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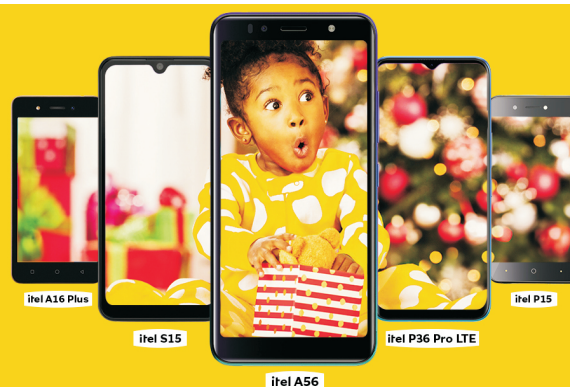
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# Continental News

## Kenyan Scientists discover new Coronavirus mutation

**K**enyan scientists have raised an alarm on a coronavirus variant they say differs from the one spreading in South Africa and Britain.

About 10 investigators from the Kenya Medical Research Institute, or KEMRI, discovered the mutation of the virus responsible for the COVID-19 disease.

Charles Agoti, a principal investigator and researcher, says that the variant unique to Kenya was detected in a batch of samples taken from Taita Taveta county, located in the southeastern part of the country.

"Our interpretation is that because in this one place in Kenya we were seeing, it represents the majority of the sequenced samples; it does imply that actually, it could be if it has intrinsic properties, be more transmissible," Agoti said. "It could result in an increase in the number of cases locally."

Between June and October of last year, KEMRI sequenced around 205 genomes in the coastal region and further identified around 16 circulating mutations all of which have so far have proven

harmless.

Agoti says that the variant will not at this stage have an impact on the effectiveness of new coronavirus vaccines. "I think it's unlikely this is just only one change in the about 1,200 amino acids-long spike protein, so still there are very many other bits of the virus which the current vaccines target and can be able to neutralize the virus effectively," Agoti said.

According to the World

Health Organization, these variants of concern which are on the rise in 47 countries in Africa may impact a person's immune response and need to be investigated further.

Rudi Eggers is the WHO representative in Kenya. Eggers says that the mutations are a cause of concern worldwide.

"So, the vaccines as far as we can say will still be effective as far as we can

notice at the moment, but this is very early days, and we will have to do more research on that, but early indications deem that the vaccines that are generally available against this virus are still holding and still are protective; but it's possible that actually there will be a decrease in the efficacy of the vaccine," Eggers said.

Brazil, the World Health Organization noted, is one of the countries where a new variant has also been found.

Experts at Duke University's Global Health Innovation Center say they fear that the world may need to roll out second generation vaccines even before first generation vaccines have been fully introduced. Andrea Taylor is the assistant director at the North Carolina-based

center.

"So, the current slate of COVID vaccines work by targeting the spike protein, however the Brazil strain for example, changes the shape of that protein and our current vaccines may not be as effective against this or future mutations," Taylor said. "Unless we can control spread everywhere, we could find ourselves in the position of needing second generation vaccines before we have even rolled out the first generation."

According to the latest data from the John Hopkins University, Africa has around three million reported coronavirus cases, with a fatality count of 76,000.

Johns Hopkins also says more 99,000 Kenyans are infected and 1,700 people have died. VOA



Passengers wearing full personal protective gears get off a plane at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi

## Egypt woman arrested for baking 'indecent' cakes

**A** woman in Egypt was briefly detained after being accused of baking "indecent" cakes, local media say.

The cakes, topped with genitalia and underwear fashioned out of fondant icing, were eaten at a birthday party at an exclusive

Cairo sports club.

After photographs went viral, the baker was arrested and later released on \$319 (£234) bail. She is said to have denied making the sexually suggestive icing.

A top religious body warned that such baked goods were forbidden by Islam.

Dar al-Ifta wrote on Facebook that products featuring sexual representations were "an assault on the value system and a crude abuse of society".

Several women who attended the birthday party are also reportedly being investigated, while the ministry of youth and sports is looking into the involvement of the club that hosted the private gathering. Human rights lawyer Negad El Borai tweeted that the incident confirmed "there is a segment of society, with support of the state, that wants to eliminate any space for personal freedom in Egypt under the pretext of safeguarding Egyptian family values".

He drew parallels with the cases of several young Egyptian women accused of morality-related offences in connection with videos posted on TikTok and other social media platforms. Last Tuesday, an appeals court overturned the two-year

## Rwanda puts capital under 15-day lockdown to slow virus

**R**wanda has imposed a 15-day lock down on its capital, Kigali, as the country battles a second wave of coronavirus cases that has resulted in "unprecedented deaths and transmission rates".

This is the capital's second lockdown since the outbreak of the pandemic.

The government had in March enacted a countrywide lockdown that lasted 45 days.

In a statement on Monday night, the government said all movements outside homes in the capital will require an approved permit from the police, except for essential service providers.

Travel between Kigali and other provinces and districts will not be permitted, except for essential services and tourism. Tourists must have Covid-19 negative certificates.

Public transport is also prohibited and all employees in public and private sector



shall work from home except for those providing essential services.

Places of worship and learning institutions will also be closed.

The government has also increased the hours of a nationwide night-time curfew which will now start at 18:00 local time to 04:00.

Coronavirus cases are on the rise in the country. Officials said 61% of the new cases since the new year were recorded in Kigali.

The country has so far confirmed 11,259 cases and 146 deaths, according to a tally by the Johns Hopkins university. BBC



The baker has reportedly denied making the sexually suggestive icing

prison sentences handed to two influencers - Haneen Hossam, 20, and Mawada al-Adham, 22 - who were convicted in July of "undermining family values and principles" and publishing "indecent" photos and videos.

But days later it emerged that the public prosecutor had ordered the women's

continued detention pending an investigation on human trafficking charges. The prosecutor alleged that they had exploited teenage girls by encouraging them to post similar videos to theirs.

A lawyer for the women said they would appeal against the move. 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

By Mary Robinson

## No Time to Spare for the Paris Climate Promise

*In the five years since the world came together to conclude the Paris climate agreement, the geopolitical environment has changed profoundly, and the disastrous effects of global warming have become increasingly evident. Having squandered past opportunities and shirked previous commitments, we now must start making up for lost time.*

DUBLIN - COVID-19 turned the world upside down in 2020. But it has also shown us that when there is a political consensus for action, human ingenuity and innovation can be deployed at the scale and speed needed to meet global challenges.

With unprecedented speed, we have developed, tested, and begun to deploy multiple effective vaccines for COVID-19. Now we must bring the same resolve to bear on fighting the other great existential threat to humanity: climate change. As United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres put it last month, "our future security and prosperity depend on bold climate action."

And yet, even at the most recent Climate Ambition Summit on December 12, many leaders' commitments still fell far short of what is needed to meet this collective challenge. To be sure, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and even some of the smaller countries that are most vulnerable to climate change have significantly strengthened their 2030 emissions-reduction targets. But the United States, Japan, China, and other major greenhouse-gas emitters still need to follow suit, preferably well ahead of the UN Climate Conference (COP26) in Glasgow this coming November. Given the crisis we face, there are no more excuses for delay or prevarication.

Five years ago, after long and painstaking negotiations, the world came together to conclude the Paris climate agreement. This was one of the greatest triumphs of multilateral diplomacy in recent years, but it must not be taken for granted. Without an even greater commitment to action, the legacy of Paris risks being squandered altogether.

The events of the intervening half-decade have created a geopolitical landscape that would be unrecognizable to those who gathered in Paris. Back then, words like "coronavirus" or "Brexit" would have elicited little more than a puzzled shrug; now they command the fevered attention of policymakers and heads of state and government around the world.

But we cannot allow these developments to obscure the continuing and increasingly acute need for climate action, especially climate finance. Over a decade ago, the world's richest countries pledged to mobilize \$100 billion per year by 2020 to assist poorer countries with climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. That deadline has now passed, and these

countries have yet to fulfill their promise.

Still, there is hope. I am delighted that US President-elect Joe Biden has reaffirmed his commitment to rejoin the Paris agreement immediately upon taking office. American leadership is sorely needed after the four wasted years of unnecessary destruction under Donald Trump. A \$2 billion payment to the Green Climate Fund by the US to help meet its part of the \$100 billion commitment would be a concrete complement to rejoining the Paris accord. This money was already pledged during Barack Obama's presidency, so there is no excuse to keep it sitting in the US Treasury's coffers.

By the same token, other rich countries must not use the renewed focus on the US as an alibi for backpedaling on their own commitments. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's recent announcement that she will initiate a new international process on climate finance next year is a welcome declaration of intent. But past experience shows that we cannot count on lofty rhetoric.

Moreover, all countries in 2021 must give clear proof that they are reviewing and seeking to heighten the ambitions of their nationally determined contributions, the voluntary instrument through which signatories will uphold their commitments under the Paris agreement.

Solidarity and justice lie at the heart of both the Paris accord and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which were also adopted in 2015. These principles, and the responsibilities they entail, are more important than ever as we chart a sustainable recovery from the shock of COVID-19.

The blunt truth is that we have wasted too much time in the five years since Paris. The policies we need to cut emissions - including an end to fossil-fuel subsidies, a meaningful carbon price, and investment in renewable energies - have been fitful, inconsistent, and uncoordinated. But the climate crisis, like COVID-19, observes no borders and is indifferent to national sovereignty.

While attention has properly been focused on the virus, the world has also witnessed ever more extreme weather phenomena, from wildfires in Australia and California to the costliest storm on record in the Bay of Bengal, which forced two million people to evacuate their homes. We have all become acutely and intimately aware of the fragility of human existence and the extent to which, across borders and generations, our fates are interconnected.



## O-PED

By Arvind Subramanian  
& Josh Felman

# The Year of the Renminbi?

*After years of poor policy and political tumult in the United States, it is not unreasonable to ask whether China's currency will soon be in a position to challenge the greenback. While neither country has been doing itself any favors in the currency pageant, it is worth remembering that history is not on America's side.*

**N**EW DELHI - When the billionaire investor Ray Dalio recently predicted that the Chinese renminbi will become a global reserve currency, the world took notice. It's a prediction that the Chinese government has encouraged through its own efforts. The question now is whether the coming "Year of the Ox" will bring the decisive shifts needed to position the RMB to fulfill policymakers' ambition.

Like a beauty pageant, the contest for reserve-currency status is one of relative attractiveness. International traders and investors must decide which among the currencies available to them is most convenient to use, is supported by the strongest financial system, and - perhaps most important - enjoys the backing of a trustworthy sovereign. What is new today is that both of the world's major sovereigns also seem to be competing to reduce their own trustworthiness.

Relative attractiveness is difficult to quantify. But underlying this concept is one factor that can be measured precisely: the size of the issuing country's economy. As the economist Paul Krugman explained in a 1984 paper, "the currency of a country which is important in world markets will be a better candidate for an international money than that of a smaller country." In other words, a globally dominant economy is the "hardware" for an international reserve currency.

China, clearly, has the necessary hardware. It been the world's largest trader since 2013, its economy is now larger than that of the United States in purchasing power parity terms, and soon it will pull ahead in terms of market exchange rates, too. For these reasons, one of us (Subramanian) pointed out a decade ago that the renminbi would come to rival and eventually eclipse the dollar.

Since then, China has made great progress in boosting the renminbi's relative attractiveness. Its economy has continued to grow much more rapidly than US GDP and emerged more resilient from the COVID-19 crisis. Its central bank has started developing and testing a digital currency. And its "Belt and Road" clients across the developing world are beginning to use the renminbi in their growing trade and financial transactions with China.

But the dollar has proved stubbornly resistant. As Gita Gopinath, the International Monetary Fund's chief economist, and her colleagues have shown, an overwhelming preponderance of trade continues to be invoiced in dollars, and the dollar still plays a prominent role in cross-border funding as well.

A key reason for the dollar's resilience vis-à-vis the renminbi is that America's economic hardware is complemented by powerful software: all of the intangible qualities that underpin investor confidence - not least a strong banking system backed by a reliable sovereign. China still has a long way to go in these areas.

To build trust in its financial system, China needs to shore up its highly leveraged, overextended banks. After that, it should remove its capital controls and ensure greater transparency so that investors can enter Chinese financial markets with confidence that they know what they are buying. Chinese authorities then must commit to keeping capital controls lifted, so that investors can be confident that they will always be able to move their money out of the country. None of this can be accomplished quickly, and convincing investors that the changes are irreversible will take even longer still.

Next comes the task of building confidence in the sovereign. China will need to convince other countries that it is and will remain a reliable economic partner. This will require even more time and effort, especially given that the Chinese government has been moving in the wrong direction. China may have helped negotiate the recently agreed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, but it has also used trade sanctions as a form of political punishment against one of its main trading partners, Australia.

Moreover, China has been cracking down on free speech and democracy activists in Hong Kong, with scant concern about the implications for the city's standing as an international financial center. It has also acted punitively against one of its leading financial-sector entrepreneurs, Alibaba founder Jack Ma, while publicizing a new "dual-circulation" development strategy that unmistakably signals an inward turn for economic policy.

To be sure, the US has raised questions about its own reliability as a financial partner, particularly under President Donald Trump. For example, the Trump administration's sanctions against Iran prohibit US banks from dealing not only with that country directly, but also with any foreign banks that operate there. As a result, other countries - including many US friends and allies - now recognize how vulnerable they are to US unilateral action. While the dollar's dominance provides convenience, it now comes at a high potential cost - so high that Europe had to scramble to create its own cross-border clearing mechanism for trade.

More recently, the Trump administration has again taken direct action against China, ordering that US financial institutions and investors cut ties with certain state-run Chinese firms and that three Chinese companies be delisted from the New York Stock Exchange. Chinese authorities have since been planning a response to protect Chinese companies from the slings and arrows of US financial dominance.

It is not clear which country has done more to undermine confidence in its own software, so one should not confidently assume that the dollar's reign is unshakable. China could still win the reserve-currency contest, either because the renminbi becomes more attractive, or simply because the dollar has become less so.

Moreover, it is worth remembering that history is not on the dollar's side. The late MIT economic historian Charles P. Kindleberger famously predicted that "the dollar will end up on history's ash heap, along with sterling, the guilder, florin, ducat, and if you chose to go way back, the Levantine bezant."

It is an open question whether any decisive transition from the dollar to the renminbi will begin this year. But when it comes to the long term, China's rulers are confident in their currency's prospects. They already seem convinced that their hardware will prove attractive, regardless of the shortcomings of their software. The not-so-subtle message to the world is that, regardless of what China does, the renminbi will rule.

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## OPINION

By Jayati Ghosh

# Four Ways Biden Can Boost the Global Economy

*The US is nowhere near as economically dominant as it was even a decade ago. Yet President-elect Joe Biden can take several relatively simple steps that would have far-reaching benefits for the US economy, the American people, and the rest of the world.*

**N**EW DELHI - On January 6, when a mob of US President Donald Trump's supporters breached the Capitol with shocking ease, the world's already-low expectations of the United States plummeted. And yet, when it comes to the global economy, there are immediate steps President-elect Joe Biden can take to boost the world's - and especially developing economies' - prospects.

To be sure, the limits of US global leadership are significant. After Trump's presidency, even America's closest allies harbor serious doubts about its reliability and values, and about the effectiveness of its government. The Trump administration's botched COVID-19 response, including an inept vaccine rollout, reinforced the perception of national derangement. The Capitol insurrection - which Trump incited, with the goal of disrupting Congress's certification of Biden's electoral victory - drove it home.

Even on the economic front, the US is nowhere near as dominant as it was a decade ago, let alone a generation ago. Add to that a razor-thin Democratic majority in the US Senate, and the Biden administration's ability to implement economic policies that reverberate positively worldwide would seem to be limited.

It is not. Biden does not need congressional approval to implement measures that would have far-reaching benefits for Americans and the rest of the world.

The first is to drop all objections to a World Trade Organization proposal to waive temporarily certain intellectual-property obligations in response to COVID-19. The proposal - introduced by India and South Africa, and cosponsored by other developing countries - aims to remove barriers to timely access to affordable medical products related to the "prevention, containment, or treatment" of COVID-19.

This is in line with WTO rules: the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual-Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement allows for compulsory licensing. Moreover, the WTO specifies public-health emergencies as adequate cause under TRIPS to issue compulsory licenses that would allow more companies to produce essential drugs. It is difficult to imagine a more appropriate situation in which to apply this provision.

A lower price for COVID-19 vaccines and drugs would benefit everyone, including the advanced economies, whose public budgets are under significant strain. And yet the US has led the advanced economies in blocking the proposal. This benefits only one group: multinational pharmaceutical companies.

This isn't a matter of ensuring that these companies recoup their costs. The COVID-19 vaccines have been developed on the back of public research and were funded almost completely by public budgets. Even with the temporary suspension of intellectual-property rights, the companies that developed them will profit handsomely.

Allowing these companies to retain patent monopolies on COVID-19 vaccines would prolong the pandemic for everyone - adversely affecting public health and the economy - for the sake of letting a few huge companies line their pockets. If, however, the Biden administration leads the advanced economies in supporting the temporary suspension, countless lives would be saved, and the global economic recovery would accelerate.

Likewise, the Biden administration does not need congressional approval to allow the International Monetary Fund to provide a new allocation of Special Drawing Rights to all its member countries. The US blocked the IMF's request for such an allocation - worth \$500 billion - last April. (India also blocked the request, but if the US withdraws its objection, India is unlikely to resist. In any case, India has little voting power.)

At this point, however, a \$500 billion allocation is nowhere near enough; a \$2 trillion allocation would be far more effective in bolstering the ailing global economy. Nonetheless, even an initial \$500 billion worth of SDRs would provide short-term relief to a wide range of developing economies, especially those with heavy debt burdens.

A third priority for the Biden administration should be to cooperate with other countries to create an effective global system for taxing multinationals' profits. As the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation has shown, this would not be difficult to do. The first step would be to set a minimum effective corporate tax rate of 25% worldwide.

The share of a company's profits taxed in a particular country would be determined according to a formula that included sales, employment, users (for digital companies), and capital. That way, multinationals could no longer avoid taxes by artificially shifting reported profits to lower-tax jurisdictions.

The Trump administration vehemently opposed action to tax multinationals fairly. For example, when France decided to tax the revenue of US digital giants like Facebook, Apple, and Google, it imposed retaliatory tariffs, claiming that the tax discriminated against US companies. The Biden administration should take the opposite approach, working with other countries to ensure a victory for governments and people worldwide.

By recommitting to the Paris agreement, Biden will accelerate global progress on climate change and provide additional support to post-pandemic economic recovery. We can hope that his administration will quickly pluck the other low-hanging fruit as well.

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**ECOWAS holds 45th Ordinary Session of Mediation and Security Council meeting virtually**

The 45th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council (MSC) at the Ministerial level which held virtually on the 19th of January, 2021 ahead of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers meeting also scheduled to hold virtually from the 20th to

Commission, Mr. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, stated that the Memorandum on the regional security situation being presented, duly took stock of the regional situation on the ground.

He also restated the commitment and determination of the Commission to work

this violence” President Brou added.

Declaring the meeting opened, Mrs. Shirley Ayokor Botchwey, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of the Republic of Ghana and Chair, ECOWAS Council of Ministers, urged the Ministers and Representatives of Member States to conduct a thorough consideration of the recommendations from the MSC at the Ambassadorial level and the various memoranda brought forward for approval.

She said the MSC would continue to focus attention on implementing the ECOWAS Action Plan against Terrorism while redoubling the collective efforts in honouring the financial obligations made towards the implementation of the 2020-2024 Priority Action Plan to combat terrorism in West Africa.

A minute silence was also held in memory Mr. Jerry John Rawlings, former President of the Republic of Ghana, M. Amadou Toumani Toure, former President of Mali, Mr. Moussa Traore, Former President of Mali, Mr. Mamadou Tandja, former President of Niger and the late Dr. Nelson Magbagbeola, Secretary-General of the ECOWAS Commission, who have all lost their lives since the last MSC meeting.



the 21st January, 2021.

The ministers in charge of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of ECOWAS Member States deliberated on the security and political situation in the region among other matters.

Addressing the Ministers, the president of the

towards achieving the objectives of the Community in the field of Democracy, Good Governance and Security.

“I take this opportunity to reiterate our firm condemnation of the terrorist acts in our region and to renew our solidarity with all the member countries affected by

**CENTAL to mentor investigative journalists**

The Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL) is set to roll out an anti-corruption & Investigative reporting mentoring program as part of its National Integrity Building and Anti-Corruption (NIBA) Program funded by the Government and People of Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

The program has gotten underway with the launch of the recruitment exercise for potential and interested journalists.

The anti-corruption & integrity-related investigative reporting program seeks to empower journalists to investigate and independently report on corruption and integrity-related issues in Liberia. The program aims to build a

network of journalists from diverse backgrounds to actively be involved with relevant project activities as part of broader partnership and collaboration with the media in

consolidating efforts against corruption in the country.

Under its National Integrity Building and Anti-Corruption (NIBA) Program, CENTAL intends to establish a network



**Ex-soldiers warned over arson threat**

Barely a day after some disbanded soldiers threatened to set banks on fire over pension-related issues, the Ministry of Defense yesterday called on the group to publicly withdraw its statement within 72 hours or risk all necessary actions within the ministry’s reach in dealing with the threat.

“The ministry takes serious exception to such statements and calls on the group to publicly withdraw said statement within 72 hours or the ministry will be left with no alternative, but to take all necessary actions within its reach in dealing with the

the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).

The ministry reiterated that any attempt of arson on any of the institutions named, the leadership of said group will be held liable, as it views such a statement as terroristic.

It added that it will not tolerate any mischievous acts that have the propensity to undermine the gains the Ministry of National Defense has made in unifying the veterans community under the Bureau of Veteran Affairs.

“The Ministry of National Defense wants to be emphatically clear that any group of Liberians attempting to



threat,” the ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The Ministry of Defense noted that its attention had been drawn to a threatening statement issued on Monday, 18 January by a group calling itself the “Executive Committee of the Unconstitutional Disbanded Soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia.”

In the statement issued by the disbanded soldiers, the Defense Ministry observed, the group has threatened to burn down ECOBANK, United Bank of Africa (UBA) and SIB if they dare open pensioner’s accounts for the disbanded soldiers of

stall the ongoing account opening process of members of the former AFL at the Barclay Training Center will be vehemently resisted by the Ministry of National Defense and the Armed Forces of Liberia,” the release continued.

Meanwhile, the authorities at the Ministry of National Defense and the High Command of the Armed Forces of Liberia assure the banking institutions named not to panic, as the Armed Forces of Liberia are on full alert to abort any threat coming from any group of Liberians.--Press release

of at least twenty (20) members to be drawn from the print and electronic media including community radios.

The program will rotationally provide a minimum financial support (mini-grant) to the network members to enable them independently investigate and report on corruption related issues, especially in the seven project targeted counties - Montserrado, Bong, Nimba,

Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa and Rivercess.

Annually, each of the journalists will be required to produce a minimum of three (3) investigative reports/stories, except for the inception phase which requires a minimum of two (2) stories per reporter. The stories will cover longstanding and trending issues targeting key sectors identified and



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# NEC reserves ruling

The Board of Commissioners of the National Elections Commission (NEC) has reserved rulings into motions of appeals in the Bomi and Grand Gedeh counties' elections irregularities cases involving Senators-Elect Edwin Melvin Snowe and Zoe Emmanuel

January 2021 after final arguments between lawyers representing both complainants and resistance in the Bomi and Grand Gedeh cases.

The BOC in the first motion of appeal case: ruling Coalition for Democratic Change, by and through former House Speaker Alex Tyler versus National Elections Commission and

ruling and serve notice to the two parties.

In the Grand Gedeh County motion of appeal, praying for a re-run poll involving Thomas Yaya Nimely verses Zoe Emmanuel Pennue, the BOC through Chairperson Davidetta Browne Lansanah said ruling into the matter will be reserved for a later date. This was preceded by final arguments between Cllr. Jimmy Bombo, representing Zoe Pennue and Cllr. J. Laveli Supuwood, representing Thomas Yaya Nimely.

In the final motion of appeal case, H. Dan Morais verses NEC, and CDC, through James Biney, the BOC, through its Chairperson said matters into the case will be rescheduled soon for assignment.

Earlier, lawyers representing H. Dan Morais, Cllrs. Wilfred Sayer and Stanley Kparklen, after the case was called for hearing, asked the BOC to grant them their prayer, but the BOC said without the full transcribed minutes and documentary evidence, it would be difficult to proceed with the case.

But lawyers representing James Biney, led by Peter Kerkulah and Charles Harris took exception to the BOC's decision, saying this was a delay tactics by the complainants. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Pennue, respectively. The NEC has at the same time rescheduled electoral irregularities case in Maryland County between Senator-elect James Biney and rival H. Dan Morais.

The Board of Commissioners (BOC) took the decision on Monday, 18

Intervener Edwin Melvin Snowe through Chairperson Davidetta Browne Lansanah said following arguments by lawyers Amara Sheriff and Author Johnson, representing Alex Tyler and Attorneys Cephas Teewia, A. Teage Jalloh and Ebenezer Gibson, representing the Intervener, the BOC will reserve

# Advocate wants campaign billboards down

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The December 8, 2020 special senatorial election is over but campaign billboards of candidates that participated in the process are still visible in several parts of Montserrado County and across the country, leaving commentators asking when they will be taken down.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with the New Dawn in Monrovia recently, local advocate Joseph T. F. Johnson of the Action for Elections and Democracy said he is taken aback that since the polls ended a more than month ago; political actors are yet remove their campaign billboards from the streets.

He noted the presence of campaign billboards in the streets and communities after an election violates the National Elections Commission guidelines on political activities in the country.

According to him, all political campaign billboards



erected across the country should have by now been disposed off since the purpose for which they were erected has ended.

Johnson believes that politicians were informed by the National Election Commission as to the erection and removal processes, so he sees no reason

why up to present they are still in the public domain.

He calls on the NEC to enforce rules governing campaign and elections to avoid a repeat of such practice.

"We are no longer having

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

# LEC, ESBI contract expires

-Senator Nyonblee says

By Ethel A Tweh

Grand Bassa County Senator Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence has brought to the attention of the Liberian Senate that the management services contract between the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) and the ESBI Engineering and Facility Management limited has expired.

In her communication to the plenary Tuesday, 21 January Senator Karnga - Lawrence said the commencement date of the said management services contract is 8 January 2018, referencing Sub-clause 2.2 of

not been renewed or extended in compliance with Liberian laws.

The opposition Liberty Party political leader however solicits the support of plenary's urgent intervention into the matter by citing the relevant authorities of the Liberia Electricity Corporation to appear before the Senate to provide appropriate answers as to why they are illegally operating with ESBI Engineering and Facility Management Limited without a valid contract.

In a motion, Montserrado County Senator Saah H. Joseph of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) says the subject matter is important



the document.

According to her, the instrument further states in Sub-clause 2.3 that "unless terminated in accordance with clause 24 Default and Termination, this contract shall be in effect until the third anniversary of the commencement date."

She argues that the third anniversary of the commencement date of this contract as clearly spelt out in Sub-clause 2.3 on the duration of the contract is 8 January 2021. Senator Lawrence says further that this contract has

to everyone and it should be taken seriously.

He therefore urges that the communication be opened for discussion.

Former House Speaker, now Margibi County Senator J. Emmanuel Nuquay says the Senate works with committees and therefore the communication should be sent to the committees on Public Corporation, Concession and Judiciary, to report to the plenary within one week.-- *Edited by Winston W. Parley*

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**MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

# CBL dismisses rumors on money printing

By Bridgett Milton

The Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) has dismissed rumors that the Legislature has refused the printing of banknotes.

Legislature refuse the printing of banknotes.

The CBL official explains that before the bank comes up to print any money, there has to be a written proposal to the Legislature, adding that such

adding that at the right time, it will go to the Legislature.

The House of Representatives summoned the Central Bank of Liberia after a communication from Montserrado District #16 Representative Dixon Sebeo requested the House to invite the CBL to provide expert discussion on the status of the monetary sector of Liberia with special emphasis on the bank's plan to resolve the liquidity issue that is prevailing in the economy.

According to Sebeo, for the past eight months the House committee along with other specialized committees during their break, had some encounters with the CBL to understand what had happened to the Liberian dollars on the market.

He says it is important to know what happened to the Liberian dollars and what the CBL's laydown plan is.

Also speaking, CBL Governor Aloysius Tarlue says in December 2020, there were more money outside the bank, adding that there were \$25.3 billion in the bank while \$22.5 billion outside the bank.--

*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



Appearing before the House of Representatives Tuesday, 19 January, CBL Deputy Governor for Operations Nyemadi D. Pearson said at no time did the

proposal has not reached the Legislature yet.

Pearson notes further that the CBL has sent a communication to the president for the printing of banknotes,

# Elders raise red flag in Slipway/Crown Hill communities

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Elders Council and the Chairman of Slipway/Crown Hill communities have expressed concern how a document from Magistrate L. Ben Barco of the Monrovia City Court at the Temple of Justice to Judge J. Kennedy Peabody of the Civil Law Court 'A' Six Judicial Circuit landed in the hands of the dismissed Chairman of the Slipway/Crown Hill community Elections Commission Augustine Zolduah, which was used to conduct a 'fake' election recently in the community that declared Isaac K. Krah as community chairman without knowledge of the Elders Council.

Elders Council Chairman Daniel Davies said the document referred to as 'Court Report' from Associate Magistrate Barco cannot be used to conduct elections in the community because said

Elders Council of the community shall install into office newly elected officers after certification of the election results, which was never done.

It terms the alleged action of Associate Magistrate Barco as dangerous to the democratic process and peaceful wellbeing of residents of the community.

However, the 'Report' from Magistrate L. Ben Barco, Associate Magistrate of the Monrovia City Magisterial Court, Temple of Justice, on the complaint of Augustine Zolduah, Chairman, Ad Hoc election commission of Slipway/Crown Hill Development Association to Judge J. Kennedy Peabody, Resident Circuit Judge, Civil Law Court "A" Six Judicial Circuit dated 25 March 2020, said that Chairman Augustine Zolduah filed a complaint before Judge Kennedy Peabody to the effect that sometime in December 2019 the Association mandated

# CDC Chairman hails reform at Foreign Ministry

The Chairman of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), Mr. Mulbah K. Morlu has hailed Liberia's Foreign Minister H.E. Dee - Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr., for transforming the Ministry, restoring the dignity of the country's Passport and making it affordable.

A press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs says during a courtesy visit at the ministry on Tuesday, 19 January, the ruling party Chairman expressed excitement at Minister Kemayah's work since taking over as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, saying he is impressed by the progressive attributes of the Minister and members of his staff at the ministry.

"See how affordable our Passport has become and see the dignity of the Passport being restored. That's specifically important because without respectable traveling documents, you wouldn't be able to interact with the rest of the world as a country," Chairman Morlu is quoted as saying.

According to Chairman

Morlu, during the courtesy excursion, he sat in Foreign Minister Kemayah's office and witnessed via CCTV, all the interactions within the Passport bureau, describing the transformation there as historic.

"We are very much impressed by the progressive attributes of the Minister and members of his staff here at the ministry," Chairman Morlu notes.

He indicates that the

headquarters of the ruling CDC is excited that there are ministers of government, starting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is burdened with the desires and urge to ensure that H.E. President George Manneh Weah achieves his announced agenda within the confines of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"I was also very proud for the first time in decades to have seen how digitized the Passport Section has become

**▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11**



CDC Chairman Mr. Mulbah K. Morlu



case is still pending before the Civil Law Court.

The community election which was scheduled to have taken place on 1st December 2019 was reportedly halted following confusion amongst some of the candidates vying for the chairmanship, which eventually led to the death of one person.

According to the Elders Council, the 'Court Report' from Associate Magistrate Barco is posing chaotic and life-threatening situation in the community.

The Council calls on the Judicial inquiry commission at the Temple of Justice and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia to intervene in the matter.

Quoting Article 14, Section 1 of the constitution of the Slipway/Crown Hill Community, the Elders Council notes that the Chairman of the

him to conduct an election for new corps of officers to steer the affairs of the community.

The 'Court Report' also quotes Mr. Zolduah as further alleging that on election day, December 1, 2019, he visited the Zone Two Police Depot to request for police protection as was previously arranged, but that he was informed that the County Attorney of Montserrado County, Cllr. Edwin Martin had ordered the police to halt the election on grounds that he (Cllr. Martin) had received a complaint from one of the contestants, who was accompanied by some members of the Elders Council to the offices of the County Attorney.

It says there and then, the police ordered the discontinuation of the election, and that as a result of the police stance, the election did not go

**▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11**



# Français

## Investir 50 millions USD par an pour résoudre le problème de routes dans le sud-est du Libéria

Le Vice-président de la Chambre des Représentants, Me J. Fonati Koffa estime qu'avec 50 millions de dollars américains par an, l'administration Weah est capable de construire des corridors routiers dans le sud-est du Libéria.

Le tout nouveau numéro deux de la chambre basse compte donc faire pression au cours des trois prochaines années sur le gouvernement de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique pour que le rêve qu'il partage avec le président de la République devienne une réalité.

Le législateur du comté de Grand Kru a promis de tout faire pour qu'il ait une allocation budgétaire. Le coût estimatif pour un mile de route est de 1 million de dollars américains, alors avec 50 millions par an, on peut construire 50 miles de route par an.

« Nous n'allons pas attendre de gros prêts estimés à 100 millions de dollars par exemple pour relever ce défi qui date de si longtemps », a déclaré Me Koffa.

Selon lui, pour réhabiliter toutes les routes du pays, le

gouvernement devra allouer au moins 50 millions chaque année et en seulement trois ans, au moins 150 miles de routes auront été réhabilitées.

Dans sa première interview post-électorale pour le poste de vice-président sur la chaîne publique ELBC / LNTV lundi, le représentant du district n° 2 du comté de Grand Kru a dit que c'est une stratégie de développement qui permettra de faire un progrès significatif pour le développement du pays. Mais encore faut-il que

cette idée soit embrassée par le président George M. Weah qui, faut-il le rappeler, s'est donné l'objectif de réhabiliter toutes les routes du pays pendant son mandat, plus particulièrement les routes du sud-est du pays.

« Ces routes », rappelle le représentant Koffa, « une fois construites, permettront de faciliter la croissance économique, d'améliorer les capacités locales, de créer des emplois et de faire des

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



## Le Sénateur Jonathan Sogbie se dit prêt à soutenir les programmes de développement

Le sénateur nouvellement élu du comté de River Gee, Jonathan Boy Charles Sogbie, a promis de travailler dans l'intérêt des habitants de River Gee et du pays en général. « Je ne suis pas devenu sénateur pour un comté mais pour l'intérêt de

ce pays. Mon travail au Sénat libérien consistera à soutenir tout programme de développement qui sera dans l'intérêt de notre peuple, et non dans l'intérêt de l'exécutif », a-t-il dit.

S'exprimant le lundi 18 janvier sur Prime Morning

Drive '', une émission radiodiffusée en direct, le sénateur Sogbie a déclaré qu'en dépit d'être membre de l'ANC (Alternative National Congress) et par extension membre de la

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Mr. Gbehzohngar Milton Findley

## Législatives ivoiriennes : le front de l'opposition se fissure



À l'approche des législatives du 6 mars, les dissensions se font de plus en plus entendre entre les partis et plateformes de l'opposition quant à la stratégie à adopter. Certaines formations refusent d'y participer quand d'autres décident d'y aller. Et parmi ces dernières, les discussions pour des candidatures uniques sont plus que laborieuses.

À la veille de la date limite de dépôt des candidatures à la CEI, le front de l'opposition, lancé avant la présidentielle d'octobre dernier, a du plomb dans l'aile.

Quand la CDRP, plate-forme constituée autour du PDCI, et la plate-forme pro-Gbagbo EDS ont annoncé leur intention d'aller aux législatives, plusieurs petits partis n'ont pas suivi, estimant que ce choix contrevenait à la stratégie de boycott de la présidentielle et de refus de reconnaître le régime Ouattara.

Puis GPS, le mouvement de Guillaume Soro, qui dispose de députés sortants, a indiqué qu'il n'y

participerait pas.

Ce lundi, c'est le COJEP de Charles Blé Goudé qui claque la porte de la CDRP, déplorant que les législatives aient « mis au grand jour les appétits et autres guerres de positionnement entre des entités pourtant supposées être des partenaires ».

Le FPI tendance Affi N'Guessan ne cachait pas non plus ce lundi sa grogne contre le PDCI et EDS qu'il accuse de s'entendre dans leur coin sur la répartition des candidatures et de l'avoir mis à l'écart des discussions.

« Nous ne sommes pas dupes. On a senti cette ruse-là depuis le départ », commentait un responsable du FPI Affi qui tenait une réunion d'arbitrage tard hier soir. « C'est houleux, concède un cadre du PDCI. Mais ça a toujours été comme ça, ce genre de discussions, y compris au sein d'un même parti. À plus forte raison entre plusieurs groupes. Cela ne signifie pas pour autant la fin de la coalition d'opposition », tempère ce cadre.

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# Français

## Investir 50 millions USD

affaires».

Le Libéria souffre d'un manque criard de routes fiables, en particulier dans le sud-est, qui comprend cinq comtés :Sinoe, Rivergee, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru et Maryland.

Les routes du sud-est sont impraticables pendant les saisons des pluies, ce qui affecte ainsi de manière négative la croissance économique, car cela empêche les communautés rurales d'accéder aux produits et services publics essentiels, tels que l'éducation, les soins de santé, l'eau et les marchés pour vendre des récoltes et des biens. En raison des fortes averses dues au changement climatique, les routes du sud-est sont également difficiles à emprunter même pendant la saison sèche et impossibles pendant les saisons des pluies.

Le vice-président Koffas'est en outre engagé à

travailler dans l'intérêt commun du peuple libérien. C'est d'ailleurs l'un de ses principaux objectifs en tant que numéro deux de la Chambre des représentants.

Il a ainsi promis de faire en sorte que les débats sur les questions d'intérêt national soient robustes et d'encourager les différentes idéologies politiques qui puissent contribuer à l'intérêt primordial du peuple. Il a renouvelé son engagement envers son district, son comté et l'ensemble du pays.

Le représentant Koffaa promis des mesures restrictives afin d'empêcher les Ghanéens engagés dans l'exploitation minière illégale à Grand Kru et dans d'autres régions du pays de continuer leurs activités illégales.

Selon lui, des Ghanéens entrent par centaines dans le comté de Grand Kru et d'autres comtés côtiers. « C'est un problème sérieux », s'est-il inquiété.

## Le Sénateur Jonathan Sogbie

Collaboration des partis politiques de l'opposition, il acceptera de travailler le gouvernement si les programmes visent l'intérêt général du peuple libérien.

Il s'est dit pleinement déterminé à soutenir tout programme de l'exécutif uniquement si cela est dans l'intérêt du peuple libérien, affirmant que les problèmes sont trop nombreux et devraient être classés par ordre chronologique.

Parmi ces problèmes cardinaux figurent, selon lui, le mauvais état des routes non seulement dans le comté de River Gee, mais aussi dans toute la région du sud-est, « ce qui continue de poser de graves difficultés aux citoyens ».

« Quand les gens prennent le risque de mettre leurs véhicules sur des routes

délabrées pour se lancer dans les affaires, c'est pour avoir des bénéfices. Et ceux qui achètent également des produits de l'intérieur doivent également en bénéficier, ce qui est impossible en raison de l'état des routes », a-t-il regretté.

Selon lui, l'état déplorable des routes dans le sud-est a conduit à une hausse des prix. « Je soutiendrai donc tout ce que fait l'exécutif qui ne soit pas contre l'intérêt du peuple. Je travaillerai pour le peuple libérien et je ferai tout ce qui est juste. Alors si l'exécutif pose des actes sages, je le soutiendrai, même si la CPP s'y oppose », a-t-il averti.

« Il ne faut que nous jouions un jeu avec notre peuple, leur vie compte le plus, la décision que nous prenons ou refusons de prendre affecte la vie de nos enfants à naître et pour moi, je ne jouerai pas avec le peuple. »

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Mary Robinson

### Il n'y a pas de temps à perdre pour concrétiser les promesses de l'Accord de Paris sur le climat

**D**UBLIN - La pandémie du Covid-19 a mis le monde sens dessus dessous en 2020. Mais elle a également prouvé que lorsqu'il existe une volonté politique partagée d'agir, l'ingéniosité humaine et l'innovation peuvent être déployées à l'échelle et à la vitesse nécessaires pour relever les défis auxquels le monde est confronté.

Avec une rapidité sans précédent, nous avons mis au point et testé, et commencé à déployer une multitude de vaccins efficaces contre le Covid-19. Nous devons à présent faire preuve de la même détermination pour lutter contre l'autre grande menace existentielle pesant sur l'humanité : le changement climatique. Comme l'a déclaré le secrétaire général des Nations unies Antonio Guterres le mois dernier, « notre sécurité et notre prospérité futures dépendent de mesures audacieuses en matière de climat ».

Pourtant, même lors du récent Sommet « Ambition Climat » du 12 décembre dernier, les engagements de nombreux chefs d'État ont été très en deçà des mesures nécessaires pour relever ce défi collectif. Certes, l'Union européenne, le Royaume-Uni et même certains des petits pays les plus vulnérables au changement climatique ont nettement relevé leurs objectifs de réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre (GES) d'ici 2030. Mais les États-Unis, le Japon, la Chine et autres grands émetteurs de GES doivent encore leur emboîter le pas, de préférence bien avant la Conférence de l'ONU sur les changements climatiques (COP26) qui se tiendra à Glasgow en novembre prochain. Compte tenu de l'ampleur de la crise à laquelle nous sommes confrontés, rien ne saurait plus excuser les attermoissements et les faux-fuyants.

Il y a cinq ans, après de longues et difficiles négociations, la communauté internationale s'est unie pour conclure l'Accord de Paris sur le climat, l'un des plus grands triomphes de la diplomatie multilatérale de ces dernières années. Il faut toutefois veiller à ne pas le tenir pour acquis : sans un engagement plus déterminé encore de lutter contre le changement climatique, l'héritage de Paris risque d'être totalement dilapidé.

Les événements survenus depuis lors ont à tel point transformé l'environnement géopolitique qu'il serait méconnaissable par les participants à l'Accord de Paris. Des mots tels que « coronavirus » ou « Brexit » n'auraient suscité qu'un haussement d'épaules dubitatif. Aujourd'hui, ils sont au centre de l'attention fébrile des responsables politiques et des chefs d'État et de gouvernement du monde entier.

Néanmoins, nous ne pouvons pas permettre que ces évolutions éclipsent la constante, et de plus en plus pressante, nécessité d'une action en faveur du climat, et en particulier en ce qui concerne le financement international de la lutte contre le changement climatique. Il y a plus d'une décennie, en 2009, les pays les plus riches s'étaient engagés à mobiliser conjointement 100 milliards de dollars par an entre cette date et 2020 pour soutenir les efforts des pays en développement en matière d'adaptation au changement climatique et d'atténuation de ses effets. Cette échéance est

maintenant passée et ces pays doivent encore concrétiser leurs promesses.

Il est pourtant permis d'espérer. Je suis ravie que le président élu américain Joe Biden ait réaffirmé son engagement à ce que les États-Unis réintègrent l'Accord de Paris « au premier jour » de son entrée en fonction. La participation des États-Unis se fait cruellement sentir après les quatre années perdues en sabotage inutile sous Donald Trump. Un versement par les États-Unis de 2 milliards de dollars au Fonds vert pour le climat, en tant que contribution de leur part à l'engagement de 100 milliards de dollars, serait un geste concret accompagnant leur retour dans l'Accord de Paris. Ce montant avait déjà été promis durant la présidence de Barack Obama et rien n'excuse donc qu'il reste dans les coffres du Trésor américain.

De la même manière, les autres pays riches ne doivent pas se servir du regain d'attention porté aux États-Unis comme alibi pour revenir sur leurs propres engagements. L'annonce faite récemment par la chancelière allemande Angela Merkel sur la mise en place l'an prochain par son gouvernement d'un nouveau processus international pour lever davantage de fonds pour le climat pour la période post-2020 est une déclaration d'intention bienvenue. Mais les expériences passées montrent qu'il n'est pas possible de compter sur les beaux discours.

En outre, tous les pays devront en 2021 apporter la preuve évidente qu'ils réévaluent et cherchent à relever les ambitions de leurs contributions nationales déterminées, l'instrument volontaire par lequel les signataires respecteront leurs engagements au titre de l'Accord de Paris.

La solidarité et la justice sont les valeurs au cœur de l'Accord de Paris sur le climat et des Objectifs de développement durable des Nations unies, également adoptés en 2015. Ces principes, et les responsabilités qu'ils impliquent, sont plus importants que jamais à l'heure où nous définissons la voie vers une reprise durable après le choc de la crise sanitaire.

La triste vérité est que nous avons perdu un temps précieux durant les cinq ans écoulés depuis l'Accord de Paris. Les politiques nécessaires pour réduire les émissions de GES - notamment la fin des subventions aux combustibles fossiles, un prix du carbone adéquat et les investissements dans les énergies renouvelables - ont été appliquées de manière intermittente, incohérente et non coordonnée. Mais la crise climatique, comme le Covid-19, ne connaît pas de frontières et est indifférente au concept de la souveraineté nationale.

Si l'attention s'est concentrée à juste titre sur le coronavirus, le monde a également été témoin de phénomènes météorologiques toujours plus extrêmes, des incendies de forêt en Australie et en Californie à la tempête cyclonique la plus coûteuse jamais enregistrée dans le golfe du Bengale et qui a obligé le Bangladesh à évacuer deux millions de personnes. Nous avons tous pris pleinement et intimement conscience de la fragilité de l'existence humaine et de la mesure dans laquelle, par-delà les frontières et les générations, nos destins sont liés.

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# Protest awaits Annual Message

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Staffers of the Liberian Senate have threatened massive and uncontrollable demonstrations over unpaid salary arrears, a situation that may likely delay, if not stall, President George Manneh Weah's 4th Annual Message to the 54th Legislature next week.

The leadership of the Liberian Senate is yet to pay 16 months' Liberian dollar salary arrears owed staffers, despite repeated assurances.

in full before the presentation of the President's Annual Message.

In response, Pro-Tempore Chie promised to take the staffers before the full plenary of the senate for a discussion, and any decision from said meeting will be proffered to them through their leadership, headed by Charles Browne.

Following an executive session yesterday, the staffers are yet to get a favorable response from either the senate or President Pro-Tempore Chie.

Based on failure of the

to deliver his annual message, which contains his legislative agenda for this New Year.

According to the 1986 Constitution, the President shall deliver an annual message, which shall set the economic agenda of the country for the next 12 months.

During their meeting Tuesday on the grounds of the Capitol Building, the Chaplain General of the Senate, Rev. Michael Holder, provided US\$10 to the aggrieved staffers and promised to work closely to ensure their just benefits are given in accordance with the law.

Last August, the Senate leadership set up a committee headed by Grand Gedeh County Senator, Alphonso Gaye, to investigate the matter.

In his report to the plenary, Mr. Gaye said he believes the payroll submitted is a scam.

The ad-hoc committee observed a disparity in the senate staffers' payroll and salary allotment. It also discovered that, currently, the Senate has more than 800 employees.

Sen. Gaye noted: "We also observed disparity in the payroll where employees of the same status are making more than their colleagues in other departments. The most frustrating thing we saw is that there is an office manager in an office of a senator who makes more than a chief of office staff to a senator and that is something that needs to be reviewed."

Since that report to the senate, the issue of unpaid salaries of staffers still lingers. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**



Both the leadership and the staffers have been in series of rough edges, as the aggrieved staffers continuously argue that the Senate President Pro-Tempore leadership, led by Senator Albert Chie, is indebted to them for 16 months.

On Monday, this week, the aggrieved staffers met with Pro-Tempore Albert Chie, along with some members of the senate, with the staffers insisting their arrears be paid

senate to reach out, the aggrieved staffers have planned today, Wednesday, January 20, to dress up in blue jeans trousers and red T-shirts, while male staffers will attire themselves in black skirts or black trousers with red T-shirts for what they expect to be for a final engagement with the senate.

Mr. Browne, who is the spokesman for the group, said if the senate failed to adhere to their demand, President Weah will not be allowed next Monday

# CENTAL to mentor

Cont'd from page 5

selected based on their vulnerability to corruption, especially the extent to which citizens' access to public services and decision-making have been consistently undermined by corruption in the country - including education, energy, construction/road, health and land.

The program is open to all who are working as journalists working with various media institutions in and around Monrovia as well as Community Radio Stations across Liberia with solid experience reporting on social issues and must be skilled in one of the following areas: broadcast journalism; digital/print journalism; photojournalism; social media; video editing; fluency in English and should be based/working in Liberia and passionate about reporting corruption and integrity related issues.

Applicants are also encouraged to complete a biographical form <https://bit.ly/3sIY3uD> along with a 600-worded motivational essay to explain

why the applicant wants to participate in the program and how it would strengthen their journalistic skills and media organizations; a letter of recommendation from the applicant's supervisor as well as one work sample to show the applicant's knack for investigative reporting. Applications can be sent through email to: [szota@cental.org.lr](mailto:szota@cental.org.lr) and the deadline for submitting applications is Thursday, January 28, 2021.

CENTAL is a civil society organization and national chapter of Transparency International (TI), the global coalition against corruption with chapters and networks in more than 120 countries worldwide. Since 2004, the organization has led and sustained active civil society engagement with integrity building and anti-corruption efforts in Liberia. CENTAL's work focuses on governance, with emphasis on transparency, accountability, and fighting against corruption. This allows us to work on issues related to Education, Land, Mining, Rule of Law, Public Finance, etc.

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## Liberian Judiciary

as an institution responsible for the fair and impartial hearing and disposition of cases. The statement is of outmost concern to the Judiciary," the judiciary says.

Until now, the Judiciary says it has withheld comments and reactions to allow for consultations with the US Embassy near Monrovia for the benefit of receiving more information on the matter.

Following these consultations, the Judiciary says it wishes to make it emphatically clear that as an institution, it has zero tolerance for bribery and all other forms of corrupt practices.

As such it says it does not and will never allow or condone the act of any lawyer,

party litigant or whosoever desiring to "exercise influence" over it.

It explains that one of its core policies, the effectuation of which became very necessary especially at the end of the civil war, is to eradicate corruption and ethical misconducts of judges and lawyers.

Pursuant to the power conferred upon it under Article 75 of the Constitution of Liberia, (1986) to make rules to regulate the practice of law and conduct of judges and lawyers, the release notes that the Supreme Court has promulgated Judicial Canons to govern the conduct of judges and Code of Moral and Professional Ethics to govern the conduct of lawyers.

It details that the Judicial Inquiry Commission (JIC) and the

Grievance and Ethics Committee (GEC) have been established by the Court to investigate ethical violations by judges and violations of the Code of Moral and Professional Ethics by lawyers.

The release continues that these bodies were expanded under the current Bench of the Supreme Court to include prominent Liberians from the civil society - members of the clergy from the Christian and Muslim religions, members of the press, educators, and human rights actors.

"The obvious intent is to promote fair play and transparency and engender public confidence in the judicial system," the release says.

Over the years, it notes

that reports of ethical transgressions against judges and lawyers have been scrupulously investigated by the JIC and the GEC and appropriate actions taken.

Such actions have ranged from ordering restitution, imposition of fines, suspension, disbarment and forwarding to the Legislature, names of judges for impeachment in cases of egregious acts.

By these actions, the Judiciary says it has regularly and systematically sanctioned its members and weeded out those whose acts are inimical to its core values.

"However, in all cases, before appropriate sanctions are applied, a formal complaint is filed, the accused judicial actor is furnished with a copy, investigation is conducted by the body

responsible, and hearings are conducted by the Supreme Court concerning recommendations from the JIC and GEC," the release says.

"This is an essential requirement to accord the cardinal principal of due process. But in the instant case, the information contained in the statement issued by the US Treasury Department, without more, is insufficient to serve as a basis for sanction against the referenced judicial actors," the release continues.

The Judiciary renews its commitment to fight corruption in the judicial system of Liberia and will continue to collaborate and work with friendly governments and international organizations, including the American Bar Association (ABA), to curb practices of corruption.



# Gov't will not yield to blackmail

The Liberian Government Tuesday said it will not yield to any form of blackmail under the pretext of exercising freedom of expression.

In a press statement issued Tuesday January 19, in response to a newspaper report which purportedly quoted the Management of Radio Bushrod (D-15 Radio), as giving the Liberian Government a 48-hour ultimatum to publish an indictment drawn against Mr. Henry Pedro Costa or it will go ahead to grant him air time on their platform, the government said it considers such ultimatum as a form of threat.

It also called on the Management of D-15 FM Station to reconsider the gravity of such statement which has the potential to

charged therein is in custody or has given bail. A violation of this provision shall be punishable as contempt of court."

"Pursuant to the provision of the Criminal Procedure Law, the Government is under no legal obligation whatsoever to unveil an indictment drawn against a Liberian citizen until the person named in the indictment is arrested, the state said.

According to the government release, Costa was undergoing investigation for laissez passer fraud at the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) under the custody of the law when his counsel, Findley Karnga signed for, and obtained Costa's living body, with the firm assurance of producing him whenever he was needed, but has not been seen since then.

The Government of Liberia therefore called on Cllr. Karnga to make good his promise to

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.

# CDC Chairman hails

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and how transparently accountable it has been transformed," Mr. Morlu says further.

"And so we also want to say thank you to the President for being very farsighted to appoint Minister Kemayah and members of his staff. Beyond that, see how young people are beginning to gain access to training opportunities within the ministry, the Protocol Team, the ministry has transformed," he adds.

According to Mr. Morlu, the reception he received at the Ministry at different entry points is impressive, adding that he thinks the government is in line with ensuring that there is a prospect of marriage between activities of the ministry and the President's agenda.

Mr. Morlu indicates that one of the most important pillars of governance within the confines of government's initiative is to ensure that international respect for national documents will be accelerated.

In the midst of previous challenges that existed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, compared to what is now being achieved - the dignity that has been given the Liberian Passport, Chairman Morlu says it does not only speak to the quality of work Minister Kemayah has brought to the Ministry, but the quality of governance that President Weah has transmitted in the governance atmosphere.

"So I want to call on Minister Kemayah and others to remain

steadfast and focused because change must not be taken lightly. Sometimes beneficiaries of change themselves will from the beginning reject change. No change comes easy," he continues.

According to him, for the first time in 173, Liberia has a President that has aggressively tackled national development problems.

Giving a background of his visit, Chairman Morlu discloses that he has initiated a routine visitation to state institutions in view of President George Manneh Weah's announced agenda to transform the country which has to be scrupulously implemented by government functionaries.

He says his visit was meant to pay a courtesy call on Minister Kemayah, adding that while on the courtesy tour, he went to assess the level of progress that has been initiated since he took over as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

He commends the Minister and all his staff for their support, calling on them to work together as a team to ensure that the President's agenda is meticulously implemented.

In the wake of this new development at the Foreign Ministry, Chairman Morlu urges the Ministry's Public Affairs Department to talk more about unfolding developments that are taking place at the ministry, noting that if you don't say these things, people would not know what you are doing.--**Press release**



undermine the rule of law and create unnecessary tension.

The government statement reminds all media institutions that while it will do nothing to stifle free speech, it will not however submit to any form of blackmail under the pretext of exercising freedom of expression.

It further stated that under the Criminal Procedure Law, specifically Title 2, Liberian Codes of Law revised, Chapter 15, section 15.14(2) titled: "Secrecy of proceedings" states: "Disclosure concerning indictment before arrest-- Except to the extent necessary for the issuance and execution of a warrant of arrest or summons, no person shall disclose the finding of an indictment until the person

unconditionally turn over Costa to the Liberian Immigration Service.

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

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# Advocate wants campaign

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election in Liberia and so why should politicians campaign billboards still be seen around our communities; I think the National Elections Commission should take the necessary action to ensure complete compliance", Johnson emphasized.

He recalled that during the 2017 general and presidential elections, several campaign billboards were erected across the country but following the process, most of the political

actors failed to take them down as required by the National Elections Commission.

It is not however clear what penalty the NEC imposes on politicians or candidates whose campaign billboards are still in the streets following the senatorial and representative by-elections that have witnessed several legal challenges at both the Commission and the Supreme Court of Liberia.

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## Liberian Judiciary disagrees with US on sanctions



Liberia's judicial branch of government says the information contained in the statement issued by the US Treasury Department is insufficient to serve as a basis for sanction against the referenced judicial actors here, weeks after Senator the US placed sanction against Senator H. Varney G. Sherman for bribing judges.

In a press release issued Tuesday, 19 January, the Judicial Branch recalled that on 9 December 2020, International Anti-Corruption Day, the United States Treasury Department, in a statement captioned: "Treasury Sanctions Corrupt Actors in Africa and Asia", placed the Global Magnitsky Designations on several individuals in some countries including Liberia.

It notes that the United

States Treasury Department declared that Counsellor Harry Varney Gbotto-Nambi Sherman, a prominent lawyer, Liberian Senator, and Chairman of the Liberian Senate Judiciary Committee, "offered bribes to multiple judges associated with his trial for a 2010 bribery scheme and had an undisclosed conflict of interest with the judge who ultimately returned a not guilty verdict in his favor in 2019."

The judiciary here adds that the statement from the US further said that Counsellor Sherman has "routinely paid judges to decide cases in his favor..." and that his "acts of bribery demonstrate a larger pattern of behavior to exercise influence over the Liberian Judiciary and the Ministry of Justice."

"The statement, no doubt, casts serious doubts and aspersions not only on the integrity and credibility of the Counsellor named and the judges alluded therein, but also on the Liberian Judiciary

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## Chelsea boss facing the sack?

Chelsea boss Frank Lampard has revealed his concerns over his side's poor form after going down 2-0 to Leicester City on Tuesday.

Wilfred Ndidi and James Maddison both struck in the first half to consign the Blues to defeat at the King Power Stadium.

The result leaves Chelsea in eighth place, five points away from Liverpool in the final Champions League qualification spot having

played a game more than Jurgen Klopp's defending champions.

Tuesday's reverse was the team's fifth in their last eight Premier League outings, a torrid run of form that has heightened the pressure on their manager.

And Lampard acknowledged that his charges cannot ignore the reality of the situation.

"We won against Fulham without playing brilliant, from that we come and lose a game so it's a small step backwards," the manager explained to Sky Sports after the final whistle.



"I am worried about the slump - from the form we were in to get so quickly into the form we're now in and we've had some wins, but five losses in eight isn't where we want to be."

"It takes character to get out of that - I'm not against the lads in the dressing room because they're disappointed."

It's a young team and it's a big lesson that if you come off it and think you're fine then you've got to get yourself out of the hole."

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