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NEC Chair, Davidetta Browne Lansanah

# NEC trapped

*-As December 8 leaves commission in huge debts*

# Koffa wins deputy speaker post



Deputy Speaker J. Fonati Koffa

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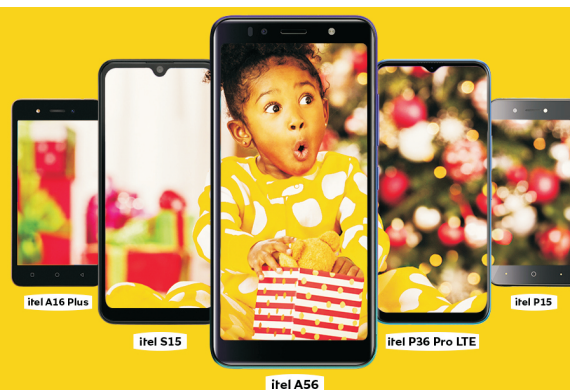
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# Continental News

## WHO, Partners Announce Ebola Vaccine Stockpile

Parts of the world ravaged by outbreaks of Ebola can now heave a small sigh of relief thanks to the stockpile of vaccine, the International Coordinating Group (ICG) announced Monday.

The single-dose vaccine will allow affected countries, particularly those in Africa, to better contain the deadly virus during future outbreaks.

"This new stockpile is an excellent example of solidarity, science and cooperation between international organizations and the private sector to save lives," Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general, said in a Tuesday press release on the UNICEF website.

The vaccine development is a joint effort of four leading international health and humanitarian organizations: World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), with financial support from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

The vaccine was piloted

among 350,000 people in Guinea and in the 2018-2020 Ebola outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of Congo under a protocol for "compassionate use."

It has since been licensed by the European Medicines Agency, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and eight African countries.

Both Guinea and Congo were slow to recover from the

epidemic that ravaged West Africa and affected people in other parts of the world.

More than 15,000 cases of the hemorrhagic feverlike disease were recorded. With a fatality rate of up to 90%, more than 11,300 people died between 2014 and 2016, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Two years after it was

brought under control, Ebola reared its head again in the Congo for two more years. The vaccine, which is recommended by the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on immunization for use in Ebola outbreaks, will be managed by UNICEF although the ICG will be "the decision-making body for its allocation and release," the press release said.

"We are proud to be part of this unprecedented effort to help bring potential Ebola outbreaks quickly under control," Henrietta Fore, UNICEF executive director, said in the press release.

Fore said "when it comes to disease outbreaks, preparedness is key." She said the vaccine stash is a "remarkable achievement" that will allow vaccines to be delivered to those who need

them in a timely manner. Countries that make requests for vaccines should receive a response in 48 hours. The vaccines will then be shipped from Switzerland in temperature-controlled packages. The statement said the target is to make "overall delivery time from the stockpile to countries" in seven days.

An initial 6,890 doses are now available for outbreak response with additional quantities to be delivered into the reserve this month and throughout 2021 and beyond.

It could take between two to three years to reach the SAGE-recommended level of 500,000 doses in the emergency stockpile. Unlike COVID-19, Ebola is rare and unpredictable, hence the need to create a reserve in the absence of a "natural market for the vaccine." VOA



Health workers begin their shift at an Ebola treatment center in Beni, Democratic Republic of Congo

## Senegal's 'best student' disappears in France

An investigation has been opened in France after the disappearance of a talented Senegalese student who was studying at a prestigious Paris school. Diary Sow did not return to school after the Christmas holidays, causing concern in Senegal and France.

Described as "the best student in Senegal", Ms Sow won several national academic prizes and published her first novel last year. Aged 20, she has not been seen since 4 January. The BBC is not responsible for the content of external sites.

View original tweet on Twitter

Presentational white space

The Senegalese diaspora is mobilising social media to find her. Several French celebrities, including actor Omar Sy, are sharing the appeal on Instagram and Twitter. Ms Sow is a second-year pre-university student at the prestigious Parisian high school Lycée Louis-Le-Grand, having received a scholarship for excellence. "She is a punctual, very serious student, and the alert was given quickly. Nobody saw her, we did not find her in her apartment" in a university residence in Paris, Henry Sarr, member of an association of Senegalese students who launched appeals on social networks, told the AFP news agency. "Neither her parents, nor her friends, guardian or the embassy have had any news," a member of the Senegalese community in Paris - Daouda Mbaye who organised a distribution of leaflets appealing for information at the weekend - told AFP.



Abdoulaye has lived in Senegal his whole life

## Ghana's Jerry Rawlings' funeral set for 27 January



A row between traditional leaders delayed Jerry Rawlings' funeral

Ghana's government has announced the date for the funeral of former President Jerry Rawlings.

The former president will lie in state for public viewing from 24 to 26 January according to the communique.

The burial is scheduled to take place on 27 January.

The former president died in mid-November at the age of 73 after being admitted to a

hospital in Accra.

The funeral was initially going to be before Christmas but was postponed following disagreement among Ghanaian traditional leaders.

Rawlings led Ghana for almost 20 years after staging two military coups as a young officer in 1979 and 1981.

He is also credited with returning the country to multiparty democracy in 1992.

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# EDITORIAL

## Liberians deserve nothing, but service leadership

**VICE PRESIDENT JEWEL** Howard Taylor, President of the Liberian Senate, sounded a reawakening call to senators of the 54th Liberian Legislature Monday, 11 January 2020, reminding them that with the constitutional authority they have, there should be no more excuses, apologies and promises for another day in delivering services to the people.

“...**FOR TRUTH BEING** told, you are members of the First Branch of Government and you have the full authority to make their dreams come true”, VP Taylor bluntly said as members of the 54th Legislature that includes both the Senate and the House of Representatives returned to the Capitol Monday after their annual break.

**TRUTH OF THE MATTER** is, not that lawmakers on Capitol Hill are ignorant of their responsibilities to the electorate, who in the first place gave them the power they wield, but for greed and sheer selfishness, representatives and senators just turn their backs on the people, once they get the power.

**MOST OFTEN, THEY** never complete projects embarked upon in their respective constituencies during the entire tenure in office until the year of election then they run back to their constituents, seeking re-election. Of the 15 senators that contested in the December 8, 2020 special senatorial election, only two returned, accompanied by new faces.

**THIS RESULT CLEARLY** indicates that voters had never received services promised by politicians in their campaigns. For instance, in Maryland County, southeast Liberia where Speaker Bhofal Chamber hails from, citizens, including marketers and educators are enraged over abandoned projects that should have benefited their lives.

**IT IS NOT** only sad, but highly disappointing that elected officials would renege on delivering services promised to the people, but always want to represent them in the First Branch of Government. In reality, they get elected to serve their personal interests rather than the people.

**VICE PRESIDENT JEWEL** Taylor herself a former senator, flared some of the burning issues confronting Liberians generally, ranging from insecurity, banknotes shortage, high cost of living, a sluggish economy characterized by lack of basic services and distrust and mistrust, amid allegations and counter-allegations.

**IN ALL OF** these, the common man in the street feels the pinch more, because he stands at the margin of society and is therefore, the first to take the shocks. Yet, politicians always go to him and other poverty-stricken citizens across the country for votes with wide promises that they don't really intend to deliver.

**VICE PRESIDENT TAYLOR** is challenging lawmakers to make a complete turn-around and prioritize welfare of the people: justice and security, economy, reconciliation and unity, opportunities and development.

**WE JOIN MADAM** Taylor in sending this message down the minds of lawmakers returning at the Capitol. Our people deserve better. Service delivery should take priority in all businesses that would come on the floor in the interest of the people, rather than the other way around.

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# COMMENTARY

By Dani Rodrik

## Europe's China Gambit

*The new EU-China agreement underscores a fundamental question of the post-pandemic world order: How should strategic and economic relations between major powers with very different institutional and political arrangements be managed? Can democracies remain true to their values while engaging in trade and investment with China?*

**C**AMBRIDGE - Just as 2020 was ending, the European Union and China announced the completion of a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) between the two economic giants. This “will be the most ambitious agreement that China has ever concluded with a third country,” boasted the official announcement from the European Commission.

The CAI gives European firms enhanced access to the Chinese market, removes (or relaxes) Chinese government requirements on joint ventures and technology transfer in some sectors, and promises equal treatment with state enterprises and greater regulatory transparency. Moreover, the Chinese government has undertaken some obligations on environmental sustainability and labor rights, notably by agreeing to make “continued and sustained efforts” to ratify the Forced Labor Convention.

On paper, this is a win not only for European industry, but also for human rights. But the reception the CAI has received has not been uniformly positive. The US reaction ranged from disappointment to outright hostility. For hardliners, including officials of the outgoing Trump administration, Europe's decision looked like caving in to Chinese economic might and handing the country an important diplomatic win.

But many moderates, including President-elect Joe Biden's designated national security adviser, were dismayed as well. The incoming Biden administration would have preferred presenting a unified front against China, by striking an economic deal with Europe first.

For others, it was the EU's apparent naivete on China's human rights promises that rankled. Guy Verhofstadt, a former Belgian prime minister and member of the European Parliament, tweeted that “any Chinese signature on human rights is not worth the paper it is written on.”

The Europe-China agreement underscores a fundamental question of the post-pandemic world order: How should strategic and economic relations between major powers with very different institutional and political arrangements be managed? In particular, can democracies remain true to their values while engaging in trade and investment with China?

To answer this question, we must recognize two facts. First, it is impossible to envisage a significant decoupling of the Chinese economy and the economies of the West that does not induce economic catastrophe. Second, there is little that Western countries can do, individually or collectively, to reshape China's state-driven economic model or repressive human- and labor-rights regime.

Trade and investment agreements cannot transform China into a Western-style market economy or turn it into a democracy. Our best hope, then, is to seek a new global regime that recognizes the diversity of economic and political settings without severely undermining the gains from international trade and investment.

None of this implies that Western countries should put human rights or political considerations aside when they engage China in the economic sphere. It simply means that the US and Europe should pursue more limited, more attainable, and ultimately more defensible goals.

Two such goals are paramount. First, trade and investment rules should ensure that Western firms and consumers are not directly complicit in human-rights abuses in China. Second, such rules should safeguard democratic countries against Chinese practices that could undermine their domestic institutional arrangements on labor, environment, technology, and national security. The objective ought to be to uphold and protect the West's own values, rather than export them.

So, the important question on the CAI is not whether the EU will be able to alter the Chinese economic system or improve China's human rights and labor regime. Even if the treatment of the mostly Muslim Uighur minority improves, the repression of dissidents and free speech will continue. And even if China ratifies the Forced Labor Convention and enforces its provisions - a doubtful matter - Chinese leaders do not plan to recognize independent unions. The relevant question is whether the EU has given up its freedom to pursue policies that limit complicity in human rights and labor abuses or safeguard European national security and labor standards.<sup>2</sup>

The European Commission has claimed that the CAI allows the EU to maintain its “policy space,” especially in “sensitive” sectors such as energy, infrastructure, agriculture, and public services. In the remaining areas, the EU is already fairly open to Chinese investment. That raises the question of what the Chinese government thinks it is getting with the agreement.

The answer seems to be that China is buying insurance against future restrictions in Europe. The agreement contains an arbitration scheme that enables the parties to bring violation complaints against each other. If consultations fail to resolve the matter, disputes are to be brought to arbitration panels with specific compliance procedures. While the European Commission views this as a mechanism to prevent Chinese backsliding from commitments, it could also serve as a means for the Chinese government to challenge specific entry barriers against Chinese firms.

A dispute resolution framework is essential to any workable global order. But what if, say, a European country wants to bar a Chinese firm that treats its workers badly or operates in Xinjiang? France already requires that large French companies abide by international human rights and environmental norms in their foreign operations.

What happens if European countries adopt tougher measures preventing Chinese firms with problematic labor or environmental practices from operating in the EU? Would the arbitration mechanism find these regulations compatible with the CAI? Similarly, how much deference will panels show to exceptions to market access based on “national security” considerations?

The answers to such questions are not clear. Much will depend on the final text of the CAI, and the degree to which arbitration panels choose to prioritize market access over countries' self-described “public purpose.”

In any case, neither the US desire to forge a united front against China, nor the reality that the CAI will fall short of creating a freer, more market-oriented China is a valid argument against the CAI and other similar trade and investment agreements. We should not judge the CAI by whether it enables Europe to export its system and values. We should judge it by whether it allows Europe to remain true to its own.



# Can America Lead Again?

*The US president-elect has advanced a vision of America that is back in charge of the liberal international order. But while that would go a long way toward enabling constructive competition with China, there is good reason to believe that Americans do not want their country to lead again.*

ANN ARBOR - US President-elect Joe Biden's impending inauguration has raised hopes that his administration will "make America lead again." If the United States is to transform its rivalry with China into constructive competition, this is the right approach. But whether Biden can restore and sustain America's global leadership depends on how effectively he mends domestic fractures and addresses deep-seated misgivings about globalization held by segments of the US electorate.

Biden has repeatedly pledged to restore America's international reputation and global standing, which were severely damaged under Donald Trump. To that end, he will quickly rejoin multilateral institutions (such as the World Health Organization) and international agreements (beginning with the Paris climate agreement) from which Trump withdrew the US.

These pledges point to a vision of the US back at the head of the liberal international order, a position from which it can more effectively compete - and cooperate - with China. But there is good reason to believe that many Americans do not want their country to lead again.

Biden's electoral victory in November fell short of the decisive repudiation of Trump and his toxic brand of populism that liberals expected. Yes, Biden won over 81 million votes - more than any US presidential candidate in history. But Trump received more than 74 million - the second-highest number on record - and increased his share across minority groups, compared to 2016. This is despite an unprecedented parade of scandals and a disastrously mismanaged pandemic.

What explains Trump's enduring popularity? One explanation, advanced by Peter Singer in November, is that nearly half of America has "lost its soul." This diagnosis is certainly true of the most disturbing elements of Trump's voter base, which includes the white nationalists and neo-Nazis who stormed Capitol Hill on January 6. And even those who do not fit into this category did vote for an openly racist president, who refused to denounce white supremacy.

Still, it would be simplistic to dismiss support for Trump as nothing more than an endorsement of bigotry. It is worth remembering that 6% of those who voted for Trump in 2016 voted for Barack Obama in 2012. And Trump received ten million more votes in 2020 than in 2016.

Trump draws support from a motley array of sources. Racism and xenophobia are among them, but so is anger among rural and working-class voters over stagnating incomes and rising inequality. Some Asian voters also fell for his hawkish stance on China. As a political outsider, Trump was able to exploit resentment of the political establishment, hack the Republican apparatus, and package himself as a champion of the disaffected.

These voters have been misguided to put their faith in Trump, who never intended to address their grievances in any genuine way, and has no qualms about inciting them to mount an insurrection and then abandoning them. One structural factor has made it easy for Trump and his conspirators to dupe these voters: globalization has created many losers alongside winners.

The winners include big companies that shifted their manufacturing to cheaper locations, thereby considerably expanding their profit margins, and the developing economies - especially China - to which they moved. The losers include millions of American manufacturing workers who have lost their jobs. Mix in America's legacy of racism and the spread of fake news via social media, and the result is flammable.

But it is not only the working class that is disillusioned with globalization. As the global economy's center of gravity has shifted toward emerging powers like China, these countries have gained a greater say in international institutions, which are supposed to represent all countries rather than only these institutions' architects. For many US policymakers, this was unacceptable: if the US bears the costs of sustaining a world order, they believe, it should get to ensure that its interests come first.

True to his promises of "America First," Trump withdrew the US from its previous global leadership commitments, pared down its engagement overseas, and built a wall. He delivered exactly what his voters wanted. But his policy inevitably produced a consequence that US leaders couldn't accept: China's rising profile, as it stepped in to fill the leadership vacuum the US left behind.

In response, the Trump administration portrayed China as America's mortal enemy, launched a ruinous trade war, and imposed a slew of sanctions. For Beijing, such hostility confirmed long-held suspicions that the US would never accept its rise without a fight, so it has reacted defensively. The resulting vicious cycle of mistrust and antagonism has yet to be broken.

For the Biden administration, two lessons stand out. First, the US cannot have it both ways. It cannot withdraw from global leadership and refuse to allow anyone to take its place; if it insists, confrontation and brinkmanship will ensue. Second, America's clash with China over the last four years has been as much a divorce from that country as a divorce from globalization.

This means that, if the US is to reclaim the leadership position that will enable it to compete constructively with China - and retain it for more than an election cycle - the Biden administration must tackle inequality and the costs that globalization has brought. Otherwise, Trump - or, worse, a more competent version of Trump - could well recapture the presidency in 2024 or 2028, and reverse whatever progress the Biden administration makes in the coming term.

# Whither America?

*Fortunately, Joe Biden will assume the US presidency on January 20. But, as the shocking events of January 6 showed, it will take more than one person - and more than one presidential term - to overcome America's longstanding challenges.*

NEW YORK - The assault on the US Capitol by President Donald Trump's supporters, incited by Trump himself, was the predictable outcome of his four-year-long assault on democratic institutions, aided and abetted by so many in the Republican Party. And no one can say that Trump had not warned us: he was not committed to a peaceful transition of power. Many who benefited as he slashed taxes for corporations and the rich, rolled back environmental regulations, and appointed business-friendly judges knew they were making a pact with the devil. Either they believed they could control the extremist forces he unleashed, or they didn't care.

Where does America go from here? Is Trump an aberration, or a symptom of a deeper national malady? Can the United States be trusted? In four years, will the forces that gave rise to Trump, and the party that overwhelmingly supported him, triumph again? What can be done to prevent that outcome?

Trump is the product of multiple forces. For at least a quarter-century, the Republican Party has understood that it could represent the interests of business elites only by embracing anti-democratic measures (including voter suppression and gerrymandering) and allies, including the religious fundamentalists, white supremacists, and nationalist populists.

Of course, populism implied policies that were antithetical to business elites. But many business leaders spent decades mastering the ability to deceive the public. Big Tobacco spent lavishly on lawyers and bogus science to deny their products' adverse health effects. Big Oil did likewise to deny fossil fuels' contribution to climate change. They recognized that Trump was one of their own.

Then, advances in technology provided a tool for rapid dissemination of dis/misinformation, and America's political system, where money reigns supreme, allowed the emerging tech giants freedom from accountability. This political system did one other thing: it generated a set of policies (sometimes referred to as neoliberalism) that delivered massive income and wealth gains to those at the top, but near-stagnation everywhere elsewhere. Soon, a country on the cutting edge of scientific progress was marked by declining life expectancy and increasing health disparities.

The neoliberal promise that wealth and income gains would trickle down to those at the bottom was fundamentally spurious. As massive structural changes deindustrialized large parts of the country, those left behind were left to fend largely for themselves. As I warned in my books *The Price of Inequality* and *People, Power, and Profits*, this toxic mix provided an inviting opportunity for a would-be demagogue.

As we have repeatedly seen, Americans' entrepreneurial spirit, combined with an absence of moral constraints, provides an ample supply of charlatans, exploiters, and would-be demagogues. Trump, a mendacious, narcissistic sociopath, with no understanding of economics or appreciation of democracy, was the man of the moment.

The immediate task is to remove the threat Trump still poses. The House of Representatives should impeach him now, and the Senate should try him some time later, to bar him from holding federal office again. It should be in the interest of the Republicans, no less than the Democrats, to show that no one, not even the president, is above the law. Everyone must understand the imperative of honoring elections and ensuring the peaceful transition of power.

But we should not sleep comfortably until the underlying problems are addressed. Many involve great challenges. We must reconcile freedom of expression with accountability for the enormous harm that social media can and has caused, from inciting violence and promoting racial and religious hatred to political manipulation.

The US and other countries have long imposed restrictions on other forms of expression to reflect broader societal concerns: one may not shout fire in a crowded theater, engage in child pornography, or commit slander and libel. True, some authoritarian regimes abuse these constraints and compromise basic freedoms, but authoritarian regimes will always find justifications for doing what they will, regardless of what democratic governments do.

We Americans must reform our political system, both to ensure the basic right to vote and democratic representation. We need a new voting rights act. The old one, adopted in 1965, was aimed at the South, where disenfranchisement of African-Americans had enabled white elites to remain in power since the end of Reconstruction following the Civil War. But now anti-democratic practices are found throughout the country.

We also need to decrease the influence of money in our politics: no system of checks and balances can be effective in a society with as much inequality as the US. And any system based on "one dollar, one vote" rather than "one person, one vote" will be vulnerable to populist demagoguery. After all, how can such a system serve the interests of the country as a whole?

Finally, we must address the multiple dimensions of inequality. The striking difference between the treatment of the white insurrectionists who invaded the Capitol, and the peaceful Black Lives Matter protesters this summer once again showed to those around the world the magnitude of America's racial injustice.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the magnitude of the country's economic and health disparities. As I have repeatedly argued, small tweaks to the system won't be enough to make large inroads in the country's ingrained inequalities.



## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# Miss Earth Liberia takes on first project

By Lewis S. Teh

The winner of the recent Miss Earth Liberia beauty pageant charming Robell C. Hovers discloses she has embarked her first endeavor, called Eco project.

"This Eco project is established to acknowledge people on the environmental issues, and to help people on

social issues", says Miss Hovers.

Addressing a news conference on Friday, January 8, 2020 at the Monrovia City Hall in Monrovia she the project is in two phases - the first is the environment, and the second will focus on social issues.

According to her, phase one mainly targets students between ages 11 and 16. "We decided to use those ages to be able to build

their minds on the environment; upon entering senior high school or college and reaching adolescent age they will be able to understand the importance of a clean and healthy environment."

Miss Hovers said her team will visit students from elementary and junior high, including communities to establish environmental clubs, appointing community chairmen as head to set a date aside for cleanup campaign.

She also pointed out that the project will distribute Eco friendly trash cans in Montserrado County, divided into seven zones, including Paynesville, Somali Drive, Bushord Island, St. Paul, Bridge, Bensonville and Careysburg.

"We are trying to create a self-esteem environment for everyone to have experience, and it is time for people to realize the importance of having a clean environment; we all must work together to make our various environments clean, and to do that we all need to be

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10



# LRA, MFDP begins month long workshop

The Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) is conducting a month-long training workshop here, on procedures and processes leading to imposition of excise tax stamps on several

manufacturers, importers, suppliers, taxpayers and tax practitioners on the rules, procedures, modules and solutions to problems that may arise when trading in commodities such as alcohol, fuel and tobacco products.

LRA Assistant Customs Commissioner for Ports

scheduled to take place in all 15 counties of Liberia for the next 30 days.

The imposition of excise stamps on selected goods and products is a result of an administrative regulation formulated by the LRA and the MFDP and has made it possible to put in place the proper use



A group photo of participants during the Excise Stamp Training Workshop

commodities and goods currently on the Liberian market.

The LRA says the workshop is sponsored by USAID through its Revenue Generation, Growth and Governance project (RG3) and aims to educate and enhance the capacity of key stakeholders,

Operation, Edwin F. Kendema says the specially designed stamps as per the established tax regulation are customized and unique to each one of the listed commodity and can be easily detected if counterfeited or tampered with by any supplier or manufacturer.

He indicates the training is

of specific stamps for manufacturers and suppliers of petroleum, tobacco and alcohol products on the Liberian market as well as curtail leakages of potential tariffs for the country. -Press Release

# CENTAL ends retreat in Monrovia

The Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL) has completed a two-day retreat aimed at reviewing successes and challenges experienced in 2020 and to strategically plan for the improvement of its overall performance this year.

According to a press release, the retreat took place at Tropicana Beach and Resort from January 7 to 8, 2021 to reflect on and review lessons learned from 2020; enhance staffs' capacity in project design and implementation; increase internal coordination, information sharing and collaboration; as well as equip staff with the needed document and tools for timely reporting.

the releases says at the close of the exercise, staff received commendation for their commitment to serve and were encouraged to work even

Dean of the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law at the University of Liberia, lauded the Management of CENTAL through its Executive Director, Anderson D. Miamen for the exceptionally leading the organization in the right trajectory over the years.

For his part, Director Miamen lauded the staff for the level of commitment and dedication shown over time as well as their expressed willingness to always acquire new skills for the improvement of their individual capacity as well as the operational capacity of the entity.

He told staff to return to their respective places of assignment with renewed dynamism and further commitment to achieving the organization's targets for 2021. Also speaking, the Program Manager of CENTAL, Gerald D. Yeakula thanked the County Field Officers (CFOs) for attending the retreat despite



harder for the building of integrity and the promotion of transparency and accountability across all sectors of the country.

CENTAL Board Chairman, Cllr. T. Negbalee Warner, is quoted as saying the retreat was necessary to allow the organization plans properly to effectively and efficiently execute the task of fighting corruption and bad governance in Liberia.

Cllr. Warner stated that continuous capacity building remains very critical to the survival as well as enhancement of productivity, efficiency and growth of the organization. He said making Liberia better and a corruption free nation requires honest effort of everyone, including staff who have signed off to a pledge of fighting the menace of corruption and to build a culture of transparency and accountability in the country.

Cllr. Warner, who is also

short notice. He said the participation of the CFOs is a demonstration of their commitment to the organization and rallied them to remain diligent in the performance of their duties.

According to the release, the retreat brought together CENTAL's central office staffs and CFOs from seven counties: Montserrado, Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Gbarpolu and Bomi. The retreat was held under the theme: "Reflecting and Planning for Greater Impact." With funding from the Government and people of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Corporation Agency (SIDA), CENTAL is currently implementing a three-year National Integrity Building and Anti-Corruption (NIBA) Program in seven counties: Montserrado, Bong, Nimba, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Gbarpolu and Bomi, respectively. -Press Release



## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Liberia UN Mission highlights strengthening of peace, security and democracy

The Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the United Nations, Mr. Israel Choko Davies, says the Government of Liberia will continue to prioritize the

Monday, 4 January 2021 with Mr. Neils Scott, the new United Nations Resident Coordinator for Liberia, Mr. Israel Davies said the government will also endeavor to mobilize efforts to strengthen the Liberian

remains a significant United Nations member state, contributing to the discourse of global peace, security, and development, particularly with its peacekeeping service with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Mr. Davies then highlighted the need to prioritize the speedy deployment of an additional 105 Liberian military personnel to Mali.

The acquaintance meeting requested by Mr. Neils is part of a multi-step process of Resident Coordinators' induction and orientation aimed at providing first-hand information from Permanent Representatives to the United Nations relating to key priorities and expectations of Countries that Resident Coordinators are assigned to.

The Liberian Diplomat assured Mr. Scott that the Government of Liberia will remain constructively engaged with partners, including the United Nations Peace Building Commission (PBC), working in collaboration with the Peace Building Support Office

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Mr. Israel Choko Davies

strengthening of peace, security, and democracy currently enjoyed by Liberians and residents of Liberia.

During a virtual acquaintance meeting on

economy and protect and empower the most vulnerable, especially women.

According to a dispatch from the Liberian Mission at the UN, Mr. Davies noted that at the international level, Liberia

## Dispute over Slipway community election

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Chairman of the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) of Slipway/Crown Hill Community Mr. Daniel Davies, and scores of residents have rejected the election of Mr. Isaac K. Krah as chairman of the community.

They term Krah's election amid a pending court ruling on a previous election in the community as gross disrespect. Krah is from the community-based Indigenous Party.

In a statement, IEC Chairman Davies said, while complaint from Isaac K. Krah is in court, he has allegedly and singlehandedly conducted a bogus election that declared him community.

"I as Chairman-elect of the Independent Elections Commission (IEC) of Slipway/Crown Hill community do hereby declare and vehemently reject the so-called election conducted by

chairman, say they will not recognize his leadership because his election was carried out outside of court ruling.

They call on the court to ensure self-proclaimed chairman Krah does not drag the community into serious violence, adding that his action has the propensity not only to disrupt community peace and security, but also sabotage and prevent it from benefiting developments so badly needed.

One person reportedly died in 2019 during electoral violence in Slipway/Crown Hill community. The victim was said to have been pushed into the St. Mesurado River allegedly by a supporter of one of the candidates vying for the community chairmanship position when police arrived there to quell the violence.

Mr. Isaac K. Krah on 23 October and 27 November 2019 wrote two separate complaints before the Independent Elections Commission of



Embattled Chairman Isaac K. Krah

Isaac K. Krah that is not recognized by the court and residents of Slipway/Crown Hill", the statement reads.

It continues that no group or person within the community has right whatsoever to conduct community elections except the IEC that was elected by overwhelming majority of the Slipway/Crown Hill residents.

The statement wonders why Isaac K. Krah, whose complaint is before the court, would decide to conduct election in the community in total disrespect for the rule of law, something, it notes has the propensity to drag the entire community into serious violence and chaos, urging inhabitants not to do business with the Krah leadership, pending ruling from the court.

At the same time, dozens of residents, who spoke to reporters following Krah's election as community

Slipway/Crown Hill community, containing several allegations from the election process.

Krah's Indigenous Party (IP), among other things, alleged that there was no general meeting held to mandate the IEC as per the voting process and procedures; registration process not in order, check and balance for transparency, voter's registration without photos, no education for electoral staff, which caused lot of dissatisfaction to his IP party and community dwellers with voter's registration officers moving from house to house.

His complaints also cataloged other alleged irregularities such as no party observers or prominent dwellers during the registration; no application process for qualification of candidates, and adequate public awareness, among others.

## Senators gauge tasks ahead

By Ethel A. Tweh

Senators here have been weighing the responsibilities awaiting them as they begin work at the Capitol with Margibi County newly inducted Senator, J. Emmanuel Nuquay, who once served as Speaker of the House in the 53rd Legislature, calling on his colleagues to review some of the concession agreements they signed in order to help boost the economy.

Mr. Nuquay resigned as Speaker and became running mate for former vice president Joseph Nyumah Boakai during the 2017 presidential election on the ticket of the ex-ruling Unity Party but lost to now President George Manneh Weah.

However, speaking at his induction in the chambers of the Liberian Senate on Tuesday, Senator Nuquay said the senate is challenged with issues of high cost of importing goods, inflation, lack of roads, lack of support to the Education sector, and lack of safe drinking water, amongst others that require immediate intervention.

He says senators will work together to address issues concerning the Decent Work Act, which need to be addressed immediately.

River Gee County Senator Jonathan "Boy Charles" Sogbie, who is making his debut in the Liberian Senate, says he hasn't gone there to fight anyone but to serve his people and Liberians at large. But he notes that anything at the senate that is not in the interest of the people will have a

checkmark, adding that anything on the contrary could hurt the country's unborn generation.

Senator Sogbie notes that the economy is faced with cash shortage, yet some of his colleagues [from the House of Representatives] create means for by-elections by vying for the senate despite being an incumbent lawmaker,

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# MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Sherman complains US govt.

### -Senate Pro-tempore Chie discloses

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Senate President Pro-tempore Albert Chie, discloses here that his leadership has received a formal complaint from Grand Cape Mount County Senator, Cllr. Varney Sherman, on recent United States government sanction placed on him (Sherman) for alleged bribery.

Speaking at a news conference Tuesday, January 12, at the Capitol Building, Pro-tempore Chie said Senator Varney's

his colleagues "to support impeachment of a judge who has ruled against him."

In a release, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said it is targeting corrupt actors and their networks across several countries in Africa and Asia, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, which builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, and targets perpetrators of corruption and serious human rights abuse.

the United States government and the travel restriction was imposed.

He points out that it is not a strange for the US government to place people on sanction list, noting this is a normal routine.

Chie says the Liberian Senate and its members are very concerned about the situation and how the matter can be handled. Commenting on the resumption of the senate, he promises that the body will now keenly focus on oversight.

He adds the senate is concern about economy of the state, including lack of money in commercial banks, and that despite a fall in the exchange rate between the Liberian dollar and U.S. dollar, prices of commodities remain extremely high hence, a need to review all concession agreements during this sitting.

Pro-tempore Chie says he had anticipated that many of former colleagues that lost the senatorial by-elections would have returned but the will of the Liberian people was different.

Currently, the senate leadership which comprises eleven persons has vacancies for six, as the result of the elections.

However the Pro-tempore is optimistic that senators, especially those who had worked before at the legislature, would be effective and forceful in meeting challenges that the country is faced with.

He also discloses plan to revamp the Ways, Means, Finance and Budget, and the Public Account and Banking and Finance Committees of the senate in order to actively diagnose problems plaguing the economy for proper remedy. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**



communication will be placed on the senate's floor for deliberation and subsequent actions.

Late 2020, the United States of America, through its Treasury Department, placed Global Magnitsky designations on several individuals in Africa and Asia, including Liberian Senator, Cllr. H. Varney G. Sherman, on grounds that he allegedly facilitated bribery in the judiciary and that, in one instance, he allegedly bribed

"On International Anti-Corruption Day, Treasury remains fully committed to imposing costs on those who facilitate corruption at the expense of the people," said Deputy Secretary Justin G. Muzinich in the release.

Pro-tempore Chie notes that the procedurals that led to placing Cllr. Sherman on sanction list lacks due process, arguing that Sherman was not talked and his side of the story was never heard; instead, information was forwarded to

## NEC conducts re-run in Grand Kru today

The National Elections Commission, (NEC), says it's scheduled re-run Special Senatorial Elections and Constitutional Referendum in three polling places in electoral districts One and Two in Grand Kru County will go on as planned today Wednesday January 13.

The Commission says it is in full readiness to conduct the re-run elections in districts number one and two after procuring new election

three precincts with code numbers as 18050, 18024, and 18029 in Grand Kru County with a total number of 960 registered voters.

The Commission's decision to conduct the election on Wednesday, 13 January 2021 follows a meeting with stakeholders, including candidates and or their representatives.

The NEC is calling on all candidates and the 960 registered voters in Beloken,



materials, including ballot papers and that a new team of electoral technicians has been instituted to conduct the election and referendum in Grand Kru on 13 January 2021.

The NEC says the re-run elections will be conducted at the Beloken Town Hall, the Wakpo Public School and the Boluwein Town Hall in Grand Kru County.

A release from the Commission issued today, 12 January 2021, identified the

Wakpo and Boluwein to participate in the election and referendum slated for 13 January 2021.

Meanwhile, the National Elections Commission says all accredited media institutions, local and International Organizations will be allowed to cover the 13 January 2021 election in Grand Kru County. **-Press release**

## World Bank Plans to Invest over \$5 Billion in Drylands in Africa

The World Bank plans to invest over \$5 billion over the next five years to help restore degraded landscapes, improve agriculture productivity, and promote livelihoods across 11 African countries on a swathe of land stretching from Senegal to Djibouti.

World Bank Group President David Malpass announced the investment at

the One Planet Summit, a high-level meeting co-hosted with France and the United Nations that is focused on addressing climate change and biodiversity loss.

"This investment, which comes at a crucial time, will help improve livelihoods as countries recover from COVID-19 while also dealing with the impact of both biodiversity loss and climate change on their people and economies," said Malpass.

The more than \$5 billion in financing will support agriculture, biodiversity, community development, food security, landscape restoration, job creation, resilient infrastructure, rural mobility, and access to renewable energy across 11 countries of the Sahel, Lake Chad and Horn of Africa. Many of these efforts are in line with the Great Green Wall initiative. This builds on World

Bank landscape investments in these countries over the past eight years that reached more than 19 million people and placed 1.6 million hectares under sustainable land management.

"Restoring natural ecosystems in the drylands of Africa benefits both people and the planet," said Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Working with many partners, PROGREEN, a World Bank global fund dedicated to

boosting countries' efforts to address landscape degradation, will also invest \$14.5 million in five Sahelian countries - Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania.

The World Bank Group is the biggest multilateral funder of climate investments in developing countries. In December 2020, the World Bank Group announced an ambitious new target for 35% of its financing to have climate co-benefits, on average, over the next five years. **-Press release**

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# Français

## La vice-présidente Taylor aurait du mal à cacher son inquiétude face à la morosité de l'économie libérienne

« Le premier devoir des membres du parlement est de veiller à ce que les Libériens restent en sécurité et soient heureux », c'est en substance le message qu'a livré la vice-présidente du Libéria aux sénateurs.

Mme JewelHoard Taylor qui se veut rassurante a indiqué qu'il existe encore une lueur d'espoir pour les libériens, quoique « le Libéria soit en proie à une myriade de problèmes, allant de l'insécurité élevée à la rareté des liquidités en passant par la cherté de la vie, le marasme économique, le manque de services de base et la méfiance ».

S'exprimant à l'ouverture de la 4e session de la 54e législature dans la salle des conférences du Sénat libérien lundi, la vice-présidente s'est dite fière de la démocratie qui est « vivante et se renforce au Libéria » avec le respect de la volonté du peuple dont le message n'a souffert d'aucune ambiguïté lors des élections sénatoriales spéciales de 2020.

« Ils ont envoyé un message clair à tous et à toutes. Ils n'acceptent plus les choses

telles qu'elles sont ; mais ils attendent beaucoup plus de leurs représentants à tous les niveaux », a-t-elle dit.

« Il est impératif que les législateurs se rappellent les tendances nationales des problèmes qui ont assailli la Nation au fil des ans, et que les points critiques nécessitent une attention immédiate, tels que la cherté de la vie, la limitation des services de base, le manque d'opportunités minimales de croissance et de développement, les impôts

élevés et le taux de criminalité élevé », a-t-elle ajouté.

« Étant la première femme vice-présidente et défenseuse de l'égalité des sexes, Je suis personnellement attristée par ces problèmes qui s'aggravent de jour en jour avec la violence sexuelle et sexiste perpétrée contre nos citoyens les plus vulnérables, les filles de moins de 18 ans et parfois aussi des jeunes de moins de 2 ans victimes de sodomie et de

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor

## Guinée : nouveau procès contre un opposant et répression accrue selon les ONG

Le parquet guinéen a réclamé lundi un an de prison ferme contre une figure de l'opposition à un troisième mandat du président Alpha Condé, dans un contexte de répression accrue de la contestation, selon les défenseurs des droits

humains. Oumar Sylla, alias Foniké Mangué, était jugé pour trouble à l'ordre public par un tribunal de la banlieue de Conakry alors que, selon Amnesty International et Human Rights Watch, les semaines précédant et suivant la présidentielle du 18 octobre ont

vu l'arrestation de centaines de personnes. Le jugement a été mis en délibéré au 14 janvier.

Oumar Sylla a été arrêté le 29 septembre alors qu'il parcourait à moto la banlieue de Conakry pour inciter à participer à une manifestation interdite contre la candidature du président Condé à sa propre succession. Il est détenu depuis et a entamé une grève de la faim, qu'il a récemment arrêtée.

Oumar Sylla est un cadre du Front national de défense de la Constitution, collectif qui a mobilisé pendant des mois contre la candidature de M. Condé à un nouveau mandat. La contestation, plusieurs fois durement réprimée, a fait des dizaines de morts. M. Condé, 82 ans, a été proclamé vainqueur de la présidentielle, malgré les protestations de son principal adversaire criant à la fraude, et les remises en cause de la constitutionnalité de sa

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



## Un journaliste et le directeur de publication de "La lettre du continent" relaxés, poursuivis en diffamation

Le tribunal de Paris a relaxé un journaliste et le directeur de publication de "La lettre du continent", poursuivis en diffamation par le président ivoirien Alassane Ouattara pour un article de 2017 sur les fonds souverains de ce pays. Le président avait porté plainte en France après la publication d'une brève intitulée "Côte d'Ivoire - Ouattara fait exploser les fonds souverains", publiée le 30 août 2017 dans le bimensuel, aujourd'hui devenu un quotidien sous le nom d'Africa Intelligence. Dans cet article très court, le journal écrivait que M. Ouattara "bénéficiait" d'un fonds souverain de 342,6 milliards de francs CFA soit 521 millions d'euros, "en hausse de 20 milliards par rapport à 2015", une "enveloppe

imputaient par insinuation de se livrer à un détournement de fonds publics, avec la complicité de son frère". Il contestait les chiffres avancés comme étant un "amalgame inexact de plusieurs rubriques budgétaires". "La décision est satisfaisante dans le sens où le tribunal reconnaît le caractère diffamatoire des propos", a réagi jeudi son avocat Me Pierre-Emmanuel Blard, qui a indiqué étudier l'opportunité d'un appel.

Dans ce dossier, la défense avait souligné l'indépendance de la rédaction vis-à-vis des gouvernements et partis, rappelant que le sujet de l'article attaqué avait déjà été traité par le journal en 2012 et 2014, tout en défendant la bonne foi du journaliste et le sérieux de l'enquête. "On a



budgetaire" dans laquelle il pouvait "d'autant mieux puiser à sa guise" qu'elle était "directement gérée par son frère, le ministre des affaires présidentielles Birahima Téné Ouattara". Dans son jugement, le tribunal a estimé que les propos étaient bien diffamatoires mais que les prévenus devaient être relaxés au bénéfice de la bonne foi. Le tribunal a souligné que l'article s'inscrivait dans un "débat d'intérêt général" et que le journaliste disposait d'une "base factuelle suffisante" pour publier les propos. Il a aussi relevé le "ton modéré" utilisé "à l'exception de quelques termes critiques", qui "demeurent adaptés à la ligne éditoriale" de la publication. M. Ouattara estimait que ces propos "lui

fait notre travail de journaliste, le tribunal l'a reconnu", a déclaré jeudi à l'AFP le directeur de publication Maurice Botbol. Alassane Ouattara, 78 ans, a été réélu le 31 octobre pour un troisième mandat controversé, jugé inconstitutionnel par l'opposition, qui a boycotté le scrutin et ne reconnaît pas sa réélection. Les violences électorales ont fait 85 morts et un demi-millier de blessés entre août et novembre. Marquant une nouvelle décrispation de la situation politique, l'ensemble de l'opposition ivoirienne a cependant annoncé jeudi sa participation aux élections législatives du 6 mars avec pour objectif de décrocher "la majorité au Parlement".

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# Français

## La vice-présidente Taylor

toutes sortes de violences sexuelles », s'est-elle lamentée.

Selon elle, la société libérienne s'appauvrit à un rythme alarmant, avec très peu de solutions permanentes à portée de main.

La VP Taylor a averti que si l'on ne trouve pas de solutions permanentes à ces maux sociétaux et si l'on ne met pas en place des mesures pour garantir une société plus sûre, le peuple doutera de la capacité collective de l'équipe dirigeante à gouverner et à donner aux citoyens le type de nation à laquelle ils aspirent.

Faisant le bilan du Sénat libérien, elle a indiqué que 34 législations ont été introduites au cours de la période considérée, et que parmi celles-ci, 27 ont été adoptées, 2 ont fait l'objet d'un veto et 5 ont été envoyées en comités pour

être examinées.

«Alors que vous considérez des questions importantes pour l'attention et la résolution, permettez-moi d'attirer votre attention sur les résultats du référendum qui vient de se terminer et sur la nécessité de tracer une voie pour un examen holistique indispensable de notre constitution, des quotas d'équité entre les sexes, des dettes envers les fournisseurs locaux, du retard du paiement des salaires dans certaines institutions, de la nécessité d'une approche plus agressive de la fourniture des services de base, de la sécurité nationale, de la nécessité d'élargir l'assiette fiscale nationale en créant de nouvelles taxes dans les secteurs du tourisme et de l'agriculture, ce qui réduira le fardeau actuel de notre peuple et la nécessité de garantir un budget réaliste pour le programme national en faveur des pauvres. » a dit Mme Taylor.

## Guinée : nouveau procès

candidature." Mme la présidente, vous avez devant vous le roi des jeunes qui, le 29 septembre, est sorti à moto pour haranguer des milliers de jeunes", a dit le procureur Lansana Sangare devant le tribunal de Mafanco placé sous la surveillance de dizaines de policiers casqués portant matraque.

"Mme (la présidente), je vous demande de bien juger, mais le seul juge reste Dieu et quant à moi je sais que je suis un éternel prisonnier d'Alpha Condé", a dit le prévenu don't les avocats ont plaidé non coupable. Il avait déjà été arrêté mi-avril 2020, mais relaxé fin août par un tribunal des faits de diffusion de fausses informations.

"Les semaines après l'élection ont été marquées par les mesures répressives contre l'opposition politique", a commenté à l'AFP Ilaria Allegrozzi, chercheuse pour Human Rights Watch. Elle chiffre à "plus de 300" les membres de l'opposition ou sympathisants

arrêtés.

Fabien Offner, chercheur pour Amnesty International, évoque une vague d'arrestations "inédite" mais difficilement quantifiable. Il cite le chiffre de 325 interpellations prononcé le 31 octobre par la cour d'appel, selon lui. Des opposants et des détenus arrêtés récemment ou il y a plusieurs mois en relation avec le contexte politique "sont morts en prison", a-t-il assuré.

"Après 52 ans de régimes autoritaires, l'élection d'Alpha Condé en 2010 était censée faire entrer la Guinée dans l'ère de la démocratie. Dix ans plus tard la situation est celle d'un président qui s'est maintenu au pouvoir au prix de dizaines de manifestants et de passants tués par les forces de défense et de sécurité en toute impunité, et de violations massives des libertés", a estimé le chercheur. En novembre, le gouvernement reprochait à Amnesty et HRW de ne s'en prendre qu'à lui et ainsi d'encourager les violences commises par l'opposition.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Dani Rodrik

## L'accord d'investissement Chine-UE et les valeurs européennes

CAMBRIDGE - Fin 2020, l'UE (Union européenne) et la Chine ont annoncé la conclusion d'un Accord global d'investissement (AGI) entre les deux géants économiques. La Commission européenne s'est félicitée de cet accord, selon elle "le plus ambitieux que la Chine ait jamais conclu avec un pays tiers".

L'AGI offre aux entreprises européennes un meilleur accès au marché chinois, supprime (ou assouplit) les exigences du gouvernement chinois en matière de joint ventures et de transfert de technologies dans certains secteurs et promet l'égalité de traitement avec les entreprises d'Etat, ainsi qu'une plus grande transparence réglementaire. Par ailleurs, le gouvernement chinois s'est engagé à faire des efforts continus et soutenus en vue de ratifier la Convention sur le travail forcé et à faire des progrès en matière de protection de l'environnement.

Sur le papier, c'est une victoire non seulement pour l'industrie européenne, mais aussi pour les droits de l'homme. Mais l'AGI suscite aussi des réactions négatives, aux USA par exemple elles vont de la déception à une franche hostilité. Pour les faucons (notamment au sein de l'administration Trump), en signant cet accord, l'Europe cède à la puissance économique de l'Empire du Milieu et lui offre une victoire diplomatique importante.

Mais de nombreux modérés, dont le futur conseiller à la sécurité nationale choisi par le président élu Joe Biden, sont eux aussi consternés. Le nouveau gouvernement Biden aurait préféré présenter un front uni contre la Chine en concluant d'abord un accord économique avec l'Europe.

Pour d'autres, c'est l'apparente naïveté de l'UE à l'égard des promesses chinoises en matière de droits de l'homme qui pose problème. Pour Guy Verhofstadt, ancien Premier ministre belge et membre du Parlement européen, qui s'est exprimé sur Twitter "toute signature de la Chine au sujet des droits de l'homme ne vaut pas le papier sur lequel elle est écrite".

L'accord UE-Chine soulève des questions fondamentales sur l'ordre mondial post-pandémie : Comment gérer les relations stratégiques et économiques entre grandes puissances aux fonctionnements institutionnels et politiques profondément divergents ? Les démocraties peuvent-elles rester fidèles à leurs valeurs tout en s'engageant dans des échanges commerciaux et financiers avec la Chine ?

Pour répondre à ces questions, il faut prendre en compte deux éléments :

- Il est impossible d'envisager un découplage significatif de l'économie chinoise et des économies occidentales qui n'induisse pas de catastrophe économique.

- Les pays occidentaux ne peuvent pas faire grand-chose, que ce soit individuellement ou collectivement, pour remodeler le modèle économique étatique de la Chine ou peser en faveur du respect des droits humains et du droit des travailleurs dans ce pays.

Les accords sur le commerce et les investissements ne peuvent transformer la Chine en une économie de marché de type occidental ou en une démocratie. Notre meilleur espoir est donc de bâtir un nouveau système mondial qui reconnaisse la diversité des régimes économiques et politiques sans compromettre gravement les avantages qu'offrent le commerce et les investissements internationaux.

Cela n'oblige en rien les pays occidentaux à mettre de côté les droits de l'homme ou les considérations

politiques lorsqu'ils traitent avec la Chine sur le plan économique. Cela signifie que les USA et l'Europe doivent poursuivre des objectifs plus limités, plus réalistes, et en fin de compte plus faciles à justifier.

L'un de ces objectifs est crucial : d'une part les règles en matière de commerce et d'investissement doivent garantir que les entreprises et les consommateurs occidentaux ne sont pas directement complices des violations des droits de l'homme en Chine, d'autre part elles doivent protéger les pays démocratiques contre les pratiques chinoises susceptibles de saper leurs dispositions institutionnelles en matière de travail, d'environnement, de technologie et de sécurité nationale. Autrement dit, il s'agit de défendre les valeurs de l'Occident, plutôt que de les exporter.

La question importante n'est donc pas de savoir si l'UE sera en mesure de modifier le système économique de la Chine ou d'améliorer le respect des droits de l'homme et le régime du travail dans ce pays. Même si le traitement de la minorité ouïgoure majoritairement musulmane s'améliore, la répression des dissidents et les atteintes à la liberté d'expression se poursuivront. Et même si la Chine ratifie la Convention sur le travail forcé et la respecte - ce qui est douteux - les dirigeants chinois n'envisagent pas de reconnaître des syndicats indépendants. La question pertinente est de savoir si l'UE renonce à sa liberté de limiter sa complicité dans les violations des droits de l'homme (y compris dans le travail) et si elle abandonne l'idée de préserver la sécurité nationale et les normes de travail européennes.

La Commission européenne estime que l'AGI permet à l'UE de conserver son "espace politique", notamment dans les secteurs "sensibles" tels que l'énergie, les infrastructures, l'agriculture et les services publics. Dans les autres secteurs, l'UE est déjà assez ouverte aux investissements chinois. Cela pose la question de savoir ce que l'Empire du Milieu pense tirer de cet accord.

Il espère probablement se prémunir ainsi contre de futures restrictions en Europe. L'accord contient un mécanisme d'arbitrage qui permet aux parties de porter plainte en cas de violation de l'accord. Si des consultations ne permettent pas de résoudre un différent, des commissions d'arbitrage dotées de procédures spécifiques trancheront. La Commission européenne considère qu'il s'agit d'un mécanisme destiné à empêcher la Chine de revenir sur ses engagements, mais il pourrait également servir à cette dernière pour contester certaines barrières à l'entrée de ses produits dans l'UE.

Un cadre de règlement des différends est nécessaire à tout ordre mondial durable. Mais que se passera-t-il si un pays européen veut interdire l'entrée de ses produits à une entreprise chinoise qui traite mal ses travailleurs ou qui opère au Xinjiang ? La France exige déjà des grandes entreprises françaises qu'elles respectent les normes internationales en matière de droits de l'homme et d'environnement dans leurs activités à l'étranger.

Que se passera-t-il si certains pays européens adoptent des mesures plus restrictives pour empêcher les entreprises chinoises ayant des pratiques problématiques en matière de travail ou d'environnement d'exercer leurs activités dans l'UE ? Le mécanisme d'arbitrage jugera-il ces mesures compatibles avec l'AGI ? Et sous quelles conditions acceptera-t-il des interdictions d'accès au marché basées sur des considérations de "sécurité nationale" ?

Les réponses à ces questions ne sont pas claires. Beaucoup dépendra du texte final de l'AGI et de la mesure dans laquelle le mécanisme d'arbitrage donnera la priorité à l'accès au marché plutôt qu'aux desideratas d'un pays donné.

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# Koffa wins deputy speaker post

By Bridgett Milton

**G**rand Kru County, District #2 Representative J. Fonati Koffa has won the post of Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, replacing Bong County Representative Prince Moyo who is now inducted as senator of Bong County.

His win on Tuesday, 12 January is a slap in the face of the main opposition Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) which had mandated its

speaker position, though the House of Representatives has a total membership of 73 lawmakers.

And this is because there were three absentees during the in-house election and two lawmakers are also deceased, thereby reducing the number of voters to 68.

Immediately after the votes count, House Deputy Speaker, Koffa in his acceptance speech, lauded all for the confidence reposed in him to be elected as Deputy Speaker of the House of

Liberty Party and joined the CDC where he serves as a member of the Executive Council.

He is comparatively one of Liberia's brightest barristers and began his legal career in the United States in 1998 in private practice and would move to Liberia in 2009 to become a founder and Managing Partner of the International Law Group (ILG), now one of the emerging corporate and government firms in Liberia.



Deputy Speaker J. Fonati Koffa

lawmakers at the House of Representatives to vote for its candidate Representative Clarence Massaquoi of Lofa County for the deputy speaker post.

Koffa had the backing of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) for the in-house election among members of the House of Representatives which was held at the Capitol Building.

Representative Koffa massively defeated the CPP's choice Mr. Massaquoi with 45 votes or 67.16 percent of the total votes cast.

Mr. Massaquoi got 20 votes amounting to 29.88 percent of the total votes cast while the lone female candidate Moima Briggs Mensah collected only two votes.

A total of 68 ballots casted Tuesday for the deputy

Representatives.

Deputy House Speaker Koffa calls on members of the House of Representatives to get back to doing the work of the people by enacting laws that will see the prosperity of Liberia.

He says it is an honor to serve the Liberian people and he is up and ready to perform his duty.

Koffa is seen to be politically grounded and one who understands the politics of Liberia. He is a founding member of the opposition Liberty Party, a constituent member of the CPP.

He became Liberty Party's chairman from 2011 to 2014 and oversaw its growth and expansion, including winning legislative seats for the party and ensuring that its lawmakers sat on and led ranking committees in the Legislature.

But Koffa resigned from the

He was admitted to the Supreme Court Bar of Liberia as valedictorian of its Class of 2014.

Koffa was educated at the University Of North Carolina School Of Law at Chapel Hill, where he obtained a Juris Doctorate (JD) degree in Law. He also holds a Master Degree in Public Administration (MPA) from Raleigh, North Carolina State University, and a Bachelor of Public Administration (Cum Laude) with a concentration in Urban Planning, from Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA.

For his part, defeated candidate Clarence Massaquoi thanked his colleague for his victory, saying he will continue to do the Liberian people's work.--

Edited by Winston W. Parley

# Liberian police

Starts from back page

be very diligent, dutiful and responsible in the UN Mission, reminding them that they are Liberia's ambassadors on the mission.

"You are bearing the Flag of the Republic of Liberia, whatsoever attitude or your deportment out there will represent, will definitely reflect on the Republic of Liberia," he cautions.

Col. Sudue notes that the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) went out on a UN Peacekeeping mission and has been making Liberia proud by exhibiting good conduct, thereby urging the police team to follow the good example that the AFL has set.

Giving the historicity of the officers' selection, Col. Sudue says in his quest to have LNP officers serve on UN Peacekeeping mission, he was invited to New York in December 2018 by former Liberia's Ambassador to the United Nations, now Foreign Minister Dee - Maxwell Saah Kemayah.

Col. Sudue says the meeting afforded him the opportunity to meet with the Deputy Police Adviser and Officer in Charge of the UNPOL, Shaowen Yang where modalities of including the Liberia National Police on Peacekeeping Mission was

Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia.

Of that number, he says 34 officers comprising 31 and 3 females were certified by the UN Peacekeeping Department after successfully completing the United Nations Required Test conducted by Successful Selection Assistance & Assessment Team (SAAT).

Out of the certified number of officers, he says four officers comprising 3 males and 1 female have been selected to participate in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Southern Sudan (UNMISS).

The mission is expected to last for a year, after which a new batch of officers may be dispatched to Southern Sudan based on the prevailing security situation.

At the press conference, Deputy Police Inspector General for Operations Col. Marvin Sackor reminds the commissioned officers that they represent the nation and the regimental institution, urging them to set standards on the mission.

Col. Sackor says the four officers represent almost every department within the LNP, noting that it shows that their



highlighted with a commitment made of including Liberia on UN Peacekeeping mission.

Upon his return from New York, Col. Sudue says his administration in May 2019 for the first time in the history of the LNP established the LNP's Peacekeeping Desk headed by Assistant Commissioner of Police Kalem D. Karyo, a trained and professional police trainer.

He discloses that 100 officers were vetted and trained by the LNP's Peacekeeping Desk with oversight from the United

actions will set the standards that will give way for others.

Responding on behalf of his team, Chief Superintendent Togba J. Massaquoi thanked the leadership of the LNP for giving the kind of support from the very beginning of the process that has brought his team this far.

Officer Massaquoi assures that their moral conduct will garner praises, promising to remain in touch with the LNP authorities to channel issues that will require authorities' attention to ensure that the necessary action is taken.

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# NEC trapped

By Othello B. Garblah

The number of electoral disputes surrounding the December 8, 2020 special senatorial elections is not the only sour grape left behind at the National Elections Commission situated on 9th Street in Monrovia, there are more, this paper has learnt.

The electoral body risks legal actions from vendors and potential demonstrations from poll workers in demand for pay for services rendered and salaries for the December 8, 2020 elections and Constitutional Referendum.

Information available to this paper indicates that NEC total debt stock as a result of the conduct of the special senatorial elections, and the by-elections in Montserrado District #9 and Sinoe County District #2 is near the US\$4 million mark.

The local media has the lowest amount standing at US\$30,000, followed by local printers US\$200,000, vehicle rentals US\$739,675, Poll Workers US\$882, 996 and Bulk Press which is near USD1million. These amounts excludes other service providers that this paper did not

Lansanah told media managers Tuesday, when she called to inform them that the election house was not reneging on its responsibility but was seeking funding to effect payments to those who rendered services during the election period.

She acknowledged that the vendors including the media and poll workers deserve to be paid for the services rendered but the delay is as a result of the funding process.

"Poll workers, please be a little patient, as soon as we get the funding we will pay you all," she said.



NEC Chair, Davidetta Browne Lansanah

NEC hired several vendors and poll workers ahead of the December 8, polls with hope that they would have delivered on their promises after both vendors and poll workers had performed their services, but it appears with slow funding of the process, the commission is now left walloping in huge debts.

Amongst its vendors are the Ghanaian Bulk Press which printed the ballot papers for the elections and Referendum, local printing presses, the media and poll workers across the country.

captured.

The actual budget submitted by NEC for the conduct of the special senatorial elections and the Constitutional Referendum was around US\$17 million. That amount was reduced by nearly US\$4m. When the Commission was asked to include the two by-elections the amount was increased by US\$390,000 bringing the total December 8, 2020 elections and Constitutional Referendum budget to US\$13.989m.

"NEC doesn't have any money to pay you people now," NEC Chair, Davidetta Browne

Mrs. Browne-Lansanah said it was important to inform service providers that NEC acknowledged its indebtedness and as a sign of respect, it was important to call them and let them know that they will get pay as soon as funding is made available to them through the Ministry of Finance Planning and Development.

Meanwhile, the NEC boss told the media owners that she was not certain as to when money owe them will be paid. "We na able to payyorna," she said in pidgin English.

## Liberia UN Mission

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(PBSO) to ensure that it continues to deliver on its mandate, particularly via the Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Davies congratulated Mr. Scott on his preferment and expressed the hope that his experience as Resident Coordinator in Burundi, Indonesia, and Georgia, and as head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Cote d'Ivoire will prove useful in the discharge of his duties in Liberia.

"I trust that as Resident Coordinator in Liberia, you will impartially and conscientiously, to the absolute best of your ability, discharge your duties," Mr. Davies emphasized.

For his part, Mr. Neils Scott

said he was pleased to be in Liberia to carry out the responsibility of Resident Coordinator and thanked Liberia for exporting peace to Mali through MINUSMA.

Mr. Scott said he looks forward to working with the Permanent Mission of Liberia to the United Nations and the Liberia Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, chaired by Sweden, in supporting the initiatives of the Government of Liberia.

With the Liberian Government's approval, Mr. Scott was appointed on January 1, 2021, by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres to serve as United Nations Resident Coordinator in Liberia. --Press release

## Ellen rethinks

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government operation by training teachers, reactivating the teachers training institute to gather more teachers who had gone through the necessary training to deliver quality education that we all are enjoying here today.

She said that couldn't be enough because education is something that builds and strengthens any nation, and so she didn't stop there, but went on to ensure compulsory education for primary students. "Ensuring this isn't still enough because we got to go at the higher level to produce people that have the brains, and capacity to reach out into other schools and infuse them with the knowledge that are required."

According to her, she then recognized that her government couldn't do it all, and needed full support and cooperation from others, noting that the lesson was an example that she took from the Republic of Kenya, which she adapted as a means of helping to improve Liberian education sector.

Meanwhile, the President of the Best Brain International University or (BBIU) Rev. Dr. Luther Tarpeh says the goal of the institution is to shape the destiny of the country by educating patriotic Liberians, who will use their education to solve national problems that might arise.

He said it's an honor for him to have formed part of the launching ceremony of what he sees as one of Liberia's best interms of education, adding, "Our goal is to shape the destiny of a generation that will produce seasoned patriots who will believe in themselves and use their education to solve our national problems".

Dr. Tarpeh said the foundational stones of BBIU will encourage Liberians to love their country and become proud citizens who will give their very best in making sure Liberia moves forward.

"When you are patriotic, full of energy and actions, there's no doubt that your education will make a difference", he concluded. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

## Senators gauge

Cont'd from page 6

which poses strains on the already nose-dived economy.

He calls for a legislation that would require any incumbent member of the House seeking senatorial position to resign, lamenting, there will soon be four by-elections and the country will have to spend US\$4 million or above.

Former deputy speaker of the 54th Legislature Prince Moyer, now Senator of Bong County, says he took the highest risk of leaving his post to contest for the senate, which he won, adding that it was the will of the people for him to serve as their senator.

Senator Moyer says he didn't run with the intention of going to the senate to

become Senate President Pro-Tempore because he knows election for the post will not be held until 2024. He says his focus was not the budget for deputy speaker, but the willingness to serve.

Montserrado county Senator Abraham Darius Dillon urges his colleagues to work in the interest of the Liberian people, reminding them that nine years has an end. Dillon maintains that they will work together to get the job done for the people, vowing to be more robust this time around.

He thanks the people of Montserrado for their support and discloses that as he declares his assets, they need to re-visit the Code of Conduct for public officials so that any official who

declares his assets should publish them.

Grand Bassa County re-elected Senator Nyonblee Kangar-Lawrence rallies her colleagues to work to restore stability in the economy and make the lives of the people better. She says they will work with independent senators of like minds to put the senate feet to the fire so that it can work for the Liberian people.

She lauds the people of Grand Bassa for their love and support, the Collaborating Political Parties, and all other well-wishes, for the opportunity given her to serve her people for another nine years.

Twenty of the 30 senators at the Capitol resumed official

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work on Monday, January 11, after their annual break.

Statutorily, a total of 30 senators represent all 15 political sub-divisions of the country, meaning two senators from each county. But the

conduct of the recent Special Senatorial election which should have produced 15 new senators is beset disputes currently before the National Elections Commission. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



# Ellen rethinks on Liberia's education



By Lewis S. Teh

Former Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who once described the country's education as "a mess", is having a rethink here, saying the current status of the country's education sector, coupled with the number of

institutions of higher learning, including high schools and universities indicates a significant progress.

In a speech during her presidency in 2013 Mrs Sirleaf said the Liberian education system was a mess, and there was need for a complete overhaul of the system. Her

statement at the time was in response to entrance results released by the University of Liberia in which all 25,000 candidates that wrote the exam failed. She also termed the entrance result at the time as "alarming."

But speaking Monday, January 11, 2021 when Mr. Sirleaf formally launched Liberia's university, Best Brain International University situated along the Robertsfield highway outside Monrovia, she called on students there to compete with their counterparts in the sub-region.

"There was a time during my regime as president of Liberia I said the country education system was a mess, but that was to inspire schools authorities and our officials to do more to improve the sector", said the former president.

Mrs. Sirleaf: The efforts we made to help improve the messy system that we talked about was to go beyond

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# Liberian police embark on first UN mission

By Winston W. Parley

Liberia is set to deploy its first batch of police peacekeepers on a United Nations peacekeeping mission, with four officers due to depart the country on 14 January for South Sudan in East Central Africa to join other forces under the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

South Sudan faced a civil war that broke out from

December 2013 through February 2020 before a unity government was formed between President Salva Kiir and rival Riek Machar.

Presenting the first four officers from the Liberia National Police (LNP) during a press conference Tuesday, 12 January at the LNP Headquarters, Police Inspector General Col. Patrick T. Sudue said it is a landmark achievement for the police force under his administration.



The four officers commissioned to serve in the UN Mission in Southern Sudan include the team leader Chief Superintendent Togba J. Massaquoi, Chief Superintendent Anthony T. Blaye, Superintendent Rachel B. Harris and Sargent Abdullai Dukuly, Jr.

Col. Sudue says the LNP expects these officers to exhibit high quality of discipline and to

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