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**P11**

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*-as local businesses threaten unspecified actions*

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# Continental News

## 'People think we're murderers' says Zulu princess

A South African princess has denied rumours that the Zulu queen who died only a month into her reign was poisoned by the royal family.

"People think we're murderers," Princess Thembi told local media on Sunday, amid a bitter family rift over who will become the next monarch.

Queen Mantfombi, 65, became interim leader last month after the death of her husband, King Goodwill Zwelithini. She died of an unspecified illness and there is no evidence of foul play.

It has been expected that 47-year-old Prince Misuzulu - the eldest son of Queen Mantfombi and King Zwelithini - will be next in line, but a legal challenge days after the queen's death is seeking to halt that.

A handwriting expert has reportedly been brought on board to try to prove that the signature on the king's will was forged, as his daughters from his first marriage contend.

Their mother Queen Sibongile Dlamini has taken her fight for the throne to Pietermaritzburg High Court, where she is demanding a 50% share of his estate plus sole recognition as the only legal wife of the late king. The king of the 11 million-strong Zulu nation left six wives and 28 children. Queen Mantfombi was named regent because she was the only wife with royal blood -

her brother is King Mswati III of Eswatini.

The throne does not have formal political power and the monarch's role within broader South African society is largely ceremonial, but they remain hugely influential and enjoy a yearly taxpayer-funded budget of more than \$4.9m (£3.5m). A bitter feud is playing out in public between Princess Thembi and Prince

Mbonisi, who led Sunday's impromptu press conference, and the late queen's Prime Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Chief Buthelezi said he was "angered" by the princess saying he was not invited to a key meeting because he "belittles" others and "doesn't give us space to freely discuss matters".

He accused her and her brother of wanting "to paint me as the author of the rumours that Her Majesty was poisoned", and even questioned their parentage asking why they "consider themselves 'the Royal Family'". Chief Buthelezi also told the national broadcaster SABC that the legal action was "shameful".

With the throne still empty

and amid ever-growing rifts, the BBC's Pumza Fihlani says a resolution is far off unless the factions can strike a compromise and agree to place the throne above all else. In fact, the Zulu saying ubukhosi buyabangwa - meaning "the throne is contested" - speaks of what has become an unsurprising and unwelcome feature of the infighting seen throughout history. The stakes are high. The Zulu people are the largest group in South Africa and one of the most well-known throughout history, in part for their prowess on the battlefield.

The nation's most well-known warrior King Shaka was himself killed by his half-siblings so they could take over. Before King Goodwill Zwelithini could assume the role of king more than 40 years ago, he was forced into hiding for three years following death threats. BBC



The public fallout comes days after the death of Queen Shiyiwe Mantfombi Dlamini Zulu

## Nigerian priest stirs controversy over Buhari remark

A Catholic priest in Nigeria has defended his controversial remarks asking President Muhammadu Buhari to resign over rising insecurity in the country.

Father Ejike Mbaka also told off a government official who termed his remarks as "ungodly" saying he was only saying the truth.

Yekini Nabena, the deputy national publicity secretary of the ruling party All Progressives Congress (APC),

had suggested that the priest should obey and honour the authorities - as Jesus Christ did.

He said there was a "lot to tell" to the church headquarters in the Vatican about what the priest was doing.

However the priest dismissed the party official: "If the Pope knows I am speaking against bad governance, he will clap for me. So please, quickly go to Rome," Nigeria's newspaper Vanguard quotes Fr Mbaka as saying.

The priest has in the past

expressed his support for the president - and Mr Buhari has previously shared a picture of them together at state house in the capital Abuja.

On Friday the presidential spokesman, Garba Shehu, questioned Fr Mbaka's "u-turn", and alleged that the criticism was because he failed to get contracts from the government.

The spokesman made his claims in a post on Twitter - which Fr Mbaka has termed as "laughable" and "childish". BBC



The Nigerian presidency had shared this 2015 photo of Fr Mbaka at state house

## French court asked to drop Rwandan genocide case



June 1994: French soldiers on patrol pass ethnic Hutu militiamen in Rwanda

Prosecutors in France have asked magistrates to drop legal proceedings against five French military officers linked to a massacre of ethnic Tutsis during the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

Investigators said they found no evidence of complicity by the French peacekeeping troops.

They had been accused by

survivors of abandoning Tutsis in the Bisesero region, leading to a massacre by ethnic Hutu extremists.

In March, a major French report concluded that France bore "serious and overwhelming" responsibilities linked to the Rwandan genocide, but cleared it of complicity.

Some 800,000 mainly ethnic Tutsis were killed in just over three months in 1994. BBC

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# EDITORIAL

## President Weah was very magnanimous

**PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH Weah** intervened last week by a cash donation of US\$30,000.00 to help with the medical bill of ailing veteran Liberian journalist and Publisher of the Inquirer Newspaper, Atty. Philip N. Wesseh.

**JOURNALIST WESSEH, WHO** has been battling illness for quite a while, was flown to Accra, Ghana late Thursday, 29 April for further medication after intensive medical care at the Fidelity clinic on 20th Street, Sinkor in Monrovia.

**THE PRESIDENT'S INTERVENTION** has been very timely in facilitating the ailing journalist's medical journey to Ghana. We join family members of Journalist 'PNW' as he is affectionately called, members of the Publishers Association of Liberia, who are standing with him, and all practitioners of the journalism fraternity in thanking President Weah for the gesture to save the life of a patriotic son of Liberia.

**BY HIS SINGULAR** contribution, President Weah has demonstrated that he is a true father, who cares for all of the flock God has placed under his watch, as Head of State. Such magnanimity will never go unnoticed in the Liberian society, particularly by members of the Wesseh family, as it has been recorded in history.

**WE ARE EXCITED** because of all of the humanitarian and religious institutions in Liberia, President Weah has stood tall as a dependable leader who understands pains and the darkest hours of life, so he wasted no time in reaching out to Journalist 'PNW.'

**BUT THEN WE** are not so surprised at all. President Weah, like Journalist Wesseh, were both born and reared in slump communities where poverty taught them hard lessons. Notwithstanding their respective humble beginning, they carved separate paths in life and destiny took Philip from D. Twe Memorial High School in New Kru Town to the Journalism profession where he has served with distinction, while Mr. Weah at an very early age in Gibraltar, Clara Town embraced soccer both as a habit and career and eventually reached the zenith of professional football before transitioning to politics and winning the Presidency.

**AND SO DESPITE** being President of Liberia, Mr. Weah understands when one is in a near-death situation and needs prompt attention. This was what President Weah demonstrated last Thursday to Journalist 'PNW.'

**WE CALL ON** other well-to-do members of the Liberian society, including opposition politicians to emulate the kind gesture of the President's by reaching out to people desperately in need rather than turning blind eyes. Helping one another is the best way to live life because we need one another irrespective of our diversity.

**IT IS THEREFORE** our sincere prayer that Philip would receive appropriate medication, recuperate and return to Liberia to continue serving the Motherland in the role God has called him to perform before both friends and foes.

**THE HOLY BIBLE** says give a man his flowers while he's alive, not when he is dead. President Weah is human like every other mortal being. He makes mistakes just as anybody else, but when he takes a positive step he should be recognized and commended like he has done for ailing Journalist Philip N. Wesseh.

# COMMENTARY

By Jean Pisani-ferry

## Europe Needs a New Fiscal Framework

**P**ARIS - In the mid-1980s, only seven countries had fiscal rules. In 2015, when the International Monetary Fund last counted, 96 did. Most had provisions limiting public debt, budget deficits, or both, and some had additional rules on public expenditures.

This circumscription of fiscal discretion was partly a response to traumatic experiences such as Latin America's "lost decade" following the debt crises of the 1980s; the painful adjustment suffered by countries caught off-guard by rising interest rates in the early 1990s; and the European sovereign-debt crisis of 2010-12. But the adoption of fiscal rules also owed something to growing distrust of fiscal activism.

In 2000, John B. Taylor of Stanford University captured the spirit of the time when he wrote that it is "best to let fiscal policy have its main countercyclical impact through the automatic stabilizers" - in other words, to put it on automatic pilot. The consensus then was that monetary policy is a nimbler and more effective policy tool, because the key decisions are made by an independent central bank and implemented with the stroke of a pen.

Nowhere are fiscal rules as detailed and prescriptive as in the European Union, whose budgetary rulebook is nearly 100 pages. There are good reasons for this. Because euro members share a currency, they cannot inflate away their individual debt burdens. As Paul De Grauwe of the London School of Economics has observed, they are in a position similar to countries that borrow in a foreign currency. Yet excessive public debt results in pressure on partner countries to come to the rescue to avoid severe financial fallout from debt restructuring or, worse, an exit from the currency union. This is what happened with Greece in the 2010s. So there is a real motive for preventing fiscal irresponsibility.

But there are also bad reasons for having codified budgetary behavior so extensively. Germany is traditionally wary of stabilization policy (though not in response to the 2008 financial crisis or the pandemic), and smaller northern European countries are even more fiscally gun-shy. In addition, member states lack mutual trust. As a result, they have piled up a tangle of rules so complex that people in Brussels joke that only one person in the whole European Commission actually understands it all.

But times have changed. For 12 years now, interest rates have been pinned near zero, making a mockery of claims touting monetary policy's effectiveness. Instead of protecting the central bank from fiscal vagaries, the priority in such an environment is to ensure that monetary and fiscal policy function in tandem. Breaking a taboo, Isabel Schnabel, a member of the European Central Bank's Executive Board, has stressed that today's situation requires unconventional monetary policies and unconventional fiscal policies, which should complement one another to protect the economy from large downturns. As outlined in a recent Geneva Report, the long-forgotten concept of a policy mix is back in

fashion.

In parallel, concerns about sovereign solvency have greatly diminished. As former IMF chief economist Olivier Blanchard notes, there is no such thing as an unsustainable debt as long as the interest rate remains below the growth rate. In many countries, this has now been the case for a decade; and even in the United States, where bond rates have recently increased, the margin remains wide.

Recognizing the implications of these debt dynamics, US President Joe Biden's administration has lost no time pursuing its fiscal agenda. Whereas the post-2008 US stimulus was too timid, the recently adopted \$1.9 trillion fiscal package, coming on top of trillions of dollars in spending enacted last year under Donald Trump, amounts to massive overkill.

The question now is what Europe will do. In March 2020, it wisely availed itself of an escape clause in its fiscal rulebook, allowing member states "to temporarily depart from the normal budgetary requirements." This exception will likely remain in place for 2022 but, pandemic permitting, will end in 2023. In the meantime, the debate will focus on whether the rules should be reformed before they are reinstated, and - more fundamentally - whether fiscal initiatives should be regarded as a problem or as a solution.

The case for comprehensive reform was strong before the pandemic and has now become overwhelming. The current rules were built for a world that no longer exists. They are opaque, excessively constraining, and reliant on numerical targets that do not make sense in a low-interest-rate environment. Moreover, they are no longer credible. With a debt-to-GDP ratio approaching 160% this year, Italy can scarcely be expected to hit the EU's debt-to-GDP limit of 60%.

Make no mistake: in a monetary union, fiscal responsibility is crucial. The question is not whether member states should be given high standards to meet, but how this should be done. Reformers want to retain the commitment to fiscal discipline but change the yardstick for assessing actual behavior. Others, worried that this commitment would not survive a renegotiation, prefer to tinker on the margin. But sticking to an obsolete commandment out of fear of being unable to define a better one is a formula for undermining trust in the rules altogether.

If there is any silver lining to the COVID-19 crisis, it is that we have been forced to rethink rules that have survived on inertia. Short of the radical reform advocated by some, it is possible to design a fiscal framework that creates more space for fiscal discretion but preserves the essential commitment to responsibility. The first step is to accept that all countries cannot be expected to achieve the same goal. The second is to acknowledge that fiscal discipline must be based on principles and buttressed by well-designed institutions, rather than by rigid numerical targets.

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# OPINION

By Andrés Velasco

## Twisted Democracies

**L**ONDON - Pedro Castillo is an authoritarian left-wing populist without the charm or charisma of most populists. Keiko Fujimori is a recently incarcerated right-wing populist, the daughter of a former dictator who is serving a 25-year sentence for murder, kidnapping, and corruption. Together, Castillo and Fujimori received fewer than one in three votes in the recent first round of Peru's presidential election. Yet one of them will be the next president.

This much is certain: whoever wins the runoff will have a hard time governing. Castillo's Perú Libre party has only 37 of the 130 congressional seats. Fujimori's Fuerza Popular has just 24. She might just manage to assemble a majority because three other rightist parties have 45 seats among them. But compromise and coalition-building are not what Peruvian politics is about. Most parties are shells built around a single leader's transient popularity. They spend their time and energy shooting down every other politician who tries to govern. That is what Fujimori and her party did to Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, who narrowly defeated her in 2016, and to Martín Vizcarra, who became president after Kuczynski resigned in 2018.

Ecuador, on Peru's northern border, is in a similar bind. Guillermo Lasso, a conservative banker, will become president after a narrow runoff victory over Andrés Arauz, a left-leaning economist and close associate of Rafael Correa, the former president recently sentenced to eight years in jail for graft. But Lasso's CREO party will have just 12 votes in the 137-seat congress, which could rise to 31 if he can count on the support of the center-right Social Christians. By contrast, Correa's party has 48 seats, and Pachakutik, an indigenous people's movement whose candidate came in a close third in the presidential race, has 27.

Lasso won not because he promised faster economic growth, but because a majority of voters did not want to relive the Correa years' toxic mix of populism and strong-arm tactics. Like the next president of Peru, Lasso will face great difficulties governing. His plans for market-friendly reform will most likely gather dust.

It is not just that voters are becoming more fickle and politicians more feckless. The rules of South American democracy promote political fragmentation and divided government. But taking power from politicians has not delivered satisfaction to voters. On the contrary, weak governance has produced chaotic politics, mediocre policies, poor social and economic outcomes (the epic failure to control COVID-19 is only the latest example), and increasingly frustrated citizens.

The type of regime (presidential or parliamentary) and electoral system (majoritarian or proportional) define a country's politics. The combination of parliamentary governance and proportional representation has yielded model democracies in Scandinavia. The parliamentary first-past-the-post formula of the Westminster system, copied by Canada and other Commonwealth countries, also works well. American exceptionalism shows up in the coupling of presidential and majoritarian arrangements (single-seat districts in the House, two seats per state in the Senate). Former President Donald Trump notwithstanding, this combination has sustained nearly 250 years of stable democracy.

And then there is the oddball combination of presidentialism and proportional electoral systems, which exists only in Latin America. Presidents are elected for a fixed term of office and remain, regardless of whether they enjoy a parliamentary majority. And proportional systems, which allocate seats according to a party's vote share, deliver the kinds of fragmented parliaments Peruvians and Ecuadorians have just elected and countries like Brazil, Colombia, and Chile have had to endure in recent years.

With two-round presidential elections now enshrined in most Latin American constitutions, the final winner can claim a vigorous mandate, from which all manner of deep and important reforms will follow. That vow, typically delivered in solemn tones on election night, vanishes under the harsh light of dawn. The strong majority of the runoff quickly turns into a weak minority in the legislature.

Some presidents, like Sebastián Piñera in Chile, end up caving in to the whims of ever-shifting parliamentary coalitions. Others, like Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, are forced to rely on the votes of groups (the so-called *Centrão*) with which they share few if any ideas; the result is volatile and unpredictable policymaking. Others, like Fujimori's father, Alberto, simply close down parliament and assume quasi-dictatorial powers - as Castillo has threatened to do if Peru's legislature does not do his bidding.

The combination of a fixed-term executive presidency and a proportional electoral system was never a great idea. It has been made worse by the decline of another crucial democratic institution: political parties. Many Latin American countries never had strong and stable parties. In the few that did - Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, and Uruguay - parties are a shadow of their former selves. For example, Chile today has 15 legally constituted parties and a half-dozen in the process of gaining legal recognition. No party or coalition commands a working legislative majority. In 2020, only 7% of Chileans expressed trust in parties, which have been described as "hydroponic": floating above society with no roots in it.

The decline of parties throughout the region is partly the result of well-meaning reforms. It was thought that making the electoral system more proportional would better reflect society's increasing diversity; instead, it produced myriad tiny parties that represent no one. Introducing primaries was supposed to make parties more democratic internally; it did, but at the risk of making them vulnerable to being taken over by media-savvy celebrities. The gain in transparency that came with campaign finance reform also caused a collapse in party discipline, as party bosses lost leverage over publicity-seeking parliamentarians. Greater use of plebiscites has allowed small groups of activists to hijack the policy agenda.

The problem is not uniquely Latin American. Yale political scientists Frances McCall Rosenbluth and Ian Shapiro argue that similar "decentralizing reforms" in the United States and Europe, meant to "return power to the people," weakened parties and led to "policies that are self-defeating for most voters." Paradoxically, the closer to the grassroots political power moves, the more disenfranchised the grassroots become.

# O-PED

By Pranab Bardhan

## Organized Labor After COVID

**B**ERKELEY - The recent failure to unionize workers at Amazon's warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama is merely the latest chapter in the long decline of traditional working-class organizations. Has the pandemic made things even worse?

Since 1985, trade union membership has fallen by one-half, on average, across OECD countries. Business interests have run persistent, well-funded campaigns against unions and captured much of the media and think-tank circuit. All told, these efforts have clearly succeeded in curtailing workers' traditional rights and scope of representation. While employer-friendly "right to work" legislation has undermined unions' ability to fund themselves, the widespread use of "contract labor" (like in India) has created a sprawling class of workers without job security or benefits, many of whom are deployed alongside permanent employees.

Global competition, automation, and market concentration are all weakening labor's bargaining power. But labor's collective strength has also been undercut by internal fragmentation. There is a sharp division between manufacturing production and transportation, on one hand, and service, retail, and caregiving, on the other.

Although service workers in the United States and Canada have been organized by the Service Employees International Union, and in Europe by UNI Europa (the European Services Workers Union), we know from the pandemic that workers in health care, delivery, and other sectors remain badly underpaid and unprotected.

In developing countries, the fragmentation of labor runs even deeper, owing to the gulf between the formal and informal sectors. In countries like India, Kenya, and Peru, the overwhelming majority of workers are engaged in informal activities, without any benefits or social protection. As these workers are often self-employed, labor organizations are rarely sensitive to their need for credit and marketing facilities, health and childcare, or legal and insurance services. (There are exceptions, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association, the largest informal workers' organization in India.)

With the rise of the gig economy, more workers in rich countries also find themselves without social protection and very little help for their particular needs. Unions in Germany are trying to expand the availability of worker-friendly customer-review sites, because gig workers depend heavily on online ratings to secure work. In the US, some small companies are entering the market to provide gig workers with affordable insurance or sick leave. Germany's IG Metall, Europe's largest industrial union, is opening itself to self-employed workers; and the Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain also is increasingly trying to reach out to gig workers.

Intra-labor fragmentation also stems from how unions organize. In the US and India, unionization is so decentralized that corporate employers can easily block or weaken nascent organizing efforts. Since their defeat, the union organizers in Bessemer have recognized that they need to move their organizing efforts to the industry level - as happens in Europe, where individual firms have less incentive or leverage to curb unions - and also mobilize Amazon customers against the company's labor practices. In the recent unionization effort, the primary demand was less about wages and more about the company's use of robots and monitoring algorithms to set a relentless work pace.

In several countries, the hardships of the pandemic seem to have triggered a surge in some forms of labor organizing. Given the relatively high average age of members in old-style unions, organizers are trying to update their methods, such as by using social media and labor networks to get the "millennial" generation on board with online petitions and messages geared toward concerns not associated with a physical work site. Even higher-skilled and better-paid young workers are growing concerned about labor insecurity.

In New Zealand, where the labor market was heavily de-unionized in the 1990s, bargaining efforts are underway to set new wage floors and standard working conditions across certain sectors and occupations.

Fortunately, more shareholders nowadays seem open to the idea that negotiating job stability, welfare, and training programs with labor may be good for long-run productivity and profits - a departure from the longstanding view of labor as just another cost to be minimized for the sake of quarterly profits and year-end executive bonuses. Through some level of co-management, in which all parties have an interest in articulating and working toward mutually beneficial long-term goals, trade unions can assume more responsibility for the overall trajectory of firms and industries.

One problem, however, is that governments can be sometimes more myopic than bosses. For example, India's right-wing Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has used the pandemic as a pretext to ram through laws diluting workers' rights and security. Cheered on by short-sighted corporate interests and their supporters in the financial media, his government is pushing the economy toward more class distrust, industrial unrest, and stagnant labor productivity.

These trends are already visible in recent incidents such as the violent ransacking of Wistron's iPhone assembly plant near Bangalore, which employs about 2,000 permanent non-unionized workers alongside 7,000 contract workers. The grievances that inflamed many workers reportedly included non-payment or delayed payment of wages, an extension of the workday to 12 hours with little notice and no consultation, and inadequate safety provisions for women on the night shift.

One longstanding source of labor fragmentation in India has been the capture of labor organizations by national political parties whose leaders often are more concerned with mobilizing electoral support for their own political agenda than they are with day-to-day workplace issues. Fortunately, independent movements like the New Trade Union Initiative have emerged in recent years to challenge this political domination.

But labor organizations nonetheless have their backs to the wall in many countries. To re-establish a foothold, they will need to ally with broader social movements for human rights. This is the only way labor unions in the US, for example, will be able to overcome today's many restrictions on collective action. Progress will be slow until there is enough public support for unions, and enough public accountability for corporate employers, to prevent behemoths like Amazon from blocking or hindering labor organizing with impunity.



# MEMO TO CLLR. CHARLES WALKER BRUMSKINE

By: Isaac W. Jackson, Jr.

As twin starting points: Today is your birthday; you departed this life on 20 November 2019. Reflecting upon your courageous fight for a corruption-free Liberia under the rule of Law, it is of deep concern to me how your venerated legacy is being exploited and poorly treated by some of our friends.

Collectively, we struggled to lay the foundation stones of Liberty Party - the political vehicle aimed at advancing the aspirations for a better Liberia. The journey we trekked was not altogether smooth; however, there was a common consensus on public standards of decency that the Party espoused at its formative stages. From what's obtaining nowadays, I am not sure whether you would recognize the political vehicle of integrity you left behind, if your return were humanly possible! Because, those purporting to manage the affairs of the political vehicle have no decent respect for integrity. They are unconscionably flirting with utterly-corrupt individuals and bastardizing the Party's integrity standards which call for those linked to corruption scandals to step aside from whatever positions they hold to clear their names.

Contrary to the standards mentioned supra, the Party now has a chairman who is a condemned FIFA fraudster, congenitally dishonest, and widely known both in Liberia and abroad for corruption scandals. So, I am wondering where the Party is heading with such diametrical departure from its founding practices and principles? Hence, this Memo!

Boss man, besides having this morally bankrupt fellow as chairman, I see others faking and manipulating our people into falsely believing that they had a wonderful relationship with you during your last days on earth. Since I know that this sort of attitude constitutes a mighty deception on an industrial level, I thought to highlight them in this Memo.

At least, those of us who follow from a distance, as a result of our disagreement, are aware that you held a meeting with core members of the Friends of Brumskine (FOB) just before your departure to the USA for medical treatment. In that meeting, you expressed utter disgust about how Darius Dillon [now Senator] insulted you; and that one of the comrades stood-by without saying a murmuring word in your defense. Also, you groaned, and lamented the personal disservice to you when others pledged support to Weah's CDC in reckless disregard of your advice. Today, some of those same people are still pretending that you were on good terms with them during your sad departure from earth. This childish maneuver is utterly despicable!

In their desperate attempts to exploit your venerated legacy, in recent times they attributed to you a legal maxim that you pooh-poohed in the case, CDC and Liberty Party v. The Executive Branch of Government, decided January 11, 2008. Knowing my zero tolerance for nonsense, I red-carded them publicly for being disingenuous.

Also, in an attempt to deceive our people, more recently they employed similar tactics on Spoon TV, talking plausibly about your warm relationship with them; even though, you would have flatly denounced some of their misdeeds. For example, taking money from Albert Chie under the cover of darkness; dividing US\$6,000 with fellow Lawmakers, while PPEs and beddings were in short supply at quarantine centres. Yes, you would have condemned them for threatening to jail Election Commissioners on bogus contempt charges. I emphatically highlighted these cases, especially the one with the NEC Commissioners because one of your Refrains was that, "as Senate Pro Tempore, you NEVER jailed anyone". I recall you telling me on several occasions that a leader doesn't gain the respect of others by abusing the exercise of his/her authority. So, I know that you would have filed such overzealous action under legislative tyranny: in that, the Election Commissioners did not deliberately obstruct legislative functions in the case under consideration.

Boss man, your "small sister, Nyonblee" who left in charge of the Party, even though you were not on talking terms with her until your sad departure, is now proceeding in total disregard of the pillar of reconciliation in the Party. Also, she has proceeded in reckless disregard of your legacy, and the Constitution of the Party by organizing a controversial and bogus Special Convention to inveigle Musa Bility to the Chairmanship of the Party.

I know in 2005, you declined an invitation from Musa Bility's Mandingo Caucus for obvious reasons. But, again, politics being what it is, you compromised your position and hang-out with Bility in 2017. Maybe, if you had known the drama and trauma Bility would have put you through as a result of his pledge to Weah's CDC against your advice, you would have maintained your posture and position of 2005, i.e., staying clear of tainted characters.

Boss man, I heard that you told Romeo Gbarte and some of the comrades that you would have shocked the nation by appointing me as one of your first ministers, had you won the election for the presidency.

I also heard you told Lamii Kpargoi that I surprised you by

being the only FOB and Liberty Party Executive member who stayed with you at your mother's funeral until her casket was deposited in the grave, and fully sealed up. Following your discussion with Lamii, you extended me an invitation thru him to see you. Truth being told, you informed Lamii that most of the things I criticized and screamed about in the Party were true; however, your only problem was the manner in which I articulated those uncomfortable truths.

Boss man, as you look down from heaven upon us, I know you are nodding your head with pleasure, and saying, Bob Jack is once more saying the uncomfortable truths. Yes, sir, I am saying the uncomfortable truths, for you know that I am not a passive soldier, and will not compromise with utter rubbish. So, yes, I am fighting again! However, this time around, you can be consoled by the fact that I am not fighting alone but, along with your Pekin them: Daniel Merchant, Chester Neese, Sampson Dolo, Bishop Lemuel Gbardue, and your sister Clarice Jah - we are fighting for the soul and the long time moral health of the Party. On the other hand, Romeo Gbarte, Jacob Smith, Aruna Fallah and Debar Allen are also fighting in a subtle manner through FOB to launch a lecture series in your honor. I also contributed to their efforts by developing the communication strategy for the lecture series, suggested the names of some of the panelists, and developed the topic with editorial input from Aruna Fallah regarding today's program.

Boss man, knowing that our friends who are purportedly running the affairs of the Party have no solid argument against me, they have escalated their lies against me by saying that I am not a member of Liberty party, and that I am being sponsored by Samuel Tweah, an old pal from the University of Liberia, now Finance Minister. I know you are aware that these are irrational and rubbish arguments. Because, if they are saying that I am not a member of Liberty Party, then what become of the reconciliatory overture that was made by you, which rendered the case at the Supreme Court Moot? Or what about the other subsequent reconciliatory efforts by the Party? By saying that I am not a member of Liberty Party, are they not questioning the intelligence of Madam Clarice Jah, Steve Zargo, Jacob Julius Smith, and Bishop Lemuel Gbadyu - stalwarts of the Party who are associating with me? Do these clowns really believe that such caliber of sophisticated people will be associating



with a non-member of Liberty Party to ferret out their missteps? I can understand why those people in their desperation would glibly gloss over institutional piety, i.e., respecting those who give birth to the thing that's benefiting today.

On the allegation regarding Samuel Tweah; do I have to take money from Tweah to make an obvious argument that Musa Bility is a notoriously corrupt bandit based on that fact that he (Bility) has been linked to myriads of corruption scandals? Heaven knows that the person next to Chief Justice Korkpor that I am unhappy with in the CDC Government is Samuel D. Tweah, Jr. Yes, it is true that Samuel Tweah has been my longtime friend but, since the CDC Government has been sitting on my neck, I have not had any friendly conversation with him. So, how could these people come up with such useless lie? I can understand, their use of the dead cat strategy is aimed at diverting meaningful attention from the efforts to pull corrupt Bility's pants down, and handcuff him to his checkered history. But, their strategy will not work!

Boss man, I'm sure you remember this same rumor surfaced in 2005, that I was influencing you to endorse CDC because of my friend Samuel Tweah. I remember during the Executive Meeting aimed at deciding whether to support CDC or Unity Party, it was this rumor that opened the discussion, when I, in my usual Bob Jack's style, jokingly responded that even if we had endorsed CDC, I would have still explained that we had gone to the CDC to shepherd the process - having said that, I remember everybody laughed, and the meeting stated on a more serious note. Though the consensus in the room at the time was, for us to endorse Unity Party's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf but, through your persuasion, we decided to remain neutral. So, boss man, you are aware that the rumor was not true yesterday, and it's not true even today.

In addition to the barren allegation supra, they have been spewing the shoddy propaganda that Madam Sirleaf rewarded me with Assistant Minister job because I was saying mean things about you. You know, and heaven can testify that the confusion in Party erupted as a result of Nat Toe, Sampson Dolo and others being asked to resign and that Mr. Israel Akinsanya overstayed his role as acting chair.

By the way, how is it rational that a serious professional of Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's caliber will give me a job for merely saying mean things about you, when in fact, I was also fiercely criticizing Madam Sirleaf? Far from the rubbish those clowns are saying, I believe Madam Sirleaf offered me the opportunity to serve her government firstly because of my competence, and secondly because of my pure intellectual and legal argument at the time that she shouldn't go to the TRC because her appearance would have violated Article 61 of the Constitution. I hold this view because it was following this argument that I bumped into Cllr. Morris Saytumah at the Louise Arthur Grimes School of Law, when he said, "I like the argument you are making. When we offer you a place to work in the government will you accept it?" My answer to the question was in the affirmative. About two weeks following my conversation with Cllr. Saytumah at the Law School, he called me in his office, and asked, "if we offer you a place in the Government, will you not be leaking information to Cllr. Brumskine?" I answered in the negative. Then he said, "by evening hours, we will announce you". End of story!

Contrary to the false claim by some people that "they even took me to Madam Sirleaf", I never met Madam Sirleaf during my advocacy. This fact can be authenticated by Tobias Wesseh, then Special Assistant to Cllr. Saytumah. Matter of fact, I was not even desperate for a job at the time because I had just taken up a new job at LBDI as its Legal Assistant.

No rational person in my position at the time would have refused an offer from the Sirleaf administration because I was criticizing my political leader, and also criticizing Madam Sirleaf. I had no friends then. So, what would a rational man do in the case under consideration? In fact, when the appointment was made, ranking members of Liberty Party, United Democratic Party and FOB issued a press release on October 9, 2008, commending President Sirleaf, and also stated that my appointment was a confirmation of the Unity Party-led administration's policy of inclusion. Even you, yourself, boss man, sent me an email congratulating and wishing me well for my appointment in September of 2008.

Boss man, Bility and his people who are accusing me of taking money from Tweah, endorsed Weah's CDC. So, how come they're making it to look like working with Tweah's CDC is a disgusting sin, when in fact, they are responsible for giving CDC power? Knowing that Musa Bility and his likes were driven by their selfish ambitions to curry favor with Weah's CDC, why do they want us to suddenly join them in their frustration with the CDC-led Government? How is it our fault that they were not farsighted? If Mr. Bility were enjoying a cozy relationship with the CDC-led Government, would he have cared about the poor masses? By the way, when Mr. Bility was pledging support to the CDC, did he care to know that some of us would have been at risk? I think Bility and his bunch of greedy friends created their own Frankenstein, let them deal with their creation without dragging my name into their mild frustration. I say mild frustration because if President Weah were to reach out to Bility now, his mild anger will suddenly dissipate.

Boss man, you know that I am not like Bility to trade character for money. Just look at how Bility swaggers with political parties, i.e., LAP, ALCOP, Unity Party, CDC, now LP. You see, I don't pretend in my opposition to wrongdoings. I am not looking for any personal benefit in my opposition to Bility. Matter of fact, others and I, are opposing Bility because he doesn't represent the aspirations of the Party that we established, and we want the best for our Party. I am a bit visible because I am a passionate warrior, and naturally allergic to roguish behavior.

Boss man, this is not the normal intellectual battle. I am told that some of those in this fight have zero intellectual muscles to flex therefore they have resulted to consulting juju men. But, I am not perturbed by this scaring rumor because I am covered by the efficacious blood of Jesus. And so, Boss man, as you look down from heaven upon us, give us the courage to be strong in upholding your legacy by ensuring that Bility relinquishes the Chairmanship in obedience to the established precedent in the Party. Don't let your passing witness the death of integrity in our dear Liberty Party. Knowing that Bility and others treated you so badly in your last days on earth, I ask that your spirit fight back fiercely so that they do not remain at the helm of power in our Party. Let this shame not befall your legacy, and the Party you labored to establish!

Boss man, was the term of endearment used by all of us at the early stage of the movement. And so, with teary eyes and heavy heart, I wish to say rest on, Boss man!

\*The author, B.Sc., LL.B, LL.M, is a Founding Executive Member of Liberty Party, United Democratic Party and Friends of Brumskine (FOB) political arrangement. He defends a political career which arises from his days as a student activist at the University of Liberia.

Atty. Isaac W. Jackson, Jr.

Mobile: +231-777-008140

E-mail: whiekonblo@yahoo.com



# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Weah declares World Red Cross Month

President George Manneh Weah over the weekend issued a Proclamation declaring Monday, 1 May through the 31st as World Red Cross Red Crescent Month and, May 8, 2021 As World "Red Cross Red Crescent Day," to be observed throughout Liberia as a Working Holiday.

The Proclamation further ordered and directed all civic and voluntary organizations and Government Agencies concerned to fully participate in such programs as planned by the Liberia National Red Cross Society to

committed to rendering relevant and timely services to distressed and needy people throughout the world in times of trouble, sickness, war, natural calamity and other forms of disasters.

For more than 100 years now, the devoted volunteers of the Liberian Red Cross have responded to challenges in the various counties, districts and communities with compassion and generosity; and in times of disaster, they deliver humanitarian relief, save lives, and offer hope for a brighter tomorrow, the Proclamation observed further.

The release stated that in this

acts as a force for positive change in communities when it is needed the most, the release stated that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement including the Liberian Red Cross aim to broaden the public understanding on the diversity of its work and the universality of its approach and to harness the power of emotion felt towards the Movement.

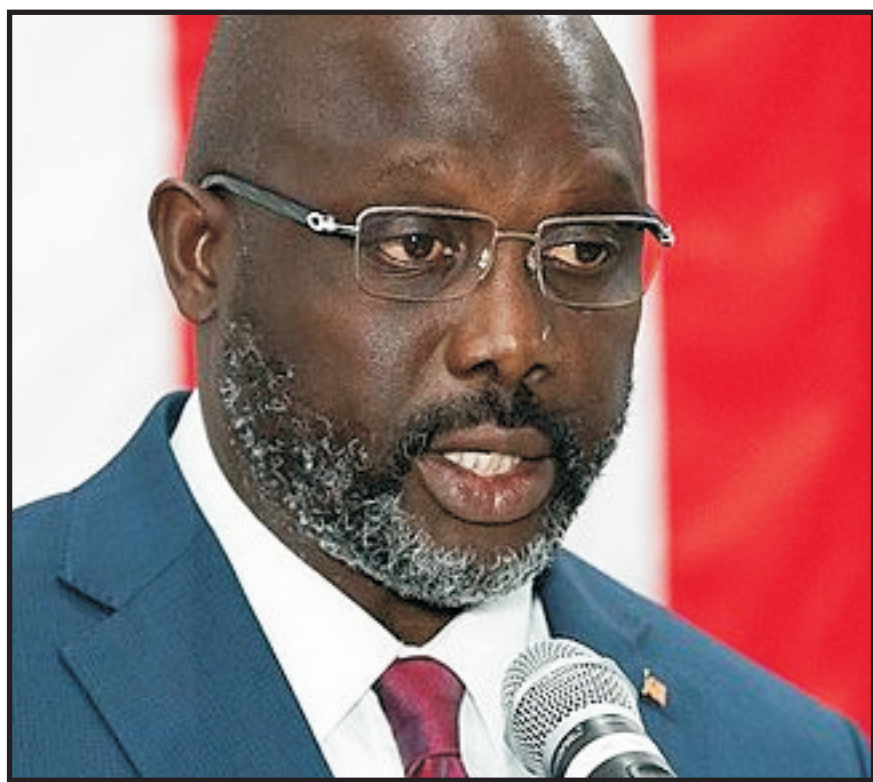
It is using a simple call to action to generate, either the feeling or understanding that the Red Cross and Red Crescent network is unparalleled.

"It is present everywhere, providing support to the most vulnerable in all contexts from large scale disasters, challenging conflict situations, to remote and hard to reach areas where no other aid organization has access to", the release stresses.

The Proclamation says thousands of youths worldwide have been trained as peer educators in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

For more than 130 years, the devoted volunteers of the Liberian Red Cross have responded to challenges in the various counties, districts and communities with compassion and generosity and in times of disaster; they deliver humanitarian relief, save lives and offer hope for the brighter tomorrow and their service has meant so much to many, the release stated.

The release also recounted that since 2020, one in every 12 people around the world received some form of help from either the Red Cross or Red Crescent, adding "from in-person psychosocial support to seeing a social post with COVID-19 information." -**Press release**



make the occasion more meaningful and rewarding.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, the Proclamation further requested and called upon all persons residing within the territorial limits of the Republic to observe the month - long event.

The release stated that this year's World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day will be observed under the theme: #Unstoppable #Inarretable #Imparable.

The Proclamation also noted that the World Red Cross Red Crescent has been

rapid changing world, young people will lead positive change as recent surveys indicate that half of the 17 million Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers in more than 190 Countries are youth who are innovators embracing new ideas and technologies faster than any generation before them, thousands of whom worldwide have been trained as peer educators in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

According to the proclamation, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is there for everyone, with neutrality and impartiality; it offers hope and support, thus

## JFL campaigns for war crimes tribunal

The chief executive of Justice Forum Liberia - a local group, Maxson S. Kpakio has reiterated call for establishment of a war crimes tribunal for Liberia to try perpetrators of heinous crimes during the dearly two decades Liberian Civil War.

He said establishment of a war and economic crimes court will go a long way in helping to curtail culture of impunity in the Liberian society.

Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which operated between 2006 and 2009, recommended for a war crimes court, an extraordinary criminal court for Liberia to stamp out impunity.

Liberia by endorsing the establishment of [the] court", he added.

He said though infrastructure development is important, the Weah-led government has a duty to ensure justice for atrocities committed during the civil war.

"Liberia cannot achieve genuine peace in the absence of justice for atrocities committed during Liberia's civil wars", he said.

He emphasized the establishment of a war and economic crimes court by the Weah-led administration will prevent reoccurrence of war and significantly reduce current wave of corruption by public officials.

According to him, Liberians have advocated and on many occasions held street parades,



Mr. Maxson S. Kpakio

Mr. Kpakio made the statement over the weekend while addressing a press conference on Benson Street in Monrovia.

He warned that no major national development can be achieved under the George Weah Presidency when establishment of war and economic crimes court, one major reason why Liberians elected him, has been neglected.

"President Weah advocated for the establishment of a war and economic crimes court before and during the 2017 presidential elections, but he's not taking advantage of the opportunity, now that he's the President to bring an end to the culture of impunity in

campaigning for war and economic crimes court, as well as petitioned the legislature to implement the TRC's recommendations.

He dispelled notion the establishment of such court could cause instability and financial burden for the Liberian government, saying the international community will finance the court one hundred percent.

Meanwhile, the JFL leader disclosed, several Liberians, including war victims and civil society organizations will assemble at the Capitol Building on May 18, to re-echo call for the establishment of war and economic crimes court for Liberia.

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# Citizens want Ganta home demolition investigated

A group of Liberian citizens hailing from Nimba County are calling on the government of Liberia to conduct a thoroughly impartial investigation into recent peace-threatening events in Nimba County. The Ganta Support Group (GSG) says

Two weeks ago, on April 19, officers from the Liberia National Police Support Unit (PSU) assigned at the Regional Gbarnga Security Hub effected an eviction notice from the circuit court in Sanniquelle, Nimba County - thereby making scores of people homeless. But the GSG says the police action

demolition actions at 4am when people, women, children, elderly, sick, were in bed.

“Without any legitimate written notice, the PSU vandalized the homes and businesses of the Donzo, Jabateh, and Kromah families on behalf of one Fred Suah.



such investigation should establish the circumstances surrounding what it calls ‘illegal demolition of homes’ and burning of a warehouse in Ganta.

The two incidents caused the city of Ganta to come to a standstill, causing public panic.

was illegal and caused victims to lose cash and other valuable properties to criminals.

According to GSG, the LNP acted on an outdated 2019 court order that was not executed because it was not served to party litigants, therefore could not be a legitimate and legal basis for police eviction and

The 2019 court order wasn't served. The law says one should be served first. In this case the people weren't served. If they weren't served and they were attacked at 4am in the morning, then, there's no court order.

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# ECOWAS stresses regional integration for sustainable development

By Lewis S. Teh

The Special Representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission in Liberia, Mr. Nathaniel B. Walker says the regional body has been promoting economic cooperation and regional integration as a tool in accelerating development of the West African economy.

“For us at Ecowas, regional integration remains the most viable and appropriate tool for achieving and accelerating sustainable development of the West African countries”, he said.

Mr. Walker was speaking at the Ministerial Complex in Congo Town outside Monrovia over the weekend during official launch of the Harmonizing and Pmproving Statistics in West Africa or (HISWA) Liberia project.

Making remarks on behalf of the President of ECOWAS Dr. Mohammed Ibas Chambers, he said ECOWAS authorities and Heads of States and governments reaffirmed commitment to improving the West African integration process while

enhancing the effectiveness of the institution in it's totality, by creating an understanding of situation through support of improved data.

He thanked the director general of Liberia Institute of



# Liberia Finalizes National Risk Assessment Report

The Liberian Government through the Financial Intelligence Unit of Liberia along with other competent authorities in the Anti-money laundering and Countering Terrorist Financing regime, has finalized the National Risk Assessment Report, following a two-day technical workshop in Monrovia.

Speaking to the media at the closure of the two days technical workshop, the Director General of Liberia Financial Intelligence Unit, Edwin W. Harris, explained that the NRA technical workshop focused on the final review and discussion of the National Risk Assessment Results, the design of the Risk Based Action Plan, discussion on implementing issues and the final publication of the NAR report, coupled with its accompanying Risk -Based Action Plan.

According to him, the overarching objective of the NRA technical workshop has been achieved based on the full participation of leads/specialists of the eight NRA Technical Working Groups (TWGs), heads of all agencies represented on the TWGs and the Governance Steering Committee (GSC); which is

chaired by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) and Co-chair by the Minister of Justice (MOJ).

He lauded representatives of the Inter-Governmental Action Group Against Money Laundering (GIABA), United States Embassy, World Bank, African Development Bank (AFDB), European Union, UNODC, and Government of Liberia (GOL) who attended and participated in the National Risk Assessment workshop.

The FIU boss said the final publication of the National Risk Assessment (NRA) report is an important national exercise that will boost Liberia's standing in the global financial system and also give way for a more effective 2nd round of mutual evaluation by GIABA representatives or assessors in early next year (2022).

Meanwhile, other public institutions that are included in the competent authorities in the fight against money laundering and countering terrorist financing regime in Liberia are: Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, General Auditing Commission, Ministry of Justice, Liberia Revenue Authority, Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency, Liberia National Police, amongst others.

# Accident kills

Starts from back page

collided with the parked truck near a cold storage operated by a fishing company.

They detailed that the bike rider was on speed, using one hand to operate the bike while the other hand was serving as a shield to prevent rain from flashing in his face when he ran into the parked truck. All three victims are said to hail from Karluway, Electoral District#3, Maryland County.

The site of the accident had reportedly suffered several incidents in the past that led to death and injuries of several persons due to narrowness of the road.

According to the angry motorcyclists, several calls had been placed to the city authority in the past to advice truck drivers to avoid packing cars in such location but the

authorities allegedly continue to pay deaf ears.

“See what the deaf ears being paid by the authorities of this city has caused us, this place is not a parking station for cars because the place is very small; it is even difficult for two big cars to pass by each other here, so why have they decided to park car here?” the cyclists asked in frustration. The district coordinator for the motorcyclists union, Edin Papa Sieh Wilson lamented that motorcyclists are usually victimized in the county.

He claimed that on a daily basis, the Pleebo City Corporation is in the constant habit of penalizing bike riders whenever they parked along the road, but ignore vehicles that park there, something, he described as unfair.

Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) Prof. Francis Wreh, and chairman of the board Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweh for their support towards smooth organization of statistical harmonization in the region.

Mr. Walker continued that

the initiative, when implemented successfully, will help support the country's macroeconomic policy planning which are aligned with government national development roadmap, "Pro Poor Agenda for Development and Prosperity or (PAPD)."



# Français

## La petite Precious Pearl Ireland regagne sa dernière demeure

La petite Precious Pearl Ireland, âgée de 14 ans, a été abattue par l'adolescent Jovanus Oliver Turay, 16 ans, dans la matinée du 13 avril à Cyber-Ed Christian School. Ses parents lui ont rendu un dernier hommage vibrant le weekend dernier à la Harvest Continental Cathedral Church de Oldest Congo Town.

Le Dr Philip Ireland, le père de la défunte Precious Pearl Ireland a dit qu'il n'a rien contre la famille du jeune Turay qui a tué sa fille. « Nous avons pardonné à la famille Turay. Nous n'avons rien contre eux. Ce qui est arrivé est arrivé », a-t-il dit lors de la cérémonie funéraire de sa fille.

Deux suspects furent arrêtés par la police dès après la fusillade qui a coûté la vie à la petite Precious. Il s'agit du suspect Turay et de Matthew Gonkerwon, un adolescent de 17 ans à Sophie Community, Congo Town.

La victime fut transportée d'urgence à l'hôpital pour des soins médicaux, mais elle fut déclarée morte à son arrivée par des infirmières en service. Selon la police, les

suspects Jovanus Oliver Turay et Matthew Gonkerwon ont été arrêtés tôt mardi matin à 8 heures par l'unité anti-vols de la police nationale du Libéria (LNP). Le tireur a été placé dans une maison sûre en attendant l'enquête de la police.

La défunte Precious Ireland est née le 2 décembre 2006. Elle fut inhumée le vendredi 30 avril 2021 au Kaiser Memorial Cemetery à Brewerville, dans le comté de Montserrado.

Rendant un dernier hommage

à sa fille à la cathédrale Harvest Continental à Congo Town avant son enterrement, le Dr Ireland a exprimé ses regrets pour la disparition soudaine de sa fille. Toutefois, il a pardonné à Jovanus Turay et à sa famille son action. Il a souligné la nécessité de la réconciliation et de la paix entre les deux familles.

« En tant que famille, nous pardonnons à Jovanus, à son

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## Le Libéria et les États-Unis signent un protocole d'accord pour préserver l'île de la Providence

L'ambassadeur des États-Unis au Libéria, Michael McCarthy, et des responsables du gouvernement du Libéria ont annoncé une initiative de collaboration américano-libérienne pour la préservation du site historique de Providence Island et l'élaboration des

recommandations pour sa réutilisation.

En 2020, le Département d'État américain a accordé au World Monuments Fund (WMF) une subvention de près de 100.000 dollars du Fonds des ambassadeurs pour la préservation de la culture (A F C P), <https://eca.state.gov/cultural->

heritage - center/ambassadors-fund- la préservation de la culture), supervisée par l'ambassade des États-Unis à Monrovia, pour mener une étude sur la préservation et la réutilisation de l'île de Providence.

Le WMF a choisi la professeure Allison James de l'Université de Virginie pour diriger le projet d'étude et consulter de nombreuses parties prenantes libériennes. La professeure James collabore étroitement avec le Dr William B. Allen, professeur d'histoire à l'Université du Libéria et spécialiste de l'histoire du Libéria.

L'île Providence, où les tribus indigènes ont vécu pendant des siècles avant l'arrivée des esclaves affranchis venus des États-Unis d'Amérique en 1821, est essentielle en ce qui concerne la narration de l'histoire du Libéria, de ses peuples et de son identité nationale. C'est aussi un symbole des relations

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Indian Businessman Upjit Singh Sachdeva

## Éditorial

### Le président Weah est dégoûté

Les fonctionnaires de l'administration Weah semblent tromper le peuple et le président qui s'en rend compte au fur et à mesure qu'il visite le pays.

Récemment, dans le comté de Grand Cape, le président Weah a été désagréablement surpris en se rendant compte que le sénateur Varney Sherman et d'autres législateurs du comté n'ont pas de domicile ou de lieu pour accueillir une délégation officielle dans le comté qu'ils représentent.

Maintenant dans le comté de Grand Bassa, le président Weah n'était pas que déçu, il était littéralement bouleversé par le fait que les responsables du comté, y compris le surintendant et les législateurs, n'avaient aucun lieu pour le recevoir à part une mairie mal tenue. Il a terminé la troisième étape de sa tournée nationale déçue.

M. Weah : « Regardez ceci, regardez ceci, regardez ceci, regardez autour de vous, regardez ceci et regardez-nous, regardez-nous (décrivant à quel point ils étaient magnifiquement habillés par rapport à l'infrastructure dans laquelle ils étaient assis et l'environnement).

Parfois, il faut que nous ayons une conscience et ayons honte de nous-même. Cet endroit ne représente rien. Vous ne pouvez pas être les représentants des gens et recevoir le Président et l'ensemble du gouvernement ici. Ce n'est pas possible ».

Jetant un regard autour de la salle dans laquelle se tenait la réunion, il a déploré que l'endroit ne soit pas adapté à un tel rassemblement et que même leur propre vêtement contredisait tout.

Les fonctionnaires doivent savoir que la réalité contredit toujours la fausseté. La vérité est que la tournée nationale du président n'a pas été une surprise. Elle était prévue pour 2020, mais elle a été reportée en raison du COVID-19 et d'autres engagements officiels.

Même avant le début de cette tournée cette année, elle avait été officiellement annoncée. Nous sommes donc également surpris que les surintendants de comté et les législateurs ne se soient pas suffisamment préparés à accueillir le président et son entourage. Le surintendant du comté de Grand Bassa,

Janjay Vakpah, la sénatrice Nyonblee Kangar Lawrence et ses collègues législateurs du comté veulent-ils nous dire qu'ils n'ont pas trouvé de peinture à Buchanna, la capitale provinciale, pour donner à l'hôtel de ville une cure de jeunesse pour la réunion du président Weah avec les citoyens? Comme c'est décevant !

Les législateurs ne devraient pas se concentrer sur leurs projets personnels seulement, il faut qu'ils pensent aussi à leurs électeurs, il faut qu'ils pensent aussi à leur comté qu'ils représentent, en particulier lorsque le président effectue une visite officielle. Il doit être reçu et hébergé dans le respect et l'estime réservés à la présidence.

À quoi bon de se vêtir très élégamment et se promener partout pendant que les villes, les villages, les comtés et les personnes qu'ils représentent restent dans des conditions épouvantables. Ce n'est pas du leadership mais de l'hypocrisie !

River Gee, Grand Cape Mount et Grand Bassa, c'est la même histoire : négligence et infrastructures mal gérées et délabrées au point qu'on a l'impression qu'elles ne sont pas des lieux qu'ils représentent en tant que leaders. Pourtant, les membres du pouvoir législatif libérien décident chaque année du budget national et distribuent le gâteau national, s'attribuant même des parts plus importantes.

Il est temps qu'ils changent leur style de leadership en plaçant les personnes et les lieux qu'ils représentent au-dessus de leurs intérêts personnels pour démontrer le véritable leadership qu'on attend d'eux.



# Français

## La petite Precious Pearl Ireland

père et à tous ceux qui ont à voir avec cette famille à cent pourcents », a déclaré le Dr Ireland. Il a même prononcé des bénédictions et offert des prières pour le jeune suspect Jovanus, pour sa famille et pour la nation dans son ensemble.

« En fait, pour aller encore plus loin, nous bénissons et nous prions pour Jovanus, nous demandons à Dieu de faire de lui un meilleur père, un meilleur mari. Nous ne servirons jamais l'ennemi, nous nous en tenons à Dieu. C'est notre hommage pour notre bien-aimée Precious. »

« Les Libériens sont témoins des effusions de sang et des actes de violences dus à une haine profondément ancrée dans les cœurs, une hainée des expériences certes terribles et fâcheuses, mais qui pourrait aussi faire l'objet d'un dialogue pacifique. Hélas. C'est pourquoi nous n'avons rien contre le jeune qui m'a arraché ma fille. Nous ne voulons pas d'œil pour œil, dent pour dent. Nous ne

voulons aucune vengeance. Notre pays en a trop vu, nous pardonnons, nous n'avons besoin de rien », a-t-il ajouté.

Le Dr Ireland se souvient encore de l'amour que lui manifestait sa fille, surtout lorsqu'il est retourné chez lui après qu'un rapport médical a révélé qu'il était atteint du virus Ebola. « Elle me nourrissait souvent, alors que je n'avais même pas d'appétit. C'était une belle enfant et une âme très gentille et aimante », a déclaré le Dr Ireland.

S'exprimant au nom du gouvernement, la vice-présidente Jewel Howard-Taylor a exhorté les administrations scolaires à inclure dans leur personnel administratif, un conseiller dont la responsabilité sera spécifiquement de conseiller et de créer une atmosphère qui leur permettra de partager en toute confidentialité les choses qui les affectent. Elle a également appelé les parents à s'abstenir d'être trop occupés pour leurs enfants et à se méfier des types d'amis avec lesquels ils s'associent.

## Le Libéria et les États-Unis signent

durables et des liens interpersonnels entre les États-Unis et le Libéria. Et aujourd'hui, l'île de Providence est également un espace vert important dans le centre de Monrovia et une attraction touristique potentielle.

La professeur James, avec le soutien du ministère de l'Information, de la Culture et du Tourisme (MICAT), s'est rendue pour la première fois au Libéria en novembre 2020. Elle a rencontré des ministres du gouvernement, le Conseil national traditionnel du Libéria, des jeunes leaders, des membres des communautés entourant l'île de Providence, et d'autres parties prenantes. Elle enseigne actuellement une classe composée d'étudiants de l'Université de Virginie et des étudiants de l'Université du Libéria dans le cadre des projets de recherche qui éclaireront les informations historiques de l'étude finale.

Vendredi, le Gouvernement du Libéria, représenté par le Vice-

Ministre Gray, et le Gouvernement des États-Unis, représenté par l'Ambassadeur McCarthy, ont signé une déclaration commune pour annoncer leur soutien au plan de préservation et de réutilisation de l'île de Providence. En outre, MICAT, représentée par le ministre Rennie, accompagné par le ministre de la Justice Dean, et le World Monuments Fund qui est représenté par le chef de projet Stephen Battle, ont signé un protocole d'entente, qui déclare leur désir mutuel de développer et de renforcer leur coopération pour la conservation du paysage culturel de Providence Island.

S'adressant au prestigieux groupe réuni pour célébrer cette occasion, l'Ambassadeur McCarthy a exprimé son enthousiasme : « Providence Island continue d'être un lieu de rencontre, un lieu d'échange, un lieu de nature, un lieu de multiculturalisme. C'est vraiment un terrain historique. Et c'est et sera toujours un symbole puissant de la relation durable entre les États-Unis et le Libéria. »

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Jean Pisani-ferry

## L'Europe doit redéfinir son cadre budgétaire

PARIS - Seuls six pays disposaient de règles budgétaires au milieu des années 1980. Au dernier comptage du Fonds monétaire international, en 2015, ils étaient 96. La plupart s'étaient dotés de dispositions visant à limiter la dette publique, le déficit budgétaire, ou les deux, et certains de règles additionnelles d'encadrement des dépenses publiques.

Cette volonté d'endiguer pouvoir discrétionnaire a certainement été l'effet d'expériences traumatisantes : la "décennie perdue" en Amérique latine qui a suivi une série de crises de la dette dans les années 1980, l'ajustement douloureux subi par les pays pris au dépourvu par la hausse des taux d'intérêt au début des années 1990, ou la crise européenne des dettes souveraines de 2010-2012.

Mais l'attrait pour les règles provient également d'une méfiance à l'égard de l'activisme budgétaire. En 2000, John Taylor, de l'université de Stanford, a bien saisi l'esprit du temps lorsqu'il a écrit qu'il était "préférable de laisser la politique budgétaire jouer son rôle contra-cyclique principalement par le biais des stabilisateurs automatiques", en d'autres termes, de la mettre en pilotage automatique. Le consensus de l'époque était que la politique monétaire est un outil plus agile et plus efficace, car les décisions sont prises par une banque centrale indépendante et mises en œuvre d'un simple trait de plume.

Ces règles ne sont nulle part aussi détaillées et prescriptives que dans l'Union européenne, dont le règlement budgétaire compte près de 100 pages. Il y a de bonnes raisons à cela. Parce qu'ils partagent leur monnaie avec d'autres, les membres de l'euro ne peuvent pas réduire le poids de leur dette en jouant sur l'inflation. Comme l'a fait remarquer avec perspicacité Paul De Grauwe, de la London School of Economics, c'est comme si ces États empruntaient dans une monnaie étrangère. Or une dette publique excessive pousse les pays partenaires à venir à la rescousse plutôt que de devoir faire face aux retombées financières de la restructuration de la dette ou, pire, de la sortie de l'union monétaire. C'est ce qui s'est passé avec la Grèce dans les années 2010. La raison d'être d'une prévention de l'irresponsabilité budgétaire est incontestable.

Mais la codification extensive du comportement budgétaire provient aussi de mauvaises raisons. L'Allemagne est traditionnellement méfiante à l'égard de politiques de stabilisation (ce qui ne l'a pas empêché de réagir vigoureusement à la crise financière, puis à la crise sanitaire), et les petits pays d'Europe du Nord le sont encore plus. En outre, les États membres de l'UE ne se font pas confiance. Ils ont donc empilé les réglementations, au point que la plaisanterie à Bruxelles est qu'une seule personne au siège de la Commission européenne maîtrise la complexité qui en découle.

Les temps ont cependant changé. Depuis douze ans, les taux d'intérêt monétaires sont bloqués à un niveau proche de zéro, ce qui discrédite la célèbre efficacité de la politique monétaire. Plutôt que de protéger la banque centrale d'éventuels divagations budgétaires, la priorité dans un tel environnement est de faire en sorte que politique monétaire et la politique budgétaire puissent fonctionner en tandem. Brisant un tabou, Isabel Schnabel, membre du Directoire de la Banque centrale européenne, a souligné que la situation exigeait à la fois des politiques monétaires et budgétaires non-conventionnelles, et qu'elles devaient se compléter l'une-l'autre en vue protéger l'économie contre des épisodes récessifs importants. Comme l'expose un récent rapport de Genève, le concept longtemps oublié de policy mix est de nouveau d'actualité.

Parallèlement, les inquiétudes concernant la solvabilité des États se sont fortement atténuées. Comme l'a souligné Olivier Blanchard, l'ancien économiste en chef du FMI, aucune dette n'est insoutenable tant que le taux d'intérêt reste inférieur au taux de croissance. Telle est la situation depuis une décennie et même aux États-Unis, où les taux obligataires ont augmenté, cette condition reste largement remplie.

Le président Biden n'a pas perdu de temps pour en tirer les conclusions. Alors que le plan de relance lancé en 2009 en réponse à la crise financière était trop timide, son paquet de 1900 milliards de dollars, qui vient s'ajouter au programme de relance de Donald Trump, représente un puissant - sans doute même excessif - coup d'accélérateur.

Les regards se tournent désormais vers l'Europe. En mars 2020, elle a judicieusement activé une clause de sauvegarde de son cadre budgétaire. Celle-ci restera certainement en place en 2022, mais prendra fin en 2023 si la pandémie le permet. Un débat s'est engagé à la faveur de cette parenthèse pour savoir si les règles doivent être réformées avant d'être rétablies et, plus fondamentalement, si les initiatives budgétaires doivent être considérées comme un problème ou plutôt comme une solution.

Les arguments en faveur d'une réforme d'ensemble étaient puissants dès avant la crise sanitaire. Ils sont désormais incontournables. Les règles actuelles ont été conçues pour un monde qui n'existe plus. Elles sont opaques, limitent excessivement l'action budgétaire et reposent sur des objectifs numériques qui n'ont aucun sens dans un contexte de faibles taux d'intérêts. De plus, elles sont inapplicables : on ne peut pas demander à l'Italie, dont la dette devrait approcher 160 % du PIB cette année, de viser un ratio dette/PIB de 60 %.

Il ne faut pas se tromper : la responsabilité budgétaire est indispensable à une union monétaire. La question n'est pas de savoir s'il faut fixer aux États des normes exigeantes à respecter et les tenir responsables de leurs performances, mais de savoir comment le faire. Les réformateurs veulent conserver l'engagement en faveur de la discipline budgétaire mais changer le critère d'évaluation des comportements des États. D'autres préfèrent retoucher le Pacte de stabilité à la marge, car ils craignent que cet engagement ne survive pas à une renégociation. S'en tenir à un commandement dont la raison d'être a été perdue par crainte de ne pouvoir en définir un plus raisonnable, c'est cependant la meilleure façon de miner la confiance dans les règles.

La vertu de la crise sanitaire est qu'elle oblige à repenser ce qui fonctionnait par simple inertie. Sans aller jusqu'à la réforme radicale proposée par certains, il est possible de concevoir un cadre budgétaire qui préserve l'engagement essentiel en faveur de la responsabilité budgétaire, mais laisse plus de place aux choix discrétionnaires. Cela exige d'abord d'accepter que les pays ne peuvent pas tous se voir assigner le même objectif. Ensuite, cela implique une discipline budgétaire fondée sur des principes et soutenue par des institutions bien conçues, plutôt que par des objectifs numériques rigides.

L'Union européenne n'a pas hésité à concevoir des réponses sans tabou à la crise sanitaire. En s'engageant dans une réforme complète de son cadre budgétaire, elle montrerait qu'elle est suffisamment forte pour repenser la politique économique dans le contexte post-pandémique. Elle devrait ouvrir le débat sans attendre, dans la perspective d'un plan d'action d'ici un an.

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## FEATURE

## FEATURE

# Ghana Hit Hard by COVID-19 with a Decline in Commodity Exports

By Suzanne Driscoll from Sharemoney

Over 80% of Ghana's revenue comes from exports of three major commodities: gold, crude oil and cocoa. Unfortunately, shipments of crude oil and cocoa have been drastically reduced during the past year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With government debt increasing to over 70% of gross domestic product (GDP) and interest payments consuming half of the country's revenue, Ghana's credit rating was reduced to B- in September 2020. Revenue spent on debt servicing increased from 39 percent in 2019 to a staggering 55 percent in 2020. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) disbursed \$1 billion to Ghana in April 2020 due to the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tao Zhang, Deputy Managing Director and Chair of the IMF, commented that "The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting Ghana severely. Growth is projected to slow down, financial conditions have tightened, and the exchange rate is under pressure. The budget deficit is projected to widen this year given expected lower government revenues and higher spending needs related to the pandemic."

## Demand for Crude Oil Drops

With fewer people traveling, shipments of freight reduced and manufacturing halted in many areas, the demand for crude oil as well as prices plummeted during the past year. Just as there was a worldwide increase in production, the International Energy Agency (IEA) estimated that global demand for oil was down by almost 30 million barrels per day (mb/d) during 2020. However, demand for oil is projected to grow by 5.4 million barrels per day in 2021, recovering around 60% of the volume lost to the pandemic in 2020. There should be stronger demand in the second half of 2021 as the world economy recovers.

## Cocoa Viewed as a Luxury Product

Cocoa is the key ingredient in chocolate, for which there was a decline in demand during the pandemic. Ghana is the second largest exporter of cocoa beans in the world, with Ivory Coast being the largest. As the country's main cash crop, over 1 million farmers in Ghana depend on cocoa for their livelihood. The government has provided incentives in recent years to encourage people to expand their farms such as building improved



access roads, establishing minimum producer prices, encouraging the use of fertilizers and insecticides, and providing new seedlings for trees lost during periods of drought. The supply of cocoa did not decrease during the pandemic, but demand declined by 5-10 percent. Restaurants that bought cocoa for their menus were closed, and since no one was traveling, the amount of chocolate purchased in airports also decreased.

## Gold Prices Increase as Production Ramps Up



The price of gold increased during the past year, which was good news for Ghana. They are now the largest producer of gold in Africa, thanks to their lower-cost mines where it is easier to extract deposits. The government also created a friendly business environment by cutting corporate taxes and establishing a sliding scale of mineral royalties based on the gold

price. Ghana also has a standard 10% free-carry stake in all mining companies that provides investors with a high level of assurance.

Plans for the Future to Minimize Disruptions to Ghana's Economy.

Ghana needs to diversify its economy so they are not totally dependent on just the three commodities mentioned above. But with the high amount of debt servicing required each month, this may not be possible in the short term. For such commodities as cocoa, local clusters of production and processing could be established so that if one area of the country is affected by a drought, for example, other areas can still harvest cocoa beans for export. Ghana also needs to strengthen the enforcement of child labor laws in the harvesting of cocoa, or risk backlash from major U.S. importers such as Nestlé, Hershey's and Blommer.

The country will remain dependent on the availability of loans to avoid long-term consequences of the pandemic. But since their credit rating declined, market-based sources of credit will not be available.

Ghana will then have to rely on financial institutions such as the IMF for funding. However, the IMF can impose certain conditions on their loans such as public sector wage freezes. This discourages young adults to enter such professions as medicine and education, which further deepens a crisis such as COVID-19 or an Ebola outbreak. Like many African countries, Ghana spends more on debt servicing than health and education combined. Their tax system needs to be strengthened so that the wealthier residents and companies are paying their fair share.

The IMF could also assist Ghana when agreeing to provide emergency loans. The agency should call all creditors to immediately start talks towards a full debt restructuring as part of the official agreement.

There is certainly hope for the future. The IMF recently forecast that due to the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines and vast sums of government aid, global economic growth will accelerate to a record high this year in a powerful rebound from the pandemic recession. The agency expects the world economy to expand 6 percent in 2021, up from the 5.5% it had forecast in January 2021. It would be the fastest expansion for the global economy in IMF records dating back to 1980.





# Standoff paralyzes Freeport of Monrovia

Standoff between riot officers of the Liberia National Police and protesting port workers paralyzed normal activities at the Freeport of Monrovia on Monday, 03 May, affecting businesses.

The workers were hired by

Wednesday, has caused dock workers, port truckers and customs brokers to halt operation.

A Liberian businesswoman Kebbeh Collins, laments the impasse is affecting movement of containers out of the port and prolonged stay of goods in the

am appealing to the President to intervene.”

According to her, taxes at the Freeport are driving Diaspora-based Liberians away with many of them now turning to neighboring Guinea to ship goods to Liberia thru the Liberian border post in Ganta, Nimba County and then transported by road to Monrovia.

The president of Liberian business persons importing goods from China Saah Folley, threatened they take unspecified action by Wednesday, if government failed to address the situation.

But the spokesperson for the National Port Authority Malcom Scott said management is durig everything address the protesting workers' concern, which he described as germane.

The current protest has been blamed on the Management of APM Terminals' failure or refusal to re-instate 42 employees, as instructed by the Ministry of Labour.

According to the Ministry, the employees were illegally dismissed, so management must re-instate and pay them for the period they sat down.

-Story by Jonathan Browne



the Management of APM Terminals after the dismissal of some 42 employees. They are demanding a collective bargaining agreement with the company.

The situation at the Freeport, which according to report, started last week

port is making her and others to incur extra storage cost.

Madam Collins is a former representative candidate for Montserrado County District#7.

Speaking to OK FM 99.5 Monday, she lamented that daily storage fee at the port after five days is US\$71.00 daily, adding, “I

# Citizens want Ganta

Cont'd from page 7

“This unprovoked attack on the families of the Donzo, Jabateh, and Kromah was no doubt masterminded by a notorious land grabber, Fred Suah, even though this particular piece of land was legitimately deeded to these families that have owned, developed and lived on it for over 50 years up to, including and beyond the period of the Liberian civil war,” the group says.

The group's coordinator, Alpha D. Jabateh, says the demolition carried out by the police without a legitimate court order not only presents a nefarious objective by Mr. Suah but also sets a dangerous precedence that could undermine Liberia's prevailing peace, especially in Nimba.

“We believe that such unwarranted behavior has the propensity to derail the peace and harmonious living arrangements our people have enjoyed for so long. In view thereof, we are calling on the authorities to swiftly investigate this violent demolition of the properties of the Donzo, Jabateh, and Kromah families by Liberia National Police and agent

provocateurs in collaboration with Mr. Fred Suah. Anything contrary to an expeditious investigation will not only embolden the perpetrators but also undermine respect for rule of law and due process,” Mr. Jabateh says.

The group also says that in the absence of a thorough criminal investigation, it finds it difficult to believe that people sent to court in connection with the burning of the warehouse are the real committers of the crime. GSG believes in order for government to not be seen as being used by anti-peace agents for wrongful targeting of people, a full-scale investigation must be commissioned to establish the facts.

On April 28, the police sent four persons to court for their alleged role in burning the warehouse.

Meanwhile, GSG and its collaborating organizations have expressed appreciation peace-loving people, both in Liberia in the Diaspora, for speaking out against what it calls ‘disturbing discretionary abuse of power’ by the police at the expense of the country's fragile peace.

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# EU announces 15m for election

The Head of the European Union (EU) Delegation to Liberia Ambassador Laurent Delahousse has revealed that the EU is planning to help digitize Liberia's elections system by providing the amount of Euro 15 million for the process.

Liberia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs says Ambassador Delahousse stated during a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Dee Maxwell Saah Kemayah on Monday, 3 May that given the population of Liberia which is about five million, “it is easy to digitize the electoral system in Liberia.”

Ambassador Delahousse further mentioned that a conversation is currently ongoing between the Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel D. Tweah and the EU on fast tracking activities leading to the 2023 elections which are fast approaching.

Amb. Delahousse's disclosure of the EU's plan came when he accompanied the Chief Observer of the 2017 EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) Ms. Maria Arena and other EU officials at Minister Kemayah's Capitol

Hill office.

During the courtesy call, Madam Arena lauded the Government of Liberia for the peaceable manner in which the December 2020 special Senatorial election was conducted here, adding that the 2020 election was well managed.

Madam Arena who is also a member of the European Parliament, said they are in the country to follow-up on recommendation from the EU Election Observer Mission which was deployed to observe the

Presidential and Legislative elections in October and December 2017.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Monrovia says while paying a courtesy call on Liberian Foreign Minister Ambassador Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah, Sr., at his Capitol Hill office, Madam Arena noted that the EU Mission will proffer suggestions for reform for the upcoming 2023 presidential and general elections in Liberia.



Ms. Arena intoned that the 2023 elections which seems to be far away for now must take into consideration the issue of women participation and empowerment as the country prepares for future elections ahead.

She called on the Legislature to speed up the constitutional change as it relates to election, saying they need to know the reform proceeding to 2023 elections.

“The role of women in this process is very important in your country; to have women well represented in the electoral process...[being] about 50 percent of the population, we need to work on the quota for women representation in National the Legislature, we need to prepare for 2023 elections,” she stated.

Responding, Minister Kemayah welcomed EOM to Liberia and appreciated Madam Arena for the kind words on the December 2020 election.

Minister Kemayah noted that while the government takes it as a compliment, it is not complicit, adding that it strengthens the government's resolve as a country to ensure

that whatever improvement that is needed within the electoral system will be done.

The Dean of the Cabinet said democracy is an uncompromising endeavor for all, not only as a country, but for President George Manneh Weah.

Minister Kemayah disclosed that d against this background, President Weah called opponent to the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) who won the seats to congratulate them.

While responding to the Head of EU Delegation to Liberia Ambassador Laurent Delahousse's question whether there are plans by the GOL to reform its election law that will allow diaspora Liberians to participate in future elections in Liberia, Minister Kemayah said it is only through an electoral reform that the change will take place.

Madam Arena was accompanied by the Head of EU Delegation, Ambassador Laurent Delahousse, and two electoral experts of the European External Action Services (EEAS), who will be present in Liberia between April 22 and May 16, while Madam Arena will be in Liberia from May 2 to May 7, 2021.





# Accident kills 2 in Pleebo



By Patrick N. Mensah  
Maryland County

Commercial motorcyclists in Pleebo City, Maryland County are demanding speedy investigation into a fatal accident involving a cyclist and a truck, resulting to the death of two persons instantly, and injury of

another.

The third victim is currently said to be in critical condition at the J.J. Dossen Referral Hospital in Harper City.

Angry motorcyclists threw stones early Sunday morning, demanding speedy investigation.

The deceased have been identified as 17-year-old Susannah Gbwah, and Martin Toe, Jr., 26, while survivor

Beatrice Bohlen, 25, is currently admitted at the J.J. Dossen Hospital.

Eyewitnesses narrated to the New Dawn that the late Martin Toe, Jr. and the two others were riding on a TVS Star motorbike heading from Pleebo parking to the City Hall with terrific speedy and

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# Guardiola: CL semi-final second leg harder than the final

Pep Guardiola believes his Manchester City players are facing the toughest task in European football as they take on Paris Saint-Germain in the semi-finals of the Champions League.

Second-half goals from Kevin De Bruyne and Riyad Mahrez saw City come from behind to claim a 2-1 win in Paris last week, putting them in prime position to reach their first final in Europe's top

competition. Guardiola is a two-time winner dating back to his Barcelona tenure a decade ago, but knows the semi-final stage can be particularly unforgiving.

Inter and Chelsea ended Barca's title defences at the penultimate hurdle in 2010 and 2012, while LaLiga heavyweights Real Madrid, Barca and Atletico accounted for Bayern Munich in the semis across Guardiola's three seasons in Bavaria.

"From my experience, the semi-final is always difficult," he told a pre-match news



conference, having confirmed City have all senior players available with the exception of back-up defender Eric Garcia, who is laid low with a sickness bug. "You play with the result of the first leg, you play with the mind here [thinking] final, final, final. Sometimes you can forget what you have to do.

"Always in my experience the second leg of the semi-final is the difficult one. The final is completely different, it doesn't mean it's easier, it's completely different."

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