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Milton A. Weeks



David Fahart



An Executive of the United Blind Association, Stanley S. Swen

Blind Association rejects Covid-19 food

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Continental News

Police rescue workers 'locked in rice factory'

Police in Nigeria have rescued 300 people they say were locked in a rice-processing factory and forced to work throughout a coronavirus lockdown.

From the end of March the men were allegedly not allowed to leave the mill in the northern city of Kano.

The workers were promised an additional \$13 (£10) a month on top of their \$72 monthly salary - those who did not accept were threatened with the sack.

Five managers at the Indian-owned mill have been arrested.

The company, called Popular Farms, has not responded to BBC requests for comment.

Police spokesman Abdullahi Haruna told the BBC that the plant had now been shut down and the owners were being investigated for "holding the men against their will".

Some of the men say were forced to work most of the time during their incarceration, with little food.

"We were allowed to rest for only a short time, no prayers were allowed, no family visits," 28-year-old Hamza Ibrahim,

one of those rescued, told the BBC's Mansur Abubakar in Kano. The police were tipped off about the men's plight after one of them called a human rights organisation.

"What I saw was heart breaking. Where the company

kept these people to live isn't fit for animals," Karibu Yahaya Kabara of the Global Human Rights Network told the BBC.

"Their meals weren't enough and there were no drugs for those that took ill," he said. Mr Kabara said his organisation was taking up the case to ensure that the men got justice.

Nigerian businesses were asked to close up shop in late March as part of government guidelines to halt the spread of coronavirus.

The country has more than 20,000 confirmed cases of Covid-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus.

Lagos, in the south, remains the epicentre of the virus, but Kano - Nigeria's

second-biggest city and the capital of Kano state, has the most cases in the north.

Lockdowns elsewhere in the country have been eased - but in Kano people are still only allowed to go out on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays to buy food at stipulated times.

Popular Farms workers say they were asked to double their hours in February as their employers wanted to stockpile in preparation for a shutdown.

By March they say it was decided to keep the plant going by offering them more money - or the sack - to stay on working.

However, having agreed to stay on the workers discovered they had been prevented from ever leaving the mill. BBC



The men slept inside the warehouse for about three months and were not allowed out

Tanzanian opposition leader arrested ahead of polls

An opposition party in Tanzania has condemned the arrest of its leader, Zitto Kabwe, describing it as a clear act of oppression and intimidation ahead of October's elections.

The Alliance for Change and Transparency (Act) says Mr Kabwe and seven colleagues have been

accused by the police of unlawful assembly.

Police interrupted a legal political meeting in the south-eastern region of Lindi and arrested them on trumped up charges, a party statement says.

The East African nation will hold general elections in October.

President John Magufuli,

who is expected to run for a second term, dissolved parliament last week.

Rights groups say oppression of the opposition has increased significantly since President Magufuli came to power in 2015 during which time there has also been a clampdown on the media. BBC



Zitto Kabwe was holding a political meeting when he was arrested

Hundreds protest over rape of 5-year-old girl

Police in Sierra Leone briefly detained some people after they took to the streets in Freetown on Monday to protest against the rape of a five-year-old who died of her injuries.

The protesters called for justice and an end to sexual and gender based violence.

The post-mortem report indicates that she was raped multiple times and died on June 17. Police say the main suspect, who is said to be the

social media.

Sierra Leoneans took to social media to express outrage over the incident.

A leading child rights campaign group, Kids Advocacy Network (KAN), said the rape is a violation of the country's child protection laws.

"We urge the Sierra Leone police to fully investigate the matter and charge in court all the perpetrators to face



girl's relative, and a suspected accomplice have been detained as authorities continue their investigation.

Protesters said they fear the case could end up unresolved like many others in the past, due to socio-cultural factors and the lack of capacity to properly investigate and prosecute rape cases.

News of the death of baby Khadija broke at the weekend, after a copy of her post-mortem report was leaked on

justice," it said in a statement.

First Lady Fatima Bio, who is a well-known campaigner against sexual and gender based violence, said she would wage war against the perpetrator.

She posted on her Facebook page that she and her husband, President Julius Maada Bio, were shocked about the rape case and will fight to ensure justice for the girl and her family. AFP

EDITORIAL

Back to status quo

WE MAY HAVE sounded to some like prophets of doom when we alarmed in a recent editorial that Liberia is seriously slipping into a dilemma, as the country embarks on easing some restrictions, for eventual resumption of normal activities amid a rapid increase of confirmed cases of the coronavirus. Sorry. We are not doom sayers.

BUT THE REALITY has set in. Less than a week after we made that alert, the country is returning to the status quo, as President George Manneh Weah has extended the State of Emergency by additional 30 days and reversed the 9:00pm lockdown to 6:00pm with strict mandate for the enforcement of all health protocols, including compulsory wearing of facemasks in public places at all times, constant hands wash and social distancing, among others.

AS WE FELT then, and now, not much progress has been achieved that should inform the government it is time to ease restrictions and open up the economy. The authorities had announced resumption of normal flights at the Roberts international Airport as of June 22, 2020 but President Weah has deferred the schedule by one week, setting June 28th instead, as the new date for flights to resume at the airport.

THE GOVERNMENT SAYS this is necessary to make sure proper measures are put in place to keep travelers and airport employees safe amid upsurge of the pandemic.

BESIDES, PRESIDENT WEAH has mandated the Minister of Health Dr. Wilehmina Jallah to announce and make public details of other health measures aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus in the country.

WE ARE BAFFLE but not ruffle. In the first place, what really informed the President to have begun easing restrictions when statistics from the National Public Health Institute of Liberia or NPHIL, show clearly and consistently that cases are on the increase since the country's index case was pronounced on March 16, 2020?

SOMETHING SEEMS FUNDAMENTALLY wronged here. We suspect that the President is being misinformed about progress from the frontline in the ongoing Covid-19 fight and therefore, misled to taking actions or making pronouncements that he would have to go back on, as in the case instant.

ARE HEALTH AUTHORITIES being honest with the President on the health crisis or are they sweet talking in his ears for self-interest, while sweeping the real issues under the rug? Something smells fishy here.

FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, recently challenged the Government of Liberia, particularly, health authorities leading the fight against the COVID-19 to provide "Clear, measurable, and easy-to-understand" indicators on progress made in the fight, if there were any justifiable reasons to continue the lockdown.

NGAFUAN: "RELYING MORE on the advice of health authorities during a health crisis is the prudent thing to do. However, the Liberian people deserve more concrete and detailed indicators to justify the extension of a lockdown than a nebulous unresolved crisis."

INDEED, THIS IS the quandary we seem to find ourselves right now as a people: Forward never; backward to sickness, poverty, misery and death. Only we Liberians can liberate ourselves from this deadly pandemic by putting all hands on deck and strictly observing all health protocols to stay safe.

COMMENTARY

By Anne O. Krueger

What the Global Pandemic Response Is Missing

While developing countries' debt levels have received ample attention in recent months, little has been said about a more immediate problem: their inability to acquire the medical supplies needed to fight COVID-19. To minimize the negative impact, a non-market allocation mechanism must be quickly established.

WASHINGTON, DC - After ravaging the developed world, COVID-19 is now devastating developing and emerging-market countries, most of which lack the medical and financial capacity to combat the pandemic and its economic effects.

For advanced economies, the first line of defense has been social distancing, hand washing, face masks, and widespread lockdowns. But for poorer countries, replicating this response is virtually impossible. Housing tends to be overcrowded, and face masks and soap are scarce. Moreover, water sources and sanitation facilities are often shared and situated in narrow alleys, and many poor people must leave their homes daily to access them or to purchase food. Hence, for poor people who live hand to mouth, an enforced lockdown amounts to a sentence of penury and possibly starvation.

Conditions in many parts of India illustrate the catastrophe that has been unfolding across developing and emerging markets. When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared a sudden lockdown in late March, millions of migrants lost work and were forced to return to their villages hundreds of miles away. With no means of transportation, they simply started walking, spreading the virus as they went.

Now that India's lockdown has been lifted, and, with hospital capacity having reached its limits, even people presenting with severe COVID-19 symptoms are being turned away. The Washington Post reports that, "Before the pandemic hit, India had only 0.5 hospital beds per 1,000 people, ... compared with 3.2 in Italy and 12.3 in South Korea." Mumbai, a city of 20 million, has just 14 intensive-care-unit beds available for COVID-19 patients. And yet, by the end of July, India is expected to have at least 500,000 cases, up from an estimated 30,000 today.

The circumstances are just as dire in many other developing countries. In addition to lacking hospital capacity, most have little or no productive capacity for personal protective equipment (PPE), medicines, and other critical supplies. And while advanced economies and international institutions are coordinating financial support and debt relief for developing countries, this shortage of essential goods has yet to be addressed.

Making matters worse, at least 75 governments have imposed restrictions or bans on exports of medical supplies, prompting importing countries to start investing in their own capacity. Already, this is leading to a vicious circle in which export restraints encourage import restrictions and vice versa.

In normal times, markets would allocate these resources efficiently, with rising prices leading to lower demand and more supply. But that cannot happen in a global crisis; nor does it help simply to furnish developing and emerging markets with financing. Fresh funds would allow them to bid for supplies in global markets,

but the effect would be to send prices higher. Ultimately, because the short-term supply of PPE and other products is inelastic, wealthier countries would crowd out the poor.

If distribution of a vaccine is left to the market, there will be an even more intense bidding war. Without some kind of allocation mechanism, demand would initially far outstrip supply, and the price would skyrocket. Moreover, while supply eventually would increase and price pressures would ease, there would still be problems. If export restrictions persisted, the high-cost production facilities now being built would divert precious resources from programs to help the poor. And because these facilities remain under construction, they won't add any productive capacity during the period of acute price increases, just when it is needed most.

In the long run, the completion of these facilities would mean that more efficient producers in advanced economies could not resume the same level of sales to poorer countries. Those countries would have their own less-efficient medical supply industries, exporting countries would be left with excess capacity, and everyone would be worse off.

Avoiding such a wasteful outcome requires a mechanism for rationing scarce medical equipment until supplies have increased. Rich countries should not simply extend cash or loans to poorer countries to purchase what they need, because they will effectively be financing a bidding war against themselves. Instead of money, countries that need medical supplies and equipment should receive goods in kind.

The international community, for its part, will need to agree on the criteria for allocating medical supplies, and then enforce them to prevent black markets from developing. Obviously, infection rates and public-health capacity (or the lack thereof) should be the major factors guiding allocation decisions. But recipient countries also will need to agree to refrain from wasting scarce resources on building their own productive capacity.

Given that it already has most of the necessary data, the World Health Organization should take the lead on coordinating medical-supply allocation. In an ideal world, everyone would receive the supplies they need without regard to their ability to pay. In the real world, vaccine developers and PPE producers must be able to count on some reward for their efforts, or they won't undertake them in the first place.

With an allocation mechanism, at least such rewards would not be supercharged by a bidding war. More important, governments in developing and emerging-market countries would be better positioned to resist protectionist pressures, and to expend their scarce resources on programs to ameliorate the pandemic and recession. If these governments have a voice at the table, the road to recovery will be much smoother, and the global production of medical supplies will be more efficient and equitable both now and over the long term.

New Dawn
TRULY INDEPENDENT

O-PED

By Daron Acemoglu

The Great Debt Cleanup

Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in a steep economic downturn, highly indebted emerging markets and developing countries are facing potentially ruinous fiscal crises, the costs of which will fall on ordinary citizens. Fortunately, there is a way to address the problem that is both practical and just.

BOSTON - With more than \$7.5 trillion owed to external creditors, emerging economies' debt-service costs are becoming increasingly onerous just when they need as much fiscal space as possible to confront the COVID-19 crisis. While there is a strong case for canceling much of this debt, many key players oppose doing so, arguing that it would limit these countries' access to international markets in the future, thereby reducing investment and growth.

In fact, the evidence for this view is fairly weak. Far from reliably boosting investment and growth, international financial flows are more likely to contribute to volatility in emerging markets and developing economies. Even so, it has long been assumed in academia and policy circles that international finance helps emerging economies build more effective institutions, enabling them to develop their banking system and stock markets, for example. Opponents of debt forgiveness have also argued that emerging markets need the "discipline" that international bond markets provide, because the threat of capital flight constrains misrule by autocrats and populists.

Hence, during the European debt crisis, Greeks were discouraged from defaulting on their debts to foreign banks, lest they destroy their credit profile. And even after Greek voters had rejected the terms imposed by the troika of official creditors (the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund), the country's left-wing government ultimately made a deal, leading many policymakers to conclude that market discipline had worked.

But this narrative no longer rings true. Far from checking autocrats, international finance has been facilitating them. For example, in South Africa between 2009 and 2018, foreign funds continued pouring in even after it was obvious that then-President Jacob Zuma's kleptocratic government was hollowing out the country's economy and institutions. When Zuma was finally kicked out of power, it was because his own party, the African National Congress, took steps to remove him. The whip of international markets had little to do with it.

Similarly, although Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's attacks on his country's institutions have coincided with declining investment and productivity growth, foreign investors have saved him. With money still flowing in to finance a growing current-account deficit and prop up a faltering economy, Erdogan has been able to consolidate his rule, even establishing a presidential system that subordinates parliament and the courts to him. As with Zuma, the greatest resistance Erdogan faces comes not from international markets, but from domestic politics. In municipal elections last year, his party was defeated in most of Turkey's major cities, leaving his grip on power significantly weakened.

Beyond these examples, there is also mounting evidence that international finance has overtly facilitated corruption and criminal activities in emerging markets, as in the case of Goldman Sachs's alleged involvement in Malaysia's \$700 million 1MDB fraud scandal. None of these cases should come as a surprise. Why wouldn't international financial institutions seize on opportunities to lend on attractive terms to autocrats, or to boost profits by helping kleptocrats and dodgy businesses cook the books and exploit tax havens?

To move beyond this broken status quo, we should seek forms of debt restructuring and forgiveness that would cut off corrupt regimes. One idea is to establish an international, impartial body to set the rules for fair lending practices by international banks. The same institution could then determine whether a country's current debts were accumulated under democratic governments, whether they are the legacy of kleptocratic and fraudulent borrowing sprees, and whether their repayment or servicing would impose undue hardship on the population.

For countries that borrowed under democratic governments, external debts could be restructured on generous terms, and similar options could be provided to long-term creditors and those who have undertaken foreign direct investment in the emerging world (because these forms of lending are less likely to end up in autocrats' pockets). For countries in the second group, the "odious debts" that were accumulated under past autocratic or corrupt governments should be written off. Ordinary citizens should not suffer the consequences of deals made between financial institutions and politicians they did not elect. Investors who struck Faustian bargains with kleptocrats should not benefit from international protection.

As for the third group - governments facing socially intolerable repayment or servicing costs - there is a clear case for not forcing these countries into deeper poverty, even if their debts were incurred under democratically elected governments. The assumption that a massive round of debt restructuring and forgiveness would mean the end of plentiful capital for emerging markets is not well founded. Even if these countries refused restructuring or forgiveness, their debt overhangs would prevent further investment in infrastructure, poverty alleviation, and new technologies.

Equally important, the cancellation of odious debts would improve the incentives governing international financial markets, because lenders would have to think twice before propping up authoritarian and corrupt regimes. And this change could provide an impetus for designing a new framework for global financial integration.

This approach will work only if it does not become a blanket condemnation of international finance. Many developing countries still need resources for investment and infrastructure, and there are still plenty of responsible, regulated international financial flows that they can tap. We must not create a situation in which emerging markets and developing countries are left without any access to finance at all.

To that end, debt restructuring and cancellation should be clearly framed as an emergency measure that will discriminate between those institutions that have acted properly and those that have entered into deals with corrupt and authoritarian governments. We need a new international body not only to oversee the rules of future financial engagements and monitor financial malfeasance, but also to backstop a new global framework of norms and standards. Only that can ensure the system's legitimacy in the eyes of developing countries and international financial institutions alike.

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OPINION

By Daoud Kuttab

Israel's Trumpian Unilateralism

Under the cover of a sham "peace plan" put forward by the Trump administration earlier this year, Israel is rushing to seize occupied Palestinian territory in the West Bank. The Netanyahu government's cynical strategy not only violates longstanding international law, but also undermines Israel's own long-term interests.

AMMAN - Since the end of World War II, the international community has embraced a simple but powerful principle: No country, no matter how powerful, may take land from its neighbors by force. When Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands in 1982, the world voiced few objections to the United Kingdom's military intervention to retake its territory. When Iraq occupied Kuwait in 1990, the United Nations authorized military action to expel them. And when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, the UN imposed heavy sanctions that remain in place today.

For 53 years, Palestinians have placed their hopes in this principle. In 1967, it was codified in the preamble to UN Security Council Resolution 242, which established a roadmap for peace between Israel and Palestine, and further affirmed "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war." Although living under occupation has always been unacceptable to Palestinians, it was made tolerable by the hope that right would overcome might, and Israel's "inadmissible" occupation eventually would end.

Moreover, unlike the Falklanders, the Kuwaitis, or the Ukrainians, Palestinians have shown flexibility in trying to negotiate an acceptable settlement with Israel. But instead of being rewarded for this good faith, Palestinian offers of land swaps (equal in size and quality) have been twisted by policymakers in Israel to legitimize the theft of occupied Palestinian territory.

And now Israel is moving to annex much of the West Bank. Of course, the Israelis would never be this brazen on their own. They are exploiting an opening created by the sham "peace plan" unveiled in January by US President Donald Trump and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner. Conceived by the Israelis and presented by the United States, the plan would give large parts of the occupied territories - including the strategically vital Jordan Valley - to Israel. Palestinians will be left, literally, out in the desert.

While the Americans have stated that their "vision" must be accepted fully or not at all, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, facing a court trial on multiple charges of corruption, has been happy to pocket whatever political handouts Trump offers him in the meantime. With the unconditional support of the world's leading superpower, Israel can now pursue land grabs without any regard for past agreements with the Palestinians, Jordanians, or Egyptians, let alone objections from the rest of the world.

To be sure, at the poorly prepared Camp David II summit in 2000, the Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat, accepted the basic idea of land swaps; but Palestinians have since made clear that any such exchange must be equal in size and quality. And this year, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas informed the Quartet (the UN, the US, the European Union, and Russia) that Palestinians acknowledged the need for some slight border modification so long as an independent Palestinian state is actually established.

Palestinians have accepted that some of the more populous illegal Jewish settlements that have been built on Palestinian land just across the 1967 Green Line could be incorporated into Israel in exchange for, say, a land corridor connecting Gaza and the West Bank. The problem is that the Israelis and some American officials regularly misrepresent this position by claiming that Palestinians have rejected peace offers and refused to negotiate. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In recent years, as former US Secretary of State John Kerry explained in April 2014, the impasse between the Israelis and Palestinians primarily reflected Israel's greenlighting of new settlements in Palestinian territory. And, since 2018, when the US moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (in violation of UNSC resolutions), Palestinian leaders have boycotted negotiations sponsored by the overtly pro-Israel Trump administration, while remaining open to multiparty talks.

In fact, the Palestinians have already indicated that they would participate in negotiations sponsored by a "Quartet-plus" group that could also include US allies such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Japan. Picking up on this opening, Russia has invited the Palestinians and Israelis for talks in Moscow. Netanyahu has repeatedly refused.

Moreover, in June, Palestinian officials submitted a four-page counter-proposal to the Trump plan, wherein they agreed to accept a demilitarized Palestinian state with minor border adjustments. But the pro-Israel hawks in the White House have ignored these offers.

In their rush to annex Palestinian lands, Israeli officials are justifying their illegal behavior on the grounds that they are only seizing territory demarcated in the Trump administration's plan. But even the naive Kushner, the architect of that plan, has rejected the idea that such transfers should occur unilaterally. The point of negotiations, after all, is to facilitate a give and take. If one side gets to take what it wants before talks have even begun, the process is pointless.

Such unilateralism is not only unfair and unjust; it is unworkable. Peace is achieved, and legitimized, not when political leaders sign some piece of paper (potentially under duress), but when the agreed terms have garnered support from the populations that will be affected by them. Without broad-based buy-in, peace will not endure.

Netanyahu's attempts to annex Palestinian occupied lands unilaterally will only create the conditions for more bloodshed, anger, and bitterness. No wonder most American Jewish leaders, a majority of the US Congress, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, and hundreds of Israeli foreign-policy and security experts oppose the Netanyahu government's reckless approach.

The situation demands a return to talks on clearly defined, mutually agreed terms, with the aim of producing a settlement that both sides can live with now and in the future. Short of that, unilateral acts will make the possibility of peace only more remote.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

I'm doing God's work

-Jeety tells VOA
By Emmanuel Mondaye

Indian Consul General to Liberia, Shri Upjit Singh Sachdeva, saying his ongoing distribution of cooked food to vulnerable Liberians in Monrovia is service to God.

Speaking to the Voice of America African Service on

financial cost on his businesses here, but the gesture is an instruction from God.

He vowed to complete the task God has given him to feed people, who lack the means financially to provide for themselves. The distribution has been ongoing daily in various communities, hospitals and prison centers in the capital for more than a month.

also share whatsoever they have with others who cannot afford.

He prayed that God will continue to give him strength to provide humanitarian assistance to destitute and venerable populations as a means of helping them to desist from their bad habits and do something positive.

Meanwhile, the Jeety



Indian Consulate Shri Upjit Singh Sachdeva and members of his free food distribution team

the exercise that has put smiles on faces of many less-fortunate residents in various communities, Mr. Sachdeva said though the free food distribution is having serious

Mr. Sachdeva, who also operates the Jeety Trading Corporation here, said one of the greatest things human beings can do on earth is not to only love their fellowman but to

COVID-19 Stay Home, Stay Safe, Hot Cooked food distribution continues in and around Monrovia daily. -
Editing by Jonathan Browne

Bong risks patients' lives?

-as Covid-19 patients held in Phebe with non-Covid patients

By Joseph Titus Yerkeryan in Bong

Bong County Health Officer Dr. Adolphus Yeiah says three nurses who were recently tested positive for coronavirus are being placed in a mini isolation room at the Phebe Hospital along with other patients, undergoing treatment.

The move could be seen as a risk to other patients who may not be treating different illnesses, given health officials'

warning that coronavirus which is also airborne disease, can easily spread through contacts with infected persons or their wastes.

However Dr. Yeiah states that the coronavirus patients will later be taken at the official quarantine center in the county upon the completion of renovation works.

Dr. Yeiah discloses that health authorities are doing everything possible to trace the contacts of those who had interacted with the infected individuals.

From 4 June up to present, Bong County has recorded 17 cases with four deaths, zero recovery and over 90 contacts being traced.

Meanwhile, Dr. Yeiah discloses here that the County Health Team recently received US\$18,000 from the World Bank as a response fund in the fight against the novel coronavirus.

Dr. Yeiah told our Bong County correspondent that the amount will be used to repair ambulances and to purchase fuel.

According to him, the County Health Team has five ambulances but three are not in good condition, adding that it has seriously challenged operations of the County Health Team over the past time.

Dr. Yeiah explains that with the contribution of the World Bank, challenges faced by the County Health Team will now be minimized.

He stresses the need for more attention to be given to the County Health Team in the Covid-19 fight, stating that such a fight can easily be won when the health team is prepared.--
Edited by Winston W. Parley



Man, 32, commits suicide

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Thirty-two years old Prince R. Balleh, resident of Logan Town sat in his living room and took his own life to the dismay of colleagues and neighbors.

The late Ballah, according to a female family source, had warned his girlfriend not to go to a local bar, Two Nations Entertainment Center around Bong Mines Bridge on Bushrod Island. But the fiancé reportedly ignored the advice.

The source further narrates the late Balleh then threatened to kill himself, if his lover left the house to go outing or have fine time with friends.

According to the source, at about 4:00AM on Monday, occupants of the house in which Ballah lived specifically, Quiah Street Community, alarmed that he has hung himself in the sitting room.

The deceased reportedly tied the rope he hanged himself with one of the round polls in the house, climbed on an empty gallon to commit the act.

She lamented that Ballah was

too young to have taken away his own life simply because of jealousy, noting that the deceased has left a serious stigma and also shamed the family in Logan Town community.

However, some community dwellers claimed the deceased was a notorious criminal and had been allegedly involved in series of burglary at private homes, stealing valuables and money.

According to them, the death of Ballah has brought great relief to residents of the community, who for several years have had sleepless nights in the hands of the deceased and his associates.

They added that with the demise of Ballah, residents can now sleep in peace and have nice dreams because their attacker is no more alive.

The deceased was on Monday interred at the Caldwell cemetery, outside Monrovia. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

Leadership deficit in Bong -CoP Acting Chairman claims

By Joseph Titus Yerkeryan in Bong

Pressure group Council of Patriots (COP) Acting Chairman Menipakeh Dumoe says Bong County faces a serious leadership deficit at the Legislature, as he declares his ambition to contest this year's senatorial election.

Mr. Dumoe told our Bong County correspondent during an

were in the interest of the citizens, the county would have moved somewhere better in development.

Mr. Dumoe projects himself as the best choice to replace Bong County Senator Henry Willie Yallah who has served for about nine years.

Meanwhile, Dumoe says he



COP Acting Chairman Menipakeh Dumoe

interview Wednesday, 24 June that the majority of the lawmakers from Bong County are only after their personal interests but not the County.

He suggests that if Bong County lawmakers on Capitol Hill

did not support J. Marvin Cole in the 2018 Senatorial by-election on grounds that it was an act of creating unnecessary by-election.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

NPP Executives battle

--as Senator Morais dares party to host primaries in Maryland County

By Ben P. Wese

Officials of the National Patriotic Party (NPP) are in verbal clashes resulting from disagreement surrounding a demand to conduct party primaries while some of those in elected offices want to avoid primaries, but to be hand-picked for the party ticket in their quest for reelection.

The NPP is a constituent

Maryland County and make the incumbent Senator Morais to participate.

According to Peters, if Morais refuses, he will definitely lose the slot to contest on the party's ticket.

Further, Peters argues that documents that were assigned by the three collaborating parties that brought the Coalition for Democratic Change to state power do not in any way have any

statement when in fact the document that brought the three parties together mentioned presidential, representatives and senatorial elections.

Senator Morais continues that he put his blood and sweat on the line to get the National Patriotic Party to where it is today, and furthers that he will not sit in silence and watch some individuals take away what he has labored for over the years.

The Maryland County senator dares the party secretary general to put his feet on Maryland soil to conduct party primaries, noting that he (senator Morais) will not allow diplomacy to make him take things lightly this time around.

Additionally, Senator Marais indicates that the party's standard-bearer is not the problem in the party, saying just a few individuals that disagreed with some decisions that were taken by the party's executives are misinforming President George Manneh Weah.

Responding to Senator Morais' threats, Mr. Peters notes that the Maryland County senator has no power to stop him (Andrew) and the party officials from going to Maryland County to conduct party primaries, saying he is not afraid of the mere talks from the senator.

Mr. Peters insists that he will enter Maryland County and conduct the party primaries, warning that if Morais refuses to form part, the party will go ahead with to select its candidate for the upcoming senatorial election.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



party of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC).

Latest public utterances relative to the internal crisis in NPP have emerged between NPP's Maryland County Senator H. Dan Morais and the party's Secretary General Andrew Peters.

It follows Peters' appearance on local broadcaster Truth FM in Paynesville when he announced that NPP will host primaries in

impact on the upcoming senatorial election.

It was Peters' statement regarding the conduct of primaries that compelled Senator Moraisto phone in to the program from Maryland County, daring his party secretary to go to Maryland and conduct primaries.

Morais says not while he is still alive will the party conduct primaries in his county, saying it beats his imagination that the party secretary will make such a

AfDB ranks 4th on global index of transparency

Publish What You Fund has ranked the African Development Bank (AfDB) fourth out of 47 global development institutions on its Aid Transparency Index.

The Index is the only independent measure of aid transparency among the world's major development agencies. The index places the Bank in the highest category of transparency along with other world class institutions such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and UNDP.

"We congratulate the African Development Bank - Sovereign Portfolio on achieving 4th place in the 2020 Aid Transparency Index. As large quantities of aid are being reallocated to deal with the COVID-19 emergency, the transparency of international aid is more

agencies. As we work together to fill the gaps in the aid data landscape, we look forward to exploring how we can best meet the demand for data and data engagement," said Gary Forster, CEO of Publish What You Fund.

The institution's commitment to total transparency is illustrated by MapAfrica (<https://bit.ly/2Cw8kEA>) - A web-based platform that maps all of the Bank's investments across the African continent.

"I am absolutely delighted with this achievement!" said Swazi Tshabalala, Acting Senior Vice President for the African Development Bank Group. "It crowns this institution's commitment to transparency at a time when it has never been so important. With such large volumes of funding now being assigned to combat the Covid-19



important than ever," said Gary Forster, CEO of Publish What You Fund, which has produced the index each year since 2011.

Publish What You Fund ranked the Bank 'very good' - The highest of the five categories used to assess organisations' transparency. The ranking is based on several criteria, including finance and budgets, basic information data, organisational planning and performance.

In the new Index, which covers the 2019 year, the African Development Bank scored 95.5 out of 100 on transparency - A significant improvement on its score for 2018.

"It is promising to see an increase in the quantity, quality and timeliness of aid data now being shared by a broad cross section of the world's major aid

pandemic, it is crucial for our citizens to know how much, where and when the African Development Bank is investing in Africa's development."

About the African Development Bank Group:

The African Development Bank Group (www.AfDB.org) is Africa's premier development finance institution. It comprises three distinct entities: the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Development Fund (ADF) and the Nigeria Trust Fund (NTF). On the ground in 41 African countries with an external office in Japan, the Bank contributes to the economic development and the social progress of its 54 regional member states. For more information: www.AfDB.org - *Press release*

Pentecostal Ministries feed 100 old folks

By Emmanuel Mondaye

New Pentecostal Ministries International (NPMI) a Christian denomination has provided food for at least 100 old folks in the Municipal Borough of New Kru Town, Monsterrado County Electoral District #16.

Presenting rice, vegetable cooking oil and cube to the

recipients at the sports ground in New Kru Town, head of media and communications Jesse Wlue Menson said the food items is the church's way of identifying with less-fortunate Liberians especially, during the Coronavirus pandemic in Liberia.

He said the distribution is in accordance with the world of God (the Holy Bible) that the church reaches out to the needy.

Mr. Menson noted that apart from New Kru Town, food distribution has also been carried to less-fortunate residents of West Point Township where at least 120 venerable women and children benefited.

He assured that the church intends to carry on similar humanitarian work in other parts of the country, as part of its mission to "rescuing the perishing."

Several beneficiaries of the humanitarian gesture, who spoke with reporters expressed thanks and appreciation to the church for putting food on their table through the grace of God.

Rebecca Lawson, Nancy Payne and Zoe Moore said the intervention by the came at the time most of them had run out of food especially, rice to feed their children. -*Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

U.S. donates anti-Covid materials to Defense Ministry

By Winston W. Parley

The United States Embassy near Monrovia, specifically its offices of the Defense Attache and Security Corporation made a donation of huge consignment of

equipment (PPEs), clora, face masks, nose masks, face shield, medical hand gloves and several other anti Covid - 19 items loaded into cartoons, worth thousands of U.S. Dollars. Making the presentation Wednesday afternoon at the

the partnership and it is very thankful for it, adding that the donation worth thousands of U.S. Dollars is being transferred to defense authorities here to support their fight against Covid - 19. Col. Alden notes the U.S.



materials aimed at helping the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) in their fight against the coronavirus here. The donation made at the Ministry of Defense Wednesday, 24 June include personal protective

ministry, a representative of the U.S. Embassy's Office of the Defense Attache and Security Corporation Col. Matthew Alden expressed delight over the partnership that exists between embassy and the Defense Ministry/AFL. He says the Embassy values

Embassy's commitment in support of the efforts of the Liberian defense officials in their fight against the virus, concluding that it is very much thankful for the partnership.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

LEC Customer Service Center reconstruction still on schedule

The Millennium Challenge Account-Liberia's reconstruction of the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) Customer Service Center (CSC) remains on schedule. According to MCA-L's Project Controls Engineer, Senesee Hemoh, the demolition work on the existing building, at Waterside, in the West Point Community, Monrovia, is completed and the installation of roof framing has commenced. He added that the project began on February 10, 2020, and is temporarily ahead of schedule.

STARK Foundation Inc., is progressing well with the construction while adhering to health and safety protocols. At the project site, all workers have been adhering to a mandatory wearing of masks, maintaining social distancing, and frequent hand washing. The previous CSC was plagued with many

deficiencies, including inadequate seating capacity for walk-in customers, poor sanitation facilities, inadequate ventilation, and a lack of efficient technologies to meet customers' needs. These deficiencies contributed to a lack of

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



"Even with the disruption caused by COVID-19, we're still set to turn over a finished building to LEC in August 2020," Hemoh said. An earlier pause on most economic activities across the country meant increased costs and shortage of materials on the market. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the project's Liberian-owned contractor,

Blind Association rejects Covid-19 food

By Bridgett Milton

Members of the United Blind Association of Liberia located in LPRC community along Somalia Drive have refused eight (8) bags of rice (25kg) taken to them by the World Food Programme as part of government's Covid-19 stimulus food package.

blind said, they refused the rice because the entire 65 membership would not benefit from eight (25kg) bags of rice. He lamented the government is not doing justice to them, adding that they have an organization with school, so how could the authorities give them eight bags of rice.

The dissatisfied and visually-impaired citizens Wednesday afternoon erected road block to prevent a WFP truck from entering their community due to what termed "inhumane" treatment from the government.

He reiterated they are refusing the rice because the government did not do them justice.

An executive of the United Blind Association Stanley S. Swen, narrated on a live talk show hosted by Cool FM that government had promised to provide food for most vulnerable Liberians in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, including blind and physically-challenged citizens.

A representative from the WFP, who asked for anonymity, confirmed to journalists that they took eight (25kg) bags of rice to members of the UBAL, but referred further inquiry to the WFP Head Office in Monrovia.

He noted that the most vulnerable people are the handicapped and the visually-impaired and in every outbreak they should get first priority from the government.

The Government of Liberia thru the 54th Legislature approved a US\$25 million stimulus to distribute food to vulnerable Liberians amid lockdown and a State of Emergency declared by President Weah to fight the global health pandemic.

He disclosed that the WFP carried the eight bags rice to them and said it is for 20 persons.

The World Bank reportedly added \$5 million grant to the amount, bringing the total to US\$30 million.

However, Stanley pointed out that the UBAL presented a list of 65 visually-impaired persons, but the WFP brought ightbags of rice for 20 persons to be shared at two persons to a bag.

But the entire process has been marred by suspicions and lack of clarity as to the usage of the money, and if food would actually reach the people, who need it most.

According to him, the government went there to play fun, explaining that the Association runs a boarding school that has huge enrolment besides their children living with them, adding that in a week, they consume a bag of rice.

Before commencement of actual distribution, the chairman of the COVID-19 food distribution steering committee, Commerce Minister Wilson Tarpeh had informed the Liberian Senate the World Food Programme, hired by the government to execute the food distribution, has charged US\$9 million for "administrative and operational cost" to do the job, but Tarpeh made a 90 degree turn around subsequently after WFP debunked the figure.

Stanley explained that they tried getting to authorities of the food distribution but to no avail.

Communication Officer James Belgrave clarified that WFP is being allocated a small percentage of around six percent (US\$1.8 million) of the US\$30 million to conduct the exercise, not US\$9million, as claimed by Tarpeh. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

He said it is better they die with hunger than to receive eight bags of rice from the Government of Liberia because the rice cannot feed all of their members, so it was better the government took back the rice.

Also speaking to journalists, a teacher at the school for the

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Français

Le sénateur Gueh contrecarre la menace de Dillon

Le sénateur du comté de Rivercess, Dallas Gueh, a déclaré que la menace du sénateur Darius Dillon de Montserrado de s'opposer au prolongement de l'état d'urgence de 30 jours est une lettre morte, car le Sénat ne débattera pas de cette question parce que la vie du peuple libérien est plus importante que toute

idéologie politique.

Le sénateur Dillon devrait au contraire soutenir l'Etat d'urgence car le comté qu'il représente au sénat est le comté le plus touché.

Lundi dernier, les législateurs issus de l'opposition avaient juré de s'opposer au prolongement de l'Etat d'urgence. Le groupe parlementaire de l'opposition

dirigé par le sénateur Dillon avait déclaré au siège du Parti de tous les libériens à Monrovia qu'il n'était pas nécessaire de prolonger l'état d'urgence.

Dillon, au nom de ses collègues, avait fait valoir que le gouvernement Weah devrait utiliser la loi sur la santé publique du Libéria, au lieu d'un état d'urgence prolongé, pour lutter contre le virus.

Mais le législateur du comté de Rivercessa dit soutenir, quant à lui, le prolongement de l'état d'urgence parce que les membres du Sénat avaient anticipé que les 60 jours précédemment approuvés dans une résolution commune n'étaient pas suffisants, c'est pourquoi leur recommandation était de 90 jours. Et bout de 60 jours, le pays ne s'est toujours pas débarrassé du virus, d'où la nécessité d'ajouter 30 jours.

Il s'est dit confiant que durant ce temps, le taux d'infection va réduire. « Le



Sen. Dallas Gueh

Sen. Darius Dillon

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Justice : Un pasteur inculpé de viol

La Police nationale du Libéria (LNP) a inculpé un pasteur de 50 ans identifié comme James Kollie pour avoir prétendument violé une jeune fille de 13 ans à Logan Town, Bushrod Island.

Selon l'acte d'accusation de la police, le 9 juin, un parent a déclaré à la Section de la protection des femmes et des enfants de la Police Nationale du Libéria à Capitol Hill que sa nièce avait été agressée sexuellement par le pasteur James Kollie.

À en croire la police, l'homme dont le nom n'a pas été divulgué dans ce journal, a indiqué que sa nièce dit à ses parents que le pasteur Kollie avait abusé d'elle sexuellement à plusieurs reprises.

Des investigations menées auprès de la victime ont établi que le pasteur a eu des relations sexuelles avec celle-ci depuis 2019. En à croire le témoignage de la victime, en 2017, sa mère Elsie l'avait envoyée à l'église du pasteur James Kollie pour cause de maladie. Mais le pasteur, la plupart du temps, l'introduisait dans sa chambre nuitamment, lui

ôtait les vêtements et se couchait sur elle et la violait sexuellement.

La police a fait savoir que la victime a expliqué que le pasteur Kollie avait couché avec elle plusieurs fois dans sa chambre et sa salle de bain alors qu'elle se trouvait à l'église pour sa délivrance.

"Au cours de l'enquête, il a été établi que la victime avait dix ans en 2017 lorsque sa mère l'a envoyée à l'église du pasteur James Kollie à Logan Town", a indiqué la police.

Le pasteur James Kollie est le fondateur de la Community Revival Church.

La police a dit disposer des preuves claires de pénétration de la victime dans le rapport qui a été fourni par un dispensaire de la place.

Les enquêteurs ont inculpé le suspect James Kollie de viol criminel conformément l'article 14.70 (a), (i), (b) de la nouvelle loi sur le viol au Libéria, dans l'attente d'un procès.



Éditorial

Nous voilà de Retour au statu quo

En tirant la sonnette dans un éditorial récent, nous avions peut-être paru comme des prophètes du mal, quand nous déclarions que le Libéria pourrait sérieusement se retrouver dans le chaos au rythme où allaient les choses.

Le pays envisageait un assouplissement de certaines restrictions et une reprise éventuelle des activités normales alors que qu'il y avait une augmentation rapide des cas confirmés de coronavirus. Désolé si nous n'avions pas été autant optimistes que certains d'entre vous. Mais sous aucune condition, nous n'avions voulu paraître comme des diseurs du malheur.

Oui, la réalité est là. Moins d'une semaine après avoir lancé cette alerte, le pays est revenu au statu quo. Le président George Manneh Weah a prolongé l'état d'urgence de 30 jours et ramené le couvre-feu de 21 heures à 18 heures et donné l'ordre strict pour l'application de toutes les mesures barrières, dont le port obligatoire de masques dans les lieux publics en tout temps, le lavage constant des mains et la distanciation sociale, entre autres.

Comme nous le pensions à l'époque, peu de progrès ont été réalisés, il serait donc anormal que le gouvernement dise qu'il est temps d'assouplir les restrictions et d'ouvrir l'économie. Le président Weah a dû reporter la reprise des vols normaux à l'aéroport international Roberts, au 28 juin, au lieu du 22 juin comme l'avait initialement annoncé les autorités.

Selon le pouvoir, ce report est nécessaire car cela permettrait au gouvernement de s'assurer que des mesures appropriées sont mises en place pour assurer la sécurité des voyageurs et des employés de l'aéroport.

En outre, le président Weah a demandé à la ministre de la Santé, Wilehmina Jallah, d'annoncer ou rendre publiques les autres mesures sanitaires visant à freiner la propagation du coronavirus dans le pays.

Mais, premièrement, nous nous posons la question de savoir ce qu'avait poussé le président à commencer à assouplir les restrictions alors que les statistiques de l'Institut national de la santé publique du Libéria (NPHIL), montraient clairement que le nombre de cas augmentaient de façon exponentielle, ce, depuis que le pays a enregistré son premier cas index le 16 mars 2020 ?

Quelque chose semble fondamentalement anormal ici. Nous pensons que le président est mal informé en ce qui concerne les progrès réalisés dans la lutte contre le Covid-19. Le chef de l'état semble avoir initialement été induit en erreur pour prendre des mesures ou faire des déclarations qui, plus tard, devraient être balayées du revers de la main comme c'est présentement le cas.

Les autorités sanitaires sont-elles honnêtes avec le président sur la crise sanitaire ou lui font-elles les yeux doux pour leur intérêt personnel, en poussant de côté les vrais problèmes ? En tout cas il y a quelque chose qui ne tourne pas rond.

L'ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères, Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, a récemment défié le gouvernement du Libéria, en particulier les autorités sanitaires impliquées dans la lutte contre le COVID-19, de fournir des indicateurs « clairs, mesurables et faciles à comprendre » sur les progrès accomplis dans la lutte, qui justifient le prolongement du confinement.

Ngafuan : « Se fier davantage aux conseils des autorités sanitaires lors d'une crise sanitaire est la chose la plus prudente à faire. Cependant, le peuple libérien mérite des indicateurs plus concrets et plus détaillés pour justifier le prolongement d'un confinement en lieu et place d'une crise nébuleuse non résolue. »

En effet, c'est le dilemme dans lequel nous semblons nous trouver en ce moment en tant que peuple. Nous n'avons jamais, au contraire, nous ne faisons que reculer vers la maladie, la pauvreté, la misère et la mort. Nous pouvons-nous débarrasser de cette pandémie mortelle sans l'intervention de quiconque, pourvue que nous nous joignons les coudes et observons de manière strictes les mesures barrières pour rester en bonne santé.

Français

Le sénateur Gueh

système de santé fait de son mieux pour réduire les chiffres en intensifiant les tests publics », a-t-il dit.

La majorité des personnes infectées par le virus sont des individus de haut niveau et non des citoyens ordinaires. Il appelle toutefois tous les Libériens à soutenir les mesures préventives annoncées par les autorités sanitaires.

En même temps, le sénateur Dallas Gueh demande le report des prochaines élections sénatoriales de mi-mandat en raison de la crise sanitaire actuelle.

« Le gouvernement a prêté le serment de protéger des vies et des biens, il serait donc suicidaire d'organiser des élections en plein épidémie », a-t-il mis en

garde.

S'exprimant lors d'une émission radiodiffusée, il a appelé le gouvernement à prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour lutter d'abord contre le virus avant de procéder aux élections.

Les élections sénatoriales de mi-mandat sont prévues le 8 décembre 2020. Gueha fait savoir que le report des élections n'est pas une première au Libéria car en 2014, des élections étaient prévues au milieu de l'épidémie d'Ebola, mais elles ont été reportées pour préserver la vie des électeurs. « Et même si cela devrait provoquer une crise institutionnelle, le sénat soutiendra le report des élections car le bien-être du peuple est plus important que les ambitions politiques des politiciens ».

Eco : le président nigérian évoque un risque de dislocation de la Cédéao

Le président du Nigéria, Muhammadu Buhari, a pour la première fois évoqué ce mercredi un risque de dislocation de la Cédéao, en cas d'arrivée de la monnaie éco en remplacement du franc CFA par la zone UEMOA. Même s'il ne s'agit pas d'une menace, les déclarations de Muhammadu Buhari montrent que les positions restent tranchées.

L'adoption d'une monnaie unique en Afrique de l'Ouest fait toujours débat. Plus de six mois après l'annonce d'Abidjan, le projet de loi portant modification du traité de l'UEMOA est toujours sur les tables des Parlements nationaux des pays membres, ainsi que sur celle du Parlement français.

Une monnaie trop proche du franc CFA

Dans ce document, la monnaie éco a un taux de change fixe avec l'euro. Et malgré le départ des représentants de Paris des instances de la politique monétaire de la nouvelle devise, le statut de garant

financier donne à la France le droit de nommer, en cas de crise, des représentants au sein du Conseil de politique monétaire de la Banque centrale des États d'Afrique de l'Ouest.

Pour le Nigeria, il n'y a pratiquement aucune différence entre l'éco de la zone UEMOA et le franc CFA actuel. Et c'est cette confusion que les pays de la Cédéao, qui ont aujourd'hui chacun leur propre monnaie, veulent lever. D'autant plus que la monnaie unique des 15 pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest aura un taux de change flexible face à un panier de devises. L'éco devrait en principe commencer à circuler avant la fin de cette année.

La série de tweets du président nigérian souligne donc l'urgence de clarifier cette situation. Et Muhammadu Buhari, dont le pays représente plus de 60% du PIB de la Cédéao, dit qu'il a tellement misé sur le projet de monnaie unique, « pour laisser faire les choses à la simple convenance et à la commodité ».

COMMENTAIRE

Par Anne O. Krueger

Covid-19 : Pour une répartition juste et efficace des ressources médicales

WASHINGTON - Après avoir ravagé les pays développés, le Covid-19 dévaste maintenant les pays en développement et les pays émergents qui pour la plupart ne disposent ni des moyens médicaux ni des moyens financiers pour faire face à la pandémie et à ses conséquences économiques.

La distanciation sociale, le lavage des mains, le port du masque et le confinement constituent la première ligne de défense des pays avancés. Mais pour les pays pauvres, ces mesures sont inapplicables en pratique. Les habitants y sont entassés dans des logements trop petits et il leur est difficile de trouver du savon ou des masques. En général ils ne disposent pas d'eau courante à domicile, l'accès à l'eau et les installations sanitaires sont collectifs et souvent situés dans de petites ruelles, ce qui impose aux habitants de sortir chaque jour de leur domicile pour s'y rendre ou pour acheter de la nourriture. Aussi pour ceux qui n'ont presque rien, le confinement les condamne-t-il à ne plus avoir de quoi se nourrir.

La situation dans une grande partie de l'Inde illustre la catastrophe qui s'est peu à peu abattue dans les pays pauvres. Fin mars, le Premier ministre indien Narendra Modi a soudain ordonné le confinement généralisé. Des millions de travailleurs migrants ont alors perdu leur emploi, ce qui les a contraints à parcourir des centaines de kilomètres pour revenir dans leurs villages, souvent à pied en raison de l'arrêt des transports. Ils ont ainsi contribué à diffuser le virus à travers le pays.

Le confinement a été levé en Inde. Mais la capacité d'accueil des hôpitaux du pays a atteint ses limites, ils ne peuvent même plus admettre les patients gravement touchés par le Covid-19. Selon le Washington Post, avant que la pandémie ne frappe, l'Inde ne comptait que 0,5 lit d'hôpital pour 1 000 habitants, contre 3,2 en Italie et 12,3 en Corée du Sud. Bombay, une mégapole de 20 millions d'habitants, ne dispose que de 14 places en soins intensifs pour les patients atteints du Covid-19. Or on s'attend à ce que l'Inde compte plus de 500 000 cas fin juillet, contre environ 30 000 aujourd'hui.

La situation est tout aussi critique dans beaucoup d'autres pays en développement. Non seulement leur capacité hospitalière est insuffisante, mais la plupart d'entre eux ne disposent pas des moyens de protection individuelle, des médicaments et des autres équipements d'importance cruciale. Certes, les nations développées et les institutions internationales coordonnent leur aide financière à ces pays, mais il faut encore palier à leur insuffisance en matériel et en médicaments de première nécessité.

Pire encore, au moins 75 pays restreignent ou interdisent l'exportation de matériel médical, ce qui pousse les pays importateurs à développer leur propre capacité. Cela conduit à un cercle vicieux dans lequel les restrictions à l'exportation poussent à restreindre l'importation, et vice-versa.

En période normale, le marché permet une répartition efficace des ressources, la hausse des prix suscitant une baisse de la demande et une offre adaptée, mais les choses ne se passent pas ainsi lors d'une crise. Il ne suffit pas d'aider financièrement les pays pauvres pour qu'ils aient accès au matériel indispensable. Des moyens financiers supplémentaires pourraient leur permettre d'accéder aux marchés mondiaux, mais

cela se traduirait par une hausse des prix. En fin de compte, l'offre à court terme en matériel de protection individuelle ne pouvant augmenter rapidement, les pays riches les obtiendraient au détriment des pays pauvres.

Quand un vaccin sera disponible, si l'on abandonne sa distribution au marché, la concurrence pour l'approvisionnement sera encore plus vive entre pays pauvres et pays riches. En l'absence d'un mécanisme d'allocation, au début la demande dépassera largement l'offre, ce qui entraînera une envolée des prix. Et même si l'offre augmente et les prix diminuent, il restera des problèmes. Si les restrictions à l'exportation sont maintenues, le coût élevé des unités de production actuellement en construction détournera des ressources précieuses initialement destinées aux programmes de lutte contre la pauvreté. Ces unités étant déjà en construction, elles ne contribueront pas à augmenter la capacité de production au moment où ce sera le plus nécessaire, lorsque les prix s'envoleront.

A long terme, l'achèvement de la construction de ces unités dans les pays riches ne permettra pas aux plus productives d'entre elles d'exporter en quantité dans les pays pauvres, car ces derniers auront été contraints de compter sur leur propre capacité de production, souvent peu performante. Les pays riches se retrouveront alors avec une capacité de production excédentaire et tout le monde sera perdant.

Un mécanisme de rationnement de la distribution des ressources médicales permettrait d'éviter un tel aboutissement en attendant que la production n'augmente. Les pays riches ne devraient pas se contenter d'accorder une aide financière ou des prêts supplémentaires aux pays pauvres pour qu'ils achètent ce dont ils ont besoin, car ils financeraient alors une guerre commerciale contre eux-mêmes. Au lieu d'argent, il faudrait fournir aux pays qui en manquent, les ressources médicales qui leur font défaut.

Pour sa part, la communauté internationale devra se mettre d'accord sur des critères d'allocation des ressources médicales ; devraient y figurer notamment le taux d'infection et la capacité hospitalière. Elle devra également surveiller la distribution de ces ressources pour éviter l'apparition d'un marché noir. De leur côté, les pays bénéficiaires devront s'abstenir de gaspiller leurs peu de moyens à développer leur propre capacité productive.

Disposant déjà de la plupart des données nécessaires, l'OMS devrait avoir un rôle essentiel pour coordonner l'allocation des ressources médicales. Dans l'idéal, chaque pays recevrait ce dont il a besoin, indépendamment de sa capacité financière. Mais en pratique, si ce n'est à les démotiver, ceux qui auront développé un vaccin et les fabricants d'équipement médical de protection individuelle devront être récompensés de leurs efforts - ce qui ne devrait pas entraîner une guerre commerciale s'il existe un mécanisme d'allocation.

Élément essentiel, les pays pauvres seront alors mieux positionnés pour résister aux mesures protectionnistes et consacrer leurs faibles ressources aux programmes de lutte contre la pandémie et la récession. Si ces pays ont droit au chapitre, la reprise en sera grandement facilitée et la production mondiale de ressources médicales sera plus efficace et plus équitable - tant à court terme qu'à long terme.

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ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Africa Supports Nigeria's Candidate for WTO Director-General

By KesterKennKlomegah

The African Union (AU) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have thrown their unflinching support for Nigeria's Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a candidate contesting for the top position at the World Trade Organization (WTO). This backing implies that Africa is strongly behind her, and

Delta State, her father Professor Chukwuka Okonjo became the Eze (King) from the Obahai Royal Family of Ogwashi-Ukwu.

With high aspirations, Okonjo-Iweala studied at prestigious Harvard University, graduating magna cum laude with an AB in Economics in 1976. In 1981, she earned her PhD in regional Economics and

With a solid education and broad experience, a number of African presidents, such as Niger's President and ECOWAS Chairman Mahamadou Issoufou has strongly urged non-African countries to get behind and endorse Africa's candidature, referring to Nigeria's Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. In addition, the Nigeria's Foreign Ministry explained in a statement that ECOWAS had thrown their support behind her candidacy due to "her long years of managerial experience at the top echelons of multilateral institutions."

There is broad support for an African candidate and a woman, since neither have headed the Geneva-based body in the past, according to sources following the process. Supporters of Okonjo-Iweala, a former minister and World Bank managing director, vaunt her negotiating skills, including clinching a multi-billion dollar debt relief package for Nigeria.

The WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. The goal is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible. It currently has 164 members, monitoring each other's practices and regulations against a set of standard trading rules in order to improve transparency and avoid protectionism.

In addition, WTO works to build the trading capacity of developing and least-developed countries, helping them integrate and benefit from the multilateral trading system. This is an essential part of the work. The trading system has been inclusive, with the benefits of trade reaching as many as possible around the world, particularly in the poorest countries.

The WTO provides its members with a tried and tested system of shared rules and principles to support economic cooperation and thereby boost growth, development and job creation around the world. It provides a forum for members to raise, discuss and potentially solve the complex problems that they face. There is huge value in the system of World Trade Organization.



further shows a popular acknowledgement among top diplomats and politicians that Africa may be in line for the Director-General's post at WTO.

This June, WTO kicked off the process for selecting a new Director-General, after its current Brazilian Chief, Roberto Azevedo, decided to leave his job a year early, at the end of August. The surprise announcement of his early departure has left everyone scrambling. His successor will have, as required, to steer reforms and negotiations in the face of rising protectionism, a deep recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and growing trade tensions, notably between the United States and China.

Biographical records, however, show that Okonjo-Iweala developed a 25-year career at the World Bank in Washington. She then served two terms as Finance Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2003-2006 and 2011-2015) under the political leadership of President Olusengun Obasanjo and President Goodluck Jonathan respectively. Born into a royal family in

Development from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a thesis titled Credit policy, rural financial markets, and Nigeria's agricultural development. She received an International Fellowship from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) that supported her doctoral studies.



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Not guilty

By Winston W. Parley

Four of the inditees in the alleged theft and economic sabotage of billions of Liberian dollars including former Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks and Ex- Board of Governors member David Fahart have pleaded not guilty to their indictment after being arraigned before court on Wednesday, 24 June.

It's the third of a set of indictments drawn out by the state in this case, containing seven charges which are higher in number compared to the five charges levied against the defendants in the previous indictments. Except for former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's son Charles E. Sirleaf, all his alleged accomplices were reindicted.

At Wednesday's proceedings, all the four defendants in the dock informed the court through

former CBL Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks; Dorbor M. Hagba, former Director of Finance; Richard H. Walker, former Director for Banking and Joseph Dennis, former Director for Internal Audit.

The government here indicted the officials in 2019 for their alleged roles in the misapplication of \$16 billion Liberian Dollars printed and shipped to Liberia to replace old local currency after a series of mass protests led local and international institutions to investigate a claim that the money had gone missing.

The billions of Liberian dollars scandal emerged at the CBL when Mr. Charles E. Sirleaf served as CBL's Deputy Governor for Operations, just as the other defendants did in working in their various positions which they held before their indictment.

Last month prosecutors nolleprosequi (drop charges against) Mr. Sirleaf "with prejudice," and

for the purpose of selecting and subsequently selected Crane Currency as the vendor to print the Liberian banknotes.

Defendant Weeks and the Board of Governors including Farhat, Emeh, Badio and Tamba are accused of deliberately failing to revert to the Legislature in line with a communication that demanded that appropriate details of the amount or quantity and denominations of the replacing banknotes be submitted to the Legislature prior to the printing and minting of coins.

Additionally, the Board is accused of mandating defendant Weeks to enter into a contract on June 12, 2019 with Crane Currency to print L\$10,000,000,000 banknotes at the cost of US\$10,121,689.20 before receiving the July 19, 2017 communication [from the Legislature].

At the time of selecting Crane Currency to print L\$5,000,000,000, the indictment says the quantity of Liberian banknotes in circulation at the time was L\$9.940 billion and that a significant number of the banknotes had worn out and mutilated, prompting the need to replace L\$5,000,000,000 approved as the objective of legislative joint resolution.

The indictment says it is demonstrably inconceivable for the CBL Board of Governors to have requested the printing of L\$10,000,000,000 to replace all legacy notes when they knew that the total amount in circulation that should have been replaced was L\$13.792 billion. The indictment alleges that the defendants conspired to willfully conceal the actual amount in circulation for the purpose of committing theft, depriving the Government of Liberia of its resources.

Further, the indictment notes that defendants Weeks, Hagba, Walker and Dennis knew or had reasons to know that from packing lists reviewed by the investigation, the total amount printed was L\$13,004,750,000 and not L\$15,506,000,000, but "they maliciously and purposely concealed and understated the actual amount..." because they had criminally connived.

nolleprosequi Hagba, Walker and Dennis "without prejudice" as Mr. Weeks remained on separate trial. Meanwhile the \$16 billion local currency which prompted their indictment remained a mystery.

While Mr. Weeks was being nolleprosequi on Monday, 8 June for the previous indictment, a new indictment was issued against him.

The defendants are accused of flagrantly violating Chapter 15, Section 15.51 of the New Penal Law of Liberia.

According to the indictment, the CBL Board of Governors in exercising their corporate power and authority, passed a resolution dated 28 April 2016



Milton A. Weeks



David Fahart

their various counsels that they did not need jury trial, but rather a bench trial in which the judge sits and decides both issues of facts and law in a matter before the court.

Following the defendants' request, presiding Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay ruled that the court had no choice but to grant the defendants' request as trial by jury is a matter of statutory right, but had been waived by the accused, acting through their lawyers.

Prosecution included in the new indictment CBL's Board of Governors and its officials as inditees, including David M. Farhat, Melissa A. Emeh, Elsie Dossen Badio and Kollie Tamba, all of whom were not listed in the previous indictments which have already been nolleprosequi in the same case.

The other defendants are

LEC Customer

Cont'd from page 7

comfort and health issues for customers, many who are pregnant women or women with small children, and to LEC customer service agents.

When completed, the reconstructed and remodeled facility will have a comfortable increased seating capacity for over 100 customers, compared to the previous 25 maximum. It will house a modernized CSC comprised of spatial waiting areas, offices for LEC staff, a call center, and toilet spaces inclusive of facilities for physically challenged and disabled persons, better technological tools, and well-trained staff.

The revamping of the CSC is split into two projects. The US\$500,000 construction project includes procurement of three vehicles and new furniture. LEC will use the new vehicles to deliver a more effective customer service response in the field. In addition, before construction began, the MCA-L funded the relocation of the LEC customer service department to a temporary facility in Congo Town, off VP Road at Catholic Hospital Junction.

A separate US\$576,000 project will also equip the new facility with IT infrastructure and provide training to customer service agents, conducted by Tata Power.

Customers visiting the reconstructed CSC at Waterside or calling and texting the improved 4500 hotline are expected to experience shorter waiting times when visiting and improved response times when calling and texting. They

should also experience better tracking of service orders due to an improved link between customer service management and technical staff through a new integrated information management system to which the service center will connect.

The CSC complements MCA-L's past investments to make LEC a more sustainable and viable public utility. Over the past year, MCA-L has transferred US\$1.78 million worth of equipment to LEC, including light poles, transformers, conductors, meters, specialized trucks, and spare parts for thermal generators.

MCA-L also contributed US\$146.3 million of the total cost of US\$357M for rebuilding the Mount Coffee Hydro Power Plant, along with financing a three-year management services contractor to turn LEC into a more efficient and profitable company.

About MCA-L: In October 2015, the Government of the United States of America, through its development agency, Millennium Challenge Corporation, provided a grant of US\$257 million to Liberia. MCA-L is an independent, legal, and autonomous agency of the Government of Liberia created by the legislature to administer the compact projects, which address the lack of access to reliable and affordable electricity and inadequate road infrastructure. Learn more about MCA-L at www.mca.gov.lr

U.S. donates

Cont'd from page 7

Receiving the donation, Liberia's Defense Minister Daniel Ziankahn thanks the U.S. Embassy officials, telling them that the donation is timely and will be used for its intended purpose.

Minister Ziankahn informs

the U.S. Embassy delegation that AFL has troops various counties including Lofa, Grand Gedeh, Bong County and other places, saying the donation will be used to augment their work.

Police impound

Starts from back page

earlier relaxed the lockdown from 6PM to 9PM, Liberians from all walks of life converged at various night clubs in Monrovia to climax the end of the 60-day State of Emergency declared in April without observance of health regulations.

In the Monrovia suburb of Sinkor, some residents threw stones at Police trying to disperse crowd at a night club in the Airfield vicinity, damaging windshield of a police car.

Health authorities here

have made nose masks wearing compulsory for everyone appearing in public places or risk arrest and being tested for COVID-19.

But many Liberians are shying away from voluntary testing, presumably for lack of adequate awareness and education.

The government Incident Management System (IMS) reported total confirmed cases of 626, 254 recoveries and total 34 deaths from the virus.

-Editing by Jonathan Browne

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Police impound several vehicles

-as many escape Covid-19 test



Some of the vehicles arrested for breaking 6pm curfew

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Police impounded dozens of vehicles here Tuesday, 23rd June for breaching the Government of Liberia 6PM deadline for people and vehicles to vacate the streets.

Few days ago, police spokesman Moses Carter told a live talk show the police have been directed to enforce

the State of Emergency extended by President George Manneh Weah as a result of surge in new cases of the pandemic.

Carter also disclosed that as part of the directive, the police are to arrest individuals breaking the deadline and not wearing nose masks in the public.

The arrested vehicles, most of which attempted crossing

Bushrod Island by way of the Gabriel Tucker, Waterside and Jamaica Roads bridges were denied entry by Joint Security officers.

Police sources said most of the vehicles would be issued tickets in order to deposit fines into government revenue or risk being grounded on government parking lots.

At the same time, while the police were busy dealing with vehicle operators, Coronavirus testing team from the Ministry of Health also requested commuters wanting to cross over to Bushrod Island to report for testing before being allowed to leave.

The request from the medical team led people to return to where they came from, refusing to have their specimens taken for virus test.

When the government

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

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Romania's Craiova avoid sanctions

Romania's Universitatea Craiova will not face any punishment after players and fans failed to observe social distancing during late-night pyrotechnics celebrations on Tuesday, the country's professional league (LPF) said on Wednesday.

TV images showed around 100 Universitatea supporters surrounding the team bus after Tuesday's 2-1 home win over FC Botosani, setting off smoke

bombs and fireworks before giving high fives and hugging players who got off the vehicle.

However, LPF general secretary Justin Stefan said the governing body which runs the top-flight would not take any action against the club because the players had not been inside the ground where the match took place.

"Craiova does not risk anything at the moment," Stefan said. "The club cannot be sanctioned according to the



sanitary protocol if the players and fans were not inside the stadium."

The Romanian league resumed on June 13 with matches behind closed doors, ending a three-month break due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Romania's football federation (FRF) suspended all soccer in mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus has so far killed more than 1,500 people in the Black Sea state,

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