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Continental News

Guinea votes as president, 82, seeks third term

Voters in Guinea are casting their ballots in a controversial election which sees President Alpha Condé, 82, seeking a third term.

The day started with heavy rain but as soon as it stopped, long lines started forming in front of polling stations.

Mr Condé ignored critics to push for a change of constitution that allowed him to extend his stay in office.

His main challenger is Cellou Dalein Diallo, who he has twice defeated.

Ethnic clashes during the campaign have raised fears of nationwide violence if the results are disputed.

The government has closed the borders with some neighbouring countries, citing security reasons. Some 5.4 million voters eligible to vote. Results are not expected for several days.

Candidates need more than 50% of the vote for outright victory, or there will be a second round on 24 November.

Ten other candidates are also running, while some opposition groups have called for a boycott. Guinea has been beset by authoritarian and military rule since

independence. There have been some fears that the army might be getting involved in politics again. On Friday, the minister of defence issued a statement saying that a group of soldiers had entered a military camp in Kindia, a city 130km (80 miles) east of the capital Conakry, and killed its commander, Col Mamady Condé.

Some reports spoke of an army mutiny, but the authorities later said they were in control and that a search was under way to find the soldiers. Mr Condé was a veteran opposition leader who finally won elections in 2010, marking

the first genuinely democratic handover in Guinea since independence. He served jail time for challenging General Lansana Conté, who ruled from 1984 to his death in 2008.

He has campaigned on his economic record and prospects that Simandou, one of the world's largest untapped iron-ore deposits, might finally be exploited - creating thousands of jobs.

But critics say that any economic growth has not filtered down to the bulk of the population. Power cuts are common and many young

Guineans are unable to find work.

A new constitution was approved in a referendum in March. Mr Condé argues this means he is allowed to seek re-election, even though he had already served the maximum of two terms allowed under the previous constitution.

The opposition disputes this and street protests have led to dozens of deaths over the past year. Cellou Dalein Diallo, 68, a former prime minister, is the only formidable opponent. He lost to Mr Condé in both 2010 and 2015, although he says both elections were marred by

widespread fraud. He is a member of the Peul, or Fulani, community. Although they are Guinea's largest ethnic group, the country has never had a Peul president and many ethnic Peuls say they have faced discrimination, dating back to the days of President Sékou Touré, when thousands fled the country.

Mr Condé is largely backed by members of his Malinké community, as well as the country's third major ethnic group, the Soussous.

Mr Diallo and other opposition figures in the National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC) had vowed to boycott an election which they felt could never be fair. BBC



President Alpha Condé's main rival is Cellou Dalein Diallo

Shots fired at Nigerian governor during protests

The governor of Nigeria's Osun state has escaped what officials call an "assassination attempt" when armed people attacked anti-police brutality protesters in the state capital Osogbo.

After marching with the protesters, Governor Adegboyega Oyetola was addressing them when shots were fired.

Mr Oyetola was not hurt but some of his aides were wounded.

Nigeria has been rocked by more than two weeks of protests against the Sars police unit.

Its officers are accused of extortion, torture and murder.

The government has promised to disband Sars (Special Anti Robbery Squad) but this has not satisfied the protesters, who have now broadened their demands, calling for an end to decades of corruption and mismanagement in Africa's biggest oil producer, which has left many young Nigerians with bleak economic prospects.

Thousands of mostly young people have once more taken to the streets of cities across the country.

The protests have also been backed by global celebrities such as Twitter founder Jack Dorsey, US rapper Kanye West, footballers Mesut Ozil and Marcus Rashford as well as

Ex-PM's home destroyed ahead of Ivory Coast poll

The house of a former prime minister of Ivory Coast has been burnt down during clashes less than two weeks before bitterly contested elections.

It is not clear who was behind the attack on the residence of Pascal Affi Nguessan in his stronghold of Bongouanou.

One of the town's schools was also destroyed, a teacher told the BBC.

Mr Nguessan and former President Henri Konan Bédié announced this week they would boycott the 31 October elections.

President Alassane Ouattara, vying for a third term in office, has rejected their demands to postpone the vote and hold talks.

He initially said he would stand down but after his preferred successor, Amadou Gon Coulibaly, died of a heart attack in July, he reversed his position.

There are fears that the

election could reignite conflict in the country, which is slowly recovering from a civil war sparked by a dispute over the 2010 election, won by Mr Ouattara. Friday's clashes between rival groups of supporters in Bongouanou, about 200km (125 miles) north of the country's main city, Abidjan, came a day after official campaigning began.

At least two people were killed, according to witnesses cited by the AFP news agency. Mr Nguessan told AFP: "People were transported from Abidjan. They targeted the property of opposition leaders."

The teacher said: "I saw people with machetes, knives attacking other people."

"My school was burnt. They burnt everything there, all my personal belongings disappeared in the fire."

He spoke of other attacks on buildings and accused the police of not doing enough to prevent them. BBC



The demonstrators have now broadened their demands to include better governance

Nigerian superstars Davido and Wizkid. A group of people armed with guns and machetes opened fire at the time Mr Oyetola was addressing the protesters in the Osun state capital Osogbo - after he had marched and sang with them. The officials were hurriedly taken into their vehicles for safety.

Stones were also hurled at the official convoy as it left.

The governor's spokesperson told the BBC that the governor and his deputy

survived the attack unhurt but some aides were wounded and a local journalist was in critical condition due to a serious head injury. Officials say the attack was not carried out by the protesters but by thugs.

Similar attacks on the protesters have also happened in the capital, Abuja, and the country's biggest city, Lagos. It is not clear who is behind them.

Mr Oyetola is from the same party as President Muhammadu Buhari, the All Progressives Congress. BBC

EDITORIAL

No place for electoral violence

THE GOVERNMENT OF the United States thru Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, last week sounded a caveat to African countries preparing for elections, including Liberia to respect the rule of law by allowing citizens to engage in political dialogue and support their choice of candidates, parties, and platforms.

MR. POMPEO SAID in a statement issued over the weekend thru the United States Embassy in Monrovia that the conduct of elections is important not only for Africans, but also for defenders of democracy around the world.

SPECIFICALLY, THE UNITED States has vowed to closely watch actions of individuals who interfere in democratic process on the Continent and will not hesitate to consider consequences, including visa restrictions for people that would be responsible for election-related violence anywhere in Africa.

THIS CAVEAT FROM Liberia's traditional partner America, comes just at a time Liberians are gearing up for midterm senatorial elections on December 8, 2020. The December poll is to elect 15 senators to join 15 incumbent at the Capitol to complete the 30-member Liberian Senate before the next presidential election in 2023.

BUT AHEAD OF the poll, political rallies, mainly by the opposition have been disrupted repeatedly by violence, with fingers-pointing and threats of violent reaction.

ALTHOUGH SECRETARY POMPEO'S warning was not specifically directed at Liberia, but this country being a historical friend of America should listen and act accordingly. Liberia cannot afford to dwindle in violent or fraudulent elections because we should be torchbearer for young democracies on the Continent.

AS SECRETARY POMPEO emphasized, it is important that all sides have equal opportunity to participate peacefully in the democratic process void of repression and intimidation. This has not been the case at recent rallies held across the country, particularly in Monrovia and parts adjacent by opposition candidates, including Senator Abraham Darius Dillon of the Collaborating Political Parties.

WE RECALL THE incident of CPP leader Alexander Cummings' visit to Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County along with opposition Lawmaker Yekeh Kolubah months ago, where they were violently chased out of the county by machete-brandishing thugs expressing loyalty to President George Manneh Weah.

OUTCOME OF A government investigating into the violence is still pending despite a joint statement issued by Foreign Missions in Monrovia, calling for speedy probe.

EVERY LIBERIAN SHOULD endeavor to keep our elections and democracy peaceful and participatory. Whether a candidate comes from the opposition CPP, the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change or is an Independent, he or she has right to campaign and seek votes in counties, communities, towns and villages without fear of being chased away with machetes and stones.

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COMMENTARY

By Jayati Ghosh

How the Green Revolution Is Harming Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing climate change should have taught us the importance of resilience. Unfortunately, well-intentioned efforts to improve food security in Africa are instead increasing small farmers' dependence on global agribusinesses without raising their incomes, and making farming systems more fragile.

NEW DELHI - The Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations World Food Programme, declaring that it wanted "to turn the eyes of the world toward the millions of people who suffer from or face the threat of hunger." Those numbers are now greater than ever - and the dysfunctional global food system is largely to blame.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, around two billion people globally were experiencing food insecurity, and close to 750 million faced chronic or severe hunger. The health and economic crises that erupted in 2020 have made matters much worse, partly because of their impact on food supplies, but even more so because of increasing inequality and the loss of livelihoods among already vulnerable people.

This situation was, and is, preventable. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include the eradication of hunger by 2030. This goal - SDG2 - is genuinely attainable: the world already produces enough food to meet the basic nutritional requirements of everyone on the planet. But the global food system was badly broken well before the pandemic. Much food production is unsustainable. Both food and monetary incomes are so unequally distributed that billions of people cannot afford a healthy and balanced diet. And global food corporations have skewed both production and distribution to the detriment of small farmers and final consumers.

Inequalities in food access are evident across and within countries, even as irrationalities abound in food supply chains. All too often, a region's raw products are shipped around the world to be processed with chemical preservatives, and then transported back for consumption in or near their place of origin.

One reason why the world is currently not on track to achieve SDG2 is because policymakers have misdiagnosed the problem. Instead of emphasizing sustainable (and more local and diversified) food production and equitable distribution, they have focused on increasing agricultural productivity and making supply chains more "efficient" by reducing costs. That has led to an overemphasis on yields, insufficient attention to agro-ecological contexts and local nutritional requirements, and strong incentives for chemical-based agriculture.

This approach is exemplified by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), an initiative launched in 2006 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. AGRA's programs support the use of high-yielding commercial seeds, synthetic fertilizers, and chemical pesticides in a monocropping model to increase yields per acre. Surprisingly, advocates of this approach seem largely unaware that similar projects in many Asian developing countries previously produced medium-term results that were mixed at best and were often associated with major ecological problems.

AGRA initially aimed to double the household incomes of 20 million small-scale African farmers by 2020, and halve food insecurity in 20 countries through productivity improvements. It then adopted the more ambitious targets of doubling

yields and incomes for 30 million farming households by 2020. But with the deadline approaching, AGRA has shifted the goalposts, and is now promising, much more modestly, to increase incomes (by an unspecified amount) and improve food security for 30 million smallholder farm households in 11 African countries by 2021. In a recent response to criticism, AGRA was even more circumspect, claiming that its goal is to reach only nine million farmers directly and the remaining 21 million indirectly (though what that means is not clear).

Despite scaling back its targets, AGRA has not provided data regarding its progress so far. So, there are no reliable estimates of the increase in farmers' yields, net incomes, and food security. But independent researchers reached some disturbing conclusions in a recent study that used national-level data on production, yields, and harvested areas for the most important food crops in AGRA's 13 main target countries. The report found scant evidence of significant increases in small producers' incomes or food security; instead, it concluded that the number of hungry people in AGRA countries had increased by 30%. (AGRA calls this analysis "deeply flawed," but has not provided data to counter it.)

Regarding productivity, the study found that yields of staple crops in AGRA countries increased by only 1.5% per year on average in the first 12 years of the organization's operations - virtually the same rate as in the 12 years prior to its founding. Productivity growth declined in eight of the 13 countries; in three countries, yields actually fell. Even in countries where staple-food production increased substantially - such as Zambia, where maize output more than doubled, owing mainly to an increase in sown area - poverty and hunger among small producers remained very high.

Moreover, the report showed how the adverse outcomes associated with Green Revolution practices elsewhere were also evident in AGRA countries. Land use shifted away from more nutritious and climate-resilient traditional crops like sorghum and millet toward "high-yielding" maize that required farmers to buy more expensive seeds, often causing indebtedness. Monoculture and heavy use of chemicals (such as petroleum-based fertilizers) led to soil acidification and other ecological problems affecting future cultivation. Monoculture has also made diets less diversified and nutritious by reducing production of staple root crops like cassava and sweet potato.

As Jomo Kwame Sundaram has argued, such Green Revolution programs are fundamentally flawed because they view nutrition only in terms of total calorie consumption, and fail to recognize the superior nutritional value of a diverse diet. The latter requires a variety of crops best suited to the location and climate. But the headlong rush to promote supposedly "new" practices rules this out.

The pandemic and ongoing climate change should have taught us the importance of building resilience. Unfortunately, well-intentioned efforts to improve food security in Africa and elsewhere are instead increasing small farmers' dependence on global agribusinesses without raising their incomes, and making farming systems more fragile and less resilient.

O-PED

By Brahma Chellaney

The Quad Sharpens Its Edges

Despite US President Donald Trump's undermining of US alliances, his administration has made significant progress in bringing together the Indo-Pacific's leading democracies. And now that China has forced India's hand, a new strategic arrangement in the region is almost a foregone conclusion.

NEW DELHI - The Quad, a loose strategic coalition of the Indo-Pacific region's four leading democracies, is rapidly solidifying this year in response to China's aggressive foreign policy. Following a recent meeting of their top foreign-policy officials in Tokyo, Australia, India, Japan, and the United States are now actively working toward establishing a new multilateral security structure for the region. The idea is not to create an Asian version of NATO, but rather to develop a close security partnership founded on shared values and interests, including the rule of law, freedom of navigation, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, peaceful dispute resolution, free markets, and free trade.

China represents a growing challenge to all these principles. At a time when the world is struggling with a pandemic that originated in China, that country's expansionism and rogue behavior have lent new momentum to the Quad's evolution toward a concrete formal security arrangement.

Of course, the Quad's focus also extends beyond China, with the goal being to ensure a stable balance of power within a "free and open Indo-Pacific." That concept was first articulated in 2016 by then-Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and has quickly become the linchpin of America's regional strategy.

While all of the Quad partners agree in principle on the need for a free and open Indo-Pacific, it is Chinese expansionism that has catalyzed their recent actions. China is forcing even distant powers like the United Kingdom, France, and Germany to view a rules-based Indo-Pacific as central to international peace and security.

France, for example, has just appointed an ambassador for the Indo-Pacific, after unveiling a new strategy affirming the region's importance in any stable, law-based, multipolar global order. And Germany, which currently holds the European Council presidency, has sought to develop an Indo-Pacific strategy for the European Union. In its own recently released policy guidelines, it calls for measures to ensure that rules prevail over a "might-makes-right" approach in the Indo-Pacific. These developments suggest that in the coming years, Quad members will increasingly work with European partners to establish a strategic constellation of democracies capable of providing stability and an equilibrium of power in the Indo-Pacific.

After lying dormant for nine years, the Quad was resurrected in late 2017, but really only gained momentum over the last year, when its consultations were elevated to the foreign-minister level. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said this month that, "once we've institutionalized what we're doing, the four of us together, we can begin to build out a true security framework, a fabric that can counter the challenge that the Chinese Communist Party presents to all of us."

The Quad's future, however, hinges on India, because the other three powers in the group are already tied by bilateral and trilateral security alliances among themselves. Australia and Japan are both under the US security (and nuclear) umbrella, whereas India not only shares a large land border with China, but also must confront Chinese territorial aggression on its own, as it is currently doing. China's stealth land grabs in the northernmost Indian borderlands of Ladakh earlier this year have led to a major military standoff, raising the risks of further localized battles or another 1962-style frontier war.

It is precisely this aggression that has changed the strategic equation. Chinese President Xi Jinping's authorization of People's Liberation Army incursions into the Himalayas has forced India itself to take a more confrontational position. It is now more likely than ever that the Quad will shift gears from consultation and coordination to become a de facto strategic alliance that plays a central role in a new multilateral security arrangement for the region.

This new architecture will bear little resemblance to America's Cold War-era system, which rested on a patron-client framework, with the US as the "hub" and its allies as the "spokes." No such arrangement would work nowadays, for the simple reason that a country as large as India cannot become just another Japan to the US.

That is why the US is working to coax India into a "soft alliance" devoid of any treaty obligations. This effort will be on full display on October 26-27, when Pompeo and US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper visit New Delhi for joint consultations with their Indian counterparts. Most likely, this meeting will conclude with India signing on to the last of the four foundational agreements that the US maintains with its other close defense partners. Under these accords, both countries will be committed to providing reciprocal access to each other's military facilities, securing military communications, and sharing geospatial data from airborne and satellite sensors.

Moreover, having held multiple bilateral and trilateral military exercises with its Quad partners, India is likely to invite Australia to this year's "Malabar" naval war games with the US and Japan. This would mark the first-ever Quad military exercise; or, as the Chinese communist mouthpiece Global Times, put it, "it would signal that the Quad military alliance is officially formed."

US foreign policy has always been most effective when it leverages cooperation with other countries to advance shared strategic objectives. Despite President Donald Trump's undermining of US alliances, his administration has built the Quad into a promising coalition, and has upgraded security ties with key Indo-Pacific partners, including Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand, and India.

More fundamentally, the Quad's consolidation is further evidence that the Xi regime's aggressive policies are starting to backfire. International views of China have reached new lows this year. Yet the Chinese foreign ministry - doubling down on its "wolf warrior" diplomacy - recently dismissed as "nonsense" Pompeo's plan to forge an international coalition against China. "He won't see that day," the ministry declared. "And his successors won't see that day either, because that day will never, ever come."

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OPINION

By Lars Heikensten Marcia Mcnutt & Johan Rockström

Listen to the Science

The announcement of this year's Nobel Prize laureates is an ideal occasion to appreciate how much we owe to basic science, and how scientists have come together like never before to help stop COVID-19. To overcome the pandemic and meet the other global challenges we face, we must follow their example - and their lead.

STOCKHOLM - The announcement of this year's Nobel Prize laureates should remind us of the many contributions basic science has made to contemporary life. With COVID-19 ravaging much of humanity, and the world anxiously awaiting a breakthrough that can end the pandemic, we can no longer take science for granted. And the global science community, for its part, has risen to the occasion in unprecedented ways, not only to develop vaccines, therapies, and diagnostics, but also to improve our understanding of the virus and the best strategies to protect ourselves.

But the world is also afflicted by other crises that must not be ignored. Last month was the warmest September ever recorded. Tens of millions of people around the world are already experiencing the disastrous effects of human-induced climate change, from raging wildfires and rising sea levels to dangerous heat waves, droughts, and floods. Given current and projected greenhouse-gas emissions, more extreme symptoms of this kind are inevitable, and the increase in the frequency and intensity of many could be irreversible.

There are also deepening social and economic crises. The pandemic has battered national economies, exacerbated many forms of inequality, and sown distrust and social unrest around the world. We rely ever more on technology to conduct our daily lives, educate our children, and connect with each other, but we have yet to do enough to prevent the same technology from being used to amplify dangerous misinformation, inflame social unrest, and leave vulnerable communities even further behind.

Just as scientists and researchers have come together in unprecedented ways to fight the pandemic, so must we mobilize our best and brightest minds to tackle these other global emergencies. Like COVID-19, none can be stopped anywhere until it is stopped everywhere.

Drawing lessons from the global pandemic response and recovery efforts, our organizations will host a virtual Nobel Prize Summit next spring, with the theme "Our Planet, Our Future." The event will bring together Nobel laureates, leading thinkers, policymakers, business innovators, and youth leaders to discuss how progress can be made against climate change, inequality, and the potential harms of powerful new technologies. The ultimate goal will be to build a more resilient, sustainable future for everyone.

In our Anthropocene epoch, we acknowledge that humankind has become the single most important force acting on the planet. We also should recognize that our own encroachments on nature are the common denominator underlying today's global crises. There is a growing body of evidence to show that not only climate change, but also disease outbreaks, are linked to human development and biodiversity loss.

As natural buffers between humans and disease-carrying animals erode, pandemics as bad as the current one could become even more likely. Because we live in such an interconnected world, what starts as a local public-health emergency can rapidly evolve into a global economic crisis with far-reaching social repercussions.

The current crisis thus should be a transformative moment for humanity. We are seeing firsthand just how much our individual futures depend on the collective health and safety of all people and of our natural world. Though science cannot provide all the answers, it clearly is the most important tool we have, not only for stopping the pandemic, but also for building resilience into our infrastructure and economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic also has offered many lessons that will be useful in preparing for a future marked by climate change, biodiversity loss, technological disruption, and inequality. For example, as we saw in many places, nature quickly "bounced back" during the early stages of the pandemic, owing to society-wide lockdowns. We also saw that the virus and its broader ramifications disproportionately burdened the most vulnerable citizens, including racial minorities and the poor. We now must consider what these unequal effects tell us about our current infrastructure and social arrangements. How might institutions be reimagined to ensure greater equity for all?

We have also learned that public trust in science is crucial, as is a basic understanding of risk and uncertainty. Without public buy-in, there will be little chance of effective political management of future crises. Misinformation, widely disseminated with the help of today's information and communication technologies, has created an "infodemic" within the pandemic, reducing public trust in science and making it far more difficult for public-health officials to contain the virus. How can we combat false or misleading narratives and communicate scientific findings more effectively with policymakers and the public?

Although our celebrations of this year's Nobel laureates will be held virtually, they will be no less enthusiastic than in the past. And, despite the infodemic, most people's appreciation of science has grown during this crisis. Scientists have come together like never before to help stop COVID-19. To overcome the pandemic and meet the other global challenges we face, we must follow their example - and their lead.

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With Jones Mallay

LIBERIA POLITICAL HOT-FIRE

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Time to Breakup “MICAT” To Meet the 21st. Century Modern Dynamics

The Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism were created by an Act of the National Legislature in 1965. MICAT, for short, has a statutory responsibility to develop and disseminate information at home and abroad regarding the Government of Liberia. It seems from all intents and purposes that MICAT has either outlived its meaningfulness or those manning its affairs lacked considerable innovative and proactive ideas to cope with the changing dynamics of the 21st-century expectations.

What is very troubling is the fact that in MICAT's so-called statutory responsibility, the phrase “cultural affairs and tourism” were conspicuously omitted, though the crafters claimed lawfully that the phrase “cultural affairs and tourism” are an integral segment of MICAT. Did the crafters of MICAT's statutory law enlightenment thinkers, or were they simply some group of political hustlers who sought daily bread in the late 60s?

There is a clear professional standard and pragmatic demarcation between Information and the rudiments of cultures, Tourism, arts, and craft to say the least. Information is a professional service-oriented that changes rapidly with its holistic messaging trend of affairs which includes, communication and image building dynamics while culture, tourism arts, and craft are business-oriented and/or one of the numerous revenue-generating segments of government from a diverse economic perspective.

Information and culture affairs and tourism are two distinct career sectors. Cultures and tourism generate news development that should feed the information bank of the nation. Liberians who are put in charge should earn the requisite 21st-century Up-to-date modern skills or the entity will continue to be a busy noise-making instrument in Liberia. If authorities at the ministry are content with current deliverables since 1965 does not in any way imply that the ministry is good technically and professionally standing.

There is an urgent need to establish a “Culture and Tourism commission headed by an executive director with two principal deputies one for culture and another for Tourism, arts, and craft. This should not be any Liberian, but a highly skilled Liberian vast in cultural diversity backed by tourism credentials who knows the business. Both cultures and Tourism are equally potential revenue sectors of government. There are a lot of tourism sites in Liberia that can be developed to attract millions of visitors around the world with the help of international partners.

The ministry deserves an information technology reinforcement sector, to cope with the 21st-century modern communication and information requirements from a scientific and technical, communication agenda from abroad. The information has now become more scientific, diverse, measurable, and achievable elements globally.

It has transcended beyond mere talking, shouting, and having violence press conferences all over the place in the name of information dissemination—Liberia will need to wake-up from its professional slumbers by catching up with the 21st-century technical communication, scientific information dissemination, and the image construction of the nation. The information ministry by itself does not only need a Liberian with a home base mass-communication degree, it needs highly skilled information professionals, information technicians, and communication scientists who must be trained abroad with 21st-century information and communication doctrine. Home base mass-com and journalism teaching and doctrines are definitively absolute and cannot meet up with present day information and communication challenges and realities even at home, needless talks about abroad.

This is a clear manifestation that the 60s was a dark chapter and so were the so-called lawmakers themselves who did not simply understand the waiving of their fingerprints. It is a fact that past and present information authorities have been staunch political stooges from time immemorial by the executive branch of government.

Those who crafted the Legislative act in 1965 were not in their right-thinking capacity. They may have subconsciously forgotten to understand that the core values of the act itself excluded the phrase ‘cultural and tourism’ from its statutory responsibility which focused largely on disseminating information at home and abroad about the Liberian Government.

Past information doctrines and communication teachings in the late 30s, 40s, and 60s are no longer relevant to the 21st-century scientific communication and technical information trends and its holistic market place, yet these age-old teaching doctrines and curriculums are still being taught to students at the University of Liberia and elsewhere in Liberia which has an enormous impact on graduates' professional deliverable at home and abroad.

ANC former vice standard bearer joins CDC

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong County

Opposition Alternative National Congress (ANC) former vice standard bearer Mr. Jeremiah C. Sulunteh has officially joined the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), a constituent party of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change.

The CDC becomes the fifth political party Mr. Sulunteh has subscribed political loyalty to in sixteen years.

Sulunteh is Liberia's former

general and Presidential elections to party leader Mr. Alexander Cummings.

Sulunteh however failed to deliver his district to the ANC. Making his official pronouncement to the Congress for Democratic Change on Saturday, 17 October in Gbarnga, Ambassador Sulunteh said his decision to join the ruling establishment comes from the party's willingness to support national patriotism and the love for all.

He says following consultation with his family and supporters, he realized that it's appropriate for national interest to supersede his personal interest, describing the CDC as a party that supports nationalism.

“Having gathered in the beautiful city of Gbarnga today, I am very delighted to announce to you and to the people of Bong County and Liberia that our loyal and committed members of the friends of Sulunteh join me here today to officially and publicly declare our membership to the mighty Congress for Democratic,” he says.

“I want to tell Mr. Chairman, that we are coming to the CDC with no pre-condition,” Mr. Sulunteh adds.

Mr. Sulunteh describes the failure of the Collaborating Political Parties CPP to conduct primary in Bong County as deceit on the part of the CPP officials.

“Why should you conduct a primary in other counties and handpick candidate in Bong County? That is what we call deceit,” he adds.

Later, Mr. Sulunteh tells the public that he will not contest in the upcoming elections, and has declared support for Bong County incumbent Senator Henry Willie Yallah.

“Once I have joined the CDC, there is no way that I can support another

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7



Mr. Jeremiah C. Sulunteh

Ambassador to the United States, Mexico and Candida. He was a member of the Liberia Action Party (LAP) in 2004, but resigned to join the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) in 2005.

Mr. Sulunteh became a member of the then newly elected ruling Unity Party in 2006 after he lost the Vice Presidency to Joseph Nyumah Boakai. He later joined the Alternative National Congress in 2017 and became the Vice Standard Bearer in the 2017

Chelsea Fan Club

Starts from back page

and undertake projects that could unify Liberians from all walks of life, and looked forward to inviting some officials of the Chelsea Football Club from England to visit Liberia.

He narrated that as the result of President Weah's performance on the Chelsea team during his professional soccer days in England, he [Davies] and some colleagues were treated well at the airport in England because of him at the time.

Mr. Davies emphasized that since then he has being a strong supporter of the Chelsea team and hoped that all Chelsea fans in Liberia will work together through the fan club to promote image of the club in the country

Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Chelsea Fan Club Liberia, Horatio Bobby Willie said the process to establishing the Chelsea Fan Club Liberia started in 2014 with contact from a Liberian based in England, but it was not successful initially.

Mr. Willie stated that the Chelsea

Fan Club Liberia is not just a locally based fan club, as it has been established with consent of the Chelsea supporters club worldwide.

He pointed out that the Chelsea Fan Club Liberia will engage into charity ventures by helping orphanages and old folks around the country, noting that Chelsea Fan Club around the world mainly focuses on such activities.

He indicated that the Chelsea Fan Club will establish Chapters in the rest of the 14 counties in Liberia.

Chelsea Football Club were founded on 10 March 1905 at The Rising Sun pub, (now The Butcher's Hook) opposite today's main entrance to the ground on the Fulham Road. Since there was already a team named Fulham in the borough, the name of the adjacent borough, the Metropolitan Borough of Chelsea, was settled on after London FC, Kensington FC and Stamford Bridge FC had been rejected. Blue shirts were adopted by Mears, after the racing colors of Lord Chelsea, along with white shorts and dark blue socks

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Senate closes 3rd Session

By Ethel A Tweh

The 3rd Session of the Liberian Senate has formally closed here, as lawmakers go for annual break.

The session, which was constitutional scheduled to have close on August 31, 2020, was extended due to urgent businesses, including debate on the FY 2020/2021 National Budget, which has been passed at over US\$500 million.

In his adjournment statement, Senate President Pro-Tempore, Senator Albert

declined to approve nominations from the President and Mr. Weah himself withdrew one of the nominations.

President Weah under constraint, withdrew the nomination of Nigerian national, Cllr. A. Ndubuisi Nwabudike, whose Liberian citizenship has come under serious questioning despite claiming he is a naturalized Liberian.

Currently serving the Liberian government as executive director of the Liberian Anti Corruption Commission, Counselor

virus, Liberians generally died. He pointed that the pandemic negatively affected the economy, causing many to lose jobs and other means of livelihood, further reducing productivity in all sectors.

At the same time he commended health workers for their resilience and sacrifices which led to containing the virus and prevented the situation going out of bound despite denial by some compatriots.

Pro-Tempore Chie said the educational sector was also affected by the COVID-19, as schools and other learning institutions closed, but are gradually reopening, adding that despite the closure of schools, the government honored its commitment to public schools, including payment of salaries on time unlike private schools which had difficulty in paying salaries during school closure.

The Government of Liberia recently announced a US\$1 million aid package for private school teachers across the country.

The Grand Kru Senator said during the past 10 months, civil servants received salary on time and the Central Bank of Liberia printed and brought into the country additional 4 billion Liberian dollars, approved by the 54th Legislature. However, despite the infusion, the money printed in 500 Liberian banknotes is scarce in the market.

Meanwhile, Pro-Tempore Chie has cautioned aspirants and political parties against use of inflammatory statements which could spur electoral violence, urging Liberians to refrain from electoral violence and instead, make use of the security and the law. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**



T. Chie of Grand Kru County thanked his colleagues and staffers for their level of cooperation during the working period.

Pro-Tempore Chie recounted that during the 3rd Session of the 54th Legislature, 27 Bills were enacted into law, including the Central Bank Act. During the time under review, he said that the Senate confirmed 59 nominees submitted by President George Manneh Weah.

He disclosed that in four instances, the Senate

Nwabudike was nominated by the President to head the National Elections Commission when questions about his Liberian citizenship came about, mainly after he submitted documents to the Senate with three inconsistencies in his date of birth, which led Liberia National Bar Association to reject his membership.

However, Sen. Chie also recalled the 3rd Session of the 54th Legislature was challenged by the Coronavirus pandemic, saying that though none of the senators were affected by the

Pleebo District gets modern market building

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland County

Marketers and some citizens in Pleebo, Maryland County Electoral district#2, Southeast Liberia laud the Government of Liberia and partners for completion of a modern market in Pleebo Sodoken District.

The US\$430,424.88 construction was funded by the African Development Bank through the Smallholder Agriculture Productivity Enhancement and Commercialization (SAPEC) project, in partnership with Liberia's Ministry of Agriculture (MOA).

The contractor, JusMart Engineers, recently turned over the newly constructed facility to local government authorities, making it the biggest business hub ever to be constructed in Maryland County.

projects that were earmarked earlier for dedication by President George Manneh Weah in a nationwide tour, but was postponed due to the Corona Virus outbreak in the country.

Mr. Weah was also expected to dedicate phase one of the Harper-Fish Town Road Project (Harper to Karloken 50KM) and the Hardwood (One Two- One Two) junction to the Liberian-Ivorian Pedobo border - a 16Km asphalt paved roads constructed by the China Railway No.5 Engineering Company with funding from the African Development Bank.

The modern market structure contains storage facilities, toilets, play ground for children, running water, offices, including numerous stalls for food crops and dry goods, as well as 52 stores on its second floor. It stands as a



Speaking in an recent interview with this paper at the market building in Zone #3 on Thursday, October 15, 2020, marketers said the construction has brought relief to them.

According to them, prior to the project they had been selling in makeshift structures in heavy downpour, but since they moved in the newly constructed market building, the business environment has changed, encouraging more customers to buy their goods.

In May 2019, Maryland County Assistant Superintendent for Development Robin Scott, led an array of local officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society actors to break ground for the regional commercial hub, which is among several development

central commercial point for the people of Maryland, Grand Kru, River Gee and neighboring Ivory Coast.

A marketer and resident of Pleebo, Martha Weah, disclosed that since the market was completed and turned over for use by local authorities, it has brought total changes in marketers' lives, because of the facilities inside the building.

Madam Weah [no relationship to President Weah] said though it was very saddened initially when they were told to leave their various selling spots to give way for the project, today, they are happy.

Theresa Toe, another businesswoman, welcomed the modern market building, but called on the government to pave roads leading to the Southeast to create access.

She lamented that

Starts from back page

because they are poor, while in Liberia, two-thirds of the children who should be in school are not in school.

Board Chairperson of Susukuu, a 49-year-old Poverty Alleviation Liberia NGO, Dr. Tipoteh noted that there is lack of interest by "the powers that be" to prioritize ending the Poverty Pandemic, as it takes only USD60 billion to end extreme poverty in the world.

He also observed the Government of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the

End poverty to stop

world's second largest economy, in terms of GDP, next to the USA, noting that since the "Opening Up" of the PRC four decades ago, China's poverty rate has declined from 80 per cent to less than 5 per cent (World Bank). With the primacy in economic policy given to production, the PRC achieved doubledigit economic growth rates within the economic growth with economic development posture such that the income gap between the rich and the poor was narrowed

considerably, he noted.

Also a former Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs, during the 1980 Military junta headed by then Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe, Dr. Tipoteh observed that while the USA and the EU were struggling to achieve positive economic growth rates, given the impact of the Great Recession of 2008, the PRC managed to achieve a high positive economic growth rate of 7.8 per cent.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Foreign Minister Kemayah meets UN Resident Coordinator

Liberian Foreign Minister Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr. on Friday, 16 October received in audience, the United Nations Resident Coordinator to Liberia Dr. Kingsley Opoku-Amaning, when the U.N. Envoy paid a courtesy call at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Capitol Hill.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, the meeting took place in the Foreign Minister's Conference Room

continues to render the Government and people of Liberia.

Ambassador Kemayah further hailed the Courtesy visit, as well as, the appointment of Dr. Kingsley Opoku-Amaning as United Nations Resident Coordinator to Liberia.

He observed that the UN Resident Coordinator comes to the position with worth of experience and competence, which he noted, will enhance the mutual ties between Liberia

willingness to continue on the diplomatic path, which is the hallmark of the Weah-led government.

Foreign Minister Kemayah also noted that as Liberia prepares for Mid-Term Senatorial Elections, the government of Liberia is willing and fully prepared to do all in its reach to create an enabling environment for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections in the country. According to Liberia's chief diplomat, the government of Liberia will provide a level playing field for everyone to participate in the democratic process unhindered.

For his part, the visiting UN Resident Coordinator to Liberia, Dr. Kingsley Opoku-Amaning, thanked Foreign Minister Kemayah for the warm reception and expressed delight over his appointment.

The UN Envoy stressed the need for Liberia to maintain the peace and stability that the international community is wishing and seeking for.

He particularly extended gratitude to Minister Kemayah for accepting the position as Foreign Minister of Liberia and pledged his fullest support and commitment to work with him in strengthening the cordial relations between Liberia and the United Nations. Mr. Kingsley Opoku-Amaning, of Ghana, has been a strong partner to Liberia and a committed peace seeker in the region. The UN resident Coordinator, supports the UN Country Team with conflict prevention, maintains contact with political and civil society networks, and maintains relationships with senior officials in government and the international community, including donor partners.—*Press release*



at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the visit, the two officials exchanged views on major national, bilateral and multilateral issues.

While welcoming the UN Envoy at his Foreign Ministry office, Ambassador Kemayah extended heartiest gratitude and appreciation to the United Nations, through its Resident Coordinator to Liberia, for the cooperation and numerous technical and developmental assistance it

and the United Nations.

"We could not have had better person to serve in this position than you; you will have our fullest support. Through the magnanimity of H.E. President George Manneh Weah, we stand ready and prepared to work very closely with you, so as to sustain the peace and stability that we all hope to see prevail in Liberia," Minister Kemayah further recounted.

He then assured his guest of the Government of Liberia's unflinching commitment and

Rep. Koffa wants LIBTELCO to move fast

By Bridgett Milton

Just days after the Government of Liberia granted operational license to Liberia Telecommunication Corporation or LIBTELCO to provide GSM services besides two other companies here, Grand Kru County District # 2 Representative J. Fonati Koffa, has called on the LIBTELCO Management to move as fast as possible, now that it has obtained operational license.

Addressing reporters on Thursday, 15 October 2020 in Monrovia, Rep. Koffa said Liberia, a small economy with high GSM penetration, it is in the interest of Liberians to have their own, rather than have private companies control the communication network, something, he described as dangerous to national security.

three, the number of GSM service providers in the country.

This means LIBTELCO will now compete with Lonestar Cell MTN and Orange Liberia for a share in the local mobile market, increasing consumers' choices in determining network of their convenient.

The MNO had been earlier signed on Friday, September 25, 2020 at the head offices of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority, which regulates the industry.

GSM companies here and the LTA had been in serious disagreement over surcharge levied by the latter, with the regulatory authority demanding a return to status quo, an instruction the companies had earlier reneged on.

Earlier, the companies argued the surcharge was



Rep. Koffa, also a lawyer, said recent surcharge by Orange Liberia and Lonestar Cell MTN and subsequent turnaround is intended to save face.

He demands both companies to retribute moneys deducted from subscribers, as a result of the surcharge.

Both companies have offered free minutes for on-net voice and data services to the public for the recent surcharge that saw millions of subscribers virtually incapacitated, financially.

The Board Commissioners of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority on Wednesday, October 14, granted operational license to LIBTELCO to provide mobile services to the public.

The Mobile Network Operators (MNO) License signed by the LTA brings to

approved by the government based on a circular issued by the LTA. The regulator has neither denied nor confirmed the circular but insists the companies return to status quo.

"Orange Liberia informs all its customers that it will place an "additional cost" (surcharge) in the amount of \$0.008 for each minute of on-net voice and US\$0.00065 of data in compliance with the LTA Order: 0016-02-25 issued by the Liberia Telecommunications Authority on February 25, 2019. As from Monday 5th October 2020 offers shall be amended gradually going forward", the Management of Orange Liberia Incorporated texted its subscribers across the country recently.

Immediately the surcharge

Cont'd from page 5

ANC former vice

person so I want to announce my support for Hon. Yallah in the upcoming elections," he maintains.

Accepting Mr. Sulunteh, CDC Chairman Mulbah Morlu thanks the Ambassador for crossing carpet to the 'mighty CDC'.

Chairman Morlu describes Ambassador Sulunteh as an experienced man who has served the country and will bring a lot to the party.

He says the party will do all it can to ensure that its new member gets all the benefits

he deserves.

"I want to tell you Amb. Sulunteh, even though you said you have come to the party without a pre-condition, but I can assure you that what belongs to you will be given," Morlu says.

"Our party is a party that loves everyone and gives to everyone what belongs to him/her, so you are welcome and thank you for joining us as we fight for the best for our people," he concludes.

Our Bong County

correspondent says this is the fourth time Ambassador Sulunteh has back-off from a senatorial election.

He withdrew from the raise in 2011 on grounds that former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf asked him to support another candidate. He also failed to contest in 2014 and supported another person and in the 2018 senatorial by-election after the CDC failed to support him as he expected.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Français

La Vice-Présidente Libérienne rompt le silence

La vice-présidente Libérienne Jewel Howard Taylor a rompu le silence le jeudi 15 octobre sur fond d'inquiétudes croissantes concernant son état de santé et son retour dans le pays. Le numéro deux du régime actuel a déclaré qu'elle est en convalescence et qu'elle serait de retour bientôt.

La vice-présidente Howard-Taylor, a été dépêchée hors du pays le 11 août 2020, après qu'elle a été testée positive au Coronavirus par les autorités sanitaires.

Dans son édition du mercredi 14 octobre, ce quotidien s'était posé la question de savoir si la vice-présidente Taylor avait été oubliée parce qu'on n'avait pas eu de ses nouvelles depuis qu'elle a quitté le pays il y a plus de deux mois.

Mais dans un entretien à la radio d'État un jour après la publication, Mme Howard-Taylor a déclaré qu'elle était convalescente et qu'elle espérait rentrer bientôt dans son pays.

Elle s'est dite reconnaissante aux Libériens

qui l'ont gardée dans leurs prières pendant sa maladie. Elle s'est aussi déclarée préoccupée par la vague croissante de violence dans le pays, avant d'appeler les candidats aux prochaines élections sénatoriales de mi-mandat de s'abstenir de toute violence.

La Vice-Présidente Howard Taylor est le porte-étendard du Parti patriotique national (NPP, ancien parti au pouvoir de Charles Taylor), un parti

membre de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC) au pouvoir.

Concernant les élections sénatoriales de mi-mandat, elle a refusé d'apporter son soutien à quelque candidat que ce soit dans son comté natal de Bong, du moins pas avant d'avoir consulté les citoyens du comté.

« La question du soutien à un candidat en particulier concerne chaque Libérien aujourd'hui, que voulons-nous voir ? Quel genre de

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



La PAL se dit profondément préoccupée par la vague de violence et l'anarchie

L'Association des éditeurs du Libéria (PAL) se dit profondément préoccupée par la vague actuelle de violence et d'anarchie à l'approche des élections sénatoriales de mi-mandat et du référendum national prévus pour le 8 décembre.

L'Association des éditeurs, qui réunit les propriétaires et les

rédacteurs en chef des journaux et de la presse en ligne opérant au Libéria, a affirmé que « l'augmentation de la violence politique impliquant des partisans des partis politiques a tendance à menacer gravement la démocratie fragile du Libéria et à saper notre paix et notre sécurité collectives en tant que peuple et nation ».

« La perturbation des

meetings politiques à coup de pierres principalement de la part des jeunes utilisés comme des instruments pour perpétrer ces violences est totalement inacceptable et dangereuse », a dit l'Association.

L'organisation de la presse écrite et de la presse numérique est convaincue que ce comportement barbare est la raison pour laquelle le Libéria est aujourd'hui loin en arrière en matière de développement. Pour elle, ces violences ne devraient donc pas avoir leur place dans le système démocratique actuel. C'est pourquoi elle appelle les acteurs politiques à s'abstenir de ces tactiques effroyables et dangereuses.

Lors de leur dernière réunion extraordinaire le lundi 12 octobre 2020, les éditeurs ont tenu à attirer l'attention des dirigeants et des acteurs politiques libériens (au cas où ils auraient oublié) sur la fragilité du pays en matière



PAL President, Mr. Othello B. Garblah

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Éditorial

Il n'y a pas de place pour la violence électorale en démocratie

Le gouvernement américain, par l'intermédiaire du secrétaire d'État Michael R. Pompeo, a lancé la semaine dernière un appel aux pays africains qui se préparent aux élections, y compris le Libéria, à respecter l'état de droit et de respecter la volonté du peuple.

M. Pompeo a déclaré dans un communiqué publié ce week-end par l'ambassade des États-Unis à Monrovia que les élections sont importantes non seulement pour les Africains, mais aussi pour les défenseurs de la démocratie dans le monde.

Plus précisément, les États-Unis se sont engagés à surveiller de près les actions des individus qui s'ingèrent dans le processus démocratique sur le continent, tout en avertissant qu'ils n'hésiteront pas à envisager les sanctions, y compris des restrictions de visa pour les personnes qui seraient responsables de violences liées aux élections partout en Afrique.

Cette mise en garde de la part du partenaire traditionnel du Libéria, l'Amérique, intervient juste au moment où les Libériens se préparent pour des élections sénatoriales de mi-mandat prévues le 8 décembre 2020. Le scrutin de décembre consiste à élire 15 sénateurs pour rejoindre 15 autres sénateurs au Capitole pour compléter le Sénat libérien de 30 membres avant la prochaine élection présidentielle de 2023.

Mais avant le scrutin, les meetings, principalement de l'opposition, sont perturbés à plusieurs reprises par la violence. Le plus souvent, les partis politiques de l'opposition font l'objet d'intimidation et de menaces.

Bien que l'avertissement du Secrétaire d'État Pompeo n'ait pas été spécifiquement adressé au Libéria, ce pays, qui est un ami historique de l'Amérique, devrait écouter et agir en conséquence. Le Libéria n'a pas intérêt à se rabaisser par des élections violentes ou frauduleuses parce qu'il est de notre devoir d'être le porte-flambeau des jeunes démocraties du continent.

Comme l'a souligné M. Pompeo, il est important que toutes les parties aient des chances égales de participer pacifiquement au processus démocratique sans répression ni intimidation. Cela n'a pas été le cas jusque-là pour les récents rassemblements organisés à travers le pays, en particulier à Monrovia et dans les régions adjacentes par des candidats de l'opposition.

Nous nous souvenons de l'incident qui s'est produit à Zwedru, dans le comté de Grand Gedeh, lors d'une tournée du leader de la PPC Alexander Cummings avec le député opposant Yekeh Kolubah, il y a des mois, où ils ont été violemment chassés du comté par des voyous brandissant des machettes exprimant leur loyauté au président George Manneh Weah.

Quant aux résultats de l'enquête sur ces violences, ils tardent toujours à venir malgré la déclaration conjointe publiée par les missions étrangères à Monrovia, appelant à une enquête rapide.

Chaque Libérien devrait s'efforcer de faire de nos élections des élections pacifiques et de notre démocratie une démocratie participative et apaisée.

Tant les candidats de l'opposition que de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique au pouvoir et les candidats indépendants ont le droit de faire campagne et de solliciter des votes dans les comtés, les communautés, les villes et les villages sans craindre d'être chassés avec des machettes et des pierres.

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Français

La Vice-Présidente Libérienne

leaders recherchons-nous ? Et quand vous regardez le spectre depuis le niveau national, il est difficile de savoir qui soutenir, mais je prie pour que Dieu nous oriente pour un choix optimal », a déclaré Mme Taylor.

Le vice-président, depuis son lieu de convalescence, s'est dite inquiète de plusieurs choses, dont la violation, la transhumance des électeurs à travers le pays, et la mort mystérieuse des personnes.

« Je suis également choquée par la mort mystérieuse des quatre auditeurs de haut niveau. C'est un coup pour moi et pour le pays tout entier, car Emmanuel B. Nyenswa, le directeur général de l'Agence d'audit interne, était mon proche collaborateur. J'ai été particulièrement dévastée par sa mort mystérieuse », a-t-elle dit, avant d'insister sur la nécessité d'une enquête en étroite collaboration avec le Gouvernement américain.

La PAL se dit profondément

de démocratie et des libertés individuelles et sur la nécessité de militer en faveur de l'état de droit et de rejeter toutes les pratiques antidémocratiques qui risquent ramener le pays vers son horrible passé.

La PAL a en outre qualifié d'effroyables et d'inquiétants les décès mystérieux et successifs des hauts cadres des institutions d'intégrité de moralisation de la vie publique. Elle a ainsi exhorté les autorités libériennes à enquêter rapidement sur ces incidents et à traduire les coupables en justice, car l'ensemble des citoyens est désormais plongé dans la peur et l'appréhension face à l'aggravation de la situation sécuritaire dans le pays.

L'Association des éditeurs a également tenu à attirer l'attention des uns et des autres sur le fait que ces meurtres non résolus des professionnels clés, aggravés par la tension politique croissante qui caractérise les élections sénatoriales, ont tendance à effrayer et à chasser les investisseurs potentiels sur fond d'une détérioration particulière des conditions économiques.

« Quoique nous

respections l'autorité de la police nationale libérienne pour enquêter sur ces graves et effrayantes questions de sécurité nationale, il faut noter que les informations faisant état de harcèlement et d'intimidation constants et persistants des journalistes qui rapportent ces décès mystérieux et alarmants constituent une violation flagrante du droit à la liberté d'expression, garanti par plusieurs chartes internationales, dont la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme, qui stipule en son article 19 que " Toute personne a droit à la liberté d'opinion et d'expression. Ce droit inclut la liberté d'avoir des opinions sans ingérence et de rechercher, recevoir et répandre des informations et des idées par le biais de tous les médias, indépendamment des frontières " », a ajouté l'organisation.

Pour conclure, l'Association a exhorté le gouvernement libérien à travailler en étroite collaboration avec les parties prenantes majeures afin de résoudre ces problèmes persistants et réduire la tension politique actuelle avant les élections du 8 décembre.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Jayati Ghosh

La Révolution verte contre l'Afrique ?

NEW DELHI - Le comité Nobel a attribué cette année le Prix Nobel de la paix au Programme alimentaire mondial de l'ONU en déclarant qu'il veut "tourner le regard du monde vers les millions de personnes qui souffrent de la faim ou en sont menacées ". La faim bat aujourd'hui tous les records, et cela tient essentiellement aux dysfonctionnements du système alimentaire mondial.

Même avant la pandémie, quelques deux milliards de personnes dans le monde souffraient de sous-alimentation, et près de 750 millions étaient en situation d'insécurité alimentaire grave. La crise sanitaire et économique qui a éclaté en 2020 a aggravé la situation, en partie à cause de son impact sur l'approvisionnement alimentaire, mais plus encore, en raison des inégalités croissantes et du nombre de personnes vulnérables qui ont perdu leur gagne-pain.

On aurait pu éviter cette situation et il est encore temps d'agir. Parmi les objectifs de développement durable de l'ONU figure l'éradication de la faim d'ici 2030. Cet objectif est réaliste : le monde produit suffisamment de nourriture pour répondre aux besoins nutritionnels de base de tous les habitants de la planète. Mais le système alimentaire mondial fonctionnait déjà mal bien avant la pandémie. Une grande partie de la production agricole n'a pas de caractère durable, la nourriture et les revenus sont si inégalement répartis que des milliards de personnes n'ont pas accès à une alimentation saine et équilibrée. Les multinationales du secteur agroalimentaire mènent une politique de production et de distribution au détriment des petits agriculteurs et des consommateurs finaux.

Les inégalités d'accès à la nourriture sont évidentes, que ce soit entre pays différents ou au sein d'un même pays, tandis que le fonctionnement des chaînes d'approvisionnement alimentaire laisse fréquemment à désirer. Trop souvent, les produits bruts d'une région sont envoyés dans le monde entier pour être traités avec des conservateurs chimiques, puis renvoyés dans leur lieu d'origine ou à proximité pour y être consommés.

L'échec de l'éradication de la faim dans le monde tient à plusieurs raisons, notamment à un mauvais diagnostic de la part des décideurs politiques. Plutôt que favoriser en priorité une production alimentaire durable (plus locale et diversifiée) et une distribution équitable, ils cherchent à augmenter la productivité de l'agriculture et à améliorer "l'efficacité" des chaînes d'approvisionnement en réduisant les coûts. Cela conduit à accorder trop d'attention aux rendements, et pas assez au contexte agro-écologique et aux besoins nutritionnels locaux, et à encourager fortement le recours aux produits chimiques dans l'agriculture.

C'est le cas de l'Alliance pour une révolution verte en Afrique (AGRA, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa), créée en 2006 par la Fondation Bill & Melinda Gates et la Fondation Rockefeller. L'Alliance vise à augmenter les rendements en encourageant la monoculture et le recours à des semences commerciales à haut rendement, aux engrais artificiels et aux pesticides chimiques. Il est surprenant de constater que les partisans de cette stratégie semblent largement ignorer qu'elle a donné des résultats au mieux mitigés à moyen terme et qu'elle a souvent suscité des problèmes écologiques dans de nombreux pays asiatiques en développement.

L'AGRA voulait initialement doubler d'ici 2020 les revenus de 20 millions de petits agriculteurs africains et réduire de moitié l'insécurité alimentaire dans une vingtaine de pays en améliorant la productivité. Elle a ensuite adopté un objectif plus ambitieux : doubler d'ici 2020 les rendements et les revenus de 30 millions d'agriculteurs. Mais à l'approche de la date butoir, l'Alliance a changé de cap et promet maintenant,

beaucoup plus modestement, d'augmenter d'ici 2021 les revenus (sans préciser de combien) et d'améliorer la sécurité alimentaire de 30 millions de petits exploitants agricoles dans 11 pays africains. Dans une réponse récente aux critiques dont elle fait l'objet, l'AGRA s'est montrée encore plus circonspecte, affirmant que son objectif est de ne toucher directement que neuf millions d'agriculteurs et les 21 millions restant indirectement (ce que cela recouvre n'est pas très clair).

Malgré la réduction de ses objectifs, l'Alliance n'a pas fourni de données concernant ses progrès. Il n'existe donc aucune estimation fiable de l'augmentation des rendements, des revenus nets et de la sécurité alimentaire des agriculteurs. Dans une étude récente basée sur des données nationales concernant la production, les rendements et les superficies récoltées pour les principales cultures vivrières dans les 13 principaux pays où l'AGRA est présente, des chercheurs indépendants parviennent à des conclusions inquiétantes : il existe peu d'éléments montrant une augmentation significative des revenus des petits producteurs ou de la sécurité alimentaire ; par contre, le nombre de personnes souffrant de la faim a augmenté de 30% dans les pays où intervient l'AGRA. Cette dernière qualifie cette analyse de "profondément erronée", mais sans fournir de chiffres pour la contrer.

En ce qui concerne la productivité, l'étude révèle que les rendements des cultures de base des pays où agit l'Alliance n'ont augmenté que de 1,5% par an en moyenne au cours de ses 12 premières années de fonctionnement - pratiquement le même taux que pendant les 12 années précédant sa création. La croissance de la productivité a diminué dans 8 des 13 pays où elle intervient ; dans 3 d'entre eux, les rendements ont baissé. Même dans les pays où la production d'aliments de base a considérablement augmenté (en Zambie par exemple où la production de maïs a plus que doublé, principalement en raison d'une augmentation des superficies semencées), la pauvreté et la faim chez les petits producteurs sont restées à un niveau très élevé.

Par ailleurs, le rapport montre que les pays dans lesquels intervient l'AGRA pâtissent tout autant que les autres des inconvénients liés aux pratiques de la Révolution verte. Les agriculteurs se sont détournés des cultures traditionnelles, nutritives et adaptées au climat comme le sorgho et le millet, au profit du maïs "à haut rendement". Cela oblige les agriculteurs à acheter des semences plus chères, et souvent à s'endetter pour cela. La monoculture et l'utilisation massive de produits chimiques (tels que les engrais à base de pétrole) ont entraîné l'acidification des sols et d'autres problèmes écologiques qui affecteront les cultures futures. Réduisant la production de légumes racines de base comme le manioc et la patate douce, la monoculture diminue la variété de l'alimentation et sa richesse nutritive.

Comme l'a fait valoir Jomo Kwame Sundaram, la politique mise en œuvre par la Révolution verte est fondamentalement erronée, car elle ne considère la nutrition qu'en termes de consommation totale de calories, sans prendre en compte la valeur nutritionnelle supérieure d'une alimentation variée - ce qui suppose de cultiver un ensemble de plantes adaptées au lieu et au climat. La course effrénée aux soi-disant "nouvelles" pratiques exclut cela.

La pandémie et le réchauffement climatique auraient dû nous enseigner l'importance de la résilience. Malheureusement, aussi bien intentionnées soient-elles, les mesures visant à augmenter la sécurité alimentaire en Afrique et ailleurs entraînent une plus grande dépendance des petits paysans à l'égard des multinationales de l'agroalimentaire. Elles ne permettent pas d'augmenter leurs revenus et fragilisent leur production.

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ARTICLE

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Chris Patten's accusation against China Completely Confuses Right and Wrong

Recently, a few Liberian media have reproduced an article entitled "China's Leaders Can't Be Trusted" written by Chris Patten, the last British Governor in Hong Kong. This article makes irresponsible remarks about Hong Kong affairs, Xinjiang issues, and the South China Sea issues, distorts and discredits China's achievements in fighting the COVID-19 epidemic, and makes malicious attacks on Chinese leaders and government. The Chinese Embassy in Liberia expresses its firm opposition to Patten's absurd remarks.

Hong Kong is an inalienable part of China, and the Hong Kong issue was completely caused by British colonial aggression against China. In mid 19th century, the British government forced China through unequal treaties to cede Hong Kong to Britain in the form of "lease" after two Opium Wars launched by Britain against China in order to trade opium for Chinese goods. Hong Kong has never been given democracy under 150 years British colonial rule. During that period, none of the members of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong was nominated by Hong Kong residents and elected through democratic procedures. All the governors were British citizens directly appointed by the British government. In contrast, after Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, Hong Kong has held six Legislative Council elections and successively produced four chief executives of the Special Administrative Region (SAR) elected by Hong Kong residents. Isn't Chris Patten ashamed and ridiculous to talk glibly now about democracy and freedom in Hong Kong? Historically, British colonial rules all over the world have laid the bane of conflict, discord, and hatred, and also left a scourge for Hong Kong under the guise of "democracy". Over the past 20 years or so since Hong Kong's return to China, all the riots have been supported in one way or another by Britain with the excuse of so-called "democracy". These instigation acts have led to the rampant "Hong Kong independence" in recent years, resulting in chaotic public order and constant violent conflicts in Hong Kong. Especially since June 2019, the anti-China Hong Kong rioters have openly advocated "Hong Kong independence". By conducting smashing, looting and burning, they have seriously trampled on the rule of law in Hong Kong, undermined Hong Kong's stability, and endangered national security. Hong Kong residents earnestly hope to turn Hong Kong from danger to safety and chaos into governance. By safeguarding national security at the national level, China's central government has established and improved Hong Kong's legal system and enforcement mechanism, which is not only popular but also completely reasonable and legitimate. "One country" is the premise and foundation of "Two systems". Only when "One country" is safe can "Two systems" be guaranteed. Hong Kong's National Security Law will not undermine Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents, nor will it change Hong Kong's capitalist system or its legal system, nor will it affect the executive, legislative, independent judicial and final adjudication powers of the SAR. This law governs four kinds of crimes against Hong Kong: splitting the country, subverting the state power, organizing and carrying out terrorist activities, and seeking to interfere in HK's affairs by foreign and external forces. It punishes a very small number of criminals who seriously endanger national security. After the implementation of the National Security Law of Hong

Kong, the law and order in Hong Kong have improved rapidly. This has provided a solid guarantee for the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents and strong support for the stability and far-reaching implementation of "One country, Two systems". The central government of a country bears the greatest and ultimate responsibility for the national security of all its local administrative regions, which is a basic theory and principle of national sovereignty and a normal practice of all countries in the world. It is typical double standard practice for Chris Patten to openly support the "Hong Kong-independent" elements and their violent crimes and wantonly attack Hong Kong's National Security Law.

Xinjiang related issues are not those of human rights, religions or ethnics at all, but counter-violent terrorism and counter-secession issues. China is a country ruled by law, and respecting and safeguarding human rights is China's constitutional principle. China's efforts of counter-terrorism and de-radicalization in Xinjiang is an important part of the international counter-terrorism struggle, which fully conforms to the purposes and principles of the United Nations in combating terrorism and safeguarding basic human rights. For certain period of time, Xinjiang region of China was deeply affected by the superposition of ethnic separatist forces, religious extremist forces and violent

2018, which is obvious and not worth refuting. Since the end of 2018, more than 1,000 diplomats, officials of international organizations, journalists and religious figures from more than 90 countries have visited Xinjiang. They have witnessed the harmonious and stable situation in Xinjiang, and maintain that the measures taken by the Chinese government to govern Xinjiang have contributed to the international community's fight against terrorism and extremism, which is of a great reference value. Chris Patten completely ignores the large number of innocent casualties caused by the terrorism in Xinjiang, and turns a blind eye to the remarkable achievements in counter-terrorism and de-radicalization and human rights protection in Xinjiang, which only fully shows that he does not really care about China's human rights, but wants to use the so-called "Xinjiang issue" to vilify China's image, destroy China's stability and curb China's development.

On the South China Sea issue, China's sovereignty over the South China Sea Islands and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea have been established in the long course of history, and are solidly grounded in history and law. As early as 1948, the Chinese government officially published the dotted line of the South China Sea, which was not questioned by any country for a long time. China has never sought to establish a "maritime empire" in the South China Sea, always treated countries around the South China Sea equally, and always exercised the utmost restraint in safeguarding the sovereignty and rights and interests of the South China Sea. China's construction activities on some islands and reefs in Nansha Islands are completely within the scope of China's sovereignty, which is lawful, reasonable and rational, and does not affect or target any country. After the completion of the relevant constructions, the functions on the islands and reefs are multifaceted and comprehensive, which not only meet the necessary military defense needs but also serve various civil needs. According to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea reached by China and ASEAN countries in 2002, China has always been committed to resolving territorial and jurisdictional disputes through negotiations and consultations with directly related sovereign countries, and is committed to jointly maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea with ASEAN countries. China has always advocated that regional countries should establish mutual trust and resolve differences through formulating rules and mechanisms, and achieve mutual benefit and win-win results through pragmatic cooperation, and always respect the freedom of navigation and overflight enjoyed by countries in accordance with international law. China adheres to the path of peaceful development, always pursues a defensive national defense policy, and adheres to the foreign policy of developing good-neighbourly relationship and partnership with neighboring countries, which is a firm force for maintaining regional peace and stability. On the contrary, out of geopolitical needs, the United States keeps making troubles in the South China Sea and sows discord. By sending advanced ships and planes, the US shows off its power, promotes the militarization of the South China Sea, practices the logic of power and bullying, and has become a peace and stability spoiler in the region. Chris Patten turns a blind eye to the military provocation of the United States while makes



terrorist forces, and terrorist attacks frequently occurred. According to incomplete statistics, from 1990 to the end of 2016, these three forces created thousands of violent terrorist cases (events) in Xinjiang and other places, causing the killings of hundreds of innocent people and hundreds of police officers, and property losses beyond estimation. They have caused great harm to the lives and property safety of people of all ethnic groups and social stability in Xinjiang, and seriously trampled on human dignity. In order to protect the basic human rights of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang and safeguard national security, the Chinese government has taken decisive measures to carry out the fight against terrorism and extremism in conformity with law. While cracking down on violent terrorist crimes, it has focused on improving people's livelihood, strengthening legal system publicity and education, and setting up vocational skills education and training centers, which has to the maximum extent saved those people who committed terrorism, extremist illegal or criminal acts. These measures have won the support of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. Since 2017, there have been no more terrorist attacks in Xinjiang for three consecutive years. The economy is prosperous and the society stable and harmonious. Chris Patten's so-called "genocide" is nonsense. The Uyghur population in Xinjiang increased from 5.55 million in 1978 to 12.71 million in

Top legal battle emerges

By Winston W. Parley

A top legal battle among four political stakeholders emerges this afternoon, Monday, 19 October at Liberia's Supreme Court on key contentions hanging over the 8 December 2020 Senatorial elections.

What arguments each of the four parties representing the opposition Collaborating Political Parties (CPP), National Elections Commission (NEC), the Legislative and Executive branches put forth in the case and how the Supreme Court rules will finally decide the fate, confidence and morale of this senatorial election that has already seen a wave of violence.

The full bench of the Supreme Court of five Justices is sitting on this matter today because the initial decision taken in chambers by one of the Associate Justices denying the CPP's petition for a writ of

Government.

The CPP had complained to the Supreme Court that with callous disregard of the consequences, the NEC had failed, neglected and refused to clean up the voters roll as ordered by the Supreme Court, mandated by the Liberian Senate, the House of Representatives and recommended by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

It therefore asked the court to issue a writ of mandamus and halt the election process until the Final Registration Roll (FRR) of 2017 is fully cleaned up ahead of the conduct of the 8 December 2020 senatorial election which has been building up serious political tension mainly in Montserrado County between the opposition and the ruling CDC and in few of the 15 counties here. However the Justice in Chambers denied the CPP's petition to issue the writ of mandamus.

That decision received a reaction from former President

over the years have been negatively impacted by electoral dispute.

Meanwhile at the program Monday, 12 October, Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. assured all Liberians, political parties and associations or organizations that during the ensuing senatorial and all other elections here, the Supreme Court will continue to be fair in its actions and decisions, saying the court has no friend or foe in deciding elections or other cases.

The CPP's move to petition the Supreme Court came at a time there have been dissents against the Voter Roll Update (VRU) in preparation for the December 2020 Senatorial Election, with some reports suggesting mass voters' trucking and some potential voters engaging in multiple registrations and obtaining multiple voter cards.

CPP which is comprised of former ruling Unity Party, Alternative National Congress, Liberty Party and All Liberian Party, says a clear and credible Voters Roll is an indispensable prerequisite for the conduct of free, fair and transparent democratic elections.

Instead of cleaning up the voters roll, the CPP alleges that the NEC has with the approval of the government, unilaterally announced and embarked on a mobile voters roll update with focus on Liberians of voting age including those who have attained the age of 18 years and above.

Further, it says the NEC has focused on those who have relocated from previous voting places to another, those who have lost their voting cards and those who didn't register during the last voter registration in 2017. It notes that the integrity of the FRR used for the 2017 general and presidential elections was challenged by the Unity Party (UP) and Liberty Party (LP).

Following UP and LP's challenge, the CPP recalls that the Supreme Court acknowledged several irregularities in the voter roll and ordered the NEC to conduct a full cleanup of the roll in consultation with and information to the political parties.

According to the CPP, since the exhibition of the provisional voters roll was carried out on the 12th of June 2017, the total valid registered voters viewed in the database was 2,045,483.

From this analysis, CPP says the ECOWAS report concluded that between the time of the exhibition of the FRR and declaring the FRR, a total of 138,146 records were added to the voters roll. The CPP laments that there is no

Gov't schedules autopsies today for LRA employees, others

The Government of Liberia, through the Ministry of Justice has announced that it will today Monday, October 19, 2020 conduct autopsies on the remains of four Liberians who died under circumstances deemed suspicious.

The post mortem examination is aimed at establishing the cause of death of the deceased, whose passing has given rise to public concern. The dead, Albert Peters, a former Internal Auditor of the Liberia Revenue Authority; Gifty Lamah,

carried out by Dr. Benedict B. Kolee and Dr. Zebon B. Kpadeh at the St. Moses Funeral Palor. Both pathologists were trained by UNDP and internationally certified.

The government has also availed the families of the deceased the option of bringing on board pathologists of their choosing. This message has been reiterated by the authorities in the various meetings with family members.

Liberian investigators have begun working with their



Research Analyst, Liberia Revenue Authority; George B. Fanbutu, Revenue Auditor, Liberia Revenue Authority; and the Director General of the Internal Audit Agency, Emmanuel Barten Nyeswua, all died within days of one another.

The process is expected to commence at 10 AM; representatives of the Families, the Press Union of Liberia, the Inter-Religious Council and Civil Society organizations have been invited to witness the autopsies, which will be

American counterparts following an appeal by the Liberian government for U.S. assistance. President George M. Weah last week requested Liberia's International Partners to help with the investigations as a means of ensuring an open and credible process.

Meanwhile, the government continues to appeal to the public to remain calm and allow the investigation to establish the cause of these deaths and not engage in acts that could undermine the credibility of the process.



mandamus to halt the election process did not please the opposition bloc which is made of four political parties.

The CPP's last hope of legal challenge is the full bench of the Supreme Court which it is asking to halt the election process and have the NEC enforce the court's earlier order to clean up the 2017 Final Registration Roll (FRR).

According to an assignment released Wednesday, 14 October, the Supreme Court has set Monday, 19 October as the date for argument in the case at 2:00pm.

In pursuit of a full cleanup of the 2017 Voters Roll, the CPP petitioned the Supreme Court recently, seeking the issuance of a Writ of Mandamus against the National Elections Commission (NEC) and the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) - led

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf through a tweet on Saturday, 10 October when she wrote that "The recent decision of the Supreme Court of Liberia to deny the opposition appeal for a cleanup of the Voters Roll is a strike at our hard earned democracy."

Besides Mrs. Sirleaf's reaction, the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) on Monday, 12 October also reminded the Supreme Court of the grave consequences Liberia has suffered due to the crisis created out of fraudulent elections, challenging the high court to therefore demonstrate fairness in deciding election cases in the next two months leading to the senatorial election.

At the formal opening of the Supreme Court Monday, the president of the Liberian National Bar Association Cllr. Tiawon Gongloe cautioned the court to take judicial notice of the historical fact that all threats in constitutional and other governance of Liberia

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evidence up to date that these additional 138,146 voters added to the FRR have been removed from the voters roll.

It says the findings of a technical team deployed to Liberia by ECOWAS clearly showed that the 2017 Voters roll was defective and could not form a basis for free, fair and credible elections.

The CPP further claims that the conclusion is compelling and inescapable that 170,000 suspected duplicates were

never extracted from the voters roll and remain there up to date, rendering the FRR defective and unfit to lay a basis for elections.

It notes that if 170,000 suspected duplicates were removed from the provisional registration roll, the total number of the voters on the FRR ought to have been 2,012,956 and not 2,183,629 voters as reported by NEC on its final voters roll on 11 September 2017.

End poverty to stop corona virus

-Dr. Tipoteh



Renowned Liberian Economist Dr. Togba-Nah Tipoteh, is calling on Liberians and the rest of the world to end the Poverty Pandemic thru nonviolent actions.

He said given that poor people have little opportunity of surviving under any disease attack, it is of highest importance to end The Poverty Pandemic now because this is the only way to stop the Corona Pandemic.

Dr. Tipoteh made the call on Saturday, October 17, 2020 in commemoration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty through the social media.

He observed that the attention of Liberians and the rest of the world have been drawn to the Corona Pandemic, which has surged to 40 million cases and more than 1 million deaths, while necessary and sufficient attention is not being given to ending The Poverty

Pandemic.

According to him, the Corona Pandemic can be stopped only if necessary and sufficient attention were given to ending the Poverty Pandemic.

Dr. Tipoteh explained that two thirds of the world's population live on less than USD10 a day, while half of the world's population lives on less than USD2.50 a day and one-

tenth of the world's population lives on less than USD1.90 a day (official poverty line) citing World Bank report.

He added that 4.80 million people have no access to adequate food, while hunger remains the main source of deaths and at the same time over 75 million people have no access to safe drinking water (UNDP) with nearly 2 billion people having no access to electricity (UNDP) and 7.22,000 children die every day

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Chelsea Fan Club launched in Liberia

Supporters of the Chelsea Football Club in Liberia have launched a fan club to support and promote the European-based team among Liberians.

Speaking at the official launch held over the weekend at the Monrovia City Hall, the Chief Executive Officer of the Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI) and also President of the Liberia Bankers Association (LBA) described soccer as a unifying

force that unites people from diverse back grounds in any society with Liberia being no exception.

Mr. John B. S. Davies, a Chelsea fan and supporter, stressed that the official launch of the Chelsea Fan Club in Liberia is a dream come true for many Liberians, who have supported and continue to support the team since the days of now President George Manneh Weah, who played for Chelsea during professional



career.

Mr. Davies noted that the Chelsea Fan Club in Liberia has engaged into clean-up campaign across Monrovia and its environs and hoped that other social services will be provided in various communities around the country.

According to him, supporters of Chelsea in Liberia should come together

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