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TRULY INDEPENDENT

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Continental News

Tigray conflict: 'We have no food, we face death'

People in a district of Ethiopia's Tigray region have told the BBC they are on the verge of starvation.

"We don't have anything to eat," a man in Qafta Humera said, saying their crops and livestock had been looted during seven months of war.

He added that they were being prevented from seeking aid by a militia fighting with government forces.

The testimony comes as UN chief António Guterres has warned that parts of Tigray are on the brink of famine. A conflict erupted in November between the Ethiopian government and Tigrayan rebels, forcing close to two million people from their homes in Tigray, a region that was already food insecure.

The Ethiopian authorities insist that order is now being restored across the region and humanitarian access expanded. But last week, the UN warned of a repeat of Ethiopia's devastating 1984 famine and called for an immediate ceasefire in Tigray. Dire and frightening,

according to people living in Qafta Humera, an isolated district in the west of Tigray that is close to the borders of Sudan and Eritrea, who were contacted by the BBC Tigrinya service via phone. Since November 2020, the western Tigray zone has been occupied by pro-government forces and militias from the neighbouring region of Amhara.

"We are civilians, our crops

and cattle have been taken by the armed men," one farmer in his 60s said.

"They took from me around 30 cows and oxen - there are some who lost 100-200 head of cattle."

Another farmer, in his 40s, told the BBC: "We were eating small remains of crops that we managed to hide, but now we don't have anything."

"Nobody has given us any

aid. Almost everyone is on the verge of death - our eyes are affected by the hunger, the situation is perilous."

"Death is knocking on our door. You can see the hunger on the face of each of us."

Residents said they had seen vehicles carrying aid pass by, but no-one had bothered to inquire about their predicament. The older farmer said people have been trying to travel elsewhere, like the towns of Shire and Sheraro - about 200km (125 miles) east of their district, to find food and humanitarian supplies.

But transport has been difficult to come by and those that have vehicles have been prevented from leaving the area by the militia. "When we want to go to the place where there is aid all roads are blocked," he said, adding that those who have tried to flee on foot have been asked to pay

bribes, which they cannot afford.

"Even if we try on foot if the militias from Amhara found us they force us to pay 4,000-5,000 birr [between \$90 and \$115] each." The younger farmer added that people feared being killed if they came face-to-face with the militia in the bush.

"If we try to go to the place where there is aid we will be killed in the forest," he said. A local administrator appointed for the area in the wake of the conflict told the BBC that no federal aid was available and only limited assistance was coming through for neighbouring Amhara. Mr Guterres warned the situation would "only keep getting worse" unless funding was increased and humanitarian access was improved.

The government says international humanitarian workers have been allowed into most parts of Tigray. BBC



Residents of western Tigray say their crops were looted by militias and they are surviving on the little they hid

Fact-checking Ethiopia's Nobel Prize-winning PM

Since Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed assumed office in 2018, he has been praised as a peacemaker and economic reformer in a country which had been known for repression and extreme poverty.

Mr Abiy won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to resolve the border conflict with Eritrea in 2019, but has

since been criticised for his government's actions in the conflict in the northern Tigray region, and for not sticking to his reform programme.

He faces his first major electoral test in the forthcoming Ethiopian general election, currently planned for 21 June.

We have looked at some of his main claims during the campaign so far. Human rights organisations have long

criticised Ethiopia for the detention of government opponents.

During Mr Abiy's initial year as prime minister, he was praised for freeing political prisoners.

Fisseha Tekle, a researcher at Amnesty International, said the exact number of those released was not available, but it could be in the region of 45,000. However, many other people have been detained during Mr Abiy's term of office. Human rights organisations have documented evidence of thousands of arrests.

"Evidence collected by Amnesty International in Tolay [military camp], shows that at least 10,000 people were detained there in rounds of mass detention that started in January 2019, and continued to September 2019," said Amnesty. "Similarly, former detainees at Sanqale [police training centre] estimated the detainees there to be at least 2,000."

In 2020, the state-run Ethiopian Human Rights

UN calls for safety guarantee of CAR peacekeepers



UN says attacks against its peacekeepers may constitute war crimes

The UN Security Council has called on the Central African Republic authorities and other forces in the country to ensure the safety of peacekeepers.

The security council said that attacks against the UN peacekeepers "may constitute war crimes".

It also condemned violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the country. "The members of the Security Council strongly condemned ongoing human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law in the CAR,

and stressed the need to bring to justice their perpetrators," the AP news agency quoted a statement after a briefing to the council by Mankeur Ndiaye, the UN special envoy to the Central African Republic.

The council called on the authorities "and all forces present on the ground to coordinate and take all appropriate measures to enhance the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and personnel".

It came as France suspended budgetary aid and military co-operation with the CAR government. BBC

Commission reported 9,000 people had been detained following outbreaks of violence after the killing of Oromo singer Hachalu Hundessa.

"The release of thousands of political detainees in the

last months of the [previous] administration and initial months of Mr Abiy's time in office were ground-breaking, but the lull was brief," says Laetitia Bader, from non-governmental organisation Human Rights Watch. BBC



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed

EDITORIAL

Reading Pres. Weah's mind about war crimes court

PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH Weah's response to Lofa County Representative Clarence Massaquo's concern on the need to establish a war and economic crimes court for Liberia to stamp out impunity clearly indicates the President is less interested in prosecuting people who committed heinous crimes during the 14-year civil war. This means victims of the civil crisis should not count on the Weah administration to deliver justice.

LOFA COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE Clarence Massaquo, speaking in Foya District, Lofa County over the weekend reminded President Weah that Liberians are hurt because they lost relatives, including parents, so impunity should not stand in the way of accountability and justice. The Lofa lawmaker, like many Liberians, wants the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendation for prosecution implemented.

"I KNOW IT is not common to say this. But Mr. President we have the report of the TRC, whatever forms they come Mr. President, those that are in those mass graves are not here today, on their behalf, we ask for justice", he pleaded.

BUT THE PRESIDENT responded to the lawmaker in the way he spoke which indicates that war crimes court is a far-fetched discussion on his government's agenda, rather telling Liberians to live with impunity for the sake of peace.

LIBERIANS BOTH AT home and abroad are yearning for justice and rightly so, especially when warlords and other perpetrators are publicly unremorseful for atrocities they committed during the crisis that left families decimated and dreams shattered.

MOST KEY PLAYERS from the war are back in government, including the Legislature. They claim to enjoy immunity or exemption from prosecution despite being recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for trial. They include notorious warlord Senator Prince Yormie Johnson, leader of the defunct INPFL rebels, Representative Dr. George S. Boley, leader of the demobilized Liberia Peace Council rebels, Sekou Damate Conneh, leader of the LURD rebels, and Professor Alhaji G.V. Kromah, leader of the disbanded ULIMO-K rebels, among others.

IN FACT, SENATOR Johnson, a staunch political ally of President Weah, continues to brag that no war crimes court is coming to Liberia and publicly deny that he committed atrocities during the war just like his colleagues Rep. Boley and Sekou Damate Conneh say.

SO WHEN PRESIDENT Weah calls on Liberians to sit at a roundtable to discuss how to forge the country ahead rather than call for war crimes court that could return Liberia to the dark days, you can understand that justice is going to elude us continuously, as long as this administration is in power.

HOWEVER, THE HOLY Bible says the voice of the people is the voice of God. Liberians should never give up the fight. They should keep mounting pressure for the establishment of war and economic crimes court despite the apparent un-readiness by the government.

HISTORY HAS PROVEN repeatedly that the will of the people eventually prevails despite attempts to suppress their views and trample on their expressed wishes for justice, which is the fulcrum on which peace that the President talked about, development and all other positive human endeavors rest.

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COMMENTARY

By Kenneth Rogoff

A Curse Worse than Cash

CAMBRIDGE - Ransomware - a type of malicious software that restricts access to a computer system until a ransom is paid - is not a good look for cryptocurrencies. Proponents of these digital coins would rather point to celebrity investors such as Tesla founder Elon Musk, Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban, star football quarterback Tom Brady, or actress Maisie Williams (Arya in Game of Thrones). But recent ransomware attacks, and cryptocurrencies' central role in enabling them, are a public relations disaster.

The attacks include last month's shutdown of the Colonial Pipeline, which drove up gasoline prices on the US East Coast until the company paid the hackers \$5 million in Bitcoin, and, even more recently, an attack on JBS, the world's largest meat producer. Such episodes highlight what for some of us has been a longstanding concern: difficult-to-trace anonymous cryptocurrencies offer possibilities for tax evasion, crime, and terrorism that make large-denomination bank notes seem innocuous by comparison. Although prominent cryptocurrency advocates are politically connected and have democratized their base, regulators cannot sit on their hands forever.

The view that cryptocurrencies are just an innocent store of value is stupefyingly naive. Sure, their transaction costs can be significant enough to deter most ordinary retail trade. But for anyone trying to avoid stringent capital controls (say, in China or Argentina), launder illicit gains (perhaps from the drug trade), or evade US financial sanctions (on countries, firms, individuals, or terrorist groups), crypto can still be an ideal option.

After all, the US government has for many decades turned a blind eye to the role its \$100 bills play in facilitating weapons purchases and human trafficking, not to mention undermining poor-country governments' ability to collect tax revenues or maintain domestic peace. Although Bitcoin and its crypto variants have by no means surpassed the dollar in facilitating the global underground economy, they are certainly on the rise.

As even top US financial firms seek to offer crypto options to their clients, one might well ask what people are investing in. Contrary to frequent claims that there is little use for cryptocurrencies in transactions and no underlying business, there is a thriving one: aside from being a bet on dystopia, cryptocurrencies offer a way to invest in the global underground economy.

If governments will ultimately have to increase dramatically their regulation of crypto transactions, why have cryptocurrency prices in general, and the price of Bitcoin in particular, soared (albeit with headline-grabbing volatility)? Part of the answer, as economic theory tells us, is that with interest rates at zero, there can be massive and sustained bubbles in intrinsically worthless assets. Moreover, crypto investors sometimes argue that the sector has become so big, and attracted so many institutional investors, that

politicians will never dare regulate it.

Perhaps they are right. The longer it takes for regulators to act, the harder it will be to get private digital coins under control. The Chinese and South Korean governments recently started cracking down on cryptocurrencies aggressively, although it is not yet clear how determined they will be. In the United States, the financial-industry lobby has been relatively successful in holding back meaningful regulation of digital assets; witness the recent retreat to the US of Facebook's digital-currency project in the face of global regulatory pushback orchestrated by the Swiss authorities.

True, US President Joe Biden's administration is now, at least, moving to force reporting of cryptocurrency transfers of over \$10,000 as part of its efforts to collect a larger share of taxes owed. But, ultimately, reducing the potential liquidity of hard-to-trace crypto will require a high level of international coordination, at least in advanced economies.

In fact, that is one argument for why a cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin might justify its lofty value of about \$37,000 at the end of May (although its price changes like the weather). If Bitcoin is an investment in the transactions technology underpinning the global underground economy, and if it takes many decades for even advanced economies to rein in the currency, then it can earn a lot of rents from transactions in the meantime. After all, we do not have to expect a company to be in business forever - think fossil fuels - for it to have significant value today.

Of course, there will always be a market for cryptocurrencies in war-torn countries or pariah states, although their valuations would be much lower if coins could not be laundered into rich countries. And perhaps there are technologies for stripping away anonymity and thereby removing the main objection to cryptocurrencies, though one suspects that would also undercut their main selling point.

No one is arguing against the blockchain technology that underpins cryptocurrencies and has vast potential to improve our lives, for example, by providing a trusted tamper-proof network for monitoring carbon dioxide emissions. And although operating the Bitcoin system itself requires enormous energy consumption, there are now more environmentally friendly technologies, including those based on "proof of stake."

Unfortunately for those who have invested their life savings in cryptocurrencies, ransomware attacks that target growing numbers of firms and individuals could prove to be the turning point when regulators finally develop some backbone and step in. Many of us know people whose small, struggling companies have been decimated by such extortion. While governments may have better cryptocurrency-tracking tools than they let on, they are in an arms race with those who have found an ideal vehicle for making crime pay. Regulators need to wake up before it's too late.

OPINION

By Joseph E. Stiglitz

The Inflation Red Herring

NEW YORK - Slight increases in the rate of inflation in the United States and Europe have triggered financial-market anxieties. Has US President Joe Biden's administration risked overheating the economy with its \$1.9 trillion rescue package and plans for additional spending to invest in infrastructure, job creation, and bolstering American families?

Such concerns are premature, considering the deep uncertainty we still face. We have never before experienced a pandemic-induced downturn featuring a disproportionately steep service-sector recession, unprecedented increases in inequality, and soaring savings rates. No one even knows if or when COVID-19 will be contained in the advanced economies, let alone globally. While weighing the risks, we also must plan for all contingencies. In my view, the Biden administration has correctly determined that the risks of doing too little far outweigh the risks of doing too much.

Moreover, much of the current inflationary pressure stems from short-term supply-side bottlenecks, which are inevitable when restarting an economy that has been temporarily shut down. We don't lack the global capacity to build cars or semiconductors; but when all new cars use semiconductors, and demand for cars is mired in uncertainty (as it was during the pandemic), production of semiconductors will be curtailed. More broadly, coordinating all production inputs across a complex integrated global economy is an enormously difficult task that we usually take for granted because things work so well, and because most adjustments are "on the margin."

Now that the normal process has been interrupted, there will be hiccups, and these will translate into price increases for one product or the other. But there is no reason to believe that these movements will fuel inflation expectations and thus generate inflationary momentum, especially given the overall excess capacity around the world. It is worth remembering just how recently some of those who are now warning about inflation from excessive demand were talking about "secular stagnation" born of insufficient aggregate demand (even at a zero interest rate).

In a country with deep, longstanding inequalities that have been exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic, a tight labor market is just what the doctor ordered. When the demand for labor is strong, wages at the bottom rise and marginalized groups are brought into the labor market. Of course, the exact tightness of the current US labor market is a matter of some debate, given reports of labor shortages despite employment remaining markedly below its pre-crisis level.

Conservatives blame the situation on excessively generous unemployment insurance benefits. But econometric studies comparing labor supply across US states suggest that these kinds of labor-disincentive effects are limited. And in any case, the expanded unemployment benefits are set to end in the fall, even though the global economic effects of the virus will linger.

Rather than panicking about inflation, we should be worrying about what will happen to aggregate demand when the funds provided by fiscal relief packages dry up. Many of those at the bottom of the income and wealth distribution have accumulated large debts - including, in some cases, more than a year's worth of rent arrears, owing to temporary protections against eviction.

Reduced spending by indebted households is unlikely to be offset by those at the top, most of whom have accumulated savings during the pandemic. Given that spending on consumer durables remained robust during the past 16 months, it seems likely that the well-off will treat their additional savings as they would any other windfall: as something to be invested or spent slowly over the course of many years. Unless there is new public spending, the economy could once again suffer from insufficient aggregate demand.

Moreover, even if inflationary pressures were to become truly worrisome, we have tools to dampen demand (and using them would actually strengthen the economy's long-term prospects). For starters, there is the US Federal Reserve's interest-rate policy. The past decade-plus of near-zero interest rates has not been economically healthy. The scarcity value of capital is not zero. Low interest rates distort capital markets by triggering a search for yield that leads to excessively low risk premia. Returning to more normal interest rates would be a good thing (though the rich, who have been the primary beneficiaries of this era of super-low interest rates, may beg to differ).

To be sure, some commentators look at the Fed's balance-of-risk assessment and worry that it will not act when it needs to. But I think the Fed's pronouncements have been spot on, and I trust that its position will change if and when the evidence does. The instinct to fight inflation is embedded in central bankers' DNA. If they don't see inflation as the key problem currently facing the economy, neither should you.

The second tool is tax hikes. Ensuring the economy's long-run health requires much more public investment, which will have to be paid for. The US tax-to-GDP ratio is far too low, especially given America's huge inequalities. There is an urgent need for more progressive taxation, not to mention more environmental taxes to deal with the climate crisis. That said, it is perfectly understandable that there would be hesitancy to enact new taxes while the economy remains in a precarious state.

We should recognize the current "inflation debate" for what it is: a red herring that is being raised by those who would stymie the Biden administration's efforts to confront some of America's most fundamental problems. Success will require more public spending. The US is fortunate finally to have economic leadership that won't succumb to fearmongering.

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OP-ED

By Dambisa Moyo

Accelerating Global Britain

LONDON - Skeptics have long argued that the United Kingdom is past its peak and trading largely on former glories. They point to the country's middling rankings in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment education scores, the fact that only one British firm, HSBC, is among the world's 50 largest public corporations, compared to Germany's four, and the likelihood that Brexit will ultimately erode, rather than boost, Britain's global standing.

But I disagree with this judgment. After all, the UK is one of only a handful of countries to have produced an effective COVID-19 vaccine in record time. It remains at the forefront of shaping the global green-energy transition, and it was the first major economy to enact legislation requiring it to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. Moreover, the UK retains its traditional strengths of language, location and time zone, strong universities, and deep financial markets, and it remains a standard-bearer for the rule of law.

When the UK hosts the upcoming G7 summit in Cornwall, political and business leaders will want to see how well aligned the country is with the three issues that, collectively, will upend global commerce and catalyze economic growth in the coming decades: engagement with China, technological innovation, and clean energy.

With respect to China, Britain has considerable scope to increase bilateral trade. UK exports to China in 2019 were £30.7 billion (\$43.5 billion), little more than one-third of Germany's total of \$110 billion. In fact, 2020 was the fifth successive year in which China was Germany's largest trading partner.

Britain thus urgently needs to expand its trade and investment links with China, which is set to dominate the global economy. China is already the largest trading partner and foreign direct investor for many developed and developing countries, and it is now the largest lender to emerging-market economies - bigger than the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Paris Club of sovereign creditors.

Of course, human-rights concerns and ideological differences pose an ethical challenge for Britain when dealing with China. But stepping away from engagement with the Chinese political class would limit the UK's ability to influence the regime in Beijing and risk setting back the British economy.

In terms of technology, Britain's role in developing the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine underscores its strengths in medical science innovation - as evidenced by a thriving biotech and life sciences sector. And yet the UK has yet to develop a technology company of global stature and renown, and recent stock-market activity has sent mixed messages to investors. The initial public offerings of food-delivery company Deliveroo and semiconductor technology firm Alphawave were challenged: both companies' share prices fell sharply on their first day of trading and remained below their launch price weeks later.

But the UK is well positioned to benefit from investments and advances in emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, that will undoubtedly transform education and health care in the coming years. Moreover, the country has real opportunities to help allies plug technological gaps - not least in semiconductors, where America's share of global output has fallen from 37% in 1990 to just 12% today.

To realize its potential as a science superpower, the UK needs a technology hub that can rival Silicon Valley in its dynamism. That will require aggressively and deliberately building an ecosystem of talent and collaboration across data science, technology, and public policy.

For example, the Oxford-Cambridge arc already supports two million jobs and adds £110 billion to the UK economy each year. But to rise to the next level, this region must become a vibrant environment for innovation, and be far more visible to leading global investors. This is particularly important given that global foreign direct investment had fallen for three consecutive years (2016-18) even before plummeting 42% in the annus pandemicus of 2020.

On energy, the UK has been a global front-runner in mitigating climate risk through carbon sequestration and capture, and setting a net-zero greenhouse-gas emissions target. And it has an important opportunity to bolster its credentials as an environmental and green-energy leader when it hosts the United Nations COP26 climate summit this autumn.

Crucially, the UK has a chance to shift the discourse so that the green transition is not only about limiting the economic downside but also about maximizing the upside. In particular, government support for larger-scale investments in solar, wind, hydrogen, biofuels, hydropower, geothermal energy, Generation IV nuclear reactors, and new battery technologies would yield massive returns.

If Britain is to lead in the energy transition, new technologies, and engagement with China, it must overcome several obstacles. Above all, the currently fragmented "Global Britain" agenda needs to reflect much closer cooperation between the public and private sectors, and become clearer about how to track execution and measure success.

The UK has a strong hand to play. But playing it well will require greater political vision. British leaders should set in motion a grand scheme that creates a long-term legacy - in the spirit of the Manhattan Project during World War II to develop the first nuclear weapons, or the US government's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, which enabled the subsequent development of Silicon Valley.

As the world emerges from the pandemic, the UK, as host to two major international summits this year, will find itself in the global spotlight. It must capitalize on this unique opportunity and seek to reposition itself for the twenty-first century.

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ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Trying to fulfil Liberia's Disabilities Law: over 27 people with disabilities gainfully employed

But more efforts needed to achieve 4% right to work

By R. Joyclyn Wea

Achieving 4% right to work by People with Disabilities (PwD) in Liberia is an uphill struggle.

But at least over 27 PwDs have now been employed in different line ministries, agencies

The exact number of PwDs employed throughout government has not been given due to what NCD officials say is due to lack of data.

Liberia is a West African country with a population of about 4.98 million people, according to the 2008 census, but its records on those with disabilities is unclear.

As was said by the NCD director, they lack date of

disabilities in Liberia is likely closer to 20 percent.

"Not that persons with disabilities cannot go to school to be qualified to take on regular jobs, but there are barriers that stand in the way for which they cannot take on jobs and government on whose shoulder the responsibility to award job rest on must work to resolve this," she said.

Madam Dennis mentioned that as per the law, no one should be confined to a particular job or institution because of their disability rather they must be allowed to choose where they want to be employed and what kind of jobs they want to do especially when they are qualified.

In order for the four percent employment of PwDs to come to reality, Dennis calls for a shift in the current situation by doing the needful by going by what the law says.

The advocacy to achieve the 4% right to work is ongoing. One of such programs meant to press for this was held recently at the Lutheran Compound in Monrovia's Sinkor suburb, when the pro-PwD advocated pointed out the urgent need to make this a reality in Liberia.

Adama Dempster is a Human Rights Advocate in Liberia who has been in the area of advocating for all including persons living with disabilities in this country.

At a recent advocacy gathering in Sinkor, Dempster stressed the need for statistical information on persons with disabilities in Liberia.

He believes that current statistics on PwDs will help in knowing the different sex and people of the population.

He maintained that statistical data on PwDs will help in the area of forecasting different programs and activities that will lead to more persons with disabilities taking on regular jobs like other able body people in Liberia.

Mr. Dempster also stressed the need to look at how PwDs can access justice from different perspectives and how they can as well be employed into top positions in both public and private areas.

The Rights activist further stressed the need for political will to drive all of these different policies



and branches of government, as required by the act that established the National Commission on Disability (NCD), officials of the Commission have disclosed.

But this is not a satisfactory number, according to Madam Recadia Dennis, Director of the NCD.

Article 27 of the 2005 Act that established the NCD talked about the rights of persons living with disabilities to work and employment in Liberia.

Part of the law says that for every 100 persons employed in a public institution; 4% of said number 'MUST' be PwDs, an employment that should be based on merit.

The ILO Convention of 1986 also buttressed the Act recognizing the economic benefits and the other huge benefits that comes back to the country when persons with disabilities are trusted with public and private offices.

It is legislated to have them included in the workforce of the country, but the intent of what is known as a "good law" is nearly not gaining the expected results; thus causing authorities at the NCD to formulate positive means to have it achieved.

To do that, the National Commission on Disabilities is working with not only central government, but local and international partners, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to ensure that the law is fulfilled, in order to have the inclusion of qualified PwDs on the job market like any other 'normal' or able body citizen of Liberia.

The NCD Director and others have been pushing for the employment of Persons with Disabilities in keeping with the law--a dream that is yet to come true.

Madam Dennis said since 2008 the number of PwDs employed across the public sector is a little over 27 who are visible across the public sector of the country.

those in that category of Liberians- no exact statistics about them in Liberia and the available records are out of date- a very old record of UNICEF study from 1997.

The UNICEF study has it that 16 percent of the Liberian population has some form of disability.

Out of that 16 percent, 61 percent struggle with free



movements, 24 percent are visually impaired, seven percent have speech impairments and eight percent have an intellectual or psychosocial disability.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) estimated in 2014 that due to the devastating civil war that ended in 2003 and the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the population of people with

and conventions.

Similarly, Mr. Wilfred Gewon, a visually impaired and lecturer at the Lion Club Computer institution at the African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU) highlighted the advantages of PwDs being employed.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Pop Francis accepts resignation of Archbishop Zeigler

Pop Benedict Francis has accepted the resignation of the pastoral care of the Archdiocese of Monrovia, Lewis J. Zeigler, the Vatican reports.

According to report, Archbishop Zeigler retired on Monday, June 7, 2021 at age

Diocese of Gbarnga, Bong County.

He was later named Coadjutor Archbishop of Monrovia in 2009 and subsequently took over the diocese in 2011 after the death of Archbishop Michael Francis

In June 2018 he made his first

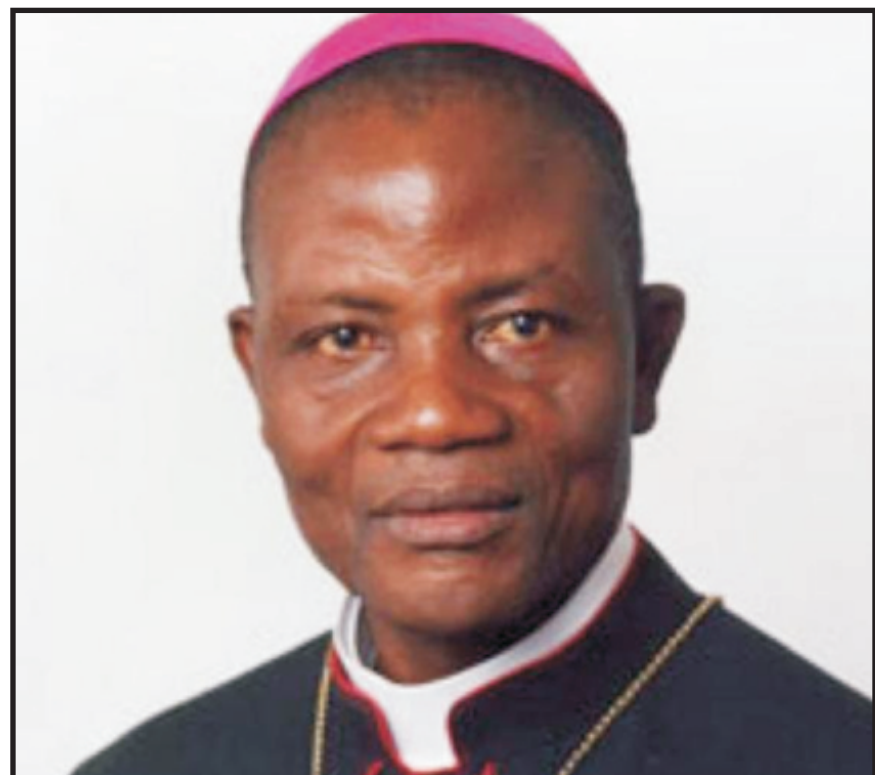
rather than focusing their lives on the Church. "It is my appeal to all of you, my fellow priests, to serve and not to chase things of the world like iPhones, iPads and whatever", he said.

He also called on the faithful to pray for their pastors whenever they do wrong since it would "help to strengthen and put them on the right path."

On the question of corruption in the Liberian society, the Archbishop described the practice as the major foe to nation building in Liberia, noting that corruption hinders national progress. "our society is sick" due to greed and selfishness which has swallowed the nation. He also called on Liberians to fight against corruption by focusing on defeating individual greed.

Meanwhile, serving at an official service at the Providence Baptist Church in Monrovia as a guest speaker on 11 April 2014, he railed against homosexuality and same-sex marriage, observing that the Liberian culture was being denigrated by calamity due to Liberians "ignoring their creator" and entering into "unwholesome activities that continue to annoy God".

Zeigler also said that such national crises such as the Ebola outbreak came about due to the dissolute ways Liberians lived that displeased God.



77, having succeeded late Archbishop Michael Kpakala Francis, who died in office.

Archbishop Lewis Jerome Zeigler was born on January 4, 1944 in Harrisburg, Montserrado County, Liberia and was ordained in 1974 as a Priest before his subsequent appointment as Bishop of the

"ad limina apostolorum" visit to Pope Francis in Rome.

Earlier, in 2015 at the Chrism Mass Archbishop Zeigler called on priests to desist from activities that distract them from their ecclesial duties and noted that most priests seemed to chase wealth and material goods involved with the world

Liberia, Guinea hold rail user conference

A joint International Ministerial conference between Liberia and neighboring Guinea will begin in Monrovia on Wednesday, June 9, 2021. The 3-day gathering is intended to discuss the development of a rail corridor to transport Guinean mining products using Liberian port infrastructure. The corridor will also facilitate the transport of agriculture products, people, good and services.

The Guinean delegation

country's Ministerial Committee on the Implementation Agreement, while Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah Jr. Will lead Liberia's.

The agreement represents a legal, institutional and operational framework between the two countries and is meant to secure the use of current and future infrastructure and/or transport services in Liberia by Guinean mining operators. It also facilitates the importation to Guinea by



will consist of nine senior ministers, headed by the country's Foreign Minister, Ibrahim K. Kaba, who will lead Guinea's bilateral engagements. Heads of Guinean financial institutions will also form part of the delegation.

The Liberian team, consisting of the same number of Ministers, will also be led by the country's Foreign Minister, Dee Maxwell Kemayah. The Guinea Minister of Mines and Geology, Hon. Abdoulaye Magassouba, will lead the

mining operators of goods used for mining projects in Guinea.

The conference is being convened at the prodding of President George M. Weah to work out the technical details for the acceleration of the implementation of the agreement.

Last month, following the passage by the Liberian Legislature, the President signed into law the act ratifying the framework agreement between both countries.

Senate probes Botoe Kanneh's complaint

By Ethel A Tweh

The Liberian Senate has ordered the Committees on Defense, Security and Intelligence and Transport to probe a complaint filed by Gbarpolu County Senator Madam Botoe Kanneh that she was disrespected on 1 June 2021 by a Transport Ministry officer and the Liberia National Police (LNP).

In her communication to plenary, Senator Kanneh complained that she was riding the official Senate vehicle #30S when her car was stopped at Vai Town on Bushrod Island for inspection.

"I identified myself as Senator Kanneh and told them that I was running late for session and the Transport officer there said he doesn't care who is in the car, so I told my driver to go," Senator Kanneh complained.

She explained further that as they left, a police officer got on a bike and ran behind her car and stopped it on



Broad Street.

"It was a disrespect to my office and I felt humiliated that I was obstructed while on my way to work after I identified myself," she added.

Following Senator Kanneh's complaint, River Gee County

Senator Conmany B. Wesseh made a motion that the communication from their colleague be accepted and turned over to the Committees on Defense Security and Intelligence and Transport to report to plenary

in one week.

Wesseh added that it is a serious matter involving their colleague so it shouldn't be treated like other communications that stay long in the committee room.

It can be recalled that at the beginning of 2021, Senator Abraham Darius Dillon made complaints to the Liberian Senate regarding the behavior of state security against his office.

He said that during the 2020 and 2021 annual message, Executive Protection Service (EPS) officers assigned at the entrance of the Capitol Building, having fully recognized him as Senator of Montserrado County, delayed

him at the entrance for twenty minutes on each of the occasions, demanding him to present and display a vehicle pass before entering the Capitol Building to perform his legislative functions.

"The lastest of the unprovoked and targeted gross disrespect to my office and my person by officers of the EPS was at the Samuel K. Doe Sports Complex on Sunday, January 31, during the county meet final. With a VIP ticket clearly displayed for entry in the stadium, I was embarrassed and blocked from entering the VIP section in the presence of the EPS Director and other state security officers," Mr. Dillon noted.--**Edited by Winston W. Parley**

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

CDC ready for any eventuality

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

A senior member of the governing council of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) Chief Cyril Allen sounds a caveat here that the CDC is prepared for any eventuality come 2023, the next presidential and legislative elections.

Chief Allen is chairman emeritus of the National Patriotic Party (NPP), a constituent political party of

untuned and we are prepared and gearing up for any eventualities from anyone especially, the opposition. We are positioned and ready for the electoral process" the NPP tough talking stalwart said.

Speaking further about the opposition's role ahead of the 2023 race, Allen, who chairs the board of directors of the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation, notes the opposition community has not

possible employment for their partisans rather than ranting negative criticisms without recommendations to national government.

He says since opposition leaders claim to have international contacts, these contacts should be put into play now for job creation and for their partisans to have food on the table.

"Help the people now through jobs creation than to go trucking and busing people from one point to another like you have the numbers [when] you don't have the numbers. You are just dividing the people, acting like they love the people; that is not true, they don't love the people."

Commenting on President Weah's nationwide tour that is gradually coming to an end, Allen describes the exercise as commendable and worth-noting, arguing that the results from those tours are encouraging and they sent a strong message of better chance for the ruling CDC in its quest for second term at the ballot box.

He recalls that prior to commencement of the tour, he (Allen) urged (President Weah) not to truck people because citizens are already in the counties, waiting for him, something, he says the President yielded to. From the turnouts, the receptions, the interactions, and exchange of pleasantries amongst and between the President and the people are something that opposition should be careful with ahead of the 2023 presidential race.

-Editing by Jonathan Browne



the ruling CDC.

He said in a WhatsApp video post recently that the CDC of President George Manneh Weah is a formidable force and the Coalition is adequately prepared to combat any form of eventuality coming from the opposition.

"Make no mistake, the CDC is a formidable force for the 2023 presidential race, we are leaving no stone

been impressive on the national scene, claiming the opposition has failed to create jobs and employment for its partisans instead, leaders of the opposition community only truck partisans from one point to another as a cover means of popularity.

He suggests the best option for opposition leaders in the country is to engage in farming and encourage investors to come and invest in Liberia to create

MOL, LCC sign MOU to create 500 new jobs

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Labour and the Liberia Chamber of Commerce (LCC), have signed a MOU for the creation of 500 new jobs for university graduates in Liberia with a minimum salary of US\$350.00 per month.

According to a press release, the ceremony which took place at the headquarters of the LCC was attended by members of the Cabinet, the Ambassadors of the United States of America and Lebanon as well as the President and Executives of the LCC.

Under the MOU, the jobs will be provided in three to four months by businesses



and concessions in the country.

Speaking during the ceremony, Labour Minister Cllr.

Charles H. Gibson projected that within the next sixty days, his Ministry and partners

Sen. Snowe condemns Malian crisis

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Senator Edwin Melvin Snowe, a member of the ECOWAS Parliament has described the military takeover and refusal to relinquish power to civilian rule as troubling.

Speaking in plenary at the ECOWAS Parliament in Abuja, Nigeria on Monday, Senator Snowe said every parliamentarian serving in the regional body was elected by their people and to allow the military Junta of Mali to send representation to the parliament, who are not elected would be a bad example and horrifying indication for the future.

He said the ECOWAS Court

He said constitutional amendments by those leaders are coups by themselves that should not be condoned.

Senator Snowe spoke in Abuja, Nigeria during plenary session of the ECOWAS Parliament to discuss the political situation in Mali. He expressed grave concern about what is happening in that country and called on his colleagues to look beyond the military takeover because if care is not taken, the wave in which some governments are subverting the constitutions of their respective countries has the propensity to create more problems in the region.

"Sometime the military takes



of Justice had ruled in the matter of representation at the ECOWAS parliament but it left the legislative body to accept the military regime representation as parliamentarians or to reject it.

He also urged the ECOWAS parliament to look at the root causes of the problems in the region, noting that some countries experienced military takeover while governments of other countries amend their constitutions to perpetuate themselves in power, something, he said is condemnable and should be rejected by everyone.

over through the guns, but there are other governments now coming to power through changing the constitution to perpetuate themselves in power. So, we should also look at that because after the military comes to power through the guns and you say there is a referendum and you change the constitution to give you a new mandate that is a coup by itself. So we need to look at it as a parliament and we need to look at it so that we will be able to debate the hard issues in our region and do a resolution on it", the Bomi County lawmaker said. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

will rollout 1000 new jobs for Liberians in the private sector.

He said that his ambition is that by the end of this year, the Ministry will be able to produce 3000 jobs for university graduates in the country.

The Liberian Labour Minister has also promised to

ensure that Liberians occupied senior management positions in concessions across the country.

Also speaking during the ceremony, the President of Liberia Chamber Commerce (LCC), Cllr. N. Oswald Tweh said that it all started in February

Français

« J'apporte des expériences différentes de de cellesde Boakai », Cummings.

L'ancien patron Afrique de Coca-Cola dit disposer d'une grande expérience différente de celle de l'ancien vice-président libérien Joseph Nyumah Boakai pour diriger le Libéria.

M. Alexander B. Cummings, aujourd'hui leader politique de

l'Alternative National Congress (ANC), a fait valoir qu'il a acquis de grandes expériences en dirigeant de grandes organisations complexes, ce qui lui avait permis d'obtenir des résultats positifs.

« Je pense que la différence, je dirai, c'est que j'apporte un ensemble d'expériences différentes de celui de l'ancien vice-président, et les Libériens

devront décider si cet ensemble différent d'expériences est ce dont ils pensent avoir besoin pour diriger notre pays », a déclaré lundi Cummings à Monrovia lors d'un entretien sur la radio OK FM.

Au cours de l'émission, M. Cummings a rappelé aux

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Mr. Alexander B. Cummings

Ex-Vice Pres. Joseph Nyumah Boakai

Les partisans de Gbagbo réclament son amnistie dans l'affaire de la BCEA

Acquitté par la CPI, il est toujours sous le coup d'une condamnation à 20 ans de prison et à 329 milliards de francs CFA d'amende (environ 500 millions d'euros), dans l'affaire dite du « casse de la BCEAO ». Les autres condamnés dans cette affaire ont bénéficié d'une amnistie qu'ils espèrent voir étendue à Laurent Gbagbo.

Du verdict rendu le 18 janvier 2018 par la Cour suprême

d'Abidjan, pas un jour de prison n'a été effectué, pas un franc versé. Laissés libres à l'issue du procès, le dernier Premier ministre de Laurent Gbagbo, Gilbert Aké N'Gbo, et son ministre des Finances Désiré Diallo, ont bénéficié sept mois plus tard de l'ordonnance d'amnistie prise par Alassane Ouattara en faveur de plus de 800 acteurs de la crise post-électorale. Même chose pour le quatrième condamné, Justin

Koné Katinan, ex-ministre du Budget, alors en exil au Ghana.

Sont alors spécifiquement exclus de l'amnistie présidentielle les militaires et les membres de groupes armés emprisonnés pour crimes de sang, et les personnes « en procès devant une juridiction pénale internationale », au premier chef, donc, Laurent Gbagbo. Celui-ci acquitté par la CPI, ses proches estiment que l'ancien président tombe désormais dans le « périmètre » de l'amnistie. Ils espèrent une « résolution politique » mais assurent que ce n'est pas un « préalable » au retour de l'ancien président.

« Le pouvoir prendrait un acte courageux en étendant l'amnistie » souligne maître Mathurin Dirabo, qui fut le défenseur des quatre hommes lors du procès.

Du côté du Mouvement ivoirien des droits de l'homme, qui s'était opposé à cette ordonnance, Drissa Bamba juge la condamnation « toujours valable » mais il ne croit pas que le gouvernement la fera exécuter.



Éditorial

Ce que le Président Weah pense du tribunal des crimes de guerre pour le Libéria

La réponse du président George Manneh Weah à la préoccupation du représentant du comté de Lofa, Clarence Massaquio, concernant la nécessité d'établir un tribunal des crimes de guerre et crimes économiques pour le Libéria afin d'éradiquer l'impunité indique clairement qu'il n'a aucunement l'intention de poursuivre les personnes qui ont commis des crimes odieux pendant la guerre civile. En tout cas les victimes de la crise ne peuvent plus compter sur l'administration Weah pour que justice leur soit rendue.

Le représentant du comté de Lofa, Clarence Massaquio, s'exprimant ce week-end dans le district de Foya, dans le comté de Lofa, a rappelé au président Weah que les Libériens sont blessés parce qu'ils ont perdu des proches, y compris des parents, donc l'impunité ne devrait pas faire obstacle à la situation des responsabilités et à la justice. Le législateur de Lofa, comme de nombreux Libériens, souhaite que la recommandation de la Commission vérité et réconciliation concernant les poursuites judiciaires soit mise en œuvre.

« Je sais que ce n'est pas courant de dire ça. Mais Monsieur le Président nous avons le rapport de la CVR, quelles que soient les formes qu'elles prennent Monsieur le Président, ceux qui sont dans ces charniers ne sont pas ici aujourd'hui de leur propre gré. Nous demandons justice », a-t-il plaidé.

Mais le président, par la façon dont il a répondu au législateur, considère la question du tribunal des crimes de guerre comme une discussion farfelue sur l'agenda de son gouvernement. Il a ainsi demandé aux Libériens de plutôt continuer à vivre en toute impunité au nom de la paix.

Les Libériens, tant au pays qu'à l'étranger, aspirent à la justice et à juste titre, en particulier étant donné que les chefs de guerre et autres auteurs de crimes ne cessent de montrer publiquement qu'ils n'ont aucun remords au sujet des atrocités qu'ils ont commises pendant la crise qui a décimé des familles et brisé des rêves.

La plupart des acteurs clés de la guerre sont de retour au gouvernement, y compris l'Assemblée législative. Ils bénéficient d'une immunité totale en dépit des recommandations faites par la Commission vérité et réconciliation. Il s'agit par exemple du célèbre chef de guerre, le sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson, chef de l'INPFL, du représentant Dr. George S. Boley, chef du Liberia Peace Council, de Sekou Damate Conneh, chef LURD, et du professeur Alhaji G.V. Kromah, chef de l'ULIMO-K, entre autres.

En fait, le sénateur Johnson, un fidèle allié politique du président Weah, continue de se vanter qu'aucun tribunal des crimes de guerre ne viendra au Libéria et nie publiquement qu'il a commis des atrocités pendant la guerre, c'est aussi le cas pour le Représentant Boley et pour Sekou Damate Conneh.

Ainsi, lorsque le président Weah appelle les Libériens à s'asseoir autour d'une table ronde pour discuter de la façon de faire avancer le pays plutôt que d'appeler à un tribunal pour crimes de guerre qui pourrait renvoyer le Libéria aux jours sombres, vous pouvez comprendre que la justice va nous échapper continuellement, tant que cette administration est au pouvoir.

Cependant, la Sainte Bible dit que la voix du peuple est la voix de Dieu. Les Libériens ne devraient jamais abandonner le combat. Ils devraient continuer à faire pression pour la mise en place d'un tribunal pour les crimes de guerre et économiques malgré le manque apparent de volonté politique de ce gouvernement.

L'histoire a prouvé à maintes reprises que la volonté du peuple finit par l'emporter malgré les tentatives de réprimer leurs opinions et de piétiner leurs souhaits exprimés de justice, qui est le pivot sur lequel reposent la paix dont le président a parlé, le développement et toutes les autres entreprises humaines positives.

Français

« J'apporte des expériences

Libériens son expérience, celle d'avoir dirigé de grandes organisations complexes et d'obtention de résultats, ajoutant que les sociétés pour lesquelles il travaillait n'étaient ni des sociétés appartenant à des Libériens, ni à sa mère ou de père, il n'avait aucun liens avec ces institutions.

«Nous avons obtenu les résultats que nous avons obtenus chaque jour et le succès que nous avons chaque jour, et mes expériences sont là, claires. Je n'arrête pas de dire que la meilleure façon de prédire les performances et les comportements futurs sont les performances et les comportements passés », a ajouté M. Cummings.

M. Cummings pense cependant qu'il est pour l'heure trop prématuré de commencer à nommer des colistiers dès maintenant, lorsqu'on lui a demandé qui il choisirait comme candidat à la vice-présidence au cas où il serait choisi comme candidat de la Coalition de l'opposition à la présidentielle de 2023. S'il venait à être choisi comme candidat unique de la coalition, le choix de son colistier obéirait à des critères quiseront élaborés. C'est en tout cas ce qu'il a dit lors de l'entretien.

Parlant des points communs entre lui et Boakai, Cummings a dit qu'à part le fait qu'ils appartiennent tous à la même Coalition, ils se soucient tous deux du bien-être de leur pays et croient au Libéria.

Le mois dernier, M. Boakai

a déclaré qu'il n'accepterait pas d'être candidat à la vice-présidence cette fois-ci, tout en s'engageant toutefois à respecter le choix que fera la Coalition.

Parmi les quatre leaders politiques de la CPP, Boakai et Cummings semblent être les principaux candidats à la candidature de la CPP. Chacun d'eux cherche avec acharnement à être candidat unique à la présidentielle de la CPP. Mais encore faut-il attendre la décision finale du parti dans les mois à venir.

En tout cas les militants de l'ancien parti au pouvoir, le Parti de l'unité (UP) de M. Boakai et ceux de l'ANC de Cummings, l'ont toujours fait savoir chaque fois qu'ils ont eu l'occasion de s'exprimer. Chaque parti a toujours essayé de présenter son leader comme étant le meilleur choix et le mieux indiqué pour affronter dans les urnes le président George Manneh Weah.

La CPP est composé de quatre partis politiques d'opposition, dont l'UP de Boakai sur le ticket duquel lui et l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf ont remporté deux mandats successifs de six ans qui ont pris fin lorsque la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC) du président George Manneh Weah a pris ses fonctions en janvier 2018 après l'élection présidentielle de fin 2017.

Au sein du CPP se trouvent également l'ANC de Cummings, le Liberty Party (LP) du sénateur du comté de Grand Bassa Nyongblee Karnga - Lawrence's et le All Liberian Party de l'homme d'affaires Benonie Urey.

Côte d'Ivoire : un soldat ivoirien tué lors une attaque dans le nord-est du pays

Une attaque a eu lieu lundi soir dans le nord-est de la Côte d'Ivoire. Selon le chef d'état-major des armées, un soldat a perdu la vie. L'attaque s'est déroulée dans la localité de Tougbo pas très loin de la frontière burkinabè. Un secteur où l'insécurité devient récurrente.

C'est la troisième attaque qui a lieu dans la zone. Comme le 29 mars dernier, jour de la dernière attaque, c'est une base militaire des forces armées de Côte d'Ivoire qui a été visée. Cela s'est passé aux alentours de 21h. Les assaillants auraient profité d'une coupure d'électricité pour attaquer. Les forces armées ivoiriennes ont

immédiatement riposté. Un soldat ivoirien a été blessé à la jambe. Il a succombé à ses blessures, précise l'état-major. Un blindé est arrivé en renfort, mais les auteurs de l'attaque s'étaient déjà enfuis. L'armée a aussitôt lancé des opérations de ratissage. Une moto abandonnée a été retrouvée, mais aucune trace encore des personnes recherchées. Même si le communiqué ne le précise pas, tous les officiels interrogés attribuent l'attaque aux jihadistes et soupçonnent encore les hommes de la katiba Macina d'Amadou Koufa.

Aucune victime civile n'est à déplorer, se félicite le haut commandement qui signale l'arrivée de renforts dans la zone.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Kenneth Rogoff

La malédiction des cryptomonnaies

CAMBRIDGE - Les ransomwares (ces logiciels d'extorsion de fonds qui vous empêchent d'accéder à vos données informatiques tant que vous ne versez pas une rançon) ne sont pas de bon augure pour les cryptomonnaies. Les partisans de ces monnaies numériques préfèrent éviter le sujet et mettre en lumière des investisseurs célèbres comme Elon Musk, le fondateur de Tesla, Mark Cuban, le propriétaire des Mavericks de Dallas (un club de basket très connu aux USA), Tom Brady (une star du football américain) ou l'actrice Maisie Williams (qui joue le rôle d'Arya dans la série TV Games of Thrones). Mais de récentes attaques au moyen de ransomwares et le rôle central des cryptomonnaies qui les favorisent constituent un désastre en terme de relations publiques.

L'une de ces cyberattaques a eu pour conséquences le mois dernier la fermeture du gazoduc Colonial qui alimente les Etats de la côte est des USA, ce qui a provoqué une hausse du prix de l'essence dans cette région avant que l'entreprise ne verse 5 millions de dollars en bitcoins aux pirates. Une autre attaque, plus récente encore, a visé JBS, le premier producteur mondial de viande. Ces événements soulignent une préoccupation de longue date dont j'ai déjà fait état : la difficulté de tracer les cryptomonnaies anonymes facilite la fraude fiscale, le crime et le terrorisme. En comparaison, les billets de banque à forte dénomination semblent inoffensifs. Bien que des défenseurs bien connus des cryptomonnaies aient démocratisé leur base et bénéficient d'un réseau de relations politiques, les régulateurs ne pourront rester éternellement les bras croisés.

Croire que les cryptomonnaies constituent une manière comme une autre de conserver de l'argent est d'une naïveté stupéfiante. Il est vrai que le coût des transactions qui leur est lié peut être dissuasif pour les petits commerçants, mais pour quiconque essaye d'éviter un contrôle des capitaux un tant soit peu rigoureux (comme en Chine ou en Argentine), elles peuvent constituer encore un outil idéal pour blanchir des revenus illicites (tirés par exemple du trafic de drogues) ou pour échapper aux sanctions financières américaines contre des groupes terroristes, des entreprises ou des Etats.

Depuis des dizaines d'années, le gouvernement américain ferme les yeux sur le rôle des billets de 100 dollars dans le trafic d'armes et d'être humains, sans parler du fait qu'ils sapent la capacité des gouvernements des pays pauvres à collecter les impôts ou à maintenir la paix civile. Au niveau mondial, le bitcoin et ses variants n'ont pas dépassé le dollar dans l'économie souterraine, mais ils y sont de plus en plus présents.

Certaines des plus grandes sociétés financières américaines commencent à faire des offres d'investissement en cryptomonnaie à leurs clients; mais on peut se demander dans quoi les gens investissent. Contrairement aux affirmations fréquentes selon lesquelles ces monnaies numériques ne sont que peu utilisées dans les transactions et ne sont guère utilisées pour d'autres activités, il en existe une florissante : outre le fait qu'elles constituent un pari sur une dystopie, elles constituent un moyen pour investir dans l'économie souterraine mondiale.

La réglementation des cryptomonnaies étant appelée à être renforcée, au moins à terme, pourquoi leur valeur (notamment celle du bitcoin) est-elle montée en flèche (accompagnée il est vrai d'une volatilité qui fait les gros titres) ? Comme la théorie économique l'indique, cela tient au moins partiellement à ce que des taux d'intérêt nuls peuvent susciter la formation de bulles massives et

durables qui touchent le prix d'actifs intrinsèquement sans valeur. Autre élément : certains investisseurs en monnaies numériques estiment que ce secteur ayant pris une telle importance et attiré un si grand nombre d'institutions, les Etats n'oseront jamais le réglementer. Ils ont peut-être raison.

Plus les régulateurs tardent à agir, plus il sera difficile de maîtriser les monnaies numériques privées. Récemment, le gouvernement de la Chine et celui de la Corée du Sud ont réagi énergiquement face au développement de ces monnaies, mais on ne sait pas encore jusqu'où ils iront. Aux USA, le lobby de l'industrie financière a relativement bien réussi à empêcher l'adoption d'une réglementation significative des actifs numériques. C'est ainsi qu'il y a peu, face à la pression réglementaire internationale orchestrée par les autorités suisses, les USA se sont retirés du projet de monnaie numérique qu'avait envisagé Facebook.

Néanmoins, dans le cadre de sa lutte contre l'évasion fiscale, le gouvernement Biden va rendre prochainement obligatoire la déclaration des transferts de capitaux en cryptomonnaies d'une valeur supérieure à 10 000 dollars. Mais au moins en ce qui concerne les pays avancés, la réduction de la liquidité potentielle des cryptomonnaies difficiles à tracer nécessitera un haut niveau de coordination internationale.

C'est l'un des arguments qui explique pourquoi une cryptomonnaie comme le bitcoin a pu atteindre fin mai la valeur extravagante de 37 000 dollars (bien que son prix varie comme la météo). Faisons une hypothèse : le bitcoin est un investissement dans la technologie qui sous-tend l'économie souterraine mondiale, et il faudra encore attendre encore plusieurs décennies avant que les pays avancés ne le contrôlent efficacement. En attendant, son utilisation pourrait devenir de plus en plus fréquente et sa valeur pourrait encore grimper. Il n'est pas nécessaire de croire qu'une entreprise va être éternelle pour qu'elle ait une valeur significative aujourd'hui (pensons aux combustibles fossiles).

Bien sûr, il y aura toujours un marché pour les cryptomonnaies dans les pays déchirés par la guerre ou dans les Etats voyous, mais leur valeur sera bien moindre si elles ne peuvent plus être blanchies dans les pays riches. Peut-être existe-t-il des technologies permettant de supprimer l'anonymat, et donc de lever la principale objection à l'utilisation des cryptomonnaies, mais cela réduirait probablement le principal argument de vente en leur faveur.

Personne ne remet en question la technologie des blockchains utilisée par les cryptomonnaies, car elle pourrait améliorer notablement nos vies. Ainsi, elles peuvent constituer un réseau entièrement sécurisé pour contrôler les émissions de dioxyde de carbone. L'utilisation du bitcoin exige une énorme consommation d'énergie, néanmoins il existe des technologies beaucoup plus respectueuses de l'environnement, notamment celles basées sur la "preuve d'enjeu" (proof of stake).

Malheureusement pour ceux qui ont investi les économies de toute une vie dans les cryptomonnaies, l'utilisation des ransomwares est de plus en plus fréquente. Beaucoup de petites entreprises en difficulté ont été décimées par ce type d'extorsion de fonds. Les Etats disposent peut-être d'outils de traçage des cryptomonnaies que l'on ignore ; en tout cas ils sont dans une course technologique avec ceux qui ont trouvé le moyen idéal de faire que le crime paye. La situation devrait pousser les régulateurs à intervenir. Espérons qu'ils se réveillent avant qu'il ne soit trop tard !

O-PED

By Dambisa Moyo

Op-Ed: Journalism as a Public Good and the role of the media in Liberia

BY H.E. Ingrid Wetterqvist
& Mr. Stephen Rodriques

2 7 May 2021; Monrovia, Liberia: Earlier in May, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration, a seminal document issued by African journalists meeting in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1991. The Declaration, as relevant today as it was then, outlines principles protecting the press from interference by governmental, political, or economic interests. It brought home to the global community that progress depends on having a free, pluralistic, and independent press. The UN followed their lead and accepted the call to declare 3 May as World Press Freedom Day.

The Declaration emphasised that information is a public good to which everyone is entitled, and this was the theme for this year's celebration of World Press Freedom Day. Information is both a means and an end to the fulfilment of collective human aspirations, including those enshrined in Chapter 3 Article 15A of the Liberian Constitution, in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and in the African Union's Agenda 2063.

A fair and credible media is the lifeblood of a free and transparent society. As stated in the Windhoek Declaration "Enhanced transparency makes for public accountability." Journalism, and especially high-quality investigative journalism, has the power to hold a government accountable to its electorate, to uncover the truth behind the operations of public and private institutions, and to provide citizens with oversight over the activities of the State. Citizens with access to credible and timely information on the decisions that impact their daily lives can make their voices heard and their needs known. Access to information is fundamental for democracy to function.

Speaking truth to power, however, can come at a cost. Too often, and in too many countries, journalists work in an environment that imperils both their lives and their livelihoods. Here in Liberia, the 2019 Abdulai Kamara Press Freedom Act effectively decriminalised "libel", "sedition," and "criminal malevolence" - and this was a major step towards expanding democratic rights - but still there is an atmosphere of self-censorship based on actual violence as well as threats of violence against journalists.

Attacks on and threats against journalists and media outlets have been on the increase since 2018, reaching a crescendo in the lead-up to the 2020 elections. Last year, there were 28 reported incidents of violence and intimidation against journalists, according to a report from the Press Union of Liberia and the Committee to Protect Journalists. While some acts were perpetrated by private citizens, far too many involved instruments of State power. In this same period, Liberia slipped three spots, to 95 of 180 countries surveyed, in the 2021 Reporters Without Borders' annual World Press Freedom Index. These are worrying signs and should be of concern for both the Government of Liberia and its partners.

An environment in which the media can operate freely and independently results not only from the work and the political will of Government, but also from the demands of the people. At the same time, equipping both citizens and journalists with the skills needed to distinguish between fact and falsehood, between journalism and opinion, makes them a bulwark against disinformation.

Shining a bright light into the darkest corners is what the best journalism can accomplish. To quote the great investigative journalist Bob Woodward, "Democracy dies in darkness."

Through our programmes, both the Government of Sweden and UNDP are committed to fostering freedom of expression and access to information, both online and offline, in line with international guarantees of these rights. We support a free, independent, and pluralistic media, while reinforcing the need to protect the safety of journalists, with a specific focus on women journalists. We will continue to nurture media development and information literacy throughout our work, and we will strive to help improve people's access to relevant, diverse, and reliable information.

In everything we do in Liberia, we work with the Government to help expand peoples' options and opportunities. Development, ultimately, is about whether people are able to live long, healthy, and meaningful lives, to make choices, and to have a say in things that matter to their own development. Access to information plays a critical role in ensuring that people are well informed in making choices and decisions, and about what is happening in their communities, their country and the world at large.

Development relies on an informed citizenry, and this, in turn, can only be assured through the work of free, independent, and professional journalists.

H.E. Ingrid Wetterqvist is Ambassador of Sweden to the Republic of Liberia. Mr. Stephen Rodriques is the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Liberia.

Trying to fulfil Liberia's

Cont'd from page 7

According to Gewon, when persons with disability are employed, they become independent, self-reliance, and contribute immensely to development of any society.

Using himself as a case study, the visually impaired lecturer at the Methodist University said he no longer depends on his father pension benefits to make ends meet for him and family because he is gainfully employed and capacitated to underwrite expenses.

He is no long seen as a burden, but an asset to his family stressing the need for empowerment of persons with disabilities, which Gewon said has lot of advantages for them.

Naomi Harris, another inspiring woman who has fought her way through life and has gone against all odds leading to her doing very well in Liberia, despite her physical condition.

Madam Harris is the Executive Director of the National Union of Organizations of the Disabled (NUOD), a CSO that advocates for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in Liberia.

They are yet to see the 4% of PwDs being employed to a satisfactory level and as CSO, NUOD is trying to see how best more advocacies can be done to have it achieved in every sectors of the country.

"Whether in the public or private sectors, people should see that PwDs are qualified and should be employed and given the opportunities to work," Madam Harris confidently said.

Unlike in the past, PwDs are nowadays qualified to be employed in any entity, according to Madam Harris.

In time past, persons with disabilities were only seen as objects of pity and concern on streets, stretching their hands for handouts (begging) to make ends meet.

But with efforts being made on several fronts, the narration is gradually changing, with many of them now taking advantage of higher education and other vocational skills to get on path to empowering themselves for the job market.

"Every year when you check the different universities and vocational institutions, your will either have two or three PwDs coming out and that is because of the awareness and advocacies we have been carrying out, so you find out that PwDs are making use of opportunities and going to school and graduating," Madam Harris says with smile one her face.

"The problem we have is that if I were a visually impaired person and I graduated from teacher college, I will be sent to the school of the blind to teach because they think when I go to the regular school I will not be able to teach," the head of the disabilities union explained.

Madam Harris asserted that the reason for which the National Commission on Disabilities was established has not been met, on grounds that they are yet to achieve the 4% employment mark.

Persons with disabilities have lots of potentials and they bring to bed lots of positives that are not being highlighted by society.

According to a World Bank report, one billion people, or 15% of the world's population experience some forms of disabilities.

Persons with disabilities, on an average as a group are more likely to experience unfavorable socioeconomic outcomes than persons without disabilities.

It was based on that that the United Nations gathered in December of 13, 2006 session to adopt highlighting issues affecting PwDs.

The Convention on the rights of persons with disability is intended as a human rights instrument with a clear, social development element. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Convention on PwD is one of the fastest negotiated human rights treaties ever in the cycle of the United Nations.

It was negotiated during the eighth sessions of an Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

This speaks to the importance that has been attached to those living with disabilities and the good associated with employing them like any other able body person who is well educated.

The quest form Madam Dennis is that the current 27 total of over persons who are gainfully employed be increased to achieve the 4% employment benchmark which according to her when is done, the Liberian society will have fewer beggars in the streets concerns as compare to now.

Publication of this article was made possible with support from Internews Liberia Inclusive Media Project.



Bring TRC document on the floor

President George Manneh Weah urges Liberian lawmakers supporting calls for the establishment of war and economic crimes court for the country to put the Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report currently before the 54th Legislature on the floor for public debate.

President Weah calls on Liberians to pressurize their lawmakers to open the TRC recommendation for debate in order to derive a definite

is available; they need to come to you and explain; Is this what you want? We all are hurting; this is our country. What happened to us, it shouldn't have happened", says Mr. Weah.

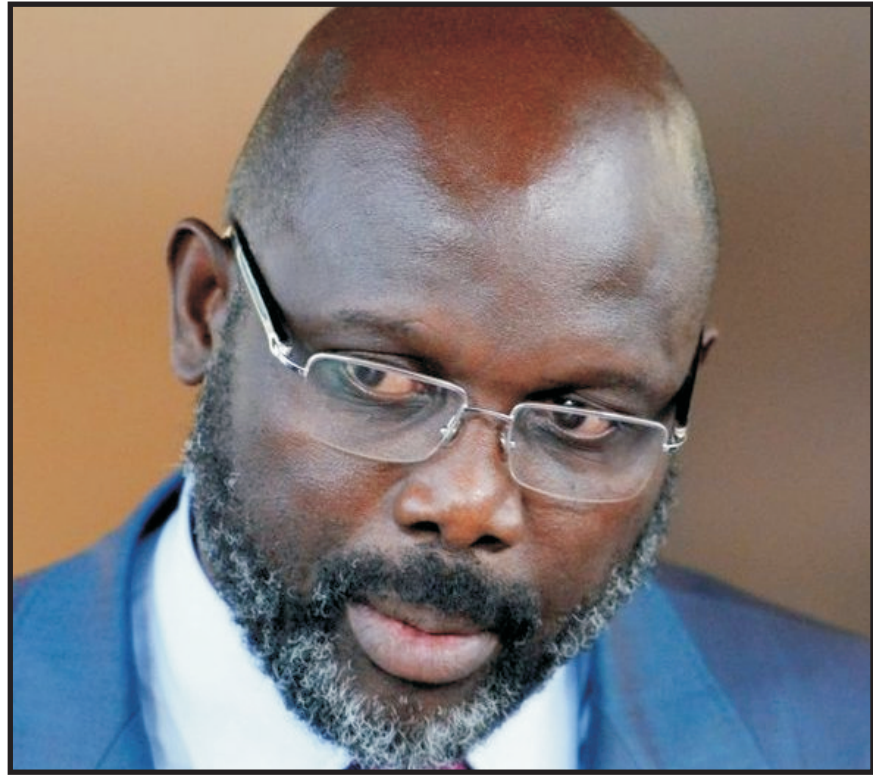
He challenges Rep. Massaquo, who formed part of the President's visit to Lofa County, to write the leadership of the Liberian Legislature, asking for the TRC document to be brought on the floor for debate so that Liberians can decide whether they want restorative or retributive

Egregious Domestic Law Violation. It was formally released to the Government of Liberia on December 9, 2009 under the administration of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

"The war crime court has a document; they're going to look at it. They are in the parliament (Legislature). Tell them to go to the parliament (Legislature) and bring it back and find a solution to the document and get all the international partners that want to see and let us go to it. No one is afraid here", President Weah adds.

In September 2019, President Weah sent a letter to the legislature, asking lawmakers "to advise and provide guidance on all legislative and other necessary measures towards the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, including the establishment of the Economic and War Crimes Court.

"As President of the Republic of Liberia, I am committed to a holistic implementation of the National Consensus (recommendations of the dialogue) and do hereby call on the National Legislature to advise and provide guidance on all legislative and other necessary measures towards the implementation of the TRC report, including the establishment of war and economic crime courts," the President communicated in a letter to Speaker Bhofal Chambers, stressing that "accountability of past human rights violations are essential ingredients for sustainable peace and achievement of inclusive development", Mr. Weah noted.



position on the matter.

The President's call was in response to concern raised last week in Kolahun, Lofa County by Representative Clarence Massaquo about justice for victims of the Liberian Civil War. Rep. Massaquo raised the issue while President Weah was touring the county.

"So I listen every day, some people asked for war crimes court; they asked for this and that, but they need to explain to you the detail of the document. The document

justice.

The TRC final report recommends prosecution for actors who bear greater responsibility for heinous crimes and crimes against humanity.

The report contains major findings on root causes of the civil conflict, and its impact on women, children and the generality of the Liberian society, responsibility for massive commission of Gross Human Rights Violations and violation of International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights Law as well as

"Sustainable development rests on Liberia's ability to attract Foreign Investors"

--U.S. Ambassador says

By Lewis S. Teh

United States Ambassador accredited to Liberia Ambassador Michael McCarthy says prosperity and national development rest on Liberia's ability to attract foreign investors and donor partners.

"For prosperity and sustainable development here in Liberia rests on the country's ability to attract foreign investors, encourage local entrepreneurship and maintain the tax system that is fair and transparent," Amb. McCarthy said a national

judicial conference Wednesday, 7 June 2021 at the Ministerial Complex in Congo Town.

The U.S. Envoy extended a heartfelt congratulatory message to Liberia's Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. and the staff of the Supreme Court for organizing this national judicial conference.

Ambassador McCarthy said with a strong justice system, and with a zero tolerance to hold corruption in all its form, achieving those goals will require a swift and appropriate approach to ensure that justice in Liberia is accessible to all effectively and free of corruption.

He however pointed out that

apart from the Temple of Justice, the Ministry of Justice, civil society and the Liberia National Bar Association all play essential roles, adding that these should be forces of good.

Amb. McCarthy noted that if one stakeholder tries to move the country backward, others should resist and stand for what's right.

He said it is no secret that the U.S. government through its Embassy has a long history of standing beside Liberia to support its justice efforts directly by providing funding. Amb. McCarthy indicated that it is their role, even though the Carter Center and the

Liberia, China sign

Starts from back page

conditions:

The Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation signed on September 1, 2018, by and between the Chinese Government and Liberian Government,

the Exchange of Letters signed on September 9, 2019, by and between the Chinese Government and Liberian Government with regard to acceptance by the Chinese Government to undertake the Project, and Minutes of Meeting signed on October 31, 2018, by and between the Chinese Side and Liberian Side, with regard to the site visit for feasibility study of the Project.

Details include the main line of the west overpass bridge reconstruction section on Back Road, Tubman Boulevard with the length of around 1,140 meters, auxiliary roads with the length of 480

meters, additional ramps with length of 950 meters, and the construction of the overpass with the length of around 287 meters; as well as the main line of the east overpass bridge reconstruction section on Back Road with the length of around 870 meters, additional ramps with the length of 1080 meters, and construction of the overpass with the length of around 162 meters.

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, Acting Public Works Minister Coker-Collins thanked Chinese government for its many assistance and contributions to Liberia's developmental drive.

For his part, Economic and Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Liberia Li Jiang, reiterated his government's commitment to upholding bilateral ties with Liberia. **-Story by Jonathan Browne**

MOL, LCC sign MOU

Cont'd from page 7

2020 when the Chamber received a letter from the Minister of Labour inviting it to discuss issues relative to ensuring that qualified Liberians are giving preference for vacancies and to strategize on ways and means on how businesses and employers can take in some recent and past college graduates in the employment sector.

"From this meeting, an idea of a special employment scheme took root.

To aid in carrying out our objective, we solicited the assistance of the Association of Liberia Human Resource professionals. A concept note was developed, policy, procedures and guidelines that will guide the process were formulated.

During the course of the implementation of this MOU,

data will be collected and records, and performance of this MOU will be maintained.

This will enable us to review the data and records as well as correct and address any situation to allow us make improvement."

Mr. Tweh added that LCC represents over 300 companies and business associations. He said the Chamber is dedicated to be most representative of Business Association and the lead advocate for reform that contribute to the creation of an enabling and conducive environment for commerce and trade in Liberia.

In separate remarks, the Lebanese Ambassador, Mansour Abdallah and US Ambassador, Michael A. McCarthy spoke of the important of job creations in Liberia and encouraged Government, Public, and Private Partnership. **-Press Release**

Embassy remain steadfast in every aspect to a peaceful Liberia.

Also speaking, Swedish Ambassador Ingrid Wetterquist applauded the Chief Justice and the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court for holding the judicial conference, saying she is glad that after ten years the judiciary thought it wise to host this meaningful conference.

She said the country's legal system depends on the three branches of government, adding that they are also satisfied with what is being done. Amb. Wetterquist asked the justices to continue in the judiciary, the education and

the rule of law here in Liberia.

According to her, this creates stability for anyone wishing to engage the country, stressing that it's very important to have these things in place.

At the same time, Amb. Wetterquist has pledged her country's support to Liberia, assuring that Liberia can count on Sweden in terms of support because it has been supporting Liberia's development efforts through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Amb. Wetterquist thanked the judiciary for allowing the Swedish Embassy to be partners in these efforts towards the rebuilding of Liberia and they stand ready to support.

First Lady launches menstrual hygiene initiative



The First Lady's Office in collaboration with Clar Hope Foundation and Gender Ministry launches a national initiative to boost awareness and sensitization on menstrual and personal

hygiene on Wednesday, June 9, at the Centennial Memorial Pavilion in Monrovia.

The She's You Menstrual & Personal Hygiene initiative, which is part of the Mrs. Clar Marie Weah's flagship program, She's You Movement, endeavors

to increase awareness on the proper management of one's period and usage of sanitary pads.

Through this initiative, Mrs. Weah wants all women and girls, including those with disability, to be inclusive in the fight for national menstrual hygiene and better sanitation.

According to a release, the initiative also seeks to ensure platforms for knowledge sharing among women and girls, minimize discrimination and stigma and reduce the risk of other diseases that could cause further complications.

Advocacy for the integration of menstrual hygiene management into school programs and the distribution of sanitary pads and personal hygiene kits to girls and women are part of the initiative's objectives.

At least 500 adolescent girls from all walks of life along with local and international partners among others are expected to grace the occasion.

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Liberia, China sign MOU to construct 2 overhead bridges here

The Government of Liberia and the Government of the People's Republic of China have formalized implementation agreement for construction of two overhead bridges along Tubman Boulevard in Monrovia.

The project is titled Implementation Agreement of Two China-Aid Overpass Bridges Project on Tubman Boulevard in the Republic of Liberia.

Liberia's Acting Minister of Public Works Ruth Coker-Collins signed on behalf of the Government of Liberia, while the Economic and Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Liberia Li Jiang, signed for his government.

Based on the Exchange of Letters signed on September 9, 2019 by and between the Government of People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Liberia, China agreed to undertake Two China-



Acting Public Works Minister Ruth Coker-Collins and Chinese envoy Li Jiang exchange notes in Monrovia

Aid Overpass Bridges Project on Tubman Boulevard in Liberia.

International Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Public Works of the Republic of Liberia reached the consensus on specific issues through friendly consultations and full exchanges of ideas, and signed the Implementation Agreement of the Project under the following terms and

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

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