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CDC Senatorial candidate Thomas Fallah waves to a jubilant crowd

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# Continental News

## Ethiopian army to 'encircle and shell' Tigray city

The Ethiopian army has told residents of the northern region of Tigray to "save themselves" as government troops advance on the capital, Mekelle.

The military plans to encircle the city - home to 500,000 people - with tanks and fire artillery, Col Dejene Tsegaye, a military spokesman, told state TV.

"Free yourselves from the junta... there will be no mercy," he said.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which controls the mountainous region, has vowed to keep fighting. TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael told Reuters news agency that his forces had managed to stall advancing federal troops.

"On south front, they couldn't move an inch for more than one week. They [are] sending waves after waves but to no avail," he added. The government said its troops took over some key towns last week.

However, information is difficult to confirm and claims cannot be



*The conflict has so far killed hundreds and displaced thousands of people*

independently verified because phone and internet connections have been down since the beginning of the conflict.

The conflict has reportedly killed hundreds and displaced thousands in recent weeks. The UN has warned it could trigger a humanitarian crisis. On Friday, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as the African Union Chairperson, announced the appointment of three former presidents to lead talks to end the conflict. But

Ethiopia has rejected the offer because it sees the operation as an internal "law enforcement" mission. "We don't negotiate with criminals... We bring them to justice, not to the negotiating table," Mamo Mihretu, a senior aide to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed told the BBC. The conflict is rooted in longstanding tension between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the powerful regional party, and Ethiopia's

central government.

When Mr Abiy postponed a national election because of coronavirus in June, tensions escalated. The TPLF sees the central government as illegitimate, arguing that Mr Abiy no longer has a mandate.

On 4 November the Ethiopian prime minister announced an operation against the TPLF, accusing its forces of attacking the army's northern command headquarters in Mekelle.

TPLF has rejected the claims. Its fighters, drawn mostly from a paramilitary unit and a well-drilled local militia, are thought to number 250,000. "Our African brothers and sisters would play a more significant role if they put pressure on TPLF to surrender and for that, you know, nobody needs to go to Tigray or Mekelle to make that point clear to them," Mr Mamo said.

He said that former leaders from Mozambique, Liberia, and South Africa - who are due to arrive in the country in the coming days - would not be able to visit Tigray because of the ongoing military operation.

Communication and transport services has been severely hampered since fighting broke out.

Mr Mamo added that the government was doing its "utmost" to allow UN agencies to provide assistance to people in Tigray. Aid agencies have no access to the conflict zone, but they fear that thousands of civilians may have been killed since fighting erupted at the beginning of November.

At least 33,000 refugees have already crossed into Sudan. The UN refugee agency has said it is preparing for up to 200,000 people to arrive over the next six months if the fighting continues.

On Friday, the TPLF was accused of firing rockets into the city of Bahir Dar in the neighbouring Amhara region. The Amhara government said there were no casualties and no damage caused.

But the reported incident in Amhara, which has a long-running border dispute with Tigray, has raised concerns that the conflict could extend into a wider war after regional forces were sent to support federal troops. BBC

## Burkina Faso votes amid jihadist threat

People are voting in Burkina Faso's president election, although polls are closed in parts of the north and east because of fears of jihadist violence. President Roch Kaboré is seeking a second five-year term, with 13

opposition candidates challenging him.

At least 400,000 would-be voters were unable to register because of the security situation. Brutal attacks have forced more than one million civilians from their homes in the past two years

alone. Campaigning was halted for 48 hours last week following a deadly ambush on soldiers in the north of the country. Up to a fifth of the country is out of state control, estimates suggest, with rival jihadist groups battling for dominance and also attacks by other armed militias. Most polling stations opened at 06:00 GMT and are expected to close at 18:00. In the northern town of Djibo polling stations opened 30 minutes late according to local sources, but everything is going well and there's a heavy security presence, says the BBC Afrique correspondent Simon Gongo. President Kaboré cast his vote in a school in the capital Ouagadougou and urged people to take part.

"I call on all Burkinabè to vote, whatever their leaning. It's about the democracy of Burkina Faso, it's about development, it's about peace," he said.

The election is also being

held amid the coronavirus pandemic. Many businesses and schools were forced to close in parts of the country. In September, the UN warned that more than 500,000 Burkinabè children were acutely malnourished.

However, peace and security are priorities for many in this year's elections, BBC Afrique's Lalla Sy reports. President Kaboré, who has governed Burkina Faso since 2015, is seeking a second term.

His main challengers are veteran opposition UPC leader Zéphirin Diabré, and Eddie Komboïgo, standing for the CPD party of ousted former President Blaise Compaoré.

Now living in exile, Mr Compaoré's 27-year rule ended in 2014 after a wave of popular protests.

Mr Kaboré once served as Mr Compaoré's prime minister, but gained popularity after opposing his bid to change the constitution and run for a third term. He left the ruling party and formed the MPP. In all, 13 candidates are running - including the only woman in

the race Yéli Monique Kam, former culture minister Tahirou Barry, Gilbert Noël Ouédraogo, Farama Ségui Ambroise among others.

AFP news agency reports that almost all the opposition candidates support the idea of holding talks with the jihadists, and quotes Mr Diabré as saying "military action on its own has never been able to defeat terrorism in any part of the world". But President Kaboré has ruled it out, as has former colonial power France which has troops stationed in the country and whose President Emmanuel Macron reportedly said: "We don't talk with terrorists. We fight." Under Burkina Faso's electoral rules, the winning candidate requires a majority of votes to become president.

Nine presidential candidates and 22 opposition parties signed an agreement in August to rally behind any candidate who reaches the second round of the vote to boost their chances of unseating President Kaboré. BBC



*Peace, security and reconciliation are top priorities for many voters*

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# EDITORIAL

## COVID-19 and the senatorial election

**IF THE CURRENT** post-election atmosphere in the United States of America that has seen serious surge in the coronavirus pandemic across several states with daily death toll hitting nearly a million is something to gauge, then Liberians should exercise every caution during this campaign period leading to the actual poll on December 8, 2020 to avoid a resurgence of the virus in the country.

**PARTICULARLY LAST WEEKEND** saw mass gathering of partisans and supporters of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change here at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville City outside Monrovia to officially launch its campaign for the senatorial and representatives' by-elections. Party loyalists draped in predominantly blue and white T-shirts matched by red and blue berets converged from various parts of Monrovia and outside the capital for the launch clustering the stadium to capacity.

**JUST DAYS BEFORE, ON** Wednesday, 18 November Bomi County Disatrick#1 Representative also Independent Senatorial Candidate Edwin Melvin Snowe, who had been campaigning in his county, reportedly tested positive of the virus and immediately went into self-quarantine at his residence though according to him, he had never felt any signs and symptoms.

**REP. SNOWE, A** senior member of the ECOWAS Parliament, was expected to have attended a meeting in Lome, Togo when he went for routine test at the government facility here and was subsequently pronounced positive, effectively banning him from traveling abroad.

**WITH BARELY TWO** weeks before actual voting day on December 8th, the need for all Liberians, particularly partisans and supporters of rival parties and candidates to exercise caution and ensure full compliance of all health measures cannot be over emphasized. We don't want a scenario in which after the poll this country could slip back to compulsory lockdown, as we experienced before.

**AND THIS MAY** likely happen, if care is not taken now, especially as we prepare to celebrate Christmas after the elections that would be characterized by victory euphoria from the poll.

**LIBERIA'S MINISTER OF** Health Doctor Wilhelmina Jallah, addressing a press briefing in Monrovia last week disclosed re-emergence of the virus, particularly in Montserrado County and elsewhere in the country, stressing strict adherence to all health protocols including wearing nose mask, social distancing and regular hands washing, among others.

**ENFORCING THESE REGULATIONS** should not only be left with health authorities along; political party leaders and candidates equally have a responsibility to educate their followers by wearing masks in public and observing social distancing themselves.

**THESE ELECTIONS WILL** come and pass, but how we conduct ourselves as a nation importantly, amid the global pandemic would go a long way in determining our continuous stability health-wise, politically and economically.

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT** everyone takes cue from Rep. Snowe, who should have been out there campaigning, but is now constrained to self-quarantine for two weeks before being cleared by the Health Ministry to resume normal public activity, pray God that he wouldn't miss the election.

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

# COMMENTARY

By Mark Malloch-brown

## Slow Death or New Direction for the UN?

*For most of its 75-year existence, the United Nations has struggled to strike a balance between its lofty founding aspirations and realities on the ground. But in today's fast-changing geopolitical environment, the organization may be facing its biggest challenge yet.*

**L**ONDON - For much of its life, the United Nations has hidden behind the comfortable maxim that, "If we didn't have it, we would have to invent it." Now at the venerable age of 75 (old enough to have been a 2020 US presidential candidate), the organization still enjoys widespread approval in global opinion polls.

But beneath the surface, the UN faces difficulties that cannot be ignored. Judging by traditional and social media, the issues that the UN pushes tend to get little traction. Worse, when it comes to maintaining peace and security, the UN is often stymied by its dysfunctional Security Council, which itself reflects an increasingly divided world. Whether in Syria, Yemen, or Libya, progress toward securing peace has been glacial, with much more being decided on the battlefield than at the Security Council. These same divisions have also hampered human-rights advocacy, as has the recent election that awarded seats on the UN Human Rights Council to Russia, Cuba, and China.

Of course, the UN has always mirrored the world it represents. There was broad member support for a strong UN only in its initial years and during the early years of Kofi Annan's tenure as secretary-general in the late 1990s. Otherwise, the UN has typically operated against strong headwinds; and now, a number of political and demographic changes are rapidly reshaping the UN's world.

Today's world is younger overall. US power appears to have peaked, and the global distribution of power is being redistributed to China and others. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has ensured that the world will be poorer, just as digitalization has made it less equal.

With a charter that rests squarely on the liberal-democratic values of the winners of World War II, the UN has struggled to accommodate the changing global order. Under its current secretary-general, António Guterres, the UN has admirably continued to pursue gender parity and more diversity in its staffing. Still, too many top jobs remain in the hands of the founding member states. And, more fundamentally, the organization seems out of touch with the world beyond its doors.

China, the second-largest contributor to the UN's assessed budget, has increasingly tried to assert global leadership on climate change and other issues, following America's abdication under outgoing President Donald Trump. At the UN General Assembly in September, Chinese President Xi Jinping took an extraordinarily consequential step, pledging that China would become carbon neutral by 2060. Yet the same regime that has committed to environmental sustainability is also brutally persecuting China's Uighur minority.

This points to the UN's central dilemma. In

terms of population, most of today's world is under authoritarian rule, ranging from despots without even a pretense of democratic legitimacy to elected autocrats who have eroded democratic institutions and checks on their power.

With no choice but to contend with this increasingly undemocratic world, the UN's challenge now is to fashion a practical, achievable agenda without betraying its founding charter and its commitment to human rights and other freedoms. It will have to tap into its current strengths. As a representative of "collective rights," the UN is uniquely positioned to mobilize action on issues like climate change, which threatens poor farmers in developing countries as much as it does rich Manhattanites who are exposed to rising sea levels.

Likewise, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to tackle inequality and exclusion everywhere, remain an example of the UN at its best, as does Guterres's call for "A New Social Contract for a New Era." The UN provides an indispensable global good by producing league tables of human development and organizing broad coalitions to achieve steady progress on key indicators of well-being.

But just because the UN is a leading voice for social, economic, and environmental justice does not mean that it should be given a pass on human rights. The organization has a duty to report human-rights abuses wherever it finds them. Though it should be smart about passing evidence on to others and issuing denunciations, it must remain fearless in its advocacy. Here, its best allies are civil-society groups and the few brave countries that are willing to defy narrow commercial or political interests to take on the likes of China, India, or Saudi Arabia.

By contrast, the UN probably will have to bow to the logic of the twenty-first-century cold war. The Security Council will remain ineffectual until it is reformed, which is a distant prospect. But there are ways around this paralysis. During the original Cold War, the UN, without reference to the Security Council, launched major initiatives to address humanitarian crises and to support new members emerging from colonial rule. UN development and humanitarian agencies often drew on their own mandates and international law to intervene when the circumstances required it.

Today, UN Special Representatives in conflict areas and UN Resident Coordinators elsewhere do much unsung good, working tirelessly behind the scenes to avert local conflicts, defend civil society, and address inequality and other root causes of political instability. This field-based UN thrives out of sight and out of mind, safely removed from the obstructive state-driven politics of the Security Council in New York City.



## O-PED

By Javier Solana

# The Biden Formula

*Just as US President-elect Joe Biden has pledged to “build back better” to promote economic recovery, America also urgently needs to reinvent its international role. Doing this successfully will require an empathetic leader like Biden, who has always taken pride in his ability to navigate sensitive issues.*

**M**ADRID - There is an eternal debate about how much leadership and personality matter in international relations. But after the turbulence of the last four years, there can no longer be any doubt that a lot depends on who is at the helm, particularly in the United States. Moreover, as Harvard’s Joseph S. Nye convincingly argues - and contrary to what skeptics believe - foreign policy is not devoid of moral considerations. For both these reasons, the election of Joe Biden as America’s next president is excellent news for the world.

The American people will, of course, benefit most directly from this turn of events. With his approachable disposition and willingness to engage in dialogue, Biden has devoted his long political career to the essential labor of forging consensus between Democrats and Republicans. Progressives have not always welcomed his flexibility, and his career has not been without blunders. But it is precisely Biden’s flexibility that has allowed him to recover from his mistakes and adapt to the times.

The best example of this is his sensible choice of Kamala Harris as his vice president, despite their sharp clashes during the Democratic primaries. Harris’s ability to reach out to younger generations will turn into a great asset for the Biden administration.

Progressives should also recognize that Biden’s centrist reputation may help him to formulate in a palatable way the profound structural reforms that America needs. In the 1960s, another centrist Democratic president, Lyndon B. Johnson, set in motion one of the most forward-looking social reform agendas in US history.

Biden’s problem is that, unlike Johnson, he may well face strong congressional opposition. The Democrats will struggle to win the two run-off votes in Georgia on January 5 that will determine control of the Senate, and the election this month left them with only a slim majority in the House of Representatives.

On top of these difficulties, the ideological gap between Democrats and Republicans has grown in recent decades, hindering bipartisan cooperation and compromise. A recent poll by The Economist and YouGov shows that perceptions on the outcome of the election are heavily dependent on partisan affiliation. While 57% of all respondents believe Biden won legitimately, only 16% of those who identify themselves as Republican agree.

The Biden administration will face fewer obstacles concerning foreign policy, where US presidents have wider latitude. Furthermore, Biden has worked this terrain for much of his career, first in the Senate, and then during his eight years as vice president under President Barack Obama.

Whereas other members of Obama’s cabinet strongly advocated overseas interventions and the use of force, Biden offered a more restrained counterpoint that Obama greatly appreciated. For this and other reasons, Obama never tired of repeating that choosing Biden as his number two was his “single best decision.” Moreover, had Biden had his way, the US would not have intervened in Libya in 2011, and Obama would have avoided what he described as the worst mistake of his presidency: letting that country slide into chaos.

Biden’s foreign-policy judgment certainly has not been infallible. In 2002, he voted in favor of the Iraq war, while his future boss criticized the decision to go to war as “dumb” and “rash.” But Biden acknowledged his error and has made it clear that his administration will shy away from unilateral foreign adventures.

The president-elect will return diplomacy to its central place in US foreign policy - reviving the battered State Department - and will strongly favor multilateral understandings. His first major foreign-policy decisions will be to rejoin the Paris climate agreement and to halt the US withdrawal from the World Health Organization. In addition, Biden has opened the door to returning to the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement and is expected to adopt a much more constructive position toward the World Trade Organization than that of his predecessor.

Democrats have been fully justified in denouncing the Trump administration’s abdication of many of its international responsibilities. But it is neither likely nor desirable that the pendulum swings to the other extreme under Biden. Opinion polls indicate that Americans have little appetite for the US to act as the world’s watchdog, although they do want their government to be conscientiously involved in resolving global problems. That is exactly what the rest of the world is asking for: the US is clearly an “indispensable nation,” as some like to call it, but it is not the only one.

US-China tensions will persist under a Biden administration, and so will China’s rapid economic growth. Despite the ongoing Sino-American trade war during Trump’s presidency, China continued to grow by more than 6% annually until the COVID-19 pandemic, and the International Monetary Fund expects that it will be the only major economy to expand in this disastrous year. Biden will have to find ways to cooperate with a country that simply can’t be shunned.

In that task, he will be able to rely on the European Union, whose recently developed “dual approach” to China openly recognizes the existence of deep disagreements but also acknowledges coinciding interests. The EU will also apply this moderation (albeit a warmer version of it) to transatlantic relations, forging tight bonds with the Biden administration without diminishing the strategic autonomy that the bloc has been trying to consolidate.

When Biden pledged during his presidential campaign to “build back better,” he wanted to emphasize that his economic plan involved tackling long-simmering structural problems rather than taking the US back to 2016. A similar logic applies to foreign policy, where the US urgently needs to reinvent its international role.

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## OPINION

By Ana Palacio

# America, Heal Thyself

*President-elect Joe Biden’s victory in the US election has raised hopes that the US is ready to re-engage with the world and the multilateral system. But if the US is to resume its role as the beating heart of the liberal international order, it needs to overcome the domestic divisions that the election confirmed and reinforced.*

**M**ADRID - In 1998, then-US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright famously defined the United States as “the indispensable nation,” declaring that, “We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future.” Two decades later, the US remains the indispensable nation. And yet, rather than seeing into the future, it has lately seemed to have its eyes closed. Does Joe Biden’s victory in this month’s presidential election mean the US is re-opening them?

One thing is apparent: had Donald Trump won a second term, the fate of the US Albright described would have been sealed. The America that has long undergirded the liberal international order - shaped by the universal principles defined in the 1941 Atlantic Charter - would have been destroyed, once and for all.

And yet the impending Biden presidency by no means guarantees a return to the US leadership and vision of the past. Yes, it was a definitive victory. Biden won over 79 million votes, more than any other US president. And he won the same number of Electoral College votes as Trump did in 2016, when Trump claimed to have a “massive landslide victory,” despite his having lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton.

Nonetheless, Trump received more than 73 million votes this year - about ten million more than in 2016, and the second-largest number of votes ever cast for a US presidential candidate. And his unfounded claims of widespread voter fraud - supported so far by much of the Republican Party establishment that has, until now, refused to confirm Biden’s victory - have convinced about half of US Republicans that he is the election’s “rightful” winner.

Far from producing a wholesale rejection of Trump and Trumpism, the election has demonstrated that Trump’s influence will extend far beyond his presidency. This is to say nothing about the lasting scars that his continued challenges to the election results - in the courts and in public consciousness - will leave on America’s democracy and international reputation.

To be sure, this legacy is not likely to be fully felt internationally in the near term. The Biden administration will seek to reassert America’s role in multilateral institutions. Already, the president-elect has pledged to rejoin the Paris climate agreement, the World Health Organization, and the Iran nuclear agreement. Other likely actions include the unblocking of appointments to the World Trade Organization’s Appellate Body, responsible for adjudicating disputes among members, a move that is of both practical and symbolic significance.

But, while these nods to multilateralism are important, the expectations that the US will swiftly resume its global leadership role must be tempered. Although the US remains the world’s predominant military and economic power, as well as a major cultural force, it is no hegemon. It can no longer dictate the direction of international relations.

What the US can still do is mobilize diverse international actors to address shared challenges. Unless the US heals its divisions, however, even this “convening power” - which lies at the heart of Biden’s likely early efforts to restore multilateralism - is likely to be eroded in the medium to long term.

Convening power is more nuanced than raw hegemonic power. It rests not only on capacity and influence, but also on a sense of moral authority that attracts partners and infuses shared action with legitimacy. A convening power must set an example of liberalism and multilateralism, not just make demands. A country as divided as today’s US cannot provide such an example.

The stakes are high. If the pole around which the international order was built continues to weaken, the dangerous drift of recent years - exemplified by the absence of a coordinated global response to the COVID-19 pandemic - will continue. Even the diplomatic muscle memory that has enabled the limited recent examples of cooperation will fade.

Why shouldn’t someone else lead? Simply put, because no one else can. There is no single actor, or even a collection of actors, that is ready to take America’s place.

Consider the European Union, which has long fancied itself a potential standard-bearer of liberal values. It certainly possesses many of the attributes of an exemplar: vibrant and diverse cultures, dynamic civil societies, well-institutionalized systems for upholding human rights and the rule of law, and a commitment to multilateralism.

And yet, in many areas vital to global leadership, the EU falters. A lack of political will has meant that Europe has consistently misallocated resources. As a result, it has failed to build up adequate shared capacity or even to create the conditions for doing so. For example, EU leaders insist that Europe needs to achieve “strategic autonomy,” without agreement on what that means.

More fundamentally, the EU lacks the self-assurance it would need to serve as a credible and compelling example for the world. To change that, it must first define and convey a compelling *raison d’être*, which can form the basis of its own revitalized model. It must then dedicate significant resources - time, effort, and money - to building the capacity and status needed to project its influence. In short, the EU must walk the walk. 1

Unless and until it does, the US will be indispensable, because it is irreplaceable. That makes it all the more important for the Biden administration not only to re-engage with the world and the multilateral system as a convening power, but also to find a way to heal the US. Only a reasonably united America can stand tall, look forward, and serve as the beating heart of the liberal international order.

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## A MEMO

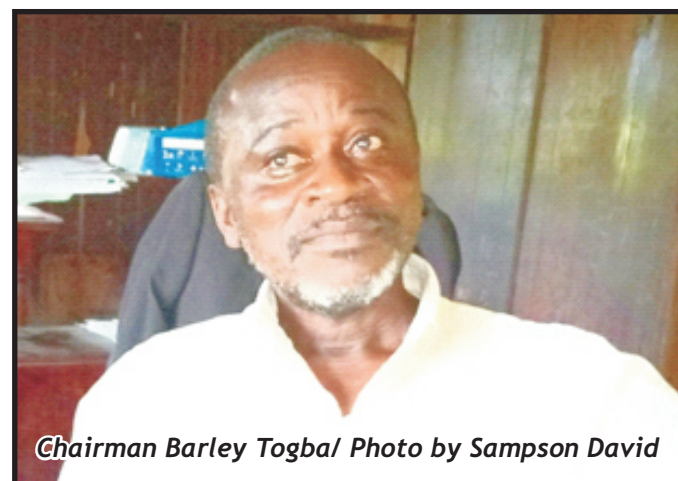
## A MEMO

# LMD Fellow: Grand Bassa Joins Call to Postpone December 8 Referendum

By Sampson David  
BUCHANAN, Grand Bassa

Civil society organizations, professionals and politicians, as well as voters from Grand Bassa joined others to protest against holding the December 8 referendum due to lack of sufficient public awareness and information on the three propositions.

Barley Togba, chairperson of the Civil Society Council of Liberia (CSCL) Grand Bassa chapter, said that the referendum should not be encouraged because there is not enough civic education, and therefore, the National Elections Commission (NEC) should postpone it. He added that people in remote areas in particular have not had access to proper information and civic education about what they are supposed to vote.



Chairman Barley Togba/ Photo by Sampson David

"The people of Grand Bassa County spoke clearly through the civil society organizations that the referendum is not timely," Togba stated. "We are not rushing, you need to give the people more time to educate them, provide civic education. We invited our lawmakers and told them already."

Togba added that Liberia is not Monrovia and therefore, there is a heightened need to extend the civic education to the rural areas to sensitize voters about the laws that are to be modified and their direct or indirect impact. "...[W]e need more time. This is our country, and nobody can detach us," he told journalists. Togba threatened that he will not vote on December 8.

The Bassa chapter of the CSCL is comprised of several community-based organizations from the rural and urban areas of the county. In the past, Togba said, civil society organizations helped with the civic education programs across the county, but it is a different case in this election, when the NEC seemingly kept the civil societies out of the process, he alleges.

## Shortage of money and time

Civil society organizations were invited by NEC to apply for accreditation to participate in civic education between 9-20 December 2019. Initially NEC budgeted \$24.4 million USD for the conduct of both the Special Senatorial Elections (SSE) and the referendum. This amount suffered progressive cuts to just \$13.5 million USD. NEC only received half that money.

This reduction in funds also meant that instead of 28 days of civic education, NEC only had money for just 10 days, a reduction by 64%. All other civic education and awareness programs meant to encourage gender balance and counter violence in elections campaign have also been reduced by 75%.

Although NEC communications director Henry Flomo said civil society organizations were vetted and accredited across the country, Togba said that no local organization in his county received the approval to carryout awareness programs.



Grand Bassa senatorial candidate Magdalene Harris.  
Photo by Sampson David

Magdalene M. Harris, one of the two female candidates participating alongside six male candidates in the Senatorial Elections in Grand Bassa, concurred with Togba on the need to provide more information and increase awareness among voters. She also believed that voters are not sufficiently prepared to make informed decision.

"If you have a country with many literate people, then it is easy to [hold the referendum] alongside the special senatorial elections, but where [the] majority of the people are not educated, then they need more time to educate them," she said.

Harris stated that many of the people living in the urban and rural areas may not even know that there is a referendum this year and might not have participated in a Referendum because it happens only after every five years. She noted that the referendum should have been separated from the special senatorial elections because of the potential to create confusion among voters, especially those who aren't properly informed and educated on the current election.

She told journalists that when people are not aware of the referendum process and propositions, they may end up doing the wrong thing without even knowing it: "If we don't create awareness for the people to make the right decision then we put the country at risk and citizens are equally at risk, that is my fear," Harris concluded.

Representative Vincent Willie, who runs for reelection on behalf of the Grand Bassa District #4, agrees that the referendum is rushed. "I strongly believe that the referendum should not be held in parallel with the Special Senatorial Elections due to lack of sufficient awareness. The people are not aware so how do you expect them to make an informed decision?"

Rep. Willie added that the voters are more focused on the senatorial elections, and not so much on the referendum because of the perceived belief that the referendum does not have a direct impact on them. "This is why I think the court should grant the request of those



Representative Vincent Willie/Photo by Sampson David

who are arguing that the referendum should not be held alongside the special senatorial elections. The essence of it will not exist. Let the referendum be scratched off of the election," Rep. Willie argued.

Representative Willie explained that Lofa County Representative, Clarence Massaquoi, filed a motion with the court to postpone the referendum, adding that "[...] some of our friends have gone to court while others are

getting prepared to go to court."

## Voters speak

Sampson Zegan, a resident of Grand Bassa's Wayzohn City, also in District #4, said that the referendum should be held after the SSE to give NEC more time to carry out awareness or civic education campaigns: "For me, if they continue with it, I will vote, but will not touch the referendum because I don't know anything about it."

Bendu Sumo a resident of Wayzohn city also supports postponing the referendum in order to give the citizens a chance to make the right decisions adding that the referendum is more important than the SSE as it is about changes to the law that governs the country: "If the referendum remains, we will not vote [...]. They are in power for the citizens, not for themselves - we put them there. They should postpone [the referendum] to go from place to place to educate the people before the process begins," Sumo said.

Several additional organizations and professionals have called on the government and the NEC to postpone the referendum due to insufficient awareness, adding that it could also lead people into voting without understanding what they voted for. Among those calling for postponement are the Press Union of Liberia, the umbrella-organization for all media houses in Liberia, the Liberian Women Can Lead, a civil society organization that supports women in politics, and lawyers Gloria Musu Scott, the chairperson of the former Constitutional Review



Committee.

The Communications Director of the National Elections Commission, Henry Flomo, said the NEC decided to blend the special senatorial elections with the referendum because the holding of the referendum meets the constitutionally required timeline and could help save money and resources.

The referendum proposals were passed on September 30, 2019, Flomo argued, which is more than a year ago. "So, it met the constitutional requirement - meaning after September 30, 2020, a referendum can be held anytime. It was wise to have all of the elections in the same year together instead of separating them and that also help to save cost and other resources," Flomo said.

Flomo added that even though the time and resources to prepare the elections may be inadequate, people seem to single out the referendum as a problem, and they should just vote NO if they don't like a referendum proposition:

"Yes, we are not going to have sufficient time and sufficient resources given the circumstance, but to always single out the referendum to say you don't know about it. I think if people don't like any proposition, just give it a NO vote."

"How come they only know about the Senatorial Elections and don't know about the referendum when everything is going hand in hand? We had regional meetings and consultations across the country."

▶ TO BE CONT'D



# MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## GoL to launch Aid Management Tool, National Aid and NGO Policy

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning is to shortly roll out the Aid Management Tool (specifically referred to as the Liberia Project Dash

organized by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning scheduled for Wednesday, November, 25 at the Ministerial Complex in Congo Town.

According to the Organizers, the three main objectives of

responsibility of MACs in the implementation of the NAPL, will be re-emphasized. Secondly, during the occasion, national donor coordination framework as per the PAPD and NAPL will be formally established. And thirdly, the Organizers will present and official launch the Liberia Project Dashboard (LPD) as a repository of donor and GoL project information.

It can be recalled that between September 28 and October 3, 2020, the Government of Liberia, with funding from the AfDB and USAID, conducted a roll out training and launched the National Aid Policy of Liberia (NAPL) to the public in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County

The event encompassed the training of over 60 data focal persons (employees) of Ministries, Agencies and Commissions (MACs) and local government administrations from across the country to utilize the Liberia Project Dashboard (LPD); and an array of public officials and in-person and virtual attendance of representatives of a score of development partners including the AfDB, USIAD,

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Board), as well as, the National Aid and NGO Policy of Liberia (NAPL).

The "Roll Out" will be part of a National Conference under the theme "Programming Aid for National Development"

the National Conference are to roll out the National Aid and NGO Policy of Liberia which formally gives ownership of the policy instrument to Ministries, Agencies and Commissions. It is expected that at the Conference, the roles and

## State of Qatar donates medical equipment to boost Liberia's COVID-19 fight

The Government of the State of Qatar has donated several cartons of medical equipment and supplies to the Government and people of Liberia to boost health care delivery and enhance the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic that is currently ravaging the world.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the donated medical equipment and supplies include the Infrared Non-Contact Thermometer; Alcohol 70% 236 ml; Chlorine Powder; Ear Loop Surgical Face; Bleach Chloral Liquid; Nitrile Examination Gloves; Personal Air Sanitizers; and Ventilator and Oxygen Concentrator, among other.

According to the release, the presentation ceremony took place on Thursday, 19 November in the C. Cecil Dennis, Jr, Auditorium at the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Capitol Hill.

Receiving the donation on behalf of Liberia, Madam Naomi Gray, Assistant Minister for Afro-Asian Affairs, thanked the Government and People of Qatar for their laudable

humanitarian assistance to Liberia.

Minister Gray stated that the donation is a clear manifestation of the cordial bilateral ties of friendship and cooperation subsisting between Liberia and Qatar.

Expressing delight during the occasion, Assistant Minister Gray said the



## ECOWAS election support team head gives assurance

The Head of the ECOWAS Commission Technical Data Support Team to Liberia has vowed to ensure that the process to further clean-up 2020 Voter Roll will be inclusive and transparent of all stakeholders, mainly political parties.

Madam Charlotte Osei, former head of the Electoral Commission of Ghana said this will ensure that the 2020 Final Registration Roll for the 8 December 2020 elections will be accepted by all Liberians.

Madam Osei said if this was done the final results from the

already in collaboration with the ECOWAS team, the UNDP technical team and the Data Section of the NEC on the 2020 voter roll.

She said the actual de-duplication process to further cleanup the roll by the NEC Data Center,

ECOWAS and UNDP Technical Support teams of the Voter Roll leading to development of the 2020 Final Registration Roll or FRR will shortly start with the inclusiveness of technicians representing political parties.

In a related development, the Political Affairs and Gender



ECOWAS Technical Data Support Team Head Charlotte Osei Marking speaks after her official introduction in Liberia.

8 December 2020 ballot of the Special Senatorial Elections and two representative By-elections will surely be accepted by all.

The former Ghanaian Electoral Commission Boss spoke over the weekend during a program to mark her official welcome and introduction ceremony and the official launch of the rebranded website of the NEC organized by the NEC through a press conference.

Madam Osei, former head of the Ghanaian Electoral Commission in remarks said significant work has been done

Sections of the National Elections Commission over the weekend concluded a two-day separate workshops focusing on Political Parties and Independent Candidates Training of Trainers, TOT and the training of Tactile Ballots for 34 participants from the Disabled Community in Nimba County respectively. Commissioners Boakai A. Dukuly and Floyd Oxley Saylor attended the workshop representing the Board of Commissioners of NEC. The United Nations Development Program, UNDP sponsored the two workshops.

Government of Liberia remains eternally grateful to the State of Qatar for the assistance it continues to render the Government and people of Liberia.

She said the donation of medical equipment and supplies to Liberia by the State of Qatar at this critical time will go a long way in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance health

care delivery in Liberia.

The medical equipment and supplies were delivered by Mr. Fahad Rashid Al-Marekhi, Chargé d' Affaires, of the Embassy of the State of Qatar near Monrovia.

Presenting the medical equipment on behalf of his government, Mr. Fahad Rashid Al-Marekhi expressed delight over the existing cordial

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



# MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## M'land County endorses CPP candidate Giko

The Chairperson of the Collaborating Political Parties, Alexander B. Cummings stirred up Maryland County during the weekend where citizens endorsed Mr. Eric Wlea Giko as CPP senatorial candidate for the county.

Chairperson Cummings' visit to the county has been described as colorful, characterized by huge turnout of citizens, including motorcyclists, market women, elders, traditional chiefs, supporters and partisans of the Collaborating Political Parties.

The CPP leader visited several towns in Harper, Pleebo and Karluway districts respectively, and was received by thousands of jubilating citizens, including traditional chiefs and elders.

Special programs were held in Cavalla Fish Town, Middle Town and Rock Town in Harper, Electoral District #1, Maryland County.

Similar receptions took place in Karluway, Electoral District #3, bringing together sons and daughters of Barrobo and Karluway in Electoral District #3, witnessing the endorsement of Mr. Giko, as the CPP senatorial candidate for the county.

Giko vied for district #3 representative seat in 2017, but lost to incumbent Representative Isaac Roland Blalu, who is also contesting in the impending senatorial election for December 8, 2020.

The CPP endorsement ceremony continued in Pleebo, Maryland County Electoral District #2 at the St. Francis Parish Hall, where citizens lifted Mr. Giko high as their choice for the senate.

Speaking earlier, Mr. Nelson Neal, chairman of the Traditional Chief Council of Maryland County, who also presented the certificate of endorsement to Mr. Giko, said he was proud to have been selected among his colleagues chiefs to certificate the CPP candidate.

Mr. Neal continued that the endorsement of Giko begins the CPP's victory in Maryland County saying, "let me present this certificate and flag to you as the Senatorial Candidate of the CPP; this certificate and flag of the Collaborating Political Parties show the beginning of the party's achievement."

In remarks, CPP leader Cummings lauded citizens of

Maryland County for turning out, noting that although he is a son of Maryland himself, but his visit there was to identify with his people and to officially introduce the senatorial candidate on the ticket of the Collaborating Political Parties.

"Marylanders, you have seen what have come to you in those nine (9) and 12 years past; if you will stay here and elect these

will be good, you can see from the Eve, so, if you elect Giko come December 8, then we know you are prepared to change this country."

"Please, as you all have gathered here today witnessing the endorsement, be the messengers in the field to encourage your people to make the change we want and need as a people. "As you can



Impeached Justice Ja'neh

same people to power, who have not done anything for you, you will get the same thing again, because you can't be doing one thing over and over and expect different results", Mr. Cummings rallied the citizens.

He is also leader of the opposition Alternative National Congress - one of the four constituent parties of the CPP. According to him the Collaborating Parties have agreed unanimously to support Eric Wlea Giko, as their candidate for the senate comes December, indicating that the Liberty Party, Unity Party, the Alternative National Congress and the All Liberian Party are not putting forth separate candidates for the senatorial race.

He said the best way to improving Maryland County and the entire Liberia is by citizens making right choices at the ballot box in electing development-oriented leaders.

"If you accept my request to elect Mr. Giko, come December 8, then you're encouraging me that you will make the change come 2023", he stressed.

"Again, if you want Maryland to change, if you want the Country to change, you shouldn't elect those same people, who haven't brought anything back to show you", he added.

"Let me say if the Christmas

see, the southeastern road condition, it is very bad but who will talk for you; so, if you want good roads in the southeastern part of Liberia, please join me to elect Mr. Giko", he conclude.

In response, Candidate Eric Wlea Giko commended the CPP leader and citizens who turned out to witness the occasion.

Giko disclosed that he was overwhelmed to be placed on the ticket of the Collaborating Political Parties, noting that the changes the people need can be achieved if they elected him come December 8.

"Giko could be the next senator who could do the right thing within the nine years or could be that person who might not make the change but you need to try him", he pleaded.

Meanwhile, CPP senatorial candidate for Montserado County Abraham Darius Dillon has led thousands of supporters to the Roberts International Airport in Margibi County to receive impeached Associate Justice Kabineh Ja'neh, who won a legal battle recently against the Government of Liberia at the ECOWAS Court.

Thousands of jubilating supporters of incumbent Senator Dillon, who is facing CDC senatorial Candidate Thomas Fallah in the coming

race, backed by predominantly Muslims, including members of the Mandingo tribe of Justice Ja'neh boarded vehicles and headed for the airport where flight bringing the man who vehemently challenged his forceful impeachment in 2019 by the ruling establishment was expected to tough down at 2:00pm, the same Saturday, from Nigeria.

In its ruling, the ECOWAS Court of Justice recently ordered the Republic of Liberia to pay Ja'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 benefits, as if he had retired at the normal retirement age for justices of the Supreme Court.

Filing 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 had 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 Solicitor General Cllr. Sayma Syrenius Cephus denied violating the 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.

Similarly, the Liberian Senate 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. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

## Air France resumes

Starts from back page

ceremony were Information Minister Ledgerhood J. Rennie, Deputy Transport Minister Sirleaf Tyler and the new French Ambassador Michael Roux - who extolled the ties between Liberia and France. Ambassador Roux said the French government trusts the prospects for the Liberian economy, despite Covid-19 and the toil it has taken on businesses.

It can be recalled that during a state visit to France in 2019, President George M. Weah made a case with French

officials and the airline's management for the resumption of their Monrovia route. Their operations in the country, which was halted in 2014, was initially scheduled to restart April 2020 but delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Air France will add to a growing list of international carriers the government has been courting as it improves on airport infrastructure, while creating the conditions necessary to ensure the Monrovia route becomes a go-to destination. **-Press release**

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# Français

## Manque de liquidité : le président de la chambre des représentants s'en prend aux commerçants

Le président de la Chambre des représentants, Bhofal Chambers, accuse les commerçants Libériens d'être entièrement responsables de la crise de liquidité dont est en proie le pays depuis quelques semaines.

Le chef du parlement reproche aux commerçants le fait de conserver leur argent en dollars libériens chez eux à la maison, au lieu de le déposer en banque, ce qui aurait provoqué cette pénurie de billets de banque.

Le président Chamber demande donc aux commerçants et aux chefs d'entreprise de déposer leur argent dans les banques qui sont dans le pays afin de mettre un terme à la rareté artificielle du dollar libérien.

Face à son incapacité à s'assurer que la monnaie locale est protégée et maintenue à l'intérieur des frontières du Libéria par le biais du comité bancaire et monétaire de la Chambre des représentants, le président Chambers a choisi de réprimander plutôt les commerçants et les chefs d'entreprise, les accusant

d'avoir volontairement provoqué cette crise monétaire.

A noter que le président national de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (coalition au pouvoir) était le premier à accuser publiquement les commerçants d'avoir mis la main sur les dollars libériens.

S'exprimant lors d'une cérémonie d'adhésion à la Coalition au pouvoir pour le changement démocratique de deux anciens législateurs du

parti de l'unité, à savoir la représentante du comté de Bomi, Haja Fata Siryon, et le représentant du comté de Sinoe Matthew Zarzar, le chef du parlement Chambers a fait croire que les commerçants et les hommes d'affaires sont contre le régime actuel, c'est pourquoi ils ont créé cette crise artificielle pour le déstabiliser.

« Ils pensent qu'en retenant les dollars libériens, c'est une autre façon de

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



## Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf parmi les envoyés spéciaux de l'AU pour une médiation en Ethiopie

L'union africaine a désigné trois anciens présidents comme envoyés spéciaux en Ethiopie pour tenter une médiation entre les parties en conflit, a annoncé vendredi soir le chef de l'Etat sud-africain Cyril Ramaphosa, qui assure actuellement la présidence tournante de l'UA.

Joaquim Chissano, ancien président du Mozambique, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, ancienne présidente du Liberia, et Kgalema Motlanthe, ex-président d'Afrique du Sud, ont ainsi été nommés, a annoncé M. Ramaphosa dans un communiqué, exprimant son « désir profond de mettre fin au

conflit grâce au dialogue entre les parties ».

Ils voyageront en Ethiopie pour « créer les conditions d'un dialogue national ouvert pour régler les questions ayant mené au conflit », a-t-il ajouté, sans préciser de

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## Guinée : Emmanuel Macron isole davantage Alpha Condé



Après que le Quai d'Orsay tout comme l'Union Européenne aient émis de sérieux doutes sur « la crédibilité des résultats » du scrutin présidentiel du 18 octobre 2020 qui donne, selon la commission électorale guinéenne, Alpha Condé vainqueur, Emmanuel Macron en rajoute une couche.

Dans un entretien à 'Jeune Afrique' paru ce vendredi 20 novembre, le président français s'est largement exprimé sur les relations franco-africaines. Emmanuel Macron est particulièrement sorti des « bons protocoles » diplomatiques pour réitérer avec des mots forts l'opposition de la France à un troisième mandat du président guinéen. Pour cela, il n'y va pas par quatre chemins.

« Je pense que la situation est grave en Guinée pour sa jeunesse, pour sa vitalité démocratique et pour son avancée », a déclaré le président français. Poursuivant, Emmanuel Macron a laissé entendre que le président Condé a une carrière d'opposant qui aurait justifié qu'il organise de lui-même une bonne alternance. « D'évidence, il a organisé un référendum et un changement de la Constitution uniquement pour pouvoir garder le pouvoir. C'est pour ça que je ne lui ai pas encore adressé

de lettre de félicitations », a justifié le président Français.

Cette posture intransigente qui tranche avec les premières années de la gouvernance Condé dans ses rapports avec la France, sonne comme une rupture brutale avec « l'attentisme » ou la diplomatie « soft » dont la France a jusque-là fait preuve vis-à-vis de la Guinée.

Cela pourrait par ailleurs s'expliquer par les innombrables atteintes aux droits de l'homme dénoncées par les organisations internationales des droits humains qui ont recensé depuis dix ans, des centaines de tueries, des arrestations arbitraires, et un recul significatif de la démocratie.

Le Front national pour la défense de la constitution guinéenne (FNDC) et le chef de file de l'opposition, Cellou Dalein Diallo, ont salué l'intervention du président français et appelé à la prise de mesures concrètes. « Le FNDC demande également aux États de l'UE de prendre des sanctions ciblées contre des responsables politiques et des forces de défense et de sécurité impliqués dans les atrocités commises contre les populations civiles », a-t-il indiqué dans une déclaration.





# Français

## Manque de liquidité

l u t t e r c o n t r e l'administration du président George Weah », a-t-il dit.

Les banques libériennes tentent de gérer la pénurie de monnaie locale, tandis que le ministère du Commerce a mis en garde les commerçants contre le rejet du dollar libérien ou le dollar américain, sous peine d'une amende.

Les clients font la queue dans les banques pour retirer de l'argent de leurs comptes ou pour encaisser des chèques. Certains magasins rejetaient le dollar américain, pourtant c'est qu'ils préféreraient auparavant.

« Nous avons remarqué que beaucoup de magasins ont commencé à refuser le dollar américain et à insister pour que les clients achètent uniquement en dollars libériens », a déclaré mardi le ministre libérien du commerce et de l'industrie, Mawine G. Diggs, lors d'une réunion d'urgence au parlement.

La pénurie a fait chuter le taux de change, 1 dollar US s'échangeant contre 150 LD au lieu de 200 LD. La pénurie de liquidités affecte tous les secteurs de l'économie du pays. Le vendeur de chaussures d'occasion Jefferson Gbaytain, 39 ans, a déclaré que cela a réduit son pouvoir d'achat.

## Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf parmi

calendrier.

La désignation de ces envoyés spéciaux vise à "aider le peuple fraternel d'Éthiopie à trouver une solution aux problèmes actuels, dans un esprit de solidarité, guidés par le dictum de +solutions africaines à des problèmes africains", a-t-il ajouté.

Des roquettes tirées par les forces du Tigré, qui affrontent l'armée fédérale éthiopienne, ont à nouveau visé la région voisine d'Amhara vendredi, quelques heures après que le

gouvernement central a affirmé que ses troupes se rapprochaient de Mekele, capitale de la région dissidente.

Prix Nobel de la paix en 2019, le Premier ministre éthiopien Abiy Ahmed a déclenché cette opération contre les forces du Front de libération du Peuple du Tigré (TPLF), les accusant de chercher à déstabiliser le gouvernement fédéral et d'avoir attaqué deux bases militaires éthiopiennes dans la région, ce que nient les autorités tigréennes.

## e Liberia exprime sa

Le gouvernement de la République du Liberia a réaffirmé sa solidarité et son soutien à la cause nationale du Maroc, faisant part de sa préoccupation des derniers développements dans la zone tampon d'El Guerguarat.

Dans un communiqué, le gouvernement du Liberia a réitéré sa position constante en soutien à l'intégrité territoriale et à la souveraineté nationale du Royaume du Maroc, appelant au respect du cessez-le-feu, signé il y a trois décennies, et du plan marocain d'autonomie pour les provinces du Sud.

Il s'est dit s'aligner sur la position de l'ONU visant à parvenir à une solution politique permanente au conflit autour du Sahara, saluant les efforts déployés par le Maroc pour une

solution pacifique et durable sous l'égide des Nations Unies c o n f o r m é m e n t a u x résolutions du Conseil de sécurité.

Le Liberia a exhorté le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies à accélérer le processus de désignation de son représentant personnel pour promouvoir les initiatives pacifiques conformément aux résolutions du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU.

Monrovia a exprimé également sa détermination à renforcer ses relations fraternelles avec le Royaume du Maroc sur tous les plans, diplomatique, politique, économique et humain, notant que les deux pays qui entretiennent d'excellentes relations, continueront à coordonner leurs positions sur les questions bilatérale, régionale et internationale.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Mark Malloch-brown

## Une mort lente ou une nouvelle orientation pour l'ONU ?

L O N D R E S - Durant une grande partie de leur existence, les Nations Unies ont vécu bien à l'abri de l'adage rassurant : « si cela n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer ». À présent que cette institution atteint l'âge canonique de 75 ans (un âge assez avancé pour être candidat à la présidence des États-Unis en 2020), l'organisation jouit encore de l'assentiment général dans les sondages d'opinion mondiaux.

Mais sous la surface, l'ONU traverse des difficultés réelles. Si l'on en juge par les médias traditionnels et les médias sociaux, les questions mises à l'ordre du jour de l'ONU ne suscitent qu'un faible intérêt. Pire encore, lorsqu'il s'agit du maintien de la paix et de la sécurité, l'ONU est souvent contrariée par le dysfonctionnement de son Conseil de sécurité, qui traduit lui-même un monde de plus en plus divisé. Que ce soit en Syrie, au Yémen ou en Libye, les progrès vers l'instauration de la paix se font à pas de tortue, et bien plus de décisions ont été prises sur le champ de bataille plutôt que par le Conseil de sécurité. Ces mêmes divisions ont également ralenti la défense des droits de l'homme, tout comme les récentes élections qui ont accordé des sièges au Conseil des droits de l'homme de l'ONU à la Russie, à Cuba et à la Chine.

Bien sûr, l'ONU a toujours été à l'image du monde qu'elle représente. Il y a eu un large soutien de ses membres en faveur d'une ONU forte uniquement au cours de ses premières années, ainsi que lors des premières années du mandat de Kofi Annan comme Secrétaire général à la fin des années 1990. En dehors de cela, les Nations Unies ont généralement fait face à de forts vents contraires. À présent, un certain nombre de changements politiques et démographiques redistribuent rapidement les cartes du monde pour l'ONU.

Le monde actuel est globalement plus jeune. La puissance américaine semble avoir atteint son sommet et la distribution mondiale du pouvoir est en train de se redistribuer vers la Chine et vers d'autres pays. Dans le même temps, la pandémie de COVID-19 a rendu le monde plus pauvre, tout comme le passage au numérique l'a rendu moins équitable.

Avec sa charte qui repose directement sur les valeurs démocratiques libérales des vainqueurs de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'ONU a du mal à s'adapter à un ordre mondial en pleine mutation. Sous le mandat de son Secrétaire général actuel António Guterres, l'ONU maintient sa tâche admirable en poursuivant ses efforts dans le domaine de la parité entre les sexes et d'une plus grande diversité dans ses effectifs. Pourtant trop d'emplois de haut niveau restent entre les mains des États membres fondateurs. Et plus fondamentalement, l'organisation semble avoir perdu le contact avec le monde au-delà de ses murs.

La Chine, le deuxième plus grand contributeur au budget de l'ONU, tente de plus en plus d'affirmer son leadership mondial sur le changement climatique et sur d'autres questions, à la suite de l'abdication de l'Amérique sous le président sortant Donald Trump. À l'assemblée générale de l'ONU de septembre, le Président chinois Xi Jinping a pris une mesure extraordinairement lourde de conséquences, en affirmant que la Chine parviendrait à la neutralité carbone d'ici 2060. Pourtant le même régime qui s'est engagé en faveur du développement durable persécute brutalement la minorité ouïghoure de Chine.

Cela montre le dilemme central de l'ONU. En termes de population, la plus grande partie du monde actuel vit sous régime autoritaire, qu'il s'agisse aussi bien de despotes sans la moindre prétention à une

quelconque légitimité démocratique, que d'autocrates élus qui ont affaibli les institutions démocratiques et les limitations à leur pouvoir.

Sans autre choix que de faire face à ce monde de plus en plus antidémocratique, le défi de l'ONU consiste désormais à concevoir un ordre du jour pratique et réalisable sans trahir sa charte fondatrice et son engagement en faveur des droits de l'homme et d'autres libertés. Pour cela, elle va devoir puiser dans ses points forts actuels. En tant que représentant des « droits collectifs », l'ONU est la mieux placée pour mobiliser des actions sur des questions comme le changement climatique, qui menace les travailleurs agricoles pauvres des pays en développement, tout comme que les riches habitants de Manhattan exposés à la hausse du niveau des mers.

De même, les Objectifs de développement durable de 2030, qui visent à s'attaquer aux inégalités et à l'exclusion partout dans le monde, restent un exemple de l'ONU à son meilleur niveau, comme l'a montré l'appel de Guterres à « Un nouveau contrat social pour une nouvelle ère. » L'ONU fournit un bien public mondial indispensable en produisant des classements du développement humain et en organisant de larges coalitions pour réaliser des progrès constants sur des indicateurs clés de bien-être.

Mais ce n'est pas parce que l'ONU donne le ton en matière de justice sociale, économique et environnementale qu'elle peut se dispenser de défendre les droits de l'homme. L'organisation a le devoir de signaler tous types de violations des droits de l'homme. Bien qu'elle doive faire preuve de finesse dans sa communication de preuves à d'autres et dans ses dénonciations publiques, elle doit rester implacable dans ses plaidoyers. Ici, ses meilleurs alliés sont les groupes de la société civile et les quelques pays courageux qui sont prêts à défier des intérêts commerciaux ou politiques étroits, pour s'en prendre à des pays comme la Chine, l'Inde ou l'Arabie Saoudite.

En revanche, l'ONU devra probablement s'incliner devant la logique de guerre froide du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le Conseil de sécurité restera inefficace avant qu'on ne le réforme, ce qui n'est pas une priorité à l'ordre du jour. Mais il y a des moyens de contourner cette inertie. Au cours de la véritable Guerre froide, l'ONU, sans consulter le Conseil de sécurité, a lancé d'importantes initiatives pour faire face aux crises humanitaires et pour soutenir les nouveaux membres issus du régime colonial. Les agences humanitaires et de développement des Nations Unies ont souvent tiré parti de leurs propres mandats et du droit international pour intervenir lorsque les circonstances l'ont exigé.

Aujourd'hui, les représentants spéciaux des Nations Unies dans les zones de conflit et les coordonnateurs résidents des Nations Unies ailleurs dans le monde font un énorme travail de l'ombre en travaillant sans relâche en coulisses pour éviter les conflits locaux, pour défendre la société civile et pour s'attaquer aux inégalités et à d'autres causes profondes de l'instabilité politique. Cette ONU de terrain prospère loin des yeux et loin du cœur, et met à profit son éloignement des manœuvres politiques obstructionnistes des États qui siègent au Conseil de sécurité de New York.

C'est de cette façon que l'avenir de l'ONU sera assuré ou perdu. Dans un monde de plus en plus jeune, de plus en plus en colère et de plus en plus impatient, un club lointain d'hommes en costumes sombres est voué à l'inutilité. C'est sur le terrain que l'ONU prend tout son sens, quand elle utilise son remarquable mandat de lutte en faveur de ceux qui en ont le plus besoin.



## A MEMO

## A MEMO

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

By Ike D. Coleman  
Cont'd from last edition

**M**ango/Plum—why enjoy Mango (plum) during the rainy season only when it is in abundance. What if people could process it into juice concentrate during peak season, flash freeze it, and reconstitute it as an ice-cold drink during the dry season; other opportunities for processing mango include, (puree, diced for pie-making, dried (dehydrated), and transformed into a powdered drink. Jelly/jam/preserve...many more uses could be pursued. A combination of mango juice/lemon/lime/orange.

**Coffee:** Liberia is a major coffee grower, but you won't know that because unlike Senegal, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Kenya, Tanzania....that not only process coffee for domestic consumption, but also export it, the "poor pride" mentality limits Liberians' ability to see the financial potential because getting their hands dirty is never prestigious thing. Prestige for many "big shots" means having family members ship Starbucks coffee to Liberia for personal use and something to boast about among many Liberians returning from the US, even for those that didn't drink Starbuck because of its cost.

**Cassava:** Outside of roasting, boiling, making fufu, dumboy, gari, other uses of cassava processing include, but not limited to flour for bread-making, dredging, and frying to make cassava fries/chips, modified starch as a thickener, et al.

**Bottled Water:** As observed in Costa Rica, rainwater can be inexpensively collected, bottled during the rainy season, stored in warehouses, distributed, and sold during the dry season. Sells relatively cheaply because of low production costs, compared to imported bottled water.

**Fish:** Liberia's biggest source of protein could be altered many other ways for business purposes, other than fish soup, grilled (roasted), or fried for "dried" rice. Business-minded Liberians could dive into processing fish nuggets, paired up with cassava fried; fish balls and patties...

**Bakery:** Could be communal, which people could use, based on scheduling, to baked their brand of bread/pie/cake/cookies for distribution, or a professional bakery servicing many different vendors based on their specification request for texture, color, taste, size, design to distinguish from other vendors.

**Sugar cane:** Again starting on a small scale growing and juicing sugar cane and converting it to syrup using a rebuilt or second-hand juicer/press, which would reduce sugar importation, as Liberians continue to learn the process of transforming sugar cane juice into other products.

**Consignment Merchandising:** Teaching Liberians the rewards of consignment merchandising, for instance, through a cooperative set up, would be of immense benefit to people that have products to offer, but lack the opportunity to own a storefront due to high rental cost. So how would consignment merchandising work under one roof, with people displaying many different consumables! This would include reexamining under-used available warehouse/real estate space for consideration. Discussion!

**General Retailing:** Since it is virtually impossible for mom & pop businesses to secure loans from banks, wholesale distributors would rescue many small businesses, by offering "inventory-based lending," where credit via merchandise offerings and a revolving account are awarded to small retail businesses, who in turn make a monthly payment, having agreed to terms and condition such as weekly sales auditing to determine how well a business was doing with merchandise

purchased on credit; making sure it was properly recording daily sales activities, which could translate to an increment in its line of credit, based on payment history. Much, much more to discuss and relate.

**Future Post Now** that we have provided information about a few startups, one question remains: What options are there for people to secure money to finance any number of those and other small-scale related businesses. In our next post, will examine where Mr. Weah and his team should look to tap dormant resources to trigger a once-in-a-lifetime Small Business Development Revolution. Revamping the entire tax code to identify untapped revenue sources would mean a focus on both the Formal and Informal Economies.

**Informal Economy:** Reclassifying certain businesses that may qualify to pay a flat tax instead of remaining under the radar and not paying into the system; the informal economy in all third world countries undermines the government's ability to raise additional tax revenue because it is not only very disorganized, but evade the government's ability to reclassify those businesses that pull in substantial incomes but pay nothing.

Because of its disorganization, people tend to glide under the radar by pretending they were just too small to pay any tax. But many of those businesses are relatively mid-size businesses that if identified and registered, could bring in much-needed added revenue to the government coffers. Discuss!



**Formal Economy:** Personal income taxes, Property Taxes: Real estate/Business.... Revisit. Value Added Tax(VAT): Possibly assessing new taxes on supposedly well-off Liberians, bringing in luxury and durable goods, who even buck at the idea of paying container clearance fees, not to mention the numerous "under-the-table" deals with Lebanese and other business individuals, which reduce their excise tax contribution and container clearing fees, hence, reducing revenue flow toward the government. The net effect of diluting revenue flow to the government coffers via "elbow greasing" by Port officials on behalf of friends and business people, means deeper pockets for certain individuals. Discuss!

**Consolidation and Dismantlement:** The Liberian government is so bloated it can hardly breathe; therefore, dismantling and consolidating some agencies and run with the savings would generate new much-needed revenue. Dismantlement and consolidation in some instances would allow the government to contract out some services to the private sector, force some agencies to become self-funding based on fee collection, which would have the effect of creating new businesses and hiring opportunities. Such a decision would reduce many "warm body" government employees on the public payroll, let alone force them to seek employment in what may become a new, robust private sector. But the biggest gift to Liberians would be a reduction in corruption and theft because no longer would so many

people remain so close to the public coffers. Discuss!

**Reducing Hiring Redundancy:** Personnel audit is one vaccine capable of compressing the bureaucratic bloat, which is compressed in overlapping job duties and essential functions. Discuss!

**Duty-free:** Who's entitled and who's not and why, considering the huge losses by Lebanese businesses and senior-level Liberian government officials' mistresses shipping containers to Liberia without paying any clearance money. Discuss!

**National Lottery Funding for Schools:** In every country and state in the US that authorized a lottery system, the government owns the lottery; in cash-strapped Liberia, taking full control of the lottery system would generate new funding for primary and secondary education after expenses. That could mean reallocating portions of budgetary allotment for grade school, to higher education, for instance. Discuss!

**A National Bond & Gasoline Tax Initiative:** Funding exclusively for road construction and maintenance. For example, a toll-paying coastal highway from Monrovia to Cape Palmas. Much more to relate. Discuss!

Finally: Liberia's economy has always been in a terminal phase, crying out for transformative leadership capable of putting the country ahead of self. Mr. Weah has an opportunity to demonstrate he's that rescuer, who can bridge the gap between the failed generation of the 1970s of which Ellen was an integral part and his generation. To accomplish that feat, however, he must prove that his leadership was not one signaling optical illusion to deflect his people's attention from the real problems facing his country. It should be one incorporating respect for his fellow Liberians, regardless of position, highlighted by a diversity of thoughts, given that his ideas are not the only factors that mattered. And "poor pride" by "yes-men" definitely has no place in the furtherance of good governance; all it does is breed laziness and contempt.

In the immortal words of Pogo, "...we have found the enemy and he is us." Until Mr. Weah succumbs to the realism that it is about every Liberian, he could end up blaming everybody else but himself for being surrounded by "yes-men" whose idea of governance was merely impressing him, while unsuspectingly, were using him as their cover for personal gains. Without a diversity of views, even from those that oppose him, Mr. Weah is highly likely to continue wondering why creativity, innovation, and development always evaded his presidency. No leader that entertains "group think" to support his/her follies ever succeeds in realizing his/her defined objectives. Opponents are not always enemies as African leaders would like people to believe; instead, people's reaction is usually to the dislike of a leader's uninviting attitude and behavior, which negatively impact policies. Hardly do people hate a leader personally, as much as their disdain for policies that offered promises not kept. It is never about the individual as a leader—no matter your position or title; it is how your policies impact people's lives relative to whether they can see and feel the practical impact on their standard of living. One point of reference whenever a leader supposedly sees people as enemies is remembering when he or she wasn't in power and fought for the same rights and protection he or she may now be denying people.

As a plug-in, I'd encourage those closest to the Liberian Chief Executive—friends/influencers to offer as a X-mas gift, for instance, this little inexpensive, but power book. Matter-of-factly, it would be a good read for any and all Liberian political leaders. "ON TYRANNY: Twenty Lessons From the Twentieth Century."



# CDC shows strength in Montserrado

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Partisans, supporters and well-wishers of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change from across Monrovia and parts adjacent converged at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville Saturday, 21 November to officially launch their campaign for the December 8 senatorial and representatives' by-elections, chanting battle cries and party slogans.

CDC partisans and supporters took the principle streets, emerging from various street corners and communities dressed in their

tripartite Coalition which comprises the Congress for Democratic Change, the National Patriotic Party and the Liberian People Democratic Party, mandated partisans to reclaim Montserrado County, once its stronghold, from Senator Dillon.

The CDC had held onto Montserrado since its formation in 2004 up to 2017, when it disgracefully lost to the county with most populated voters to the opposition in a defeat it has never recovered from.

From the 2005, 2011 and 2017 general and presidential elections, the Coalition topped all political parties that participated not until the 2019

Montserrado County Senatorial Candidate and incumbent District No. 5 Representative Thomas Fallah, lauded the gallantry of members of the CDC for the show of support, especially, their standard bearer President George Manneh Weah for giving him the opportunity to serve on the ticket of the Congress for Democratic Change back in 2005.

"I say this time without number my sincere gratitude to His Excellency, President George Manneh Weah for giving me (a plank seller), the opportunity back in 2005 to serve. Since then, I have served my party with all my being and today this plank seller has set for himself, the CDC, the people of district No. 5, as Representative in this highly energized Montserrado County."

"Mr. Standard Bearer, thank you for the opportunity. Certainly with the show of support here today, from our partisans who have come; abandoned their works and other family issues; you can be assured Mr. Standard Bearer, Mr. President, that all CDCians regardless of their reservation have agreed to reclaim Montserrado County. This promised Mr. President, we are committed to do come December 8, 2020." Fallah told cheering supporters.

Liberians go to the poll December 08, to elect 15 senators nationwide to fill the Liberian Senate in January, 2021. The National Elections Commission has since announced the inclusion of the additional two hundred ninety-nine thousand nine hundred sixty-nine (299, 969) new registrants, the total number of registered voters stands provisionally at two million, four Hundred, eighty-three thousand, three hundred fifty (2, 483, 350) ahead of the publicized senatorial elections. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**



official blue and white colors, as they marched thru the main route from Central Monrovia to the sports stadium in Paynesville, deliberately obstructing traffic, forcing both commercial and private vehicles to park for hours in huge traffic.

All 17 gates of the sports stadium were parked to capacity with CDCians and supporters, including VIP area that was filled with senior government officials and stalwarts of the ruling establishment.

President George Manneh Weah, standard bearer of the

senatorial by-election when the CPP candidate Dillon, overturned the table, placing him at the top of the table unbelievably even to President Weah himself despite the President personally lifting the hand of CDC candidate Pualita C. C. Wie in the campaign.

Dillon swept the poll with more than 70 percent of the total votes against his rival Paulita, who traded behind with about 40 percent, from the preliminary results, a lead she failed to reverse up to the final results that gave the CPP a convincing victory against the ruling Coalition.

Speaking at the rally, CDC

# GoL to launch

Con't from page 6

WHH, etc. To date, two (2) Units of the MFDP (Aid Management & Coordination Unit and the Program Implementation Unit) have rolled out the LPD in their aid information management system. The LPD is an aid information management system used to input, analyze and publish information about development projects across the country. In essence, the LPD is a flagship indicator of a new era of aid management that will be guided both in principle and practice by the recently adopted NAPL. The objective is to improve compliance and build skills to mainstream the tool across GOL system. The full utilization of LPD will increase transparency and accountability both in the management of public sector investment projects and development assistance programmes.

Additionally, the National Aid and NGO Policy will now provide both government and development partners in Liberia the requisite coordination framework to systematically engage and enhance inclusive partnership to orientate national development towards one goal.

Over the years, the gap imbued lapses as such that both government and development partners are unable to hold each other accountable for alignment beyond the policy level objectives to the alignment of aid to interventions in the national development strategy.

These lapses also had far more implications for the way aid is managed and coordinated amongst government agencies and with huge information asymmetry in engagements with development partners as one government. Without roles and

responsibilities being clearly defined and ascribed, these engagements have been largely disorganized and resulted in project implementation delays, cumbersome internal procedures, and most importantly, donor fatigue in the context of coordination with government.

The National Aid Policy of Liberia (NAPL) is designed to address these gaps and establish an internal coordination mechanism to curtail instances of such. The policy also establishes a national coordination framework for collective engagement with Development Partners at the technical and policy levels. In addition to defining the types of assistance and the preference of aid modalities for the government, mostly in accordance with international consensus on aid delivery, the policy also clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of government institutions and development partners in the management of external assistance.

Finally, the Organizers stress that as the Government of Liberia reels from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of external assistance will continue to remain integral to the successful implementation of the Pro Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD). Mobilizing high quality aid in support of the PAPD requires strong and robust coordination within and among government entities in tandem with a unified, coordinated and systematic engagement with development partners. This would ensure that resources are efficiently pooled and directed towards needed and prioritized interventions as per the PAPD; avoiding waste, double funding and neglect of priority areas.

Con't from page 6

## State of Qatar

bilateral ties between Liberia and the State of Qatar.

He also expressed confidence that the wonderful friendship between Liberia and Qatar will be further expanded to a renewed level for the mutual benefits of the two countries and peoples.

The Qatari Chargé d'Affaires said the donation of medical equipment from his country symbolizes the excellent ties of friendship

between both states, hoping that Qatar's valiant gesture will enhance the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

While making remarks at the brief ceremony, Mr. Sherdrick M. Jackson, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation and Economic Integration expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Qatari government for the supplies and noted that the gesture will further help cement the bonds between Liberia and Qatar.

For his part, Abraham Nyenswah who represented the Incident Management Team and the Liberia's health authorities thanked the Qatari Government for the medical supplies donated to Liberia to help flatten the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expressing delight over the occasion, he stated, "I am very pleased to receive this medical supplies and equipment on behalf of the

Incident Management Team and wish to express profound appreciation to the Government and people of Qatar for this huge benevolent gesture".

The medical equipment and supplies come at the time when the Government of

Liberia and the international community are intensifying the fight against the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

The ceremony was attended by representatives from the Liberian Government and the Embassy of the State of Qatar near Monrovia. **-Press release**

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# Air France resumes flights to Monrovia



The Government of Liberia has hailed the resumption of flights to Monrovia by Air France, an event which marks the end of a long hiatus since the airline halted its operations in the country.

President George Manneh Weah expressed the Liberian Government's appreciation and delight Friday, when Air France Senior Executives for

Africa paid him a courtesy call. The Liberian Leader said with his strong ties to France, bilateral relations between the two countries will only get better. "France has done a lot for me and with the commitment from Air France that it is here for the foreseeable future, says a lot of the goodness of the French People," President Weah said.

For his part, Air France Senior Vice President Henri Hourcade

praised the Liberian Government's efforts and commitment in getting the Airline to resume its operations in the country. "It is because of the very strong commitment of Liberia this time around engendering the right conditions that we are back here to resume operations with a full complement," Henri Hourcade asserted.

Earlier in the day, at a formal ceremony meant to commemorate the arrival of the maiden flight, the Liberian Minister of Finance and Development Planning Hon. Samuel D. Tweah said the recommencement of the airline's operations in the country was a reflection of the confidence the airline has in Liberia's economic future. He said despite the Covid-19 crisis, a lot has been achieved and that the business climate will continue to improve.

Also in attendance at that

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# Liverpool go second with convincing win over Leicester

Jurgen Klopp's side remain behind Spurs on goal difference but the manner of the win - achieved amid an injury crisis - sounded an ominous warning to those hoping to wrest the title away from the champions.

Liverpool also established a new club record of 64 home league games unbeaten, breaking their previous best run, set between February 1978 and January 1981.

Klopp's side took the lead midway through the first half when Jonny Evans nodded a corner into his own net and the advantage was doubled four minutes before half-time when a move of 30 passes ended with Diogo Jota heading in Andrew Robertson's superb cross.

Liverpool added Mohamed Salah to their long list of absentees after he tested positive for Covid-19 in Egypt but the prolific Jota, signed from Wolves for £45m in



September, once again stepped in - becoming the first player in the club's history to score in his first four competitive home appearances.

Leicester improved marginally in the second half but it was still Liverpool who dominated, Evans heading against his own post and both Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane being denied by the woodwork and keeper Kasper Schmeichel.

Firmino was finally on target as he rose to send a fine header

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