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# The New Dawn

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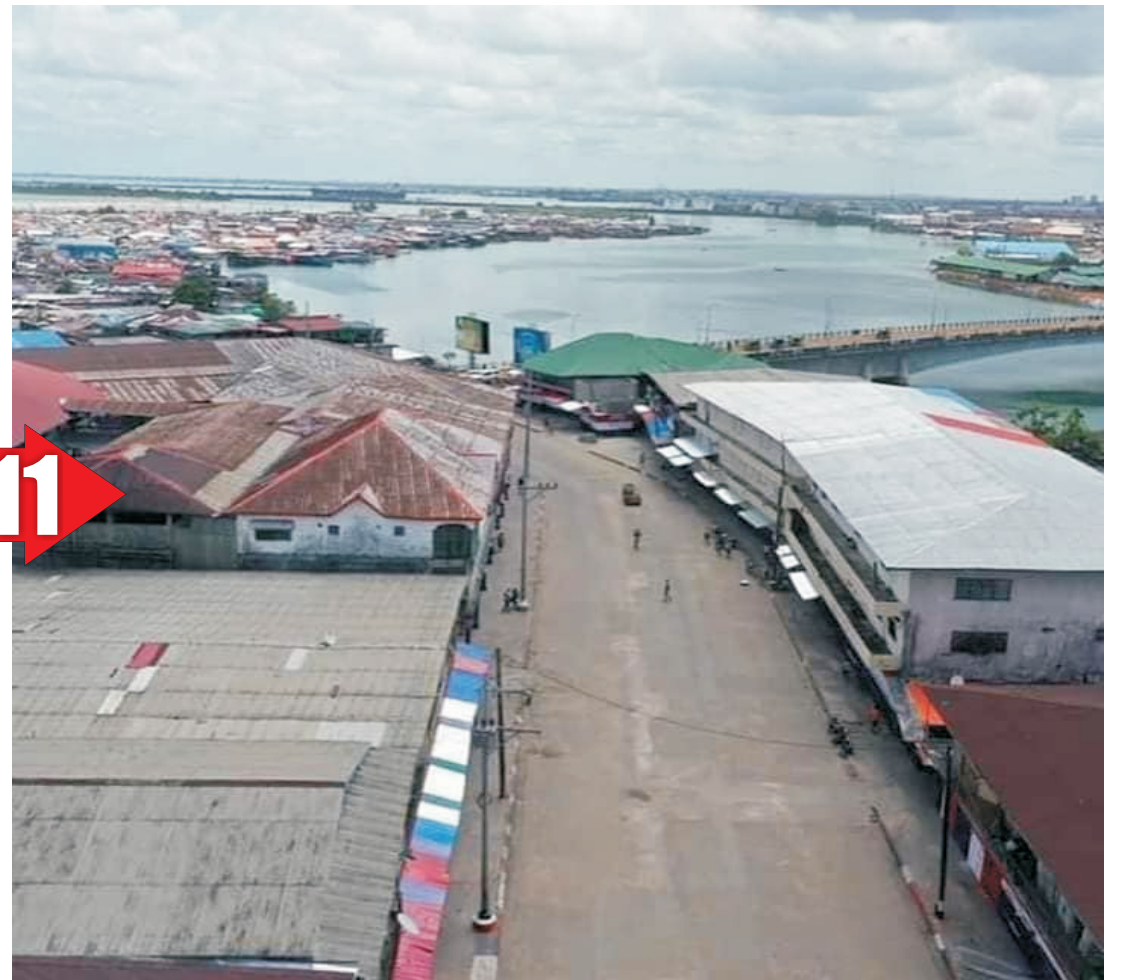
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# Total lockdown imminent



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# Continental News

## Tanzania hospitals overwhelmed by coronavirus - US

The US embassy in Tanzania has warned that there is a risk of "exponential growth" of Covid-19 cases in the country, at a time when the government is not releasing data on new cases.

It added that hospitals in the main city, Dar es Salaam, were "overwhelmed" and that the chance of contracting the virus was "extremely high".

The embassy did not, however, give any evidence to back up its claims.

Tanzania's president has accused health officials of exaggerating the crisis.

John Magufuli has repeatedly urged people to attend services in churches and mosques, saying that prayers "can vanquish" the virus. However, recent videos of night burials shared on social media have caused some to call into question the government's approach.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has also expressed concern about the government's strategy.

On 29 April, the last day

official data was released, there were 509 cases, with 21 deaths. Last week, President Magufuli revealed that he secretly had animals and fruits samples tested at the national health laboratory in charge of coronavirus and that a papaya (paw-paw), a quail bird, and a goat had returned positive results.

He later closed the laboratory and suspended the head. The Tanzanian president is among several African leaders who have received orders for a herbal tonic touted by the president of Madagascar as a cure for Covid-19.

The WHO has warned against using untested

medicine. The US embassy statement advised Americans living in Tanzania to stay at home and limit interactions with people other than those they live with.

It went on to claim that hospitals in Dar es Salaam are overwhelmed and warned that due to the limited capacity of the healthcare system in the country, patients may face life-threatening delays for medical care.

The BBC asked the embassy to share its evidence but was referred to the Tanzanian ministry of health. More than four million people worldwide have contracted coronavirus, and the US has the highest number of infections - at least 1.3m - according to the John Hopkins University.

The Director of the US

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Dr Anthony Fauci, said on Tuesday that the US death toll was probably higher than the official figure of 80,000. Government spokesman Hassan Abbasi told the BBC he had "no comment" in response to the US embassy's statement.

The authorities have previously rejected accusations that the government was operating in secrecy and denial.

"The claims that Tanzania has wavered and isolated itself in the fight against Covid-19 are not true because Tanzania has provided leadership in the economic bloc of the Southern African countries (Sadc), which the country chairs, and it has continued to do so with respect and all efforts required," said Foreign Affairs Minister Palamagamba Kabudi. BBC



Tanzanians have been sceptical of the government's assurance that the crisis was not serious

## Twelve terror suspects 'found dead in their cells'

Twelve people arrested on suspicion of terror offences have been found dead in their police cells in Burkina Faso.

The prosecutor for the town of Fada N'Gourma said 25 people had been detained overnight on Monday, and "unfortunately, 12 of them have died during the course

of the night in the cells they were being held in".

The cause of death is currently unknown. Security sources told AFP news agency it may have been asphyxiation.

An investigation has been launched.

In a similar episode in July 2019, 11 people accused of drug trafficking were found dead in a cell belonging to the

national police's drugs squad.

It comes less than a month after Human Rights Watch (HRW) said it believed Burkina Faso security forces had executed 31 unarmed men in the northern town of Djibo, a few hours after arresting them in a counter-terror operation.

Burkina Faso, a landlocked country in West Africa, is fighting Islamist insurgents with ties to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group. More than 300 civilians have been killed by militants, according to HRW, while the government has killed several hundred for allegedly supporting them.

Most of the 12 dead men were ethnic Fulas, a group often accused of jihadist links, AFP reports. Burkina Faso's security forces have been repeatedly accused of mistreating them.

A local human rights organisation said a Fula teacher accused of having terrorist associations was found dead in a police station in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, on 2 May. BBC



Burkina Faso is fighting Islamist insurgents with ties to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group

## African frontline workers 'must be heard' in UK inquiry

A coalition of mainly African diaspora medics' associations has said that a proposed public inquiry in the UK into the high number of deaths from coronavirus of people from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds must include the voices of frontline health workers.

"With BAME more likely to be employed in less senior

railway worker Belly Mujinga, 47, originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, after she was spat at by a man who said he had coronavirus.

Black men and women are nearly twice as likely to die with coronavirus as white people in England and Wales, according to the UK's Office for National Statistics. Although the analysis doesn't



Railway worker Belly Mujinga, originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, died from coronavirus after a man spat at her

and lower paid roles as well as less likely to be listened to when they raise concerns, they are at a greater risk of exposure to Covid-19," says the statement endorsed by the Sudanese Medical Association UK and Ireland, Tanzania UK Healthcare and Ghana Nurses Association UK, among others.

It comes in the week when news emerged of the death of

address the impact of exposure at work or current health conditions.

The medics' coalition says that institutional racism has meant that risks to members of the BAME community are not included in health messages about coronavirus. It calls on the government to provide more targeted communications.

In March, Dr Amged El-

# EDITORIAL

## Lip-servicing genuine reconciliation

**GENUINE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION** would continue to elude Liberians for long because the country's national leaders seem to lack political will to drive this vital instrument of cohesion. A nation that is so divided in its historical and political existence can but go no further.

**LIBERIANS CELEBRATE MAY 14** each year as National Unification Day, credited to the late 18th president William V.S. Tubman, who saw a compelling need to unite indigenous citizens and former slaves from America, who settled here and exercised a dominance posture over those they met on the ground, perhaps as a result of influence from ex-slave masters.

**DIVISIVE POLITICS OR** politics of exclusion is one vice that has subjected a population of less than 5 million people to deep-seated hate for one another with some semblances of envy, greed and narrow mindedness.

**PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH Weah** said this year's National Unification Day couldn't be commemorated officially due to the novel coronavirus fight in the country. But truth to the matter, what is there to celebrate?

**MR. WEAH HIMSELF**, who once headed Liberia's national reconciliation under former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf prior to winning the presidency in 2017, failed to initiate any meaningful program to bring Liberians together, despite coming from a marginalized and politically deprived segment of the society.

**SOME MAY ARGUE** that he might had adapted such done-care posture for obvious political reasons, not wanting to have a leader whose position he was eagerly eyeing, to take the glory or credit. However, ex-president Sirleaf herself had publicly remarked that her real weakness is forgiveness. She has no desire or interest in pardoning her perceived enemies.

**NOTWITHSTANDING, THEN** here is Mr. Weah, now President, saying he wouldn't sit with members of the opposition to share views and ideas on ways to not just uniting Liberians, but moving the country forward, principally because of persistent criticism against his government.

**SO LIBERIA CONTINUES** to wallop in this unfortunate quagmire with leaders from one administration to another talking reconciliation on their lips, rather than from the bottom of their hearts. They preach one thing in public, and totally mean something else in private.

**JAILED FORMER PRESIDENT** Charles Ghankay Taylor, from the Americo-Liberian background or decent of settlers, said his greatest regret as a former leader, is he was not able to reconcile Liberians. He led a bloody rebel incursion in 1989 against the first indigenous President of Liberia, Samuel Kanyon Doe in a clearly reprisal attack, for Doe toppling the Tolbert regime, which was dominated by the settlers.

**THIS NATIONAL DIVISIVENESS** has stagnated this country for over a century, and from every indication, is not going away any time soon. The 14 years (1989-2003) civil war even exacerbated the situation. The people are divided from tribes, clans, communities, right into households and families.

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# COMMENTARY

By Jayati Ghosh

## Messages from "Fiscal Space"

*While many advanced economies increase government spending to unprecedented levels to mitigate the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, most developing countries have struggled to marshal even relatively small rescue packages. These differences reflect a systemic flaw in the global economy.*

**N**EW DELHI - Among the many inequalities revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the most striking is the dramatic divergence in governments' fiscal responses. Economic activity has collapsed worldwide as a result of lockdown measures to contain the coronavirus. But while some developed countries have been able to deploy fiscal stimulus on an unprecedented scale, most have not.

Since March, the US government has announced additional spending amounting to over 14% of GDP. In Japan, the figure is over 21%, compared to nearly 10% in Australia and around 8.4% in Canada. In Europe, lack of agreement on a strong joint stimulus effort has led to more varied responses, from additional spending ranging from 1.4% of GDP in Italy and 1.6% in Spain to 9% in Austria, with Germany and France in the middle, at 4.9% and 5%, respectively. Rigid EU budget rules continue to limit government spending in precisely those countries that need fiscal stimulus the most.

Meanwhile, monetary-policy responses have expanded the fiscal capacity available at sub-national levels of government in many advanced economies. By cutting interest rates, buying up municipal and provincial bonds, and introducing new lending facilities for specific sectors and enterprises, the US Federal Reserve and other major central banks have used all means at their disposal to keep borrowing costs low, and to maintain public agencies' liquidity.

By contrast, the fiscal response across most developing economies has been underwhelming, but not because the economic conditions facing these governments are any less challenging. If anything, the lockdown measures and disruption of global trade and investment have already inflicted even greater damage on developing and emerging economies than on the rich world.

In India, for example, it is estimated that 122 million people lost their jobs just in April. Worse, despite lockdown measures, the number of COVID-19 cases in the country continued to rise rapidly. Declining remittances and sharply falling export and tourism revenues have battered many other developing economies as well, even those with less stringent lockdowns.

Yet, despite large-scale job losses and declining household incomes, there has been relatively little fiscal response. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi just announced a package amounting to 10% of GDP, this includes earlier allocations and the expected impact of monetary measures. Additional public spending will comprise only a minuscule fraction of the total amount.

These differences are evident even within the G20. By the end of April, new public spending by the group's emerging economies averaged around 3% of GDP, compared to 11.6% among the advanced economies. And even within that cohort, there was wide variation, with South Africa increasing spending to 10% of GDP, while India's new public spending was less than 1%. Not surprisingly, outside of the G20, low-income countries have struggled to marshal even tiny rescue packages, let alone anything sufficient to combat the virus and avert economic collapse.

Much of this difference in fiscal responses across countries can be explained by longstanding systemic inequalities in the global economy, in which developing countries must borrow in internationally accepted reserve currencies. As a result, they simply do not have the fiscal freedom enjoyed by countries that issue such currencies. That is why a new issue of the International Monetary Fund's reserve asset, Special Drawing Rights, has become such an urgent priority.

Moreover, many developing economies were already being crushed by a mountain of external debt before the pandemic struck. For example, African countries (as a group) were spending more on debt service than on public health. Though many bondholders and other creditors remain in denial about the need for substantial debt relief, the imminent implosion of global debt makes this outcome inevitable.

After all, the widespread cessation of economic activity means that tax revenues are plummeting just when governments need to increase spending. For developed-country governments that can borrow directly from the central bank, this isn't really a problem. But for most developing countries, the calculus is more difficult. Even those without immediate debt-repayment concerns are showing little inclination to raise public spending to anything near the levels needed to prevent a broader economic collapse.



## Lord, dis one it look like baboon will divide kola oo

Dear Father:

*Ayakah, you na hear de one our people talking in dis village-Da noise! Dis one if dey try it, baboon will divide kola oo. Dey moh na com try us here o.*

*You fini sweet talking people to stay home, na time to give us de thing you promised us-our free food, water and current you com say what? In fact, me my ear na hear nothing! I say dis one da pure noise.*

*Hmmm, I wonder who na make my son vex again and he walking talking all by himself like da?*

*Oh, Father, you haven't heard? Um, do you know da after de people fini promising us da there will be free food for everybody in the village to make dem to stay home to avoid Aunty Corona, na dey are changing their tongues-but this one da noise. We na go gree.*

*My son calm down.*

*Father, dis one da na calm down bisnay oo. You na hear da rice bisnay we can move our town chief dem, dey moh jus try us da all.*

*Dey think da small thing to stay home ehn? De small money people had we fini eating everything and sitting here praying for dem to bring the food then dey com say it na for everybody? Dey will go and find food for everybody oo.*

*Da wat dey are saying?*

*Oh Father, de people com speak some kina big book-dey say dey will give de food to vulnerable people. But wat one concern me sef about their big book. Since dey say vulnerable, allor us are vulnerable people.*

*Yes, Father, when you na working, you are vulnerable to plenty thing-your wife or girlfriend can leave you, you can't even buy rice or small oil sef to eat. So allor us are vulnerable in the village. in fact, the whole village is vulnerable-anybody can buy LIB right na.*

*My son vulnerable mean people who can't afford to get food, people who are na strong and depend on other people for help.*

*Ehn, we all depending on people na. Look, me I was working and my brother was selling his lay thing, my other sister doing dry goods bisnay. But our big people say we moh stay home. No more selling for us and no work to go to right na-so you see, we are vulnerable too.*

*Bor you need to slow down small na.*

*Father, dis one na slow down small bisnay oo. I say, our whole village is vulnerable. Yes oo, everybody is vulnerable.*

*Do you know da some of our sister dem who used to go hustle or are hanging on people husband dem have become vulnerable too because de people married men are all in lockdown with their wifey dem.*

*Some of de men even though dey are in lockdown with their wifey dem bor dey are also vulnerable too, because wifey na giving any change for side chic, any strange fon call will be noise-And so dey are vulnerable to wifey noise right na.*

*So you see, everybody vulnerable right na. Da why nobody must play fun with us here about da food bisnay.*

*Yes oo, nobody moh bring any noise on my block here. Me if dey like dey moh na give me water and current, bor my chew moh com.*

*Father, you moh tell demoo because da you Jorweah can be praying to about people who get appetite bor dey na get food and people who get food bor dey na get appetite. Me I get appetite and I need food oo or else me and my family will carry our noise on his blac.*

## OPINION

By Beth English & Kelly Pike

### Will the Pandemic Set Women Back?

*By sapping demand for garments and other goods produced in export-oriented developing and emerging economies, the COVID-19 pandemic poses an acute threat to women workers and progress toward greater gender equality. In addressing the economic fallout of the public-health crisis, policymakers must tailor their response accordingly.*

**P**RINCETON/TORONTO - In April, the International Labor Organization predicted that 195 million workers worldwide would "suffer severely" in the second quarter of this year, owing to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. And markets remain shaky, raising fears of a recession more severe and prolonged than that following the 2008 financial crisis. The stakes are high for everyone, but particularly for women - and especially for women in developing and emerging economies.

A recession (or even depression) would cause more than just economic losses. The experience of the post-2008 period suggests that women's advances will be rolled back substantially, even among those already doing low-income work. In that case, the gains will be difficult, if not impossible, to win back.

The COVID-19 crisis, like the 2008 crisis, has revealed features of globalization that many take for granted in normal times. When advanced economies like the United States contract sharply, their consumers cut back on spending, and demand for goods from export-oriented countries plummets. Owing to the pandemic, the low-wage global garment industry is facing what some manufacturers describe as an "apocalyptic" situation.

Women make up over three-quarters of the global garment workforce, and thus have the most to lose from the downturn. Most have long been subject to poor working conditions, which makes their situation even more precarious. Since the 1970s, clothing manufacturers in developed countries have offshored and outsourced their productive capacity to developing countries with the lowest wages and, by proxy, the weakest labor standards. Along this global assembly line, employment is typically temporary, job-based, sub-contracted, and insecure.

Nonetheless, while there is rampant exploitation in the industry, there are also opportunities for women. For many employed in the garment sector, a job in a clothing factory provides an entry point to participation in the formal economy - steady work for a stable wage with tangible benefits. Work in the sector comes with the promise of independence, skills development, mobility, and a better quality of life.

The COVID-19 crisis endangers not only these women's jobs, but also the potential for gender empowerment more broadly. In a recent study of garment-sector workers in Kenya, Lesotho, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Bangladesh, we found that access to waged employment can broadly advance women's prospects in highly gender-unequal societies. The data show that garment-sector employment for women has translated into broader improvements in gender dynamics. Among the countries considered, the most significant shifts have occurred in factories where there have been specific interventions to improve workplace health and safety, such as training in manager-employee communication.

The ripple effects from women's wage earning in manufacturing are evident in household gender relations. Female study participants demonstrated an increased ability to leverage the material resources that they contribute to engage male partners more effectively in decisions about spending and other household matters. Study participants also reported increased participation by men in domestic and caretaking labor typically carried out entirely by women. The sharing of household work has helped to reduce the "time poverty" that study participants would otherwise experience as a result of their dual roles as wage earners and caretakers. And this, in turn, has improved both their physical and emotional wellbeing.

In limited but meaningful ways, these changes have mitigated key sources of household financial precarity and conflict, as well as enhanced women's self-respect and sense of agency. However, with the spread of COVID-19, lockdown measures are leading to a reported global surge in domestic violence - much of it triggered by stress, financial difficulties, and alcohol consumption. And this problem is particularly acute in cases where women who previously provided a significant share of the household's income have been prevented from doing so because they can no longer go to work.

Given these heightened risks, policymakers, central bankers, and economists scrambling to cushion the financial impact of the public-health crisis must do more to consider the stakes for women wage earners in developing and emerging economies. Safeguarding the gains these women have made will require investments and policies not only to address widespread unemployment, but also to bolster programs to facilitate gender advancement.

In other words, the COVID-19 response cannot be gender-neutral. To account for the unique conditions experienced by women workers, policymakers must focus on wage-replacement benefits, women's shelters (which should be categorized as essential services), emergency childcare provisions, access to proper feminine hygiene, and public-health messaging that can reach marginalized women who lack digital or cellular connectivity. At the very least, we must defend the progress that women have made through generations of work toward gender equality and empowerment.

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## FEATURE

## FEATURE

# Barehanded Soldiers in the Fight Against COVID-19 in Liberia - The Health Workers

## A Tribute to Health Workers

### Introduction

In this write-up, the writer pens his impression about the extraordinary efforts being exerted by health workers in Liberia, and in the world at large to combat a virulent and debilitating disease known as Coronavirus or COVID-19. This dangerous disease which first appeared in China in December 2019, quickly crammed at the doorsteps of other parts of Asia, and then to Europe, the USA and in no time has surfaced with its deadly face in the rest of the world, is on the rampage. It remains, invariably, the biggest medical conundrum to hit the world in recent history.

### What is the COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

It is called Coronavirus or COVID-19 because it first showed its scourging presence in 2019 in Wuhan, China and has spread its contagious and deadly claws across the globe, with Liberia not being spared. This virus, of cosmic proportion, is hovering over the earth space like a roaring and unstoppable beast and inflicting incalculable damage. COVID-19 is wrecking havoc, killing people, collapsing economies, ravishing dysfunctional healthcare systems and overwhelming state-of-the-art and sophisticated health care systems. It has upset the normal course of human interaction and circumscribed socialization to an abyss, with social distancing, wearing of mouth/nose masks, and an endless washing of hands in the public space being the global new normal. COVID-19 has also brought to the ascendancy a new phenomenon of working from home (WFH). A health expert aptly refers to the virus as a disease of hate, because it abhors the normal social intercourse of handshakes, hugging and other physical contacts people relish in the exchange of pleasantries and the expression of intimacy. The mask coronavirus currently wears is the ignorance of the world of its biological content, its characteristics and physiology. The coronavirus is a respiratory illness that is transmitted through droplets from coughing, sneezing or talking that is left on an object or surface to which individuals are exposed to, touching or talking in very close proximity with an infected person. Health experts say it is both symptomatic and asymptomatic disease. Symptomatic because it has signs and symptoms; asymptomatic because carriers of the virus may not show symptoms yet can infect others. Some of its symptoms include: fever, sneezing, coughing and shortness of breath, among others.

### Impact of the Virus

The obscure nature of the coronavirus gives it an apparent advantage over the global health capabilities and has made it perilous to the human race at this particular juncture. In short, there is no known cure or treatment for the virus, but can be prevented by avoiding close contacts with infected persons, observing social distancing and avoid touching nose, eyes and mouth with unclean/unsanitized hands, constant washing of hands and wearing of masks. Globally, diligent efforts to develop a vaccine are in the works. As at the time of this write-up, the writer posits, several clinical and human trials are being conducted globally for a vaccine, but these have yielded no fruitful outcome yet. It is interesting to note that the manipulative prowess of scientists is yet to prove superior to subdue this stubborn and nefarious disease. Coronavirus has grounded the airline industry, shutdown outdoor and indoor recreation, sporting events and brought the world to a virtual pause. It has also crippled economies, with rich and powerful nations including USA, Great Britain, China, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, others feeling its bumpy crunch. The virus has put millions out of jobs, snatched more than 300,000 lives, while over 4 Million people are infected worldwide. In Liberia, over 200 persons have come down and counting, with the virus while health authorities put the death toll at 35 as at the time of this article.

The writer describes them as the frontline soldiers and commanders- the health care workers -the Doctors, the Nurses, Laboratory Technicians, Public Health Practitioners, Epidemiologists, Scientists, Care Givers and Ambulance Drivers that are working against the odds to fight an invisible and unknown, but lethal enemy. In Liberia, in particular, the health care workers are working under unpleasant and mundane conditions that have attended the health system for decades. As at the time of this piece, there were reports that there is very little or no personal protection equipment (PPEs), i.e., no standard face masks, no hand gloves, no ventilators, limited or no testing kits, yet they are daringly working around the clock vigorously battling to abate a disease which knows no borders.

### Fight Against COVID-19 in Liberia

The Coronavirus is no respecter of class, race, economic, political and social status. Some prominent world figures have contracted the virus including Prince Charles, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, to name but a few. In Liberia, the Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Nathaniel Blama is the first person to have been tested positive on March 16, 2020, but survived along with dozens of other earlier known cases. However, the Director of the Drug Enforcement Agency, Col. Michael Soko and little over a dozen others have to date, fallen prey to the virus and have succumbed. Later, the Minister of Justice, Cllr. F. Musa Dean and the Minister of Information, L. Eugene Nagbe, Deputy Police Director for Administrator



Sadiatu Reeves and a host of other government officials - also contracted the disease; were treated and discharged from the newly built 14th Military Hospital. It was reported in the media that President George Weah who closely interacted with Nagbe prior to the Minister testing positive with the virus did not self-quarantine as required under the health protocols. Information from the corridors of state actors hinted that President Weah might have contracted the disease as his alleged secretly leaked test result showed. As a consequence of that alleged leakage, a number of health workers from the National Public Health Institute of Liberia and the Montserrado County Health Team were subjected to security interrogation. The writer who spoke to one of the health workers was informed of their horrifying ordeal and how they were intimidated and harassed for hours by the authorities of the National Security Agency. However, Health authorities, probably for the fear of losing their jobs, have remained tight-lip on the matter. There is no indication whether President submitted himself to be tested, but was seen with a dazzling array of government officials distributing rice and COVID prevention materials in some communities around Monrovia and parts adjacent.

That being said, in the face of inadequate supply of critically needed materials, these men and women are saving lives, attending to the sick, the persons who have symptoms, or are showing signs of the virus. These health workers are working under the most severe and appalling infrastructural defects with no emoluments, low salaries

which are usually not paid on time. These health workers continue to brave the icy current to face the bullets at the frontline of the fight against the scathing attacks of the disease. They are vulnerable and practically barehanded due to lack of the necessary tools and equipment they need to face the invisible but deadly enemy. While the writer agrees that these health workers took an oath to serve humanity and to save lives, they cannot continuously be exposed to danger and subjected to humiliation caused by the unfavorable conditions of service while they combat a disease to the peril of their lives. As these health care workers continue to face the enemy at the frontlines, despite these abysmal conditions, the writer herein embellishes them with a humble salute for the incredible job. These health workers are the unsung heroes of this fight against the coronavirus. The writer reminisces that during the Ebola outbreak in 2014, Liberia was caught with its pants down. The health care delivery system was moribund, and unprepared to respond and to combat the plaque at the time. That being said, in the aftermath of the EBOLA outbreak, it was expected that the country would erect a typology of adequate preparation by garnering the requisite tools and the necessary safeguards that would evince the commitment of politicians and policy makers to build a resilient health system.

However, the recent outbreak of the coronavirus has exposed the seemingly intractable weakness and showcased that the system still remains in tatters. It also accentuates the exigency of the health system and hammers in the stubborn truth that national leaders have made no significant investment and or have not prioritized allocation of adequate resources and to make other interventions required to build a resilient health care system. Suffice it to say that Ebola did not teach us any hard lesson, neither did it prepare the country to bear and combat the outbreak of another epidemic or a pandemic as the national response to the coronavirus has eloquently unraveled.

In the calculus for combating this current global pandemic, and bracing for future outbreaks in Liberia, the need to hugely invest in the health care infrastructure and personnel cannot be overemphasized. The nuance is that considering the relics that are traceable to the Ebola virus, the building of a vibrant and responsive health care delivery system is inextricably linked to erecting the requisite technical and professional safeguards to respond to the current coronavirus and future outbreak of an epidemic or a pandemic for that matter. The health care infrastructure remains seriously challenged and unimpressive. The shameful conditions that attended the outbreak of EBOLA are very present, which further expose our health care workers to danger, and getting possibly infected while they help to save lives. In the likely event that many of health care workers get infected with the virus due to these prevailing demotivating working conditions, this would have deleterious consequences on the overall effort to combat the virus. Giving care at such a crucial time of national health emergency is not a simple act imposed by mere professional duty and the obligation to save lives. It is typical of the biblical story of one laying down his life for another to be saved. It becomes even colossal when such fight presents real and clear danger to their lives. The writer applauds the valor emitted by the unbridled commitment of the men and women of the health care system of Liberia and their counterparts around the world. In spite of the unpleasant and horrible conditions they are made to work under, the health caregivers continue to be at the frontlines amidst systemic failures and inadequacies. In Liberia, the laundry list of shortcomings that attend the healthcare delivery system range from absence of basic social services, i.e. lack of pipe borne water, lack of electricity and poor infrastructure and lack of incentives for health workers.

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## ArcelorMittal Liberia staff Tests Positive for Coronavirus

ArcelorMittal Liberia (AML) has announced that a member of its workforce in Buchanan has tested positive for the Coronavirus (COVID19). The company in a press

remained in precautionary isolation since that time and will continue in isolation following this new test.

"The family is feeling well and not showing any symptoms," the company added.

precautionary isolation.

It added that the condition of the contacts are being monitored by suitably qualified doctors, with none displaying symptoms of Covid19.

"The relevant county and national health authorities are closely involved and the County Health Team is overseeing management of the case. An investigation is ongoing to establish the possible source of infection," it said.

Company explained that it had planned for this possible scenario and put in place stringent measures throughout our three-county Concession.

These regulations it said are aimed at limiting the spread of the disease and include: • Mandatory wearing of face masks; Setup of hand washing facilities; Enforcement of social distancing measures; Closure of businesses operating in the Concession at 3pm daily; and Working from home (where possible).

As a responsible business partner to Liberia and a company that places high

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



release issued Thursday May 14, said the positive result comes after the person originally tested negative 14 days ago on 30th April 2020.

It said even though the earlier test was negative, the employee and family have

ArcelorMittal Liberia also noted that it is providing all necessary support. It said contact tracing was launched at the time to track those with whom the staff might have come in contact with, and a number of staff were placed in

## Rape suspects released without trial?

By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan

Bong County Attorney Jonathan Flomo has criticized the outgoing Judge of the 9th Judicial Circuit Court, Judge Karboi Nuta for releasing eight rape suspects in the County without a single trial.

The Bong County's Chief Prosecutor said the release of the suspects is a violation of Liberia Criminal Procedure Law.

Judge Karboi Nuta, was assigned at the 9th Judicial Circuit Court for the February A D Term of Court in the County.

The Attorney said under the laws of Liberia, there are two instances where criminal defendants can be released without trial, adding Chapter 18, Section 18.1 (Dismissal by Prosecuting Attorney), and Section 18.2 (Dismissal by Court for Failure to Proceed)."

Attorney Flomo at the same time quoted, Section 18.2 of the criminal procedure law as saying that the state must be given the

opportunity to show 'good cause' why the defendant should not be released, noting that in the case of the suspects, the state did not receive a motion for "failure to proceed" filed by the defense or a motion from the court through a notice that the case had been assigned for hearing.

Attorney Flomo who is also a Dean of the Bong County Bar

Association said he is not opposed to the suspects' being release, but the court should follow the law.

"I received a released document on March 26, 2020, from the sheriff's office for the release of the 8 pre-trial detainees who had been indicted. When I received the

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Judicial Circuit Court in Gbarnga

## Catholic Church delays reopening

By Winston W. Parley

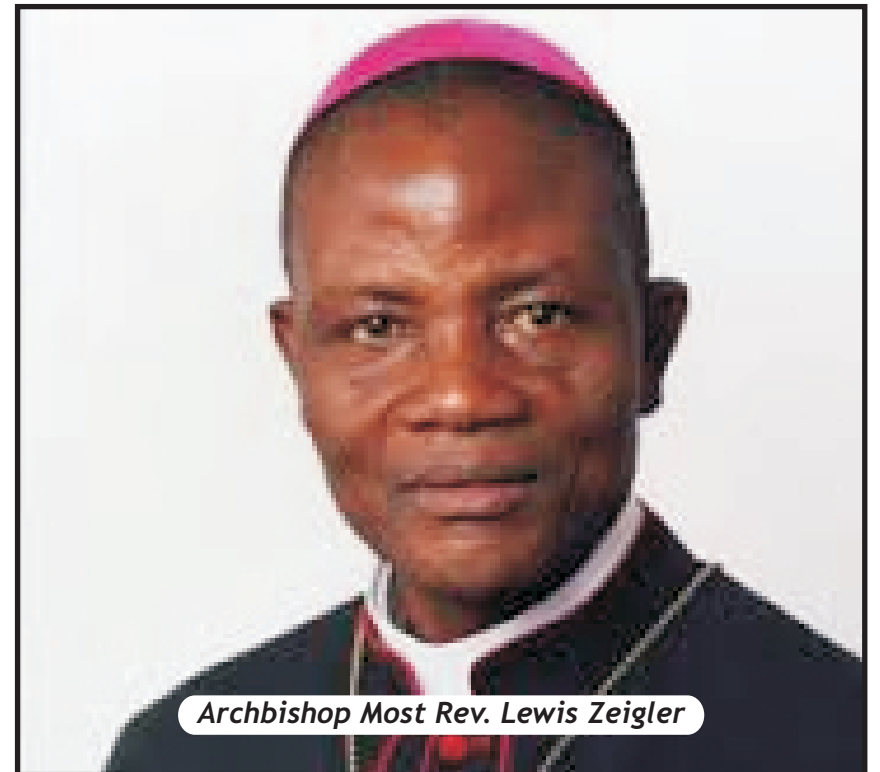
Liberian Catholic Archbishop Most Rev. Lewis Zeigler has asked all Parish Priests and Priests in charge of parishes in the Archdiocese of Monrovia to delay the opening of their churches for regular church activities till the end of May 2020, in the wake of daily increase of coronavirus cases here.

"This will enable us to monitor the reduction in the cases of the Coronavirus pandemic in the Archdiocese. By early June we shall observe and decide how to go forward with the resumption of our church activities. Many thanks for your understanding and cooperation," a memorandum under his signature dated 13 May, says.

While Mr. Weah permits Churches, Mosques and worship centers to reopen, coronavirus cases are still increasing daily, with 215 total cases recorded by the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) as of 13 May, out of which 20 victims have died and 105 others have recovered, leaving 90 confirmed active cases.

Liberia is in the third phase of 14 days lockdowns imposed by the administration to ease the spread of the virus as extensions of the lockdown measure became necessary here due to continuous reports of new cases of the virus.

At the start of the crisis when coronavirus cases were far less than the current figure, Churches were abruptly closed



Archbishop Most Rev. Lewis Zeigler

Archbishop Zeigler says while being respectful to the decision of the Government of Liberia, he does not believe that this is the right time to have Catholic Churches opened for regular public worship, when the confirmed cases of the coronavirus are on a daily rise in the country.

His decision to delay resumption of church activities came about five days after President George Manneh Weah on 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.

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.

The reopening of Churches, Mosques and worship centers followed 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.

He however expresses thanks and appreciation to the Government of Liberia for the decision taken to declare Churches, Mosques and worship centers reopened as of 17 May.

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**High risk for transmission**

**-Sen. Coleman warns against resuming churches**

By Ethel A Tweh

The chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Dr. Peter Coleman has told the Liberian Senate that there will be high risk of COVID-19 transmission

Coleman informed his colleagues that his committee has met with some church leaders and found that they are afraid of reopening their churches at this time to avoid exposing their members to the

beginning Sunday, 17 May, with Muslims permitted to begin operating in their Mosques on 8 May.

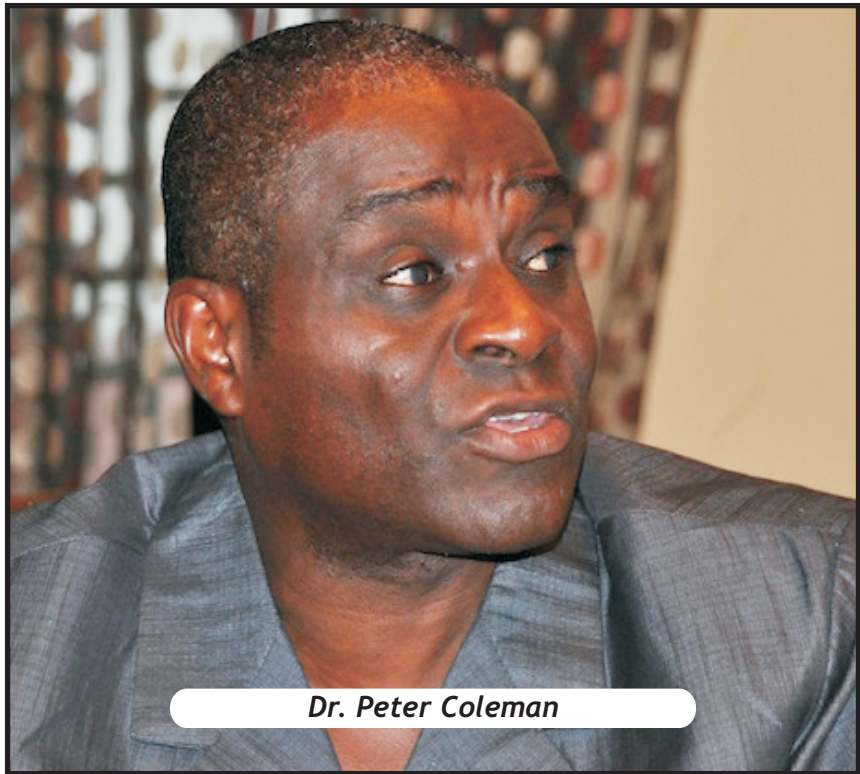
While Mr. Weah permits Churches, Mosques and worship centers to reopen, coronavirus cases are still increasing daily, with 215 total cases recorded by the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) as of 13 May, out of which 20 victims have died and 105 others have recovered, leaving 90 confirmed active cases.

In an apparent effort to discourage the idea of reopening churches at this time of the health crisis, Sen. Coleman says since Liberia's neighboring countries like Ghana and other African countries lifted their lockdown, their cases have increased.

He details that Liberia has a population that is living in denial and also not adhering to the health measures, cautioning that the opening of churches need to be looked at carefully.

Coleman believes that the decision to open churches was a political decision that the president was under pressure

**▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11**



Dr. Peter Coleman

if Churches were to open as ordered by President George Manneh Weah.

Updating the Liberian Senate on the [work] of the COVID-19 Steering Committee Wednesday, 13 May, Sen.

virus.

President Weah on Friday, 8 May proposed that Churches, Mosques and worship centers consider operating 25 percent of the regular worship-hour occupancy for each service

**Unity Party survives on Cummings' pocket**

**-Rep. Gray**

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

member of the governing Coalition for Democratic Change -Montserrado County Electoral District #8 Representative Acarous Moses Gray claims here that despite the 12 years leadership of the Unity Party, the former ruling party has placed its financial burden squarely on the shoulders of opposition Alternative National Congress political leader, Mr. Alexander Cummings.

Addressing a news conference in Monrovia on Thursday, May 14, Rep. Gray notes that it is shame for the former ruling establishment to hang on the pocket of Mr. Cummings, who according to him, has lost his way to the presidency.

He says Cummings' close relationship with the former ruling establishment would pave the way for the ruling CDC to win a second term landslides on grounds that Liberians will not give the country back to the Unity Party that allegedly squandered huge opportunities intended for the Liberian people over its 12

years reign.

Gray notes that stalwarts of the former ruling establishment are bitter with the Coalition for Democratic Change-led administration because they believe political leadership for

chairman of the Council of Patriots, terming it as "reckless."

Acting chairman Menipakei Dumoe, currently in police custody, posted on his Facebook page that,



Representative Acarous Moses Gray

the country is their exclusive right.

He expresses total disappointment in leaders of the four Collaborating Political Parties for supporting recent facebook post by the acting

"Liberians don't need bags of rice but AK-47s."

Gray says it is appalling for people from the opposition community to defend such comment.

According to him, the

**Weah raps on**

Starts from back page

has had a total confirmed coronavirus cases of 215, out of which 20 victims have died and 105 others have recovered, leaving 90 confirmed active cases.

Liberia is in the third phase of 14 days lockdowns imposed by the administration to ease the spread of the virus as extensions of the lockdown measure became necessary here due to continuous reports of new cases of the virus.

In his Unification Day message Thursday, Mr. Weah says this year, Liberians celebrate the day under obviously challenging circumstances - when the world is reeling from the effects of a global pandemic, noting that the coronavirus has altered their way of life as it afflicts many of compatriots.

However, he says Liberians have shown remarkable resilience over the years, expressing confidence that it wouldn't be long before the nation can make this crisis a thing of the past.

"It is during moments like these that Liberians of all persuasion must unite against the common foe which threatens our existence," he pleads with citizens.

"We must come together as a resilient people to harness our positive attributes and direct them to eliminating this existential threat and forging a stronger nation," Mr. Weah adds.

He assures that the government is doing all in its powers to lead this fight, adding that Liberia is beginning to see some progress, but cautions that citizens and residents must not let down their guard.

"I am counting on all Liberians to join hands in order to defeat this unseen enemy," he continues.

Meanwhile, President Weah says Unification Day grants Liberians another opportunity to soberly reflect on the purpose for which this nation was founded.

He recalls that the forbearers of Liberia strived through blood and tears to lay the foundation for the nation, adding that they toiled to guard every inch of its territory in order to establish an enviable system of self-governance.

When more than a century later that system became threatened by Liberia's cultural, political and even racial diversities, Mr. Weah notes that the nation's progenitors developed different initiatives that highlighted characteristics to strengthen the bonds rather than those that divided its people, saying National Unification Day, a day to reflect that wholesomeness was legislated.

"As we do so, let's kneel in supplication to the Almighty God for healing. I made a call to all Liberians and residents within our borders, a call to all religious leaders to observe today as a day of national prayers for our beloved nation," he urges.

He calls on Liberians of all faiths to invoke God's presence and His mercy through fast and prayer in their homes or their various places of worship.

He concludes that all Liberians, Christians, Muslims and all persons of faith should pray for God's divine intervention.

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statement threatens national security and the Liberian government is right by arresting Mr. Dumoe to provide detail.

Some leaders from the opposition community, including Montserrado County Senator Darius Dillon have defended the statement, saying, Dumoe lacks the ability to breach the peace or place guns in the hands of Liberians.

But Gray counters that during the days of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, such statement was

considered deadly and counterproductive to the peace process.

The lawmaker recalls that he and the current chairman of the Coalition for Democratic Change were detained several times by the former regime for their statements, but those comments were far from threatening the peace.

Meanwhile, Justice Minister Cllr. Frank Musa Dean, has ordered the release of Mr. Dumoe, pending full investigation of his recent comments on social media.

# Français

## Affaire disparition présumée de 16 milliards : Les suspects Sirleaf et Weeks divisés sur leur procès

M. Charles E. Sirleaf, fils de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, et l'ancien gouverneur exécutif de la Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL) Milton A. Weeks, ont présenté des arguments distincts dans le procès pour sabotage économique présumé, ce qui était auparavant un procès conjoint. Le tribunal a par conséquent décidé de juger Weeks, Sirleaf et les autres défendeurs séparément.

« Compte tenu du fait, ce

tribunal dit que c'est une question de formalité et, à ce titre, la requête en séparation doit être maintenue et elle est par la présente accordée. Dorénavant, Charles Sirleaf est séparé et distinct du co-accusé Milton Weeks », a statué le juge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay, juge de la Cour pénale « C », le mardi 12 mai.

M. Sirleaf, qui était sous-gouverneur de la Banque Centrale du Libéria (CBL), et son patron M. Weeks, ont été inculpés conjointement avec le directeur du département des finances de la banque,

Dorbor M. Hagba et le directeur adjoint de l'audit interne, Joseph Dennis, pour sabotage économique, complot criminel, sollicitation criminelle et blanchiment d'argent.

Les accusés, dont Richard Walker, ont été inculpés le 4 mars 2019. Ils doivent répondre de leurs rôles présumés dans le scandale des 16 milliards de dollars libériens dont la disparition présumée a secoué le pays tout au long de l'année 2018 et déclenché une enquête locale et internationale à la suite d'une série de manifestations ici.

Au mois d'août l'année dernière, le tribunal a ordonné aux accusés de déposer chacun une caution de 1 058 000 000 LD, qui, combinées, totalisait 5 290 000 000 LD après qu'un nouvel acte d'accusation pour blanchiment de capitaux avait été ajouté aux accusations précédentes. Dans le cadre de l'affaire, un recours avait alors été déposé devant le juge en chambre de la Cour suprême.

À la suite d'une audience sur cette requête, l'affaire a été renvoyée devant le tribunal pénal pour

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



## Présidentielle 2020 : l'opposition ivoirienne fait des propositions aux Nations Unies

Des partis politiques de l'opposition ivoirienne, relativement à l'atelier d'information et d'échanges sur le processus électoral et la révision de la liste électorale au siège du programme des nations unies pour le développement (PNUD), ont fait des propositions aux Nations Unies. Nous vous proposons l'intégralité de cette déclaration dont Abidjan.net a reçu copie ce lundi 11 mai 2020.

Le mercredi 6 mai 2020, les Partis politiques de l'opposition ivoirienne (PDCI-RDA, RPP, USD, RPCI, UPCI, URD, CAP- UDD, LIDER) et la plateforme EDS, ont, sur invitation du Programme des Nations Unies (PNUD), participé, au siège de ladite organisation, à un atelier d'informations et d'échanges sur le processus électoral et la confection de la liste électorale.

Les partis politiques de l'opposition et la plateforme,

ci-dessus énumérés, viennent, par la présente déclaration, d'une part porter à la connaissance de l'opinion nationale et internationale le cadre et la portée de cette rencontre et d'autre part faire connaître à celles-ci les propositions faites par leurs

soins.

1) Les partis politiques de l'opposition et la plateforme signataire de la présente déclaration précisent que la réunion du 6 mai 2020 a été organisée par le Programme des Nations Unies pour le

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Meninakei Dumoe as police search his home

## Prolongement de l'Etat d'urgence au Libéria : Le sénat aurait fait du mal au président Weah

Le secrétaire de la presse présidentielle Isaac Solo Kelgbeh accuse les membres de l'Assemblée législative d'avoir rendu la tâche difficile au président George Weah en prolongeant la durée de l'état d'urgence sanitaire.

M. Kelgbeh a confié mardi à ce journal que lorsque le président parlait d'un plan de relance, il était question de quatre comtés qui ont été initialement touchés - Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba et Grand Kru et d'un état d'urgence qui ne devrait durer que 21 jours.

Mais les membres de l'Assemblée législative ont tenu à ce que l'état d'urgence soit prolongé à 60 jours et que le plan de relance profite à l'ensemble du pays sans rechercher de fonds supplémentaires. M. Kelgbeh croit que c'est en cela que les

montant de 25 millions de dollars avait été affecté à la couverture de l'ensemble du plan de relance, qui comprend la distribution alimentaire d'urgence, l'approvisionnement en électricité et en eau, la prime de risque pour les travailleurs médicaux, etc.

Depuis la ratification de la résolution par l'Assemblée législative nationale, qui a non seulement approuvé l'état d'urgence du président, mais l'a également prolongé de 60 jours avec un paiement controversé de 6 500 USD à chacun des membres du Sénat - certains sénateurs l'ont décrit comme paiement des fonds opérationnels en souffrance, tandis que d'autres disent que ce sont leurs honoraires de séance-, le paquet n'a pas encore été distribué.



Pres. Weah



Pro-Temp Chea

législateurs ont fait du mal au président.

"Le mandat du président était basé sur les comtés touchés à l'époque", a déclaré M. Kelgbeh. "Donc, avec l'augmentation ... c'est pourquoi nous disons maintenant les plus vulnérables", a-t-il ajouté. Kelgbeh a déclaré que le président Weah n'était pas en faveur de la prolongation du confinement du pays en raison de ses effets néfastes sur l'économie, mais il a été contraint de le faire.

Il a dit douter que le président Weah prolonge confinement au-delà des 60 jours.

Il y a plus d'un mois, le président Weah présentait un plan de relance à l'Assemblée législative libérienne pour fournir des secours d'urgence aux citoyens d'ici pendant l'état d'urgence du pays. Un

Cependant, le comité directeur, qui comprend des représentants du gouvernement, des membres de l'opposition et le Programme alimentaire mondial, a déclaré que le programme de soutien alimentaire des ménages ciblera les groupes vulnérables et les communautés des bidonvilles.

Selon le président du Comité directeur, le ministre du Commerce, Wilson Tarpeh, la distribution sera calquée sur l'ancien programme de distribution alimentaire Special Emergency Life Food (SELF), mais sera dirigée par le Programme alimentaire mondial assisté par les dirigeants communautaires dans les bidonvilles ciblés à partir de mai 23.



# Français

## Affaire disparition présumée de 16 milliards : Les

poursuivre sa procédure. Selon le juge Gbeisay, ce mandat a été transmis au tribunal pénal « C », lui ordonnant de reprendre sa compétence et de poursuivre l'affaire.

« A la dernière assise », a continué le juge, « les avocats du défendeur Sirleaf et d'autres ont demandé au tribunal des procès séparés, tandis que les avocats du défendeur Weeks ont demandé la suspension du procès ».

Le juge Gbeisay a indiqué que dans la sagesse de la cour, il a réservé sa décision et a rejeté la réclamation faite par les avocats de Weeks, car, à la connaissance de la cour, l'affaire concernant ces derniers était toujours pendante devant la Cour suprême du Libéria.

Selon le juge Gbeisay, le simple fait que cette affaire soit devant le juge en chambre, l'une des parties a

fait exception à la décision du juge et a annoncé un appel tandis que les autres parties ont concédé la même décision et un mandat a été envoyé à la Cour « C », qui en soi "rendait les deux défendeurs et leur thèse séparément".

Entre-temps, le juge Gbeisay a ordonné l'ouverture du procès impliquant l'accusé Sirleaf et les autres accusés ce vendredi 15 mai à 9 heures.

Bien que le procès impliquant le fils de l'ancienne présidente Sirleaf et d'autres personnes devrait commencer vendredi, alors que l'ancien gouverneur Weeks attend ses appels devant la Cour suprême, ce qui est arrivé aux 16 milliards reste un mystère. Kroll Associate, une société d'enquête américaine embauchée par l'USAID dans son rapport, a déclaré que l'argent était arrivé à la banque centrale mais qu'il y avait eu des défaillances à chaque étape du processus.

## Présidentielle 2020 : l'opposition ivoirienne

Développement (PNUD), dans le cadre du projet d'appui aux élections en Côte d'Ivoire (PACE).

2) Les Partis politiques de l'opposition et la plateforme signataires de la présente déclaration tiennent également à rappeler leur vision politique caractérisée par la responsabilité, le dialogue, la paix et la cohésion sociale. C'est donc, conformément à cette ligne de conduite, qu'ils ont accepté de prendre part aux travaux sur le processus électoral et la confection de la liste électorale, organisés par le PNUD et auxquels, ont participé d'autres Partis politiques et la Commission chargée des Élections.

3) Cette rencontre a permis aux partis politiques et la plateforme signataires de la présente déclaration de saisir l'opportunité offerte par le PNUD pour réaffirmer leur décision de ne pas reconnaître la Commission Électorale actuelle, qui est un organe déséquilibré, partial, inféodé au RHDP Unifié et incapable d'organiser des élections libres, transparentes et crédibles.

4) Les partis politiques de l'opposition et la plateforme signataires de la présente déclaration ont jugé irréaliste le délai de quatorze (14) jours, allant du 10 au 24 juin, proposé par la

Commission chargée des élections pour constituer la liste électorale.

Cette proposition a été rejetée par l'opposition politique dans son ensemble, au regard de l'importance du nombre de personnes en âge de voter non inscrites sur la liste électorale, estimées à cinq(05) millions d'électeurs, dont de nombreux nouveaux majeurs, selon les statistiques.

5) Face à cette situation, le PDCI-RDA, le RPP, l'USD, le RPCI, l'UPCI, l'URD, le CAP-UDD, LIDER et la plateforme EDS, ont réitéré :

- leur demande d'utilisation de la Carte Nationale d'Identité (nouvelle ou ancienne) et du certificat de nationalité comme pièces, pour l'inscription sur la liste électorale;
- la prorogation de la validité des anciennes cartes nationales d'identité;
- la durée de la révision de la liste électorale à au moins trente(30) jours dans les dix mille cinq cents (10500) lieux de vote;
- la proclamation des résultats bureau de vote par bureau de vote;
- le respect des délais de publication des listes, conformément aux dispositions prévues par la loi.

Les Partis politiques de l'opposition et la plateforme signataires de la présente déclaration ont recommandé que le Système des Nations Unies et la communauté

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Jayati Ghosh

### Dans l'espace budgétaire, qui vous entend crier ?

**N**EW DELHI - Parmi les nombreuses inégalités qu'a révélées la pandémie de Covid-19, l'une des plus frappantes est la profonde divergence des réponses budgétaires mises en œuvre par les différents gouvernements. L'activité économique s'est effondrée dans le monde entier en conséquence des mesures de confinement prises pour empêcher la propagation du coronavirus. Mais si certains pays ont été capables de lancer des plans de sauvegarde d'une ampleur sans précédent, la plupart n'en ont pas eu la possibilité.

Les dépenses supplémentaires annoncées depuis le mois de mars par le gouvernement des États-Unis se montent à 14 % du PIB. Au Japon, le chiffre excède les 21 %, qu'on peut comparer aux presque 10 % décidés en Australie et à une part d'environ 8,4 % au Canada. En Europe, l'absence d'un accord sur de fortes mesures de sauvegarde conjointes s'est soldée par une assez grande diversité de réactions, les dépenses supplémentaires consenties allant suivant les pays de 1,4 % du PIB pour l'Italie et 1,6 % pour l'Espagne à 9 % pour l'Autriche, l'Allemagne et la France se situant quant à elles à mi-chemin environ, avec respectivement 4,9 % et 5 %. Les règles budgétaires strictes de l'Union européenne limitent les dépenses publiques des pays qui, précisément, auraient le plus besoin de mesures de soutien budgétaire.

Les options de politique monétaire ont par ailleurs étendu la capacité budgétaire disponible aux niveaux infranationaux des pouvoirs publics dans nombre d'économies avancées. En baissant les taux d'intérêt, en achetant des obligations émises par les collectivités locales, en consentant à de nouvelles facilités de prêts pour certains secteurs et certaines entreprises, la Réserve fédérale des États-Unis et d'autres grandes banques centrales mettent en œuvre tous les moyens à leur disposition pour maintenir un coût de l'emprunt peu élevé et garantir les liquidités des agences et organismes publics.

La réponse budgétaire dans la plupart des économies en développement est en revanche peu convaincante, alors que la situation économique à laquelle sont confrontés ces pays n'est pas moins difficile, tant s'en faut. Les mesures de confinement et les perturbations des flux mondiaux d'échanges et d'investissements ont déjà infligé aux économies émergentes et en développement des dommages encore plus importants que dans le monde développé.

En Inde, par exemple, on estime que 122 millions de personnes ont perdu leur emploi durant le seul mois d'avril. Pire encore, malgré les mesures de confinement, le nombre de cas de Covid-19 continue son augmentation rapide dans le pays. La diminution des envois d'argent liquide par les ressortissants indiens travaillant à l'étranger ainsi que la chute brutale des exportations et des recettes du tourisme ont frappé bien d'autres économies en développement, même celles qui avaient pris des mesures de confinement moins strictes.

Pourtant, malgré des pertes d'emplois à grande échelle et une diminution des revenus des ménages, les réponses budgétaires ont été relativement faibles. Si le Premier ministre indien Narendra Modi vient effectivement d'annoncer un plan qui se monte à 10 % du PIB, ce calcul prend en compte des allocations antérieures et surtout l'effet attendu des mesures monétaires. La dépense publique supplémentaire ne représentera qu'une faible part du montant total.

Ces différences sont évidentes même au sein du G20. À la fin du mois d'avril, les nouvelles dépenses publiques dans les économies émergentes du groupe se chiffraient en moyenne à 3 % environ du PIB, qu'on peut comparer aux 11,6 % affichés par les pays avancés. Et même au sein des premiers, les variations ne laissaient pas d'être importantes, avec l'Afrique du Sud relevant ses dépenses à hauteur de 10 % du PIB, tandis que l'Inde ne consentait qu'à une augmentation de 1 % de ses dépenses publiques. Comment s'étonner qu'en dehors du G20, les pays à faible revenu aient toutes les peines du monde à réunir ne serait-ce que de minuscules plans de sauvetage, sans parler de ce qui serait nécessaire pour lutter contre le virus et éviter l'effondrement de l'économie.

Cette disparité des réponses budgétaires d'un pays à l'autre peut s'expliquer par les inégalités systémiques, de longue date, au sein de l'économie mondiale, où les pays en développement sont contraints d'emprunter dans les monnaies de réserve internationalement adoptées. En conséquence de quoi elles ne disposent tout simplement pas des marges budgétaires que peuvent s'octroyer les pays qui émettent ces monnaies de réserve. C'est bien pour cette raison qu'une nouvelle émission de droits de tirage spéciaux, les avoirs de réserve du Fonds monétaire international, est devenue une priorité absolue.

En outre, nombre d'économies en développement étaient déjà écrasées par une montagne de dette extérieure avant que ne frappe la pandémie. Ainsi les pays d'Afrique (dans l'ensemble) dépensent-ils plus dans le service de leur dette que dans leur santé publique. Si les détenteurs d'obligations souveraines et les autres créanciers demeurent pour beaucoup dans le déni quant à la nécessité d'un allègement substantiel de la dette, l'implosion imminente de la dette mondiale rend cette issue inévitable.

La suspension généralisée de l'activité économique mondiale signifie que les recettes fiscales s'effondrent au moment même où les gouvernements ont besoin d'augmenter leurs dépenses. Pour les gouvernements des pays développés, qui peuvent emprunter directement auprès d'une banque centrale, ce n'est pas un véritable problème. Mais pour la plupart des pays en développement, le calcul est plus difficile. Même ceux qui n'ont pas de problèmes immédiats de remboursement de leur dette ne montrent guère d'enthousiasme à l'idée d'augmenter leurs dépenses publiques, même loin des niveaux qui seraient pourtant requis afin d'éviter un effondrement économique généralisé.

La raison en est simple : la plupart de ces pays craignent la fuite des capitaux. Plus de 100 milliards de dollars se sont déjà évaporés des pays en développement depuis que s'est déclarée la pandémie. Non seulement leur dette est pour l'essentiel libellée en devises étrangères, mais plus d'un quart de la dette des pays en développement détenue dans leur propre monnaie l'est par des investisseurs étrangers, et la libéralisation, par de nombreux pays, des règles s'appliquant à la balance des opérations de capital permet aux résidents de transférer des fonds à l'étranger. Tout cela laisse les pays en développement profondément démunis, à tel point que la crainte des marchés financiers joue le rôle d'une contrainte majeure y compris sur les mesures les plus urgentes et les plus évidentes.

En Inde, par exemple, un haut responsable du ministère des Finances a récemment justifié la faiblesse pathétique du plan de sauvegarde du gouvernement par la crainte de plus en plus vive de voir la note de la dette souveraine du pays se dégrader. Il semble peu importer, en comparaison, qu'une réponse inadéquate accroisse la probabilité d'une catastrophe économique qui précipiterait des centaines de millions d'Indiens dans la pauvreté et la faim. Il n'est pas moins révélateur qu'en Afrique du Sud le vice-ministre des Finances ait suscité la controverse en suggérant de façon parfaitement raisonnable que la banque centrale devrait acheter directement des obligations d'État.

Dans un tel climat de crainte néolibérale intériorisée, l'idée même de mettre en place un contrôle des capitaux est rejetée comme une absurdité, au prétexte qu'il risquerait d'effrayer et de faire fuir les investisseurs étrangers. Les retombées économiques de la pandémie rendent pourtant essentielle une hausse substantielle des dépenses publiques dans la plupart des pays en développement. Par ailleurs, combien d'investisseurs étrangers (hormis ceux qui ne seront intéressés que par la possibilité de faire main basse sur des actifs bradés) se sentiront-ils attirés par des économies que l'absence de contre-mesures budgétaires aura laissées totalement dévastées ?

Bien avant que ne survienne la pandémie, il était évident que la financiarisation de l'économie mondiale alimentait des niveaux vertigineux d'inégalités ainsi qu'une volatilité économique inutile. Dans cette crise sans précédent, la nécessité de la maîtriser est littéralement devenue une question de vie ou de mort.

## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

# In Era of COVID-19, Russia's Strategic Politics of Coronavirus Aid Takes the Stage in Africa

By Kester Kenn Klomegh\*

With coronavirus rapidly spreading among the population of 148 million, Russia took the third position in the world. According to the official data provided on May 11, Russia had an aggregate total of 221,344 COVID-19 cases. The United Kingdom and Italy earlier reported 219,183 and 219,070 cases, respectively. Spain comes in second with 224,390 coronavirus cases, and the United States ranked first with nearly 1.4 million cases.

That are huge gaps compared to over 50,000 cases among 1.3 billion population of Africa, at a first glance, and readily offered an understandable story. South Africa and Maghreb region are the hardest hit and worse affected with the coronavirus in Africa. As expected, the pandemic places diverse impact on the global economies and the society, recommended measures have been taken in a bid to prevent the coronavirus spread.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) report, Africa still behind European countries when it comes to the COVID-19 outbreak and is far from seeing its peak. While Africa has only reported more than 50,000 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus early May, the UNECA-released report "COVID-19 in Africa: Protecting Lives and Economies" said "anywhere between 300,000 and 3.3 million African people could lose their lives as a direct result of COVID-19, depending on the intervention measures taken to stop the spread."

According to the Regional Office for Africa of the World Health Organization (WHO), the hardest hit are South Africa and mostly Maghreb countries of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. These Maghreb countries have strengthened information controls, instead of upholding transparency during the health crisis, but generally reported to have more than 5,000 infections, while in Tunisia, there are 1,018 patients and 43 people have died. In sub-Saharan West Africa, Ghana and Nigeria are also among the top ten African countries affected the pandemic.

While Russia, for a time, appeared to escape a serious coronavirus outbreak, the situation there has changed drastically during these two months of April and May, - passing Germany and France to become the third most-infected country in the world, according to The Moscow Times. Russia now has the fastest rate of new cases in Europe, and second-fastest rate of new cases in the world behind the United States.

In an important part, Russian health workers are still reporting a shortage on protective equipment. With the picture getting highly scary, Russian President Vladimir Putin worries about any slightest missteps when, in one of his live television speeches, he warned: "We cannot jump ahead of ourselves. Any carelessness or haste may cause a setback."

Despite its internal difficulties, Russia has been offering coronavirus assistance to a number of Africa countries. Russia is using it bilateral and multilateral mechanisms in addressing these requests filed by African countries since March after the coronavirus pandemic had spread to the continent that consists of 54 countries. However, Lesotho and Comoros are free from the coronavirus.

Russian Foreign Ministry said a number of African countries have requested Moscow's assistance in combating the coronavirus. "A number of countries on the African continent have requested Russia's assistance in combating COVID-19. African nations need a wide range of medical equipment, including ventilators, as well as testing systems, individual protective gear, disinfectants and consumables. These requests are carefully studied and the situation in a particular country is taken into account," it reported, adding that coronavirus spread rates were relatively

low in African countries, with the exception of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and South Africa.

"However, this issue is causing serious concern to many countries on the continent. The social and economic situations in many of these countries are complicated, while high population density, poor healthcare systems, various crises and conflicts, transparent borders and uncontrolled migration can lead to a sharp rise in cases and unpredictable consequences," the statement said.

According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, the pandemic may negatively affect African countries' ability to carry out major tasks to overcome poverty, ensure sustainable development and implement integration projects. Russia had been assisting African countries in responding to natural disasters and the spread of infectious diseases, including the Ebola fever. "We will do what we can to help the continent combat the coronavirus pandemic, using bilateral mechanisms and those of international organizations," the ministry said, noting that "when making decisions, we will take a whole set of factors into account, including Russia's coronavirus spread rate."

Understandably, wholesale provision of coronavirus assistance is, absolutely and practically, impossible to Africa. Therefore, in the shadow of COVID-19, Russia is strategically choosing for its coronavirus aid destinations inside Africa, experts argued. Historically, Russia has had a high preference for the Maghreb region and southern

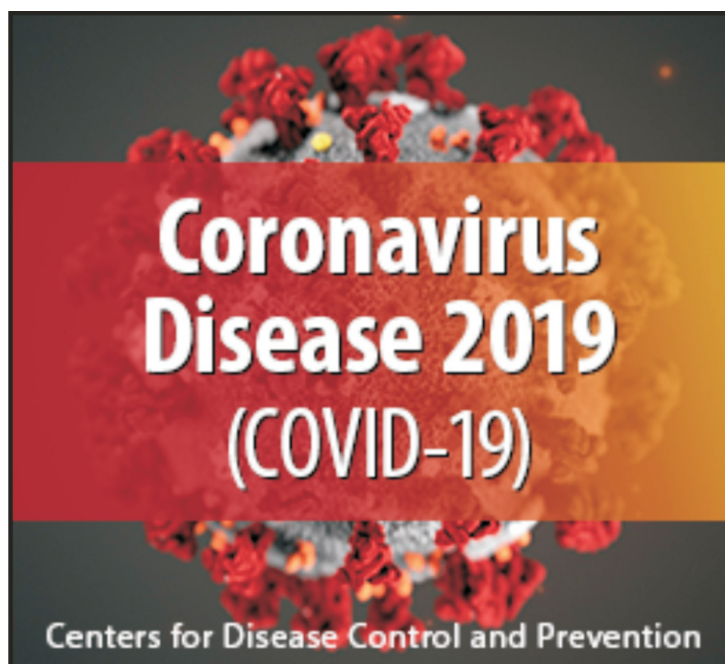
medicines, vaccines, and there are not enough masks, gloves, and disinfectants.

In this regard, the Congolese are looking forward to the arrival of two mobile laboratories at the end of May this year, which, due to their versatility, can be used to combat the spread of a number of especially dangerous infections, including COVID-19. Russia plans to train Congolese personnel in these microbiological complexes.

In addition, as part of the provision of gratuitous anti-epidemic assistance, Rospotrebnadzor plans to send modern laboratory equipment, diagnostic preparations, vaccines against BVE, cholera, plague and measles, test systems for the detection of Ebola, dengue fever, malaria, cholera and coronavirus to Kinshasa.

Russian-Congolese health contacts are quite extensive and are backed by an agreement signed between the Federal Service for Supervision of Consumer Rights Protection and Humanitarian Affairs and the DRC on the sidelines of the Russia-Africa summit in October 2019 in Sochi. Over the course of several years, Russian virologists have repeatedly visited this country in order to identify its urgent needs, held meetings with local specialists and, in the most difficult period of the global spread of coronavirus in the Republic of Congo.

Russia's Sputnik News, under the headline "TO BE CONT'D"



African countries. Thus, in the months of April and May, aid was delivered to Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in North Africa. Ethiopia and Djibouti in eastern Africa. In southern Africa, the beneficiaries included Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, according to various media reports inside Africa.

On May 11, at the National Institute of Biomedical Research (NIBI) of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), more than 28 thousand units of laboratory supplies and 8 thousand units of personal protective equipment including protective clothing, respirators, reusable full-face masks with a set of filters and gloves were delivered. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs media report, the cargo was sent by Russia's Rospotrebnadzor.

The delivery event was attended by the DRC Minister of Health, DrEteniLongondo, Advisers to the President, P. Muanda Congo and S. SialSial, as well as the Director of the National Institute of Biomedical Research (NIBI), Professor J.M. MuyembeTampam and Russian Ambassador Aleksey LeonidovichSentebov. According to WHO, Congo confirmed its first case of coronavirus mid-March, and as of May 5, there were only 264 confirmed cases and 11 deaths in a country of some 80 million people. Therefore, the Russia's assistance provided is extremely timely, since epidemics of coronavirus, Ebola, Cholera and Measles broke out, at the same time, in the country. In difficult sanitary and epidemiological conditions, DR Congo is experiencing a sharp shortage of equipment, tests,

## Justice Minister

Starts from back page

protecting the fundamental rights of everyone, even as it grapples with an unprecedented health crisis and urges all to refrain from making incendiary remarks which could undermine the hard-earned peace.

"Liberia currently faces an existential threat that should claim the attention of all of us. Attempting to score political points when our compatriots die is unpatriotic," Minister Nagbe concludes.

Mr. Dumoe in his media post suggested that poor Liberians here need an AK47 rifle, a gun notorious here during the country's nearly two decades of civil war, to be taken seriously by the government instead of a promised rice that has been long overdue.

"We don't need free bags of rice. I say we the poor in Monrovia need AK47s so our leaders can take us seriously," Mr. Dumoe wrote on Facebook.

Although Mr. Dumoe, a young promising political activist has said that his statement was metaphorical, state securities here on Tuesday invited him

for a conference to enable him provide them a better understanding of his statement, but he was soon arrested and a search warrant issued to search his home for arms or related documentation.

Under the previous regime of former president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, his comment would have been described as someone seeking an "undue attention," but not under this regime.

Mr. Dumoe did not deny making the post, but he claims he was being metaphorical, saying he is not talking about using a physical weapon.

His lawyer Cllr. Finley Karnga complained Tuesday that his client was arrested, contrary to police's assurance that he should accompany his client to the police headquarters in Monrovia for a conference.

Cllr. Karnga says he felt extremely betrayed and belittled on grounds that the "police - lawyer relationship" which he had relied upon to carry his client for the conference had been abused by the authorities whose real plan to arrest his client was hidden.

# Total lockdown imminent

Reports reaching the New Dawn newspaper indicate that there is going to be a total lockdown of communities following the distribution of COVID-19 response food packages to enable health workers move in to test for the virus.

As at May 13, 2020, Liberia has reported 215 confirmed coronavirus cases. Of this number, the country has reported 20 death and 105 recoveries with 90 active cases.

Liberia is in the third phase of 14 days lockdowns imposed by the administration to ease the spread of the virus as extensions of the lockdown measure became necessary

Household Food Support Program told this paper Thursday, May 14, 2020, that the food distribution which is expected to commence on the 23rd of this month will begin at 3pm to ensure that community dwellers are within their respective communities to be able to receive their food packages.

Minister Tarpeh also told this paper that his committee will rely heavily on community leaders to work with the World Food Program for the food distribution.

He said the committee is expected to host a major press conference today (Friday May 15, 202) to spell out how the food distribution will be carried out.

It could be recalled that

Senate-which some say was payment of overdue operational funds, while others said it was their sitting fees.

The Steering Committee comprises government officials, media organizations representatives, opposition members and the World Food Program.

According to Mr. Tarpeh, the distribution will be modelled after the former Special Emergency Life Food (SELF) food distribution program.

"We will begin with the initial four affected counties-Montserrado, Margibi, Nimba and Bong Counties," Minister Tarpeh was quoted to have said in a



here due to continuous reports of new cases of the virus.

Authorities here say health workers have identified some of the hot spots and those areas will be among the food recipient communities to enable mass testing for the virus.

Though it is not clear how long the total lockdown will last for, officials say it would depend on the number of days it will take for distribution and testing to be completed in a target community.

Commerce Minister Wilson Tarpeh who chairs the Liberian Government's Steering Committee for the

President George Weah a month ago presented a stimulus package before the Liberian Legislature to provide emergency relief to citizens here during the country's State of Emergency. An amount of US\$25 million was earmarked to cover the entire stimulus package, which includes emergency food distribution, electricity and water supply, hazard pay for medical workers etc.

However, since the rectification of the resolution by the National Legislature, which did not only approved the President's State of Emergency (SOE) but also extended the SOE by 60 days with a controversial USD6, 500 payoff to members of the

statement issued on May 3rd.

He further stated that the remaining 11 counties will be included in the food distribution program at a later stage.

Minister Tarpeh also noted that in order to keep the wheels of the economy turning during this period of emergency, the Committee has decided to include local farm produce such as palm oil, red beans etc, as part of the food package. He opined that the move is to empower local farmers.

"This is intended to empower our local farmers economically as we battle the pandemic," said Tarpeh.

# ArcelorMittal Liberia

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importance on the health, safety and wellbeing of its workforce and the public, AML has been a pro-active key player in the fight against the Coronavirus. The Company has also ordered additional medical supplies and equipment for our hospitals and is also supporting the fight against COVID-19 at the community, county, and governmental levels. An overriding commitment to the health and safety of our people as well as contributing beyond our own operations is a fundamental part of our business values and who we

are as a company. "We will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders throughout this crisis," it continued.

ArcelorMittalArcelorMittal is the world's leading steel and mining company, with a presence in 60 countries and primary steelmaking facilities in 18 countries.

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# Rape suspects release

Cont'd from page 6

notice, I met with Judge Nuta and I appealed to him (Judge Nuta) not to release these suspects," Flomo said.

According to the State prosecutor, he informed Judge Nuta that several defendants agreed to confess in court in a plea-bargain trail.

But contrary to his plea, he was surprised when he learned on April 14, 2020, that the eight suspects who had been indicted on rape, a non-billable offense under the law, were being released by Judge Nuta.

He said a suspect identified as Junior Flomo who was charged for raping his grandmother, mother, and a one-week-old baby and her mother was among eight pre-trial detainees that were released by Judge Nuta.

Additionally, Attorney Flomo said the Judge was in error to release the 8 suspects,

on the ground that if you read Chapter 25, Section 25.3 of the amended judicial law, all sexual offenses should be heard in the Sexual Offenses Division of the Ninth Circuit Court of Bong County, not the circuit court.

It can be recalled that Judge George C. Katakpah was appointed by the President of the Republic of Liberia as Resident Judge of the Sexual Offenses Division of the 9th Judicial Circuit in Bong County and was subsequently confirmed by the Senate and Commissioned.

Meanwhile, Attorney Flomo revealed that he has filed a former complaint to the Ministry of Justice on the illegal action of Judge Nuta.

However, efforts by the NewDawn Bong Correspondent to contact the accused Judge Nuta proves fruitless, as his phone rang endlessly without answer and later switched off.

# High risk for

Cont'd from page 7

to make.

According to Sen. Dr Coleman, the Covid - 19 Steering Committee is divided into pillars, and one of those pillars is the case management, adding that it requires contact tracing.

Sen. Coleman reveals that since the response started, they have admitted 152 persons at the 14th Military Hospital which has 150 beds capacity, saying 110 of those admitted there for the virus have been discharged.

At the time of giving his update, Coleman says 51 patients were admitted at the 14th Military Hospital, saying only one death has occurred there from the time the steering committee was established.

At the quarantine center, Sen. Coleman continues that there are 78 patients that are

being observed, adding that recently the Liberian Government received an offer of a 56 - bed hospital from the World Lebanese Culture Union of Liberia to boost the case management here.

In his update, Coleman notes that Liberia had a total of 213 confirmed cases as of 11 May, out of which Montserrado had 185 cases; Margibi had 13 cases; Nimba had 6 cases; Gbarpolu had 5 cases; Maryland had 1; Sinoe had 1 case and Grand Kru had 1 case.

Meanwhile, Sen Coleman discloses that the recovery rate here is 46.6%, boasting that it is the highest in the African region. He states that the effectiveness of the treatment center results to the number of recoveries seen here.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

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# Weah raps on political gains



Pres. Weah

By **Winston W. Parley**

President George Manneh Weah is cautioning Liberians against claiming to be patriots, but opting to gain political capital out of a national crisis - coronavirus.

Mr. Weah faces criticisms for allegedly personalizing government's fight against the virus as "Weah's Project" with giant - sized billboards erected for awareness

containing only his image.

"Fellow Liberians, this is when we all show love and devotion to country. You can't claim patriotism but opt to gain political capital out of a national crisis," he said in a statement released on Unification Day, 14 May.

Vice President Jewel Howard - Taylor has followed in Mr. Weah's footsteps with separate billboards carrying her image, just as some lawmakers have

done, leaving some members of the public to question the individual approach of government officials in the fight against the coronavirus.

Some anti - coronavirus buckets and other items being used to help the public in controlling the spread of the virus and spreading messages that promote health protocols intended to defeat the virus have President Weah's photos, and other officials on them.

Notwithstanding, President Weah suggests that now is the time for Liberians, including him, to put aside the political machinations for the sake of the country.

"There will always be time for politicking. All of our leaders, political, business, religious, or otherwise, should lend a hand as we grapple to rid our country of the deadly virus," he says.

As of 10:00pm Wednesday, 13 May, the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) reported that Liberia

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# Justice Minister orders Dumoe's release

By **Winston W. Parley**

Liberia's Justice Minister Frank Musah Dean has ordered the release of

pressure group Council of Patriots (COP's) acting chairman Menikpakei Dumoe, after staying approximately two days in police detention over his social media post that the government here claims was threatening to national security.

In a statement authorized by Information Minister

Eugene Lenn Nagbe on Unification Day, Thursday, 14 May, the government says Dumoe was arrested on Tuesday, 12 May after a search of his home - which was sanctioned by the courts - for making comments deemed threatening to national security.

Minister Nagbe who along with the Justice Minister and other senior security officials were released recently from quarantine over coronavirus infections, recalls that earlier



Menikpakei Dumoe as police search his home

this week, Dumoe posted on his Facebook page that poor people in Monrovia needed "Ak47s so that the government can take us seriously".

According to Minister Nagbe, Justice Minister Dean says an investigation by the Joint Security Forces, which includes the examination of materials from Dumoe's home, is continuing.

He says the government remains committed to

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