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TRULY INDEPENDENT

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Pres. Weah



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-Weah tells judges



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Continental News

UN aid chief says there is famine in Ethiopia

UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock has said there is famine in northern Ethiopia after the release of a UN-backed analysis of the situation. "There is famine now," he said, adding: "This is going to get a lot worse."

The Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) found that 350,000 people were living in "severe crisis" in the war-torn Tigray region, as well as neighbouring Amhara and Afar.

Tigray has been devastated by fighting between government forces and rebels.

The IPC says the food situation in the region has reached the level of a "catastrophe", which it defines as starvation and death affecting small groups of people spread over large areas. "An IPC analysis update conducted in Tigray and the neighbouring zones of Amhara and Afar concludes that over 350,000 people are in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) between May and June 2021,"



A child sleeps on a sack of food aid in the Tigray region

the report says.

"This severe crisis results from the cascading effects of conflict, including population displacements, movement restrictions, limited humanitarian access, loss of harvest and livelihood assets, and dysfunctional or non-existent markets," the analysis adds.

But the report stops short of

officially declaring a famine, which has a very specific definition. Noting that this is the highest number of people in IPC Phase 5 since the 2011 famine in Somalia, the authors of the report say it should act as an "urgent call for the delivery of crucial life-saving assistance".

The IPC says its report was not endorsed by Ethiopia's

government. The IPC announcement falls short of declaring a famine in Tigray. That is because the "f-word" is such a powerful, compelling word that governments and international organisations have agreed it should only be used when certain strict criteria are met.

For now, the IPC has settled on the use of the word "catastrophe" instead - with a warning that large parts of Tigray are at risk of famine in the coming months.

Put simply, a "Phase 5 catastrophe" can refer to small groups of people, spread over large areas, whereas the word "famine" is only used when a big and distinct population group is experiencing conditions of starvation and death. And right now, in Tigray - in part because of insecurity and problems accessing those in most need - there is not yet the data to support a definition of famine.

But many experts find this - often highly politicised - debate over definitions both petty and counter-productive, and individuals, like the UN's humanitarian

chief, Mark Lowcock, have chosen to ignore the rules and insist that "there is famine now in Tigray".

The IPC analysis said that as of May, 5.5 million people were facing high levels of acute food insecurity in the region. Apart from the 350,000 people living in Phase 5: Food shortages can lead to large numbers of people lacking nutrition, but only rarely do they amount to famine, according to UN humanitarian criteria.

Long periods of drought and other problems reducing the supply of food do not necessarily result in a famine.

A famine is declared only when certain measures of mortality, malnutrition and hunger are met. They are:

at least 20% of households in an area face extreme food shortages with a limited ability to cope

acute malnutrition rates exceed 30%

the death rate exceeds two persons per day per 10,000 persons

The declaration of a famine carries no binding obligations on the UN or member states, but serves to focus global attention on the problem. BBC

Kenyan avocado farm faces more claims of abuse

Two women who say they were raped by security guards at Kenya's Kakuzi farm have spoken out about their ordeals. Their claims come as the agri-business seeks to sue Kenyan human rights groups over what it says are false allegations of abuse. Critics say the Kakuzi lawsuit is aimed at winning back contracts recently lost in a UK supermarket boycott.

The company told the BBC the new claims must be

investigated and it doesn't tolerate wrongdoers.

Mudhikwa Musau, 88, lives in a village just a few minutes' walk from the tree-lined perimeter of Kakuzi's vast farmland in central Kenya. She says in 2009 she was violently raped by one of the firm's security guards. Speaking in the local language of Kamba, she demonstrates how the alleged assault was carried out.

"I was caught like that and he was catching me here like this. I was taken round. He stood up and stepped on me. He stepped

on my neck. He held my neck and turned it around. He covered my mouth while I screamed."

Mudhikwa Musau says she went to the police after making her complaint, but she never heard about the case again. In response to the case, Kakuzi pointed to court documents showing one of their employees was convicted of assault over the incident but acquitted of rape.

Sixty-five-year-old Mariam Wanza has also come forward. She says she bore two children to Kakuzi security guards in the 1990s. "I was raped by Kakuzi security guards and it cost me my marriage," she said. "The second time after I was raped, [my husband] said: 'I am now tired. I have given you up to the security guards of Kakuzi. Go and stay with the security guards.'"

Over the past 30 years, dozens of shocking allegations have been levelled against Kakuzi guards by local community members. The accusations include rape, assaults and even killings. BBC



Mudhikwa Musau accuses a Kakuzi security guard of rape.

Tunisia opens cemetery for Mediterranean migrants



The burial site for migrants in Tunisia is already half full

A cemetery for migrants who drown in the Mediterranean while trying to reach Europe has been formally opened in the southern Tunisian town of Zarzis.

It is already half full. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, the head of the UN's cultural agency Unesco spoke of an "unfolding tragedy". Audrey Azoulay paid tribute to what she called the "castaways who perished in pursuit of a better life". Many buried at the site,

called the Garden of Africa, were unidentified, and have no name on their headstones.

They lie in graves surrounded by olive trees, vines and sculptures. The Algerian artist who funded and designed the cemetery said he wanted to give those who were brought there a "first taste of paradise".

"I wanted to help the families get closure and for them to know that there is a place for a dignified burial" of their loved ones, the AFP news agency quotes Rachid Koraichi as saying. BBC

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 Anne-marie Slaughter,
Kazumi Hoshino-macdonald

Making America Global Again

WASHINGTON, DC - The liberal international order remains trapped in the twentieth century. As autocracies like China and Russia increasingly develop spheres of cooperation, the United States is responding by building or strengthening regional groupings of its own, from NATO to the Indo-Pacific Quad (the US, Japan, Australia, and India). But America should instead take a global approach that focuses on values and visions rather than on countries.

Emerging strains of authoritarianism pose new challenges to democratic aspirations from Crimea to Taiwan. In both Eastern Europe and East Asia, proliferating "gray-zone" warfare tactics are jeopardizing countries' territorial integrity, open trading systems, democratic elections, technology supply chains, and the rule of law. These illiberal threats are no longer just European, American, or Asian issues. They target all open societies, international human rights, and democracy itself.

Unfortunately, America's post-1945 international frameworks are ill-suited to fostering a common conversation among liberal societies. The G7, NATO, the European Union, and the Quad are too regionally disparate to forge a strong global response.

Consider the issue of semiconductors. The most advanced play a foundational role in emerging technologies such as biotech, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence, and are produced almost exclusively by the US, the EU, and their Asian allies. But semiconductor manufacturers depend on a global system of talent and trade in which China is deeply embedded. No democratic forum currently exists to generate consensus on international standards, export controls, or industrial cooperation.

The US, the EU, and their democratic Asian allies, which have technologically sophisticated economies and high standards of living, together account for roughly half of global GDP. But if the US is to protect and rejuvenate its economic foundations and approach autocracies from a position of strength, its strategy cannot be merely trans-Pacific or transatlantic; it must be openly sourced from across the democratic world.

US President Joe Biden's administration has, or at least had, a vision of global democratic cooperation, but one focused on countries more than issues. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and author and pundit Robert Kagan called in 2019 for the establishment of a "league of democracies." Likewise, during the presidential transition, Biden announced his intention to convene a "Summit of Democracies" during his first year in office. But the administration stumbled on the rock that trips up all such efforts: the difficulty of defining who belongs to the liberal democratic club. It has thus renamed the gathering the "Summit for Democracy," and apparently postponed it until next year.

Rather than focusing on democracy itself, the summit should emphasize the underlying values that liberal democracies cherish: an open society, the rule of law, representative government, economic opportunity, privacy, security, freedom of expression, justice, and equality.

To that end, the US should consider how to work with smaller states to convene countries in support of specific democratic norms and standards on important issues. Jared Cohen of the Council on Foreign Relations and Richard Fontaine, the CEO of the Center for a New American Security, argue that such "microlateralism," a combination of "small-country leadership and large-state participation," can be a "key instrument in the United States' collective-action toolkit."

Developing a code of best practice for open societies' pandemic responses might be an easy starting point. Taiwan, for example, has been among the most successful in countering COVID-19, despite its proximity to the Chinese mainland and lack of vaccines. Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, recently praised Taiwan's handling of the pandemic, noting that the US has "a lot to learn" from the country's ability to combat disinformation and tackle the challenges of an interconnected democratic society. The US could turn to New Zealand to lead or co-lead a gathering of states committed to developing a set of principles or a code of conduct for tackling pandemics. This could be named after the host city, like the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

Such a forum should not be restricted to governments. Civil society, academia, industry, philanthropy, and religious organizations are all force multipliers for democratic dynamism. During the COVID-19 pandemic, institutions such as Johns Hopkins University and vaccine developers like Pfizer-BioNTech have been invaluable in immunizing society from disinformation and the virus, respectively. The vibrancy of these non-governmental actors is one of liberal democracies' unique strengths vis-à-vis authoritarian systems.

Moreover, these gatherings could disseminate democratic best practices on combating disinformation. Estonia, which developed a multi-faceted digital approach to reinforcing its democratic institutions after a series of crippling cyberattacks in 2007, offers an excellent example of how civic tech can foster resilience to autocratic hostility. Its "digital nomad" visa has allowed citizens of countries from Canada to South Africa to work virtually in Estonia, thereby integrating further private-sector expertise and strengthening cultural ties with other open societies. Such innovative pockets of ingenuity shine a positive light on the value of human freedom and show how developing and diffusing democratic norms can offer a multi-centered model of twenty-first-century governance.

The Biden administration is currently preparing for the upcoming G7 and NATO summits, but prominent democracies such as Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, Taiwan, and South Korea will not be at the table (although the UK



Lord, are we really that cursed?

Dear Father;

You know, I have really been thinking of late about my village. To tell you the truth, I have been having some sleepless nights. It may sound funny, ridiculous but that's just the truth Father.

Hmm, what has really been playing on your mind son?

Father, you know, by all standards we are a very rich village endowed with all the natural wealth any village on this planet Earth can think of. In fact, because of our wealth, our village has been envied by some of its neighbors.

But come to think of it, how can a village so endowed with the natural gift of wealth be so poor-the poorest in the world? Are we really that cursed?

It is well my son.

No, Father, it is not well. Something must be fundamentally wrong here. And I don't really know where we actually got it all wrong. Sometimes I wonder if it's a curse for slaughtering our forefathers publicly in the name of corruption. Yet still corruption has become more than a vampire in our village since we slaughtered those old men on a pole.

Today, to tell you the truth, traveling around the village with the Footballer, I sometime feel ashamed of myself-that ego with which I have paraded myself over the years, not knowing part of our fiefdom still looks like the pre-civilization era-stone age to sound brutal with the truth.

So, what was our people doing for the last 170 years? Sometimes Father I figure that it's a resource curse, but again blessings can only be turned as curse when greedy people preside over it.

That could be true my son.

Yes Father, you only see good gifts being a curse or a reason for trouble when it is not evenly distributed to benefit all. This I think is where our problems lie. The me, myself, and I forms of the English verb conjugation. No other person must benefit, you and only you should benefit.

The other day a friend of mine from Uncle Sam's village and I were having a conversation surrounding our village and the lack of underdevelopment thereof and also how our leaders both past and present have siphoned and continue to run our village dry.

And it all came down to the lack of home training. Yes, Father, the lack of home training in our village has been one of the catalysts for the rampant corruption and abuse of power we have witnessed and continued to witness in our village-that self-discipline is lacking in every sphere of our village.

Yes, Father, that respect for other people thing is not in our gene. In fact, the people don't have respect for self that other people they will have it for. It's all about what I can get for myself and not what I can do for my people.

One can only be disciplined at the level when you have a home training, living in a home with your parents and siblings knowing what is yours and what is theirs and sacrificing to ensure that whatever is put on the table goes around evenly at least.

But in an environment or society wherein most of its leaders are self-read, survival of the fittest is the only discipline that is in their gene-at least, which is what they have been trained to know-get what you can get for yourself and move on.

This is so sad Father. It is very sad. A village, once a beacon of hope for the entire continent and elsewhere today lies in abject poverty with many of its people hopeless in some parts of it-surviving and just waiting to be called home by our creator, because for some there is no hope at the tunnel and yet they sit on such wealth. Where have we actually gotten it wrong Father and for how long can we continue on this path?



With Jones Mallay

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LIBERIA POLITICAL HOT-FIRE

Should President Weah continue to be apprehensive over CDC's massive senatorial defeat, or simply ignore it completely?

Political Hot-Fire asks: "Should President Weah continue to be apprehensive over CDC's massive senatorial defeat, or simply ignore it completely?"

The writer is aware that CDC's Stewarts would refer to him as being stupid or has no sense of direction. But the fact of the matter is that the senatorial results are self-evident of president Weah's systematic declining football popularity that took him to the majesty-high of the Liberian politics, where he now served as President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia.

However, President Weah's well-deserved football popularity was not the only factor that gave him the Presidency. Two other political parties stood with the CDC to capture the government in the form of a coalition led by Alex Tyler (Liberia People Democratic Party (LPDP)); and the National Patriotic Party under Jewel Howard Taylor. These two parties helped to enforce CDC's overwhelming success through its "Coalition for Democratic Change."

But the political foundation of LPDP and NPP in the coalition is seemingly cracking at a disproportionate level, which should by and large make Pres. Weah apprehensive due to the just-ended CDC massive senatorial defeat which is a political referendum on Pres. Weah's if he chooses to run for 2nd term in 2023.

Pres. Weah should also be apprehensive for three reasons: First, either the coalition base did not support any of his senatorial candidates, or the coalition members simply refused to vote for them either the coalition leadership was simply unhappy over the limited political pie Pres. Weah has to offer them and keep the most lucrative jobs for CDC partisans.

Second, President Weah may have turned his blind eyes on everything they agreed on or he simply doesn't respect the power of the coalition anymore. Third, either President Weah is now overconfident at this time in his presidency after mastering and understanding the Presidency, or he no longer needs any type of political expertise going into the 2023 election.

But the writings are very clear on the wall. The parties that make up the coalition are the same parties that may undermine the CDC in the 2023 elections for three reasons: First, they may feel Pres. Weah used them for his political aggrandizement at their peril. Second, they may also feel that President Weah dumped them and deceived them by denying them lucrative jobs.

Third, the coalition parties would feel that they have nothing to lose, but Pres. Weah has all to lose, because if the CDC is yearning for 2nd term in 2023, with or without any coalition which in my mind is very dangerous tactics, that could possibly be the end of CDC political existence. But the LPDP and the NPP are not sleeping as well. They could be in search of another political opportunity to build a much stronger coalition that may inevitably endanger Pres. Weah chances in 2023.

Other CDC partisans think that Pre. Weah has a very strong political popularity from his football career days which is still active to earn him the 2023 presidential victory whether coalition or no coalition parties. Three reasons account for the President's confidence come 2023. First, Pres. Weah did employ an array of election Commissioners that can easily twist their hands in the direction of President Weah in the 2023 presidential election and make him the winner. Second, Pres. Weah did employ all the election Commissioners who should also return similar favor in kind by making him the winner in the 2023 election. Third, African governments are very notorious when it comes to cheating and nothing can ever happen to them.

Aside from the coalition fallen apart due to Pres. Weah's own political maneuvering capabilities, the ruling CDC has its own bad political odors heading into the 2023 Presidential election could also affect Pres. Weah directly. The first bad political odor is associated with the deplorable economic status of the nation where Pres. Weah has put the economics of the nation in the charge of his friends, who are simply not doing well? Pres. Weah has received calls from oppositions to replace unqualified Liberians with qualified Liberians but he doesn't care. This could cause a problem for Pres. Weah in 2023 Another bad odor has to do with the CDC party itself.

The party membership will need to be revamped to be reflective of a more responsible personality who do not subscribe to militants' ideologies. The CDC should be a respected ruling political party in Liberia, but it is not. There are many level-headed Liberians who are finding it difficult, if not impossible to take up active membership within the CDC political entity due to the type of characters who are currently manning the CDC.

Political-Hot Fire is told that the CDC is run largely by boys who are militants and who make militants' utterances and dress like militants who are ready to kill. Some responsible Liberians at home and abroad argued that the CDC doesn't have a well-structural layer of functionaries, nor does it have well-educated professionals and political technocrats to man its day-to-day political affairs or guide its strategic planning and actionable goals.

Many level headed Liberians in CDC led-government are often ashamed to associate themselves in public with the CDC party officials who are just violence oriented according to one inside source familiar with the CDC inner working. These are some of the rationales while Pres. Weah has to be apprehensive in the 2023 election for 2nd term.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

REFLECTIONS: My Response to Representative George Boley and Senator Prince Johnson's Threats!

By John H.T. Stewart, former Commissioner Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC).
Monrovia, June 4, 2021

Continue from last edition

The Alhaji Kromah led-ULIMO-K rebel faction was claiming Gbarnga as its prize after its forces attacked the town on September 9, 1994 and put NPFL fighters to flight. And ULIMO K rebel leader AlhajiKromah had proudly declared that Gbarnga was now his coveted prize. Also claiming Gbarnga as a prize was the George Boley led rebel Liberia Peace Council (LPC) faction after its forces attacked and overran ULIMO positions which caused ULIMO-K fighters to retreat north of Gbarnga to the town of Palala.

At the time the Francois Massaquoi led Lofa Defense Force rebel faction(LDF) as well as the LPC were making a case for inclusion in the peace negotiations claiming that they were holding territories just as ULIMO-K, ULIMO J and the NPFL. At the time only warring factions, who controlled territories were involved in peace talks and negotiations. When news broke of the fall of Gbarnga in early September 1994, I was at the time serving as founding Associate Editor of the New Democrat Weekly, then the nation's largest selling newspaper.

Sometime in mid-September 1994, a couple, George Boley and WeadeKobbahWureh walked into our Center Street offices seeking to speak with the Editor-in-Chief, Tom Kamara. They were ushered into his office, and I followed.

And the purpose of that meeting they explained, was to invite the New Democrat to Gbarnga to verify reports of the fall of Gbarnga as well as to verify accounts that LPC was in control of Gbarnga.

The couple's visit came in the wake of previous initial failed attempts we made to contact ULIMO-K rebel leader AlhajiKromah to grant us access to Gbarnga to report on developments there. However, Kromah instead granted access to the Inquirer's reporter, SidikiTrawally and that is how the Inquirer broke the story. Thus, when this couple, George Boley and WeadeKobbahWureh walked in offering to grant us access through their lines to report on happenings in Gbarnga, we jumped at the opportunity and agreed to send a reporter.

But we found ourselves faced with a dilemma-and that was no reporter appeared willing to take the risk of traveling through rebel lines to get to Gbarnga with all the associated dangers.

Being unable to identify a reporter willing to undertake the assignment, I volunteered to take the assignment. Little did I realize at the time the enormity and gravity of the assignment I had volunteered to undertake.

Had I realized at the time, that our earnest desire to go all out to accurately informed would place my life at such grave risk and danger and would have had the ultimate effect of granting legitimacy to a rebel group with a bloody signature, I doubt, on reflection, that I would have undertaken that assignment.

But to make a long story short, I accepted the assignment and proceeded to meet with an official of the LPC to arrange my travel. The official, LPC Secretary-General WeadeKobbahWureh escorted me to the Thinkers Village home of the late Thomas Woewiyu who was not at home at the time. Thomas Woewiyu, a former Defense Minister in the NPFL, along with others including LaveliSupuwood and Samuel Dokie, had broken ranks with Taylor and formed a faction styled- NPFL-CRC which had entered into a coalition with the LPC.

There at Woewiyu's home a pickup truck driven by a young man who identified himself as "Major

Trouble from Brigade" was loaded down with arms and ammunition including Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs).

There I was provided an escort by the same LPC official (WeadeKobbahWureh now WeadeKobbahWureh, Boley) current wife of George Boley who with him had previously visited our offices.

But before taking off, she shouted out a battle cry to the escort. "More Yoyo", "More Blessing" came the instant reply and then she followed with "More Blessing" and came the instant reply, "More YoYo". Prince would later confess to me that YoYo meant confusion and "Mo blessing" meant the rewards of unrestricted looting.

The escort, armed with an RPG identified himself as Prince, his last name I cannot recall now but, he told me he hailed from Zorzor District in Lofa. But he preferred to be called by his nom de guerre, "Prince Yudugbay Johnson", the LPC's version of Prince Johnson. My escort, Prince and two others were later publicly executed in Buchanan on Boley's orders for "looting". The incident was carried in local newspapers.

What an irony and travesty of justice it was. Here was the LPC leader a chief beneficiary of the widespread looting carried out by his men, accusing others of looting. They were hurriedly tried by a kangaroo court set up by Boley at Flour Mill, Buchanan, and put to death by firing squad. From Thinkers Village we drove to the LPC



Buchanan, Flour Mill to meet LPC Field Commander, General Ruth Milton aka General Arteelah. She was a heavy-set individual, and she looked the no nonsense type.

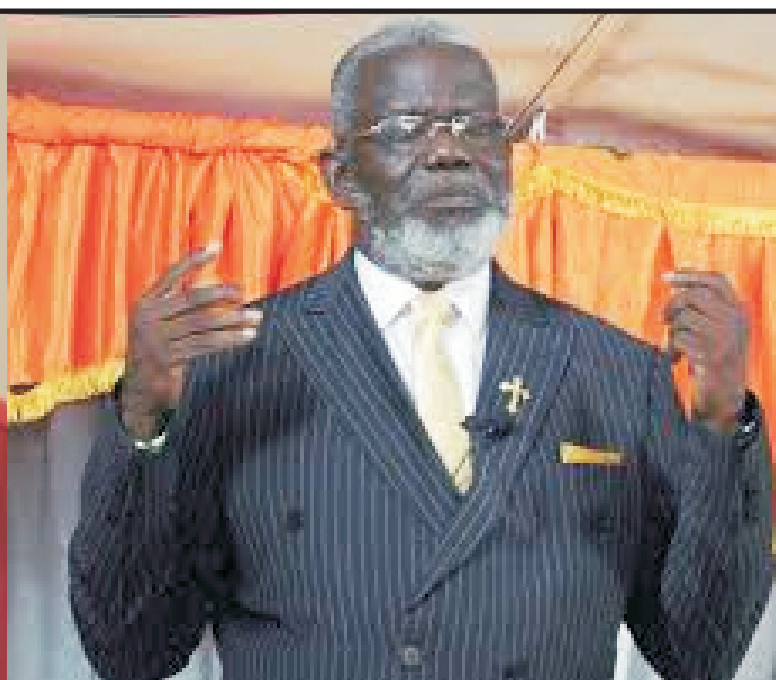
I learned that she had been one of the first females to be enlisted into the AFL after President Tolbert assumed office following the death of President Tubman in 1971. There at the LPC Flour Mill Buchanan headquarters she delivered a final charge to Major Trouble and "Yudugbay" to escort me safely into Gbarnga. We then began a harrowing all day journey on a route littered with landmines. Our first stop outside Buchanan was at Big Joe Town, where ECOMOG'S last checkpoint stood, Major Trouble disembarked from the vehicle and proceeded by foot examining every inch of the road ahead up to a church building standing on the left side of the road, about 50 yards away.

"Look at that church", Major Trouble declared." During the Peace talks, that is where NPFL General KuKu Dennis used to park his vehicle and then walk to the ECOMOG check point. After the fall of Buchanan Charles Taylor had planted anti-tank mines along the stretch of road to prevent any potential advance by ECOMOG. But Major Trouble had spotted three (3) landmines at different points along the road. Heavy rains had partially exposed them.

And over each of the mines, he placed a broken metal bucket turned upside down in order to alert other users of the road to their presence. Next he searched out the ruts, track marks of vehicle tires on the road to ensure the absence of mines. After the exercise we resumed our journey. At Buchanan, we had picked up additional fighters to accompany us to Gbarnga. As we proceeded the fighters riding the back of the pickup truck opened up with random bursts of automatic rifle fire aimed at nothing but the bushes.

My heart it seemed, skipped a beat with each burst of gun fire. Here I was in the company of complete strangers, armed to the teeth not knowing how the journey would end. Eventually, we made it safely to Sammy Kollie Ta, just a stone's throw from Gbarnga, by nightfall. However, a return vehicle to Buchanan, which we encountered along the road filled with looted goods and some wounded LPC fighters ran over a landmine that exploded leaving a single survivor out of ten individuals aboard that vehicle.

We slowed to a halt as the vehicle, a pick-up truck, approached. There was a wounded fighter in a wheel barrow being pushed by five other fighters. In vain they pleaded with the Buchanan bound vehicle to take them aboard. Not succeeding they turned to us asking for help to take them to Buchanan. But the driver, Major Trouble stoutly refused insisting that he was carrying supplies for men at the front and could not therefore abandon his mission to return to



Buchanan. And we continued our journey to Sammy Kollie Ta a village just outside Gbarnga.

After spending nearly three weeks, I was able to obtain a firsthand account of how life was behind LPC rebel lines. It was there in Sammy Kollie Ta, I encountered hundreds of displaced people without shelter nor food to eat.

They had to resort to scavenging, harvesting abandoned rice fields and seeking shelter in whatever available abandoned structures there were. Moreover, they lived in constant fear of summary execution for whatever contrived reason. It was from them that I learned that the LPC favorite method of killing was what they called "design", meaning that a victim would be chopped into pieces and the remains strewn along the roadside. Even some fighters themselves boasted of such wicked exploits.

This was intended to induce fear and force people to flee. Their abandoned villages would then be plundered and stripped of every valuable item. The fighters called the booty from this kind of pervasive looting as "risk taker".

Finally, I returned to Monrovia and wrote a story, "Gbarnga Burns" that made front page headlines.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MTN mobile money customers can now deposit cash in and out at Global Bank

Lonestar Cell MTN, Liberia's leading GSM and mobile financial services company, announces that effective today, MTN Mobile Money customers and agents are now able to cash out at any Global Bank.

from their mobile money wallets or deposit cash to their mobile money wallets.

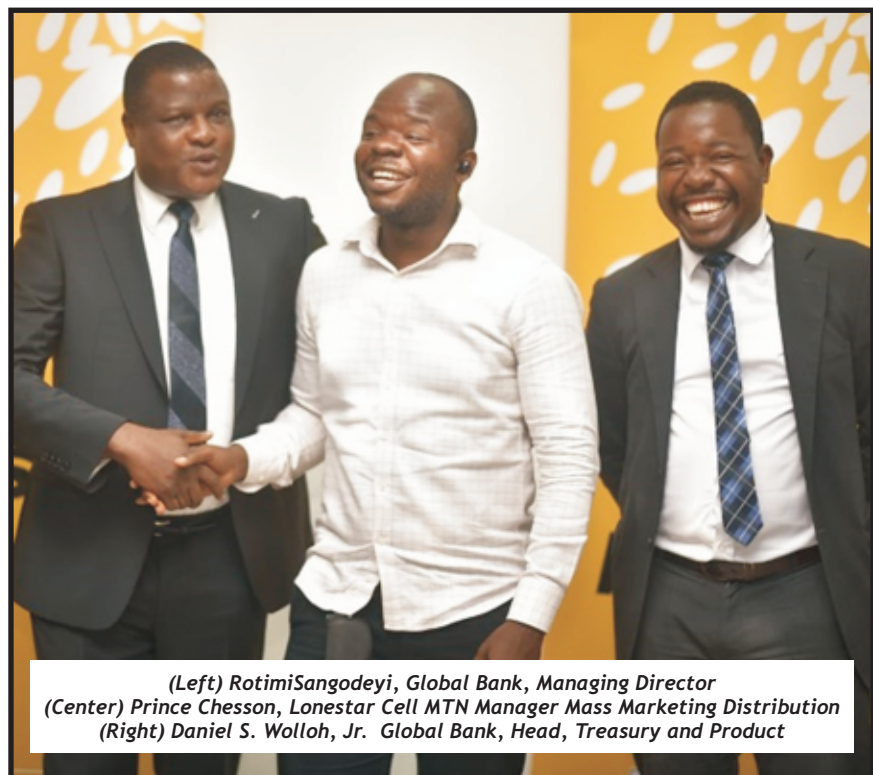
Chris Ssali, Mobile Financial Services Manager, said, "We believe that digital advancements improve lives. We support the government's

partnerships with all of Liberia's nine commercial banks.

Global Bank, which is Nigerian owned, has been in Liberia for the last 15 years and has 50,000 clients. With four branches in Montserrado County and one in Buchanan, the bank's General Manager, RotimiSangodeyi said that he is enthusiastic about this new offering and the partnership with Lonestar Cell MTN because the global banking services industry is going digital.

He said, "I can't wait to launch this new feature. If you don't digitalize you will be out of business. So, I can't wait to be a part of the global trend. I urge mobile money customers to take advantage of the new feature for their convenience."

MTN Mobile Money has always been more than just sending and receiving money. The platform facilitates fast, convenient, and most importantly, secure transactions. Signing up for MoMo is free. Just visit any Lonestar Cell MTN Service Center or registered MoMo agent with a valid identification card and fill out an application form.



(Left) RotimiSangodeyi, Global Bank, Managing Director
(Center) Prince Chesson, Lonestar Cell MTN Manager Mass Marketing Distribution
(Right) Daniel S. Wolloh, Jr. Global Bank, Head, Treasury and Product

Thanks to this seamless connection, anyone can conveniently withdraw and deposit cash directly to their MoMo accounts.

To use this service, mobile money users can go to any Global Bank, then dial *156*5# and receive cash

aim for a cashless digital economy. We are excited about the service because we are giving customers another avenue in which to access their money through our partnership with Global Bank.

Including Global Bank, Lonestar Cell MTN now has

LNP holds forum with media practitioners in Rivercess County

In an effort to strengthening security relations with the media, the River Cess Detachment of the Liberia National Police will on this Saturday June 12, 2021, stage a day-long forum in the commercial township of Yarpah.

The forum will bring together security sector actors from the Liberia National Police, Liberia Immigration Service, Liberia National Fire Service, Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency, Bureau of Correction and Rehabilitation, and the Liberia National Scout Association.

Senior management staff from the three community radio stations in the county, will make representation at the forum, as journalists serving as correspondents for Monrovia based media outlets have been asked to attend.

The forum, under the theme "Strengthening

Security Relations with The Local Media", seeks to broaden the understanding of actors on the roles and responsibilities of both the security sector and the media.

The gathering, funded by the River Cess Detachment of the LNP under the leadership of Assistant Commissioner of Police Fasus V. Sheriff, will bring on facilitators from the Press Union

of Liberia and the Ministry of Justice.

River Cess County Superintendent, Bismark Karbiah will make remarks at the opening ceremony of the dialogue.

It's expected the dialogue when held would foster cordiality between the joint security, principally the police and the local media.



Pro-Tempore Albert Chie tours Arcelor Mittal Liberia

YEKEPA – (June 10, 2021) Liberian Senate President Pro Tempore, Albert Chie has expressed optimism about the transformational impact that the ArcelorMittal Liberia (AML) expansion project will have on the country's economy and the many benefits to be accrued in jobs, revenue generation, and other critical areas.

According to a press release, President Pro Tempore Chie said the investment will be an important driver for economic growth and pledged to work with other legislators to support the AML expansion project and plan for the future.

A geologist, Pro Tempore

that will provide many jobs and training for Liberians to take up major technical and professional roles within the company," explained Pro Tempore Chie.

ArcelorMittal Liberia's acting Chief Executive Officer Johannes Heystek who hosted the Liberian Senate President Pro Tempore, thanked him for his interest in the operation of AML and for the courtesy to visit the company's mining operations.

Heystek emphasized AML's readiness to accelerate ongoing progress on the expansion project and assured of the company's commitment to increasing investment in Liberia as a strategic partner to the country.

He said ArcelorMittal Liberia



Chie spoke this week during a courtesy visit to the AML mining operations in Tokadeh, Nimba County where he toured the mine and inspected ongoing preparatory work for the resumption of construction of a concentrator and other state of the art mining infrastructures.

During the tour, Honorable Chie said it is important to commence the concentrator Phase 2 project as soon as possible. He stressed the need for everything to be done to fast track the ongoing discussions with the government to start the project.

"Government sees this as a groundbreaking investment

was excited by the visit of the President Pro Tempore and expressed the hope that as someone with a rich mining and geological expertise, he would be an ambassador for the expansion project.

An indication of the strong interest and support to the AML expansion project, the visit of President Pro Tempore Chie follows previous high-level visits to ArcelorMittal Liberia by H.E. President George M. Weah and members of the diplomatic corps including the Ambassadors to Liberia of the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United States of America, France, as well as the United Nations Resident Coordinator amongst others.

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Court releases Police killer in Grand Gedeh

Liberian judicial authorities, including Solicitor-General Cllr. Symah Cyrenius Cephas and Police Inspector General Patrick Sudue corroborate here that suspect Sampson F. Pennue who allegedly shot dead Deputy Police Commander Alexander B. Saye in Grand Gedeh County last year is out of prison on bail though murder is non-bailable under the laws of Liberia.

The late DPC Alexander Saye headed the Emergency Response Unit of the Liberia National Police assigned in Grand Gedeh when he was

Symah Cyrenius Cephas, who earlier denied having knowledge of the situation, subsequently told OK Conversation if this is true, all his office can do as government chief prosecutor is to go to the Supreme Court and challenge the situation.

"I asked the lawyer to compile all the documents and send them to me in Monrovia or thru WhatsApp", Cllr. Cephas explains.

Also responding to the issue, Inspector General of Police Col. Patrick Sudue says he is shocked to have learnt that Suspect Pennue is released from detention, but notes: The Police do not have jurisdiction over the

case, instructing, "Call the 7th Judicial Circuit Court."

Meanwhile, the brother of deceased DPC, John Saye says, the family will hold a meeting to determine the next course of action.

The Liberia National Police in Grand Gedeh County charged Suspect Pennue with Murder for the killing of late DCP Saye..

Police say the charge is in accordance with Chapter 14 Sub-chapter A, Section 14.1 of the Revised Penal Code of the Republic of Liberia for having "criminally" and "intentionally" "shooting" and "causing bodily injury on



Deceased DPC Alexander B. Saye and Suspect Sampson F. Pennue and the arm used in the murder

allegedly shot dead by National Security Agency (NSA) county commander, Sampson Pennue on November 27, 2020 in Camp 3, Barteh'jem where a Chinese firm, Golden Trip Group Ltd, operates in the county.

The brother of the deceased John Saye alarmed Thursday, June 10, 2021 when he spoke with OK FM 99.5 in Monrovia. "Sampson Pennue has been released; we are very sad about it", he disclosed.

Liberia's Solicitor-General

court."

"I just got a call from one of my officers that he (Sampson Pennue) was released. It is kind of sad to hear such of news."

Reports say there is growing descent within the police force over the release of the suspect, who gunned down a senior police officer.

Suspect Pennueh is reportedly brother of Grand Gedeh County Senator Zoe Emmanuel Pennue.

Grand Gedeh County Attorney Cllr. Adolphus Karuah says though he is the judicial head of the county, a senior lawyer, who he did not name, is handling the

the person of victim Alexander B. Saye with a 9mm pistol thus, resulting to his death.

DCP Saye along with the manager of the Chinese Mining Company Randy Scott, NSA commander Sampson Pennue, and Eugene Sambolleh and Joseph Osseili, agents of the Executive Protection Service had gone to the mining camp to settle dispute among the workers and management of the mining group, according to the police. **-Story by Jonathan Browne**

NEC receives USD500K from GoL to pay vendors

The National Elections Commission, (NEC), says it has received US\$500, 000 from the government of Liberia, for onward payment to local and international vendors, who rendered services to the Commission during the 8 December 2020 Special Senatorial Elections.

NEC-Liberia Thursday said the money was made available through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, after all the necessary modalities

between the Commission and the Ministry were reached.

A statement issued by NEC-Liberia, on 10 June 2021 said, the Commission has already started payments to both local and international vendors for services rendered to the commission in 2020.

However, the NEC is asking the government, through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, to work with speed to pay the balance of the money to ensure that the Commission clears all of its liabilities.

Recently, the NEC local Magisterial office in Tappitta, Nimba County, was besieged by Vendors who provided vehicular services to the Commission, while local vendors in Monrovia have issued several ultimatums to the Commission, indicating that they were "out of patience" with the Commission for the delay in honoring contractual arrangements between them and NEC-Liberia.

Liberia is overwhelmed by violence against children, adolescents

-Gender Minister Tarr

By Lewis S. Teh

Liberia's Gender, Children, and Social Protection Minister Whillemina Saydee Tarr says, violence against children, and adolescents remains a daunting challenge for her ministry, and the country at large.

"Violence against children and adolescents, especially girls, including rape, abuse, harassment and exploitation remains a daunting challenge", she says.

Minister Tarr spoke Wednesday, June 9, in a news conference held at the ministerial complex in Oldest Congo Town, outskirts of Monrovia, ahead of celebrations for the Day of the African Child.

"As we gear towards the commemoration of the Day of African Child (DAC), the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in collaboration with the Children's Representative Forum and members of the Child Protection Network would like to inform the public that Liberia will join the rest of the world on June 16, 2021 in observance of the day", Whillemina reveals.

Celebration of the Day of the African Child (DAC) arises from Resolution No: CM/1290 of the Heads of States Summit of the then Organization of African Unity [now the African Union] held in Abuja, Nigeria in June 1990.

From that summit, it was declared that the 16th day of June every year be celebrated as the Day of the African Child to commemorate the death of hundreds of school children who were massacred in Soweto, South Africa, by the then Apartheid Regime in June 1976.

The children protested against the inferior quality of their education and demanded their rights to be taught in their own language.

This year's celebration is on the global theme, "30 years after the adoption of the Charter: accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2040 for an Africa fit for children."

Liberia is commemorating the day under a National Theme: "Promoting Positive Arts, Culture and Heritage to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda 2040 in making Liberia a better place for children".

The Gender Minister says Liberia being a member of the AU, has also organized series

of activities in commemoration of the Day which is expected to focus on the global 2040 Agenda that provides a platform to reflect on the African Continent's flagship development agenda.

As part of activities marking the DAC, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, in collaboration with the Child Protection Network of Liberia (CPN) and the Liberia National Children Representative Forum (LNCRF) will on Monday, June 14, 2021 in Sanniquelle, Nimba County begin roll out of key activities which will include, Advocacy Campaign, Visitation to Orphanages, Disabilities' Homes, Historical Sites and Presentation of Gifts.

She adds that day-II, Tuesday, June 15, will be characterized a national children conference to help children effectively engage policy makers and state Actors for the implementation of Laws and policies that protect children, and also to create equal opportunities for all children, including those with disabilities and in institutional care as enshrined in the Liberian Children's Law.

While in Nimba County, the conference will bring together children from all 15 counties, child rights advocates and activists to formulate action plan in protecting children from abuses, including sexual gender based violence, physical assault, neglect, and trafficking, among other vices.

The celebration will be climaxed here on Wednesday, June 16 with an official indoor program that starts with a parade through the main streets of Sanniquelle, Nimba County. The activities have been drawn to give children the platform to speak about issues affecting them in the 2040 Agenda for sustainable development and the African Children Chapter.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Gender recounts that in 2020, a total of 2,240 Gender Based Violence cases were reported with rape and gang rape constituting 1,546. However, Montserrado County with the largest population, recorded a whopping 1,073 cases, amounting to 78.8% of the total number of cases, while Grand Gedeh and Nimba Counties recorded 185 and 167 cases respectfully. Minister Tarr laments that it is even troubling to note that rape and sodomy constitute 1,462 cases, gang rape, 84 cases; sexual assault, 191 cases and physical or domestic violence, 323 cases.

Français

Conférence judiciaire pour la facilité de faire des affaires et l'état de droit

La quatrième journée de la 4e Conférence judiciaire nationale organisée sous le thème : Le droit, les politiques publiques et l'économie mettra en exergue les petites et moyennes entreprises.

L'événement souligne la relation nécessaire entre l'environnement commercial favorable, les facteurs qui entravent les opportunités du marché libre et l'innovation, ainsi que l'état de droit et l'accès à la justice.

Ce n'est un secret pour personne que la primauté du droit est un outil efficace pour promouvoir et protéger la croissance du secteur privé. On peut dire de même que le secteur privé est le moteur de la croissance et du développement économiques dans toute société. Sans un système judiciaire efficace qui s'attaque à certains des problèmes qui sous-tendent l'environnement des affaires, la création d'emplois et l'amélioration du niveau de vie pourraient ne pas être importantes.

Le thème de cette année de la Conférence nationale de la magistrature est global et démontre l'engagement et les synergies des trois pouvoirs de l'État. Le thème reflète également le mariage entre la stabilité macroéconomique, la croissance économique et l'amélioration du niveau de vie d'une part et l'accès à la justice, l'état de droit, l'équité et

l'égalité devant la loi.

Les présentations doivent refléter l'état des activités commerciales dans le pays et la manière dont les lois ont un impact positif ou négatif sur les relations transactionnelles entre l'acheteur et le vendeur ou le prêteur et l'emprunteur. Les questions de l'exécution

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



« Aligner le document de stratégie pays sur la diversification économique », Samuel Tweah

Le ministre Libérien des Finances et de la Planification du développement, Samuel Tweah, a exhorté le country manager de la Banque africaine de développement au Libéria à aligner son plan d'action stratégique 2019-2023 sur la diversification économique du pays.

M. Tweah, s'exprimant lors de l'examen du portefeuille d'une journée de la BAD avec le gouvernement du Libéria, a déclaré que les partenaires au développement devraient se concentrer sur la manière d'étendre la diversification économique, la valeur ajoutée aux matières premières et de soutenir l'industrie agricole.

« Nous voulons que la Banque mondiale, la Banque africaine de développement et les partenaires au développement structurent les ressources de manière à aider les acteurs du secteur privé à assumer un plus grand rôle et une plus grande responsabilité pour développer l'économie », a expliqué Tweah.

Selon lui, les matières premières, notamment le caoutchouc et le palmier à huile, ont un potentiel énorme et il est nécessaire d'investir dans ces secteurs.

« Le caoutchouc a des rendements énormes au moment où nous parlons aujourd'hui, toute personne assise ici peut investir dans le caoutchouc et obtenir de bons rendements. Idem pour le palmier à huile, car le palmier à huile est le nouveau produit, et il y a tellement de produits que vous pouvez en tirer du savon, de l'huile et de la lotion, pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns », a ajouté Tweah.

Pour sa part, le directeur pays

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



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 Massaquo, 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 Massaquo, 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

Conférence judiciaire pour

des contrats, de la résolution de l'insolvabilité et du paiement des impôts seront au cœur des discussions.

Au fil des ans, les banques commerciales ont sonné l'alarme sur l'incapacité des emprunteurs à régler leur dette. L'utilisation du tribunal comme recours juridique dans certains cas n'a pas été couronnée de succès en raison des retards dans les procédures judiciaires, les délais et les coûts. Le récent rapport de la Banque mondiale sur la facilité de faire des affaires a noté qu'en moyenne, il faut plus de 1000 jours pour statuer sur une issue de la résolution de l'insolvabilité.

Le chef du Secrétariat du climat des affaires, P. Emmanuel Munyeneh, a noté que la conférence de cette année ne présentera pas seulement les problèmes et les défis pour un climat d'investissement propice, mais plutôt une conférence qui se concentrera sur la recherche de solutions. La conférence sera pratique. Les secteurs public et privé diront au peuple libérien quels progrès ils ont réalisés depuis 2020 et quels sont certains des défis qui doivent être relevés par le biais des

cadres législatifs et réglementaires », a noté Munyeneh.

En octobre 2018, le président George M. Weah a créé le groupe de travail sur le climat des affaires pour identifier et atténuer les contraintes à la facilité de faire des affaires dans le pays. Depuis sa création, le Secrétariat a organisé une série de réunions politiques et techniques pour identifier et résoudre certains des obstacles.

La conférence qui commence aujourd'hui utilisera également Zoom comme moyen de connecter les partenaires internationaux et les Libériens de la diaspora, car leur participation et leur contribution permettront également de trouver des solutions. Les communautés peul, indienne et libanaise devraient également partager leurs points de vue sur les enseignements tirés de la conduite des affaires au Libéria. L'institution financière internationale devrait également fournir des perspectives sur les obstacles à l'exécution des contrats et à la résolution de l'insolvabilité au Libéria. Le président du Libéria, le président Weah, devrait prononcer le discours d'ouverture lors de la conférence.

« Aligner le document de stratégie

de la BAD, le Dr Orison Mawumenyo Amu, a déclaré que la revue du portefeuille d'une journée vise à évaluer la mise en œuvre des progrès réalisés depuis l'approbation du document de stratégie pays, à évaluer la pertinence de la stratégie, à se concentrer sur les priorités du DSP et à proposer les changements à venir en tenant compte des nouveaux problèmes et développements émergents dans le pays.

Selon lui, le document de stratégie pays de la banque a été approuvé par le conseil d'administration de la Banque africaine de développement le 24 octobre 2018.

“Ce DSP marque cette année le niveau de mise en œuvre de la stratégie et couvre la période de cinq ans allant de 2019 à 2023”, a-t-il ajouté.

Il a déclaré que l'objectif de

l'examen est d'évaluer les priorités pertinentes du DSP qui ont été convenues en 2019. “ Comme nous le savons, cette année, nous nous concentrerons sur deux priorités majeures : la diversification économique par l'amélioration des infrastructures de transport et d'énergie et l'amélioration de la gouvernance économique. Et faire progresser le développement économique. Nous devons également réaffirmer quelles priorités sont cohérentes avec les priorités du gouvernement à ce jour. Le deuxième objectif est d'évaluer les progrès réalisés à ce jour, dans quelle mesure nous les avons mis en œuvre et de livrer au début de l'appel de propositions.

“Si nécessaire, intégrer des changements concernant les problèmes d'urgence et le développement au Libéria” a déclaré la Bad.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Anne-marie Slaughter,
Kazumi Hoshino-macdonald

Redonner à l'Amérique sa mondialité

WASHINGTON - L'ordre libéral international demeure prisonnier du XXe siècle. Tandis que des autocraties comme la Chine ou la Russie ne cessent de développer des sphères de coopération, les États-Unis répondent en construisant ou en renforçant des groupements régionaux où ils jouent les premiers rôles, de l'OTAN au Quad indo-pacifique (qui rassemble, outre les États-Unis, le Japon, l'Australie et l'Inde). Mais l'Amérique devrait plutôt se concentrer, dans sa stratégie globale, sur les valeurs et les visions communes que sur les pays eux-mêmes.

Les tensions autoritaires qui montent posent de nouveaux défis aux aspirations démocratiques, depuis la Crimée jusqu'à Taïwan. En Asie orientale comme en Europe orientale, la mise en place de zones grises, entre guerre et paix, met en péril l'intégrité territoriale, les systèmes d'échanges ouverts, les élections démocratiques, les chaînes d'approvisionnement et l'État de droit. Ces menaces illibérales ne constituent plus des questions purement européennes, américaines ou asiatiques. C'est désormais aux droits humains et à la démocratie elle-même qu'elles sont lancées de façon globale.

Malheureusement, les cadres internationaux de l'Amérique d'après 1945 sont mal dessinés pour nourrir une conversation commune parmi les sociétés libérales. Le G7, l'OTAN, l'Union européenne et le Quad, disparates parce que conçus pour différentes régions du monde, ne sont pas adaptés à la formulation d'une réponse globale forte.

Prenons la question des semi-conducteurs. Les plus avancés jouent un rôle fondamental dans l'émergence de technologies comme les biotech, les technologies quantiques ou l'intelligence artificielle et sont exclusivement produits aux États-Unis, dans l'Union européenne ou par leurs alliés asiatiques. Mais les fabricants de semi-conducteurs dépendent d'un système mondial de collaborateurs et d'échanges au sein duquel la Chine est profondément ancrée. Il n'existe aujourd'hui aucun forum démocratique pour fabriquer du consensus sur les normes internationales, les contrôles des exportations ou la coopération industrielle.

Les États-Unis, l'Union européenne et leurs alliés en Asie, qui disposent d'économies technologiquement sophistiquées et jouissent de niveaux de vie élevés, comptent, pris ensemble, pour la moitié du PIB mondial. Mais si les États-Unis veulent protéger ou rajeunir leur assise économique et s'adresser aux autocraties dans une position de force, leur stratégie ne peut être simplement transpacifique ou transatlantique ; elle doit puiser son inspiration dans l'ensemble du monde démocratique.

L'administration du président Joe Biden a une vision, ou du moins en avait une, de la coopération démocratique mondiale, mais elle est centrée sur les pays plus que sur les questions à traiter. Le secrétaire d'État Anthony Blinken et l'auteur et commentateur Robert Kagan ont appelé de leurs vœux en 2019 la constitution d'une « ligue des démocraties ». Et Biden, durant la transition présidentielle, a fait part de son intention de réunir un « Sommet des démocraties » durant la première année de son mandat. Mais l'administration bute sur l'écueil où trébuchent tous les efforts : la difficulté à établir qui appartient ou n'appartient pas au club démocratique libéral. Elle a donc renommé la conférence « Sommet pour la démocratie » et l'a semble-t-il reportée à l'année prochaine.

Plutôt que mettre l'accent sur la démocratie en elle-même, le sommet devrait insister sur les valeurs fondamentales que défendent les démocraties libérales : une société ouverte, l'État de droit, le gouvernement représentatif, la liberté d'entreprendre, le respect de la vie privée, la sécurité, la liberté d'expression, la justice et l'égalité.

À cette fin, les États-Unis devraient penser aux façons de travailler avec de petits États afin de rassembler des pays qui soutiennent des normes et des règles démocratiques précises sur des questions importantes. Jared Cohen, du Council on Foreign Relations et Richard

Fontaine, le PDG du Center for a New American Security, affirment qu'un tel « microlatéralisme », qui combinerait « un leadership de petits pays et la participation de grands États » pourrait être un « instrument essentiel de la trousse d'intervention des États-Unis dans le domaine de l'action collective ».

On pourrait envisager, comme point de départ, de mettre en place un code des meilleures pratiques organisant la réponse des sociétés ouvertes aux pandémies. Taïwan, par exemple, fait partie des pays qui ont le mieux résisté à la pandémie de Covid-19, malgré sa proximité avec la Chine et un manque de vaccins. Le conseiller à la sécurité nationale de Biden, Jake Sullivan, a récemment loué Taïwan pour sa gestion de la pandémie, et fait remarquer que les États-Unis avaient beaucoup à apprendre des capacités du pays à combattre la désinformation et à relever les défis qui se posent aux sociétés démocratiques interconnectées. Les États-Unis pourraient demander à la Nouvelle-Zélande de diriger ou de codiriger un rassemblement d'États engagés dans la mise en œuvre d'un ensemble de principes ou dans l'application d'un code de conduite pour lutter contre les pandémies. L'initiative, comme ce fut le cas du protocole de Kyoto sur le changement climatique, pourrait recevoir le nom de la ville hôte.

Un tel forum ne contraindrait pas les gouvernements. La société civile, le monde académique, le secteur industriel, les organisations philanthropiques et religieuses sont autant de bras de levier du dynamisme démocratique. Lors de la pandémie de Covid-19, des institutions comme l'université Johns Hopkins et des concepteurs et fabricants de vaccins comme Pfizer-BioNTech ont été d'une utilité inestimable pour immuniser la société, respectivement contre la désinformation et contre le virus. L'énergie de ces acteurs non gouvernementaux est une des forces qui n'appartiennent qu'aux démocraties vis-vis des systèmes autoritaires.

En outre ces sommets ou rassemblements pourraient diffuser les meilleures pratiques démocratiques dans la lutte contre la désinformation. L'Estonie, qui a mis en place une stratégie numérique à plusieurs volets afin de renforcer ses institutions démocratiques après une série de cyberattaques invalidantes, en 2007, offre un excellent exemple de ce que peut faire une industrie des technologies civique pour bâtir la résilience à l'hostilité autocratique. Son visa de « nomade numérique » permet à des ressortissants du Canada ou d'Afrique du Sud de travailler virtuellement en Estonie, intégrant ainsi plus avant l'expertise du secteur privé et consolidant ses liens culturels avec d'autres sociétés ouvertes. De telles poches d'honnêteté innovantes jettent une lumière positive sur la valeur de la liberté humaine et montrent comment la mise en place et le développement de normes démocratiques peut fournir un modèle de gouvernance polycentré pour le XXIe siècle.

L'administration Biden a les yeux tournés sur les sommets du G7 et de l'OTAN, mais des démocraties de premier plan, comme l'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zélande, l'Inde, l'Afrique du Sud, Taïwan et la Corée du Sud ne sont pas aux tables de discussion (bien que quelques-uns d'entre eux soient les invités u Royaume-Uni à la réunion du G7). Un mécanisme efficace de conception stratégique au sein des États libéraux-démocratiques pourrait aider l'Amérique à mettre sa propre maison en ordre et exercer une autorité fondée sur les valeurs pour tout ce qui concerne les droits humains, la gouvernance technologique, les chaînes logistiques, et même un impôt mondial sur les entreprises. Les démocraties émergentes ou fragiles, voyant là une occasion plutôt qu'un choix contraint, en prendraient certainement note.

La stratégie des États-Unis pour répondre aux défis lancés par les régimes autoritaires devrait être mondiale et non régionale, plurielle plutôt qu'unitaire, et s'appuyer sur les questions à résoudre plutôt que sur les pays. Voici plus d'un siècle, après une pandémie, l'Amérique fut le moteur qui entraîna la création d'un nouvel ordre international. Aujourd'hui, elle doit diriger depuis le centre plutôt qu'en première ligne, aux côtés de nombreux autres pays, pour saisir cette chance unique d'actualiser le modèle d'une société mondiale plus interconnectée, plus inclusive et plus démocratique.

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Cont'd from page 7

REFLECTIONS: My Response

Not long after then, a peace conference dubbed Abuja I, held in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, in 1995 was convened with all the warring parties present. I covered that conference in Abuja as a journalist working from our room at NiconNoga Hilton hotel together with other journalists including Sando Moore, Ben Asante, Lindsay Barrett and BBC reporter Sola Odufa.

It was at that meeting that legitimacy was conferred on the LPC granting it representation on the Transitional Council and firmly establishing its leader, George Boley as warring faction head. The Transitional Council was made up of proxies representing the various factions. Representing the NPFL was rebel General Isaac Musah (deceased) while ULIMO-K was represented by Dexter Taryor (deceased) and the LPC/NPFL CRC was represented by LPC Secretary-General, WeadeKobbahWureh (Present wife of George Boley).

Quite clearly, the LPC's drive to establish itself as a warring faction with a seat at the table of peace negotiations had been accomplished.

Both of its top executives, George Boley and WeadeKobbahWureh had ascended to the high office of Vice Heads of State respectively at different intervals. Their path to high offices in the land was however smeared with blood and paved with heaps of corpses of innocents whose lives were cut short by the mass and indiscriminate killings committed by fighters of the Boley led Liberia Peace Council (LPC). The experiences of many of those who witnessed the killing of relatives and friends or suffered egregious human rights abuse at the hands of the LPC are well documented in the TRC Final Report.

More to that eyewitness accounts of the massacres and looting spree carried out by the LPC are also documented in the TRC Report. One of such massacres took place in Bloh Town situated on the road leading to Cestos City.

There TRC Commissioners were led to a site in a rubber bush where they observed a large number of human remains scattered about in the rubber bush opposite the town. Survivors and eyewitness accounts say about 400 persons were killed by LPC fighters using machetes, axes and wooden clubs.

Additionally, logging equipment including front-end loaders, trailers, power saws, tons of rubber looted from the Liberia Agricultural Company (LAC) in Grand Bassa and the Sinoe Rubber Company plantation as well as timber etc. were looted and sold into the Ivory Coast and beyond according to accounts provided by former LPC fighters.

Additionally, former LPC fighters and informed sources from Ghana have revealed that about twenty-two (22) looted vehicles were allegedly taken across the Ivorian border and into Ghana where they were sold to different buyers.

Some of the vehicles including a bus, were converted into public transportation. This suggested that Mr. Boley was actively engaged in transportation business in Ghana while back home in Liberia, his LPC rebel group looted, pillaged the Country and murdered people indiscriminately. One of the buyers of the looted vehicles was a young Ghanaian male who purchased a state-owned bullet proof black Mercedes-Benz. According to investigative sources and former LPC fighters, it was the same vehicle used as official vehicle by President Samuel Doe during the last days of his Presidency.

But as things turned out, according to credible sources including former LPC fighters, the young Ghanaian had paid only US\$10,000 out of the asking price of US\$30,000 and had reneged on further payment. The black Mercedes Benz was allegedly worth around \$92,000.00 According to former LPC fighters (names withheld), local Ghanaian drivers who were running the other vehicles as taxis, absconded with the vehicles and to date have not been found. One such compelling story is about the bus that was used as public transportation which was also alleged to have been looted from Liberia by George Boley's LPC fighters on his behalf. Sources alleged that the driver for the bus also absconded with the bus but was later found and taken to court by an official of the Boley led LPC identified as WeadeKobbahWureh, now Mrs. Boley.

But in an unusual twist, the Ghanaian bus driver told the judge that he was being coerced to pay for a stolen vehicle by rebels from Liberia who had looted state property, and that the bus was one of the looted vehicles.

Further according to sources, the Judge, upon listening to the bus driver's testimony, became incensed and railed at the complainants for looting their country and shamelessly pursuing payment for an illegally acquired vehicle.

According to sources, the Judge threw out the case telling the LPC official and her supporters to go back to Liberia and fix their Country they helped destroyed.

But more to that informed sources, including former LPC fighters, have disclosed that Boley allegedly purchased two compounds. One is located in Community 9, Tema and the other in Community 10 Tema, Ghana, where he frequented during the Taylor regime. Sources further alleged they jointly operated a business firm (South Eastern Trade Links) in Ghana through which funds realized from the illegal sale of looted tropical timber rubber and other valuables were channeled.

Boley, according to US media reports, had also bought properties all in cash in the US including a mansion allegedly valued at about US\$1m situated on a 10-acre spread in the city of Clarkson, upstate New York after his stint as Vice Head of State in the Transitional government. Credible sources say, after the fall of Buchanan, Greenville, and Harper to the LPC, thousands of logs stockpiled (valued several million dollars) at those ports were illegally shipped to Vincennes, a shipping port on France's Mediterranean coast.

Former Chairman of the National Investment Commission (NIC) TrohoeKpargahai and former Liberian Ambassador to France Aaron George were, according to sources serving as middlemen arranging the illegal sales of stolen timber from Liberia. Timbers were sold to French buyers who reports say had an insatiable appetite for tropical timber and were prepared to go any lengths to acquire same.

Quite clearly, Dr. George SaigbeBoley is and has been a beneficiary of the country's civil conflict. And he has benefitted, acquired wealth from the wanton plunder and illegal sale of private and state resources.

Today, George Boley, a recruiter of child soldiers and former leader of the notorious LPC warring faction whose bloody footprints still litter the landscapes of Bong, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Grand Kru, River Gee and Maryland Counties, sits in the Liberian Parliament while his former LPC Secretary-General, now his wife, WeadeKobbahBoley is a Vice President at the University of Liberia.

Neither of them has been held to account for their roles and participation in the civil war as leaders of one of the most brutal and notorious warring factions. And he Boley, has been unrepentant as ever.

He recently told a fellow parliamentarian in a high-handed and shameless manner that had he not done the things he did, many people including his colleague would not be here today.

In other words had his foot soldiers like Generals Noreiga and Satan not terrorized the peoples of Sinoe, Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Kru, Maryland and River Gee Counties with random indiscriminate killings, and the massive looting of private and public property, Representative Dixon Seeboe would not be where he is today.

During parliamentary discussions recently, Representative Dixon Seeboe had openly accused George Boley of killing his relatives during the civil war.

For my part, Boley has on several previous occasions accused me, John H.T. Stewart as one of those individuals opposed to peace in Liberia because of the TRC report which documented the atrocities committed by fighters under his command.

Recently on the Ashford Garley show, he again repeated the same accusations. Journalist Ashford Garley did not and has not so far provided me the opportunity to react to Boley's threatening utterances against me and possibly that of my family and close

associates. Thanks, however, to social media, I am availed of the opportunity to respond to threatening comments by George Boley. I must admit that I am not surprised by his utterances. Those threatening utterances are induced and driven by fear. It is the fear of eventually being dragged to Court to face criminal charges for war and economic crimes.

It is also the fear of facing similar prospects to that of his counterpart, Charles Taylor currently serving a 50-year sentence in a British jail. But Representative George Boley is not alone in this regard. His legislative colleague Senator Prince Johnson also harbors such fears and I dare say they are deeply engrained fears. On several occasions during his church service, Prince Johnson has launched vitriolic attacks and made threatening statements against my person.

And his reason just like George Boley's is because I served on the TRC that indicted him and recommended his prosecution for crimes against humanity. I have often brushed off Senator Prince Johnson's as insane comments from a mentally challenged person; however, I am not unmindful of his killer instincts neither am I unmindful of George Boley's vindictive and evil character.

Remember his (Boley's) late brother-in-law, Charles Gbenyon who was killed at the Executive Mansion in the wake of the November 12, 1985, abortive invasion and how he did not lift a finger, according to family sources to help save his brother -in-law from execution? Journalist Charles Gbenyon, according to eyewitness accounts was beheaded by soldiers at the Mansion. Also, remember George Boley dressed in military fatigues flaunting an M-16 automatic rifle and virtually gloating over the lifeless body of failed coup leader, General Thomas Quiwonkpa?

Remember also, reports of George Boley leading soldiers to the Bentol home of assassinated Liberian President, William R. Tolbert on the day following the coup according to family members? Regarding that incident, Mr. George Boley was also accused by a Co-Member of the PRC, Captain KalongoLuo, who testified before the TRC in the US and attested to Boley's looting of the President's home and taking away his safe and other valuables.

When Boley appeared before the TRC, he denied being part of any warring group and insisted that the LPC group which he led was simply an advocacy group. But when I posed the question to him in which capacity did he sign the Abuja I Accords since it was only warring factions who were signatories to the Peace Agreement he fumbled for an answer. That question apparently infuriated him. And George Boley, lying through his teeth, responded emphatically declaring that, I John H. T Stewart led the LPC attack on Gbarnga on September 14, 1994. His lies that I led the attack on Gbarnga, made news headlines the very next day.

But I say all this with no malice towards him (George Boley) nor any of his kith and kin some of whom I know very well. However, for me this is a life and death matter over which such sentiments of amity do not hold sway.

I take the threats of Parliamentarians George Boley and Prince Johnson seriously and I am now informing the world that owing to their threats against me, I am placing my life and safety in their hands. I cannot and can never underestimate their capacity to actualize their vile threats neither can I dismiss their intent to bring harm to my person, family, friends and or associates.

However, let me inform all and sundry that I am not afraid of evil men and women. God being my helper, I have, over 45 years in the struggle for rights and justice survived and overcome many trials and tribulations including imprisonment, torture and economic marginalization. Even if they succeed in killing me, they cannot kill the desire of the Liberian people for freedom justice and accountability.

George Boley, and Prince Johnson including their allies and friends may be rich and powerful, but their wealth stems from the spillage of innocent blood and their respective paths to power are smeared with innocent blood and littered with heaps of corpses. Compare the attitudes of these rich and powerful men, George Boley and Prince Johnson to that of Joshua Milton Blahyiother wise known as Buck Naked. "Buck Naked" has since continued to display a spirit of

Speedy justice attracts investment

By Winston W. Parley

President George Manneh Weah has told justices, judges and lawyers at a national judicial conference in Monrovia that growing the country's domestic and private investments is dependent on the process and time it takes to resolve legal disputes and the perception of justice that arises from the adjudication process.

"If businesses cannot get timely legal redress from the courts, or if contracts cannot be effectively or fairly enforced, we affect the investment climate," President Weah said at the Ministerial Complex in Congo Town Thursday, 10 June.

Addressing the conference, President Weah said only the Judiciary holds the key to people's and institutions' perception and sense of justice in Liberia, adding that the powers held by the Chief Justice,

depends on the body of laws and policies which we have in place to regulate the free flow of investments and commerce, the process and time it takes to resolve legal disputes arising from the application of these laws, and the sense or perception of justice that arises from this adjudication process," he said.

According to him, this very structure of business and investment climate has been his concern since taking office, noting that in October 2018, the Government established a Business Climate Working Group to look into ways of improving the business climate in Liberia.

He assured that the Executive stands in partnership with the Judiciary in seeking to overhaul business processes and simplify them.

Accordingly, he announced that he will shortly appoint a high-level Cabinet sub-committee on the investment and business climate which will be chaired by the Ministry of Finance and Development

commercial banks cannot enforce judgment on collateral when people default on their loans, these banks may not be able [to] lend money into the economy.

"I therefore urge you to let us work together as a Government to re-brand Liberia through impressive reforms and actions affecting the business climate. I have no doubt that this Conference will contribute meaningfully toward this end," he continued.

"If the law is the problem, then let us reform the law. If processes and systems are the problem, let us change those processes. If the lack of funding is a problem, let us find ways to provide more resources," he added.

President Weah further urged that if certain people are the problem because, for selfish motives, they stand in the way of fair and transparent processes, then let them be kicked out of the systems to improve the investment and business climate.

He thanked the international partners who continue to stand with Liberia to transform the country, asking them for a stronger partnership as his government aims to transform the business and investment climate here.

President Weah said a series of workshops and meetings across the Government and with Development Partners and other stakeholders have identified key challenges affecting the business climate and opportunities for improving it.

These challenges, he said, are largely summarized by the World Bank's Doing Business Indicators, which include indicators such as: starting a business, getting electricity, getting credit, paying taxes, enforcing contracts, registering property, protecting minority investors, trading across borders, and resolving insolvency.

"In this regard, I am informed that Liberia ranks 175 out of 190 countries, that our neighbor Sierra Leone ranks 163 out of 190 and that Cote d'Ivoire, our other neighbor, ranks 118 out of 190 countries," he stated.

President Weah noted that this indicates that his government and the country have some serious work to do, saying at the conference, the Judiciary will be looking at its contribution to changing these numbers through the application of the law, in key areas such as enforcing contracts, resolving insolvency and getting credit.

Planning, and will include the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Liberia Revenue Authority, the National Investment Commission, the Liberia Business Registry, the Liberia Electricity Corporation and other agencies as may be necessary.

President Weah detailed that this cabinet sub-committee will be tasked to present a roadmap after the Judicial Conference that will track the recommended actions and changes needed for improvement.

He said the committee will be required to present a report in six months to show credible progress on the business climate in a range of areas.

"Mr. Chief Justice, you will agree with me that if we make it difficult for businesses to register, to get electricity, or to pay their taxes, we affect the economy," President Weah indicated.

He suggested that if



Associate Justices and learned counselors and lawyers in Liberia's democracy and over Liberians are awesome.

"I am very impressed that you have chosen to assess the impact of this power on our national polity and economy through this Judiciary Conference. It is also commendable that, on this Fourth day of the conference, you have also chosen to specifically assess how this power may be impacting businesses, corporations and investors," he noted.

According to President Weah, his government's drive to provide jobs for the people and to grow the economy by increasing the flow of both domestic and private investments are all dependent on the structure of Liberia's business climate.

"That very structure

Poem

Everyone Who's Been Suffering

Our world has changed
Like never before and it's so sad
Every day because our lives have changed
So much in life today and so many families suffering
Like never before and this killer virus is here to stay
And we were all caught and unaware and it's sadness
In the air and Isolated from our loved ones every day
And there's know happiness or joy in our lives today
It's just another loved one who's sadly passed away
And coronavirus walks among us every day
And we try our best to struggle through
This horrible coronavirus storm
Trying to stay safe and keep ourselves warm
And the pain and hurt it's brought us and
There's nothing much to gain and our
Peace and love has all gone away
And it's just a lonely tear rolling down my face and I've been
Crying inside this cold lonely old place
And all the pain running though me every day
Coronavirus, coronavirus when will you ever
Just go away and I cry for the loved ones who's sadly
Passed away and I'm still cocooning away and
Every day and I'm lost without you in my life and
The world has changed so much
Coronavirus every day in our life
And the darkness surrounds the world today
And it's so cold and painful every day and
I feel the chill up and down my spine every day
And our warm hugs and soft kisses
Have just all faded away and
Just like our loved ones fading away
And nobody to hold at night
And nobody to whisper I love you goodnight
And as a lonely tear rolls down my face
I try to smile and remember your beautiful face
As coronavirus has slowly taken you away
And I promise you all I'll love
And pray for everyone
Who's been suffering from coronavirus
Every day.

Todee residents attend training workshop

The Sustainable Urban and Rural Integration Development Organization (SURIDO) has concluded three days intensive training workshop on water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for 90 residents of Todee Statutory District, Montserrado county.

The participants dominated by women, acquired 'WASH sustainability skills' during the intensive training sessions held recently at the Administrative Hall, Nyehn Town in Todee Statutory District,

According to a WASH release, the first batch of 90 participants comprising local leaders and prominent citizens were trained in village saving Loan skills to ably sustain WASH facilities within some 15 towns where Surido operates in the district.

The second day session focused on sustainability skills to enable WASH-line ministries and local authorities to manage WASH facilities in the district, while the third day training session was attended by representatives of WASH-

line ministries, local leadership and civil society Organizations, focusing on Human Right Based Approach in WASH Advocacy.

Program Director Sippy M. Dugbeh, said SURIDO has constructed nine water wells in several schools and communities as well as rehabilitated 19 more water wells in Schools and communities during its two phrases of works in Todee district.

Director Dugbeh said Surido programs and projects are supported by Water aid-Liberia and the Church of Latter Day Saints Charity. He thanked both charity institutions for supporting Surido to bring relief to the needy.

He however expressed regret that Surido is being challenged to remedy the lacks of safe drinking water in Todee district where most residents are drinking from creeks due to lack of pipe borne water or sufficient wells.

He disclosed that a sac of water is being sold in Todee for L\$200.00 and a plastic bag costs L\$10.00, prices that most citizens cannot afford. -Press Release

PSG beat Barcelona to Wijnaldum capture



Georginio Wijnaldum has agreed a deal to join Paris Saint-Germain despite looking poised to link up with Barcelona for several months.

The Netherlands international has signed a three-year contract at Parc des Princes, with his salary said to have been increased dramatically by the Parisians.

Wijnaldum joined Liverpool from Newcastle United in 2016 and quickly established himself as a key

man for the Reds, only failing to appear in 11 Premier League matches over that five-year spell. Liverpool had tried to keep the 30-year-old but he acknowledged last month that the two parties had been unable to agree on a new contract.

It seemed a given he would subsequently turn up at Barcelona, with transfer links between the two emerging as early as last year when Ronald Koeman replaced Quique Setien in August.

He was expected to be Barca's third free transfer of the close

season after Sergio Aguero and Eric Garcia, with Memphis Depay - who, like Wijnaldum, played under Koeman for the Oranje - expected to follow.

But PSG have pulled off something of a coup, luring Wijnaldum to Paris as the club's patchy relationship with Barca is thrust into the spotlight again.

Wijnaldum bolsters PSG's central midfield options that already include Idrissa Gueye, Leandro Paredes, Ander Herrera, Danilo Pereira and Marco Verratti.

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Andre Onana's doping ban reduced following CAS hearing

Andre Onana's 12-month ban from football has been reduced to nine months following a hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

The Ajax goalkeeper's hearing took place earlier this month and after a four-hour online session and much consideration, the powers that be have declared that Onana will be allowed to resume training from 4 September onwards, before

being allowed to compete again from 4 November.

The decision was announced on Ajax's official website, and could help pave the way for a move to Arsenal this summer - with the faltering Premier League giants believed to have been awaiting the outcome of the hearing before deciding whether or not to pursue a deal with the Eredivisie champions.

Why was the ban reduced?

The three-person panel from CAS who heard Onana's appeal found that UEFA's original 12-



month suspension had been 'disproportionate and excessive'.

Onana had explained that Furosemide had been found in his body due to a mistake of his wife, who had inadvertently put her pills in the footballer's medicine box.

Onana's wife was in possession of the drug, which is not deemed a performance enhancing substance, because she was pregnant and had been prescribed it by a doctor.

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