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VOL.11 NO. 036

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021

PRICE LD\$40.00



P11

The myth unveiled

-In Lutheran church massacre

12 inmates escape Gbarnga prison



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Continental News

Yemen rebels 'regret' deadly migrant centre fire

Yemen's rebel Houthi movement has expressed "deep regret" over a deadly fire at a migrant detention centre in the capital Sanaa earlier this month.

A senior Houthi official said 44 migrants had been killed and 193 others hurt in the blaze, which he described as accidental.

On Tuesday, the United Nations demanded an

independent investigation.

Human Rights Watch accused Houthi forces of causing the fire by launching projectiles at the centre.

Witnesses told the group that security personnel and guards had been trying to end a protest by hundreds of migrants, most of them Ethiopians, against conditions there.

The Houthis have controlled Sanaa and much of north-western Yemen since late 2014,

when they ousted forces loyal to the government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

The conflict escalated the following year, when a Saudi-led coalition of Arab states intervened to restore the government's rule. The fighting has left more than 100,000 people dead and triggered the world's worst humanitarian crisis. "We express our deep regret over

the accidental incident at the migrant detention centre in Sanaa," Houthi Deputy Foreign Minister Hussein al-Azi said on Wednesday, according to rebel-controlled AL-Masirah TV. "There is an investigation into the reasons for the incident," he added.

While Mr Azi is the first rebel official to express regret for the fire and the first to give a final casualty toll, he did not address Human Rights Watch's report. Witnesses told the group that detainees had been protesting against cramped and unsanitary conditions at the facility on 7 March, when guards and Houthi security forces rounded up hundreds of them into a hangar.

One member of the security forces climbed on to the roof of the hangar and launched two projectiles, according to the witnesses. The first produced smoke and made their eyes water and sting, while the second exploded loudly and started a fire.

HRW said it could not verify the type of projectiles used

but that the accounts indicated that they could have been smoke grenades, tear-gas cartridges or stun grenades.

"I was terrified, I felt like my mind was blocked with smoke. People were coughing, the mattress and blankets caught fire," a 20-year-old migrant was quoted as saying. "People were roasted alive. I had to step on their dead bodies to escape."

HRW said there was a heavy security presence in hospitals following the incident and that forces had reportedly rearrested migrants who were not severely injured. "The Houthi authorities need to hold those responsible to account and stop holding migrants in abysmal detention facilities where their lives and well-being are at risk," said Nadia Hardman, HRW's refugee and migrant rights researcher.

The UN's envoy to Yemen, Martin Griffiths, later told a Security Council briefing: "There must be an independent investigation into the cause of the fire to settle the claims which are now a matter of public commentary. "All people in Yemen, regardless of nationality, deserve protection and to be kept safe." BBC



Representatives of African communities in Sanaa called for an international investigation

More than 50 killed in attacks on Niger border

At least 58 people have been killed in Niger after attacks near the border with Mali, the government has said. Gunmen opened fire on four vehicles that were bringing people back from a market in the Tillabéri region. No group has claimed the attacks, which

happened on Monday.

However, there are currently two jihadist campaigns in Niger - one in the west near Mali and Burkina Faso, and another in the south-east on the border with Nigeria.

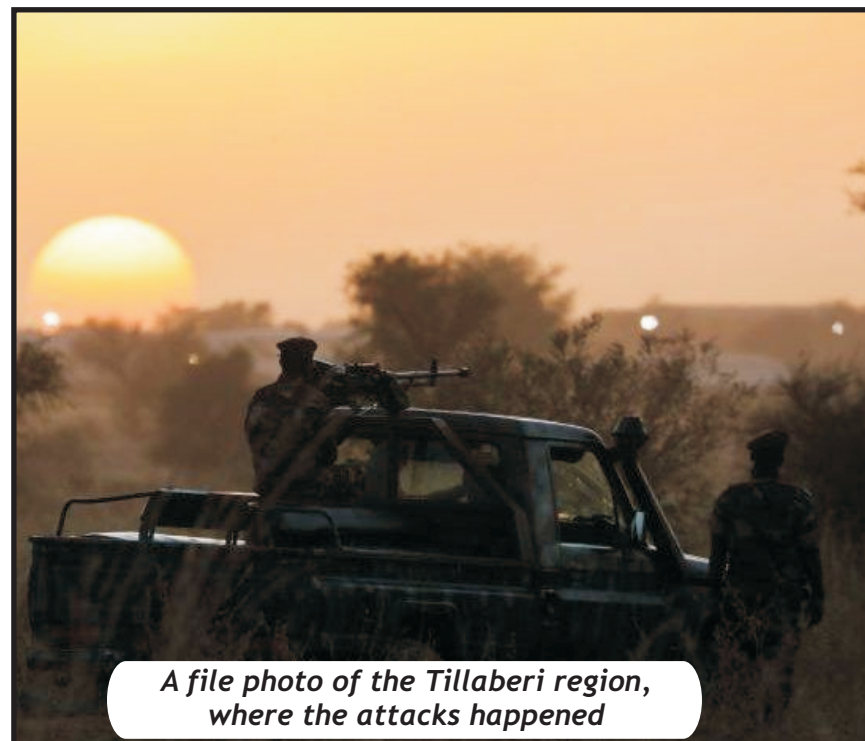
In a statement read out on public television, the Niger government said that "groups of

armed, still unidentified individuals intercepted four vehicles carrying passengers back from the weekly market of Banibangou to the villages of Chinedogar and Darey-Daye".

"The toll from these barbarous acts [is] 58 dead, one injured, a number of grain silos and two vehicles burned, and two more vehicles seized," it added. The government also announced a three-day period of national mourning, starting from Wednesday.

It urged people to have "greater vigilance", and spoke of its "determination to relentlessly pursue the fight against criminality in all its forms". A resident previously told AFP news agency that the series of attacks started with a shooting on a bus travelling to Chinedogar, in which about 20 people were killed.

Another said that the victims had been shopping at Banibangou, a popular market town close to the Malian border. BBC



A file photo of the Tillabéri region, where the attacks happened

Fight at Nigeria school over Muslim head-coverings



The groups clashed over the reopening of 10 schools

Fighting broke out between Muslim and Christian protesters at the Baptist Secondary School in Ilorin city in north-central Nigeria over whether Muslim female students should be allowed to wear head-coverings.

Both sides reported injuries after throwing stones and plastic chairs at each other during the protest on Wednesday morning, preventing the reopening of the school that was forced to close last month - along with nine others - because of an escalating dispute over head-coverings worn by Muslim girls

for religious reasons. Police also fired tear gas after some Muslim protesters tried to pull down the school sign-board.

The Kwara state government - headquartered in Ilorin, the state capital - had ordered the reopening of the 10 schools at the centre of the dispute. The schools were set up by Christian missionaries many years ago, but the government says it controls them. This has led to legal battles, with the High Court and Appeal Court ruling in favour of the government, but a Christian group is now challenging the decision in the Supreme Court. BBC

EDITORIAL

Attack on NEC is an attack on democracy

MONDAY'S (MARCH 15) PETROL bomb attacks on the headquarters of the National Elections in Monrovia is a clear declaration of war on democracy in Liberia, and should be condemned by all who subscribe to rule of law and pluralistic democratic practices. They happened at a time when the nation just came from midterm senatorial election held in December 2020.

POLICE ARE CARRYING on investigation but we believe strongly that these attacks were carried out with motives. Whatever those motives are, they do not serve the common good of the country. Liberians should not forget that political violence in any form such as the one against the National Elections Commission sends out wrong messages with far-reaching consequences. It must be condemned by all peace-loving Liberians irrespective of sides.

WHAT WOULD LEAD a group or individuals to launch petrol bombs against the electoral house without any reason? Let those actors be told in no uncertain terms that violence would not give them what they did not get or cannot get at the ballot box.

POLITICIANS AND THEIR supporters should learn from the late Cllr. Charles Walker Brumskine that the way to get doubts on electoral matters cleared is by challenging the process in court, rather than resorting to hooliganism. The late founder of the opposition Liberty Party took his concerns before the law after the first round of the 2017 presidential election and got redress from the highest court of the land.

SADLY, SOME UNSCRUPULOUS buffoons believe they can take the law into their own hands to satisfy their selfish desires at the detriment of the entire population. This is unacceptable!

THEY WANT TO take Liberia back to the dark days, which it has not fully recovered from. The economy is in shambles with scarcity of cash exacerbated by serious insecurity. In such an environment, people are throwing petrol bombs at a key public institution. What do they hope to achieve?

THOSE BEHIND MONDAY'S attacks should rethink if this is the way they want us to proceed as a people. No one Liberian's desire should take paramount over the whole nation. The action can be equated to nothing else but terrorism! It is too unfortunate.

THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS to put its feet down firmly. Lawlessness and insecurity is gradually taking over our society. It must be nipped in the bulb immediately before it becomes too late.

THE MINISTRY OF Justice along with the Joint Security should leave no stone unturned in expeditiously bringing perpetrators to book to avoid a recurrence of the action that poses serious threat to national security and the already tumbling economy.

COMMENTARY

By Melvyn B. Krauss

Vaccines Can Mend US-EU Ties

STANFORD - Strange as it may sound, vaccines are now the key to reviving the transatlantic relationship. Former President Donald Trump's "America First" administration had left ties between the United States and its European allies badly frayed. So, in his address to the Munich Security Conference in February, President Joe Biden thought it best to reaffirm America's support for Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty: an attack on one NATO member would be considered an attack on all.

That is all to the good. Yet a speech is still a speech, and some wonder what Article 5 and the Alliance is worth when Europe's shortage of COVID-19 vaccine supplies is putting European lives and livelihoods in danger while the US is swimming in doses. The Biden administration has not even pressed for Food and Drug Administration approval of the United Kingdom's Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, despite having an estimated 60 million doses on hand.

There is no doubt about Biden's desire to revitalize ties with Europe, which is why his administration must address this egregious vaccine imbalance and help the Europeans in their moment of need. The fastest way to do this - and to strengthen the transatlantic relationship - is US-European joint production of vaccines in Europe. Here, the Biden team should follow the model of the highly successful deal it brokered in the US, where Merck is manufacturing millions of doses of Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) vaccine under license.

Cooperation in production and distribution across borders, and even oceans, is a more effective way to promote diplomatic objectives than simply selling vaccine supplies to the Europeans (though that is better than nothing at a time when Europe lags far behind the US in terms of vaccine delivery). Russia, not famous for sharing anything, understands this, and has just signed a deal to produce its Sputnik V vaccine in Italy, with similar arrangements reportedly in the works in France, Germany, and Spain.

By cutting such deals, the Kremlin has succeeded in leveraging a critical area, public health, while seeking to divide and hollow out the European Union. Given this, the obvious question is, why hasn't the US government done more to push US pharmaceutical firms to agree to joint production agreements with European pharmaceutical firms?

True, Pfizer/BioNTech (which is a German firm) have a deal with Novartis to produce their vaccines in Marburg - 60 million doses per month at full capacity. And J&J's vaccine is being produced in Leiden, with the company having signed in February a deal with Sanofi to produce 12 million doses per month in Marcy-l'Étoile, France. Moderna has now contracted with the Lonza Group to manufacture its vaccine in Switzerland.

But all of these moves came late (thanks to Trump), after it became clear that the EU was far behind in delivering vaccines to its citizens. And that inability to deliver vaccines gave both Russia and China a window of opportunity to position themselves as Europe's health saviors, which they are now seeking to exploit.

By pushing joint vaccine ventures, US national security would be enhanced without an additional dime of defense spending. Just as the US cemented its ties with Europe after World War II with Marshall Plan aid, it should encourage as many cooperative vaccine production agreements as the Europeans need to meet their needs. The Marshall Plan helped to keep the Soviets out of Western Europe; joint production of vaccines in Europe would limit the malign (and costly) influence that Russia and China seek to exercise. Hungary, for example, is paying many times more for its Chinese vaccines than it would for the UK or US versions.

But jabs are only part of the story. The Biden administration has already made solid progress in mending US relations with Europe, particularly by ending a long-standing, and poisonous, dispute over aircraft production subsidies. Biden and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, agreed in early March to suspend all tariffs imposed in the subsidies dispute for an initial period of four months.

This agreement's commercial significance is matched by its symbolic importance as a signal of a revitalized transatlantic partnership. The aircraft dispute had started almost two decades ago, and the EU had imposed tariffs on US products worth roughly \$4 billion, while the US levied tariffs on \$7.5 billion of European goods. "Finally, we are emerging from the trade war between the US and the EU, which created only losers," Bruno Le Maire, the French finance minister, said on Twitter.

But aircraft subsidies were not the only trade issue separating Europe from America. The tariffs Trump imposed on steel and aluminum from Europe on national security grounds remain in place. Gina Raimondo, the US commerce secretary, recently called the steel and aluminum tariffs "effective," an indication the Biden administration will not soon repeal all of Trump's protectionist measures. And there also remains the thorny dispute over US sanctions on German and other EU firms building the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline to deliver Russian natural gas directly to Germany, bypassing Ukraine and Poland.

How can Europeans not be skeptical of Biden's promise that "America is Back" when he refuses to stand up to the steel protectionists? For Biden, there is a fear that tariffs are popular with the working-class white voters the Democrats want to win back. Moreover, Republicans, and the steel industry and its unions remain behind them.

New Dawn
TRULY INDEPENDENT

OPINION

By Olivia White, Anu Madgavkar

How to Spend \$12 Trillion

SAN FRANCISCO/MUMBAI - Even before the passage of the latest stimulus bill in the United States, governments around the world have offered almost \$12 trillion in financial aid to businesses and households affected by COVID-19, equivalent to 12% of global GDP. But how well have they delivered that unprecedented amount of assistance to the intended recipients? And what lessons do these efforts hold for the future?

Many are asking such questions, from policymakers and fintech innovators to economists and civil-society watchdogs. We recently sought answers by analyzing 12 government pandemic-support programs, for both individuals and small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), in seven countries - Brazil, India, Nigeria, Singapore, Togo, the United Kingdom, and the US.

We assessed the ambition of each program's design - its scope, scale, and specificity - and the effectiveness of delivery, measured by the speed and coverage of disbursements. The research, which built on our earlier work on digital identification and digital financial inclusion, considered both country- and program-level financial infrastructure.

Our study revealed considerable variance. Some programs combined ambitious design with effective delivery. But many fell short in one or both areas, with problems including slow rollout, failure to reach eligible beneficiaries, and in some cases fraud.

The key takeaway from our research is that large-scale, rapid, and targeted economic disbursements require robust digital financial infrastructure. Beyond helping provide support during crises, this infrastructure also fosters economic growth and resilience more generally. This is true for all countries, but emerging economies have more to gain than richer countries in economic value for every percentage point of GDP spent on incremental government disbursements. That may be because advanced economies already have more digital financial infrastructure in place.

In our study, Singapore's Job Support Scheme and the UK's Job Retention Scheme were among the best performers in terms of both design and delivery. But some emerging-economy schemes also scored well. Two Indian programs - one targeted at women, and an emergency credit guarantee scheme that benefited more than three million SMEs and micro-businesses - were able to build on existing financial infrastructure to perform strongly. Togo, which has less developed financial infrastructure, was still able to make good use of what it has: its Novissi program made fortnightly cash transfers to informal workers' mobile money wallets that amounted to 30% of the minimum monthly wage for the duration of local lockdowns.

One of our main conclusions is that effective government support programs have three critical features of financial infrastructure in common: digital payment channels, a basic digital ID system with broad population coverage (such as India's Aadhaar program), and simple data on individuals and firms that are linked to the digital ID.

Countries whose financial infrastructure included these three features could design programs optimally and deliver them quickly. Singapore's SME job-support program, for example, transferred funds automatically to eligible businesses; amounts were calculated based on firms' payroll, without the need for an application process. This was made possible by the "CorpPass" digital ID system, which assigns each SME a unique ID linked to government data on the firm's tax payments and employee wages.

But countries lacking one or more of these infrastructure features had to make trade-offs between their assistance programs' design ambition and delivery success. The US Economic Impact Program sought to pay more than 50% of the population, but had only limited targeting; all individual Social Security recipients and tax filers earning less than \$75,000 annually received the same amount, for example.

There were also delivery challenges in terms of both speed and coverage, owing to the program's partial reliance on paper checks and incomplete list of eligible recipients. Although more than 160 million Americans ultimately received a payment under the scheme, only 90 million did so in the three weeks after it began on March 30, 2020.

A second significant finding is that building robust digital financial infrastructure can give the economy a larger boost than we had previously thought. Before the COVID-19 crisis, we estimated that applying basic and advanced digital ID to a wide range of interactions between individuals and institutions could deliver an economic gain by 2030 of between 3-13% of GDP, depending on the country. But we now estimate that the potential gain could be up to 20% higher.

The pandemic has served as a high-stakes stress test for many countries' financial systems, highlighting critical gaps and opportunities. At the same time, it provides valuable lessons about how to improve efficiency and resilience.

Our analysis covers only a subset of assistance programs in a small number of countries. But it shows that strong financial infrastructure for SMEs and individuals is vital, not just for responding to unexpected and potentially catastrophic crises such as the coronavirus pandemic, but also for boosting financial resilience and economic growth.

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O-PED

By Michael Spence

The Shape of Global Recovery

MILAN - COVID-19 vaccination programs are gaining momentum as production capacity ramps up, and as disorganized and tentative distribution and administration procedures are replaced by more robust systems. A task of this size will surely encounter additional bumps along the road. But it is now reasonable to expect that vaccines will have been made available to most people in North America by this summer, and to most Europeans by early fall.

As of March 15, Israel has administered more than 100 doses per 100 people, compared to 38 in the United Kingdom, 36 in Chile, 32 in the United States, and 11 in the European Union - and those numbers are rising fast. The rates are relatively lower in Asia and the Pacific, but these countries already largely contained the virus without mass vaccination programs, and their economies have since experienced a rapid recovery.

Meanwhile, lower-income countries on several continents are falling behind, pointing to the need for a more ambitious international effort to provide them with vaccines. As many have noted recently, in our interconnected world, no one is safe until everyone is safe.

Assuming that vaccination continues to pick up globally, the most likely scenario for the economy is a rapid recovery in the second half of this year and into 2022. We should see a partial but sharp reversal of the K-shaped growth patterns that have emerged in pandemic-hit economies.

Specifically, growth in highflying digital and digitally enabled sectors will subside, but not dramatically, because the forced adoption of their services will be tempered by the resumption of in-person activities. At the same time, the sectors that were partly or completely shut down will revive. Major service sectors like retail, hospitality, entertainment, sports, and travel will reopen for an eager public. Industries such as cruise lines will probably institute their own version of a vaccination certificate, with sales rebounding once customers are confident about safety.

All told, this return to previously closed consumption patterns, turbocharged by pent-up demand, will produce a burst of growth in depressed sectors, leading to improved economic performance overall. Unemployment will almost certainly fall, even if permanent changes in living and work patterns reduce employment in some areas. (For example, hybrid work models that lock in pandemic-era remote workplaces may reduce demand for restaurants in city centers.)

To be sure, while massive government programs have buffered the economic shock of the pandemic, hard-hit sectors have nonetheless faced significant losses. Between these transitory reductions on the supply side and the predictable surge in demand, a temporary bout of inflation is possible and perhaps likely. But that is no cause for great concern.

Financial markets are already anticipating these trends. After struggling before the pandemic and being hammered in the early stages of the contraction, many value stocks are staging a comeback. Growth stocks in the digital sector, meanwhile, have experienced a small correction. But this, too, should be temporary. While value stocks will continue to hover above their previous doldrums, digital growth stocks will benefit from the powerful long-term trend toward incremental value creation via intangible assets.

One matter of considerable importance is international travel. Businesses can function on digital platforms for a while, but eventually in-person contact will become essential. Moreover, many economies are heavily dependent on travel and especially tourism, which accounts for 10-11% of GDP in Spain and Italy and as much as 18% of GDP in Greece (and probably more if one counts multipliers).

Compared to many other sectors, travel faces additional headwinds, because it is non-local. The rapid recovery pattern that local service industries can expect once the virus is under control does not strictly apply to travel, especially at the international level. To allow for more travel between countries, both - origin and destination - will need to have made progress in vaccinating their populations and containing the virus. Those who are vaccinated and willing to travel will have to be acceptable to the destination country, perhaps by presenting some kind of certification or vaccine passport.

Complicating matters further, international travel is subject to multi-jurisdictional and somewhat uncoordinated regulation. This, together with imperfect cross-border knowledge about external conditions, will make adjusting to new realities on the ground more difficult.

The current trajectory of vaccination indicates that the global rollout will take considerably longer than the programs in advanced economies. The hope is that once these first movers are done, their leaders will turn their attention to bolstering international cooperation and accelerating vaccine production and deployment in developing countries and some emerging markets.

By that point, the advanced economies will be experiencing a brisk recovery, like China and the other Asian economies that contained the virus early on. The return of high-employment service sectors will fuel a broad-based comeback, producing market shifts in relative value across sectors. Schools will resume full in-person learning, armed with complementary digital tools that may enhance the curriculum and provide resilience for the next shock.

In the second half of 2021 and into 2022, the K-shaped dynamic of the pandemic economy will give way to a multi-speed recovery, with the traditional high-contact sectors taking the lead. The two lingering areas of uncertainty for health and economic outcomes are the pace of the vaccine rollout in the developing world and international cooperation to accelerate the restoration of cross-border travel. But with forward-looking leadership, both issues should be fully manageable.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Electricity is key on Pro-poor Agenda

-Energy Minister Murray

By Lewis S. Teh

Liberia Mines and Energy Minister Gester E. Murray says, the importance of electricity in Liberia cannot be overly emphasized, and at such, it is one of the key components of President Weah's Pro-poor Agenda.

"As many of you may be aware that under the leadership of this government, Dr. Weah has mainstreamed electricity into his flagship program which is the Pro-poor Agenda for peace and development",

electrified, noting that it was a wonderful moment for him and the government for the LERC to be awarded several licenses.

"This license ceremony, to me, is a great milestone in the energy sector of this country." He however, calls for cooperation, something he says is key to energy efficiency, adding, "we will encourage anything that can be done to enhance the smooth operation of this program."

According to Murray, Liberia is gradually removing those barriers that are within the energy sector to supplying

The commission began operation in 2018, and it's the lead entity for facilitating the transformation and development of the electricity sector to attract investment, improve availability and adequacy as well as quicken the pace of access to electricity in a liberalized sector.

For his part, the former board chair of LERC, now Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia, J. Aloysius Tarlue, extolled both the leaderships of the LERC and the LEC for their tireless efforts in making sure that vast majority of the country's population has access to affordable electricity.

Governor Tarlue pledged the CBL's unflinching support to working along with the two institutions in whatever way to bring relief, and transform through energy supply.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives' committee chair on energy and carbon, Representative Vencent Willie of Grand Bassa County district#4 thanked both entities, including donor partners such as the European Union and Millennium Challenge Corporation or MCC, among others for standing with Liberia in every aspect of its development drives.

He said for too long citizens have cried for electricity, and the awarding of the six licenses to the LEC is something that will help bring a great relief in the discharge of their duties by providing electricity to citizens.

The Grand Bassa lawmaker said there is need for safe, affordable and interrupted electricity, because electricity chases away criminals and no country moves forward in the absence of electricity. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

sufficient energy to the population.

He underscored a need for national government to consider investment in the LERC, as it would unlikely achieve the intended objectives of transforming the electricity sector without continued stakeholders' participation and their involvement.

The LERC is a statutory body created in 2015 by the electricity laws of Liberia with the mandate to oversee and regulate the electricity sector of the country.



he notes.

Minister Murray spoke here recently at the Liberia Electricity Regulatory Commission or LERC head office in Congo Town, outside Monrovia when the commission awarded six licenses to the Liberia Electricity Corporation in keeping with its operation.

Making remarks at the licensing ceremony, the Mines and Energy Minister described the occasion as being in line with President Weah's vision to seeing the country fully

J. J. Roberts Foundation appreciates 27 college graduates

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The 212th birth anniversary celebration of Liberia's first President Joseph Jenkins Roberts on 15 March 2021 at the First United Methodist Church on Ashmun Street, Monrovia witnessed the recognition of 27 graduates of the J.J. Roberts Educational Foundation.

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, Sister Tanneh G. Brunson, who performed the recognition and award ceremony, paid tribute to graduates S. Morris Massalay, who acquired BBA in Accounting, Bernice W. Lloyd, BA in Sociology from the African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU); Leelah M. Clarke, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Public Health; Eunice K. Feekpeh, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Nursing; Chester Manbiah, Bachelor of

Civil Engineering; Abraham K. P. A. Dallars, Associate of Arts (AS) in Agriculture; William Tarr, Jr., Associate of Science (AS) in Agriculture; Hannah Jacobs, Associate of Science (ASN) in Nursing; Josephine Paye, Associate of Science (ASN) in Nursing; Josephine Siaway, Associate of Science (ASN) in Nursing; Elizabeth Nagbe, Associate of Science (ASN) in Nursing; Dearest T. Jallah, Associate of Science (ASN) in Nursing and Lawrence D. James, Associate of Science (AS) in Public Administration, respectively.

Sister Brunson also ecognized several graduates of the Stella Maris Polytechnic University in Monrovia, including, Campbell E. Y. Gonmenn, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Electrical Engineering; Joey NyanteeSneh, Bachelor of



Science (B.Sc.) in Biology; Martha Nimely, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Nursing; Lovetee Willie, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Nursing; DavidettaZoduah, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Nursing; Geordia M. Zorbah, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Nursing; and Promise M. Freeman, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Nursing from the Adventist University of West Africa (AUWA), respectively.

From the Grand Bassa Community College, Sister Brunson recognized Emmet T. Flahn, Associate of Science (ASN) in Nursing; Mardea N. A. James, Associate of Science (AS) in Agriculture; Shadrach Taycar, Associate of Arts (A.A.) in Accounting; Love Garway, Associate of Science (A.S.) in Computer Science-ICT; Nehemiah J. Giahquee, Associate of Science (AS) in

Science (B.Sc.) in Economics as well as Tim N. Telyon, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Civil Engineering, while at the University of Liberia (UL) she paid tribute to Moses D. S. M. Togar, Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in General Agriculture, respectively.

Meanwhile, the Principal of the J. J. Roberts High School has called on the Board of Trustees of the J.J. Roberts Educational Foundation to revisit the scholarship because some of the beneficiaries are not performing in line with criteria set by the Foundation.

Mr. Samuel Sargbieh said a follow-up with the Foundation would afford the grantees of the scholarship to ascertain whether students placed on the scholarships are academically performing or not. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

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SPECIAL

FEATURE

Discovering Liberia on a presidential tour

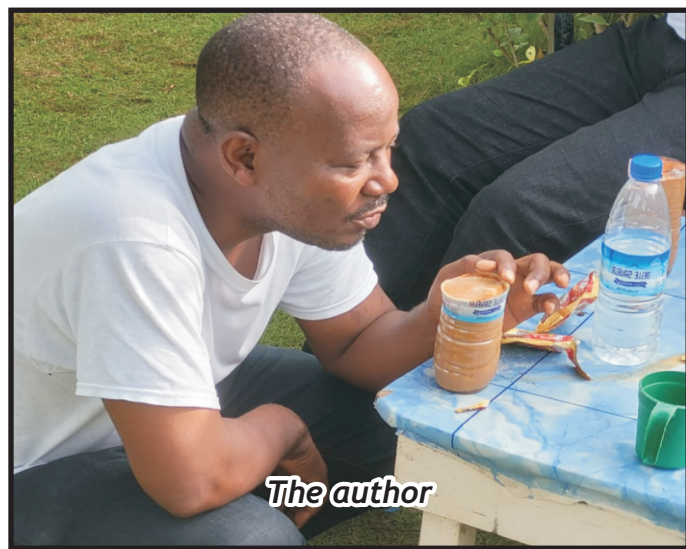
(Edited Version)

By Othello B. Garblah

Editor's note: We sincerely apologize for the publication of the unedited version of this article in our hard copies and online editions. Below is a reprint of the article in its edited version.

By all standards, Liberia is a country rich in natural resources. The country's rich natural resources include iron ore, diamonds, gold, fertile soil, fishery and forestry, just to name a few. But despite its rich natural wealth and strategic geographic location, Liberia remains one of the poorest countries in the world.

Traveling with President George Weah on his recent tour of six of the country's 15 counties in the



The author

southeastern region provided me the opportunity to actually discover the place I called my country-Liberia.

It was a firsthand experience driving over 1200 kilometers on mostly bad road networks from Monrovia through thick rain forests and backward communities amidst abundant wealth and beautiful serenity.

The level of backwardness in the wake of underdevelopment and extreme poverty were overwhelming to the eyes. The deeper we travelled, so was the declined in everything; infrastructure and road networks.

Monrovia is not Liberia, as we say and the truth was available for all to see. Extreme poverty and backwardness begin to stare you in the face as soon as you leave central Monrovia by way of Mount Barclay in Paynesville or Robertsfield, in Margibi County.

The level of underdevelopment and poverty within these counties are beyond comparison to any modern civilized nation-not even in our sub-region. The country's economy is extremely underdeveloped.

Some say the economy of Liberia is extremely underdeveloped, largely due to the First Liberian



Harper, a mission in ruins

Civil War from 1989-96, but I beg to differ. It is as a result of lack of leaders with vision to develop and distribute the wealth of the country evenly or maybe, maybe they did not set the priority of the country right.

Most of the past concession agreements and whatever negotiations that went into them do not show any landmark or infrastructure to count as a gain on the deal. Liberia is 173 years old. This coming July 26, the country will be counting 174 years amidst increasing poverty and underdevelopment.

To be honest, our forefathers did not help this nation. As you go deeper into rural Liberia, so you see a decline in infrastructure development but yet abundant wealth-mostly being exploited by just a handful of multinational companies that shipped out the raw materials, leaving the host communities poorer with damaged roads and bridges most of which are made of timbers.

And so, it was not surprising to hear rural dwellers making roads their number one request to President Weah on the heels of it comes agriculture at all the town hall meetings hosted to interact with him.

Our first stop-Bong County



Sam Dean of Independent pounds peper

One would argued that the central Liberian region is blessed to have paved road passing through it to Ganta, Nimba County. But the challenges faced by the people outside of central Gbarnga, in Bong County are enormous.

In Kokoyah, for instance, where President Weah held his first town hall meeting during his tour, the citizens were vociferous. They did not hold back their desires for a better road condition to enhance their agriculture activities-farm to market roads.

They complained that due to the bad road condition trade in agriculture commodities has slowed down. They even mentioned how Alpha, a logging company in the district has threatened to pull out if a bridge there is not rehabilitated by the government.

Kokoya is a district that links four counties; Bong, Bassa, Nimba and part of Grand Gedeh and the bridge in question links with St. Johns.

Here, for the first time, I listened to President Weah speak presidential as



he responded to the citizens particularly in reference to the threat by Alpha Logging Company.

"I don't believe what was said but if it is true then they (company) need to rethink...Our Government will not be afraid of any company because of Bridge. We will find a company that is willing to build a bridge and stay." Said, president Weah.

"If a company will want to leave because of a little bridge, then we have lawmakers that should be looking for another company to make bridge and stay," he added.

However, "if it is our responsibility to make sure that the bridge is fixed and the road is good then we need to sit and see how we can move forward. But they cannot abandon a contract and our country because of a little bridge that can be fixed."

"So we have to go back and revisit this document. So we can alter this document to make sure it benefits our people," the president noted. He pointed out that people needed to be serious about what they do in the interest of the country and the people.

The response by President Weah in Kokoya had me thinking throughout the entire tour as I reflected on concession agreements that have been entered into by past leaders and yet have not added any value to our economy in terms of going beyond just shipping our raw materials abroad to manufacturing locally.

In this, Firestone Rubber Plantation stands out as a classic example. Since its establishment in 1926, it has not been able to manufacture a rubber tea spoon here locally but manufactured its tires in South Africa from rubber latex harvest in Liberia.

Nimba County

Nimba is arguably Liberia's breadbasket, take it or leave it. Most of our current local agriculture products are produced in the county. The county's agriculture potential is huge. But sadly, the lack of a better road condition linking Ganta, its commercial capital to Sanniquellie, its political capital leave much to be desired.

Yekepa, where the President also visited in Nimba is home to Arcelor Mittal, a multinational steel company. But since its establishment in 2006, the road leading from the main road between Karnplay and Sanniquellie to Yekepa is a disgrace to Mittal Steel which has over a multibillion dollar investment in the area. Sadly, local workers there are dwelling in containers. The concession area does not represent the image of the company-plain and simple but yet the ores are being shipped from there daily.

From all indications, road connectivity to counties here is one of the major reasons behind Liberia's underdevelopment.

Discovering Liberia



Take Tappita for example, where the Jackson F. Doe referral hospital is situated. From Ganta to Tappita is about 200 kilometers. But the road leading to this state of the art hospital is so deplorable to an extent that it can best be described as a death trap for any patient in critical condition.

President Weah while there, broke grounds for the construction of an isolation unit to treat VIPs but with such a deplorable road condition, am just wondering whether it will serve its purpose.

Grand Gedeh

One of the most challenging routes in the southeast is Grand Gedeh. Unlike the little villages and towns you see on the road while traveling through the rain forest from Bong through Nimba, Grand Gedeh is just quite the opposite.

It's a risky route with poor road network and unseen villages along the route just in case one is traveling alone and needs help when there is a breakdown of a vehicle or something, you better think again.

But despite its rough and dangerous route, Zwedru, the capital of Grand Gedeh is well-organized. Here President Weah received the highest number of people who turned out to welcome him.

Many Grand Gedehans are very outspoken in making claims that President Weah is the son of slain President Doe. Meanwhile, individual efforts in Grand Gedeh is paying off as huge structures scattered over the Zwedru.

River Gee County

Established in 2000 by jailed former President Taylor for political patronage, River Gee, with its capital as Fish Town is one of the most backward counties in the southeastern region of Liberia.

There are no internet services, mobile networks don't function properly, and worst of all the county is lacking behind in everything in addition to basic services. In fact, the CLSG electricity lines passed over the county from Grand Gedeh and hit Maryland.

Political rivalries in the county have not move it any further in terms of development. Most of its sons and daughters residing in Monrovia and other places appear to shy away from the county.

The county's political leaders were conspicuously absent when the President visited the area.

Here, we slept in a house that was horrible. In the first place, we could not lock it from inside. The room was filled with crawling insects and rats. We took turns to sleep as we watch over each other. We could not even take bath in Fish Town.

Fortunately for the county, the Asphalt pavement from Harper is almost in the city and maybe when it passes through Fish Town, it could also help bring some relief.

Maryland County

Maryland is arguably one of the well-organized cities in the southeast-better organized than Zwedru. Unfortunately, the city skylines are littered

with huge abandoned ancient buildings which showcased the past wealth of the county. The huge houses of the Tubmans and Allisons spread across Harper in their dilapidated state. Their remains remind first-time visitors of its former glory-but the city now lies in ruins.

The county enjoys 24 hours electricity same as villages in Nimba, and the Grand Gedeh capital-Zwedru. Economy activities here are very slow same as other counties. The much talk about Harper Port does not represent its name to the eye.

Grand Kru

This county has one of the most beautiful serene environments in the country with nice coconut beaches. Grand Cess and Sass Town beaches remind travelers about the Caribbean. But access to this beautiful landscape is its problem-bad road networks and other basic social services- the lack thereof have isolated it.

The county is home to President Weah, Senate Pro-tempt Albert Chie, Deputy Speaker Fonati Koffa, Police Director Patrick Sudue, Liberia Revenue Authority Commissioner General Thomas Doe-Nah and a host of several other current senior government officials.

The layout of Barclaysville was done by current General Services Director Mary Broh ahead of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf tour of the county doing her regime.



The Presidential tour ended in Sass Town, the President's home town and so we had to head back to Monrovia through Sinoe, River Cess and Grand Bassa Counties.

The Return

We left Sass Town on the evening of February 27, at about 5:30 PM, and headed for Greenville, Sinoe County. We were warned about the terrible road condition from Sinoe through Rivercess to Bassa, but we decided to take our chances ahead of the convoy.

We arrived in Greenville at 1:30 A.M. We made all efforts to find a hotel, motel, or a guest house to rest our tire bodies, but all were filled.

A group of boys leaving a beach clubhouse called Jamaica directed us to another club guest house called Meet Me There. By now, it was around 2:30. We got to Meet Me There and we were told the rooms were filled. So, we asked the keeper if he could open his bar for us to sit. He obliged and brought us seats but we asked to be seated on the sidewalk. He agreed.

Philibert Browne and Sam Dean ordered drinks, Stanley Seakor stayed back in the vehicle to sleep. Emmanuel Conway of Heritage also joined us outside as he also ordered his drink. The driver, who has driven over 6 hours from Sass Town to Greenville also ordered his drink. After sipping my Malt, I joined Stanley in the car to take nab.



Stanley in the car to take nab.

Philibert, Sam, and the others talked the boys out for the next one hour and a half offering them drinks just to stay up with us. When I woke up, we all looked at our time and it was 3:45 AM. We washed our faces and bought the driver an energy drink and headed for River Cess. Remembered I said the Grand Gedeh route from Saclepae to Kpelleh Village in Grand Gedeh was dangerous because of the distance and isolation right, well the Greenville Rivercess is the most terrible in terms of passage.

If we thought the route from Ganta through Tappita to Zwedru and Fish Town was bad, then the Greenville to Yakba Town in Rivercess was the most terrible.

We had to endure these routes just once and not returning to distances we had covered during our trip except once, from Karplay back to Ganta. But imagine the citizens that have to travel these routes daily back and forth.

Now, the government has shifted its focus to agriculture because of its potential to provide food security. But if the government is dare serious on its program and investment in the sector, the road should be its number one priority.

Until we make roads our priority and join our counties-Liberia will remain underdeveloped and backward.

Don't listen to the donors that come with their own templates. It's time we tell them what we want and if they are not really to do that, let them go with their packages.

It's time that the donor community listen to the people. Have they ever wonder why they keep making interventions that have not made any impact in our country? It's simply because they think what work in country 'A' can work in ours.

No, the challenges are different and for Liberia road is the gateway to our economy prowess.



Français

La commission électorale victime d'incendie criminel

Le siège de la Commission électorale nationale (NEC) a été attaqué au cocktail Molotov sur fond de contentieux post-électorales. Un des bâtiments et un véhicule de la commission sont allés en fumée. L'attaque a eu lieu tard le lundi 15 mars 2021, en marge de la célébration de la fête nationale à la mémoire du premier président du Libéria, feu Joseph Jenkins Roberts.

Aucune victime humaine n'a été déplorée, mais les informations recueillies jusqu'à présent indiquent que l'attentat à la bombe Molotov a eu lieu après que toute l'équipe de la direction de la commission électorale a quitté les lieux en fin de journée. Le mardi 16 mars, tôt le matin, les locaux de la Commission électorale nationale ont été interdits au public et aux employés, aux fins d'enquêtes préliminaires des forces de sécurité.

Les enquêteurs de la police nationale libérienne et d'autres agences de sécurité n'ont encore nommé aucun suspect concernant l'incendie criminel survenu

lundi vers 22h30. Cependant, plusieurs débris de la bombe molotov qui n'ont pu exploser ont été retrouvés sur les lieux au cours de l'enquête préliminaire.

Selon la NEC, des inconnus avaient lancé des bouteilles contenant des substances inflammables dans l'enceinte du siège. Un pick-up et un garage ont été incendiés. La Commission estime que le coût des dommages s'élève à 45 000 dollars américains.



Some of the unexploded petrol bombs found.

L'enquête préliminaire a montré que d'autres bombes à essence non explosées avaient été découvertes près de la clôture de la NEC, du côté de la 10e rue. La Commission électorale nationale a dit soutenir la police nationale libérienne dans le cadre d'enquêtes en cours pour traduire les auteurs en justice.

L'attaque contre la maison

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Le G5 Sahel : Les Pays Membres Plaident Pour Une Restructuration Totale De La Dette

Les cinq pays membres du G5 Sahel - Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger et Tchad - appellent à une restructuration profonde de leur dette afin de leur permettre de continuer à répondre aux attentes urgentes et légitimes de leurs populations en matière de sécurité et de développement.

« Les chefs d'État du G5

Sahel, préoccupés quant à la capacité des pays d'Afrique subsaharienne à supporter le poids de leur dette en raison des conséquences de la pandémie de Covid-19 et du poids des dépenses sécuritaires, appellent à la mobilisation de toutes les parties prenantes pour une restructuration profonde de la dette des pays du G5 Sahel », insiste la déclaration ad hoc sur la dette.

Les pays du G5 Sahel consacrent entre 17 et 30% de leur budget aux dépenses militaires et sécuritaires. Dans une déclaration adoptée après leur 7^e Sommet organisé les 15 et 16 février 2021 à N'Djamena, la capitale du Tchad, les cinq pays sahéliers estiment que le moratoire sur la dette des pays les plus pauvres décidé en avril 2020 par le G20 n'est pas suffisant.

Partenaire stratégique des pays du G5 Sahel et première institution de financement du développement en Afrique, la Banque Africaine de Développement (BAD) a consacré, cette année, son rapport phare, « Perspectives économiques en Afrique 2021 » à la question de l'endettement sur le thème suivant : « De la résolution de la dette à la croissance économique : une feuille de route pour l'Afrique ».

Le rapport a été dévoilé ce vendredi 12 mars à Abidjan lors d'une cérémonie virtuelle marquée notamment par un échange

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Éditorial

Le bureau du président de la Chambre des Représentants a déçu

Le bureau du président de la Chambre des Représentants veut valloir que valloir défendre ce qui est manifestement indéfendable et accuser la police d'être responsable du récent accident de circulation qui s'est soldé par une fausse couche et des blessures graves. Cela est triste et décevant.

Pire, le Bureau du président Bhofal Chambersa fait valloir que jusqu'à présent, aucun décès n'a été enregistré contrairement aux dires de certains médias, et qu'aucun véhicule officiel de son convoi n'était impliqué dans l'accident.

A bon ? C'est maintenant que le bureau du chef du parlement fait une distinction entre le détachement de la police nationale du Libéria qui assure officiellement sa sécurité et les autres voitures de son convoi ? Ces autres véhicules dits officiels sont-ils sa propriété privée ?

Ce qui est plus dégoûtant, c'est le fait que M. Walkinsnie qu'il y ait eu aucun mort à la suite de l'accident, même face à la confirmation des médecins de l'hôpital JFK selon lesquels la femme enceinte en question a fait une fausse couche, tandis que sa mère a eu les jambes cassées.

Dans un communiqué officiel publié le jeudi 11 mars, le bureau de presse de la Chambre, qualifiant l'accident de « malheureux », a indiqué que l'évènement s'est produit vers 6 heures du matin alors que des éléments de la garde rapprochée du Président de la chambre basse du parlement libérien se rendait au travail.

« Les victimes de l'incident sont hospitalisées à l'hôpital John F. Kennedy aux frais du président de la Chambre des représentants, le Dr Bhofal Chambers, qui s'est rendu à l'hôpital pour s'assurer que les victimes bénéficient d'un traitement adéquat », lit-on dans le communiqué.

Selon le communiqué, le président Chambers a invité la famille des victimes au calme et à la prière pour un prompt rétablissement de leurs proches, tout en les rassurant de son engagement à tout faire en vue d'un dénouement heureux.

Pour sa part, le Bureau du Président Chambers a affirmé que ni le véhicule officiel ni le convoi du Président n'a été impliqué dans aucun accident.

Dans un courriel adressé à ce journaliste jeudi, le porte-parole officiel du Président, George Watkins, a déclaré qu'aucun décès n'était survenu à la suite de l'accident, contrairement aux informations publiées dans les médias.

Donnant sa propre version des faits, Watkins a dit qu'un véhicule utilisé par le service de sécurité de la police nationale du Libéria affecté auprès du président de la chambre basse, conduit par M. Lawrence Williams, un agent de police, est entré en collision avec une Chevrolet Seden bleue blessant ainsi la victime, une femme enceinte et sa mère le mardi 9 mars 2021 sur la 20e rue à Sinkor Monrovia, tôt le matin. Le véhicule était allé chercher le personnel de la sécurité.

Ce que le bureau du Président aurait dû dire, c'est que le convoi n'était pas en service au moment de l'accident. La vérité est que le président Bhofal Chambers doit être tenu responsable de tous les véhicules qui sont officiellement sous son commandement, où qu'ils soient.

Le Bureau du Président dit-il qu'une fausse couche n'est pas une perte de vie ? Quand commence la vie ? Est-ce au moment de la naissance ou à la rencontre des spermatozoïdes d'un homme et d'un ovule d'une femme dans l'ovaire de celle-ci après un rapport sexuel ?

En disant qu'aucun décès n'est survenu à la suite de l'accident, le bureau du chef du parlement veut-il dire que la victime n'était pas enceinte et que les médecins de l'hôpital JFK ont menti ?

Une valeur fondamentale des relations publiques est la vérité, dire les choses telles qu'elles sont pour attirer l'attention du public. A quoi bon mentir ou dissimuler ce qui est déjà connu ?

Français

Le G5 Sahel :

de haut niveau entre le président du Groupe de la Banque Africaine de Développement, Dr Akinwumi A. Adesina, et le prix Nobel d'économie, Pr Joseph Stiglitz.

De nombreux enjeux tels la reprise économique post-Covid-19, les systèmes de gouvernance économique en Afrique et la gestion prudente de la dette ont été abordés par le président Adesina et le professeur Stiglitz auxquels se sont joints, lors d'un panel, LesetjaKganyago, gouverneur de la Banque Centrale d'Afrique du Sud, Ernest Kwamina Yedu Addison, gouverneur de la Banque Centrale du Ghana, AiaEzaNacilia Gomes da Silva, secrétaire d'État au Budget et aux Investissements publics de l'Angola ainsi que Masood Ahmed, président du Centre for Global Développement.

Le rapport Perspectives économiques en Afrique dresse, chaque année, un état des lieux de l'économie africaine et développe les forces et faiblesses de chacune des cinq régions du continent : Afrique Australe, Afrique Centrale, Afrique de l'Est, Afrique du Nord et Afrique de l'Ouest.

Cette publication emblématique de la Banque Africaine de Développement dissèque à travers une fiche-pays la situation économique de chacun des 54 pays membres régionaux.

La publication annuelle des Perspectives économiques en Afrique est très attendue par les États, le monde universitaire, les milieux d'affaires et les partenaires au développement, qui y voient une solide référence en matière d'analyse et de mise en perspective des économies africaines.

La commission électorale

électorale est la première depuis la construction du siège au début de 2005 par l'Agence des États-Unis pour le développement international, USAID.

Cela survient à un moment où la commission enquête sur une série de contentieux

post-électorales après les sénatoriales spéciales du 8 décembre 2020. Un certain nombre de candidats battus dénoncent des fraudes et des irrégularités. D'autres exigent un recomptage des votes dont les résultats ont été officiellement annoncés.

Sénégal : Ousmane Sonko rend visite à ceux qui l'ont soutenu

Ousmane Sonko, leader du parti Pastef, est sous contrôle judiciaire et inculpé dans une affaire de viol présumé, mais il crie au complot ourdi par Macky Sall pour l'écartier de la prochaine présidentielle. Son arrestation a déclenché de violentes émeutes ces dernières semaines au Sénégal. L'opposant a rendu visite aux organisations qui l'ont soutenu.

Dans le cadre de sa tournée de remerciement de toutes les organisations qui l'ont soutenu après son arrestation il y a deux semaines, l'opposant sénégalais a rendu visite mardi au mouvement Frapp-France dégage, dont le leader Guy Marius Sagna est actuellement incarcéré. L'occasion pour Ousmane Sonko de faire une mise au point alors qu'il a souvent surfé sur un sentiment anti-France dans ses discours. « J'ai toujours dit que nous n'avons pas de problème avec la France et qu'aujourd'hui, il faut poser la question simplement de manière générale en termes de relations équilibrées avec nos partenaires, a-t-il déclaré,

comme le rapporte notre envoyée spéciale à Dakar, Carine Frenk. Je crois que nous avons des acteurs politiques français qui tiennent ce discours autant que nous le tenons. Nous avons une amitié des peuples. Donc nous ne sommes pas dans cette logique et nous voulons lever ces amalgames qui peuvent être perçus comme une animosité dirigée contre un pays ou un peuple, ce qui n'a jamais été le cas. » Ces dernières semaines, le Sénégal a été le théâtre d'affrontements entre jeunes et forces de l'ordre, de pillages et de saccages après l'arrestation de l'opposant, arrivé troisième de la présidentielle de 2019. Des émeutes au cours desquelles des enseignes françaises comme des supermarchés Auchan ont été pillées, vandalisées ou saccagées. « Ces enseignes françaises n'ont pas été attaquées avec des motivations politiques, a assuré Ousmane Sonko. Je crois que les casseurs sont partout et quand des gens profitent de ces situations pour casser, c'est parce qu'ils ont faim et ils vont là où il y a l'abondance.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Melvyn B. Krauss

Les vaccins peuvent réparer la relation UE-USA

STANFORD - Aussi étrange que cela puisse paraître, les vaccins sont désormais la clé pour relancer la relation transatlantique. L'administration « America First » de l'ancien président Donald Trump avait fortement détérioré les liens entre les États-Unis et leurs alliés européens. Aussi, dans son discours à la Conférence de Munich sur la sécurité en février, le président Joe Biden a jugé bon de réaffirmer le soutien américain à l'article 5 du Traité de l'Atlantique nord : une attaque contre un membre de l'OTAN serait considérée comme une attaque contre tous.

On peut évidemment s'en réjouir. Néanmoins, un discours reste un discours, et certains se demandent ce que valent l'article 5 et l'Alliance alors que la pénurie de vaccins contre la COVID-19 en Europe met en danger la vie et les moyens de subsistance des citoyens pendant que les États-Unis nagent dans une abondance de doses. L'administration Biden n'a même pas fait pression pour que la Food and Drug Administration approuve le vaccin britannique Oxford-AstraZeneca, alors qu'elle disposait d'environ 60 millions de doses prêtes à être injectées.

Il n'y a aucun doute sur la volonté de Biden de revitaliser les liens avec l'Europe, c'est pourquoi son administration doit remédier à ce déséquilibre vaccinal flagrant et aider les Européens au moment où ils en ont besoin. Le moyen le plus rapide d'y parvenir - et de renforcer la relation transatlantique - est la production conjointe américano-européenne de vaccins en Europe. Ici, l'équipe de Biden devrait suivre le modèle de l'accord très réussi qu'elle a négocié aux États-Unis, où Merck fabrique des millions de doses de vaccin Johnson & Johnson (J&J) sous licence.

La coopération dans la production et la distribution par-delà les frontières, et même les océans, est un moyen plus efficace de promouvoir des objectifs diplomatiques que de simplement vendre des fournitures vaccinales aux Européens (même si c'est mieux que rien à un moment où l'Europe est loin derrière les États-Unis en termes de livraisons de vaccins). La Russie, qui n'est pas connue pour sa générosité, l'a compris et vient de signer un accord pour produire son vaccin Sputnik V en Italie, avec des arrangements similaires qui seraient en cours de préparation en France, en Allemagne et en Espagne.

En concluant de tels accords, le Kremlin a réussi à tirer parti d'un domaine critique, la santé publique, pour continuer son travail de division et de sape de l'Union européenne. Compte tenu de cela, la question évidente est la suivante : pourquoi le gouvernement américain n'en a-t-il pas fait davantage pour pousser les entreprises pharmaceutiques américaines à accepter des accords de production conjointe avec des entreprises pharmaceutiques européennes ?

Certes, Pfizer / BioNTech (qui est une entreprise allemande) a conclu un accord avec Novartis pour produire ses vaccins à Marbourg - 60 millions de doses par mois à pleine capacité. Le vaccin de J&J est quant à lui en cours de production à Leiden, et la société a signé en février un accord avec Sanofi pour produire 12 millions de doses par mois à Marcy-l'Étoile, en France. Enfin, Moderna vient de conclure un contrat avec le groupe Lonza pour fabriquer son vaccin en Suisse.

Mais toutes ces mesures sont arrivées tardivement (grâce à Trump), après qu'il soit devenu clair que l'UE était loin derrière dans la vaccination de ses citoyens. Et cette incapacité à fournir des vaccins a donné à la Russie et à la Chine une fenêtre

d'opportunité pour se positionner en tant que sauveurs de la santé des Européens, que ces deux pays cherchent maintenant à exploiter.

Encourager des co-entreprises de vaccins renforcerait la sécurité nationale des États-Unis sans augmenter d'un dollar les dépenses de défense. Tout comme les États-Unis ont consolidé leurs liens avec l'Europe après la Seconde Guerre mondiale grâce à l'aide du plan Marshall, ils devraient encourager autant d'accords de coopération que nécessaire en matière de production de vaccins pour répondre aux besoins des Européens. Le plan Marshall a contribué à maintenir les Soviétiques hors de l'Europe occidentale ; la production conjointe de vaccins en Europe limiterait l'influence maligne (et coûteuse) que la Russie et la Chine cherchent à exercer. La Hongrie, par exemple, paie beaucoup plus ses vaccins chinois que les versions britanniques ou américaines.

Mais les vaccins ne sont qu'une partie de l'histoire. L'administration Biden a déjà fait de solides progrès dans l'amélioration des relations des États-Unis avec l'Europe, en particulier en mettant fin à un différend de longue date et véneux à propos des subventions à la production d'aéronefs. Biden et Ursula von der Leyen, la présidente de la Commission européenne, ont convenu début mars de suspendre tous les tarifs imposés dans le cadre du litige sur les subventions pour une période initiale de quatre mois.

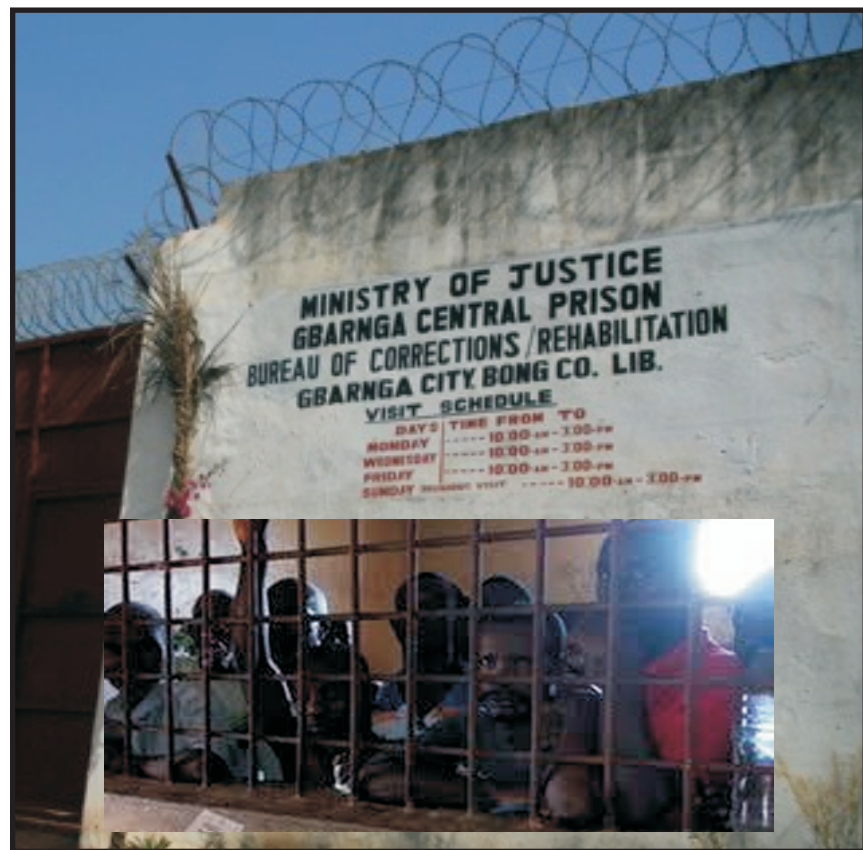
L'importance commerciale de cet accord va de pair avec son importance symbolique en tant que signal d'un partenariat transatlantique revitalisé. Le différend aérien avait commencé il y a près de deux décennies. L'UE avait imposé des droits de douane sur les produits américains d'une valeur d'environ 4 milliards de dollars, tandis que les États-Unis prélevaient des droits de douane sur 7,5 milliards de dollars de produits européens. « Enfin, nous sortons de la guerre commerciale entre les États-Unis et l'UE, qui n'a fait que des perdants », a déclaré sur Twitter Bruno Le Maire, le ministre français des Finances.

Mais les subventions aux avions n'étaient pas le seul problème commercial séparant l'Europe de l'Amérique. Les tarifs que Trump a imposés à l'acier et à l'aluminium en provenance d'Europe pour des raisons de sécurité nationale restent en vigueur. Gina Raimondo, la secrétaire américaine au commerce, a récemment qualifié les tarifs sur l'acier et l'aluminium « d'efficaces », une indication que l'administration Biden n'abrogera pas de sitôt toutes les mesures protectionnistes de Trump. Et il reste également le différend épineux sur les sanctions américaines contre les entreprises allemandes et européennes qui construisent le gazoduc Nord Stream 2 pour livrer du gaz naturel russe directement à l'Allemagne, en contournant l'Ukraine et la Pologne.

Comment les Européens peuvent-ils croire Biden lorsqu'il promet que « l'Amérique est de retour », alors qu'il refuse de tenir tête aux protectionnistes de l'acier ? La crainte de Biden est que les tarifs soient populaires auprès des électeurs blancs de la classe ouvrière que les Démocrates veulent reconquérir. De plus, les Républicains, l'industrie sidérurgique et ses syndicats continuent à les soutenir.

Le maintien par Biden des tarifs sur l'acier représente une victoire de la politique intérieure sur une politique étrangère saine. Cependant, Biden reconnaît également qu'une Amérique séparée de ses alliés est une Amérique plus faible. En aidant l'Europe à produire des vaccins au sein de l'Union, il démontrera non seulement que l'Amérique est de retour, mais surtout que c'est l'Amérique clairvoyante du plan Marshall, et non « l'Amérique d'abord » méprisante de Trump, qui est revenue.

12 inmates escape Gbarnga prison



charges range from gang rape, murder, criminal conspiracy, armed robbery, theft of property, burglary, criminal mischief and several other charges that were pending trial by the 9th Judicial Circuit Court in Gbarnga.

Attorney Flomo tells reporters that the Wednesday jail break at the Gbarnga Central Prison is a major threat to citizens of Gbarnga and the county at large.

He calls on citizens of the county to be watchful about strange people in their communities and aid the security of the county with necessary information in other to have the alleged criminals rearrested.

The Bong County Attorney says the joint security of the county has launched an investigation among prison officials regarding the "hard to believe jail break at the huge prison facility in Gbarnga"

Our Bong County correspondent says given the structure of the Gbarnga Central Prison, jailbreak at the center remains a mystery because it has several fans before entering the building that hosts the various cells.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong County

At least 12 inmates have escaped from the Gbarnga Central Prison following a jailbreak Wednesday morning, 17 March.

Rehabilitation Officers have confirmed to our Bong County correspondent that 17 inmates were in the cell that got broken, but 12 of them escaped while the remaining

five are in custody.

Bong County Attorney Jonathon Flomo has also told a local news outlet that the 12 inmates were all pre-trial detainees.

Flomo says the inmates were all high code criminals that were placed behind bars following police preliminary investigations in the county about series of crimes committed.

He explains that their

Vai Town market fire victims suspect arson

-Call for probe

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Frustrated business owners whose business houses gutted fire on early Monday, 15 March at the VamuyamConneh general market in the commercial district of Vai Town suspect hidden hands are behind the destruction of their business entities. They want government to speedily investigate the matter.

Though the victims did not point accusing fingers at any particular person, they disclosed how in recent time there had been confusion between some members of the Conneh market regarding the land on which the market sits.

Madam Kofadee Thomson, Dorothy Washington, Samuel Kollie, and Francis Lawson believe that their business houses may have been set ablaze by one of the aggrieved parties based on the manner in which the incident happened.

There have been no independent confirmation from the Conneh family in connection with the fire incident.



Mr. Vamuyam Conneh represents the Via Town district in the House of Representatives.

According to them, what was so astonishing to them is that if the fire was as a result of an electrical problem on the market premises, it should have affected several businesses situated in the same environment, but that was not the case.

According to them, it is not possible that the fire could burn their stores but a big warehouse that is very close to the affected

business structures was never affected by the blazing fire which started around 3:00 AM Monday into daylight without spreading to other parts of the market.

"We strongly believe that this fire wasn't caused by electrical shock. What we know is that someone is responsible for this ugly and frustrating nightmare that left all of our business houses completely destroyed. Why should they target us who have nothing to do with their

MoE, CSA differ

Starts from back page

every decision made by the former Sirleaf administration should be embraced by the CDC-led government.

Senator Joseph noted that the ministry should have used some of the US\$11 million to retrain those teachers rather retiring them.

The Senator, who chairs the Senate Committee on Executive, has been upset about the dismissal of classroom teachers under a donor program, saying that donors don't control Liberia.

According to him, when donors come to help Liberia in the Education sector, the Minister of Education should tell them to work with Liberia's program than to take teachers out of the classrooms purely based on donors' criteria.

"This Liberian Senate will not sit and allow those teachers leave the classroom; we have to stand for our teachers; they are citizens of

this country. Those teachers who have been serving all of those years, what will become of them when they leave the classroom? How does the Ministry expect them to survive?" Sen. Joseph frowned.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and the Civil Service Agency have over the time been working together to get about 671 of the 2,402 retired teachers back into the classroom.

Senators in agreement said those 671 teachers should be deployed in all 15 counties equally to keep students in school.

Making a motion, Gbarpolu County Senator Daniel Nathanael told ministers from the Ministry of Education should remain under oath and return to plenary of the Liberian Senate in one week with full information on implementation of the replacement of the 671 teachers. —*Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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March 17, 2021

Re-Survey Notice

Contours, Limited informed the general public that **Mr. Fred Wiles** has duly authorized the conduct of Detail & Perimeter Re-Survey of One Point Zero (1.0) Lot of land in Police Academy Community, Paynesville City, Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia.

The parcel of land to be Re-Survey is lying and situated in the Police Academy Community, Paynesville, Montserrado County, Liberia.

This Re-survey will commence on Saturday, 20th March 2021 beginning at 10:00Am.

Therefore, all adjoining & adjacent property owners, and interested parties are requested to be present at the site on the day of the survey with their **deed(s), diagram(s), map(s), technical representatives/surveyors and other relevant document to substantiate their claims.**

Please let this survey notice and announcement claim the attention of the following individuals:

1. Pastor J. William Diggs
2. Mr. Robert Muhelmburs
3. Madam Polan Togbeh
4. Mr. Karr Gargar
5. All other interested Parties

Signed:

Albert D. Giah Jr.
Registered Licensed Surveyor
Cell #: 0886740519/0770266608

SURVEYOR'S LICENCE
Name: ALBERT D. GIAH
Lic: # 083
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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conflict", they aggrieved marketers lament.

They not to until they find out who set their business entities on fire to avoid a repeat at the Conneh general market where low income Liberian entrepreneurs are struggling to support their families.

The marketers wondered where they are going to source funding from to restart their businesses at the time the country is going through economy constrains and that no bank will be prepared to provide loans to the affected businesses without guarantors.

On Monday, 15 March 2021, while owners of business houses operating at the Conneh general market in Vai Town were at their respective homes, fire attacked scores of business houses, leaving at least over US\$1M properties and goods destroyed.

The owners of the affected business entities did not had the opportunity to take penny out of their business establishments during the fire outbreak.

Up to now, authority of the Liberia National Fire Service (LNFS) are yet to establish cause of the fire incident that left many Liberians in tears.

The myth unveiled

A federal judge in a U.S. court in Philadelphia is considering evidence in the infamous massacre of over 600 civilians at the Lutheran Church during the brutal civil war here in July of 1990.

In a case brought before the court by the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) on behalf of survivors, the victims have accused forces loyal to slain President Samuel Doe as being responsible for the massacre.

On Tuesday, March 16, 2021, CJA, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, and Blank Rome LLP submitted close to two thousand pages of evidence seeking to prove that the former elite unit of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) perpetrated the massacres at the Lutheran church.

The brief filed with the court alleges that on July 29, 1990, Moses Thomas, as commander of the AFL's Special Anti-Terrorist Unit, directed his troops to attack the St. Peter's Lutheran Church, which has been recorded as one of the largest massacres.

At the time, the Church served as a shelter, housing nearly 2,000 civilians seeking refuge from the growing violence in the country. Thomas and his troops, according to the court document stormed the Church, despite its protected status under international humanitarian law, shooting and hacking to death approximately 600 unarmed civilians.

Four survivors of the massacre, names withheld for fear of retribution reportedly sued Thomas in 2018 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Thomas had been living in the United States since 2000. Today's filing brings them one step closer toward holding Thomas to account for atrocities committed over the course of the massacre.

In a sworn statement filed with the court, one survivor described the night of the massacre: "The soldiers opened fire on the crowd without saying anything. I dropped to the ground and covered myself with blood, so it looked like I had been shot. I hid among the bodies, pretending to be dead...I lay there as the AFL shot and killed hundreds of unarmed men, women, and children." The survivor who was a child at the time, described hiding in the church's pulpit with a little boy. He explained, "I whispered my little brother's name at this boy, even though I knew that my little brother was in the school building with my mother. I just wanted

to have my family alive with me, and the thought that my brother was next to me kept me believing that I could survive."

The evidence presented on Tuesday also includes detailed testimony from eyewitnesses, an expert report from the former deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy here and declassified U.S. embassy and CIA cables.

Elizabeth Nielsen, counsel at Debevoise & Plimpton, representing the plaintiffs noted: "We believe that today's court filing presents conclusive evidence that Thomas was responsible for the Lutheran Church Massacre and we are asking the court to hold Thomas

against Thomas, but shows why Liberia must finally take action to end impunity."

The background courtesy CJA

The Lutheran Church Massacre

As the war between the government's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and Charles Taylor's rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) escalated in the spring and summer of 1990, Liberian civilians flooded into humanitarian aid centers and churches throughout the capital city in search of sanctuary from the growing violence. The Red Cross and the Liberian Council of

under piles of dead bodies until the soldiers left. Most sources estimate that over 600 civilians died over the course of that night.

In 2009, the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified the Lutheran Church Massacre as one of the key atrocities of the Liberian civil wars. Despite widespread condemnation of the attack, little has been done by the Liberian government to further investigate or prosecute individual perpetrators. Nonetheless, survivors continue to demand justice. That is where CJA and the Monrovia-based Global

led AFL forces in its attack on St. Peter's Lutheran Church on the night of July 29, 1990. Thomas moved to the United States during Liberia's Second Civil War. Around 2000, he settled in the Philadelphia area. As a longtime U.S. resident, he is subject to the laws and jurisdiction of U.S. courts.

The case was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania under the Alien Tort Statute and Torture Victim Protection Act. We allege that Thomas is liable for extrajudicial killing, torture, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

On April 26, 2018, Thomas filed a motion to dismiss the case, arguing that the statute of limitations on Plaintiffs' claims had run out, and that Plaintiffs had failed to exhaust domestic remedies in Liberia. CJA defeated the motion, arguing that the situation in Liberia was so unstable that survivors could not seek justice in the immediate aftermath of the Massacre. In denying the motion to dismiss, the Court also allowed Plaintiffs' claims under the Alien Tort Statute to proceed, after finding that their allegations sufficiently touch and concern the United States, pursuant to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum*.

On March 16, 2021, CJA and Debevoise & Plimpton filed a motion for summary judgment, supported by evidence developed over a seven-year investigation. The motion argues that the record developed in this case makes clear Moses Thomas' responsibility for the massacre, and requests that the court find Thomas liable for torture, extrajudicial killings, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

This lawsuit is the first case seeking to hold a member of the Armed Forces of Liberia responsible for abuses committed during the civil wars and the first to confront a high-ranking commander for perpetrating one of the largest civilian massacres in Liberia's history.



liable for extrajudicial killing, torture, war crimes, and crimes against humanity."

Another survivor, name withheld, narrated that they filed this case in the United States because they have been unable to obtain accountability in Liberia.

"Everybody knows that the Lutheran Church Massacre happened, but there has been no accountability. The people responsible for the Lutheran Church Massacre remain free." The survivor explained.

The survivor further explained why he is pursuing justice now: "It is very difficult for me to remember and speak about these events, because it makes me feel terrible. But I joined this case and am speaking out now because I know that what Moses Thomas did was wrong, and I want to bring him to justice. I want him to be held accountable for what he did to me and so many others at the Lutheran Church."

"Liberia has yet to see meaningful accountability for the atrocities committed during its civil wars, despite demands from Liberian civil society and recommendations by the United Nations," said Ela Matthews, attorney at CJA representing the plaintiffs. "The catalog of evidence filed today not only proves our clients' claims

Churches set up shelters, including St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Monrovia, to house nearly 9,000 internally displaced people.

As rebel forces gained strength, the Armed Forces of Liberia grew more brazen and increasingly attacked civilians, specifically targeting members of the Mano and Gio tribes, who were perceived as loyal to Charles Taylor's rebel movement. By late July, as many as 2,000 civilians—mostly from the Mano and Gio tribes—were sheltering in the Lutheran Church compound, sleeping in the church, its courtyard, and a school building in the compound. On the night of July 29, 1990, as NPFL forces closed in on Monrovia, AFL soldiers stormed the crowded St. Peter's Lutheran Church compound and attacked the approximately two thousand civilians taking shelter inside.

Men, women, and children were gunned down as they attempted to flee. Many who survived the initial rounds of shooting were hacked to death with machetes as soldiers spread out over the compound, ensuring the slaughter was complete. Some people, including our clients, survived by hiding

Justice Research Project (GJRP) stepped in. Together, we investigated this historic atrocity and built a case against those responsible for the attack.

U.S. Litigation

On February 12, 2018, CJA and pro bono co-counsel Debevoise & Plimpton, LLP filed a civil suit in a Philadelphia court on behalf of four survivors of the Lutheran Church

Massacre and their families against Moses Thomas for his alleged role in the Lutheran Church massacre.

The suit alleges that Thomas, a former Colonel in the Armed Forces of Liberia,

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MoE, CSA differ on teachers' retirement



By Ethel A. Tweh

The Ministry of Education and the Civil Service Agency are in total disagreement over the retirement of 2,402 public school teachers across the country without replacement, which is negatively impacting the educational system.

Appearing before the Liberian Senate Tuesday, the Minister of Education Prof. D. AnsuSonii and the Director of

the Civil Service Agency James Thompson could not agree how the retirement was carried out.

The Ministry of Education told the Senate it is not in the know of the retirement and that the Civil Service Agency is the government entity that is responsible to retire employees.

But the Civil Service director Thompson countered that when they generated the retirement data for public school teachers, it was shared with the Ministry

of Education for its input before executing the process.

On the other hand, Education Minister Sonii told senators the CSA sent the list of teachers after they had been retired, and not for input.

"The names that came to us are those people that are already being retired by the CSA", the Minister said.

Professor Sonii disclosed the retirement was carried out under a US\$11m program supported by donors in which teachers were asked to sit a written test.

He said teachers who scored below 20 percent were dropped and encouraged to go back to school, get trained and reapply, adding, this process started under the administration of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the current administration met it there.

But Montserrado County Senator Saah H. Joseph of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change said not

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Zlatan has been recalled to Sweden for 2022 W/Cup qualifiers

Ibrahimovic has not played for his country since announcing his retirement from international football back in 2016, but has been included in Janne Andersson's latest squad.

Ibrahimovic recalled to Sweden squad for 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

The 39-year-old will join up with Sweden later this month as they begin their road to Qatar 2022, with Andersson delighted to welcome a talismanic figure back into the fold.

What's been said?

Asked what Ibrahimovic will bring to the team after announcing his final squad on Tuesday, Andersson told reporters: "First and foremost, he is a very good football player, the best we have had in Sweden."

"It is of course very funny that he wants to come back."

"In addition to what he can contribute on the pitch, he has incredible experience and can contribute it to other players in the team."

Meanwhile, Ibrahimovic confirmed his decision to come out of retirement via social media, posing a picture of



himself playing for Sweden on Twitter with the caption: "The return of the God."

Zlatan's record for Sweden Ibrahimovic made his debut for Sweden in 2001, and went on to earn 116 caps for his country, featuring in two World Cups and four European Championships along the way.

The Milan striker still holds the record as the top goalscorer in Sweden's history with 62 to his name, and will have the chance to add to that haul if he is named in Andersson's starting XI against Georgia on March 25.

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