journalists are now working from home, unable to meet with colleagues, contacts, or subjects. Some are overwhelmed with responsibilities, as they attempt to deliver timely - and potentially life-saving - information about a fast-changing crisis. Many have lost their jobs.

The news industry needs to ensure it is doing all it can to support journalists' mental health and wellbeing. According to Anthony Feinstein, a psychiatry professor at the University of Toronto, this is both about managing individual responses to the crisis and about news management validating the vital work of journalists at this time.

In an interview, Feinstein told me that rather than worrying about things they can't control - an emotionally draining habit that can lead to catastrophic thinking - journalists should reflect on where they can make a difference and limit the attention they devote to where they cannot. More broadly, maintaining a healthy routine - getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising (even if indoors), and connecting with friends and family - is vital.

Most people could stand to heed this advice. But Feinstein's third main recommendation - disconnecting from the news for a period of time before bed each night - is particularly difficult for those whose job it is to report it. According to Feinstein, the key is to delineate clearly one's professional roles and responsibilities - including where they end.

Failure to do so puts journalists at risk of moral injury - that is the stress that arises when a person witnesses, perpetrates, or fails to prevent acts that contradict their values. (Moral injury has been shown to affect journalists covering issues such as forced migration, for example.) It can cause severe emotional distress if unmanaged and untreated.

Journalists also need direct support from their employers. The BBC, Agence France-Presse (AFP), and Reuters - all of which have global workforces with diverse needs - are three major media organizations that have placed mental health at the center of their COVID-19-response plans.

A key lesson to be learned from their strategies

is the importance of communication and understanding. "There is constant communication about what we are doing, making sure everyone is seeing the messages that yes, we are a news organization, we have a mission; but the first thing we are thinking about is the health and safety of our people," AFP's global news director, Phil Chetwynd, told me.

Likewise, Kari Cobham, Senior Associate Director of Journalism Fellowships at the Carter Center in Atlanta, encourages managers to ensure their teams understand that "their wellbeing, unique family situations, and the community are important in these difficult times." As Feinstein points out, it would be very unusual if we didn't feel some kind of anxiety amid the current tumult.

More concretely, managers should rotate tough assignments when possible and validate journalists' essential work. They should also keep staff informed, including about what resources are available to them and any changes to guidelines or policies. And they should check in regularly, encouraging staff to share any questions, concerns, or feedback, including privately, if they so choose.

"But we also need to be mindful," Roz Orchard of Reuters told me, that "constant check-ins can be overwhelming," especially at a time when people are coping with the conflicting experiences of physical isolation and digital hyper-connection. And, as Cobham points out, managers should ensure they protect their own mental health.

All of this should serve to foster a sense of trust and community that keeps journalists from feeling alone or unmotivated, without exacerbating the pressures they face. To help ensure success, media organizations should provide remote coaching to managers, giving them the tools they need to support their teams effectively.

The BBC already does just that, in addition to offering regular virtual sessions on mental health and resilience. "We talk a lot about sense of purpose," BBC News and Current Affairs Managing Editor Sarah Ward-Lilley, one of the corporation's mental-health leads, told me.

For those who cannot do their journalism jobs as they did before, purpose can become a sensitive topic. The BBC is addressing this challenge by carrying out skills audits, and reassigning those who fall into this category - say, because they usually work on a program that has been decommissioned or on a subject area where there is currently no news coverage - to skills-appropriate jobs that can be performed during the pandemic. But many others may not have that option, heightening feelings of a lack of purpose and insecurity - and making access to mental-health resources all the more important.

COVID-19's effects on journalists will continue to reverberate well into the future. News organizations must act now to ensure that those effects do not include serious mental-health consequences.

The New Dawn
DAILY INDEPENDENT

O-PED

By Mohamed A. El-erian

Navigating Deglobalization

Appeals to recommit to globalization are highly unlikely to gain traction in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those keen to preserve globalization would instead be better advised to focus on minimizing the disruption caused by the coming period of deglobalization and laying the groundwork for a more sustainable process thereafter.

LAGUNA BEACH - Having already been buffeted by two big shocks in the last ten years, the global economy's highly interconnected wiring is suffering a third because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Globalization thus faces a three-strikes-and-out situation that could well result in a gradual but rather prolonged delinking of trade and investment, which would add to the secular headwinds already facing the global economy.

Appeals to recommit to the current globalization process are almost certain to fall on deaf ears - particularly because this latest shock will be driven simultaneously by governments, companies, and households in developed countries. Those keen to preserve globalization in the longer term would instead be better advised to focus on minimizing the disruption caused by the coming period of deglobalization and laying the groundwork for a more sustainable process thereafter.

For starters, it is already clear that many firms will look to strike a more risk-averse balance between efficiency and resilience as they emerge from the damaging pandemic shock. The corporate world's multi-decade romance with cost-effective global supply chains and just-in-time inventory management will give way to a more localized approach involving the reshoring of certain activities.

This inclination will be reinforced by government mandates to secure safer inputs for sectors deemed to be of national-security interest. We are already seeing such requirements in the United States for energy generation, telecommunications, health-care materials, and pharmaceuticals. It is only a matter of time until this trend spreads to other sectors and countries.

The aftermath of the current crisis-management phase is also likely to feature an intensified blame game, adding a geopolitical impetus to deglobalization. Already, the US is complaining that China didn't do enough to contain the spread of the virus and inform other countries of its severity. Some US politicians have even called for China to pay reparations as a result. And many in America and elsewhere perceive China's initial COVID-19 response as yet another example of the country failing to live up to its international responsibilities.

Moreover, the worsening geopolitical situation will likely intensify the weaponization of economic-policy tools that accelerated during the recent China-US trade war - the second recent blow to the globalization process. That in turn will confirm many multinational companies' fears that they can no longer rely on two key operating assumptions: the ever closer integration and interconnectedness of global production, consumption, and investment flows; and the orderly and relatively predictable resolution of trade and investment conflicts through multilateral institutions applying the rule of law.

Today's anti-China rhetoric will also give fresh momentum to the first pushback against globalization that emerged a decade ago. With some segments of the population feeling alienated and marginalized by the process, the anti-establishment backlash gave rise in some places to more extreme political movements that have scored some surprising successes, not least Brexit. Such developments greatly weakened global policy collaboration, as has been starkly evident in the world's uncoordinated approach to containing COVID-19.

This is not an ideal time for the world economy to undergo secular deglobalization. Most countries, and virtually all segments of their economies (companies, governments, and households), will emerge from the crisis with higher levels of debt. Absent a major round of debt restructuring, developing countries in particular will find their ability to service this debt hampered by high levels of unemployment, lost income, more sluggish economic activity, and, perhaps, less dynamic consumption.

Against this background, those who appreciate the power of cross-border interconnectivity to unleash win-win economic opportunities and reduce the risk of major military conflicts will be inclined to defend the pre-pandemic status quo. But this approach is unlikely to gain traction at a time when governments have become more inward-looking as they battle the pandemic's direct and indirect damage, companies are still reeling from disruptions to their global supply chains and markets, and households have a heightened sense of economic insecurity.

Rather than fight an unwinnable war of principle, advocates of globalization should adopt a more pragmatic approach that focuses on two priorities. First, they should find ways to manage an orderly and gradual process of partial deglobalization, including avoiding a descent into self-feeding disruptions that result in unnecessary pain and suffering for many. Second, they should start putting in place a firmer foundation to relaunch a more inclusive and sustainable process of globalization in which the private sector will inevitably play a bigger design and implementation role.

To revert to the baseball analogy, this third strike against globalization has sent it back to the dugout for now. But, as in baseball, there will be another at-bat. The challenge now is to use the time on the bench to understand the situation better and come back stronger.

OPINION

By Ian Buruma

Confronting China

If China wishes to lead the world, it will have to offer more than money and intimidation. Freedom still matters, and China will be incapable of advancing that cause on a global scale without first starting at home.

NEW YORK - Instead of using all the powers of the US federal government to limit the ravages of COVID-19, President Donald Trump's administration is wasting precious time and energy blaming China for the spread of the virus. Pundits speak of a new cold war. But if the United States really intends to confront China in a struggle for global leadership, Trump is botching it badly.

Even as the Chinese government is showering countries around the world with supplies to combat the pandemic, and even sending medical teams, Trump cut off air travel from Europe without even bothering to inform America's European allies. Since March, the Chinese government has contributed \$50 million to the World Health Organization, while Trump, claiming that the WHO is "China-centric," has frozen US funding.

When G7 foreign ministers held a video conference to discuss a common strategy to fight COVID-19, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's contribution was to insist that the pathogen be called "Wuhan virus," after the Chinese city of its presumed origin. Fed up with Trumpian antics, the other ministers ended the conference without a conclusion.

Chinese largesse does not come without strings, of course. The WHO cravenly refused to acknowledge Taiwan's success in limiting the virus, or even to admit Taiwan as a member, for fear of offending mainland China. And while the US government was promoting conspiracy theories about China, the European Union softened its criticism of deliberate Chinese misinformation after China threatened to retaliate.

The effectiveness of China's intimidation is a sign of its growing economic power. Presumably, such tactics would be less effective if the Western allies, as well as such interested parties as Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asian countries, were to stick together. In the past, any such common front would rely on American leadership. But the current administration's self-centered ineptitude rules this out. In the long run, this might let China take the lead, *faute de mieux*.

In fact, Western countries have rarely had a common policy on China, and the reasons for this haven't changed much since the late eighteenth century, when Lord Macartney was dispatched by King George III to establish diplomatic relations with the Chinese Empire. One of the ironies of this failed mission was that the British were looking to trade in goods other than opium with China. But the Qianlong Emperor stated that there was nothing the Chinese needed from the British.

Macartney had already displeased his hosts by refusing to kowtow to the Emperor, a gesture of submission that was not required by his own sovereign. Members of a similar Dutch mission who agreed to follow Chinese custom and kowtow to the Dragon Throne found more favor with the imperial court. This infuriated the British, who blamed typical Dutch avarice - anything for a quick guilder. But then the Dutch came as representatives of the Dutch East India Company, not of their monarch.

The point, however, is that China saw itself as the center of the civilized world. Missions from abroad could only be seen as bearers of tribute, and never as equals. Macartney, confident that Britain was the world's premier power, couldn't possibly deal with China on that basis. The Dutch, rather like the EU today, were primarily interested in cracking the Chinese market and were prepared to play by China's rules.

Even though Britain's clout has waned, the clash of great powers in Macartney's time still resonates. For almost a century, the American claim to be the peerless model of civilization has been no less grandiose than the Sino-centric views of the Qing emperors.

When China was impoverished and at the mercy of the world's great powers, it was easy for Americans to patronize the Chinese as potential converts to democracy, capitalism, and Christianity. Dealing with the rampant Japanese Empire in the early twentieth century, on the other hand, was much harder. When Japan, as a signatory of the Versailles Treaty in 1919, asked for a clause against racial discrimination among members of the League of Nations, the US (and Australia) turned it down.

There was hardly any money to be made in China under Chairman Mao Zedong. Even so, Western countries failed to agree on how to deal with him. When Britain recognized the People's Republic of China in 1950, just one year after the revolution, the US, gearing up for its crusade against global Communism, was furious. Until the 1970s, Washington recognized Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime on tiny Taiwan as the only legitimate government of China.

Now that there is a great deal of money to be made in China once again, we are back to the time of Macartney. The borders of the Middle Kingdom are more or less the same as those of the Qing Empire. The government is no more democratic than it was under the Qianlong Emperor. And, after a century of wars, invasions, mass poverty, and bloodshed, China is again held up as a model of civilization that barbarians are expected to follow.

The prospect of Chinese global leadership is not inviting. But the US is rapidly fading as an alternative. The "American Century" was marked by many foolish wars, ideological rigidity, and unconscionable support for some very nasty dictatorships. And yet, global adherence to US leadership was widely based on respect for a form of government that, however flawed in its execution, spoke to the human aspiration for freedom, including in parts of the Chinese-speaking world.

The same is not true for China today. If China wishes to lead the world, it will have to offer more than money and intimidation. Freedom still matters. Why else did Chinese student protesters erect a ten-meter-high Goddess of Democracy in Tiananmen Square in 1989? China will be incapable of advancing that cause on a global scale without first starting at home.

ARTICLE

Under COVID-19 lockdowns, 32 million Africans would be severely food deprived

-says new research

After an eight-week lockdown, 168 million people would no longer afford the amount of food they were consuming pre-COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa, indicates new International Growth Centre (IGC) research.

The IGC study indicates that in their current forms, and if implemented for eight weeks, lockdowns in sub-Saharan Africa could lead almost 32 million people, including 4 million children under five years old, to be severely food deprived. If extended to all countries in sub-Saharan Africa, lockdowns would push almost 78 million people (8% of the population) into extreme hunger.

The paper's authors - Matthieu Teachout, IGC Research Director, and Céline Zipfel, researcher at the London School of Economics and Political Science - also find prolonged, strict lockdowns would wipe out the savings of about 30% of the continent's population, effectively eliminating households' capacity to withstand future shocks.

The study builds on recent data showing how incomes have been affected under lockdowns in developing countries and makes assumptions about the likely impact on various sectors in Africa. Researchers estimate the impact of lockdowns on household consumption using survey data from Rwanda as a benchmark, and using additional data from multiple sources, make the same projections for all sub-Saharan African countries.

The study estimates the current containment measures in Africa have pushed an additional 9% of the population into extreme poverty. Furthermore, the long-term damage to incomes from the lockdowns could keep about 18 million people at risk of severe food deprivation.



A man walks past closed shops at the Red Light market on the first day of lockdown to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), in Monrovia, Liberia April 11, 2020. REUTERS/Derrick Snyder

While the study's simulation is speculative and subject to a margin of error, the findings allow policymakers in developing countries to better understand the direct and immediate impact of COVID-19 containment measures on people's livelihoods. The IGC recently released policy guidance for developing country governments on containment strategies and support for vulnerable households.

In their calculations, the researchers also assume there is no government intervention in the form of social assistance. Currently, some African countries are distributing food and expanding social programmes, but World Bank data show coverage of existing, pre-pandemic programmes is extremely low and social assistance does not effectively target the poorest populations.

"The findings from our study suggest that blanket lockdowns in low-income countries - if not accompanied by massive amounts of aid and social assistance programmes - may put even more people at risk of dying than the unmitigated spread of COVID-19 itself," said Teachout.

About the IGC: The International Growth Centre (IGC) aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research. The IGC directs a global network of world-leading researchers and in-country teams in Africa and South Asia and works closely with partner governments to generate high-quality research and policy advice on key growth challenges. Based at LSE and in partnership with the University of Oxford, the IGC is majority funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

OPINION

By Joe Monyue

Covid-Organics- Coronavirus cure or fake

A drink Covid-Organics made from Artemisia Annu, a herb from Madagascar, is gaining traction across the African continent as a cure and a preventative dietary supplement for the Covid-19 disease, despite warnings from both the WHO and the African Union (AU). Both organizations claim that there is no evidentiary science or data from Madagascar to prove that the drink prevents or cures the virus. But that hasn't stopped President Andy Rajoelina from announcing to the world his newfound elixir, and of course, pallets of the drinks were sent to fellow African leaders, including President Weah, who took delivery of a batch this week.

President Rajoelina also mandated that the drink which is produced by the Malgache Institute of Applied Research (IMFA), would be prescribed in syrup form "to all school children, to help to protect themselves against the pandemic."

Rajoelina is not a scientist, nor is he a doctor. Prior to becoming the President of Madagascar, he was a media entrepreneur. There's nothing in the president's background, or experience, that qualifies him to challenge the WHO. He simply lacks the credentials. It would also help if the president understood the dynamics of how supplements and drugs are regulated.

Covid-Organics, would be listed under the Dietary Supplements category by international regulatory bodies such as the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the WHO. Dietary supplements, as a rule, are not subject to regulation because they are categorized as foods. However, when a manufacturer, in this case, a Madagascar manufacturer and the President of Madagascar tout a drink as having therapeutic properties that cure a disease then the category is automatically changed to a regulated drug. And a regulated drug has to go through human trials known as clinical trials. The trials will determine the safety or efficacy of the drink to ensure that they are safe for human consumption.

Those trials will also determine the side effects of the drug if any. Clinical trials are done in Phases, usually four phases, and last a couple of years. When human lives are involved, there are no cutting corners. It is imperative that the IMFA take the potion through universal best practices such as testing, and of course, a clinical trial before taking the potion to market. That is the basis of the statement made by both the WHO and the AU.

Artemisia Annu has been in use for over a century to combat Malaria in Madagascar; it was brought to that country by the Chinese. While it has shown promise as an anti-malarial potion, however, skeptics believe that touting it as a cure for a respiratory disease such as Covid-19 is a stretch. That said, the drink is one of many drugs, mostly Anti-Malarial, that are being suggested as probable repurposed drugs in the war against the Coronavirus. But the Madagascar President is not alone in his excitement over an anti-Malarial drug being used for Covid; President Donald Trump is on record, much to the chagrin of the scientific community, for recommending that Hydroxychloroquine be used as a drug against the Covid-19 virus. Like the Madagascar leader, the data did not bear Trump out, but he went ahead and had India ship a massive consignment of the drug, even threatening India with sanctions if it did not comply.

Never mind the fact that the drug had yet to be tested in a clinical trial in order to determine its safety, toxicity, and efficacy. In fact, Trump's Hydroxychloroquine pitch led to the death of a man in Florida who ingested industrial Chloroquine, a solution used for cleaning swimming pools. His wife, who also ingested the solution, survived to tell the world that her husband was going by statements made by Trump regarding the efficacy of Chloroquine.

An African president using his office to claim a cure for a pandemic is nothing new. Some of us watched in horror in 2007 when the Gambian dictator Yahya Jammeh claimed to the world that he had found the cure for HIV/AIDS. How did President Jammeh come across a cure when the international community of scientists had been working feverishly for decades and could not find a cure? Jammeh claimed that the treatment came to him in a dream from his ancestors. Jammeh, in earnest, was playing the part of the proverbial African Witch Doctor; there were no trials to determine if his concoction was safe. In fact, he was sued in 2018 by three Gambian citizens for imperiling their lives with the daily application of this herb.

Raejolina's claims about the potency of Covid-Organics is an entrepreneurial move by an entrepreneur who wants to profit off of the global panic buying of anything that resembles a cure for Covid-19. But let's not throw caution to the wind, and instead take our cue from the WHO and the AU, as well as Raejolina's own National Academy of Medicine of Madagascar. The academy warned in a statement: "It is a drug whose scientific evidence has not yet been established, and which risks damaging the health of the population, in particular, that of children."

Joe Monyue, an entrepreneur, is a small business owner who heads Quality Resource Solutions, LLC, a firm that provides FDA regulatory compliance consultants to pharmaceutical companies. He can be reached at monjue@gmail.com

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

COVID-19 reduces Liberia's export

-NPA boss
By Lewis S. Teh

The Managing Director of the National Port Authority (NPA) reveals here that the novel coronavirus has affected almost everything at the Port, including huge reduction in exports.

Mr. Bill Tweahway laments that Liberia, like any other

danger posed on Liberia by COVID 19 is immense and our exports have been reduced, including imports as well", he disclosed in a simulcast with three radio stations Tuesday, 11 May in Monrovia.

He cautions that if anybody in Liberia thinks that COVID-19 is a makeup, such person doesn't value lives, because developing countries are on their knees, battling the virus

Greenville (Sinoe County) and Buchanan (Grand Bassa County) ports are currently exporting logs and iron ore, while the Freeport of Monrovia is well active.

Mr. Tweahway, a former lawmaker, notes that in March the NPA received about 17 vessels and in April 27 vessels, which clearly indicates how functional the ports are. "And I can tell you all the necessary goods that are needed for people to survive are in stock."

Meanwhile, Mr. Twehway further discloses the NPA has cancelled all overnight payment especially, in the wake of the State of Emergency and lockdown that has resulted to people working for only four hours.

"I think it's unfair for people to pay for overnight when they are not utilizing the entire time."

On the question of whether people abroad can easily send containers or barrels to relatives back home during this crisis, he answers in the affirmative but notes since the pandemic, Diaspora Liberians are not sending things to their relatives like before.

"As we speak, you can call your relatives in America, Europe, and other areas that the port of Monrovia remains open to anyone for business", the NPA boss urges members of the public.



Mr. Bill Tweahway

country around the world, is suffering from damages caused by the pandemic, adding that being cognizant of the danger, Management has put in place necessary measures to protect its staff and workers.

"As per my understanding and from all indications, the

saying, that is why the Management of the NPA has done everything to avoid the spread of the virus, including telling people to remain safe.

When asked whether various ports in the counties were functional, he details that all of the four ports in the country are functional, noting that both

Judge reaffirms commitment to professional duties

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

The Judge assigned at the Sexual Offenses Division of the 9th Judicial Circuit Court in Gbarnga, Bong County, George Katakpah has reaffirmed the court's commitment to the discharge of its professional duties.

Speaking at the opening of the May Term of Court in Gbarnga, Judge Katakpah says the rule of law will jealousy be guided in the discharge of his duties without fear or favor in the county.

He reveals that the court is the last place of hope for man on earth, noting that it is imposed upon them as judges and lawyers, the sacred responsibility to ensure that individuals' rights to life, liberty and pursuit of genuine happiness is respected and

protected at all times in the court system of Liberia.

Judge Katakpah uses the occasion to caution everyone, including magistrates, to use

the law as their guide post in the protection of the rights of those who appear before

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Judicial Circuit Court in Gbarnga

Man arrested for killing fiancée in Bong

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Police in Gbarnga, Bong County have arrested, charged and sent to court a 42 - year - old man Yarkpawolo Doyea for

allegedly murdering his fiancée Kermi Kollie, aged 40, in the vicinity of Janjay Town, Electoral District #2.

According to John Kellenso Flomo, Commander of the Crime Services Division of the Liberia National Police Bong Detachment, suspect Yarkpawolo Doyea, on Thursday, 30 April, flogged victim Kermi Kollie on their farm on grounds that she had insulted him.

Flomo tells journalists that victim Kermi was later pronounced dead on 5 May, days after suspect Doyea had flogged her.

Mr. Flomo says reliable sources told the police during their investigation that

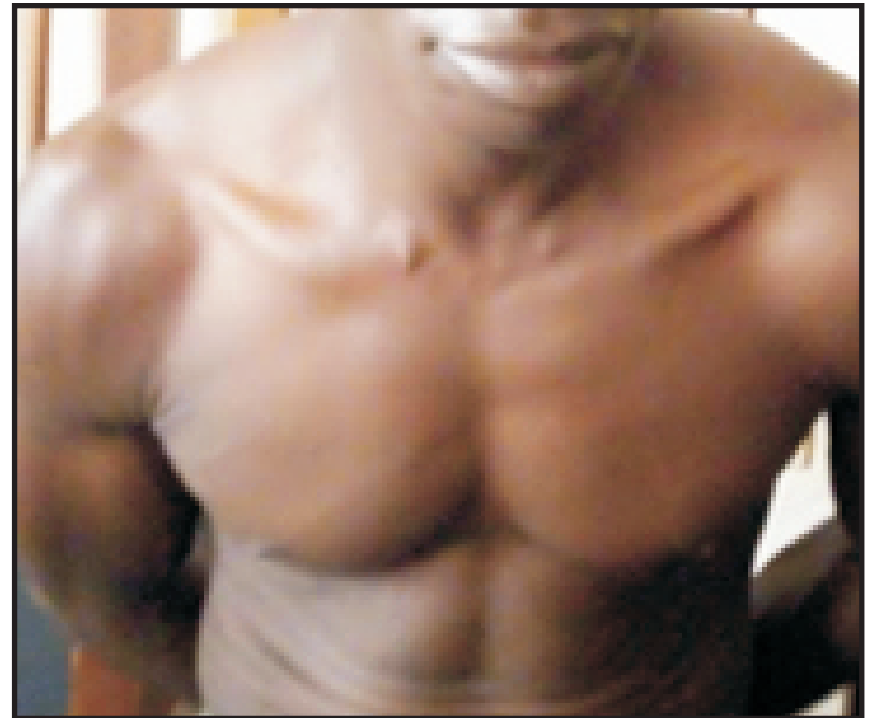
This is the second case of a man murdering his wife in less than three weeks in Bong County alone.

Recently, the police in Bong County charged and sent to court a 52 - year - old man identified as Jacob S. Nyumah with murder and aggravated assault for allegedly killing his 38 years old wife Fatu Yarkpah in Mansasu Town, Salala District in Lower Bong County.

Defendant Nyumah allegedly shot his wife with a single Barrow gun on grounds that she was having an affair with another person in the town.

According to reliable sources, victim Yarkpah and her husband Jacob were having serious misunderstandings prior to her death on the night of 26 April.

This paper gathered that Jacob had allegedly been



suspect Doyea was always in the habit of beating on victim Kermi.

After the discovery, Commander Flomo says a 15 - man jury was quickly ordered to observe the lifeless body of the victim, with the findings detailing that suspect Doyea allegedly strangled victim Kermi, resulting in her untimely death.

For his part, suspect Doyea denies commission of the crime, but admits to flogging victim Kermi. The accused argues

that Kermi did not die because of the beating she received at his hands.

"I beat her, it's true. But I can't believe that she died as a result of the beating," he says.

Meanwhile, suspect Doyea has been charged with murder according to Section 14.1 of the New Penal Code of Liberia and sent to court for trial in the county.

threatening to kill victim Fatu due to his belief that she was in the constant habit of having love affairs with an individual that he (Jacob) only identifies as Mark.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with this paper in the county at the police station, defendant Nyumah admitted to the commission of the act, but stated that it was done due to frustration.

He said victim Fatu had earlier on threatened to leave him for another man, a situation he described as unbearable.

According to a report, after shooting victim Fatu Yarkpah, he (Jacob) fled into the bush while victim Fatu was rushed at the C.H. Rennie Hospital in Kakata, Margibi County, where she was pronounced dead by doctors.—Edited by Winston W. Parley

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Gasoline surplus

Barely a month after Liberians experienced two successive gasoline crises here, a new crisis has emerged in the sector—this time pricing disparities have hit the industry undermining

petrol pump station at a government approved price of US\$2.95 (LRD 580), the price of the commodity on the black market is selling between US\$2.00 and US\$2.15 (LRD 400 and LRD430) much to the discomfort of some importers.

this case, there are claims that those selling below the approved government prices are evading taxes.

Commerce Minister Wilson Tarpeh could not confirm or deny if that was the case, he rather told this paper that the



the traditional petrol pump stations at least as some claim. But Liberians are liking it as they pay cheap for the product.

While, a gallon of gasoline is selling at a traditional

In an ideal free economy where the law of supply and demand takes shape, the situation could be considered as an excess supply or economic surplus that is working to the delight of the consumers, but in

concern surrounding the gasoline price disparities on the local market is something that has claimed the government's attention.

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Malaysians at Sime

Starts from back page

plantation to help with some technical work for about a year. They would have been paid by the head office in Malaysia and not the new company.

SDPL signed a 63-year concession agreement with the Liberian government during the regime of former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2009 to develop 220,000 hectares of land in Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Gbarpolu and Bong Counties into oil palm and rubber plantations. But the company was not able to develop even half of it due to the unavailability of land and other technical problems. Management only developed 10,500 hectares.

The head of a Civil Society organization operating in Cape Mount, Alex K. Balo also confirmed to this paper that no Malaysian is at the plantation currently.

“My understanding is that all of them have left the plantation. The understanding is that since they know a lot about the technical work, they should remain there to help and they would be paid by their head office in Kuala Lumpur and not the new company.”

Some officials from the workers union admitted that

all the Malaysian expatriates have left the plantation. “We do not know if they will come back. But from what we have been told by some of our friends from here, they may not come back.”

When the plantation office was contacted, a senior officer, who prefers anonymity, said they may return after the pandemic but nobody can estimate when the pandemic will be over and when will global air traveling resume to normal.

Early this year, Sime Darby Plantation Berhad (SDP) the parent company of SDPL, announced the completion of sale of its entire 100% equity interest in Sime Darby Plantation (Liberia) Inc. to Mano Palm Oil Industries Limited (MPOI).

Under the SPA, SDP's entire equity in SDPL was sold to MPOI for a total cash consideration of USD1 plus an Earn-Out Payment, the sum of which will be determined by the average future crude palm oil (CPO) price and future CPO production of SDPL in 2022.

The earn-out consideration is payable in equal quarterly installments over a period of eight (8) years, commencing April 2023.

More infections

By Winston W. Parley

Liberia's confirmed coronavirus cases have hit a total of 211, after 7 new confirmed cases were reported at 10:00PM Sunday night, 10 May, roughly two days after President George Manneh Weah proposed that Churches, Mosques and worship centers consider the commencement of their operations beginning Sunday, 17 May.

The persistent increase in coronavirus cases here continues to create uncertainty as to how soon the country could get back to normal and see the reopening of schools and allow works and businesses to run full time, as citizens' complaints of hardship grow daily amid the health crisis.

Meanwhile the Government of Liberia has called on Liberians, led by religious leaders, to use the upcoming Unification Day celebration to pray for the Country to be healed from the virus.

In the updated data released Sunday night, the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) indicates that Liberia has had

211 confirmed cases, out of which 106 confirmed cases are still active, having lost 20 victims to the virus with 85 total recovery so far.

Besides the 20 deaths earlier reported last week, the new data from Sunday's update comes with no new death or new recovery reported in relations to the coronavirus crisis which has hit eight of Liberia's 15 counties.

However President Weah last

Friday, 8 May proposed that Churches, Mosques and worship centers consider operating 25 percent of the regular worship-hour occupancy for each service beginning Sunday, 17 May, with Muslims permitted to begin operating in their Mosques on 8 May.

The reopening of Churches, Mosques and

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Judge reaffirms

Cont'd from page 6

them, seeking justice.

He adds that during his confirmation hearing before the Liberian Senate, he committed himself before man and God to be fearless and courageous in the discharge of his functions and duties as judge in line with the law.

“We made a vow to shield ourselves from undue political influences in the performance of duties as judge. We again today, May 11, 2020 recommit ourselves before the people of Bong County to remain on course as stated above,” Katakpah says.

“I however regret to inform you of the inability of his Honor Judge A. Blamo Dixon, Assigned Circuit judge who is unable to be with us today. In the same vein, Judge Boima Kontoe is still in foreign parts; hence his inability to be present here today,” Judge Katakpah continues.

Meanwhile, there are 68 criminal cases on the docket for this May Term of Court in Bong County.

Also speaking, Gbarnga City Mayor Madam Lucia Herbert laudes Judge Katakpah for his appointment as presiding Judge of the Sexual Offenses Division of the 9th Judge Circuit Court in the County.

Madam Herbert cautions Judge Katakpah to be careful on the issuing of land deeds to people, adding that it should not be based on friendship because they are facing problems in the county when it comes to the issuing deeds.

According to the Gbarnga Mayor, some unscrupulous individuals have organized criminal cartels in Bong County to prepare fraudulent land deeds to harass peaceful citizens there. --Edited by Winston W. Parley

Français

L'Etat ivoirien compte tenir la présidentielle d'octobre 2020 malgré l'impact du Covid-19

Le gouvernement ivoirien travaille dans la perspective d'organiser la présidentielle du 31 octobre 2020, comme fixé par la Constitution, malgré l'impact du Covid-19 sur le processus électoral, a dit dimanche son porte-parole, Sidi Touré, à la RIT 1, la télévision nationale.

La crise sanitaire continue, certes, mais « le gouvernement travaille à l'effet de pouvoir rendre toutes ces élections réalisables pour octobre 2020 et c'est la perspective ; pour

ce qui concerne le gouvernement, les élections auront lieu en octobre 2020 », a dit M. Touré au journal télévisé de 13h.

« Pour ce qui est du gouvernement, nous prenons toutes les dispositions pour la bonne tenue à bonne date de cette élection qui devra s'organiser dans les conditions de transparence et d'équité pour tout le monde », a-t-il poursuivi.

Il a toutefois fait savoir que « le véritable maître d'œuvre de ces élections, c'est la Commission électorale

indépendante qui dans son rôle a un temps opportun, donnera (au gouvernement) le calendrier opérationnel après avoir apprécié le contexte de déroulement de ces élections ».

Interrogé sur l'état de santé du Premier ministre, Amadou Gon Coulibaly, qui s'est rendu à Paris pour un « contrôle sanitaire » selon l'Etat, il a répondu que le candidat du Rhdp (pouvoir) « va très bien », ajoutant à avoir eu « le privilège de lui parler ».

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Présidentielle 2023 : L'ANC de Cummings affute ses armes en lançant une plateforme de médias sociaux

Le leader politique du Congrès national alternatif (ANC) semble se préparer pour les prochaines élections présidentielles et législatives de 2023 en étant le premier à lancer sa plateforme de médias sociaux.

La plateforme <https://www.facebook.com/ABCummingsOFFCL> permet à M. Cummings de s'engager directement et d'interagir avec des partisans, des sympathisants et tous les Libériens aux niveaux local, régional et international.

Le lancement de sa plateforme de médias sociaux intervient quelques jours après que sa fondation, la Fondation Cummings Afrique (CAF), a distribué des kits de réponse COVID-19 aux communautés de 7 comtés.

Les sept comtés étaient les comtés de Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba, Grand Kru, River Gee, Maryland et Grand Cape Mount.

"Ces comtés ont été sélectionnés afin de desservir

toutes les régions du pays au cours de cette période difficile", a déclaré la directrice nationale Wede Elliott-Brownell.

La distribution de vivres a été rendue possible grâce à un effort de collecte de fonds d'un montant de 70 000 dollars

américains, dont 25 000 dollars ont été versés en tant que subvention à une ONG locale, Teach for Liberia (TFL), pour fournir de la nourriture et des articles de nettoyage à 3 000 enseignants et étudiants à travers le pays.

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Éditorial

Quel bilan de la lutte contre le COVID-19 après 6 semaines de confinement ?

Le président Gorge MannehWeah envisage de rouvrir les églises, les mosquées et peut-être les écoles après que le pays a connu un régime d'état d'urgence pendant un mois un confinement de 14 jours sans progrès dans la lutte en cours contre le COVID-19.

Cédant à la pression apparente des chefs religieux, le président Weah a ordonné aux églises, aux mosquées et aux autres lieux de culte du pays de reprendre leurs activités à partir du dimanche 17 mai, tout en observant les mesures barrières. Le président exige des chefs religieux d'écourter la durée de leurs cultes, c'est-à-dire que la durée de chaque culte soit moins de 25% de la durée en temps normal.

Mais nous sommes très déçus qu'un mois et 14 jours après que le président a déclaré l'état d'urgence et le confinement, le gouvernement n'ait fait aucun progrès en termes de réduction du rythme de la propagation de la maladie.

Avec plus d'un mois passés sous le régime de l'état d'urgence, le président Weah a prolongé le confinement de 14 jours supplémentaires, demandant aux citoyens et aux ressortissants étrangers d'observer toutes les mesures barrières. Mais de quelles autres stratégies le gouvernement dispose-t-il pour contenir la propagation rapide du virus. Nous avons un cas index le 16 mars 2020 importé de Suisse, et aujourd'hui, nous avons franchi 200 cas et enregistré 20 décès, selon les chiffres officiels.

Nous pensons que l'objectif du confinement et de l'état d'urgence était de donner aux autorités sanitaires la possibilité de procéder à des tests systématiques et rigoureux au sein de la population pour empêcher la propagation du virus. Mais à partir de deux comtés initialement affectés (Montserrado et Margibi), le COVID-19 s'est propagé sur un total de huit (8) comtés, les deux comtés index étant en tête de liste des infections.

Ce qui est malheureux dans notre combat c'est que même les ministres de l'information et de la justice actuellement sont aujourd'hui en quarantaine à l'hôpital militaire 14 après avoir contracté le virus lors d'un conseil de sécurité auquel a pris part le chef de l'Agence Libérienne de la lutte anti-drogue, Marcus Soko, mort du virus.

« Tout ce que font ce gouvernement et ceux qui sont chargés de faire respecter les mesures barrières est dans l'intérêt direct de la population; tout cela est dans l'intérêt de protéger et de sauver des vies; cela ne donne pas un avantage indu à certains citoyens par rapport à d'autres, mais vise à faire en sorte que nous respectons les mesures que tous les autres pays et peuples prennent pour vaincre la pandémie », a déclaré le président Weah lors d'une allocution prononcée récemment sur une station de radio locale.

Il ne s'agit pas seulement du confinement et de l'état d'urgence. Le Ghana a également observé le confinement, mais le gouvernement ghanéen est allé plus loin en effectuant des tests dans les rues pour identifier les contacts possibles, ce que le gouvernement du Libéria ne fait pas. Oui, nous connaissons l'existence d'un centre de test au Complexe sportif Samuel KanyonDoe à Paynesville, mais il n'y a pas de stratégie en place pour attirer les citoyens vers ce centre pour procéder à des tests volontaires.

Si le gouvernement et les responsables de la santé ne retournent pas dans leur centre de commandement pour évaluer leurs performances au cours des deux premiers mois, les mois prochains pourraient voir le pire scénario de notre combat contre le COVID-19.

Le président Weah devrait se rendre compte que le serment de protéger des vies et des biens nécessite des actions pratiques sur le terrain, pas seulement une sensibilisation à travers la production d'une musique.

Français

L'Etat ivoirien compte tenir la présidentielle

M. Coulibaly « est allé en France pour faire un contrôle régulier de son état de santé », a-t-il insisté, rapportant qu'il a subi un examen de la coronarographie (relative au cœur) qui est une technique courante en matière médicale.

A la suite de cet examen, dira-t-il, « il se repose pour pouvoir reprendre des forces et revenir...il sera parmi nous dans quelques jours ».

Dans un communiqué sur sa page Facebook, le Premier ministre, chargé du Budget et

du portefeuille de l'Etat, Amadou Gon Coulibaly, avait indiqué s'être rendu à Paris et que dans quelques semaines, il serait de retour.

Candidat du Rhdp, cette intervention sur son cœur pourrait réduire son activité politique à environ six mois de l'élection présidentielle. M. Gon Coulibaly appelé « Le lion », devra trouver les ressources et l'énergie nécessaire au plan physique pour rebondir dans la course à la présidentielle.

Présidentielle 2023 : L'ANC de Cummings affute ses

La Fondation Cummings Africa a commencé sa distribution alimentaire dans le comté de Grand Cape Mount le jeudi 30 avril 2020, suivie des autres comtés. Un bateau a été loué pour envoyer de la nourriture dans le comté sud-est du Maryland.

M. Cummings, l'une des figures de l'opposition les plus bruyantes ici au sein de la Coalition des partis politiques, semble faire tous les efforts pour que sa présence se fasse sentir avant les élections sénatoriales cruciales de mi-mandat cette année.

Les législateurs libériens sont engouffrés dans des dettes

Plusieurs membres de l'Assemblée législative libérienne seraient pris au cou par d'énormes dettes qu'ils auraient accumulées auprès des banques locales, dont les intérêts continuent de grimper pour défaut de paiement.

La plupart des prêts, qui hantent désormais les législateurs, ont été contractés pour le financement des campagnes électorales ou pour le luxe, tels que des véhicules ou des logements. En tout cas,

est automatiquement récupéré par les banques. Ainsi certains législateurs sont retournés auprès de leurs banquiers pour renégocier les conditions de paiement ou ont fait appel à des garanties supplémentaires.

Le représentant du comté de Bong Josiah Marvin Cole s'est mis en colère le weekend dernier contre GT Bank Liberia Limited qui l'aurait empêché de retirer son salaire de mars et d'avril sur son compte personnel pour défaut de paiement.



Representative Josiah Marvin Cole

quelles que soient les raisons, les législateurs sont aujourd'hui hantés.

Et comme les salaires et les autres avantages sociaux arrivent à compte-goutte, cela n'arrange pas les choses. Les caisses de l'Etat sont vides et le gouvernement ne peut pas se permettre de payer certains des avantages des législateurs qui auraient pu être utilisés pour payer leurs dettes.

En conséquence, tout ce qui entre dans les comptes des législateurs est dété-

Selon des sources bancaires, le Représentant Cole fait partie des législateurs qui ont contracté d'énormes dettes auprès de la banque et qui sont en défaut de paiement. Par conséquent, pour récupérer son argent, la banque a décidé de déduire de l'argent chaque fois que de l'argent est déposé sur leurs comptes.

Une source a en outre indiqué que le représentant Cole avait refusé de négocier sa dette avec la banque comme les autres législateurs.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Hannah Storm

Prévenir une crise de la santé mentale au sein des médias

LONDRES - Rien ne révèle autant qu'une crise l'importance d'informations fiables. Mais alors que les journalistes sont soumis à des pressions croissantes pour diffuser les informations concernant la pandémie du Covid-19, celle-ci bouleverse également leur secteur d'activité et transforme leurs conditions de travail. Le stress engendré par la conjoncture pour leur santé mentale ne doit pas être sous-estimé.

Avant même la crise du Covid-19, de nombreux journalistes souffraient du syndrome d'épuisement professionnel ou étaient au bord du gouffre. Le cycle des actualités de dernière minute se poursuivait sans relâche, les recettes publicitaires étaient en baisse, les budgets des salles de rédaction étaient serrés et la confiance du public dans les médias en déclin.

La pandémie a aggravé ces difficultés tout en générant de nouvelles incertitudes. La plupart des journalistes travaillent à présent depuis chez eux, sans pouvoir rencontrer leurs collègues, leurs contacts ou les personnes à interviewer. Les responsabilités pèsent lourdement sur les épaules de ceux qui tentent de rendre compte en temps voulu d'informations susceptibles de sauver des vies, dans le contexte d'une crise qui évolue très rapidement. Et beaucoup d'entre eux ont perdu leur emploi.

L'industrie des médias doit faire tout ce qui est en son pouvoir pour préserver la santé mentale et le bien-être des journalistes. Selon Anthony Feinstein, professeur de psychiatrie de l'université de Toronto, il s'agit à la fois de gérer les réponses individuelles à la crise et de gérer les informations validant le travail essentiel des journalistes dans le contexte actuel.

Lors d'une interview, Feinstein m'a expliqué qu'au lieu de s'inquiéter pour des choses qu'ils ne peuvent contrôler - une habitude épuisante au plan émotionnel et qui peut mener à des réflexions funestes - les journalistes doivent se concentrer sur les sujets où ils peuvent faire une différence et prêter moins d'attention à des domaines où ils sont impuissants. De manière plus générale, il est essentiel de maintenir une routine saine - dormir assez, bien manger, faire de l'exercice (même chez soi) et rester en contact avec la famille et les amis.

Ce conseil vaut bien sûr pour la plupart d'entre nous. Mais la troisième recommandation principale de Feinstein - se déconnecter des informations pendant un certain temps avant de se coucher chaque soir - est particulièrement difficile à suivre pour ceux dont le travail consiste précisément à informer. Selon Feinstein, la solution est pour chacun de définir clairement ses responsabilités et son rôle professionnels, y compris leurs limites.

Faute de quoi, les journalistes s'exposent à un risque de préjudice moral - c'est-à-dire le stress que ressent une personne quand elle est témoin, commet ou échoue à prévenir des actes contraires à ses valeurs. (Il a été démontré que le préjudice moral affecte les journalistes couvrant des sujets tels que les migrations forcées, par exemple). Ce préjudice moral peut être à l'origine d'une grave détresse émotionnelle s'il n'est pas géré et traité correctement.

Les journalistes ont également besoin d'un soutien direct de leurs employeurs. La BBC, l'Agence France-Presse (AFP) et Reuters - qui ont tous des salariés au quatre coins du monde avec des besoins divers - sont trois agences de presse mondiales qui ont placé la santé mentale au centre de leurs plans d'intervention face au Covid-19.

L'un des principaux enseignements à tirer de leurs stratégies est l'importance de la communication et de la compréhension des priorités. Comme me l'a dit Phil Chetwynd, le directeur de l'information de l'AFP, « Nous assurons une communication constante sur ce que nous faisons, veillant à ce que tout le monde voie les messages disant que oui, nous sommes une agence de presse, nous avons une mission ; mais notre préoccupation première est la santé et la sécurité de nos salariés ».

De même, Kari Cobham, directrice adjointe du programme de bourses à l'intention des journalistes du Carter Center à Atlanta, encourage les cadres à s'assurer que leurs équipes comprennent que « leur bien-être, leur situation familiale singulière et les communautés sont importants en ce temps difficiles ». Comme le souligne Feinstein, il serait tout à fait surprenant de ne pas ressentir une certaine anxiété face à la crise sanitaire actuelle.

Plus concrètement, les cadres doivent si possible assigner les missions difficiles par rotation et valider le travail essentiel des journalistes. Ils doivent également informer régulièrement les salariés, notamment au sujet des ressources à leur disposition et de toute modification des directives ou politiques. Ils doivent en outre faire régulièrement le point avec leurs équipes, les encourageant à faire part de leurs questions, préoccupations ou retours d'informations, y compris de manière confidentielle si elles le souhaitent.

« Mais nous devons aussi faire attention à ce que des entretiens trop nombreux ne deviennent pas envahissants » m'a dit Roz Orchard de Reuters, en particulier à un moment où les individus doivent faire face à l'expérience conflictuelle de l'isolement physique et de l'hyper-connexion numérique. Et comme l'a précisé Cobham, les cadres doivent aussi veiller à protéger leur propre santé mentale.

Cette approche doit contribuer à créer un climat de confiance et un sentiment d'appartenance à une communauté qui empêchent les journalistes de se sentir seuls ou peu motivés, sans accroître les pressions qu'ils subissent. Pour qu'elle soit couronnée de succès, les agences de presse doivent fournir un accompagnement à distance aux cadres, leur donnant les outils nécessaires pour soutenir efficacement leurs équipes.

C'est ce que fait déjà la BBC, en sus d'organiser des sessions virtuelles régulières sur la résilience et la santé mentale. « Nous parlons beaucoup du sens profond de notre métier » m'a dit Sarah Ward-Lilley, directrice de la rédaction de la BBC et l'une des responsables de la santé mentale à l'agence.

Pour les journalistes qui ne peuvent plus travailler comme auparavant, leur raison d'être peut devenir une question sensible. La BBC a cherché à résoudre ce problème en menant des audits des qualifications et en réaffectant ceux qui entrent dans cette catégorie - par exemple parce qu'il travaillaient habituellement sur une émission qui a été supprimée ou sur des sujets qui ne sont plus d'actualité dans la situation actuelle - à des postes, correspondant à leurs qualifications, qui conservent leur utilité durant la pandémie. Nombre d'entre eux n'ont pourtant pas cette possibilité et éprouvent une perte de repères et une insécurité plus marquée, rendant l'accès à des ressources de santé mentale d'autant plus important.

Les effets de la pandémie du Covid-19 sur les journalistes continueront à se faire ressentir à long terme. Les médias doivent agir aujourd'hui pour s'assurer que ces effets n'aient pas de répercussions durables sur leur santé mentale.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

COVID-19: Urgent Need for African Governments to Upgrade the Health Systems

By Kester Kenn Klomegah*

Amid multifold theories and disinformation spreading around the COVID-19 in Africa, it is important for African governments to consider strengthening the existing health systems and infrastructures, and allocate substantial funds for health research and production of basic equipment, for attaining sustainable development goals set in the African Agenda 2063, according to experts.

Over the years, most African countries with the exception of South Africa, Botswana and a few others have not improved much on their healthcare system since independence, partly as a result of pure negligence on the part of senior officials who prefer to be treated abroad. The leaders of Cameroon, Nigeria and Zimbabwe are notorious for spending long periods of time abroad in hospitals, according to DrChipoDendere, Zimbabwean Professor of African Politics at Wellesley College in Massachusetts.

As Dendere further noted in a discussion with IDN, "African leaders have to start thinking seriously about issues of healthcare or people will die. They have to realize that going abroad is no longer an option. In all, it is significant for the leaders to focus on financing sustainable public health system, make investment in the health sector using public and natural resources. Public/private partnerships have never hurt, but have to be seriously considered".

Particularly because Africa's population is growing, and presents future health challenges, she added. Dendere, however, stressed that various debt relief efforts by international organizations should not be an end itself, and instead African leaders must necessarily look for long-term solutions for existing pitfalls in the sector.

In the month of April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) have offered debt relief to African countries. The IMF is set to provide \$11 billion to 32 countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have requested assistance in fighting the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the region's economies.

These steps by the IMF and its partners - the World Bank, World Health Organization, the African Development Bank and the African Union - will support domestic measures including transfers to vulnerable households, monetary and fiscal policy responses, AbebeAemro Selassie, the director of the IMF's African Department, said in a statement.

In a similar argument, Charles Prempeh, a lecturer in Africana Studies at the African University College of Communications (AUCC), Accra and doctoral candidate at the University of Cambridge, explained in an email to IDN that there are a lot of deficiencies - ranging from poor health policies through inadequate funding of health infrastructure to training and research - that have characterized the health sector in Africa.

In his view, amid the fast spreading coronavirus in some regions, it is simply "providential" that the African continent has not recorded high numbers, compared to the western countries. But it is also true that even with the relatively smaller number of cases that most countries in Africa have recorded, they have come under disproportionate strain.

Prempeh argued that over the years, many African leaders travelled abroad (including South Africa) in search of medical care. While many African countries have research institutions, designed for studying so-called orthodox and indigenous medicines, the existence of these institutions has not yielded the expected results of enhancing the quality of healthcare on the continent, he said, adding: "In many cases, these health research institutions have been starved of funding."

Consequently, many countries in Africa are looking up



to the west to find an antidote to COVID-19 that has held the world hostage. This has implied that few Africans have invested in exploring the extent to which indigenous medicine could potentially provide an answer to the current health crisis. It is, therefore, not surprising that the COVID-19 pandemic provides lenses to peep into the deep cracks in the entire health system in Africa. It also provides important lessons for African leaders to learn now to invest in the health sector, Prempeh concluded.

Beyond all the arguments 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 state to direct focus on the development agenda".

Acknowledging that Africa is a huge continent of vast inequality where almost two-thirds still live in abject poverty and years of neglect has left the health system in tatters, Massawe added: "As compared with most of the other advanced countries that have global competitive healthcare systems, African countries spend peanuts within the budget on bolstering health infrastructure in Africa."

The African governments should create the environment conducive for the evolution of competitive healthcare systems through prioritization. Governments have to work toward the empowerment of

wealth creation endeavours, adopt system approach that would enable to understand the interdependence of African problems and outline how to tackle questions of the largely weak health as fast as possible, he suggested.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in a new report on the coronavirus pandemic, underscored that the economic implications of this disease are detrimental not only to public health systems but also the economy and sociocultural lives of the entire population of Africa.

The ECA makes explicitly clear that as the pandemic continues to impact the continent's struggling economies whose growth are expected to slow down from 3.2 percent to 1.8 percent, within this short period it is likely to push close to 27 million people into extreme poverty.

The report launched virtually in mid-April titled, "COVID-19: Protecting African Lives and Economies" says Africa's fragile health systems could see additional costs being imposed on them because of the growing crisis that has to-date, resulted in thousands infected Africans.

Dr Vera Songwe, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA said: "To protect and build towards the Continent's shared prosperity, \$100 billion is needed to urgently and immediately provide fiscal space to all countries to help address the immediate safety net needs of the populations."

Africa, notes Songwe, is particularly susceptible because 56 percent of its urban population is concentrated in slums or "informal" dwellings and only 34 percent of African households have access to basic handwashing facilities. Among others, she proposes that intellectual property on medical supplies, novel testing kits, and vaccines be shared to help Africa's private sector play its role in the response, and most importantly policies must be firm and clear on good governance to safeguard health systems, ensure proper use of emergency funds.

In a widely circulated letter, various co-signatories in April, including 100 leading academics and writers, have called on African leaders to govern with compassion and see the current global health crisis as a chance for a radical change of direction. "Like a tectonic storm, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to shatter the foundations of states and institutions whose profound failings have been ignored for too long. It is impossible to list these, suffice it to mention chronic under-investment in public health" in Africa notes the letter.

As a continent that is familiar with pandemic outbreaks, Africa has a head start in the management of large-scale health crises. But the belief is that "emergency" cannot and should not constitute a mode of governance. Beyond the state of emergency, however, African leaders can and should propose to their societies a new political idea of Africa, says the letter.

Liberia Bleeds

By Hun-Bu Tulay 0777111032

Cont'd from last edition

Let's assume there is money and the US\$25 Million is found; how much of this amount will be used to purchase food items as by the Resolution? The President's letter said food items for lockdown counties (Montserrdo, Grand Kru, Nimba and Margibi). But the Resolution passed by the Legislature says all Counties. Now if one considers the population of the country, which now stands at 4.9 million, and considering five persons to a household, this is 980,00 households. Assuming each household gets one bag of 25Kg rice, which costs US\$14.00 per bag, this is will cost US\$13.72 million. For a family of five, this is enough for three weeks or less. Can government sustain the supply of rice for the duration of the emergency period of sixty days? Just the cost of the rice would be around

Protective Equipment (PPE) and training for the health workers who are the first respondents to the COVID-19 cases. By now all referral hospitals in the country, including public and private should have had these PPEs and the staff trained. It has been said that 15% of the infected people are health workers (doctors, laboratory technicians, physicians' assistants and nurses), some of whom have died. Will portion of the US\$25 Million be used to purchase the PPEs and train health workers? It is alleged that the citizens in Saclapela refused for any suspected Covid-19 patient to be attended to at hospital/Health centers because of the lack of PPE and training.

Testing is one method that has worked and is working in other countries around the world. When people are tested, the infected people are isolated and treated. Isolation breaks

market places. The security should be concentrated at these areas to enforce the social distancing. Motorcyclists are also not observing the social distancing.

Face Masks and PPE

We recommend that the Ministry of Health mobilize the tailors in country to produce PPE and Face Masks. This will give them additional income. We do have very creative tailors in country. Identify the materials and they produce them in mass. Engage tailors in the counties for this exercise.

There are too many questions and our leaders need to know that the lives of the citizens hang in the balance and they are waiting for rescue. Disappointing them is dangerous. This should be avoided at all costs. It is no gainsay to say that the



US\$13.72 Million. This excludes the cost of logistics to move the rice to the beneficiaries.

Now let us look at the petty traders' loans. Did the government investigate or inquire from the commercial banks and credit unions as to how much money the petty traders owe these lending institutions around the country? And did the Legislature equally inquire from these institutions before passing the Resolution that approved the US\$25 Million for this exercise? If both the Executive and the Legislature did not inquire from these institutions, how did they arrive at the US\$25 million amount? We hope this not a political game by both parties.

Another concern is procurement of Personal

the transmission of the virus, hence preventing the spread. If the government is interested in preventing the spread of the virus, money should be allocated for testing and isolation centers (one center in each county) and train tracing personnel in each county. Can some of the allocation from this US\$25 Million be made for procurement of testing equipment and reagents, as well as the establishment of testing centers at referral hospitals in the country? The number of confirmed cases is low because we are not doing enough testing, and this is very dangerous. When it started, it was only found in Montserrdo and after two months, the virus has spread to six counties.

Last, the social distancing recommended by the government/Ministry of Health is not being observed, particularly at the banks and

infections rate in Liberia is climbing and until we reach the peak, we have a lot of work to do; we need planners and strategists to plan our actions. We need to flatten the curve. A reflective knowledge of applicable strategies in remedying such related diseases/viruses of the past will be of a tremendous advantage. Now is the time to act with wisdom, being armed with a valuable retrospective knowledge of history about such incidents so as to eschew any expensive mistakes that could endanger the lives of the populace which the government claims to defend and protect. It has been proven abundantly in history that 'a stitch in time saves nine'. Prudence, accountability, transparency and calculated approaches are salient in the premises.

Gasoline surplus

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"We have taken siege of the matter and are in discussion with importers to see how we can harmonize the price to stabilize it for the long term," Minister Tarpeh said.

Petrol pump attendants at various stations on conditions

is contemplating on granting import license to only importers that own and operate pump stations. As it currently stands most of the importers do not have their own pump stations and therefore would sell at any



Prof. Wilson K. Tarpeh

of anonymity told this paper that they have been confronted with the issue by customers. But they claimed that their bosses bought at higher prices before it became surplus on the market.

Some think the products being sold at prices lower than the government approved price is because most of the importers are not paying the required taxes and therefore can afford to sell at such low prices.

This paper learned that to address this issue government

price thereby bringing confusion in the industry.

It could be recalled that between January 30 and early April this year, Liberia experienced two successive gasoline crises with some blaming poor port infrastructure and sloppy bookkeeping.

Commerce Minister Tarpeh is on record as saying that the first crisis was as a result of incorrect fuel-reserve figures. While the second crisis was imminent as a result of limited supply.

More infections

Cont'd from page 7

worship centers follows calls from religious leaders amid complaints by others here that the Church and Mosque have been treated unfairly in the crisis, as they have not been allowed to congregate and pray against the disease.

At the start of the crisis, Churches were abruptly closed by security forces while worshipers were in service due to authorities' apparent conflicting decision following a meeting with religious leaders ahead of the Sunday leading to the incident.

Health authorities have advised that in the wake of the unresolved crisis, the need for the measures to remain in place still is pertinent.

Because of the government's decision to provide food aid during the period, the Executive Mansion details that corridors will be opened to enable food products to move from one county to the next, while observing social distancing,

face covering and other measures.

Last month President Weah announced a State of Emergency to be observed throughout the Country. During this period, the joint security command and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia were ordered to enforce the different protocols that were pronounced.

Among the measures were orders to quarantine the 15 counties here; ensure that everyone in those counties stay at home for two weeks - with exceptions granted to designated essential persons and businesses; and require all to be indoors by 3pm.

Further, the measures included a directive to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to engage market leaders in order to make "satisfactory arrangements" for the operations of markets during the period.

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Liberia's Covid-19 dashboard as at May 10, 2020

Liberia COVID-19 Daily Case Update by County Report as of May 10, 2020

Total Confirmed
211 (7 new)

Active Confirmed Cases
106

Confirmed cases by County

Gbarpolu	5 (2 new)
Grand Kru	1 (0 new)
Margibi	13 (2 new)
Maryland	1 (0 new)
Montserrado	183 (3 new)
Nimba	6 (0 new)
River Gee	1 (0 new)
Sinoe	1 (0 new)

Cases by Gender

Female	73 (3 new)
Male	138 (4 new)

Total Deaths
20 (0 new)

Total Recovered
85 (0 new)

Deaths by County	Recoveries by County		
Gbarpolu	1 (0 new)	Gbarpolu	0
Grand Kru	0	Grand Kru	0
Margibi	1 (0 new)	Margibi	0
Maryland	0	Maryland	0
Monts.	15 (0 new)	Monts.	85 (0 new)
Nimba	3 (0 new)	Nimba	0
River Gee	0	River Gee	0
Sinoe	0	Sinoe	0

Deaths by Gender	Recovery by Gender		
Female	6 (0 new)	Female	31 (0 new)
Male	14 (0 new)	Male	54 (0 new)

Location of Deaths	Count
Death in Treatment Unit (TU)	1 (0 new)
Death in health facility	7 (0 new)
Death in community	12 (0 new)

Contacts under follow up
812 (0 new)

7 new confirmed cases, 0 new death and 0 new recovery reported as of 10:00 pm, 10th May 2020.

www.nationalphil.org | www.moh.gov.lr | National Public Health Institute of Liberia-NPHIL | @nphil6 | For more info call 4455 (toll free)

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Malaysians at Sime Darby leave Liberia

Reports from the former Sime Darby Plantation Liberia (SDPL) in Bomi and Grand Cape Mount counties, respectively say all Malaysians who previously worked there have left the plantation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with some technical reasons, local workers there disclosed.

"It is true that there is no Malaysian at the plantation. When the COVID-19 started,

all of them left," Amos Kandakai, a contractor explained.

Following the takeover of SDPL last year by a new company, MANO, the Government of Liberia and the new buyers agreed that a technical team of Malaysians would remain at the plantation to carry out technical work.

"From my understanding, there were no cordial relations between the new company and the Malaysians. Sometime,



when the Malaysians give technical advice, it will not be honored by the new management team. So, maybe it was what made the people to leave," another employee added.

Similar situation took place in 2014 during the Ebola outbreak here, and for safety concerns, they left, some said.

According to part of the agreement, the Malaysians were to remain at the

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