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Ellen looks back



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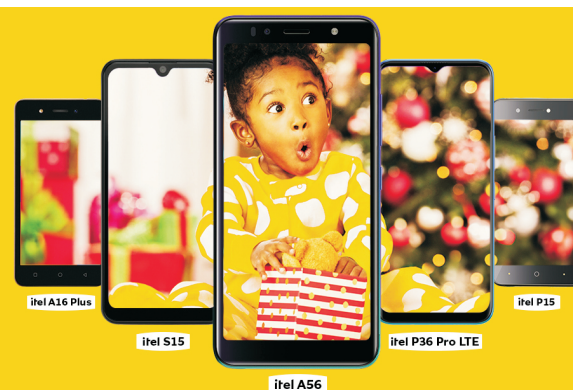
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Continental News

Uganda president in clear lead as rival cries foul

Uganda's long-time President Yoweri Museveni has a clear lead in the presidential race following Thursday's vote, preliminary results show.

The country's electoral commission has dismissed allegations of vote rigging, made by opposition candidate Bobi Wine, a former pop star.

But election monitors say confidence in the count has been damaged by a three-day internet outage.

Final results are expected to be confirmed on Saturday.

Dozens of people were killed during violence in the run-up to the election. Opposition politicians have also accused the government of harassment. President Museveni, who has been in power for 35 years, is hoping for a sixth term.

The 76-year-old says he is standing for stability. Meanwhile Bobi Wine - the stage name for 38-year-old Robert Kyagulanyi - says he represents the younger generation in one of the world's youngest countries, where the median age is 16.

On Friday, as the results came in, Bobi Wine said that Ugandan soldiers had

surrounded and breached his home. "None of these military intruders is talking to us," he said on Twitter. "We are in serious trouble."

But a government spokesman accused him of "dramatising" the incident "to seek sympathy".

"Bobi Wine at this moment is a very important person. It is the duty of the state of Uganda to ensure he is secure," Don Wanyama said. Based on provisional results from two-

thirds of polling stations, Mr Museveni has so far won 62% of the vote compared to Bobi Wine's 30%, the electoral commission said.

Election commission chief Simon Byabakama said the vote had been peaceful, and called on Bobi Wine, who said some of his polling agents were arrested on Thursday, to make public the evidence for his fraud allegations. The opposition candidate believes

the internet shutdown is being used to block communication and as a way of compromising the vote.

As well as being unable to get online, people have been having trouble sending text messages.

"Several of our phone numbers, including mine and my wife's, have been switched off, have disconnected illegally," said Bobi Wine, according to Reuters news agency.

"I will be happy to share the videos of all the fraud and

irregularities as soon as the internet is restored." The electoral commission says only two polling stations in the country reported major irregularities and voting was cancelled in those locations. Mr Wanyama, who is a spokesperson for President Museveni, also hit back at Bobi Wine's claims of vote rigging.

"He came short of the expectation of Ugandans," he said, speaking to the BBC. "He had no message and Ugandans have told him he has to wait a little longer." BBC



More than half the ballots have been counted so far

'Clashes kill 48 people' in Sudan's Darfur region

Clashes between different ethnic groups in Sudan's West Darfur state have left 48 people dead, Sudan's news agency says quoting the doctors' union.

The fighting in the state capital, El Geneina, began on Saturday after a row in which a man was stabbed to death. A state-wide curfew has been imposed and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok has sent a delegation to investigate. A conflict in Darfur that began in 2003 forced millions to flee and, despite a peace process, tensions remain.

Saturday's violence comes less than three weeks after peacekeepers from the United Nations and African Union handed over security to the Khartoum authorities after 13 years there, reports the BBC's Youssef Taha. Similar clashes in El Geneina last year, which saw Arab pastoralists fight with non-Arab groups, caused hundreds of casualties. The most recent fighting, which also left nearly 100 injured, was centred around a camp for people who had been displaced by the Darfur conflict. A deadly row between two men escalated



into a fight involving armed militias, the AFP news agency reports.

A peace deal involving most, but not all, groups in Darfur was signed last year.

The Darfur conflict began under the presidency of Omar al-Bashir, who was overthrown in 2019 and is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes and genocide in the region.

Justice for the people of Darfur was a key rallying cry for civilian groups who backed the ouster of the president after nearly three decades in power. The Sudanese Professionals' Association, which was at the forefront of the anti-Bashir movement, called for the current transitional government to deal with the "unruly armed groups which have been freely moving and terrorising civilians since the collapse of the former regime", Sudan's news agency reports. BBC

EU concern over Ethiopia war crime reports

The European Union says it is getting consistent reports of ethnic-targeted killings and possible war crimes in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray.

The defence forces entered Tigray early in

November to oust the region's ruling party after its troops had captured federal military bases.

The government declared victory by the end of that month, but the EU says the situation remains dire.

The conflict threatens the

stability of the entire region, the EU says. The government of Nobel Peace Prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed insists that it has been using proportional force to restore law and order and bring a "criminal clique" to justice.

Since the end of November there has been an operation to find fugitive Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party leaders who vowed to continue the fight after the regional capital was captured by the army.

"The situation on the ground goes well beyond a purely internal 'law and order' operation," EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell said in a statement.

"We receive consistent reports of ethnic-targeted violence, killings, massive looting, rapes, forceful returns of refugees [to Eritrea] and possible war crimes," he said.

With more than two million forced to flee their homes, people in Tigray were in desperate need of aid but access to the region remains limited, he added.



The Ethiopian government has repeatedly denied targeting civilians during its operations

Tigrayans make up around 6% of Ethiopia's more than 110 million population. Mr Borrell said that Eritrean troops were involved in military operations in Tigray, something both the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments deny. They are accused of forcibly taking back Eritrean refugees who lived in the UN-run camps in Tigray, before the conflict there broke out.

Nearly 100,000 Eritreans lived in four camps in Tigray after fleeing political persecution and military conscription in the one-party state.

His comments come a day after UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said the UNHCR had not been given access to the Shimelba and Hitsats refugee camps since early November. BBC

EDITORIAL

Govt. should pay poll workers

IT IS SADDEN, disgraceful and very embarrassing that poll workers hired by the National Elections Commission for the December 8, 2020 special senatorial election and national referendum are crying and protesting for stipend owed them over a month since the polls were conducted across the country. We just can't comprehend that the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning would delay in providing money to the NEC to pay stipends such as US\$50, US\$75 or US\$100 to poll workers who served under very strenuous circumstances during the poll.

ON THE EVE of the election in December 2020 we vividly recalled that polling staff across Montserrado County demanded stipend before being deployed. The ugly situation they tried to avoid has now caught up with them: The elections are over but pay cannot come. When will they receive it? Only heaven knows.

NEC CHAIRPERSON DAVIDETTA Browne-Lansanah last week appealed to protesting polling staff to exercise patience as the Commission continues to engage the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to make funds available to complete payment for all poll workers throughout the country.

MADAM BROWNE-LANSANAH SAID Thursday, 14 January the Commission, through its Finance Section is in daily discussion with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to quickly disburse remaining Five Million United States dollars (US\$5 Million) to clear all debts it owns not only poll workers, but vendors who also rendered electoral related services, including car rentals, printing, and the media.

BUT CHAIRPERSON BROWNE-LANSANAH should have known ever since that when she sliced her US\$17 million budget for the 2020 special senatorial elections and the National Referendum by US\$4million, she was already running into trouble such as the one before the doorstep of the Commission, for none of her predecessors had conducted nationwide election on a meager budget of US\$13 million.

WE BELIEVE HER decision to have accepted to operate on such a low budget for the senatorial election, national referendum and two by-elections for the House of Representatives was a very big mistake that she might be difficult, if not impossible, to correct under this administration.

MADAM BROWNE-LANSANAH WOULD face a serious task in convincing both lawmakers at the Capitol and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to have an operational budget above US\$17 million for future election. She brought the bar very low for an important national endeavor that has left the Commission walloping in debts and strangled.

Apart from donor's support, we stand to be corrected, but the Government of Liberia's contribution to the December 8, 2020 senatorial election did not pass US\$5 million. We Liberians, including government always want others to do for us what ought to do for ourselves, as a nation.

THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT is faced with shortage of cash in banks, crucial issue like election should not be taken lightly. It requires adequate planning and funding to make outcomes successful, including payment to polling staff and vendors.

THE MINISTRY OF Finance and Development Planning should exert all efforts in providing money for the National Elections Commission to enable the electoral house meets its financial obligations to vendors, media houses and polling staff for services rendered during the election.

COMMENTARY

MOHAMED ELBARADEI

The Eternal Promise of the Arab Spring

Instead of undergoing a genuine transition to freedom and social justice, almost all Arab Spring countries have reverted to various combinations of autocracy and various degrees of poverty and violence. But four lessons from the past decade could be useful in guiding the region's political trajectory.

VIENNA - The Arab Spring that erupted a decade ago was a quest for human dignity whose protagonists sought to overcome decades of repression, poverty, and inequality. It occurred in two waves, the first cresting in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, followed by a second in 2019-20 in Algeria, Sudan, and Lebanon.

Sadly, neither wave fully achieved the protesters' aims. Instead of undergoing a genuine transition to freedom and social justice, almost all Arab Spring countries have reverted to various combinations of autocracy and various degrees of poverty and violence. Except for Tunisia, to a certain extent, most Arab societies are more polarized and fragmented today than they were before.

Democracy is not like instant coffee. It needs an enabling environment and a hospitable culture to flourish and grow. A history of colonialism, followed by decades of authoritarianism, meant that this environment was absent in the Arab world. The people who revolted and took to the streets loathed the regimes that had tyrannized them for so long. But they lacked a clear, unified vision of the change they sought.

"Bread, freedom, and social justice" was the rallying call, but translating this into a more democratic reality proved hugely problematic. Without a robust and vibrant civil society - labor unions, political parties, associations, and independent media - it was impossible to agree on a transitional road map following the swift fall of Arab dictators. The institutions needed to enable true social cohesion were simply not there.

Once the lid of repression was lifted, the revolutionaries splintered along a variety of ideological lines. The region's dire political, social, and economic conditions had previously led many Muslims to believe that only the certainties of their faith could offer them a refuge from misery and the promise of a better future. And after the Arab Spring erupted, a deep schism divided Islamists and secularists.

This lack of social cohesion and consensus on basic values has proven to be the major Achilles heel of democratization efforts in the Arab world. It allowed the remnants of the old regimes to regroup, recombine, and rebound quickly with familiar authoritarian vigor.

Once the old regime reconstituted itself, the struggle in most cases became a vicious fight for power between the entrenched "deep state," the military, and various religious groupings that were the only organized non-state forces. Each had its own agenda; most were largely allergic to democracy or modernity.

Lost in this struggle were the interests of the masses who had triggered the Arab Spring in

the hope of a better life - food security, quality education, decent health care, and a modicum of freedom and dignity. With the exception of a few pawns co-opted by those in power, the protesters ended up being marginalized or persecuted. Many became dejected and simply gave up.

Some outside powers meddled significantly, because they thought the region was too important to be left to determine its own future. Those threatened by the idea of democracy actively worked to undermine it. Others, mostly caught off guard, were primarily concerned with stability and their geostrategic interests, which had been closely connected for decades with the region's timeless authoritarian rulers.

The economic and technical support required to support change, as well as the necessary practical and legal advice, were not forthcoming. For example, although Tunisia desperately needed only modest economic assistance to ease the pain of transition, nobody stepped up, because the country was not considered strategically important. Sudan is a more recent example of this.

As a result, those who champion democracy and human rights are often seen as using these values instrumentally to serve their parochial interests. As internal power struggles have intensified, so have outside players' political and military interventions, compounding the region's chaos and fractures, exacerbating violence, and dimming hopes that freedom and dignity will arrive any time soon.

But history suggests that the quest for freedom, though invariably long and uneven, is inevitable and unstoppable. Despite many setbacks, the Arab world's large population of young people has traded apathy for awareness and engagement, with social media playing an empowering role.

Four lessons from the Arab Spring could be useful in guiding the region's political trajectory. First, an independent and active civil society is key. Without platforms to organize and advocate for change, calls for reform are easily stifled.

Second, the need for social cohesion to fend off outside meddling cannot be overstated. Ideological reconciliation, specification of the relationship between religion and the state, and a readiness to compromise are indispensable foundations of a functioning democratic state.

Third, the transition to democracy must be incremental. Just as no one jumps directly from kindergarten to university, the democratization process must be inclusive and carefully calibrated, with clear milestones. A starting point could be a common vision to improve human rights.



O-PED

By Ekaterina Kotrikadze

Navalny's Return

Despite independent journalists uncovering more details about last year's nerve-gas attack against Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, public sentiment in the country remains unmoved. The primary reason is not that Russian citizens don't know about the crime; it is that too many just don't care.

MOSCOW - Alexei Navalny is about to disturb Russia's laziest month. As in Soviet times, the New Year holiday stretches halfway through January, allowing for Russians to drink, eat oranges, and watch nostalgic 1970s romantic comedies. Politics usually gets put on hold - but perhaps not this year, with Navalny's planned return from Berlin on January 17, following his poisoning last August.

The end of 2020 already signaled that this January would be different, because we Russians learned that Navalny, the country's main opposition leader, was the target of a murder plot that was almost certainly carried out at the Kremlin's behest. Instead of protecting us, the FSB, the Russian intelligence service and successor to the KGB, has been busy trying to eliminate the regime's opponents.

An investigation conducted by journalists from Bellingcat, The Insider, and CNN has provided a clear picture of the Kremlin's operation to poison Navalny with the nerve agent Novichok during his August trip to the Siberian city of Tomsk. It is Navalny's luck that the FSB's former mastery of the dark arts has atrophied over time. The operation failed, and Navalny is now openly - and sometimes almost comedically - exposing his assailants, one of whom, believing that he was speaking to someone in the "system," revealed operational details of the plot over the phone. It was Navalny, who recorded the call.

What more should be needed to provoke public indignation? Surveying my own colleagues at the independent TV station Dozhd, most agreed that Navalny should be 2020's person of the year. His fearless quest to hold the powerful accountable has earned the respect of thousands, if not millions.

But in another recent survey, just 61% of Russians report having "heard something" about Navalny's poisoning, and only 17% said they had been following the story closely. Worse, 30% responded that there was no poisoning - believing that it was all an act - and another 19% agreed that it was "a provocation of Western intelligence agencies." A mere 15% recognized it "as an attempt by the authorities to eliminate a political opponent."

These findings demonstrate two things. First, a large share of Russians still watch and believe state television, and are not seeking alternative opinions and news sources, such as on YouTube, where more discerning Russian news consumers now turn. Second, and more disturbing, many Russians simply don't care. Around 44% heard about this heinous crime, but either are not bothered enough by it to learn more, or are in a state of fearful denial about their own political leaders' actions.

For similar reasons, most Russians will not countenance mass protests. In December, following the investigation into Navalny's poisoning, only a few activists openly dissented. The film director Vitaly Mansky, for example, showed up at the FSB building with a piece of underwear, in reference to the revelation that this may have been the sartorial means by which the Novichok was administered. Mansky's witty antic may have been noticed by other creative types, but it fell far short of spurring a broader protest movement.

To be sure, a Russian winter does not offer ideal conditions for taking to the streets. And yet, back in the early 2010s, hundreds of thousands of Russians braved freezing temperatures to protest Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency, following his brief stint as prime minister. Moreover, in this day and age, Russians could voice their objections to the Kremlin's actions online and in many other ways. They could demand an objective, independent investigation, and discuss the matter on social networks.

As president, Putin surely knows the details of the assassination attempt. He knows that US intelligence had nothing to do with it, and yet he has claimed that Navalny is backed by "American special services," and that the Bellingcat investigation is based on selectively leaked "US intelligence materials." Though he acknowledges that Navalny was under surveillance, he points out that this is standard practice. But if the Americans are guilty only of giving information to Bellingcat, there is still the question asked of Raskolnikov in Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment: Who did it, then? The Kremlin offers no answer to that.

Among Putin's greatest fears is that someone in his immediate circle will betray him, opening the door for a "color revolution" of the kind seen in Georgia and Ukraine in the early 2000s. He has repeatedly described mass political protests in post-Soviet states as "illegal coups" arranged by the West. Though he never refers to Navalny by name in public, he regularly compares him to Mikheil Saakashvili, one of the leaders of Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution. By contrast, Belarus's dictator, Aleksandr Lukashenko, falls into the category of "our son of a bitch," because he refuses to surrender to a "color revolution."

Is a "color revolution" even possible in Russia, given that even a government operation to murder an opposition leader is not enough to provoke national indignation? Likewise, few Russians batted an eye last summer when Putin rewrote the constitution to extend his rule at least until 2036.

Russia's past - both Soviet and czarist - has taught today's Russians that separation from the leader generally comes only with his death. Under Putin, many Russians - especially older generations - have come to embody a combination of imperial longing and fear of the external (and eternal) enemy. Life under this leader may not be ideal; but, as Navalny and his supporters have learned, it isn't bad enough.

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OPINION

By Paola Subacchi

China's Debt Grip on Africa

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, China has steadily increased its direct lending to developing countries - often with draconian conditions attached. Debt moratoria during the pandemic, while important, will not solve this problem.

LONDON - The pandemic is confronting highly indebted poor countries with a fateful dilemma. As Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, lamented last April, leaders have been forced to choose whether to "continue to pay toward debt or redirect resources to save lives and livelihoods." And when they choose the latter, it is often China - Africa's biggest bilateral lender - to which they have to answer.

According to Ahmed, a moratorium on debt payments was essential to enable Ethiopia to respond to COVID-19. Such a moratorium would save Ethiopia - one of the world's poorest countries - \$1.7 billion between April 2020 and the end of the year, and \$3.5 billion if extended to the end of 2022. An effective COVID-19 response, he noted, would cost \$3 billion.

A debt moratorium did save Angola, at least for now. Along with Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Mauritania, and Sudan, Angola was under severe financial pressure, owing to the collapse in commodity prices triggered by the COVID-19 crisis. But, in September, Angola secured an agreement with three of its major creditors - including the China Development Bank (the CDB, to which Angola owes \$14.5 billion) and the Export-Import Bank of China (EximBank, owed \$5 billion) - to receive \$6.2 billion in debt relief over the next three years.

Similarly, in October, Zambia missed a \$42.5 million interest payment on a dollar-denominated bond, and was on the brink of defaulting on its \$12 billion foreign debt - the equivalent of approximately half of its GDP. But the same Chinese creditors eased the pressure: the CDB deferred interest and principal repayments for six months, until April 2021, and EximBank suspended all payments on its \$110 million portfolio of sovereign loans.

The EximBank deal was agreed within the framework of the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), under which 73 of the world's poorest countries can request temporary respite from bilateral debt repayments. So far, 46 countries - including Angola and Zambia among the 31 in Africa - have made DSSI requests.

Some 70% of the affected payments - worth about \$8 billion - are owed to China, which holds 62% of Africa's official bilateral debt. This should not be a surprise: since the 2008 global financial crisis, China has steadily ramped up its direct lending to developing countries. For the 50 most indebted recipients of such lending, the average stock of debt owed to China has increased from less than 1% of GDP in 2005 to more than 15% in 2017.

This carries serious risks. For starters, Chinese lenders tend to set more onerous borrowing conditions - higher interest rates, shorter maturities - than multilateral development banks. In April 2020, Tanzanian President John Magufuli reportedly threatened to cancel a \$10 billion project launched by his predecessor, because the Chinese funding came with conditions that "only a drunkard" would accept.

Moreover, most of China's bilateral lending is carried out by so-called policy banks and state-owned commercial banks, which may be controlled by the Chinese state, but operate as legally independent entities, not as sovereign lenders. So, unlike the members of the Paris Club of major sovereign creditors, they often require collateral for development loans. About 60% of their total lending to developing countries is subject to collateral. When a country applies for debt relief, its Chinese creditors can claim the rights to assets held in escrow.

Furthermore, because of their murky status - neither official nor private - Chinese banks tend to renegotiate sovereign loans bilaterally and in secret. That was true of Zambia's agreement with the CDB, which China considers to be a commercial creditor. Refusing to heed calls from the World Bank and the G20 for the CDB to participate in the DSSI as an official bilateral lender, China insisted that the suspension of debt-service payments took place "on a voluntary basis and according to market principles."

To be sure, China does not bear sole responsibility for this situation. It was the failure of other lenders to provide adequate funding - especially infrastructure investment - that drove so many low-income countries into Chinese creditors' arms.

African countries often cannot afford to build the infrastructure they desperately need to support their growing populations. Moreover, they lack access to international capital markets and banks. And sovereign lenders have not picked up the slack: in 2017, the Paris Club accounted for only 5% of public and publicly guaranteed debt in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Chinese lenders, on the other hand, have been willing to extend loans to poor African countries without demanding much in terms of governance reforms and anti-corruption measures. The result has been projects that are bound by draconian lending conditions, expensive to operate, and unlikely ever to produce decent returns.

Debt moratoria during the COVID-19 crisis may offer poor countries temporary respite, freeing up funds for the pandemic response. But they will not solve these countries' debt problems. On the contrary, the end of the moratoria could trigger a wave of synchronized defaults, requiring the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral institutions to intervene.

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ARTICLE

ARTICLE

China and Africa: A Closer Community for a Better World

The world will never be the same after COVID-19. Yet in a world changed and changing in ways unseen before, certain things do endure. The fraternity between China and Africa is one of them. Forged in the early nationhood of the People's Republic of China and African countries, such friendship has grown into a towering tree defying winds and rains over the decades.

And certainly, it will not be deterred by COVID-19. From 4 to 9 January 2021, Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi started his official visits to the world with a five-nation tour to Africa, a proud tradition upheld by every Chinese foreign minister over the past 30 years. Rain or shine, China and Africa are always there for each other. President Xi Jinping visited Africa on his maiden foreign trip in 2013. Many African leaders, like Tanzanian founding father Julius Nyerere, visited China quite a few times. From building TAZARA to fighting Ebola, China never hesitates to help African brothers and sisters. From applauding China's return to the UN to rebutting unfair accusation against China, Africa always stands with China.

The timing of Foreign Minister's visit cannot be more relevant: 2021 is an anniversary year of diplomatic ties between China and several of the five



African countries; the concluding year for the follow-through of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Beijing Summit; and, most importantly, a year when solidarity is vital for humanity to emerge from the challenges of our lifetime.

True friends don't leave each other at the sign of danger, according to an African proverb. When the world is in the depth of winter, due to a coronavirus which no one knew before, solidarity between China and African countries sends a warm spring breeze. For China, it is a snowfall of goodwill letters from African leaders and assistance in kind, priceless as an expression of friendship. For Africa, it is the medical supplies and professionals sent from China in addition to the online experience sharing sessions that China held with African friends.

For example, when Botswana detected its first COVID case last March, China was among the first to send medical supplies. Last September, a 46-member Chinese medical team braved the pandemic to begin their two-year long work in Botswana. At the Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone and the Nyangabgwe Hospital in Francistown, the Chinese doctors threw themselves into the treatment of urgent cases, including a little boy with acute abdominal disease, often before the patients were tested COVID-positive. It was more than courtesy when Sethomo Lelatisitswe, Botswana's assistant minister of health and wellness, once commented this, "Botswana will forever cherish the assistance from China".

Now, with China and Africa working together to make vaccines more affordable and accessible in the developing world, there is a greater chance for humanity to prevail over this trying time.

But the world needs to look beyond the pandemic. China is pursuing national rejuvenation and a better life for its people. So is Africa. With the African Continental Free Trade Area taking off on 1 January 2021 and China reinforcing its domestic market and the international one, a lot more can be done by the two coming together. When it comes to getting things done, China and Africa are no talkers but doers: an MOU was signed between China and Nigeria during Foreign Minister Wang's visit to spearhead bilateral cooperation across the board; Chinese companies like Huawei have been helping with ICT training for the next-generation Nigerian talents; D.R. Congo and Botswana became the

45th and 46th members joining the big family of Belt and Road cooperation; a grand blueprint has been drawn up for China-Tanzania cooperation in infrastructure, human resources training, investment and trade; a demonstration zone of South-South cooperation on climate change will be built to support climate change response in Seychelles, a paradise on the Indian Ocean.

Heading to a shared future with their strengths combined, China and Africa can work together toward: a healthy Africa with greater public health capacity, an Africa strong in manufacturing, a connected Africa with across-the-continent infrastructure, trade and financial links, a green Africa that prospers while preserving its grasslands, mountains and lakes, a digital Africa that thrives on the fourth industrial revolution, a bumper African harvest for all Africans, a secure Africa where guns are silenced and peace restored, and an Africa drawing on a greater pool of professional talents.

Sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith. This is the guiding principle set out by President Xi Jinping during his visit to Tanzania in 2013. Up to date, China has built for Africa 6,000 kilometers of railways, the same mileage of highways, over 130 medical facilities and more than 170 schools. China sees to it that every promise be turned into real results.

When the world today suffers the greatest recession since the 1930s, what else is more needed than solidarity and partnership? When the 1.4 billion Chinese and 1.3 billion Africans prosper together, humanity will have a brighter future.

In the 21st century, as in the past, a closer China-Africa community is a force for good for this world.

7TH DAY'S SESSION: IN THE MONTHLY AND PROBATE COURT FOR MONT. CO.
 MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2020
 JANUARY TERM A.D. 2020

SHEET ONE
 THE MONTHLY AND PROBATE COURT FOR MONTERRADO COUNTY, MET FOR NORMAL TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS WITH HIS HONOR, J. VINTON HOLDER. DEVOTION WAS CONDUCTED AND THEREAFTER THE ROLL OF ALL THE CLERICAL STAFF WAS CALLED WITH THOSE ABSENT DULY NOTED. THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS DAY'S SITTING WAS CORRECTED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED WITH THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS MADE BASED UPON MOTION TO THE COURT BY COUNSEL WHICH WAS SECONDED AND GRANTED TO FORM PART OF TODAY'S SESSION.

COURT: Mr. Sheriff, recess hour having expired, court now resumes normal business. And so ordered.

Court: Mr. Sheriff, call the case, the petition for Reading of the Will of the late KOLUBAH ZIZI TELEWODA HOWARD/BAI HOWARD

The petitioner is represented by the Jones and Jones law firm and present in court is LAVELA Kobo Johnson, Sr. who says he is in Court and has a submission to make after representation are noted. And submits.

The representation of the Counsel for the petitioner is hereby noted. The Court says Counsel for the petitioner may now proceed. And it is so ordered.

Court: Mr. Clerk you are hereby ordered to break the seal on the brown envelope and read the contents in open Court. And is so ordered.

Clerk: Your Honor, as per your Honor's orders, I herewith unseal a brown envelope purported to contained 3 pages issued by the late Hon Kolubah Zizi Telewoda/Bai Telewoda which I now read. and I have discovered therefrom a three page document, KOLUBAH Zizi Howa /ai Howard which I now read.

Thus ends the reading of the last will and Testament as per your Honor's instruction. The area are presented by the Century law offices and present in Court are Clhrs. Willie D. Barclay and lavela Kobo Johnson Sr. who says he is in Court with the petitioner and most respectfully request your Honor, Counsels and others have and application to spread on the minutes of Court after representations are fully noted.

Court: The submission by the Counsel for petitioners and the Request by counsel is hereby granted. And it is so ordered.

At this stages, one of counsel for the petitioners prays your Honor and this Honorable Court to order the breaking of the Seal containing the last will and testament of Hon. Koluba Zizi Telewoda/Bai Howard., thereafter have the same read in open court and that your Honor will order the Clerk of Court to issue letters Testamentary to the Executor or executors named in said will who thereafter will proceed with the administration of the testate Estate of the late Hon. Koluba Zizi Howard, Thus end the reading of the last Will and testament and submit

Court: The instrument purporting to be the last will and testament of the late Koluba Zizi Telewoda Howard having been read in open court as required by law, the Clerk of this Court is hereby ordered to issue public notice and have same posted on the bulletin of this Court and said public notice published in at least one legalize Newspaper for a period of 30 days for the purpose of any would be objector to file their formal objections thereto within the period of 30 days,. Their failure so to do this court will be left with no other alternative but to proceed with the admission and probate of the said

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL,
 THIS 11TH DAY OF JANUARY A.D. 2020

J. Vinton Holder
 JUDGE, MONTHLY & PROBATE COURT
 MONTERRADO COUNTY, R.L.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Debtor kills motorcyclist to clear L\$18,000

The Liberia National Police (LNP) says a 24-year-old man Amadu F. Gray and his two accomplices have killed a motorcyclist victim Abdulaye B. V. Johnson and took away the victim's motorbike to sell

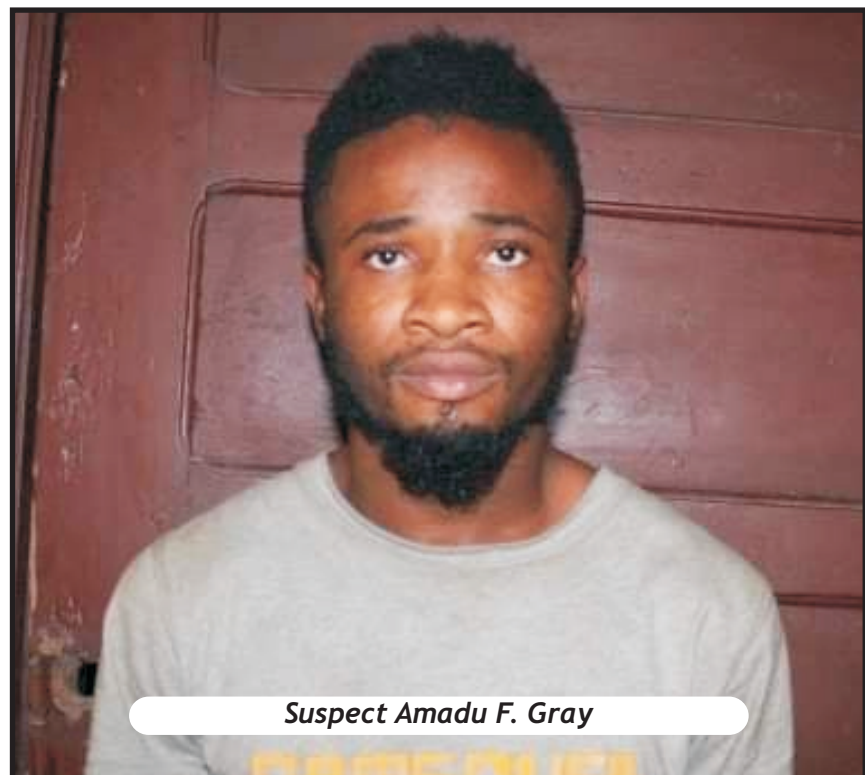
amount, he chose to take away the victim's life so as to sell the deceased's motorbike and then use the proceeds to clear his alleged debt.

In a release issued over the weekend, the LNP indicated that

28 December 2020, he and his accomplices, Rambo and T. Boy to be identified, lured victim Abdulaye B. V. Johnson to take them on the Bomi High way to be paid. He further explained that, upon their arrival at Kalgbah, Dewein District, Bomi County, they killed victim Johnson with a cutlass and dumped his lifeless body in the bush and fled to Monrovia with his motorbike. Suspect Amadu Gray is said to have narrated that they took victim Johnson's bike at his Caldwell, New Georgia residence with the intention to sell it and settle a debt of LRD18,000.00 he (suspect Gray) owed his boss Mr. Weah.

Additionally, police say they gathered that the abandoned lifeless body was discovered by a farmer on 31 December 2020, while the three suspects have since been hiding in separate locations since their return until police tip-off.

Based upon the foregoing circumstances coupled with evidence, suspect Amadu F. Gray has been sent to Court in Tubmanburg, Bomi County for prosecution in violation of Chapter 14, Subchapter A, Section 14.1 of the revised Penal code of the Republic of Liberia, while his accomplice, Rambo is charged likewise pending his arrest and probe.



Suspect Amadu F. Gray

it and settle a debt of LD\$18,000, which might be a little over US\$100.

Police say suspect Gray was allegedly indebted to his boss only identified as Mr. Weah the amount of LD\$18,000, and in his desperation to pay this

suspect Amadu F. Gray, alias 'Twenty One missed calls', and a resident of the Caldwell community had been charged with murder and sent to court to face trial. During police investigation, suspect Gray is alleged to have revealed that on

UP chair wants education prioritized in Liberia

The National Chairman of the former ruling Unity Party (UP) has underscored the need for Liberians to prioritize education, if the country should move forward.

Chairman Amin Modad said no nation can develop when its people are not educated to move the national agenda for growth and development.

Serving as guest speaker over the weekend at the first graduation exercise of the Juah Sarwee Memorial Wallance Institute in New Kru Town, Bushrod Island he said without education it is impossible for a nation to achieve any major developmental drive.

Chairman Modad, businessman-turned politician noted that if some Liberians believe that education is not vital for national leadership, they should think again and notice the current status of Liberia.

He stressed that education is the basic for any sound leadership anywhere, including government, so it should not be taken for granted.

He urged graduates of the school to pursue higher education in order to prepare for challenges ahead, noting that Liberia is faced with serious economic problems.

The UP chair also challenged the graduates not to limit their potential to excel due to the present economic environment in the country.

Chairman Modad emphasized

that Liberian youth should be determined to transform their lives through education, which he described as a key to success.

He noted that more than 15 students from the school who wrote the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) came out successfully. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



Chairman Amin Modad

Commercial cyclists want ban lifted

By Lewis S. Teh

The leadership of the tricycle and motorcycle union says in as much the Government of Liberia is unable to provide jobs for the citizenry, there should be no sanction placed on tricycle and motorcycle operators in the country.

Addressing a joint news conference recently in Monrovia, the Secretary General of the tricycle and motorcycle union Trokon Gray quoted Article 8 of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia that calls on government to create employment opportunities for its citizens.

He pointed that Article 13 of the Constitution also states that all citizens have the right to move freely around the country once they didn't contravene the organic laws of the land.

"We strongly believe our

the group, Trokon Gray said, it is unacceptable for motorcyclists that contribute to government revenue to be treated in such manner.

Mr. Trokon said since the declaration of the no-go zone restriction, their members' rights have been denied, saying, "We see this action as a complete marginalization and abuse of power."

But Police deputy inspector general for operation Col. Marvin Sackor recently clarified that restriction imposed on commercial motorbikes and tricycles from plying in central Monrovia is meant to avoid frequent road accidents and save lives.

"We didn't put sanction on motorbike and tricycle riders to put the youthful population out of jobs, but we did that to reduce the huge number of road accidents as the result of their



members operation poses no threat to our country", and therefore, for the LNP to impose no-go zone is a clear violation of Article 13 knowing that the Government of Liberia is incapacitated to providing jobs for all of its citizens", he said.

The leadership of the cyclists union further described as draconian and a complete marginalization, government's recent actions through the Police to stop its members from plying major streets in Monrovia.

It said the Police decision to declare certain parts of Monrovia as no go zones for motorcyclists has endangered lives of its members, who rely commercial cycling to feed their families.

The Secretary General of

motorcycles", he said.

Col. Sackor made the clarification on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 when he spoke to reporters in Monrovia. According to him, Police authorities met with the leadership of the federation of motorcycle union, cognizant that some of them are tax payers.

"In the meeting, we told them that due to our road safety statistics, there is huge number of accidents and based on the statistics, we told them we were going back to status quo anti, where there will be demarcation and they will only be allowed to ply the feeder roads."

Col. Sackor maintained the Police will not compromise public safety. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

EPA Boss wants Climate Change aligned with development plan

The Executive Director of Liberia Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Prof. Wilson K. Tarpeh has stressed the urgent need to align environment and climate change with Liberia's development plan, since everything is impacted by climate change.

Speaking at the closure

The closure meeting for the UNDP-supported Green Climate Fund (GCF) financed project "To Advance the National Adaptation Plans (NAP) process for medium-term investment planning in climate-sensitive sectors" was held at Bella Casa Hotel in Sinkor.

The NAP Project was signed on October 16, 2017 by the

take stock of the project results, review and share experiences and lessons learnt from the NAP Project that can inform ongoing and emerging and new projects.

The forum attracted over 60 participants including policy makers, project focal points, representatives from line agencies and some experts who worked as consultants.

Speaking further at the meeting, Prof Tarpeh disclosed that the process of developing an adaptation plan was activated in 2018 following that ratification of the Paris Agreement.

This plan in my own limited knowledge is something that is so important- it's like intellectual property; climate change is something that people don't touch; so, once you don't touch it, you don't know what it is but it has a massive effect, Prof. Tarpeh said.

He emphasized "we need to work the environment and climate change into our national development planning not only by talking it."

He said climate sensitive and climate resilience projects are in most cases likely to be funded through grant when they are captured in our development activities.

According to the EPA Executive Director the NAP project was exceptionally and

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



EPA Executive Director, Prof. Tarpeh

meeting for the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Project on January 13, 2021, Prof Tarpehsaid that the inclusion of environment and climate change into the country's development plan need to be shown and demonstrated because "climate change has massive and compelling effect on everything we do."

Government of Liberia and UNDP while the inception meeting kicked off in March 2018 and since then the project has been supporting the advancement of adaptation planning in climate sensitive sectors like agriculture, energy, waste management, forestry, health and coastal areas in Liberia.

The meeting was intended to

Weah declares today ECOWAS Human Rights Day

President George Manneh Weah by proclamation declared Saturday, January 16, 2021 as "ECOWAS Human Rights Day", and is to be officially observed today Monday, January 18, 2021, as a Working Holiday throughout the Republic.

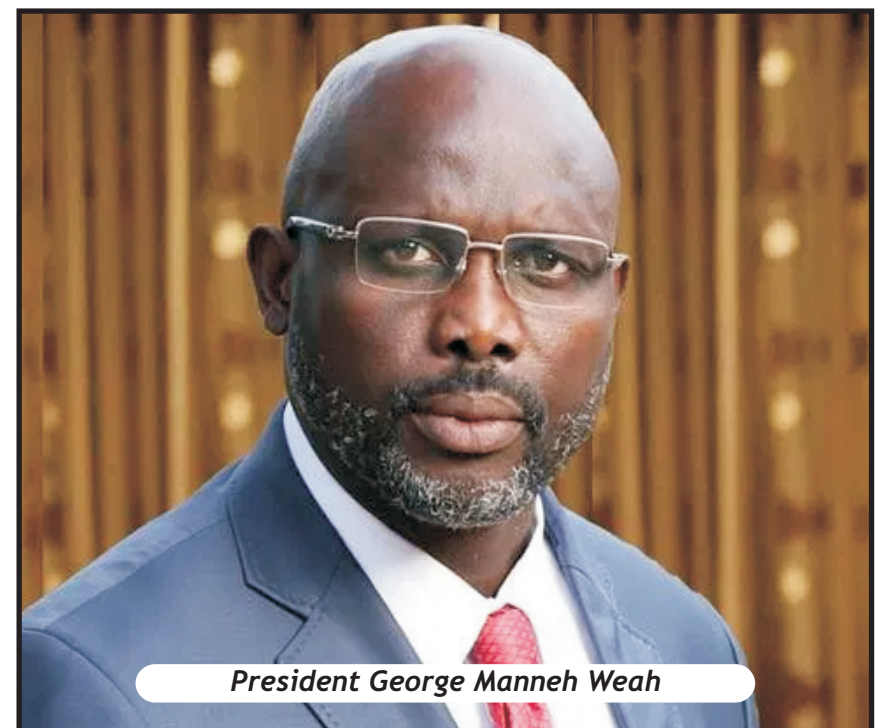
The Proclamation calls on citizens and foreign residents, national and international organizations as well as government agencies concerned to join the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INHCR) in organizing and executing appropriate programs befitting the observance of the Day.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, this year's

Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Liberian people to promote and safeguard humans and people's rights.

According to the Proclamation, the commemoration is intended to continuously awaken greater awareness for the peoples and governments of the Economic Community of West African States about the value of life and humanity and to renew Liberians' collective commitment to protect, respect and uphold fundamental human rights.

This day is symbolic as it expresses the gratitude of partnership and continues collaboration aimed at strengthening the cooperation



President George Manneh Weah

ECOWAS Human Rights Day will take place at the Monrovia City Hall, in Montserrado County.

The celebration will take place under the International Theme: "Promoting Rights to Health Education and Opportunity to Enjoy Indigenous Cultural Health Practices"

At the same time the event will be commemorated under the National Theme: "Ensuring the Promotion of Health Education and Opportunity to Enjoy Harmless Indigenous Cultural Health Practice in Liberia".

The Proclamation further stresses that the celebration of the ECOWAS Human Rights Day is an opportunity to reflect and recommit to the solemn undertakings by the Economic

between the West African States and the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and the Liberian People, the release further emphasizes.

The Proclamation also recounts that the existence of this day guarantees the promotion, protection and respect for human rights by state parties which form the basis for the commemoration of the ECOWAS' Human Rights Day on 16TH January each year.

The Fiftieth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was convened on December 17, 2016 in Abuja, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Proclamation declares.

"Let the world see what you know"

-Dep. Min. Wolokolie urges students

Deputy Finance Minister for Fiscal Affairs Dr. Samora P.Z. Wolokoie has urged graduating students of the Cathedral Catholic High School to seek higher education in order for their future to be better.

Serving as the keynote speaker at the school commencement program held on Friday, January 15, 2021, Dr. Wolokoie spoke on the topic "The Value of Education in Contemporary Times", and stated that "Now the time has come, it is your destiny, as you face the troubled world. Let the world see what you know".

According to Dr. Wolokolie, obtaining a quality education is an important first step to having an informed society because it promotes the knowledge, skills, habits, values, or attitudes and

understanding of the people in the country, while quality education is also considered as an important pillar on which the foundation of development is built.

"By this I mean education is the means through which we as a nation can recover from our technological deficit and high rate of illiteracy. Quality education helps to mold our minds and transforms us into innovative thinkers and positive contributors to nation-building".

He told the graduating class that a "right kind of education propagates a right kind of behavior and output, and they should choose learning over complacency, schools over night clubs and pubs, and enlightenment over illiteracy".

Also, he cautioned the students that to succeed in the 21st century and the centuries beyond, one must be skilled and

knowledgeable, be fit and competent, must have the abilities and capabilities to deal with the intricacies that are associated with today's happenings.

He furthered that "You cannot depend on chance to make it, to succeed, you must make deliberate efforts, and you certainly cannot just sit idly by and expect miracles to happen, and you cannot cheat your way to success".

He added that students must work hard, study hard, plan properly, and ensure that the distractions of a fast-moving society do not sway you from your path, and should learn to set targets and work toward achieving those targets; adding also their targets should be measurable.

Meanwhile, Dr. Wolokolie has said when students do the right things, and stays committed to their objectives, and chooses education over excessive

social engagements, they are well on their way to success.

Education, he says, is an essential tool that can bring about desirable change in contemporary society. And it is like a lighthouse that gives

'our' life a sense of direction and dispels doubts and confusion that surrounds us, stating that is the very reason that the government while making its policies and programs, gives a priority to education.

Français

Pas de date pour l'élection partielle de Gbarpolu

Aucune date n'a encore été fixée pour la reprise partielle de l'élection sénatoriale à Nomodatahum, district # 3, dans le comté de Gbarpolu, selon les autorités de la Commission électorale nationale (NEC).

La NEC a déclaré avoir retiré tout son personnel de la zone par mesure de sécurité, jusqu'à ce que le calme revienne. Mais pour le moment, aucune date n'a été fixée.

Nomodatum, est une localité frontalière proche de la Sierra Leone. Une reprise de l'élection sénatoriale de mi-mandat du 8 décembre 2020 y était prévue pour mardi 15 décembre, mais, pour cause de violences post-électorales dans le comté de Gbarpolu, elle a été reportée à une date ultérieure qui n'a pas encore été précisée.

L'élection a été perturbée le jour du scrutin par des jeunes en colère qui, sur instructions du chef de clan, ont pris d'assaut quatre centres de vote et emporté les urnes contenant des bulletins de vote et autres matériels de vote.

Actuellement, selon les résultats provisoires de la NEC

à l'élection sénatoriale du comté, Mme BotoeKanneh, une candidate indépendante, est en tête avec quelque 449 voix de plus que le candidat de la Coalition au pouvoir, Alfred GayflorKoiwood, qui occupe la deuxième place. Une victoire de cette dernière dans cette localité pourrait sceller sa victoire définitivement.

Mais selon des informations qui circulent depuis lundi, les électeurs et surtout les militants de Mme Botoe seraient l'objet d'intimidation.

Des témoins font état de la présence d'un masque traditionnel, qui serait sorti sur ordre du chef de clan, un militant inconditionnel de la Coalition pour le Changement Démocratique (coalition au pouvoir), ce qui empêcherait les gens d'accéder à la localité.

L'équipe juridique de Mme BotoeKanneh de Sannah&Partners a déposé une plainte devant la présidente de la NEC Mme Davidetta Brown-Lasanah lundi, indiquant que sa cliente et ses militants sont la cible

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Liberia : le "oui" en tête du référendum, l'opposition accentue son avance aux sénatoriales

Les Libériens ont répondu "oui" aux propositions de leur président George Weah de réduire le mandat du chef de l'Etat et d'autoriser la double nationalité, selon les résultats partiels portant sur un tiers des régions du pays annoncés mardi. Dans le

même temps, les électeurs ont infligé à l'ex-star du foot mondial un sérieux revers lors des élections organisées le même jour pour renouveler la moitié des 30 sièges de sénateur, selon de nouveaux résultats publiés mardi confirmant les premières

tendances.

Environ 2,5 millions d'électeurs avaient été appelés à se prononcer le 8 décembre sur huit amendements à la Constitution, dont un réduisant la durée du mandat présidentiel de six à cinq ans. Le "oui" aux huit questions l'a emporté dans les cinq comtés où le dépouillement est achevé, sur les 15 que compte le Liberia, a indiqué la commission électorale nationale (NEC).

Aux sénatoriales, sur les sept comtés entièrement dépouillés, l'opposition en remporte quatre, contre deux pour le Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) de George Weah et un pour un candidat indépendant, selon la NEC.

L'opposition enregistre une victoire hautement symbolique dans le comté de Montserrado, le plus peuplé du pays et qui comprend la capitale Monrovia.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Representative Thomas P. Fallah

Éditorial

Nous exigeons des élections libres et équitables à Gbarpolu

Les électeurs du comté de Gbarpolu seraient l'objet d'harcèlement et d'intimidation à la veille de l'élection sénatoriale partielle occasionnée par les violences qui ont perturbé les élections du 8 décembre dans le comté.

Des informations en provenance du comté de la région de l'Ouest font état d'incitation ou d'achat de votes en vue d'empêcher la seule femme en lice d'être élue à l'Assemblée législative. N'est-ce pas là l'une des raisons pour lesquelles nos mères, nos filles, nos sœurs, nos épouses et nos amis n'ont pas assez de courage pour se présenter aux élections.

Environ 2021 électeurs de Nomodatou, une localité frontalière proche de la Sierra Leone voisine, retournent dans les urnes pour élire le prochain sénateur du comté. La reprise du scrutin intervient après qu'un groupe de jeunes gens ont saisi quatre urnes le 8 décembre. Ils soupçonnaient des gens qui ont voté le 8 décembre d'être des Sierra-Léonais et non des Libériens.

Mme BotoeKanneh, la seule femme en lice est une vendeuse de viande séchée. Elle a 449 voix d'avance sur ses adversaires selon les résultats partiels. On dit qu'elle est très populaire à Nomodatou, mais sa délégation et elle-même se sont vu refuser l'entrée là-bas, prétendument par la police et d'autres forces de sécurité de l'Etat, tandis que le candidat du parti au pouvoir (CDC) a eu une série de réunions dans la ville avec le chef de clan qui avait donné l'ordre de saisir le matériel électoral.

La Coalition au pouvoir semble désespérée suite aux récentes défaites à travers le pays, et fait tout son possible dans un dernier espoir apparent de prendre le contrôle du comté de Gbarpolu, peu importe que ce soit une concurrence déloyale. Voilà une telle tactique politique qui contredit les principes démocratiques qui exigent que la volonté du peuple l'emporte dans toute élection.

Que personne ne prenne le peuple libérien pour acquis en voulant s'en servir à des fins égoïstes. Les Libériens sont un peuple résilient, qui est très conscient de ses droits en tant que citoyens. Il faut qu'on leur donne la possibilité d'exercer ce droit aux urnes, sans incitation financière.

Gbarpolu est l'un des comtés éloignés qui n'ont pas encore bénéficié du développement en raison de la mauvaise gouvernance et de la négligence. Connaissant le pouvoir des femmes leaders dans la promotion du développement et du service axé sur les personnes, Mme Kanneh est indûment harcelée pour compromettre ses chances dans la course.

Nous n'exigeons rien de moins qu'une élection juste à Gbarpolu afin que les résultats du scrutin reflètent la volonté de l'électorat, comme on l'attend dans toute démocratie. La Commission électorale nationale doit s'assurer que la bonne chose est faite.

La Coalition au pouvoir n'a montré aucun respect pour les femmes, comme en témoigne l'absence de candidate féminine sur sa liste de candidats. Ainsi le seul visage féminin, la candidate indépendante BotoeKanneh fait l'objet de graves intimidations. C'est inacceptable !

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Français

Pas de date pour

d'attaques.

Dans la plainte, Me MoiffieKanneh, un proche parent de Madame BotoeKanneh, a indiqué que les partisans et la campagne de sa cliente ne sont pas en sécurité. «Le chef de clan a demandé aujourd'hui au masque traditionnel d'entrer dans la ville de Nomodatahum, district n° 3, terrorisant pratiquement les partisans de Mme Botoe», a-t-il expliqué.

«Avec ces développements négatifs, la campagne de Mme Botoeest en danger, ce qui rend pratiquement impossible la poursuite de ses activités électorales », a dit Me Kanneh.

La commission électorale n'a pas encore entendu la plainte. La situation est tendue en ce moment. La localité contestée est difficile d'accès. Il faut deux jours pour y arriver par la route en raison du mauvais réseau routier.

Il y a des informations non confirmées selon lesquelles le bureau des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies s'est intéressé à la situation, en particulier aux allégations de violations des droits de l'homme.

Le mercredi 16 décembre, plusieurs jeunes ont tenu des

pancartes devant le ministère des Affaires étrangères, pour demander au ministre d'État Nathaniel McGill, originaire du comté, à s'en désengager. Ils l'ont tenu pour responsable pour le chaos en cours, bien qu'il n'y ait aucune preuve que le ministre est derrière ce qui se passe à Gbarpolu.

Me BoakaiKanneh a dit à ce journal mercredi soir que les forces de l'ordre étaient toujours en train d'arrêter les partisans de Mme Botoe, bien que ce journal n'ait pas été en mesure de vérifier ces informations.

Au cours d'un entretien sur la radio Prime FM tôt mardi, le directeur adjoint de la communication de la Commission électorale nationale, Prince Dunbar, avaitindiqué que les conditions sécuritaires n'étaient pas assez réunies pour permettre au scrutin d'avoir lieu mardi. « Mais avec l'aide de la sécurité de l'État, les élections se tiendront vendredi, 18 décembre 2020 », avait-t-il dit.

A en croire M. Dunbar, la présidente de la NEC, Mme Davidetta Browne-Lassanah, adonné instruction à tout le personnel de la NEC de la région de quitter le comté et de se présenter au siège social de Monrovia jusqu'à ce que les choses rentrent dans l'ordre.

Liberia : le "oui" en tête

Dans le fief électoral historique de George Weah, c'est l'un de ses adversaires les plus farouches, le sénateur Darius Dillon, qui est reconduit, avec 61% des voix, selon la commission électorale. L'échéance avait valeur de double test pour le président Weah, qui avait soulevé un immense espoir en 2018 en accédant au pouvoir dans ce pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest toujours marqué par la guerre civile de 1989-2003 et l'épidémie d'Ebola de 2014-2016. Il n'a pas réussi à redresser l'économie et l'enthousiasme a fait place au désenchantement. Les principaux partis d'opposition avaient appelé à boycotter le référendum.

Bien que M. Weah, 54 ans, en soit toujours à son premier mandat, ses adversaires craignent qu'il tire profit

d'une modification de la Constitution pour faire valoir que les compteurs sont remis à zéro et briguer le moment venu un troisième mandat, comme viennent de le faire ses homologues et voisins guinéen Alpha Condé et ivoirien Alassane Ouattara. La consultation vise aussi à modifier les règles en matière de nationalité, une question qui continue à diviser la société du Liberia, plus ancienne république d'Afrique noire fondée au XIXe siècle sous l'impulsion des Etats-Unis pour des esclaves affranchis.

Si l'adoption de la proposition de révoquer l'interdit de 1973 sur la double nationalité se confirme, les futurs binationaux, dont beaucoup ont secrètement la nationalité américaine, auront accès à la propriété au Liberia, ce qui devrait donner un coup de pouce à l'économie.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Mohamed Elbaradei

L'éternelle promesse du Printemps arabe

VIENNE - Le Printemps arabe, survenu voici dix ans, fut une quête de dignité humaine dont les protagonistes cherchèrent à surmonter des décennies de répression, de pauvreté et d'inégalités. Il s'est déroulé en deux vagues successives : la première, ayant atteint la Tunisie, l'Égypte, la Libye, la Syrie et le Yémen, fut suivie d'une seconde, en 2019-2020, qui toucha l'Algérie, la Soudan et le Liban.

Malheureusement, aucune de ces deux vagues n'a véritablement donné satisfaction aux revendications des protestataires. Loin d'entreprendre une véritable transition vers la liberté et la justice sociale, la plupart des pays du Printemps arabe sont revenus à différentes combinaisons autocratiques et à différents degrés de pauvreté et de violence. Hormis la Tunisie, dans une certaine mesure, la plupart des sociétés arabes sont aujourd'hui plus polarisées et divisées qu'elles ne l'étaient auparavant.

La démocratie n'est pas comme un café instantané. Elle a besoin pour s'épanouir et croître d'un environnement favorable et d'une culture hospitalière. Une histoire marquée par le colonialisme, qu'ont suivi des décennies d'autoritarisme, s'est soldée par l'absence de ces conditions dans le monde arabe. Les gens qui se sont révoltés et sont descendus dans les rues exécraient les régimes qui les tyrannisaient depuis si longtemps. Mais il leur manquait une vision claire, unifiée, du changement qu'ils souhaitaient.

« Du pain, la liberté et la justice sociale », tel était le cri de ralliement, mais sa traduction dans une réalité plus démocratique s'est avérée extrêmement problématique. Sans une société civile solide et énergique - syndicats, partis politiques, associations et médias indépendants - il fut impossible de s'entendre sur une feuille de route qui aurait posé les jalons de la transition après la chute rapide des dictateurs arabes. Les institutions nécessaires à la formation d'une vraie cohésion sociale n'étaient tout simplement pas là.

Lorsque le couvercle de la répression eut sauté, les révolutionnaires se divisèrent selon une multitude de lignes idéologiques. La situation politique, sociale et économique désespérée de la région avait auparavant conduit de nombreux musulmans à penser que seules les certitudes de leur foi pouvaient leur offrir un refuge contre la misère et leur fournir la promesse d'un avenir meilleur. Après la survenue du Printemps arabe, une scission profonde sépara les islamistes et les laïcs.

Le manque de cohésion sociale et l'absence de consensus sur les valeurs fondamentales se sont révélés le talon d'Achille des tentatives de modernisation du monde arabe. Ils permirent aux restes des anciens régimes de se regrouper, de se réorganiser et de retrouver rapidement une vigueur autoritaire qui leur était familière.

Lorsque l'ancien régime se fut reconstitué, le combat évolua dans la plupart des cas en luttes de factions pour le pouvoir entre un « État profond » tenace, l'armée et divers regroupements religieux, qui constituaient les seules forces non étatiques. Chaque faction avait son propre programme ; la plupart étaient essentiellement allergiques à la démocratie ou à la modernité.

Dans ces rivalités se perdirent les intérêts des masses qui avaient déclenché le Printemps arabe, gonflées de l'espoir d'une vie meilleure - sécurité alimentaire, éducation de qualité, soins de santé décentes, et un minimum de liberté et de dignité. À l'exception de quelques pions cooptés par ceux qui

détenaient le pouvoir, les protestataires finirent marginalisés ou persécutés. Beaucoup se découragèrent ou abandonnèrent, purement et simplement.

Certaines puissances extérieures s'immiscèrent franchement, car elles pensaient que la région avait trop d'importance pour qu'on la laisse déterminer son propre avenir. Celles qu'effrayait l'idée de démocratie travaillèrent activement à la fragiliser. Les autres, pour la plupart prises au dépourvu, s'inquiétèrent avant tout de la stabilité et de leurs intérêts géostratégiques, intimement liés depuis des décennies aux éternels dirigeants autoritaires de la région.

Ni le soutien économique et technique dont le changement a besoin, ni les conseils techniques et juridiques ne furent prodigués. Ainsi la Tunisie, qui cherchait désespérément une aide économique, d'ailleurs modeste, pour alléger le fardeau de la transition, demeura seule, car le pays, pensait-on, n'avait guère importance stratégique. Le Soudan est l'exemple plus récent du même abandon.

De cette attitude, il résulte que les puissances qui défendent la démocratie et les droits humains sont souvent considérées comme opportunistes, utilisant ces valeurs pour servir leurs intérêts les plus étroits. À mesure que se sont intensifiées les luttes de pouvoir internes, les interventions politiques et militaires des acteurs extérieurs se sont multipliées, ajoutant au chaos et aux divisions de la région, exacerbant la violence, et ruinant les espoirs de voir arriver bientôt la liberté et la dignité.

Mais l'histoire montre que la quête de liberté, bien qu'elle soit inévitablement longue et accidentée, est inévitable et que rien ne peut l'arrêter. Malgré de nombreux revers, l'importante population de jeunes gens du monde arabe a troqué l'apathie pour la prise de conscience et l'engagement, les réseaux sociaux jouant là un rôle de facteur émancipateur.

On peut tirer du Printemps arabe quatre enseignements utiles à l'inflexion de la trajectoire politique de la région. Premièrement, une société civile indépendante et active est indispensable. Sans cadres pour plaider la cause du changement et l'organiser, les appels à la réforme sont aisément étouffés.

Deuxièmement, on ne saurait surestimer la nécessité de la cohésion sociale lorsqu'il s'agit de repousser les ingérences extérieures. La réconciliation idéologique, la clarification de la relation entre la religion et l'État ainsi que la bonne volonté et l'aptitude au compromis constituent l'indispensable socle d'un État démocratique qui fonctionne.

Troisièmement, la transition vers la démocratie doit être progressive. On ne passe directement du jardin d'enfants à l'université ; le processus de démocratisation doit, dans cet ordre d'idée, non seulement s'adresser à toutes et tous mais être soigneusement gradué, et les étapes doivent en être clairement déterminées. Le point de départ pourrait être une conception commune du renforcement des droits de l'homme.

L'ultime enseignement du Printemps arabe - tragiquement flagrant en Libye et en Syrie - tient à la nécessité de persuader ceux qui occupent le pouvoir qu'il est dans leur intérêt de prendre part au processus de démocratisation. Quel que soit le régime, un changement progressif est préférable à la perspective d'un brusque soulèvement qui risque de remplacer ceux qui sont au pouvoir par un vide du pouvoir.

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GoL threatens radio stations

The Liberian Government has threatened to revoke the operations license of any radio station that will host “fugitive” Henry Costa, saying Costa is still a wanted man and cannot host program to communicate to Liberian audience.

On Sunday Costa in a social media post announced plans by Radio Bushrod (D15 Radio) to begin hosting his program.

But the government in a statement issued late Sunday evening said Costa who fled the country in 2020 after a writ was issued for his arrest in a criminal matter is still wanted by the law.

“The government informed the station’s Management that Costa, as a fugitive from Liberian justice, cannot host radio programs meant to communicate to Liberian audience while in the United States. Any act contrary to said notice will be a violation of the terms of the permit issued by the Ministry of Information and licensing conditions promulgated under the Telecommunications Act of Liberia.

Everyone, including broadcasters, has to be held accountable for what they communicate. Article 15 of the Liberian constitution states that “every person shall have the right to freedom of speech, being responsible for the abuse thereof”. If one is injured by a fugitive broadcasting from the United States, there would be no available redress. The Government has a responsibility to protect the public.

Any station, including D15, which continues in this path in utter violation of the laws of Liberia will have their permit and license revoked.

The use of the airwaves is a license, granted by the Liberian government to those who meet prescribed criteria.

Therefore, the government will leave no stone unturned in the scrupulous implementation of the laws of Liberia, with sensitivity to protecting the rights and obligations of free speech, the statement concluded.

Days after the brutal end of the much trumpeted December 30th “Weah Steps Down” protest here, which actually took place on January 6th, 2020 thanks to Liberia’s foreign partners, including the United States and the European Union intervention to calm the tension that led to the

rescheduled date for the protest, Mr. Costa decided to leave the country for the United States.

Bang! He was arrested at Liberia’s international airport by local immigration officers on allegations that he had forged his traveling document.

Ahead of the December 30th protest, Costa entered Liberia via Accra, Ghana with a *laissez passer*, (travel certificate) a temporary travel document issue to a person instead of his passport.

Upon his arrest by Liberian authorities, he was taken to the Liberian Immigration headquarters to answer questions on as to how he obtained the document which is allegedly fake. But Costa has since disputed the claim saying, that local authorities swapped his travel papers in their bid to implicate him.

So there were questions

that top security officials had given him the tip off. He did not say if they assisted him in his escape. But the public has been referring to a social media post purportedly by the Deputy Minister of Information for Public Affairs, which read, “Costa will soon die.”

The extradition call Soon it was widely reported that the government had called on the Sierra Leonean authority to extradite Costa to Liberia. There was no official or written communication at this point- just a mere telephone call.

Costa was immediately picked up by Sierra Leonean Immigration officers and handed over to police while trying to board a flight from Lungi to Turkey and then to the United States. There began the diplomatic row thereby intensifying the

imminent and the government felt that asking for his extradition to face charges was the best option.

How does extradition works?

An extradition is a process and must have specifics as agreed upon by both countries entering such treaty. Like in the case of Liberia’s request to the Government of Sierra Leone, the Liberian government must first write an official letter requesting the extradition through the Sierra Leonean Attorney General’s office - something which was not initially done.

Who can be extradited?

Any individual facing any of the specifics crimes outlined in the extradition treaty between both countries in this case, Liberia and Sierra Leone, but the requesting country

and shall have the same jurisdiction and powers as if the prisoner were brought before him for trial.

(4) Depositions or statements on oath taken outside Sierra Leone, copies of such original depositions or statements, the contents of any official prosecution file or other official documents (whether or not confirmed by oath) and certificates or judicial documents stating the fact of conviction may, wherever made, if duly authenticated in accordance with the provisions of section 12 (or the Court is otherwise satisfied of their authenticity), be received in evidence at the hearing or any other proceedings under, or arising out of, this Act.

(5) The Judge shall receive any evidence which may be tendered to show that in the particular circumstances of the case extradition is not permissible under this Act.”

Does Liberia have an extradition treaty with Sierra Leone?

Yes, Liberia does have an extradition treaty with Sierra Leone. However, the treaty has specifics and agreed upon crimes for which one citizen can be extradited from one country to another.

The diplomatic flip-flop

So the diplomatic flip-flop has emerged. Initially, the Government of Liberia through the Immigration Services placed a call, requesting its counterpart to prevent Costa from leaving Sierra Leone. Then the Sierra Leone Minister of Information came along on the British Broadcasting Corporation that his government does not take dictation from a foreign government.

“...We cannot take dictation from any other government. We’re a democracy, we value that. We have struggled far too long for democracy and this government is noted for its very strong democratic credential so we will not do anything on toward. So, as soon as we have gone through the process, we will do what we have to do.” Sierra Leone’s Minister of Information and Communication, Mr. Mohamed R. Swaray told the BBC.

However, late Wednesday, January 15, reports emerged that the government had made a former request. But the Government of Sierra Leone released Mr. Costa due to no apparent grounds for extradition. -By Othello B. Garblah



being raised as to when the immigration authorities realize that Costa’s traveling documents were faked, especially so when he had used the same papers to enter Liberia.

As the debates were unfolding, Costa was due to report back to the Immigration headquarters where he would have probably began answering questions into how he obtained his *laissez passer*.

However, on Tuesday January 14, it was reported that Costa had crossed the border into neighboring Sierra Leone. There were reports that he was aided by some higher-ups security personnel who had informed him of government’s plan to have him assassinated.

The government has since dismissed such a claim saying, it had no such plan but rather a responsibility to protect all its citizens under the law.

But Costa has since insisted

global attention into the Liberian Government and Henry Costa Drama.

Did the Government actually request the arrest of Costa in Freetown?

Yes, the government did placed a call to have Costa arrested as a fugitive, running away from his alleged criminal acts in Liberia.

Had Costa been charged before leaving Liberia?

It had not been made clear as to whether he had been charge, as at the time he fled the country. But what is clear here is that he was due to answer questions relating to how he obtained what the Liberian Government now says was a fake traveling document. In other words, he was still undergoing investigations. But a probable charge of forgery which the government now claims was

should go through a formal legal process.

For example, the 1974 extradition law of Sierra Leone, opined that a “fugitive criminal” means a person who is accused or convicted of having committed an offence to which any section of the Act applies in any part of the Commonwealth or within the jurisdiction of any foreign state or on board any vessel on the high seas, and who is in or is suspected of being in, or on the way to, Sierra Leone, such a person needs to be arraigned before a local when the request is made and a warrant is issued.

According to Part I session 3 of the Sierra Leonean Extradition Act: “When the fugitive criminal is brought before the Judge, to show cause why he should not be extradited the Judge shall, so far as may be expedient, hear the case in the same manner,

Ellen looks back

Former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf took to her twitter page on Saturday January 16, to celebrate the day she made history 15 years ago as the first female president of Liberia and Africa.

“On this day 15 years ago, I was deeply humbled to assume the responsibility of the Presidency of Liberia. It was the honor of a lifetime to do my part to rebuild our nation, and I am eternally grateful for the opportunity given to me by the Liberian

the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her efforts to bring women into the peacekeeping process. She has received numerous other awards for her leadership.

Background
Mrs. Sirleaf ran for president as the candidate of the Unity Party in the 2005 general election. She came second in the first round of voting behind current President George Weah, a former footballer.

In the run-off election, Sirleaf got 59% of the vote against 40% for Weah, though

Laura Bush, In January 2010, Sirleaf announced that she would run for a second term in office in the 2011 presidential election while speaking to a joint session of the Legislature.

Opposition leaders noted that in doing so, she had broken a promise made during her 2005 campaign to only serve one term if elected. Sirleaf was re-nominated as the Unity Party's presidential candidate at the party's national convention on 31 October 2010.

That same day, Vice President Joseph Boakai was nominated by Sirleaf and confirmed by the delegates as Sirleaf's running mate.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Sirleaf four days prior to the election was criticized by opposition parties, with Congress for Democratic Change candidate Winston Tubman calling the award "undeserved" and "a political interference in our country's politics."

Sirleaf called the timing of the award a coincidence and avoided mentioning the award during the final days of campaigning.

Sirleaf earned 43.9% of the vote in the first round, more than any other candidate but short of the 50% needed to avoid a run-off. Tubman came in second with 32.7%, pitting him against Sirleaf in the second round Tubman called for a boycott of the run-off, claiming that the results of the first round had been fraudulent.

Sirleaf denied the allegations, and international observers reported that the first round election had been free, fair and transparent. As a result of the boycott, Sirleaf won the second round with 90.7% of the vote, though voter turnout significantly declined from the first round.



people. #OnThisDay,” Mr. Sirleaf wrote.

Mrs. Sirleaf was sworn in as Liberia's first female President on January 16, 2006 after she defeated current President George Weah in the 2005 presidential run-off.

She had come second to Weah in the first round of voting and won by 59% in the run-off versus 40% for Weah, though Weah disputed the results.

Mrs. Sirleaf was sworn in as the country's 24th president and was elected in 2011 just weeks after she was awarded

Weah disputed the results.

The announcement of the new leader was postponed until further election investigations were carried out. On 23 November 2005, Mrs. Sirleaf was declared the winner of the Liberian election and confirmed as the country's next president and the first woman to be elected as president of an African country

Her inauguration took place on 16 January 2006. It was attended by many foreign dignitaries, including United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and First Lady

U.S. issues new COVID-19 regulations

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director has signed an order, requiring all airline passengers traveling to the United States, including U.S. citizens and Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs), to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 viral test or recovery from COVID-19.

An advisory posted Sunday, January 17, 2021 by the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia says effective January 26, 2021, all

received a negative qualifying test result or to recovery from COVID-19 and medical clearance to travel.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued an Order on January 12, 2021 requiring proof of a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 for all air passengers arriving from a



airline passengers? to the United States ages two years and older must provide either a negative COVID-19 viral test taken within three calendar days of travel or provide a positive test result and documentation from a licensed health care provider or public health official of having recovered from COVID-19 in the 90 days preceding travel.

The advisory says passengers must also attest, under penalty of law, to having

foreign country to America.

Accordingly, airlines must deny boarding to passengers who do not meet these requirements.

U.S. citizens in countries where adequate COVID-19 testing is not available, or may not be able to satisfy the requirements, should depart immediately or prepare to be unable to return to the United States until such time as they can meet the requirements. -

Editing by Jonathan Browne

Cont'd from page 7

EPA Boss wants

excellently executed and disclosed that a number of key benefits were produced.

He lauded Mr. Abraham T. Tumbey for ably coordinating the NAP Project and disclosed that some of the key results produced cannot be terminated because “doing so would nullify the entire project”.

“We have to continue,” Prof. Tarpeh emphasized.

He said “when Tumbey came with the report and I saw what we have done-we cannot help, but for us to continue”.

Prof Tarpeh also disclosed that there is a need to include sectional intervention into the climate change and adaptation plan that was developed.

He prefers calling the

National Adaptation Plan Project as the National Adaptation Program.

This, according to him “will enable us to see substantively how far we can go.”

Prof. Tarpeh noted that capacity building under the project has been very enormous.

“We were able to get some money to the University of Liberia (UL) for the setting up of the Environmental Science and Climate Change Program,” he disclosed

Prof Tarpeh pledged EPA continuous support to UL, but expressed concern about individuals who would be graduating from the program.

“This mean as an institution, we need to plan decade ahead. What do we do with those graduates? How do we make it

meaningful for them? To do that we need to make sure that we include climate change and environmental sensitive issues into every aspect of life in this country,” he stressed.

According to him, this is the only way Liberia can create the capacity and absorb individuals graduating from the Environmental Science and Climate Change Program at UL.

“It is not something big and new,” Prof Tarpeh said everything that we do is impacted by climate change.

For his part, UL President Prof. Dr. Julius Julukon Sarwolo Nelson lauded authorities of the EPA and the UNDP for the NAP Project.

He said “we, at the

University of Liberia, are grateful for the support and partnership. It was through the NAP Project that funding was provided for the establishment of the academic programs in Environmental Studies, Biodiversity and Climate Change Graduate and Undergraduate Programs at the University of Liberia.”

Dr. Nelson disclosed that first academic year of the program ended with over 35 graduate students and over one hundred students in the undergraduate program.

He disclosed that as the school begins the second academic year of the program, there is a growing interest by students to enroll in the program at both levels.

Dr. Nelson lauded the EPA and the UNDP for also donating books for the program and described the books as ‘major asset’ to the program.

For his part, Assistant Mines and Energy Minister, Johnson Willabo said that the ministry is satisfied that the key outcome of the project has been achieved.

He noted that the ministry is also elated that through the NAP its capacity to perform has been further enhanced.

Also speaking at the ceremony, Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia Executive Director, Michael F. Garbo expressed gratitude to EPA and UNDP for including civil society organizations in the implementation of the project.

He disclosed that they (civil society representatives) were able to get a better understanding of climate change through the implementation of the project and pleaded with EPA and UNDP to launch a second NAP Project so that engagement on climate

Government seeks to legalize squatters



By Lewis S. Teh
Liberia's Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel D. Tweah, Jr., pledges government's commitment to make sure land-owners and squatters have legal titles to their land. Minister Tweah describes land issue as a critical challenge in Liberia and

remains a major concern for the government. Speaking at the official launch of the Digitization of Government Systematic Land Titling project on Friday, January 15, 2021 at Clara Town football field on Bushrod Island, he said, "The Government of Liberia is here to ensure you are protected legally to have your land. We are not here to take your land from you; nobody is

taking your land." Tweah reiterates that government is concerned about ongoing land conflicts across the country, so it has embarked on bringing solutions to people who own land by recognizing and giving them legal titles to their properties. However, he explains the digitization of government processes and systematic land titling is a pilot project that seeks to digitize land registration for Liberians.

He urges authorities at the Land Authority to use the project to begin formal titling and deeding of properties owned by Liberians who are considered "squatters".

Medici Land Governance was introduced to the Liberia Land Authority, following a successful engagement held in Washington, D.C. by Minister Tweah.

The launch of the project brought together scores of government officials from line ministries and agencies, including development partners. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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Liberian woman gets top UN job

Madam Sara Beysolow Nyanti, the highest ranking Liberian in the United Nations system has been appointed UN Residence Coordinator in Nepal, with host Government's approval. Ms. Nyanti was appointed on 6 January, United Nations Secretary-General AntónioGuterres. She brings more than 20 years of experience in development and humanitarian work to the position, which she has acquired from assignments around the world with the

United Nations and externally. Within the Organization, she most recently served as Representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Yemen, where she set up programmes that provided cash assistance to nine million people, after occupying a similar position in the Gambia. She also held leadership positions across the United Nations in Jordan, Namibia, Nepal and Nigeria, working in multiple sectors and agencies on key issues such as Ebola response coordination.



Prior to joining the United Nations, Ms. Nyanti worked as her country's Director of the National AIDS Control Program in the health ministry. She authored the first Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria funding for the national AIDS response of Liberia and led the development and subsequent legislation of the national AIDS policy, guidelines and law. She holds a master's degree in public administration and is a globally accredited Partnership Broker.

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