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Continental News

Abiy gives 'ultimatum' as Ethiopians flee fighting

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has said the military operation in the northern Tigray region is entering its "final phase" now that a three-day ultimatum given to fighters to surrender has expired.

At least 27,000 people have so far fled the fighting into neighbouring Sudan.

The UN has said a "full-scale humanitarian crisis" is unfolding.

The conflict began almost a fortnight ago as tensions between the federal and regional governments boiled over. Fighting broke out after Ethiopia's government accused the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which controls Tigray, of treason and of occupying a military base..The TPLF sees the federal government as illegitimate. The UN fears the numbers fleeing Ethiopia may be just a fraction of those forced from their homes by the fighting, but for the moment aid agencies have no access to the Tigray region.

The conflict has also reportedly killed hundreds, but getting information from Tigray is hard as there is a virtual communications blackout. Regional powers Kenya and Uganda have called for negotiations to find a



At least 4,000 people escaping the Tigray region every day, the UN says

peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The Ethiopian government has, however, ruled out talks with the TPLF. In a Facebook post, the prime minister thanked TPLF fighters who, he said, took advantage of the three-day deadline to switch sides but he did not give a number.

He said that his government was "ready to receive and reintegrate our fellow Ethiopians fleeing to neighbouring countries". The UN's refugee agency, the UNHCR, said that "a full-scale humanitarian crisis is unfolding"

and thousands were fleeing the fighting.

The agency was "on stand-by to provide assistance in Tigray when access and security allow" spokesman Babar Baloch told a Geneva news briefing.

"There may be massive displacement inside Tigray and that is of course a concern and we try to prepare the best way possible," Jens Laerke, spokesman of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), told the briefing. Hundreds have reportedly died in Ethiopia since the fighting

began on 4 November. Human rights group Amnesty International said it had confirmed that "scores, and likely hundreds, of people were stabbed or hacked to death" in the town of Mai-Kadra (May Cadera) on Monday last week. Prime Minister Abiy has accused forces loyal to Tigray's leaders of carrying out the mass killings. The TPLF has denied involvement, saying it will welcome an independent international investigation.

Ethiopia's human rights commission said it would send a team to investigate. The TPLF dominated Ethiopia's military and political life for decades before Mr Abiy took office in 2018 and pushed through major reforms.

Last year, Mr Abiy dissolved the ruling coalition, made up of several ethnically based regional parties, and merged

them into a single, national party, which the TPLF refused to join. The feud escalated in September, when Tigray held a regional election, defying a nationwide ban on all polls imposed because of the coronavirus pandemic. Mr Abiy responded by calling the vote illegal.

Tigray's administration sees Mr Abiy's reforms as an attempt to hand his central government more power and weaken regional states.

It also resents what it calls the prime minister's "unprincipled" friendship with Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki. Mr Abiy won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 for his efforts to bring peace with Eritrea. federal troops on 4 November, calling the action "treasonous". The TPLF has denied attacking the camp. BBC

Ghana's anti-graft prosecutor resigns over 'meddling'

Ghana's anti-corruption special prosecutor, Martin Amidu, has resigned saying his mandate and efforts had been compromised.

Mr Amidu's appointment in 2018 by President Nana

Akufo-Addo was greeted with great expectation in the country but the results were disappointing.

In a statement announcing his resignation, the former attorney general cited a lack of independence and freedom to

execute his mandate.

He also accused President Akufo-Addo of interference although the president's office has not responded to the claim.

Mr Amidu claimed that some staff members at his office, including himself, had not been paid salaries since their appointment.

He had previously cited a lack of co-operation from other state agencies, and attempts to compromise his staff who were pursuing corruption claims against public officials.

Among the high profile cases he was working on was an alleged \$5m (£3.8m) scandal linked to an aircraft manufacturer, and a damning assessment of the government's attempt to engage in a controversial gold royalties deal. Many Ghanaians have expressed disappointment at his resignation. BBC



Martin Amidu also accuses the president of interference

Zimbabwe launches plan to salvage economy



Zimbabwe has unveiled a new economic recovery plan aimed at reducing inflation and increasing the number of formal jobs by 2025.

The country's economy contracted sharply in 2019 after the local currency introduced to address a shortage of US dollars dropped in value. Inflation peaked at 837% in July.

The plan, dubbed the National Development Strategy, plans to bring inflation from the current

471% down to single-digit figures, and to create 760,000 new jobs.

The majority of adults are not formally employed.

The government says its recovery plan will be driven by mining and agricultural production, but will also seek to develop an economic reform programme with the International Monetary Fund.

Zimbabwe has been unable to access low-cost loans with global lenders for more than 20 years after it defaulted on its repayment obligations. BBC

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EDITORIAL

We need party agents in polling centers

COMMISSIONER BOAKAI DUKULY of the National Elections Commission stressed the need for party agents to be present at various polling centers across the country during the December 8, 2020 special senatorial election to monitor the polls. He made the call last Friday, 13 November at a Training of Trainers Workshop for political parties, alliances, coalition and Independent Candidates, ahead of the special senatorial election.

COMMISSIONER DUKULY FURTHER noted the role of political party agents during elections is critical to legitimacy of election results throughout the country, as their presence during voting significantly help in validating free, fair, credible and transparent election.

WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREED with the NEC Commissioner that candidates, parties, alliances and or coalitions vying in the December poll should do everything necessary in having their agents deployed at various polling centers across the country to monitor the elections. This is important to avoid wild or unsubstantiated claims of electoral fraud that could undermine the process.

IN OTHER WORDS, claims of electoral malpractices coming from the pending elections should be backed by facts or documentary evidence to authenticate their validity.

OVER THE YEARS, we have observed repeatedly with great disappointment that most political parties and or Independent Candidates failed to send agents or representatives to polling centers to observe both casting and counting of ballots. Yet, they are the first to alarm about malpractices, which does not demonstrate good intentions.

WHILE THE NATIONAL Elections Commission is statutorily and constitutionally responsible to conduct free, fair and transparent elections in Liberia, the Commission is not perfect in all of its activities because they are carried out by human beings, who may err or who may what to do something selfish.

HOWEVER, IF AGENTS of various political parties, alliances, coalition and Independent Candidates are present to watch the polls, they may quickly raise concerns and bring them to NEC's attention for prompt redress.

COMMISSIONER DUKULY CHALLENGED party agents to be truthful and to report exactly what they see but also to be careful in handling complaints arising out of the elections. And this is very important because if complaints are not carefully handled by parties or candidates involved, they may have the propensity to spark violence, which is counterproductive in a democratic process.

THE SUPREME COURT of Liberia has assured Liberians that it would remain fully active during and after the polls, ready to receive and address all electoral complaints in the interest of justice and peace. Political actors should learn from late Cllr. Charles Walker Brumskine, ex-leader of the opposition Liberty Party, who mustered courage and complained to the High Court during the 2017 presidential election. That was demonstration of leadership at its highest level!

EMULATING CLLR. BRUMSKINE'S style of politicking by using the law would surely go a long way in not just strengthening our growing democracy, but setting good example for our respective followers and zealous loyalists other than choosing means of violence.

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COMMENTARY

By Philippe Legrain

Populism After Trump

•While more than 72 million Americans cast their votes for Donald Trump, over five million more chose Joe Biden - a 3.4 percentage-point difference. The implication is clear: right-wing populism is not dead, but it can be defeated.

LONDON - Before he was US president, Donald Trump built a reality-television persona on the catchphrase, "You're fired." Now, the American people have fired him. And Trump's defeat has also dealt a devastating blow to nationalist populists in Europe and elsewhere. Might it prove lethal?

The swamps that breed populist nationalism have not been drained. Too many people remain frustrated over their perceived (or anticipated) loss of economic and social status, and feel disregarded or maligned by establishment politicians. Wage stagnation, deindustrialization, and economic injustice continue to be serious challenges. Many are convinced that immigration and cultural change pose a threat to their safety and way of life. The COVID-19 crisis has compounded these anxieties.

The persistence of these fears and frustrations was reflected in the US election results. Though President-elect Joe Biden won over five million more votes than Trump - a 3.4 percentage-point lead - more than 72 million Americans still cast their votes for the outgoing president.

Nonetheless, Biden has demonstrated that populism can be defeated - and not just with more populism. Far from employing populists' tactics, endorsing their worldviews, or pandering to their prejudices, Biden built a broad electoral coalition around a promise of positive change, sober moderation, and competent governance. This holds a crucial lesson for center-left and center-right political parties in Europe, which have at times succumbed to the populist temptation - such as by echoing their socially conservative, anti-immigrant views - to try to win votes.

Trump's loss also amounts to a warning for other far-right populists, such as Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Earlier this year, Orbán proclaimed, "We used to think that Europe was our future; today we know that we are the future of Europe." But with Trump's defeat, his words ring hollow. Even if these leaders remain popular for now - in Bolsonaro's case, thanks to generous COVID-19 handouts to citizens - the rise or persistence of far-right populism is hardly inexorable.

Beyond shattering this self-serving narrative of inevitability, Trump's loss discredits his deeply flawed policies, thereby reducing their attractiveness to others. Over the past four years, Trump has pursued an approach that unabashedly purports to put "America first," trampling on trade treaties and misusing sanctions to try to give US businesses and workers an edge.

In this context, it seemed almost naive for others, including European governments, to pursue multilateral, cooperative open-market solutions. As mainstream politicians leaned toward protectionism, the extreme economic nationalism espoused by the likes of France's National Rally (formerly the National Front) - whose leaders favor putting "France and French people first" - seemed increasingly reasonable. Moreover, as I explain in my new book, *Them and Us: How Immigrants and Locals Can Thrive Together*, Trump's xenophobic rhetoric and encouragement of nativist sentiment opened the way for harsh immigration policies at home and

abroad.

Of course, some European governments needed no encouragement to demonize Muslims, erect barbed-wire border fences, or detain asylum-seekers in squalid camps; indeed, they began doing so before Trump was elected, notably during the 2015-16 refugee crisis. But the Trump administration's actions - including separating children from their parents and detaining them in awful conditions, deporting asylum seekers without due process, banning immigrants from Muslim-majority countries, and building a wall on the US border with Mexico - gave Europe's anti-immigrant forces a major boost.

For example, Matteo Salvini, the leader of Italy's far-right League party and the country's interior minister in 2018-19, reveled in his status as "Italy's Trump," as he blocked boats carrying rescued migrants from docking in Italian ports. When the Trump administration refused in 2018 to agree to the non-binding Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, nine EU governments - as well as other countries, such as Australia - followed suit.

Biden will set a very different example, which is likely to strengthen internationalists and weaken nationalists in Europe. To be sure, the president-elect - like Democrats more broadly - is not pushing for unfettered free trade and immigration. But he does recognize the foreign-policy benefits of trade cooperation with America's European allies, and he has pledged to reverse some of the Trump administration's most controversial immigration policies within days of taking office, as well as to reshape America's immigration system over the longer term. Biden will also scrap Trump's approach to climate change, beginning by rejoining the Paris climate agreement on the first day of his presidency.

With Trump gone, populist politicians will not only enjoy less domestic legitimacy; governments will face a higher international price for nationalist stances. Trump was a powerful ally for Europe's nationalist governments, especially in Hungary and Poland. When Poland's ruling Law and Justice party picked fights with Germany and challenged EU policies on asylum, judicial independence, and much else, it felt confident that, even if its European partners turned on it, Trump would protect it from the likes of Vladimir Putin's revanchist Russia. With Biden in the White House, the Polish government will feel more pressure to be constructive.

The same goes for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Trump championed Brexit as an expression of sovereignty and encouraged Johnson to take a tough line with the European Union, dangling the prospect of a bilateral trade deal as a prize.

Biden is no fan of Brexit - or, one might guess, of Johnson, whose racist slight about President Barack Obama's "part-Kenyan" ancestry during the referendum campaign Biden is unlikely to have forgotten. Moreover, Biden, who has often discussed his Irish ancestry, has made clear that he will not accept any threat to peace in Northern Ireland. With time running out to negotiate a post-Brexit trade agreement, Johnson is now under far greater pressure to compromise.

O-PED

By Thomas Cueni

A Pandemic We Can Prevent

Although antimicrobial resistance has been a known and growing problem for decades, only one new class of antibiotics has been discovered since 1984. Tackling AMR requires a fundamental change in how new antibiotics are valued, and government incentives that reward biotech firms for successfully developing them.

GENEVA - More than one in five Americans hospitalized with COVID-19 also contracts a bacterial infection. Absent effective antibiotics, those lucky enough to beat the coronavirus might die at the hands of these not-so-novel pathogens.

Unfortunately, the pipeline of new antibiotics is running dry. Less than 100 years after the development of penicillin, drug-resistant superbugs are threatening to gain the upper hand in our fight against bacterial infections.

Superbugs already take an enormous toll on health-care systems around the world. About 700,000 people globally die each year due to antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Without new and better treatments, that figure could rise to ten million by 2050.

Researchers are currently developing more than 550 innovative treatments and vaccines for COVID-19 - a pathogen unknown just a year ago. But although AMR has been a known and growing problem for decades, only one new class of antibiotics has been discovered since 1984. The hugely successful biopharmaceutical industry, whose expertise and resources are responsible for most of the medicines we use today, has been unable to take on this vital challenge.

The reason is simple: whereas the industry has built its strong and unprecedented COVID-19 response on a robust innovation ecosystem, the market for antibiotics is broken.

Firms that successfully develop a cutting-edge new antibiotic face major challenges. Navigating regulatory approval and potential safety issues is expensive and time-consuming, requiring skills that smaller drug makers often lack. But prospective sales pose an insurmountable problem. New antibiotics should be used extremely sparingly to prevent bacteria from evolving and growing immune to them. Ideally, they should serve as weapons of last resort against bacteria resistant to more common antibiotics.

Probable sales for any new antibiotic will therefore be very low; hospitals will have just a few doses - all under lock and key - for emergency use only. Unfortunately, this means the potential market return is too low to justify the necessary investment in research and development.

At the heart of this upside-down economics is the issue of how to recognize the value of a treatment that must be used only infrequently. John Rex, the chief medical officer of the British biotech firm F2G Ltd., compares advanced antimicrobials to fire extinguishers: absolutely essential, but ideally rarely needed.

A handful of companies are still doggedly pursuing this line of research against the odds. They include Merck, GlaxoSmithKline, Shionogi, and Roche - as well as Pfizer, which recently acquired Arixia Pharmaceuticals, a small, California-based company developing new antibiotics for drug-resistant infections. But many drug makers have abandoned antibiotics research. Big firms like Novartis, AstraZeneca, and Sanofi exited the market long ago - and in the last two years, at least four smaller antibiotic-focused companies have gone bankrupt.

Although the global health community is - fortunately - beginning to recognize the urgent need for new antibiotics, there has so far been much talk and little action. A few players are experimenting with some alternative ways of financing the development of new medicines. But in general, unsurprisingly, so far political leaders find it easier to sign up to declamatory statements at high-level meetings than to sign billion-dollar checks to fix the broken market.

That is why many of the world's largest drug makers helped to launch the AMR Action Fund in July. The Fund will invest \$1 billion in smaller biotech firms, with the aim of bringing 2-4 new antibiotics to patients by 2030 by helping to bridge the so-called "valley of death" between lab research and clinical trials. The initiative took a year to set up, and politicians and the public-health community, including World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, as well as scientists already researching treatments to combat drug-resistant bacteria, have widely welcomed it.

While we wait for new antimicrobials, doctors, governments, and the public can buy time by further curbing the overuse of existing antibiotics in medicine and agriculture, which is partly what caused the problem. Government regulation has reined in the worst excesses, by scaling back use, including in cleaning products and farm animals. Still, more careful use of the most widely adopted antibiotics is needed to slow the spread of AMR. For example, we should not expect our doctors to give us antibiotics to combat viruses, against which they are useless.

But, ultimately, slowing the spread is not enough. We must fundamentally change the way we value new antibiotics. Rather than linking their price to the quantity used, we should instead regard them as an insurance policy for medicine and health services. The United Kingdom's independent 2014-16 Review on Antimicrobial Resistance, chaired by the economist Jim O'Neill, estimated that averting the worst-case scenario of ten million annual AMR deaths by 2050 would require an investment of \$42 billion over the course of a decade. But that would represent a mere fraction of the huge economic cost of AMR between 2015 and 2050, which the review said could top \$100 trillion.

The US Senate is considering a possible legislative remedy. The proposed Pioneering Antimicrobial Subscriptions to End Upsurging Resistance (PASTEUR) Act would award federal contracts of up to \$3 billion each to drug makers in exchange for breakthrough antibiotics. The companies would be paid on a subscription basis, regardless of how much of their drug was used.

Other countries are experimenting with different models to support antibiotic research. But one way or another, as the WHO has pointed out, governments will need to establish incentives that reward biotech companies for successfully developing antibiotics. Next year's G7 summit in the UK will, one hopes, produce long-awaited real commitments rather than merely more talk and a few pilot initiatives.

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OPINION

By Shlomo Ben-ami

Joe Biden's World Order

Many hope that, when US President-elect Joe Biden takes over in January, he can salvage, and even renew, the American-led post-1945 liberal world order. That's an understandable desire, but it is entirely unrealistic.

TELAVIV - In less than four years, outgoing US President Donald Trump has achieved what, historically, only devastating wars had done: recast the global order. With his isolationism, wannabe authoritarianism, and sheer capriciousness, Trump gleefully took a sledgehammer to the international institutions and multilateral organizations his predecessors had built from the ashes of World War II and maintained ever since. What now?

Many hope that, when President-elect Joe Biden takes over, liberal international arrangements can be salvaged, and even renewed. That would certainly be desirable. Unfortunately, it is an unrealistic hope. A post-Trump order appears to be more about a return to the inter-bloc competition of 1945 than to post-Cold War liberal euphoria.

For starters, the Biden administration will be consumed by the daunting tasks of healing the domestic wounds that Trump has inflicted and correcting America's critical weaknesses, laid bare by the pandemic. The US' recovery from the most divisive presidency in its history will be neither quick nor painless. Reforming America is a prerequisite to restoring its capacity for global leadership.

Even if Biden's administration had infinite capacity, there would be no turning back the clock. The status quo ante sprang from a kind of post-Cold War euphoria, animated by the belief that Western liberal democracy had secured a definitive victory over the rest, and the world had reached, in Francis Fukuyama's famous formulation, the "end of history."

In the 1990s and 2000s, when the United States was the world's unrivaled economic, military, and diplomatic power, the logic of liberal hegemony was compelling. But, in today's rapidly changing multipolar world, it no longer is. This has been true for more than a decade, which is why the US was retreating from global leadership long before Trump took office.

Although Trump's isolationism is often portrayed as anomalous, it reflects a strain of American thought stretching back to the country's founding. Had German submarines not attacked American merchant ships in 1917, the US may well have stayed out of World War I.

Likewise, it was only when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941 that the US entered World War II. And after the war, US efforts to preserve peace (by deploying troops) and restore prosperity in Europe (by implementing the Marshall Plan) were driven by fear of Soviet expansion, not some sense of moral duty.

It was also in America's interest that Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, in whose administration Biden served as vice president, and even George W. Bush before him, took steps to scale back US foreign policy's hegemonic project. Like Trump, both Obama and Bush voiced frustration about inadequate burden-sharing by America's NATO allies.

The US retreat from hegemony reflects history that Biden cannot undo: America's loss of credibility as a result of its long, costly, and inconclusive Middle East wars, and the 2008 global financial crisis, which exposed the downside of globalization and the shortcomings of neoliberal orthodoxy. Far from fulfilling the promise of broadly shared prosperity, it became clear, the free-market ethos of the last few decades had facilitated the emergence of obscene inequalities and the collapse of the middle class.

This combination of never-ending war and rising inequality fueled the nationalist backlash that propelled Trump to victory in November 2016. The same frustrations were reflected in the United Kingdom's Brexit vote that June, France's Yellow Vest protests in 2018, and even the COVID-19 crisis.

A pandemic would seem like an unmissable opportunity for cooperation. Yet it has been met with border closures and competition over supplies and future vaccine doses, not to mention curbs on civil liberties and expansion of surveillance capabilities, including in democracies. Simply put, just when we need global cooperation the most, our broken multilateral system has driven us back to the bosom of the nation-state.

So, the world seems to be returning to a Westphalian order, in which sovereignty prevails over international rules. Trump's "America First" stance fits neatly within such an order. And while China touts international cooperation in some realms, multilateralism is a fundamentally alien concept to it. It would oppose the revival of a world order based on liberal precepts. Other big nationalist powers (such as Brazil, India, Russia, and Turkey) and smaller ones in Eastern Europe (Hungary and Poland) move broadly within the same illiberal realm.

The Biden administration should aspire to lead the world's democracies in their competition with a rising authoritarian bloc, while upholding the multilateral institutions and structures most essential to peace. To this end, it should immediately abandon its predecessor's connivance with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and replace his bellicose strategy toward Iran with an effort to reach a revised, durable nuclear agreement. Fortunately, it appears set to do both.

At the same time, the Biden administration will need to treat America's alliances more as collective enterprises, which the US ideally leads without dominating. From the allies' side, this shift has already begun, with European leaders, especially French President Emmanuel Macron, increasingly recognizing the need to take Europe's security into their own hands. The US should work with an empowered European Union to contain Russia's revisionism on NATO's borders and end its hybrid war on Western democracies.

Similarly, to manage its ongoing strategic confrontation with China, the US will need to work with its Asian allies, such as a rearmed Japan and South Korea. With China having all but abandoned its "peaceful rise" strategy, avoiding violent conflict will be a delicate balancing act.

More broadly, the US will need to galvanize the world's liberal democracies to forge a bloc capable of standing up to the world's authoritarians. This should include efforts to counter the forces of disintegration within the EU and, potentially, to transform NATO into a broader security alliance of democracies.

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A MEMO

A MEMO

President George Weah: a struggling economy & “Yes-men”

By Ike D. Coleman
Cont'd from last edition

Thin-skinned leaders as many Liberian politicians are, surround themselves with cheer-leading “yes men” to not only stoke their low self-esteem, if at all, but also hopefully boost their flattened egos with undeserved praises. As Abe Lincoln once said, “you can tell the greatness of a man by what makes him angry;” in Liberia as in all third world countries, it does not take much to discern the simplest of questions that would drive politicians nut, only because they had become accustomed to being lavished with undeserved praises.

But little do Liberian politicians know that once they chose public employment via an election or appointment, they automatically became public properties, subject to scrutiny in the name of protecting the people’s interest. If you dislike being challenged as a public figure about a country that was never “Willed” to you by your parents, then damn it, consider taking your ill-gotten wealth, and hit the private sector where you could become an employer, rather than an employee on the public payroll. But of course, that will not happen, since as security-seekers, Liberian politicians find comfort as government employees, rather than investing their loots, which could soon go bust due to poor management. So why not safeguard their loots in foreign banks, while continuing to pinch on limited public resources.

We are speaking of politicians who hide their vulnerabilities behind credentials and a fake pronounced presence to intimidate others, because that way, they don’t have to prove their lack of technical, professional experience for those that truly had none. Amid that reality, many Liberians pretentiously continue to wonder why their country remains a member of the ten poorest in the world over 172-years of existence. But who cares how old a country is, if age did not comport with infrastructure development such as a suitable, adequate national road network to move goods and services around the country, compared to a dusty mess during the dry season and muddy mess during times of rain; what about utility platforms—water, electricity, and communication, to encourage foreign investors to consider Liberia a serious investment hub, making it possible to invest in other parts of the country other than a congested, filthy Monrovia? As if to remind policymakers, when was it that a country lacked a trained workforce in skilled trades, vocational education, and apprenticeship programs, and was ever considered a competitive investment nucleus. Liberia is not set up as a service economy, as it is for manufacturing, which in turn would require technical skillset—electrical, plumbing conveyor belt tech, pipefitters, welders, machinists, fabricators, bricklayer, carpenters, ironworkers, construction, masonry, material science, et al, to maintain operational efficiency of a manufacturing facility, for instance.

If Economic Advisers to the president weren’t aware that technical skillset, not liberal arts were the driving force that attracted manufacturing investors, then maybe they need to briefly separate from those advanced liberal arts degrees that made them the talkative they are, and aim for a personal self-evaluation, which might just transform them into actors/doers, not talkers. During that brief separation, they might want to revisit the history of China’s cultural revolution, for example, and the quest to satisfy its people first security need—FOOD, with a vision of simultaneously employing three key elements—skilled hands, technical knowledge, and hard work, which propelled that nation to become the second biggest economy by 2010, thus, replacing Japan.

Costa Rica, under the leadership of Oscar-Arias

Sanchez was another example that pulled itself from a disheveled economy in the 1980s, including disbanding its rag-tag disreputable military and police forces comprising so many semi-literate Generals and lieutenants, to becoming a major investment attraction in Latin America. At some institutions in Costa Rica, political science took a step downward, replaced by Food Science Technology outfits, with available scholarships for many with a science background to travel to countries like Cuba and the US—Florida, to learn the art of processing cane sugar, for instance, not just reading the procedures from a textbook, as many do in Liberia, just because there are not sufficient industries to provide practical support. Others were dispatched to Brazil to learn the entire process of farm-to-market dynamics of coffee processing, which led to processed coffee for export and domestic consumption.

Still, other scholarships were made available for a slew of unemployed colleges undergraduates to travel abroad to learn disciplines such as furniture design and making, testing lab setups, as its visionary leader predicted a growing food processing industry would require testing for ecoli and other food-borne pathogens. To that end, flagship public universities became incubators for business startups, and testing labs meant to assist the food industry. Unlike Costa Rica and others that sought hands-on application, many Liberians at the same time sought scholarships, seeking a Master’s Degree, only to return, for teaching



positions without demonstrating any technical, professional experience to combine classroom instructions with hands-on applications, or sought government employment.

Like China, Costa Rica’s visionary leader understood that Food science drew from many disciplines, including biology, chemical engineering, material science, biochemistry..., which explains why Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Kenya, for example, can boast of manufacturing facilities in many industries, whereas Liberians tend to boast of how many degrees they have. Never met a piece of paper on a wall that possessed the capability to feed or cure people. But do not tell that to grandstanding Liberians. If knowledge is power, as they say, then “information is the catalyst that fuels such energy” for any curious, conscientious Liberian, which does not include “yes-men,” who generally are too intimidated to provide important information, albeit bad news to a timid “chief/bossman. So who are these brown-nosing “yes-men” anyway?

Who are these Brown-nosing “Yes-men,” and What do they Desire!

Brown-nosers are people usually devoid of any providence, hence, deliberately engage in offering an inattentive leader advice they think he wants to hear, not what he needs to know; in that case, it would be the hope of celebrating fantasy of the “enjoyment” by a few, rather than confronting existing realities of a suffering majority.

The single biggest unintended consequence of playing it safe by feckless “yes-men” if Mr. Weah did not remain vigilant and focused on why Liberians hired him is, “If you do not see it, Mr. President, it does not exist.” Essentially, it would appear that advisers were communicating to Mr. Weah that it was quite okay to cast off the collective majority of Liberians, who are the true victims of abject poverty because they were not in the spotlight around Monrovia to be seen.

Brown-nosers are cunning individuals whose sole purpose is a dichotomy of how to gauge the tactfulness or lack thereof of a leader. First, is to offer conspicuous support, including continuous overwhelming praises of that leader—Mr. Weah, in this case, as if he was not a human being that made mistakes like the rest of humanity; in his presence, they demonstrate unimaginable flaccidity, including prostrating and separating from their human value, pretending to love Weah more than they do themselves. Once they had offered their cynicism to an unsuspecting, gullible leader then comes the second part—delivering the coup de gras—protecting their interest, which had been the ploy all along. Put simply, “yes-men” will use the protection of a credulous leader to amass wealth however way possible, for as long as that leader keeps them around. After all, who gets blamed if the leader failed!

Mr. Weah inherited a massive failure from former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf—mainly her dismal (Poverty Reduction Strategy). As it is human nature, people will never admit to failure, if they could get away with blaming others, to diffuse responsibility. And you better believe Ellen will sing her praises, even if she could not explain what happened to the abundant international charities—including debt forgiveness for which she cannot explain why the road conditions she knew as Finance Minister in 1979 remained the same dust bowl and muddy after twelve years as president. That failure began with Ellen inviting self-perceived paper-pushing charlatans to discuss and design poverty programs, without a single victim of poverty represented at the table to give input. They weren’t good enough, because they did not speak the language of intellects. But you bet they could have taught even Ellen, the essence and downward impact of poverty on human dignity.

One could equate Ellen’s malfeasance on poverty, to international donors designing programs from the outside to be filtered to Liberian villagers, without ever familiarizing themselves with defining the problems for which they opted to dispense of solutions. As Ellen & Co. drew up papers to impress international donors about their diction and sophistication, even though she had nothing to show after a dozen years, many in her administration sought foreign banks to safeguard their dough—however way they obtained it. In Ellen’s case, Wachovia Bank (Bank of America), North Carolina, as we now know, became one of her depositories, with Robert Sirleaf—a signatory on that or those accounts, acting on her behalf at the time of her presidency. As Matthew Mangolie—a Liberian rightly asserted in early 2006, “Ellen sought power mainly to complete the bank withdrawal for herself and family for which she did not make any deposit, during her years as a public servant in the 1970s.” Accordingly, as Matthew noted, how could Ellen, who once advocated burning down Monrovia and rebuilding it, be so inept at even minimally steering the economy of the Capital city—Monrovia, to prewar levels, focusing on necessary infrastructure—water, electricity, communication, sanitation...platforms for both commercial and private consumption. Did she expect foreign investors to bring their money into Liberia and use “well or pump water” and “generators” to run a processing plant in Lofa, for example, he wondered.

▶ TO BE CONT'D

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MacDonald Went to detests weak education system

-Supports Juah Sarwee school library project

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The political leader of the United People's Party (UPP) and businessman MacDonald A. Went to has detested the weak Liberian educational system, urging government to accelerate the learning process by providing those things necessary to enhance

understand and better comprehend what their instructors are teaching.

His comment came at the annual fund raising program in support of the Juah Sarwee Memorial Welfare Institute self-help special library project.

Mr. Went to urges government through the Ministry of Education (MOE) to do more to accelerate the learning system

learning in a rather weak educational system that makes no impact.

He adds that he will work along with the administration of the Juah Sarwee Memorial Welfare Institute in ensuring that the school's US\$8,691.00 library project is fully supported to its full completion.

He says this is his way of demonstrating his desire to improve the learning environment for the student population at the institute.

In remarks, the Executive Director of the Community Education Foundation for Needy and Development (COFOND) and owner of the Juah Sarwee Memorial Welfare Institute Mr. Robert B. Teah emphasizes that COFOND is a non-profitable and non-governmental Organization.

According to him, the organization is only intended to help orphans, school dropouts, single parents and youth who are not in school but are languishing in the streets, communities, and market places due to poor parental care. He explains that the initiative is also to help buttress parents-guardians' effort in getting their children in school as a financial aid he initiated.

The Liberian politician and educator discloses that his organization's scholarship fund which started since

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Mr. MacDonald A. Went to

the academic environment for students.

Serving as a guest speaker over the weekend in the Borough of New Kru Town, Mr. Went to indicated that students' access to public libraries in all government schools is cardinal in improve their learning ability to

in the country.

The 2017 standard bearer of UPP notes that students in the country have the ability to learn if the enabling environment is provided by the government.

According to him, it would be very difficult if not impossible for students in the country to accelerate their

UNDP assures NEC of support

The United Nations Development program, UNDP Electoral Support Project in Liberia has pledged its continued support to the National Elections Commission to ensure that the work of the Commission is successful and sustained.

Making the pronouncement today in the James M. Fromayan Conference Hall, the Head of the UNDP Electoral Support Project Lenka Homolkova said the UNDP and partners will continue to support the NEC mainly in the area of capacity building.

Elections Commission.

The UNDP Electoral Support Project Head spoke today, Tuesday 17 November 2020 at the close of the two-day Elections Adjudication Cases conducted by the Independent Dispute Hearing Office of the NEC in collaboration with the UNDP, with support from the German Government.

Speaking also, Commissioner Barsee Leo Kpangbai challenged the 19 Elections Magistrates to give Liberia the best gift they can by conducting what he calls "A Good Election", adding that anything on the contrary would lead to chaos.



UNDP Electoral Support Project in Liberia Head Lenka Homolkova speaks to NEC Elections Magistrates

She said given the current challenges facing the NEC including the lack of resources, the adjudication of cases before the Supreme Court of Liberia and the current wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNDP with support from partners will do all it can to ensure that the Commission becomes truly sustain even in the absence of donor support.

Madam Homolkova said to advance this support, the UNDP has secured the purchasing of brand new laptops to arrive in the country on 18 November 2020 for onward distribution to the 19 Elections Magistrates of the National

Commission Kpangbai said to do this, the 19 Elections Magistrates must always consult, study and see their Election Manual as their guard to make adequate references to the adjudication of election matters and related complaints as they come about during and after the conduct of elections.

The NEC Commissioner with oversight on Civic and Voter Education, CVE commended the legal team of NEC, through the Chief Dispute Hearing Officer Cllr. Muana Ville and the UNDP Electoral Support Project in Liberia for the level of support to the Commission.

Islamic scholar visits Liberia soon

An Islamic cleric, Shiek Muhammad Awal is expected to arrive in Liberia upon invitation by the Islamic Affairs Adviser to President George M. Weah, Sheik Usmane T. Jalloh.

Shiek Awal is expected here for a program scheduled for November 29, 2020 at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium in Monrovia.

The visiting Muslim cleric is founder and director of ZaitunDawah Institute (ZDI) a think-tank research center with headquarters in Seattle, Washington, United States of America.

The center also has branches in New York, Atlanta, Nigeria, and Ghana, respectively. Sheikh Awal is a scholar in Islamic Sciences,



Shiek Muhammad Awal

Comparative Religion and Logic. He is also a debater, motivational speaker and prolific writer.

Disclosing this in an interview with reporter in Monrovia recently, Sheik Jalloh called on Muslims and

non-Muslims in the country to turn out in their numbers to grace the event, which he said will include a special honor to be bestowed on President

Weah for appointing an Islamic Affairs Adviser in the Office of the Presidency for the first time since Liberia declared her independence in 1847.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Action Aid Launches Global Platform in Gbarnga

by Joseph Titus Yekeryan
in Bong County

With support from the Swedish Embassy in Liberia, Action Aid has launched its Global Platform in Gbarnga, Bong County as part of efforts to promote youth empowerment.

The Global Youth Platform is now going to serve as a one-stop-shop for the integration of ideas from young people and other local organizations

Madzvamuse called on young people of Bong County to take lead of the facility.

Mr. Madzvamuse highlights the importance of the center, calling on the local authorities in the county to see the center as their own and help encourage the citizenry to get involved in processes that benefit the country positively.

Mr. Madzvamuse says being a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and

with essential skills, he or she can utilize them to feed, assist others, and even invest for future use," he says.

Cutting the ribbons to the newly furnished center, Bong County coordinator at the Ministry of Youth and Sports Jutomue Dakar Mulbah thanks Action Aid and partners for the idea of integrating young people under a platform that amplifies their voices to the international community.

He specifically thanks the Swedish government for the support in establishing the center in Gbarnga, committing himself to support the center at all cost.

"We are very happy to see the implementation of the project and as youth representatives, we will do everything possible to ensure that the necessary supports are given which we believe will help the young people here in Bong County," Mr. Mulbah says.

"I also want to use the opportunity to encourage my fellow youths to take advantage of the opportunity, even if you have had any training of such, we want you not to feel complacent because there are many opportunities that will be offered here," he adds.

Some of the participants at the training thanked Action Aid for the opportunity and promised to take advantage of it. Beatrice Flomo and Amos Johnson say they are grateful to Action Aid, and express hope that the organization will extend its activities across Bong County anytime soon in order to help youths that are in the rural parts of the county.--**Edited by Winston W. Parley**



across Bong County.

The platform seeks to also act as a training ground for young people in social advocacy, climate change, and other youth engagement programs.

Speaking recently at the official launch of the Global Platform at its Millionaire Quarter Headquarters in Gbarnga, Action Aid Acting Head of Programs Joseph

poverty reduction, Action Aid will continue to focus on strengthening the knowledge of the poor and marginalized people, especially women and youths as well.

He suggests that youth empowerment can curb the rate of poverty to a large level, adding that "one of the keys to empowering the youth is with skill development.

"When a youth is equipped

Liberia Business Alliance holds first town hall meeting today

A group of Liberian living in the United Kingdom under the banner Liberia Business Alliance (LBA) is scheduled to hold its first town hall meeting today Wednesday November 18, via zoom.

Organizers told this paper via WhatsApp call Tuesday that the town hall meeting is a prelude to a much bigger conference expected to take place next February.

In a prepared press statement issued Monday, the LBA said their alliance seeks to foster strong results driven

relationships & avenue for Liberians to successfully access business and trading opportunities between Liberia, the United Kingdom, Ireland and the rest of the world.

LBA says it is dedicated to establishing a network of Liberian business owners and professionals in the United Kingdom & Ireland, the Liberia Business Alliance was established few months ago, in London England.

"With enormous business and economic opportunities in Liberia, we view the active participation of ourselves, the

Liberian community in the UK & Ireland, as a catalyst in the development and prosperity of our nation the Republic of Liberia.

Hence, this webinar town hall provides a patriotic & friendly interactive atmosphere for the leaders of the organization to share the vision, goals & objectives of the network, as well as introduce members of the leadership to the wider Liberian community in the United Kingdom & Ireland," the releases notes.

Meanwhile, the formal

CCPP candidate gets endorsement in District#9

A local group, One People Revolutionary Movement (OPRM) has endorsed Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) representative candidate Fubbi F.A. Henries in the December 8, 2020, Special Senatorial and Representative by-elections.

The CPP is a conglomeration of opposition political parties including the Unity Party (UP), All Liberian Party (ALP), Liberty Party (LP) and the Alternative National Congress (ANC).

Montserrado County electoral District#9 was recently announced vacant

or 40.3 percent in the district.

Fubbi F.A. Henries who contested in the 2017 elections on the ticket of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) trading behind Youngblood with 8,675 votes, representing 27.4 percent now seems to be the most formidable candidate.

The head of the One People Revolutionary Movement Robert Kpadah, said his organization endorsed Fubbi based on his leadership ability and advocacy for development.

Receiving the endorsement, Fubbi commanded the One People Revolutionary Movement for his preferment



Fubbi F.A. Henries

following the death of Representative Munah Pelham Youngblood of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC).

The district covers the Monrovia communities of ICA Camp, Pyne People, Fiamma, Fiamma East, Fish Market, Gbangaye Town, Wroto Town, Raymond Field, Central Lakpazee, Old Matadi and New Matadi, as well as the eastern parts of Cooper Clinic and Ocean View communities, respectively.

The late Rep. Youngblood won the seat in the 2017 general elections, receiving 12,783 of the total votes cast

and promised to justify the confidence reposed in him, if elected. The program was held at the headquarters of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) in Sinkor Monrovia.

On April 5, this year FubbiHenries joined scores of protesters in the streets of Monrovia, demanding accountability for crimes committed during Liberia's 14-year civil war (1989 - 2003) and pillaging of the country's coffers even up to today.

Dressed in white T-shirts, the protesters carried placards that read, "We Demand War and Economic Crimes Court".
Editing by Jonathan Browne

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launching of the Liberia Business Alliance will take place in February 2021 and will bring together Liberian business owners and

professionals in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Liberia, Ireland and the world at large.

Français

Disparition des recettes fiscales : La Banque centrale nie son implication

La Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL) n'a rien à voir avec les informations faisant état de la disparition présumée des recettes fiscales du compte consolidé du gouvernement du Libéria, ont fait croire les autorités de la Banque.

Les autorités de la banque centrale du Libéria ont expliqué qu'elles ne sont pas signataires du compte. « Pour avoir des explications concernant ces impôts, il faut s'adresser à la LRA (Autorité des Revenus du Libéria) et aux

banques commerciales », ont-elles dit.

Les montants consignés dans une note d'audit interne qui a fait fuite dont une copie est en possession de ce quotidien provenaient du responsable de l'audit en chef de la LRA James Kerkulaet remis au commissaire général de la LRA, Thomas Nah Doe, concernant un audit des paiements de transfert directs dans les banques commerciales.

L'audit, qui aurait couvert les périodes 2017, 2018 et 2019, indique que les montants de

25,1 millions de dollars US et 2,3 milliards de LD représentant les impôts perçus par les banques commerciales et remis au compte consolidé des recettes générales du gouvernement du Libéria (GOL) (CGRA) à la CBL n'ont pas pu être comptabilisés.

Les rapports croient que la mort des quatre auditeurs pourrait avoir un lien avec ce rapport d'audit qui a fait fuite. Mais la CBL, dans un communiqué publié le lundi

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Amnesty appelle à la libération « sans condition » de l'opposant ivoirien AffiNguessan

L'ONG Amnesty International appelle les autorités ivoiriennes à libérer « sans condition » l'opposant AffiNguessan et des personnes détenues pour avoir exercé leurs droits fondamentaux dans le cadre du scrutin présidentiel, dans un communiqué. Les autorités ivoiriennes « doivent libérer immédiatement et sans

condition Pascal Affi N'Guessan et toutes les personnes détenues uniquement pour avoir exercé leurs droits fondamentaux », a indiqué l'ONG Amnesty International dans un communiqué de presse.

Amnesty invité toutefois l'Etat de Côte d'Ivoire à « s'engager à créer un espace où les citoyen·ne·s peuvent

exprimer librement leurs opinions et manifester pacifiquement, sans crainte d'être arrêtés, agressés ou tués. »

Le leader de l'opposition Pascal Affi N'Guessan, président du Front populaire ivoirien (FPI), le parti fondé par Laurent Gbagbo, a été arrêté dans la nuit du 6 novembre et « détenu au secret jusqu'au 9 novembre », rapporte le communiqué.

« Durant ces quelques jours, il n'a pas pu communiquer avec sa famille ni son avocat ». Et, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, visé par 30 chefs d'accusation, notamment « attaque et complot contre l'autorité de l'Etat, assassinat et actes de terrorisme », a affirmé qu'il n'avait pas vu la lumière du jour pendant 60 heures », souligne l'ONG de défense des droits de l'Homme.

L'ONG continue pour insinuer que son avocat n'a réussi à le voir que lors de sa comparution devant le juge le 9 novembre.



Affaire Ja'neh : le représentant Snowe appelle à des négociations pour éviter des sanctions

Le représentant du comté de Bomi, Edwin Snowe, souhaite que le gouvernement libérien négocie avec l'ancien Juge associé Kabineh M. Ja'neh pour trouver un accord à l'amiable afin d'éviter des sanctions de la CEDEAO.

Rappeler qu'il y a à peine une semaine le tribunal de la CEDEAO, dans son verdict dans l'affaire Ja'neh, demandait au gouvernement du Libéria de verser 200000 dollars américains en réparation du préjudice moral subi pour la violation de ses droits, « Donc, ma seule suggestion est de négocier, asseyons-nous, trouvons un moyen, faisons participer certains anciens, trouvons un moyen et payons une partie de l'argent à cet homme. Je sais qu'il est difficile de dire de lui payer tout », a déclaré M. Snowe, un candidat à l'élection sénatoriale du comté de Bomi, sur une chaîne de télévision locale.

Snowe estime également que M. Ja'neh pourrait également demander le rétablissement de son permis d'exercer le droit ici dans le cadre de la négociation, avertissant que le Libéria n'a aucun intérêt à se rebeller contre le tribunal de la CEDEAO.

« Je suis sûr que l'une des choses qu'il souhaite aussi est de ne pas être empêché de pratiquer le droit dans son propre pays. Vous négociez, vous résolvez ces problèmes, vous passez à autre chose. J'entends des gens contester le tribunal de la CEDEAO et dire, oh, la CEDEAO ne peut pas nous forcer. C'est vrai que la CEDEAO ne peut pas nous forcer, mais... vous parlez des élections aujourd'hui au Libéria, la CEDEAO a une équipe ici pour apporter de la crédibilité aux élections en aidant à nettoyer les listes électorales », a-t-il rappelé. Selon lui, le Libéria bénéficie d'un grand soutien technique de la part de la CEDEAO, d'où se rebeller contre l'organe régional pourrait coûter cher au pays.

Snowe prévient que les gens ne doivent pas se tromper, rappelant que le Libéria est signataire des statuts qui ont créé la Cour de justice de la CEDEAO, se soumettant ainsi à la juridiction de la cour.

« Vous ne pouvez pas être membre d'un organe ou d'une organisation et quand il y a quelque chose contre vous et vous dites 'non, je ne

respecte pas la décision ou je ne respecte pas l'institution », et quand il y a quelque chose en votre faveur, vous respectez la décision ou l'institution », a-t-il regretté.

Snowe dit connaître le fonctionnement du tribunal de la CEDEAO en tant que membre du parlement de l'organisation sous-régionale, soulignant que la décision de la Cour est définitive.

« Alors que pourrait-il arriver ? Il pourrait y avoir des sanctions ! Maintenant, quand les gens parlent de sanction, tout le monde pense que c'est une sanction économique. Pas nécessairement. Vous avez des postes statutaires dans la CEDEAO ..., donc ces postes statutaires pourraient vous être refusés », prévient-il.

Selon lui, le Libéria pourrait être privé d'une partie de l'assistance technique que la CEDEAO peut apporter, tout en mettant en garde : « il n'est pas dans le meilleur intérêt du Libéria d'être en conflit avec la Cour de justice de la CEDEAO ».

« Dans beaucoup de situations, des négociations ont été conclues avec les parties qui ont eu gain de cause devant le tribunal de la CEDEAO. C'est le cas du juge en chef de la Gambie qui a remporté un procès, de l'ancien vice-président de la Sierra Leone sous le président Ernest Bai Koroma et d'autres cas », a-t-il dit.

Les juges siégeant au tribunal de la CEDEAO à Abuja, au Nigéria, dans un verdict rendu le mardi 10 novembre, ont ordonné au gouvernement libérien de soit réintégrer le juge associé Kabineh M. Ja'neh ou de lui accorder le droit de prendre sa retraite en toute dignité.

En plus, il faut lui verser 200 000 USD (deux cent mille dollars) en réparation du préjudice moral qu'il a subi pour la violation de ses droits. Le juge associé de la Cour suprême réclamait dans son recours la bagatelle 25 millions de dollars américains en compensation.

Le juge Edward Amoako Asante a en outre ordonné au gouvernement libérien de restituer et de payer tous ses droits retenus, y compris les salaires, les indemnités et les prestations de retraite à compter de la date de sa destitution jusqu'à la date de notification du jugement du tribunal.

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Français

Disparition des recettes fiscales :

16 novembre dernier, semble nier avoir connaissance de la disparition de l'argent en déclarant que « nous ne sommes pas signataires des canaux procéduraux concernant le mouvement des revenus du Gouvernement du Liberia du compte des banques commerciales vers le compte de revenus consolidé ».

La CBL a en outre indiqué qu'elle ne sait rien du mouvement des fonds conformément à une directive du ministère des Finances et de la Planification du développement (MFDP).

« Toutes les taxes mobilisées par la Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) sont versées sur les comptes transitoires des banques commerciales conformément à la loi sur la gestion des finances publiques (GFP), et finalement transférées dans le compte consolidé du gouvernement tenu à la CBL, exclusivement sous la responsabilité du Ministère des Finances et de la Planification du Développement et de la LRA », explique la CBL, ajoutant que « les comptes transitoires sont sous le contrôle de la LRA et des banques commerciales. »

La banque a expliqué qu'à la fin de chaque période de réconciliation, et à l'appui d'une responsabilisation appropriée, une validation de

routine est effectuée entre la LRA et les banques commerciales (à l'exclusion de la CBL) pour confirmer que tous les fonds collectés et placés dans les comptes transitoires sont correctement traités conformément à la politique. La CBL ne participe pas à l'établissement de l'objectif de revenus, et n'a aucune juridiction ou connaissance du montant réel reçu par les banques commerciales avant tout mouvement de fonds sur les comptes du gouvernement.

A la banque de souligner en outre qu'elle n'a aucun contrôle statutaire sur le fonctionnement opérationnel des comptes transitoires du gouvernement auprès des banques commerciales, et elle n'a aucun contrôle sur les mouvements de liquidités du compte consolidé du gouvernement à moins d'une instruction formelle du Ministère des Finances.

Les rapports de la disparition des recettes fiscales interviennent au moment où des questions planent toujours sur la CBL quant à ce qui est exactement arrivé aux 16 milliards de dollars libériens dont la disparition mystérieuse n'a pas encore été élucidée. Bien que les autorités aient affirmé que l'argent n'a pas disparu, les Libériens continuent de faire la queue dans les banques locales pour manque de liquidité.

Affaire Ja'neh : le représentant Snoweappelle

Le Juge Janeh a été destitué de ses fonctions de juge associé de la Cour suprême du Libéria à la suite d'une procédure de destitution qu'il qualifie d'inconstitutionnelle.

Il considère que l'ensemble du procès en destitution, sa condamnation et son remplacement constituent une violation de ses droits à un procès équitable, une atteinte à sa dignité.

Ja'neha fait valoir qu'en vertu du chapitre VII, article 72 (B) de la Constitution libérienne de 1986, il s'est vu garantir l'exercice et la protection de la fonction de juge associé et exhibé une bonne conduite jusqu'à l'âge de 70 ans. Cependant, les législateurs qui ont porté des accusations contre lui disent le contraire. Ils ont par conséquent procédé à sa destitution de ses fonctions.

L'une des affaires qui a déclenché le procès en destitution du juge associé Ja'neh au Libéria concerne un différend foncier qui

l'opposait une certaine Mme Annie Yancy Constance.

Il a été accusé par les législateurs d'abus de pouvoir, lui reprochant d'avoir utilisé son influence en tant que juge associé pour obtenir une décision en sa faveur à la Cour suprême pour prendre possession du terrain.

Mais les avocats de Ja'neh ont soutenu que l'affirmation selon laquelle leur client aurait manipulé la Cour suprême pour se prononcer en sa faveur dans l'affaire des biens remet en question la crédibilité du juge en chef Francis S. Korkpor qui a présidé la Cour suprême et a également signé le jugement.

Dans la plainte qu'il a déposée à la Cour de la CEDEAO, Ja'neh, par la voix de son conseil Me Femi Falana, a allégué que sa destitution violait ses droits humains à un procès équitable et impartial, le droit au travail et la dignité de la personne garantis par la Charte africaine de l'homme des peuples.

Il dénonce également une violation de la Déclaration universelle des droits de

COMMENTAIRE

Par Philippe Legrain

Le Populisme après Trump

LONDRES - Avant qu'il soit président, Donald Trump avait construit son personnage de télé-réalité sur la formule : « Vous êtes viré. » C'est aujourd'hui le peuple américain qui l'a viré. Et la défaite de Trump porte aussi un coup dévastateur aux populistes nationalistes en Europe et ailleurs. Pourrait-il s'avérer mortel ?

Les marais qui ont donné naissance au populisme nationaliste n'ont pas été asséchés. Trop de gens se sentent encore lésés par la dégradation perçue (ou crainte) de leur situation économique et sociale ou déconsidérés, voire maltraités par les responsables politiques. La stagnation des salaires, la désindustrialisation et l'injustice économique posent encore de graves problèmes. Beaucoup sont convaincus que l'immigration et l'évolution culturelle font peser sur leur sécurité et leur mode de vie une menace. La crise du Covid-19 a renforcé ces anxiétés.

La persistance de ces peurs et de ces frustrations s'est traduite dans les résultats des élections aux États-Unis. Si le président élu Joe Biden en sort vainqueur, avec une avance sur Trump supérieure à cinq millions de voix - soit l'équivalent de 3,4 points de pourcentage -, plus de 72 millions d'Américains ont néanmoins voté pour le président sortant.

Biden a néanmoins démontré que le populisme pouvait être vaincu - et pas seulement par la surenchère. Rejetant les tactiques des populistes, refusant de se plier à leurs conceptions ou de flatter leurs préjugés, Biden a construit une vaste coalition électorale, autour de la promesse d'un changement concret, d'une sobriété mesurée et d'une gouvernance compétente. Cette victoire contient une leçon essentielle pour les partis politiques de centre gauche et de centre droit en Europe, qui ont parfois succombé à la tentation populiste - en reprenant par exemple les antiennes socialement conservatrices et dirigées contre les immigrants de leurs concurrents - pour tenter d'arracher des votes.

L'échec de Trump sonne comme un avertissement pour les autres populistes d'extrême-droite, comme le président brésilien Jair Bolsonaro et le Premier ministre hongrois Viktor Orbán. Plus tôt, cette année, Orbán avait lancé : « Nous pensions que l'Europe était notre avenir, aujourd'hui, nous savons que nous sommes l'avenir de l'Europe. » Mais avec la défaite de Trump, ses mots sonnent creux. Même si ces dirigeants demeurent jusqu'ici populaires - grâce, dans le cas de Bolsonaro, aux aides substantielles distribuées suite à la pandémie - leur succès ou leur maintien n'ont rien d'inexorable.

Outre qu'il fait voler en éclat le récit commode de l'inéluctabilité, l'échec de Trump jette le discrédit sur des choix profondément erronés, et par conséquent en réduit l'attraction pour ses épigones. Au cours des quatre années passées, Trump a mené une politique qui prétendait défendre sans vergogne « l'Amérique d'abord », piétinant les traités commerciaux et utilisant l'arme des sanctions pour tenter de favoriser les entreprises et les salariés américains.

Dans ce contexte, il semblait presque naïf pour quiconque, y compris pour les gouvernements européens, de rechercher des solutions multilatérales et une approche coopérative sur des marchés ouverts. Tandis que certains responsables des grands partis découvraient les attraits du protectionnisme, le nationalisme économique extrême, tel que le préconisent des partis comme le Rassemblement national (ex-Front national) français - dont les dirigeants entendent considérer « la France et les Français d'abord » - paraissait presque raisonnable. En outre, comme je l'explique dans mon livre *Them and Us: How Immigrants and Locals Can Thrive Together* (« Eux et nous : comment immigrants et populations locales peuvent prospérer ensemble », non traduit), la rhétorique xénophobe de Trump et son exaltation d'un sentiment national « de souche »

ont ouvert la voie à un durcissement des politiques migratoires, aux États-Unis comme ailleurs.

Bien sûr, certains gouvernements européens n'ont pas eu besoin d'encouragements pour diaboliser les musulmans, dresser des barbelés à leurs frontières ou maintenir en détention dans des camps sordides les demandeurs d'asile ; de fait, ces comportements ont vu le jour avant l'élection de Trump, notamment lors de la crise des réfugiés de 2015-2016. Mais les décisions de l'administration Trump - parmi lesquelles la séparation des enfants de leurs parents et leur détention dans des conditions atroces, l'expulsion sans jugement des demandeurs d'asile, l'interdiction de l'immigration à des ressortissants de pays à majorité musulmane et la construction d'un mur à la frontière des États-Unis avec le Mexique - ont considérablement renforcé en Europe les forces hostiles aux immigrants.

Ainsi Matteo Salvini, le chef de la Ligue d'extrême-droite en Italie, qui fut ministre de l'Intérieur de 2018 à 2019, se flattait-il d'être le « Trump italien », tandis qu'il interdisait aux navires transportant des migrants sauvés en mer d'accoster dans les ports italiens. Lorsque l'administration Trump a refusé, en 2018, d'adhérer au Pacte mondial pour des migrations sûres, ordonnées et régulières, pourtant non contraignant, neuf gouvernements de l'Union européenne - et quelques autres pays, dont l'Australie - lui ont emboîté le pas.

Biden offrira un exemple très différent, qui renforcera probablement les internationalistes et affaiblira les nationalistes en Europe. Certes, le président élu - à l'instar des démocrates en général - n'entend pas lever toutes les restrictions à la liberté des échanges et à l'immigration. Mais il comprend les avantages d'une politique étrangère tournée vers la coopération commerciale entre l'Amérique et ses alliés européens, et il s'est engagé à annuler les mesures migratoires les plus controversées prises par la précédente administration dans les jours qui suivront sa prise de fonctions, tout comme à réformer, sur le long terme, le système migratoire américain. Biden rompra aussi avec l'attitude de Trump concernant le changement climatique, et commencera par réintégrer l'accord de Paris sur le climat, dès le premier jour de sa présidence.

Trump parti, non seulement les représentants politiques des populistes ne jouiront plus de la même légitimité, mais les gouvernements devront payer pour leurs postures nationalistes un prix international plus élevé. Trump fut un allié puissant des gouvernements nationalistes européens, tout particulièrement en Hongrie et en Pologne. Lorsque le parti Droit et justice au pouvoir en Pologne a cherché querelle à l'Allemagne, contesté la politique d'asile de l'Union européenne et mis en cause l'indépendance de la justice, sans compter le reste, il faisait confiance à Trump, même s'il s'attirait les foudres de ses partenaires européens, pour le protéger de la Russie revanchiste de Vladimir Poutine et de ses semblables. Avec Biden à la Maison Blanche, le gouvernement polonais se sentira plus enclin à une attitude constructive.

Il en va de même pour le Premier ministre britannique Boris Johnson. Trump s'était fait l'avocat du Brexit, où il voyait l'expression de la souveraineté nationale, et encourageait Johnson à suivre une ligne dure envers l'Union européenne, faisant miroiter, en guise de récompense, un accord commercial bilatéral.

Biden n'est pas un chaud partisan du Brexit - ni, on aurait pu s'en douter, de Johnson, dont il n'est pas près d'oublier l'affront raciste fait au président Barack Obama, « en partie kenyan », selon les termes employés lors de la campagne pour le référendum par l'actuel Premier ministre britannique. En outre, Biden, qui évoque fréquemment son origine irlandaise, a très clairement fait savoir qu'il n'accepterait aucune menace à la paix en Irlande du Nord. Les délais pour une négociation d'un accord commercial post-Brexit touchant à leur terme, Johnson est désormais soumis à une pression beaucoup plus forte pour parvenir à un compromis.

Senate defiant

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The leadership of the Liberian Senate has responded to the presiding judge for the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice on its recent ruling in favor of Liberia's impeached Associate Justice Kabineh Ja'neh, maintaining the Liberian Senate violated no law or rights of the former associate justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

A statement issued in Monrovia Tuesday, November 17th under the authorities of Senate Pro-Tempore Albert Chie states unequivocally that the Senate would have reacted by now to the verdict of the ECOWAS Court in the JA'NEH Impeachment Case.

However, it says unfortunately, due to the activities of the pending December 8, 2020 Senatorial Elections, the Senate Leadership is unable to meet with the required quorum to review the matter and act accordingly, noting that in due course, the leaderships of the Senate and the House will meet to issue an advisory to the Executive on the verdict from the ECOWAS Court.

The statement continues the Liberian Senate has received information that the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice has handed down a verdict in the case: Kabineh Muhammad Ja'neh Vs. the Republic of Liberia, and the media here has been requesting its [Liberian Senate] official reaction.

The Senate indicates that because of alleged misinformation being peddled from one media outlet to the next by political detractors and ill-informed persons in the public sphere on the trial processes of the former Associate Justice, it is important to set the records straight.

The ECOWAS Court of Justice last week ordered the Republic of Liberia to pay Jan'neh the sum US\$200,000 as reparation for moral prejudice suffered for the violation of his rights.

Delivering judgment on Tuesday, 10 November, the Court also ordered the Republic of Liberia to restore, calculate and pay to Ja'neh all his withheld entitlements, including salaries, allowances and pension benefits as from the date of his impeachment to the date of notification of the Court's judgment.

It further ordered his reinstatement as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court or in the alternative, to grant him the right to retire from service on the date of

notification of the judgment of the Court with full pension's benefits as if he had retired at the normal retirement age for justices of the Supreme Court.

In filling his complaint before the ECOWAS Court, Ja'neh had sought to be awarded general damages in an amount not less than US\$25,000,000.00 as compensation and an order directing the Republic of Liberia to restore him to his position of Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

He also asked the court to declare that the entire impeachment trial, conviction and replacement on the Supreme Court constitute violations of his rights to fair hearing, dignity of his person and work under equitable and satisfactory conditions, among others.

But the Republic of Liberia represented by the Solicitor General Cllr. Sayma Syrenius Cephus denied violating the

fundamental rights were respected during the entire process of his trial at the Senate.

The senate recalls during the trial proceedings last year, on allegations that there were no rules of procedure in place at the House of Representatives (the House) prior to its impeachment of the former Associate Justice, did not honor the prohibition of the Supreme Court not to proceed with the impeachment, and there was no quorum on the Sitting Day the House impeached Cllr. Ja'neh, and so forth; the Senate wishes to clarify that under the Constitution of Liberia, it is not clothed with the Authority to question how the House passes on legislation and other instruments or make judgment on those matters.

The Constitution of Liberia, the Standing Rules of the House of Representatives,

Senate present can acquit or convict. This contravenes the Constitution of Liberia which calls for a vote of two-thirds of the entire membership of the Senate to acquit or convict an impeached public official.

Therefore, section 24 of the Senate Rules was revised to make Senate Rule 63 coherent with the Constitution of Liberia, it says.

The statement, quoting Article 29 of the Constitution says: "The legislative power of the Republic shall be vested in the Legislature of Liberia which shall consist of two separate houses: A Senate and a House of Representatives both of which must pass on all legislation."

It continues the process of passing on all legislation, resolutions and other instruments and of officially transmitting those instruments, is prescribed in the rules of the Senate and the House.

Article 43 of the 1986 Constitution says: "the power to prepare a bill of impeachment is vested solely in the House of Representatives and the power to try all impeachments is vested solely in the Senate..."

Once the House of Representatives impeaches a public official, the Senate is under constitutional obligation to try said impeachment, without question, unless the senate is prohibited by the Supreme Court of Liberia.

In the instance case, there was never a prohibition on the Senate from the Supreme Court of Liberia after the Senate had received the bill of impeachment for Justice Ja'neh from the House of Representatives.

It explains the trial took place in the Chambers of the Senate with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presiding. The Revised Criminal Procedure Law of Liberia, Chapter 2.2 states: "In all criminal prosecutions the accused shall enjoy the right to be represented by legal counsel at every stage of the proceedings from the time of arrest or where no arrest has been made, from the initial appearance and submission of the accused to the jurisdiction of the court".

Cllr Ja'neh was present throughout the trial with his attorneys. He was adequately represented by his legal counsels from the initial stage of trial till the time of judgment. Attorneys representing the House of Representatives along with its Managers on Impeachment

were also present throughout the trial. The Senate sat as "jurors" at the trial. According to the Liberian Constitution, the accused shall have fair, speedy, public and impartial trial. All of these elements stated herein were met during the trial.

Furthermore, Attorneys from both sides presented their arguments, witnesses were adduced, testified and cross-examined, there were closing arguments and motions were made and ruled on by the Chief Justice. The elements of any criminal trial were present. There was no harassment of the accused and impeached Justice, no harassment of his lawyers and there was no harassment of witnesses.

Speaking about the voting process on March 28, 2019, at about noon, after lawyers for the House of Representatives and former Justice Ja'neh rested their arguments, the chief justice made a statement and charged the Senate, as jurors, to go into their room of deliberation, and come up with a verdict.

The Senate then retired to its Chambers in the Annex and held a discussion on the voting guidelines. The minutes and all other documents pertaining to the trial were made available by the Secretary of the Senate. Senators were given the opportunity to peruse the documents before making a decision.

On March 28, 2019, 26 Senators took part in the voting. At 5:00p.m. On the same day with no other Senator showing up, the voting for the day came to an end. The Jury Foreman and Secretary tabulated the results, filled up the verdict summary sheet, signed and dated it.

The finale result indicates a total 23 Senators voted to remove Justice Kabineh Ja'neh from office having been impeached earlier by the House of Representatives. He was found guilty on the Road Fund Charge, while there were not enough constitutionally required votes to convict him on the theft of documents, obstructing the impeachment process and the Constance Land charges.

Counselor Ja'neh was found guilty of "Misconduct" and "Gross Breach of Duty", which are two (2) of the grounds provided by Article 43 of the Constitution. From the very beginning, the Road Fund Charge was very strong against Counselor Ja'neh.

Majority of the Senators believe he abused and misused his discretion by the issuance of the Writ of Prohibition against the payment of the total amount of approximately



human rights of Mr. Ja'neh and submitted that the impeachment was done through a political process which also followed the due process of law as laid down in Section 43 of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia. The State urged the Court to declare that Ja'neh's application is inadmissible because the Community Court is incompetent to review, interpret and apply the national constitution and domestic laws of Member States.

The Senate further insists the trial of former Associate Justice Ja'neh was conducted in a very fair and transparent manner as prescribed by the 1986 Constitution of Liberia, the relevant laws of the land and the Standing Rules of the Liberian Senate.

According to the Senate, Ja'neh was fully accorded Due Process as required by these laws and other legal instruments and his

the Standing Rules of the Senate and precedence have clearly laid down the rules of engagement between both Chambers of the legislature.

On the issue of Amendment to Senate Rule 63 which deals with Impeachment Trials, prior to the receipt of the Bill/Articles of Impeachment from the House of Representatives, the Senate visited its Rule 63, which is the rule of procedure for impeachment mentioned in Article 43 of the Constitution. This rule of procedure for impeachment was validated and approved by the 52nd Legislature on March 30, 2009 and is indicated in the present Senate Standing Rules.

During its review of the rule of procedure on impeachment as indicated in Rule 63, the Senate noticed that Section 24 of the rules indicates that a mere two-thirds of members of the

IAA's audit digs deep

The Executive Summary of a COVID-19 Draft Audit Report prepared by the Internal Audit Agency (IAA) here on the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) and the Ministry of Health reveals how over US\$50 million were expended by both institutions for the period February 2 - June 30, 2020 without proper accountability and outside of regulatory procedures.

The audit report, submitted since September 20, 2020 nearly a month prior

Mr. Nyeswua reportedly died as a result of falling from the first floor of his residence, days after three two internal auditors and a senior tax officers - Albert Peters, Victoria Asmah 'Gifty' Lamah and George F. Fanboto, all from the Liberia Revenue Authority died in mysterious circumstances. The four deaths occurred in a span of eight days, from October 3-10, 2020.

But the report says there is no evidence of Liquidation Report for Cash Advances totaling USD7,261.00 and LRD2,900,800.00, respectively

laborers at Star Base on Bushrod Island, including overpayment to Blessed 1 Luxury valued USD120,604.20.

"Blessed 1 Luxury TIN [Tax Identification Number] is not found in the LRA Online Application and PPC Procurement Platform; No Evidence of GOL Tax Remittances from POCs' Payments valued USD29,318.36; and Contradiction of transaction (Simple Source)", the audit executive summary reads. The IAA backgrounds that on January 30, 2020, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International concern and issued a set of recommendations, noting that based on the Public Health Emergency, the Government of Liberia started preparations for the COVID-19 virus on February 2, 2020 at the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and recorded its first case on March 16, 2020.

President George Manneh Werah then set up the Special Presidential Advisory Committee on Corona Virus (SPACOC) to build a robust national control, coordination and command mechanism in order to contain the spread of the deadly COVID-19.

Accordingly, the Incident Management System (IMS) was activated at NPHIL with its dismissed Director General Dorector Masoka Fallah serving as the Incident Manager and Head of the Response Team from February 2, 2020 to April 15, 2020.

On April 16, 2020, the responsibility for the management of COVID-19 response was transferred to Minister of Health, Doctor Wilhelmina Jallah.



to the suspicious death of the IAA boss Emmanuel Barten Nyeswua inside his compound along SKD Boulevard in Paynesville outside Monrovia, among others, observes there is no evidence of approval of funds expended from the COVID-19 National Response Budget, coupled with comingling of COVID-19 Fund (USD996,300.00) with Ministry of Health Operational Account Number 00100115021904 and 0010011501008294, including concealment of USD71,500.00 Transaction.

during the period, including making payments to purported vendors without valid contracts, while allowance valued USD 79,212.00 for March, 2020 vanished in thin air.

It points to lack of Procurement Plan and "No Objection" Authorization from the Public Procurement Concession Commission (PPCC) for contracts valued USD913,675.00, while other contracts valued USD84,880.00 were overstated.

The IAA audit also discovers discrepancy in disbursements of compensation made to casual

Cont'd from page 10

US\$27 million, which SRIMEX Corporation and CONNEX Corporation had collected as withholding agents for the Liberian Government to be eventually used to construct new roads and rehabilitate old road pursuant to the Millennium Challenge Compact between the Liberian Government and the United States Government.

That money was not the property of these two private companies; it was not part of their income or profits. As collecting agents, they had collected US\$0.35 (thirty-five cents US) for each gallon of

Senate defiant

gasoline and diesel fuel sold at the pump to the public, retained and used US\$0.10 (ten cents US) per gallon as their commission; and instead of turning over the balance US\$0.25 (twenty-five cents US) per gallon to the Road Fund Account, they kept everything and applied it for their own use, to the deprivation of the Liberian Government and people.

This caused the Liberian Government to renege on its obligations to the United States Government under the Millennium Challenge Compact. And when the Liberian

Government demanded that they pay over the amount collected, Counselor Ja'neh issued the Writ of Prohibition so that they would not have to pay on the spurious and untenable ground that the regulation/law pursuant to which they collected the surcharge was unconstitutional.

"Let it be noted with affirmation and emphatic clarity that the Liberian Senate did not violate any of the provisions of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia and any laws of Liberia nor did it breach any of its standing

S/Court declines

Cont'd from page 6

money, a felony of the first degree, theft of property for over a million USD, a felony of the second degree and criminal conspiracy.

While appeal on this matter was before the Supreme Court, a group called Consortium of Lofa Citizens petitioned the NEC to deny Samukai's bid to contest the senatorial election in Lofa County on the basis of his conviction in a criminal trial.

However the NEC ruled that the group's complaint had no merit and therefore denied the request to bar Mr. Samukai from contesting.

Unhappy that the NEC would take a decision to qualify Samukai to contest the 8 December elections, the group sought the Supreme Court's intervention, but also suffered a defeat before the nation's highest court in a ruling handed Tuesday, 17 November.

In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court rules that the NEC is an autonomous regulatory body of the government of Liberia charged with the responsibility to conduct public elections here.

In consonance with that responsibility, the Court notes that the NEC has the further responsibility to develop regulations, guidelines and procedures governing processes leading to elections.

It notes that such regulations, guidelines and procedures, if not in conflict with the Constitution or statutes of Liberia, are binding and carry the force and effect

of law.

The Supreme Court rules further that the Elections Law makes no provision for pre-election complaints, challenges and appeals.

Thus, it notes, pursuant to the authority of the NEC to develop regulations, guidelines and procedures governing processes leading to elections, the NEC promulgated the regulation on candidate nomination which provides that a "challenger or the challenged aspirant/candidate" may appeal a decision from the Board of Commissioners of the NEC to the Supreme Court within two days of the decision.

The Court continues that the provision of the Elections Law directing that an appeal be taken to the Supreme Court in seven days apply to post-election challenges and not pre-election challenges to a candidate nomination as in the instant case.

The Supreme Court adds that the failure of the group to perfect their appeal within two days in keeping with the 2020 Candidate Nomination Procedures promulgated by the NEC is a proper ground for the dismissal of the appeal.

"Wherefore and in view of the foregoing the ruling of the Board of Commissioners of the NEC dismissing the appellants' appeal is affirmed," the Supreme Court rules, ordering the clerk to send a mandate to the NEC to proceed and enforce its ruling from which the appeal emanated.

MacDonald Went to

Cont'd from page 6

2003, has seen many orphans benefited from its program.

He names schools selected for the Academic 2020/2021 school year under the five years Financial Aid Program as, Juah Sarwee Memorial Welfare Institute, First Baptist Elementary, R. D. Tarpeh Community school, Salvation Army, New Era International, Urban Day Community school and Brea Christian Academy.

Others include Gospel Hope

Mission school, Albert B. Watson Institute, Grateful Heart Christian Academy, and Sheila Whiting Institute.

Meanwhile, in their statement, students Rita Swen and Leroy Wongbage calls on the government to increase the country's education budget so as to provide those very essential materials and equipment for students' use.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley

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rules in the impeachment trial of former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia. The entire impeachment trial process was transparent, legally and constitutionally-

sound and totally void of inducements, coercion, political collaboration, vengeance, and politicking" the statement concludes. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

S/Court declines to stop Brownie Samukai's bid



By Winston W. Parley

Liberia's Supreme Court has rejected a petition seeking to overturn the National Elections Commission (NEC's) decision to allow former Defense Minister J. Brownie J. Samukai to contest in the 2020 senatorial election after a lower court found him guilty of misuse of public money,

theft of property and criminal conspiracy.

Mr. Samukai and two other Defense Ministry officials were convicted at the Criminal Court "C" in April this year for allegedly misusing funds generated through deducting the salaries of officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) for saving into a compulsory retirement funds account

established in 2009.

Criminal Court "C" Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay sentenced Samukai and his deputy Joseph P. Johnson to two years suspended imprisonment, provided that they restitute the whole or substantial amount of the judgment sum within six months and stipulate restitution of the balance within 12 months.

Further, Judge Gbeisay sentenced the third defendant James Nyumah Dorkor to a suspended six months imprisonment, provided that he resitutes his share of the judgment sum in whole or in substantial part in six months and file a stipulation to pay the balance in 12 months.

Announcing the sentences Thursday, 23 April, Judge Gbeisay recalled that the court, following a regular trial, adjudged all the three defendants guilty of the crimes of misuse of public

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

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La Liga president Tebas 'ready' for Messi exit

La Liga president Javier Tebas says he is "ready" for the exit of Lionel Messi - while criticising Manchester City, a club he believes could sign him.

Messi submitted a transfer request in August at Barcelona - who he joined as a 13-year-old - but backed down after they refused to sanction his release.

The forward had fallen out with Josep Maria Bartomeu,

who subsequently resigned as Barca president in October.

Tebas wants Messi to stay in Spain but feels La Liga would cope without him.

He argued that the competition had continued to thrive following Neymar's 2017 departure from Barcelona to Paris St-Germain, and Cristiano Ronaldo's 2018 move from Real Madrid to Juventus.

"We would prefer Messi to stay in La Liga but Ronaldo and Neymar left and we have not



noticed any difference," Tebas said. "We are ready."

The Argentina international, 33, would be available on a free transfer at the end of this season.

Tebas indicated that Messi's likeliest Premier League destination, if he went to England, would be Etihad Stadium - although club sources have pointed out that no-one at City has ever spoken about signing Messi.

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