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TRULY INDEPENDENT

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COVID-19
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Nwabudike must leave -As Dillon writes Senate



Cllr. Ndubusi A. Nwabudike

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Continental News

Tanzania 'free of coronavirus' - Magufuli

Tanzania's President John Magufuli has declared the country "coronavirus-free" thanks to prayers by citizens.

"The corona disease has been eliminated thanks to God," Mr Magufuli told worshippers in a church in the capital, Dodoma.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed concern over the government's strategy on Covid-19.

The government has stopped publishing data on the number of coronavirus cases in the country.

On 29 April, the last day official data was released, there were 509 cases, with 21 deaths in Tanzania. However, Mr Magufuli said last week that only four patients were receiving treatment in the largest city, Dar es Salaam.

Last month, Tanzania's government dismissed a US embassy warning that hospitals in Dar es Salaam were "overwhelmed" and that the chances of contracting the virus was "extremely high".

Mr Magufuli has repeatedly

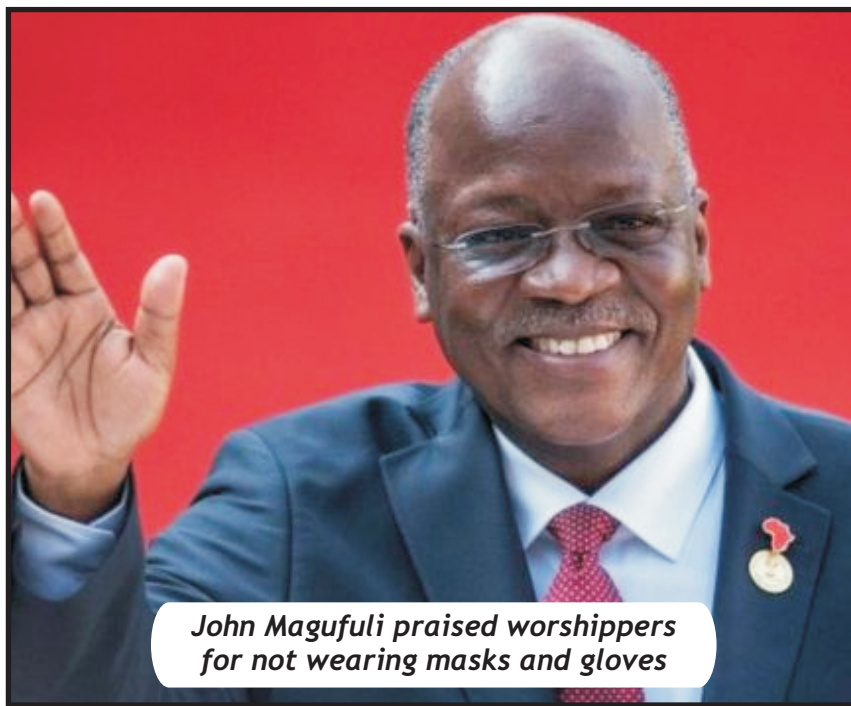
said the health crisis has been exaggerated and urged people to attend services in churches and mosques, saying that prayers "can vanquish" the virus. "I want to thank Tanzanians of all faiths. We have been praying and fasting for God to save us from the pandemic that has afflicted our country and the world. But God has answered us.

"I believe, and I'm certain that many Tanzanians believe, that the corona disease has

been eliminated by God," he told worshippers on Sunday in Dodoma.

His remarks were welcomed with applause and celebratory ululation.

Mr Magufuli also commended the priest and worshippers for not wearing gloves and masks to protect themselves from the virus. He made similar comments last Friday during a teachers' conference, declaring "corona is finished".



John Magufuli praised worshippers for not wearing masks and gloves

Burundi president dies of 'cardiac arrest' at 55

Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza, aged 55, has died after suffering a cardiac arrest, the government says.

He was admitted to hospital on Saturday after feeling unwell, his condition improved but on Monday he had a cardiac arrest and efforts to revive him were

unsuccessful, officials say.

After 15 years in power, Mr Nkurunziza was due to step down in August.

In 2015, the announcement that he would run for a third term plunged the country into chaos.

It sparked anger as some questioned the legality of a third-term bid.

There was a failed coup attempt, hundreds of people died in clashes and tens of thousands fled the country. After a change in the constitution, he was able to run for a further term in last month's election but he decided to retire and was to be known as the "supreme guide to patriotism".

He was also due to receive a \$540,000 (£440,000) retirement pay-out and a luxury villa.

Mr Nkurunziza came to power in 2005 after a civil war which left 300,000 people dead.

The former rebel leader took pride in the fact that his administration brought peace to Burundi. But his government has been criticised for widespread human rights abuses.

These include "extrajudicial executions, disappearances, arbitrary arrests, sexual violence, extortion, beatings, and intimidation", according to Human Rights Watch.



Pierre Nkurunziza was campaigning for his party's candidate in last month's presidential election

"The health minister told me that we only have four patients in Dar es Salaam but this will not stop rumours to the contrary," he said.

"We need to be careful because some of these donations to fight coronavirus could be used to transmit the virus.

"I want to urge you Tanzanians not to accept donations of masks, instead tell the donors to go and use them with their wives and children," he added. 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. It is unclear if it has been given to patients in Tanzania.

There is no scientific proof

that the tonic works and the WHO has urged people not to use unproven medication.

Opposition politicians have criticised Mr Magufuli in the past for promoting policies that could harm the health of Tanzanians.

The head of Tanzania's medical association, Elisha Osati, backed the government in a recent BBC interview, saying that hospitals were operating as normal and that the majority of coronavirus inpatients were suffering from mild symptoms.

Mr Magufuli has accused the country's health officials of exaggerating the coronavirus crisis. He has also ridiculed the strict measures neighbouring countries have imposed to fight the pandemic. BBC

Coronavirus: Johannesburg mayor goes into isolation

The mayor of South Africa's biggest city, Johannesburg, has gone into self-isolation after a member of his staff tested positive for coronavirus.

A statement from Mayor Geoffrey Makhubo's office said he was taking the precautionary measure until the results of his test are known.

statement by his spokesperson said.

South Africa has the highest number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the continent. President Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday urged South Africans not to be scared by the rising numbers after the country recorded more than half of the current total number of cases in the



Mayor Geoffrey Makhubo previously returned a negative result

He had previously returned a negative test.

All staff at his office have also undergone tests after the latest case. "The mayor will continue to monitor and provide guidance on work currently being carried out to contain and manage the spread of Covid-19 in the city whilst in self-isolation," the

last two weeks. Schools in South Africa have begun gradually reopening with grade 7 and 12 learners returning to classes on Monday. Places of worship have re-opened but with strict guidelines to prevent the spread of coronavirus. BBC

Political opponents have been targeted and journalists have been imprisoned.

Mr Nkurunziza's wife was rumoured to have tested positive for coronavirus - a disease Mr Nkurunziza had appeared to downplay, holding

an election in the midst of the outbreak, and even expelling World Health Organization representatives from the country.

The government has announced seven days of national mourning. BBC

EDITORIAL

Another US\$25m to go in thin air

THE GOVERNMENT OF Liberia seems to be struggling to expend or justify the expending of the US\$25 million stimulus package approved thru a Joint Resolution by the 54th Legislature to ease economic burdens of citizens in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE JOINT RESOLUTION partly reads, “That the initial request for US\$25 million is hereby approved for the Food Support Program with the modification that all of the 15 counties within the Republic shall be covered as affected counties for food support and additional amounts needed shall be submitted for re-appropriation. Procurement under this program must first accommodate locally produced food. That the Food Distribution Program must prioritize the vulnerable population and the first responder population to wit: the disadvantaged youth, the homeless, orphanages, senior citizens, people with disabilities, health workers and security personnel deployed in the frontline of the enforcement of the State of Emergency and that all restrictions imposed by the President pertaining to the movement of persons and hours applicable is hereby approved and modified only to the extent that all persons appearing in public streets and buildings must wear a protective device that covers at least the nose and mouth.”

THIS TOOK EFFECT on April 9, 2020. But two months after, the Food Distribution Program is yet to visibly impact even the most vulnerable residents of Monrovia, let alone Montserrado and Margibi Counties dubbed as “most affected counties” in the pandemic.

THE CHAIRMAN OF the food distribution steering committee, Commerce Minister Wilson Tarpeh disclosed recently that the International Monetary Fund provided a grant of US\$5 million to augment the stimulus package to US\$30 million. However, the actual distribution seems largely elusive, for lack of better choice of words.

WHAT IS EVEN more worrisome is that the State of Emergency has ended and President George Manneh Weah has emphatically said it will not be renewed. The Executive Mansion quotes the President as saying that given Liberia's level of experience from the coronavirus and its mode of transmission, including strides being made in its containment, coupled with developments in other countries, there is no need for extension of the SOE.

HENCE, THE GOVERNMENT is about to re-open the country, beginning with resumption of normal flights at the Roberts International Airport effective 21st June including activities of hotels, guest houses, gaming centers and schools. Meanwhile, there is no food as was budgeted, despite continuous assurance by Chairman Tarpeh to the public.

LIBERIANS ARE NOW becoming apprehensive, and rightly so, that this US\$25 million stimulus package would not face the same fate of the US\$25 million mop up of excess liquidity in the economy, which this administration has failed to account for in spite of public pressure.

SADLY, WE ARE seeing packages of food being taken to selective communities by the Tarpeh-led committee in a spring frog style amid outcry from residents that food is not reaching them amid speculations that health workers are preparing to protest for lack of incentive.

SOONER OR LATER, we are going to see the government coming out with report, whatever it may be, on how the distribution was carried out even with the glaring knowledge or reality that nothing much is being done with this allotment.

OUR HONEST ADVICE to the government is not to take the Liberian people for granted by taking money from the national coffers under the pretext of wanting to give them food when the process is shrouded with uncertainty and sheer farce.

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

COMMENTARY

By Ifeanyi M. Nsofor
& Bell Ihua

Nigeria's Mental Health Desert

Nigeria is failing those of its people who struggle with mental-health issues - no small share of the population. But with improved legislation, education, and support systems, the country can turn the tide on mental health, laying the groundwork for a healthier, happier, and more productive future.

ABUJA - To most Nigerians, mental illness is “when someone starts running around naked.” It is a shocking misconception, yet a full 70% of respondents to a recent mental-health survey - the country's largest in nearly 20 years - believe it. And that was just one of the many misguided and harmful beliefs that the poll revealed.

The survey of 5,315 respondents, conducted by our organizations - EpiAFRIC and the Africa Polling Institute - found that 84% believe that mental disorders are attributable to drug abuse, 60% link such disorders to “sickness of the mind,” 54% to “possession by evil spirits,” and 23% to “punishment by God.” Nearly one-third - 32% - believe that mental disorders run in families.

Given these misconceptions, it is perhaps not surprising that 69% of respondents said they would not engage in any form of relationship with a person with mental-health issues - mostly, said 58%, for reasons of personal safety. Only 26% of respondents would so much as be friends with a person with mental illness, while just 2% would do business with such a person and a mere 1% would consider marriage. Nigerians are often encouraged to check for a history of mental illness in the family of a prospective spouse.

This stigma has serious consequences for those who struggle with mental-health issues. If someone was seen to be suffering from a mental disorder, 8% of survey respondents would take them to a traditional healer; 4% would lock them up; and 2% would try to beat the disease out of them. Given that 48% of the survey's respondents reported knowing someone who suffers from a mental disorder - a group that includes up to 30% of the population, by some estimates - the implications of these responses are far-reaching.

Making matters worse, Nigeria's mental-health stigma is embedded in its legal system. As it stands, the 1958 Lunacy Act, a colonial law that effectively legalizes violations of the rights of the mentally ill, governs mental-health care. For example, the act authorizes medical practitioners and magistrates to identify “lunatics” and determine when and for how long they should be detained - usually in prisons alongside criminal inmates. The National Assembly has had a replacement bill since 2003. Although its Senate Committee on Health recently held a public hearing on the bill, it has yet to be passed.

Given the social stigma and lack of legal protection, Nigerians struggling with mental illness are understandably reluctant to get help. But even those who do seek support might have difficulty finding it. Even if they went to a hospital - where 65% of survey respondents said they would take a person with mental illness - there is no guarantee that a qualified professional would be available.

According to the Association of Psychiatrists in Nigeria, only 250 psychiatrists provide services to Nigeria's 200 million people - one per 800,000 people. The United States, with 28,000 psychiatrists and 330 million people, has one for every 11,786.

Given the extensive training psychiatrists must undertake, it will take decades to address this shortfall - and only if young people are encouraged to enter the field. That is why policymakers must act now, both to reduce the stigma - especially by correcting misconceptions about mental illness - and to provide adequate care and support for those who need it today.

To that end, innovative approaches are already emerging. The Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative uses the power of social media to educate the public about mental-health issues. It has also established a suicide/distress hotline, which provides immediate intervention and “mental-health first aid,” before referring callers for specialized care.

Nigeria is hardly alone. In Zimbabwe, the Friendship Bench is pioneering a community-based approach, in which local lay health workers - especially “grandmothers” (elderly women) - deliver evidence-based talk therapy on benches under trees. A clinical trial published in the Journal of the American Medical Association showed that, after six months, those who received the intervention had significantly lower symptom scores than the control group, who received enhanced conventional care.

Farther afield are even more unexpected innovations. For example, in the United States, the Oasis Alliance, a Virginia-based non-profit, uses interior design to “encourage and accelerate recovery, growth, and mental wellbeing” in trauma survivors.

Of course, programs like these cost money. So, beyond changing its mental-health laws, Nigeria's government must allocate more funds to the sector. According to the World Health Organization, the world spends less than \$3 per person, on average, on mental health each year; in low-income countries, that rate can be as low \$0.25 per person. In Nigeria, the national mental-health budget essentially covers just capital costs and staff salaries at federal neuropsychiatric hospitals, and only a fraction of the allocated budget is routinely released.

One way to make more of limited funds would be to add mental health care to existing donor-funded public-health programs. For example, HIV/AIDS programs should include mental-health services for affected people. Furthermore, health insurers should be required to include mental-health services in their plans, so that people are not forced to pay out of pocket - an insurmountable barrier for many.

O-PED

By Elizabeth Drew

America's Calamity

Many now protesting against racism and police brutality in the US won't be satisfied unless the result of this national spasm is improved schools, health care, and job opportunities for minorities - a fair shake for black people. What will happen when America once again falls short of honoring its professed values?

WASHINGTON, DC - It has been a calamity for the United States that, when two national tragedies - the COVID-19 crisis and the country's legacy of racism - collided this spring, the occupant of the White House was an unstable person, totally unfit to govern.

President Donald Trump's inability to cope with the pandemic has so far led to more than 112,000 deaths, one of the world's highest per capita mortality rates for COVID-19, with the coronavirus still spreading to areas not previously hit. The public-health crisis has also triggered the worst economic downturn in the US since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

As subsequent events have unfolded, it is no exaggeration to say that the American experiment - 244 years old next month - is in serious danger, even more so than during the constitutional crisis caused by the Watergate scandal of the 1970s. The pandemic coincided with the latest in a long series of race-related outrages, and it has caused the country to explode.

Millions of cooped-up Americans watched, over and over, the cold-blooded killing of an unarmed, handcuffed black man, George Floyd, by four Minneapolis police officers. One, Derek Chauvin, casually kneeled on Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes until he lost consciousness; two others sat on Floyd's back, further depriving him of oxygen; the fourth looked on, keeping appalled bystanders at bay as Floyd, struggling to live, cried out, "Please, I can't breathe."

Floyd's killing shocked the country's conscience. It provided Americans with an unambiguous picture of the true meaning of "police brutality." After being shut in for weeks by lockdowns and social-distancing rules, people had considerable pent-up energy, which the recordings of Floyd's death unleashed. Protests began in Minneapolis the next day and quickly spread across the country. Tens of thousands of people of all races and ages participated.

Demonstrators who engaged in violence, looting, and property destruction (including setting police cars on fire) were catnip for Trump, whose brand of politics depends on stoking his supporters' outrage. His Nixon-like "law and order" rhetoric aimed to erase the distinction between the violent protesters and the far larger number of peaceful ones.

US Attorney General William Barr was, as always, ready to help Trump exploit the situation and accrue more power. Because Washington, DC, is not a state, Trump and Barr had leeway to impose their own solution. They used various state national guards, the military-like arms of federal agencies, and, unnervingly, some unidentifiable forces. Washington became an occupied city.

Trump pretends to be a tough guy and is authoritarian to the bone. Yet, as the protests swelled outside the White House, he decided, or so he claimed, that it was time to "inspect" the president's mammoth underground bunker. The White House itself had already become a bunker: during the chaos after Floyd's murder, the height of the fence surrounding its grounds was nearly doubled. True to his inclination to stir things up, Trump tweeted that, had demonstrators breached that fence, "they would have been greeted with the most vicious dogs, and most ominous weapons, I have ever seen."

The deeply disturbing use of force to clear peaceful demonstrators from Lafayette Square across from the White House - a violation of their rights for which Barr initially took credit - also shocked the national conscience. Trump's less-than-brilliant advisers - most prominent, his daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner - had concocted a political stunt that involved Trump walking across the square to the boarded-up St John's church, the basement of which had been set on fire. But they failed to think through what he would do when he got there. Trump awkwardly waved a Bible, sometimes holding it upside down, for photos that only made him look foolish.

Moreover, Trump's advocacy of flooding America's cities with active-duty US troops was met with widespread antipathy and scorn. A cascade of former high-ranking military officials, including James Mattis, the retired Marine general who was Trump's defense secretary until last year, openly denounced the president. Mattis, who described himself as "angry and appalled" at the idea of using the troops to put down the demonstrations, said Americans were "witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership."

But those who saw in such statements the unraveling of Trump's presidency didn't factor in Republicans' continued fealty. Faced with the choice between Mattis and Trump, nearly all elected Republicans stuck with the president. They had defended him for so long, shared so many of his views, and become so dependent on him and his donors that they weren't ready to break with him, despite knowing that current polls suggest he might go down in November's election - and take them down with him.

While the national uprising against racist policing will lead to some reforms, such as improved training and the prohibition of choke holds and neck restraints like the one that killed Floyd, rethinking the role of the police alone, no matter how radical the results are, cannot eliminate racism, the great stain left on America by the founders' compromise with slavery.

Governments can do nothing about the quotidian offenses of living as a black person in America - the empty taxis that refuse to stop, being mistaken for employees in supermarkets, the myriad intentional and unintentional insults. Many now in the streets won't be satisfied unless the result of this national spasm is improved schools, health care, and job opportunities for minorities - a fair shake for black people. What will happen when America once again falls short of honoring its professed values?

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OPINION

By James K. Galbraith

The Illusion of a Rapid US Recovery

The United States has built an economy based on global demand for advanced goods, consumer demand for frills, and ever-growing household and business debts. This economy was in many ways prosperous, and it provided jobs and incomes to many millions. Yet it was a house of cards, and COVID-19 has blown it down.

AUSTIN - As protests roil the United States, the country's center-left economists gaze brightly into their crystal balls. Harvard's Jason Furman, formerly chair of US President Barack Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, has warned Democrats - eager to defeat President Donald Trump in the November election - that "the best economic data ... in the history of this country" will emerge just before voters head to the polls. Paul Krugman is likewise predicting a "fast recovery." The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office agrees. The stock market seems equally optimistic.

The arithmetic behind this thinking is simple. The CBO expects real GDP to shrink by 12% in the second quarter, and by 40% in annual terms. But it forecasts a third-quarter rebound of 5.4% - resulting in spectacular annual growth of 23.5%.

That is certainly possible: already in May, unemployment figures took a favorable turn, and it is looking like the second-quarter slump may not be as bad as projected. But, even if the CBO is right on both counts, GDP at election time would be seven percentage points below its first-quarter level, and unemployment would be above - possibly far above - 10%.

Let's assume that the optimists are right about the third quarter. What happens next? Will the economy continue merrily along, with incomes and jobs bouncing back? Or will it stay in depression, requiring a new revolution - or, more precisely, a new New Deal - to save it?

To assess this question, Furman, Krugman, and the CBO share a mental model. They regard the pandemic as an economic shock, like an earthquake or the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It is a disruption to a solid structure, a deviation from normal growth. To get America moving again, what is mainly needed is confidence, perhaps aided by stimulus. If consumers channel their pent-up demand into new spending, this "shock-stimulus" model dictates, then businesses will revive investment, and soon enough, all will be well once again.

This is how mainstream center-left economists and policymakers have thought about recessions and recoveries since at least the 1960s, when President John F. Kennedy and his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, pushed through tax cuts. But it ignores three major changes in the US economy since then: globalization, the rise of services in consumption and employment, and the impact of personal and corporate debts.

In the 1960s, the US had a balanced economy that produced goods for both businesses and households, at all levels of technology, with a fairly small (and tightly regulated) financial sector. It produced largely for itself, importing mainly commodities.

Today, the US produces for the world, mainly advanced investment goods and services, in sectors such as aerospace, information technology, arms, oilfield services, and finance. And it imports far more consumer goods, such as clothing, electronics, cars, and car parts, than it did a half-century ago.

And whereas cars, televisions, and household appliances drove US consumer demand in the 1960s, a much larger share of domestic spending today goes (or went) to restaurants, bars, hotels, resorts, gyms, salons, coffee shops, and tattoo parlors, as well as college tuition and doctor's visits. Tens of millions of Americans work in these sectors.

Finally, American household spending in the 1960s was powered by rising wages and growing home equity. But wages have been largely stagnant since at least 2000, and spending increases since 2010 were powered by rising personal and corporate debts. House values are now stagnant at best, and will likely fall in the months ahead.

Mainstream economics pays little attention to such structural questions. Instead, it assumes that business investment responds mostly to the consumer, whose spending is dictated equally by income and desire. The distinction between "essential" and "superfluous" does not exist. Debt burdens are largely ignored.

But demand for many US-made capital goods now depends on global conditions. Orders for new aircraft will not recover while half of all existing planes are grounded. At current prices, the global oil industry is not drilling new wells. Even at home, though existing construction projects may be completed, plans for new office towers or retail outlets won't be launched soon. And as people commute less, cars will last longer, so demand for them (and gasoline) will suffer.

Faced with radical uncertainty, US consumers will save more and spend less. Even if the government replaces their lost incomes for a time, people know that stimulus is short term. What they do not know is when the next job offer - or layoff - will come along.

Moreover, people do distinguish between needs and wants. Americans need to eat, but they mostly don't need to eat out. They don't need to travel. Restaurant owners and airlines therefore have two problems: they can't cover costs while their capacity is limited for public-health reasons, and demand would be down even if the coronavirus disappeared. This explains why many businesses are not reopening even though they legally can. Others are reopening, but fear they cannot hold out for long. And the many millions of workers in America's vast services sector are realizing that their jobs are simply not essential.

Meanwhile, US household debts - rent, mortgage, and utility arrears, as well as interest on education and car loans - have continued to mount. True, stimulus checks have helped: defaults have so far been modest, and many landlords have been accommodating. But as people face long periods with lower incomes, they will continue to hoard funds to ensure that they can repay their fixed debts. As if all this were not enough, falling sales- and income-tax revenues are prompting US state and local governments to cut spending, compounding the loss of jobs and incomes.

America's economic plight is structural. It is not simply the consequence of Trump's incompetence or House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's poor political strategy. It reflects systemic changes over 50 years that have created an economy based on global demand for advanced goods, consumer demand for frills, and ever-growing household and business debts. This economy was in many ways prosperous, and it provided jobs and incomes to many millions. Yet it was a house of cards, and COVID-19 has blown it down.

"Reopen America" is therefore an economic and political fantasy. Incumbent politicians crave a cheery growth rebound, and the depth of the collapse makes possible some attractive short-term numbers. But taking them seriously will merely set the stage for a new round of disillusion. As nationwide protests against systemic racism and police brutality show, disillusion is America's one big growth sector right now.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

WAEC Liberia prepares for exams

The Head of National Office of the West African Examination Council in Liberia, Dale G. Gbotoe has disclosed that hand washing buckets will be placed at various examination centers to ensure that candidates going for the exams wash their hands at all times before entering the examination halls.

Mr. Gbotoe said in order to ensure that social distancing is strictly adhere to during the conduct of the exam, the National Office has created additional centers to reduce the number of candidates previously assigned at centers.

He added that WAEC has also decided to modify its normal four-by-five feet seating distance between candidates to six-by-six in to reduce the risk of the spread of the virus during administration of the exams.

Mr. Gbotoe disclosed that the National Office completed most of its pre-examination activities before the outbreak of the Corona Virus in Liberia, including receiving of candidates' entries, selection of examination centers, and assigning of schools to selected centers across the country, which puts it in a suitable position to administer the Exam.

However, he indicated that the conduct of WASSCE can only be made possible based on improvement of the COVID-19 situation in the country.

He stressed that while the institution welcomes the mandate of the President and has expressed its readiness to fulfill it to the fullest; it however requires collective effort of all Liberians to ensure this is achieved by adhering to regulations laid down by health authorities.

"The successful conduct of the exams is based on the condition of the pandemic in the country", Gbotoe further emphasized.

He called on Liberians to join effort with the government in ending the COVID-19 scourge in Liberia by adhering to the various health measures put in place by authorities of the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia.

Meanwhile, the WAEC Liberia Head of



The WAEC boss said the institution is fully prepared to administer the 2019/2020 WASSCE Exam in fulfillment of President George Weah's mandate.

President Weah on June 5, 2020 mandated the Ministries of Education and Health to promulgate guidelines for the return of 12th gradersto class in preparation to write the 2019/2020 WASSCE in August.

Speaking on a live talk show in Monrovia on Monday,

Office has assured its stakeholders and the public of the institution's unwavering quest to ensure that health measures instituted by health experts are strictly observed during the conduct of the Exams across the country.

The West African Examinations Council is the region's foremost examining body established by law to determine the examinations required in the public interest in English-speaking West African countries, to evaluate students leaving secondary schools and award certificates comparable to those of equivalent examining authorities internationally.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

EU distributes Covid-19 materials to fishing communities

As part of efforts to help contain the spread of the Corona virus, the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) with support from the European

The materials will be distributed in fishing communities situated in Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount and Margibi Counties, respectively.

The items put at the cost of forty-nine thousand United States dollars, include



Union has begun the first of several distributions of assorted hygiene materials to fishing communities in West Point Township - one of the many coastal communities in Montserrado County.

NaFAA/EU customized large drums with foot-stand faucets, small rubber buckets with faucets, nose masks, cholera, powder soap, and sanitizers.

NaFAA is also distributing flyers as part of

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

PARTNERS PROJECT



Call for Tender Security Firm Welthungerhilfe Liberia Country
Program LBR-1056 & LBR-1053



For a world without hunger

INVITATION TO BID

FOR THE SECURITY FIRM for GBEDIAH OFFICE, RIVERCESS COUNTY and GREENVILLE OFFICE, SINOE COUNTY

Both Ebola Support Program, Phase II LBR-1053 and EULAP PARTNERS Programme LBR-1056, is a development program of the Republic of Liberia, co-financed by the Federal Republic of Germany through the German Development Bank (KfW) and implemented by Welthungerhilfe. It is within the scope of this program to request for quotation registrar security firm in Cestos City, Rivercess and Greenville City, Sinoe Counties.

Welthungerhilfe invites **LOCAL SECURITY FIRMS or COMPANY** having requisite experience and capacity in security for Gbediah office/hospital site and in Greenville City, Sinoe Counties

This invitation to bid is for the provision of the **security component** of the required works to be undertaken for two offices one in Gbediah City under LBR-1053 in River-Cee and Greenville City under LBR-1056, Sinoe County to be provided by Welthungerhilfe.

Interested bidders are therefore required to attend the **Pre-Bid Meeting** to be held at Gbediah office/hospital site and Greenville Office on the 12th June 2020 at 10:00AM. Details of the bid and Bid forms will be given during the Pre-Bid Meeting. Immediately after the Pre-Bid Meeting, site visit to the offices and hospital sites will be conducted.

Important Schedule of Activities:

Pre-Bid Meeting and site visit	-	12 th June 2020, 10:00 AM
Deadline for the Bid Submission	-	19 th June 2020, 5:00 PM
Opening of Bids	-	22 th June 2020, 10:00 AM

Bids must be submitted to WHH-offices in Gbediah, River-Cee or in Greenville, Sinoe Counties or in Monrovia.

Stephane Pauwels
Logistics Expert
Welthungerhilfe-Monrovia

Date: 08th June 2020

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Deceased kid's family demand independent probe

By Ben P. Wessee

The family of deceased little Francis Mensah has called on the Liberia National Police (LNP) to turn over their son's case to independent investigators because it lost confidence in the police's "misleading" final report and findings.

Speaking with reporters outside the police

headquarters, the late Mensah's uncle and spokesperson for a group of protesters that stormed the police headquarters Tuesday, 9 June, Mr. George C. Davis says the police's report accused him of being the cause of his nephew's death.

The three - year - old kid died days after hot water burnt him on 20 April when his grandparents were fleeing from

police's verbal command, ordering residents in Monrovia's slum community West Point to leave the streets under coronavirus lockdown measure.

Tuesday's protest followed an administrative investigation conducted by the police which exonerated their female officer Patrolwoman Sonnie Jallah who had been accused of kicking a coal pot with hot water which burnt little Mensah on 20 April, leading to his death.

The police administrative report recommended a further criminal investigation, adding that Mr. George C. Davis, a resident of West Point who wrote the police to complain about the incident as well as Mensah's Grandmother Satta McGill and Richard G. Singbeh be subjects to the investigation.

But protesters angered by the kid's death have rejected the report as misleading, demanding an independent probe into the matter.

"To date, the family has not received any formal

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The late Francis Mensah

Leper patients cry out for government support

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan
in Bong County

In the quest for sufficient and effective support, patients at the Suakoko Leprosy Rehabilitation Center are calling on the government of President George Manneh Weah to direct more support to the livelihood improvement of lepers at the center.

Some of the patients who spoke with our Bong County correspondent on Monday, 8 June said the government has forgotten about them especially during this coronavirus pandemic.

The patients explain that the government has abandoned them, leaving them to depend on Kwatekeh Africa, a Non-governmental organization that has over the past been supporting their livelihood and sometimes, Bong County Electoral District #5 Rep. Edward W. Karfiah.

The Leprosy Rehabilitation Center in Suakoko was established during the administration of late President William V.S

Tubman.

But now the lepers are complaining of lack of government's support to them.

The Administrator of the center Justin J. Togbah, who has been serving since 1990, says the government needs not to depend on humanitarian organizations for support to the center.

Mr. Togbah suggests that the

government should rather be eager to bring whatever support patients need for the improvement of their livelihood.

Mr. Togbah explains that the patients' conditions are becoming unbearable due to the lack of support from the Liberian government.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Weeks wants old

Starts from back page

understating the excess amount printed.

The defendants allegedly recorded only L\$359,750,000, excluding the L\$2.6 billion which they allegedly stole and exercised unauthorized control over at the detriment of the Government of Liberia.

With the exception of former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's son, Charles E. Sirleaf, who at the time was the CBL Deputy Governor for Operations, the prosecution in the new indictment lists the Bank's Board of Governors and its officials as indictees, including David M. Farhat, Melissa A. Emeh, Elsie Dossen Badio and Kollie Tamba.

The other defendants are former CBL Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks;

addition to the property valuation bond and the surety, their client had and continues to comply with all the additional conditions associated and connected with the bond.

The defense team complained of the "undue burden" that defendant Weeks had endured in procuring a bond each time an indictment is obtained and served on him.

With reference to defendant Weeks being allowed to benefit from his previous property valuation bond, Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay says that action is within the sound discretion of the judge, adding that the court will review the records of the past indictment including the charges and the behavior of the defendants.



Ex-Governor Milton Weeks

Dorbor M. Hagba, former Director of Finance; Richard H. Walker, former Director for Banking and Joseph Dennis, former Director for Internal Audit.

The new indictment contains seven charges which are higher in number compared to the five charges levied against the defendants in the previous indictments, and except for Mr. Sirleaf, all his alleged accomplices are reindicted.

The move by the defense counsel to plead for the reinstatement of the previous bond appears to avoid their client being rearrested.

The defense urged the court to take judicial notice that in

"The court will ascertain further and assess whether the property used to indemnify the defendant is still in tight and whether the sureties of this property are still available," Judge Gbeisay says.

On that basis, he says the court shall proceed to use its discretion in favor or against the defendants.

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.

ANC suspends youth

Starts from back page

Naatehn, Chairman of the party and with the support of the EC, has invoked police power over the Youth Congress, abrogates the powers of the leadership and hereby suspend all its activities. Chairman Naatehn shall herein exercise all powers of the Chairman of the

Youth Congress and serve as its singular leadership pending the investigation report within five (5) working days.

The ANC assured the public of its commitment to ensuring that this unfortunate incident does not repeat itself, as we focus on providing leadership to our people.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Lawmakers want Works Minister invited

By Bridgett Milton

A group of lawmakers from Nimba, Grand Gedeh and River Gee counties has written the House of Representatives, asking that body to invite the Minister of Public Works to brief the House on when reconditioning of roads in the southeast would start.

The lawmakers said their attention has been drawn to the deplorable state of roads in southeast Liberia before and during this rainy season especially, Ganta, Nimba County and other counties in the region.

In a communication to Plenary Tuesday, Representatives Samuel G. Kogar, Prince O.S. Tokpa, Joseph S. Sonwarbi, Roger S. Domah and Johnson Gwaikolo, all of Nimba; Zoe E. Pennue, George S. Boley, and Alex Grant of Grand Gedeh as well as Francis Young of River Gee warned that if nothing were done in the shortest possible time, there will be no farm-to-market roads in their counties.

Speaking in Plenary Tuesday, the main sponsor of the communication, Rep. Samuel Kogar recalled that since 1975 there has been no proper

is not the proper solution to the road problem.

Also Rep. Francis Young of River Gee lamented that it is saddened that lawmakers would discuss the road issue in the southeast when they had signed financing agreement, thinking that agreement could



Min. Mobutu Vlah Nyenpan

reconditioning of the road from Nimba to the southeast.

He said rehabilitation works have been limited to filling potholes along the route which

have given birth to reconditioning roads there. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne

EPA fines water company US\$ 1,000 -for breaching environmental law

The Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia (EPA) has fined SSS Private Limited, a mineral water producer on Bushrod Island US\$ 1,000 for breaching the Environmental Protection and Management Law of Liberia (EPML).

Acting Executive Director, Randall M. Dobayou says the company has been mandated to pay the money to the Liberia Revenue Authority

(LRA) and bring an official receipt to the agency's office on 4th Street within 72 hours.

A press statement issued in Monrovia, June 09, states that the fine was imposed following the outcome of a compliance monitoring and assessment conducted at SSS Private Limited's facility on 21 May.

Prior to the decision, back to back conferences were held between authorities of the EPA and the water producer's legal

counsel and manager on 22 and 26 May, 2020, the release says.

"The operation of SSS Private Limited is in serious defiant and violation of the EPML." Acting Executive Director Dobayou says its operation contravened several provisions of the EPML including Part III, Section 6 which speak against operating an industrial establishment without a valid environmental permit.

He noted the company's failure to notify the EPA of changes relative to its project as enshrined in previous permit, which has expired, contravened Section 26; Count 1 of the EPML.

He disclosed that the company is also in violation of Section 55 of the EPML, which speaks about unauthorized importation and utilization of chemical substances, and Section 57 that talks about unregulated discharged of effluent into the environment, Section 67 that focuses on unsustainable discarding and littering of solid waste, including Section 95 that speaks about obstruction of environmental inspection.

"In lieu of the



EU distributes Covid-19

Cont'd from page 5

efforts in sensitizing coastal residents about the danger of the Corona virus in the country.

The initiative is being supported through the European Union Sectorial Support funding to Liberia.

Speaking during the official launch of the exercise in West Point Tuesday, NaFAA's Deputy Director-General for Administration, Augustine Monoballah urged fishers and fish mongers in the country to remain more resilient in the fight against COVID-19.

Even though government has taken concrete steps in the containment of the pandemic, evidenced by the recoveries of people affected by the virus, Mr. Monoballah said recent statistics by the National Public Health Institute of Liberia, shows COVID-19 is still here.

Deputy Director-General Monoballah recalled the support of the European Union to the fisheries sector, naming the EU as a major partner to Liberia's development drive in many fronts.

The occasion was graced by local government officials, fishermen, fishmongers and residents.

Speaking earlier, the commissioner of the township

of West Point, William Wea, lauded the effort of NaFAA for the initiative, describing the intervention as timely.

The president of the Core Management Association (the liaison between NaFAA and the fishing community), NyanteeSleh, admonished residents to take ownership of the items given them.

In May 2017, under former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the European Union (EU) issued Liberia a yellow card, identifying it as not being cooperative in the fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

In recent years, the Government of Liberia (GoL) and the EU have been working behind the scenes in hopes of removing the yellow card.

EU and Liberia have a Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) which established the principles, rules and procedures governing the conditions under which Union vessels may engage in fishing activities in Liberian fishing zone, economic, financial, technical and scientific cooperation in the fisheries sector with a view to promoting sustainable fishing in the country.

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aforementioned non-conformances, SSS Private Limited has hereby been instructed to reengage the EPA in a process leading to the renewal of its environmental permit via the conduct and development of an environmental audit," he said.

Meanwhile, the Acting EPA boss has further asked the company to submit to the agency an application, in keeping with part III Section 6 relative to new undertaking at its facility and as well hire an EPA licensed waste service provider to sustainably handle

the waste generated at the facility.

He also mandated the company to undertake registration of all chemical products utilized as raw materials at its facility and seek guidance from the EPA relevant to the unauthorized discharge of effluent, couple with the institution of appropriate remediation measures or face stringent actions in keeping with the EPML and the Environmental Protection Agency Act. -Press Release

Français

« Weah a massacré l'espoir des Libériens », Dr. Whapoe

Le leader politique de Vision for Liberia's Transformation Party, le Dr Jeremiah Whapoe, s'en est pris au président George Weah et à son équipe, dénonçant sa gestion de la crise sanitaire liée aux coronavirus.

Pour le Dr Whapoe, l'attitude du président Weah et de ses fonctionnaires dans la gestion du COVID-19 pousse les gens à douter que le virus est au Libéria.

S'exprimant lors d'une interview exclusive accordé à

ce quotidien le lundi 8 juin, le candidat malheureux à la présidentielle de 2017 a dit avoir parfois du mal à croire que le COVID-19 est effectivement au Libéria.

« Est-ce que je crois que le COVID-19 ravage des vies dans le monde? Oui. Est-ce que je suis vraiment convaincu que le COVID-19 est au Libéria? Non », a déclaré le Dr Whapoe, ajoutant que le président Weah avait élaboré une politique de distanciation sociale, mais avait depuis refusé de montrer l'exemple.

Il a indiqué que le président Weah avait mangé et dîné avec le ministre de la Justice Frank Musa Dean, le ministre de l'Information Lenn Eugene Nagbe, le patron de l'Agence de lutte contre la drogue qui est décédé plus tard. Nagbe et Dean ont été testés positifs au virus, mais le président a refusé d'être testés. « C'est louche », croit l'opposant.

«Le président dînait avec des responsables qui auraient contracté le virus mais il a refusé d'être testés», a-t-il noté, ajoutant que «la gestion gouvernementale du COVID-19 a trop de sophisme et de doutes».

Whapoe se demande ensuite si le virus peut choisir qui contracter, «parce que quand vous allez au marché de Redlight, à Waterside, à VaiTown et dans d'autres parties du pays, vous vous demandez si le virus est réellement au Libéria », a-t-il dit.

Il applaudit l'Assemblée législative pour avoir approuvé le plan de relance de 25 millions de dollars demandé par M. Weah, mais il se demande à quoi cela sert, car les citoyens ne bénéficient toujours

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Covid 19 : La Guinée lance des essais cliniques pour évaluer des médicaments

Le Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (MESRS), en collaboration avec le Ministère de la Santé, a procédé ce lundi 8 juin 2020, au lancement d'essais cliniques pour évaluer l'efficacité et la tolérance de produits élaborés en République de Guinée et dédiés à la lutte contre le Coronavirus.

Cette initiative s'inscrit dans le cadre de la mobilisation des centres de recherche scientifique pour la recherche d'une thérapie anti-COVID-19, rapidement accessible et scientifiquement acceptable.

Sur la base des résultats ethnopharmacologiques acquis, l'Institut de Recherche et de Développement des Plantes Médicinales et Alimentaires de Guinée (IRDPMAG) sis à Dubréka, avec l'appui de l'Académie des Sciences de

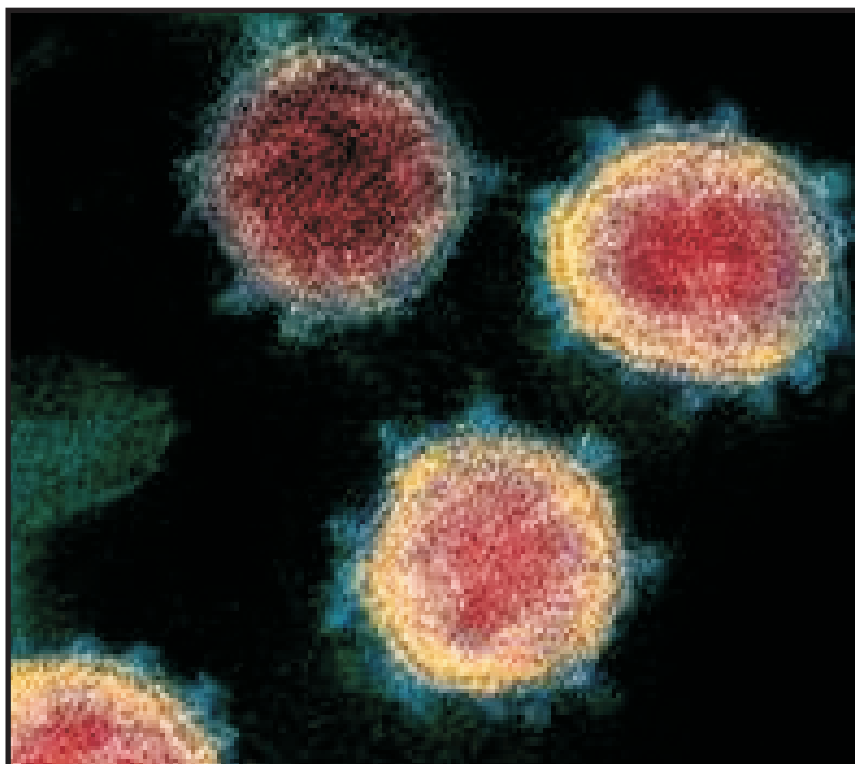
Guinée, a procédé à l'évaluation du potentiel thérapeutique de certaines plantes médicinales et alimentaires, qui ont permis d'aboutir à trois projets :

§ Projet n°1 : L'évaluation de l'efficacité et de la tolérance du Quinquina et d'un

phytomédicament «ACAR» en comparaison avec l'hydroxychloroquine chez des adultes malades du COVID-19 sans symptôme ;

§ Projet n°2 : L'évaluation de l'efficacité et de la

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



- Éditorial -

COVID-19 : Ces 25 millions de dollars pourraient aussi disparaître

Le gouvernement du Libéria semble avoir du mal à justifier l'utilisation des 25 millions de dollars américains approuvés par une résolution commune du parlement afin d'alléger le fardeau économique des citoyens aujourd'hui confrontés à la pandémie du COVID-19.

La résolution commune se lit en partie comme suit : « Que la demande initiale des 25 millions de dollars américains soit approuvée pour le programme de soutien alimentaire avec une modification selon laquelle les 15 comtés de la République seront couverts en tant que comtés affectés dans le cadre de la distribution de la ration alimentaire et que des montants supplémentaires nécessaires seront soumis pour une réappropriation. Les achats dans le cadre de ce programme doivent d'abord tenir compte des aliments produits localement. Que le programme de distribution alimentaire donne la priorité aux populations vulnérables et aux premiers intervenants à savoir: les jeunes défavorisés, les sans-abri, les orphelinats, les personnes âgées, les personnes handicapées, les agents de santé et le personnel de sécurité déployés en première ligne de l'application de l'État de Urgence et que toutes les restrictions imposées par le président concernant la circulation des personnes et les heures applicables soient approuvées et que toutes les personnes qui apparaissent dans les rues et les bâtiments publics portent un dispositif de protection couvrant au moins le nez et la bouche. »

Cela est entré en vigueur le 9 avril 2020. Mais deux mois plus tard, le programme de distribution alimentaire n'a pas encore eu d'impact visible, même sur les populations dites les plus vulnérables de Monrovia. Quant aux comtés de Montserrado et de Margibi qui sont considérés comme « les comtés les plus touchés » par la pandémie, n'en parlons pas.

Le président du comité directeur de la distribution alimentaire, le ministre du Commerce, Wilson Tarpeh, a récemment révélé que le Fonds monétaire international avait accordé une subvention de 5 millions de dollars pour porter le plan de relance à 30 millions de dollars. Cependant, la distribution réelle semble largement insaisissable, faute d'un meilleur choix de mots.

Ce qui est encore plus inquiétant, c'est que l'état d'urgence va prendre fin et le président George Manneh Weah a catégoriquement déclaré qu'il ne serait pas renouvelé. A en croire un communiqué de la présidence, le chef de l'Etat Président a dit qu'étant donné le niveau d'expérience du Libéria face au coronavirus et de son mode de transmission, y compris les progrès réalisés grâce au confinement, le tout couronné par ce qui se passe dans d'autres pays, il n'est pas nécessaire d'étendre l'Etat d'Urgence.

Ce qui veut dire que le gouvernement est sur le point de rouvrir le pays, en commençant par la reprise des vols normaux à l'aéroport international Roberts à compter du 21 juin, les activités hôtelières et toutes les autres activités dont le jeu et l'école. Pendant ce temps, il n'y a pas de nourriture comme prévu, malgré l'assurance continue du ministre Tarpeh.

Les Libériens sont maintenant inquiets, et à juste titre. Ils ont peur que ce plan de relance de 25 millions de dollars ne connaisse le même sort que celui des 25 autres millions de dollars décaissés pour, dit-on, éponger l'excès de liquidité dans l'économie. A noter que cette administration n'a pris aucune mesure malgré la pression du public.

Malheureusement, nous voyons des colis de nourriture être acheminés vers des communautés sélectionnées par le comité dirigé par Tarpehelle une grenouille du printemps, au milieu des protestations des populations à qui la nourriture ne parvient pas. A cela, il faut ajouter les spéculations selon lesquelles le personnel soignant menace de protester pour réclamer leurs primes de risques et des arriérés de salaire.

Tôt ou tard, nous allons voir le gouvernement présenter un rapport, quel qu'il soit, sur la façon dont la distribution a été effectuée, et nous sommes convaincus que rien de ce qu'ils diront sera vrai.

Nous aimerions prodiguer ce petit conseil au gouvernement qu'il ne faut pas tenir le peuple libérien pour acquis en sortant de l'argent des coffres de l'Etat sous prétexte de vouloir leur donner à manger lorsque c'est une farce.

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Français

« Weah a massacré

d’aucune aide gouvernementale.

Après que l’administration Weah a promis la ration alimentaire il y a deux mois, les Libériens attendent toujours, ils sont obligés de sortir pour vaguer à leurs occupations car le paquet n’arrive pas et ils doutent qu’il arrivera un jour. Quant au personnel soignant de l’hôpital militaire 14, ils prévoient une grève pour réclamer plusieurs mois d’arriérés de salaire.

Le Dr Whapoe a exprimé ses craintes que la nation ne s’effondre sous les yeux de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique au pouvoir. Il faut rappeler que l’économie souffre de dépression, tandis que les prix des denrées alimentaires et de première nécessité continuent de monter en flèche. Il dit avoir l’impression que les Libériens sont livrés à eux-mêmes et sont sans gouvernement responsable.

« Et pire, au lieu que M. Weah essaie de sauver la nation d’un effondrement total, il s’est engagé dans une campagne égoïste plaçant ses photos géantes sur des panneaux de publicité dans la ville et appelant le Coronavirus le projet de Weah. Ce gouvernement n’a aucun plan pour le peuple libérien », a-t-il dit.

Le 8 avril, le président Weah a déclaré l’état

d’urgence (SOE) avec à la pointe un plan de soulagement de 25 millions de dollars « pour alléger le fardeau économique des citoyens vulnérables pendant la période de verrouillage ».

Mais depuis l’adoption de l’Etat d’urgence et l’approbation du plan de relance par le pouvoir législatif libérien, les Libériens n’ont toujours rien reçu de la part du gouvernement Weah. Le weekend dernier, le gouvernement a annoncé que l’Etat d’urgence ne serait pas renouvelé, ce qui signifie que le pays devrait rouvrir. Mais des questions demeurent quant à ce qui est arrivé au plan de soulagement de 25 millions de dollars.

« Il est honteux que le gouvernement annonce un tel plan, alors qu’il est incapable des payer les travailleurs de la santé ou au moins leur acheter des kits de protection », a dit le Dr Whapoe.

“Sur quoi utilisent-ils l’argent, nous ne savons pas. Ce gouvernement n’a donné aucun kit de protection à personne », a-t-il appelé.

Il convient de rappeler que le 14 avril, le président Weah, dans sa lettre aux législateurs, a lancé un appel en faveur d’une réappropriation de 25 millions de dollars US du budget national 2019/2020 de 526 millions de dollars US, afin de permettre au gouvernement de combattre le COVID-19.

Covid 19 : La Guinée

tolérance d’une médication à base de Cosphérunate et d’un phytomédicament antiviral par voie orale en comparaison avec un traitement à base d’hydroxychloroquine chez des adultes malades de la COVID-19 sans complication ;

§ Projet n°3 : L’évaluation de l’efficacité et de la tolérance de l’Artemisia annua dans le traitement du COVID-19 chez des adultes malades sans complication.

Les protocoles des projets n°1 et n°2 ont bénéficié de l’avis favorable du Conseil Scientifique et de l’autorisation de mise en œuvre du Comité National d’Ethique pour la Recherche en Santé.

Le protocole du projet n°3 en cours de finalisation fera l’objet d’un essai clinique dans les jours à venir.

En collaboration avec le Ministère de la Santé, les protocoles d’essais sont

placés sous la supervision scientifique du Professeur Mamadou Aliou BALDE, Directeur Général de l’IRDMAG et la coordination du Professeur Mohamed CISSE, doyen de la Faculté des Sciences et Techniques de la Santé de l’Université Gamal Abdel Nasser de Conakry.

Ces protocoles sont exécutés sur financement de l’Etat et sous la surveillance du Comité National d’Ethique pour la Recherche en Santé, conformément aux dispositions en vigueur.

Le Ministère de l’Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique rappelle que ces essais cliniques sont soumis à une réglementation stricte pour préserver la santé des populations et que seules les autorités compétentes peuvent se prononcer sur les résultats et les suites éventuelles à donner pour l’utilisation

COMMENTAIRE

Par Ifeanyi M. Nsofor & Bell Ihua

Le désert de la santé mentale au Nigeria

ABUJA - Pour la plupart des Nigériens, une personne souffrant de maladie mentale est «?quelqu’un qui se met à courir nu dans la rue?». C’est une idée complètement fausse, pourtant un bon 70 % des répondants d’un sondage récent sur la santé mentale – le plus important réalisé au pays depuis presque 20 ans – y croit. Et ce n’était là qu’une seule des nombreuses conceptions erronées et nuisibles dont le sondage a fait état.

Le sondage mené auprès de 5?315 personnes consultées par nos organismes – EpiAFRIC et le Africa Polling Institute – a constaté que 84 % d’entre elles estiment que les troubles mentaux étaient attribuables à la toxicomanie, 60 % lient de tels troubles à de la «?faiblesse d’esprit?», 54 % à une «?possession par des forces maléfiques?» et 23 % au «?châtiment de Dieu?». Presque un tiers – 32 % – croit que les troubles mentaux sont le fait d’une malédiction familiale.

Étant donné toutes ses idées farfelues, il n’est peut-être pas étonnant que 69 % des répondants aient mentionné qu’ils ne voudraient entretenir aucune forme de relation avec une personne souffrant de troubles psychologiques – 58 % justifiant principalement cette attitude par des raisons de sécurité personnelle. Seulement 26 % des répondants envisageraient au mieux d’entretenir des liens d’amitié avec une personne souffrant de troubles psychiatriques, alors que 2 % seulement feraient affaire avec une telle personne et un maigre 1 % envisagerait de se marier avec elle. Les Nigériens sont souvent invités à vérifier s’il y a des antécédents familiaux de maladie mentale dans la famille d’un futur conjoint.

Cet ostracisme présente de graves conséquences pour ceux qui souffrent de problèmes de santé mentale. Si quelqu’un présentait des signes de troubles mentaux, 8 % des répondants les amèneraient chez un guérisseur traditionnel?; 4 % les enfermeraient?; et 2 % essaieraient de les guérir par une bonne raclée. Puisque 48 % des répondants du sondage déclaraient connaître quelqu’un qui souffre de troubles mentaux – un groupe qui compose jusqu’à 30 % de la population, selon certaines estimations – ces réponses prêtent à conséquence.

Pire encore, au Nigeria, les stigmates liés à la santé mentale font partie intrinsèque de son régime juridique. À ce stade, les soins de santé mentale sont régis par la loi de 1958 sur la démence, héritée du régime colonial qui légitime de fait les violations des droits des personnes souffrant de pathologies mentales. Ainsi, la loi autorise les médecins et les magistrats à arrêter les «?fous?» et à déterminer quand et comment ils devraient être détenus – d’habitude dans des prisons en compagnie de détenus reconnus coupables d’actes criminels. L’Assemblée nationale a un projet de loi au feuillet pour remplacer cette loi depuis 2003. Même si le Comité sénatorial sur la santé a récemment tenu une audience publique sur le projet de loi, la loi n’a pas encore été adoptée.

Vu les stigmates sociaux et le manque de protection judiciaire, les Nigériens souffrant de troubles psychologiques sont naturellement peu disposés à aller chercher de l’aide. Mais même ceux qui cherchent à consulter pourraient bien éprouver des difficultés à trouver des psychologues ou des psychiatres pour les aider. Même si on les envoyait à l’hôpital – là où 65 % des personnes sondées ont déclaré qu’elles amèneraient une personne souffrant de troubles psychologiques – il n’y a aucune garantie qu’un psychiatre sera disponible. Selon l’Association of Psychiatrists au Nigeria, il n’y a que 250 psychiatres pour assurer des services à 200 millions de Nigériens – un par 800?000 habitants. Les États-Unis, avec ses 28?000 psychiatres pour 330 millions d’Américains, sont pourvus d’un psychiatre par

11?786 habitants.

Puisque les psychiatres doivent suivre une longue formation poussée, il faudra des décennies pour combler ce déficit – et seulement si les jeunes sont encouragés à poursuivre des études dans cette discipline. Les responsables politiques se doivent d’intervenir, dès maintenant, pour réduire l’opprobre, mais surtout pour dissiper les malentendus sur les maladies et assurer des soins de qualité et une prise en charge de ceux qui en ont besoin, dès aujourd’hui.

À cette fin, des stratégies novatrices apparaissent déjà. La Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative utilise la dynamique des médias sociaux pour sensibiliser le grand public sur les problèmes de santé mentale. Cette initiative a déjà mis sur pied une assistance téléphonique pour éviter les suicides et soulager la détresse psychologique, qui permet une intervention immédiate et de «?premiers soins en santé mentale?», avant d’aiguiller les demandeurs d’aide vers des soins spécialisés.

Le Nigeria est loin d’être le seul pays à innover. Au Zimbabwe, le Friendship Bench met de l’avant une démarche fondée sur les ressources communautaires dans laquelle des travailleurs de la santé non spécialisés dans les collectivités – principalement des «?grand-mères?» (ou des aïeules) – qui prodigue une thérapie factuelle par le dialogue sur des bancs publics à l’ombre des arbres. Un essai clinique publié dans le Journal of the American Medical Association a indiqué qu’après six mois, ceux qui ont reçu l’intervention avaient des indices relatifs aux symptômes sensiblement plus faibles que le groupe de contrôle, qui a reçu des soins conventionnels bonifiés.

Ailleurs, on s’attend à davantage d’innovations fortuites. Par exemple, aux États-Unis, The Oasis Alliance, un organisme à but non lucratif en Virginie, utilise des concepts d’aménagements intérieurs pour «?favoriser et accélérer la récupération, le développement et le mieux-être psychologique?» chez les personnes ayant vécu un traumatisme.

Évidemment, de tels programmes coûtent cher. Aussi, à part l’abrogation de ses lois sur la santé mentale, l’État du Nigeria devra affecter davantage de fonds au secteur. Selon l’Organisation mondiale de la santé, il se dépense dans le monde moins de 3 \$ par personne, en moyenne, sur la santé mentale par année?; dans des pays à faibles revenus, ce taux peut être aussi faible que 0,25 \$ par personne. Au Nigeria, le budget national en santé mentale ne couvre que les dépenses en immobilisations et les salaires des effectifs des hôpitaux fédéraux en neuropsychiatrie et seule une fraction du budget affecté est normalement débloquée.

Une façon d’optimiser l’utilisation de fonds limités serait d’ajouter des soins psychologiques à des programmes existants de santé publique financés par des donateurs. Par exemple, les programmes de lutte contre le VIH et le SIDA devraient comporter des services de santé mentale pour les personnes atteintes. De plus, les assureurs de soins médicaux devraient inclure des services de consultation psychologique dans leur régime, de sorte que les gens n’aient pas à en déboursier les frais – une barrière insurmontable pour la plupart.

Le Nigeria laisse pour compte ceux qui souffrent de troubles psychologiques – une proportion non négligeable de la population. Mais avec une législation bonifiée, de meilleurs systèmes d’enseignement et de soutien – élaborés et mis en œuvre par la mobilisation des groupes de défense des intérêts, des praticiens et des organismes donateurs en santé mentale – les autorités publiques du Nigeria peuvent changer le cours des choses en santé mentale, jetant les bases d’un avenir plus sain, plus épanoui et plus productif.

Nwabudike must leave

Montserrado County Senator Darius Dillon has written the Senate, requesting that august body to take siege of events unfolding at the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), where the disgraced self-proclaimed naturalized Liberian, Nigerian born Cllr. Ndubusi A. Nwabudike still reign despite failing to prove his citizenship here.

Cllr. Nwabudike nominated by President George Weah early this year to head the National Elections Commission or NEC as chair, during his confirmation lied about almost everything including his naturalization papers, date of birth, and references.

His testimonies before

of his colleagues to Part VI Section 6.3 of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission's Act which prohibits foreign national from heading the anti-graft body.

Part VI Section 6.3 states: "Qualification: Each member of the Commission shall be a Liberian citizen of not less than thirty (30) years of age, of good moral character in the community, and with proven records in anticorruption advocacy or professional training and/or experience in law, law enforcement, accounting, auditing or a related field. The membership of the Commission shall also be drawn to reflect the broad spectrum of society; provided further that no two Commissioners shall have the same County of origin and

violated," excepts of Sen. Dillon's letter read.

Sen. Dillon's communication comes at a time the political leader of the Vision for Liberia's Transformation Party, Dr. Jeremiah Whapoe told this paper Monday June 8, that his party is exploring means to file legal actions against Nwabudike's stay at the LACC.

Recently, the Liberian National Bar Association in a motion before the Civil Law Court described Nwabudike as a fake individual and hence should not be allowed a day in Liberia to be considered a citizen.

"The mere fact that the Petitioner (Cllr. Nwabudike) has failed and neglected to prove his Citizenship before the House of Senate during his



Sen. Darius Dillon



Cllr. Ndubusi A. Nwabudike

senators and documents he tendered in as evidence during his confirmation hearings were all replete with inconsistencies. President George Weah embarrassingly withdrew his nomination days after senators halted further confirmation hearings.

In his letter dated June 9, 2020, a copy of which is in the possession of this paper, Senator Dillon argued that by law a foreign national is not allowed to serve at the country's anti-graft commission, thereby asking his colleagues to intervene and save that integrity institution from being abused and violated by Nwabudike.

To drive home his point, Sen. Dillon drew the attention

all five (5) shall not be of the same gender."

"Mr. Pro-temp, we hold strongly that Mr. Nwabudike, a Nigerian citizen by birth, has not demonstrated or proven to be a Liberian and manner of acquisition of Liberian citizenship as he claimed before this august body during his confirmation hearing.

In view of the above, I wish to formally invite the intervention of the Senate to this matter of national concern and impress upon my distinguish colleagues to take seize thereof and ensure that the appropriate and proper measures be taken to uphold, protect and defend the integrity and credibility of the LACC from being abused and

confirmation hearing and up to present has still failed to do so, he has justified sufficiently that he has never been a citizen of Liberia but rather a faked individual and should not be allowed a day in Liberia to be considered citizen." The LNBA wrote in a motion as intervener to buttress Government's motion.

Cllr. Nwabudike had filed a thirteen counts petition for Declaratory Judgment before the Civil Law Court after Criminal Court 'B' revealed that they were unable to locate his citizenship document. He has since withdrawn that case, but still comfortable seated at the LACC. -By Othello B. Garblah

Deceased kid's family

Starts from back page

communication on the outcome of the LNP's (Liberia National Police's) investigation and therefore find most disturbing that the LNP would be so insensitive to the loss of a little baby and ignoring the mourning of the family, thereby treating the death as irrelevant and insignificant," Mr. Davis laments.

According to him, the late Francis' family is prepared to challenge the police's findings because pieces of evidence and witness' testimonies are sufficient to attribute wrongdoing to the LNP in general.

"The premature release of findings and the attitude of the police reinforces the family's suspicion of an attempt to cover up an act of the police brutality and assault on an innocent child," he alleges.

According to Mr. Davis, the family has learned that the LNP, as part of an alleged devilish plan is seeking to charge the family with murder in an attempt to scare the kid's family.

But he warns that this will not scare them, but will rather continue to advocate for the rights of Francis until justice is done.

Since the incident that led to the death of their son, Mr. Davis complains that the Spokesman of Police Moses Carter has made two different statements on the matter, saying one of the statements accuses him (Davis) of being behind the kid's death.

For her part, Francis' grandaunt Ms. Soma McGill tells reporters that after the complaint was filed with the police, the LNP did not interview any of the family members or community dwellers that watched the alleged police brutality,

claiming that police only spoke with a lady that went to West Point to sell.

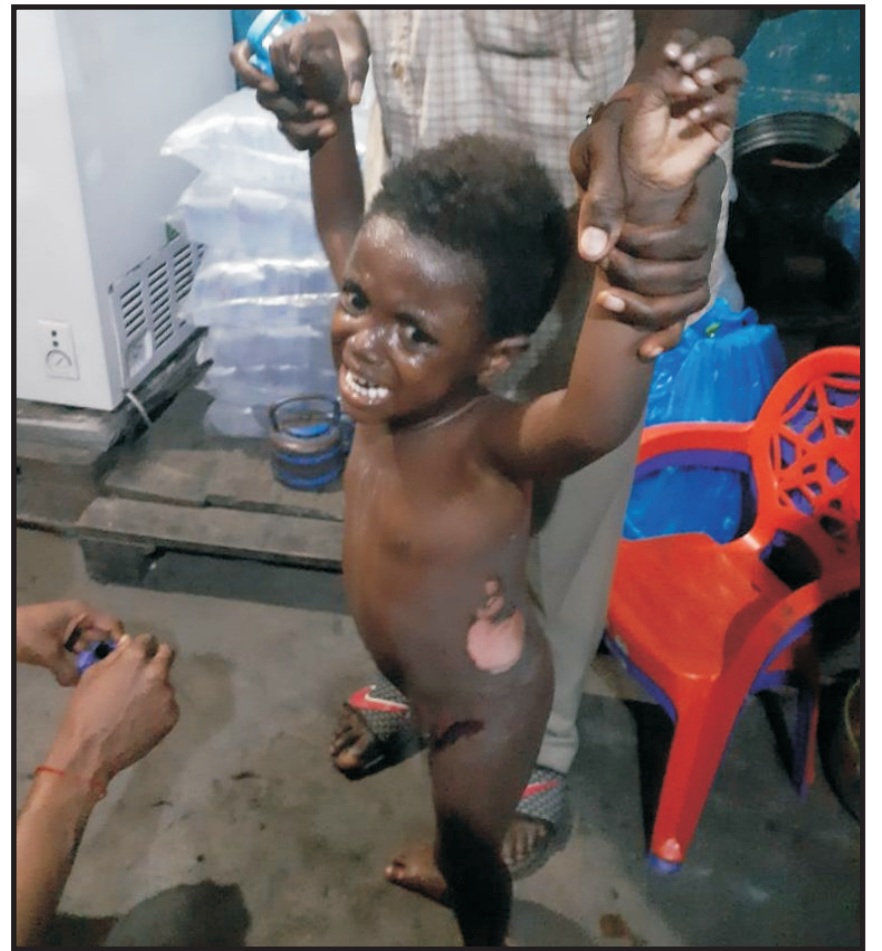
"We have been peaceful with the police after we filed our complaint. They took almost two weeks, every time we come to the police headquarters they will tell us they [are] still taking statements from the police that were [involved]. But for the police to come up with this report, it's saddening," Ms. Soma McGill says.

Receiving the petition from the group, the Police Inspector General Col. Patrick T. Sudue extends the police's condolences to the family and the protesters, saying the Liberia National Police is not in favor of seeing Liberian citizens being killed.

Col. Sudue continues that the investigation that was conducted was carried out by the police's Professional Standard Division, saying if any police officer had been found guilty, that officer would have been turned over to the Crimes Services Division.

"But the report from the Professional Standard didn't hold the officer, but that investigation did not end, the case [is] there. So the recommendation was the case be turned over to the CSD to look into the criminal aspect of the case to see as to what is the cause of this little child being burned that led to his death," Inspector General Sudue says.

He further narrates that it is the family's right to call for an independent investigation, noting that if the family and the legal team agree, the CSD can turn the case over to the Civilian Complaint Board which is headed by Cllr. Tiawon Gongoe, the president of the Liberia National Bar Association. --Edited by Winston W. Parley



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Senate, CBL tussle over printing power

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The Liberian Senate Committee on Banking and Currency, and authorities of the Central Bank of Liberia are in a serious tussle here over has authority to print local currency.

The ensued Tuesday, June 09, during the committee's public hearing in the senate chambers at the Capitol in Monrovia. The hearing is about amendments in the Act creating the Central Bank of Liberia.

It all started when CBL authorities and the president of the commercially-run Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI) Mr. John Davis argues that the senate should grant power to print local currency to the Central Bank and that the CBL should report to the Liberian Legislature every two years.

But the suggestion did not

Bank to print currency at will and only report to the legislature, if need be, which in his thinking was not proper. He warns that doing so could cause serious and uncontrollable inflation with the already struggling economy.

River Gee Senator Conmany Wesseh concurs with Senator Sherman, further arguing that the decision is totally wrong and unacceptable under the provision of the Constitution.

He also warns that if such provision of the Act were to remain as granted to the Central Bank, it means the Liberian Legislature will have no authority or oversight on the functions of the CBL.

Article 34 (ii) of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia clearly states, "no monies shall be drawn from the treasure except in consequence of appropriations made by legislative enactment and upon warrant of the President; and

impute from lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

For his part, the chairman of the committee, Senator Marshall Dennis, says the legislature is prepared and willing to work with the CBL at all times and that nothing can make the first branch of government, especially, the Liberian Senate, to thwart the Constitution just to please authorities of the Central Bank.

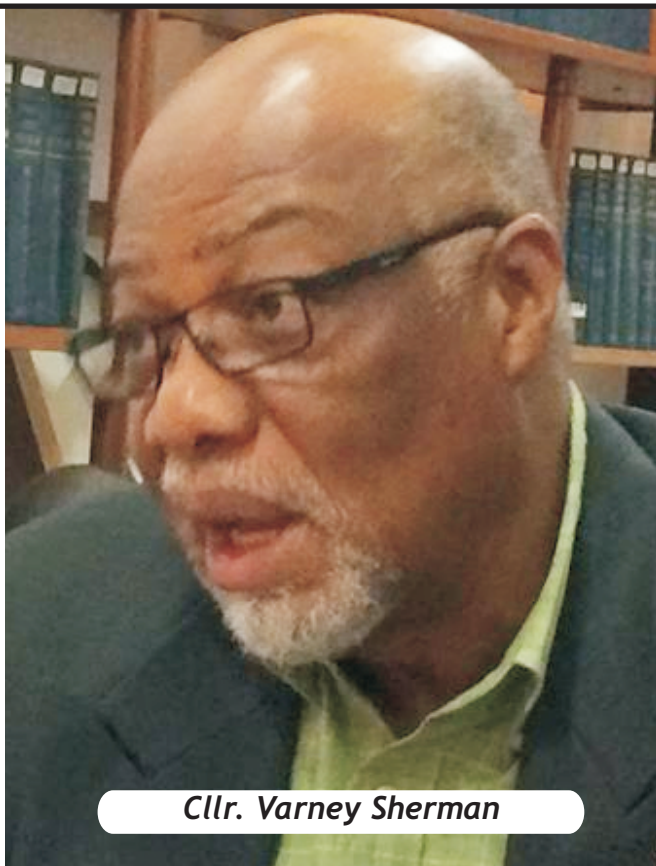
George Weah administration has hired the services of Crane AB, an American company to print and deliver LRD4 billion banknotes in domination of 500 Liberian dollars to the Central Bank of Liberia.

In March, the CBL issued a request for printing, soliciting proposals for the printing of additional banknotes.

CBL Executive Governor, J. Aloysius Tarlue, Jr., said the selection of Crane AB



CBL Augustine Tarlue



Cllr. Varney Sherman

land smoothly as Grand Cape Mount County Senator Cllr. Varney Sherman, objects to that portion of the amendment.

Cllr. Sherman counters that doing so would totally undermine the 1986 Constitution of Liberia. He notes that framers of the Constitution know exactly why the printing of currency shall totally be approved by the Legislature.

The renowned corporate lawyer says for authorities of the Central Bank to make such an appeal is to violate the Constitution by giving all authorities of control and balance system being employed by the organic law to one institution of the government.

He recalls that the Central Bank of Liberia's Act of 1999 under jailed former President Charles Taylor ascribes that power to the

no coin shall be minted or national currency issued except by the expressed authority of the Legislature. An annual statement and account of the expenditure of all public monies shall be submitted by the office of the President to the Legislature and published once a year".

However countering the senators, Deputy CBL Governor for Economic Policy, Dr. Musa Dukuly says it is impossible for the Central Bank to print currency without approval of the legislature, but the suggestion to maintain such power is intended to fast track the process of monitor and control and for the Bank to be up to her game.

Dr. Dukuly notes only the legislature has the constitutional power to instruct the printing of money but the aspect of reporting after two years does not mean the bank will act absolutely without

('Crane') "is the result of a competitive and transparent procurement process that was opened to several major currency printers around the world."

He had vowed that "the CBL will keep the Liberian people fully informed of every step in the procurement process, up to and including the arrival and injection of the additional banknotes into the Liberian economy."

The printing of new currency by the CBL under former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was marred by discrepancies, for which former executives were charged with multiple crimes, but the Weah administration has dropped charges against the accused, including ex-executive governor Milton Weeks.

An independent investigation commissioned by USAID thru Kroll

Leper patients cry

Cont'd from page 6

He commends Kwatekeh Africa and the office of Rep. Edward Karfiah for the level of support over the past.

"We are grateful to Kwatekeh Africa for the level of support; but we really calling on the government to direct its attention to us because we cannot only depend on Kwatekeh Africa," he adds.

Our Bong County correspondent who visited the area says despite the awful condition of lepers, many of them are required to engage in farming in order to earn a livelihood while they keep their hands stretched for more.

"I came here since 1973 and since then, I can remember from the beginning of my arrival things were much better, but since the war broke out, my life has completely changed for the worse and I am left with no hope again," Tennie King, aged 98, tells our correspondent.

When questioned if she knows the whereabouts of her relatives, Madam King says she left her husband and two children to seek medication at the center in 1973, but she is yet to hear from them since the war ended.

"Since I came here some

friends have been helping me. I can proudly say that this is now my home because I don't have anywhere to go as you can see. I am very old so I am not thinking of going anywhere. Those who are living in this town with me are all my families," she concludes.

According to her, only one of her hands was infected from the beginning, but her both hands and legs are now being infected with the disease.

The Suakoko Rehab Center, according to our correspondent, has little over 600 inhabitants, many of whom are not lepers.

John Tormue, one of the lepers there wants the world to hear their cry for help from the government, including financial aid and medical care.

Many of the children and grandchildren at the Rehab Center are not infected with leprosy, but they are still shunned by society due to their link to the patients.

Leprosy is a chronic, curable infectious disease mainly causing skin lesions and nerve damage. It is caused by infection with the bacterium mycobacterium leprae and it mainly affects the skin, eyes, nose and peripheral nerves.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley

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Associates, Inc. an American firm, established that the CBL ordered new currency totaling LRD 15.0 billion from Crane Currency in two tranches in 2016 and 2017.

Kroll's investigation identified discrepancies at every stage of the process for controlling the movement of banknotes into and out of the CBL during the Independent Review, including: the Legislature approval for printing new banknotes; the procurement and contracting of Crane AB; the shipping of

new banknotes to Liberia; the delivery of new banknotes to the CBL, and; the movement of funds within and out of the CBL's vaults.

According to the probe, the actual value of new banknotes printed by Crane AB to

Liberia totaled LRD 15.506 billion, therefore new banknotes totaling LRD 0.506

billion were printed by Crane AB above the initial contractual amount of LRD 15.0 billion. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

Weeks wants old bond reinstated -in 16bn case



Ex-Governor Milton Weeks

By **Winston W. Parley**
Defense lawyers representing former Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks have pleaded with Criminal Court “C” in Monrovia to

permit and reinstate the property valuation bond he filed during previous trial of the L\$16 billion case, after his re-indictment was announced along with several CBL officials and board members.

After a new indictment for


money laundering was added to the previous charges levied in the first indictment against the CBL officials in 2019.

The Court in August last year ordered the five CBL officials who were on trial at the time, to file LD\$1,058,000,000 bonds each, which when combined totaled LD\$5,290,000,000.

Having nolleprosequi the previous indictment, prosecutors here on Monday, 8 June issued a new indictment, the third in the case against the CBL officials, this time, including other members of the bank’s Board of Governors for alleged economic sabotage surrounding the \$16 billion Liberian Dollars scandal.

The new indictment alleges that the defendants knew that the total money printed by Crane Currency under the second contract was L\$13,004,750,000 which accounts for an excess of L\$2,645,000,000, and yet they connived to defraud the Government of Liberia by criminally concealing and

▶ **CONT'D ON PAGE 6**



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ANC suspends youth congress' activities -Probes violence at Hq.

The Alternative National Congress said it is suspending its youth congress in a response to the violent that erupted at its headquarters involving the party’s youths on Sunday.

The ANC noted that its National Executive Committee met on Monday June 8, and took the below decision:

? That the decision of majority of the Youth Congress Executive Committee to suspend its Chairman was a procedural breach in violation of Articles 24 and 27 of the party’s Constitution on the procedure for suspension of an elected national officer of an organ within the party. As such, the Executive Committee has therefore rescinded the decision to suspend Mr.



ANC Alexander Cummings

Benjamin Myers; That an Ad hoc Grievance & Ethics Committee has been instituted to investigate the violence caused yesterday and the allegations made against Mr . Benjamin Myers by other executives of the Youth Congress . The Committee is expected to produce its report within five (5) working days ; That in line with Article 25 , Section 1 of the Constitution , Sen . Daniel

▶ **CONT'D ON PAGE 6**



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