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# No need for lockdown yet

## -Dr. Jallah



Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah



Cllr. Kanio Gba-Ghala

# Several Red Cross officials indicted

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# Continental News

## South Africa ex-president Zuma sentenced to jail

South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma has been sentenced to 15 months in jail by the country's highest court.

He has been given five days to hand himself in to police. Failing that, the police minister must order his arrest.

The sentence comes after the Constitutional Court found him guilty of contempt for defying its order to appear at an inquiry into corruption while he was president.

Mr Zuma's time in power, which ended in 2018, was dogged by graft allegations.

Businessmen were accused of conspiring with politicians to influence the decision-making process. The former president made one appearance at the inquiry into what has become known as "state capture" but then refused to appear subsequently. The inquiry - headed by Justice Raymond Zondo - asked the Constitutional Court to intervene.

Acting Chief Justice Sisi

Khampepe was damning in her ruling. Mr Zuma refused to come to the court to explain his actions, she said, and he "elected instead to make provocative, unmeritorious and vituperative statements that constituted a calculated effort to impugn the integrity of the judiciary."

"I am left with no option but to commit Mr Zuma to

imprisonment, with the hope that doing so sends an unequivocal message... the rule of law and the administration of justice prevails." The former president was not in court to hear the majority ruling and has repeatedly declared that he was the victim of a giant political conspiracy.

In a separate legal matter,

Mr Zuma pleaded not guilty last month in his corruption trial involving a \$5bn (£3bn) arms deal from the 1990s. This was a scathing, and hugely significant judgement against Jacob Zuma.

The Constitutional Court did not simply find him in contempt, but spelled out the many ways in which the former president had lied, sought to mislead the public, and ultimately tried to "destroy the rule of law".

The judges were clearly seeking to pre-empt the inevitable push back from Mr Zuma's supporters.

They say that he is the victim of a vast political conspiracy, and wonder why a former anti-apartheid hero who spent a decade on Robben

Island should be imprisoned, while key figures from South Africa's old racist white minority government remain free.

But while there may be some protests against the court's majority decision, many more South Africans are likely to welcome the judiciary's firm stance after years in which it seemed the rule of law was being eroded by a culture of high-level impunity.

The ruling will also have an impact within the governing ANC, and will strengthen the hand of President Cyril Ramaphosa while weakening those - often linked to Mr Zuma - who have also been implicated in the vast "state capture" corruption that Mr Ramaphosa has repeatedly vowed to expose and confront. BBC



Jacob Zuma stepped down from the presidency in February 2018

## Ethiopia rebels seize capital of devastated region

Rebel forces in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region have retaken its capital, Mekelle, sparking street celebrations and forcing officials to flee. Residents reported scenes of joy, with fireworks and thousands waving flags.

The government, which took Mekelle in November after Tigrayan rebels rejected political reforms and captured army bases, has

now called a "humanitarian ceasefire" in the region.

The fighting has left thousands dead and has pushed 350,000 towards famine.

More than two million people have been displaced. There had been recent reports of renewed fighting between fighters of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and government forces outside Mekelle. But a rapid offensive on Monday led to the unexpected recapture of the city

by the rebels, in what may be a possible turning point in the bitter conflict.

A statement released by what was termed the Government of the National State of Tigray praised a "stunning victory", saying Mekelle was "now under the complete control of the Tigray Defence Forces".

It calls on the people and rebel forces "to stay vigilant, relentless and on constant alert until Tigray is fully free of all invading forces". Rebel spokesperson Getachew Reda suggested there was little appetite for a truce, telling CNN: "Our objectives are degrading the enemy's fighting capabilities... We will not stop until Tigray has been cleared of any and all enemy forces. We will do whatever it takes."

He said on Tuesday that TPLF fighters were pursuing government forces to the south and east of Mekelle. One government official told Agence France-Presse the interim administration in Mekelle had decided to leave on Monday after rebels closed in "on every side", adding: "Everybody has left. The last ones left in the afternoon... The region doesn't have a

## State denies King Mswati has fled Eswatini

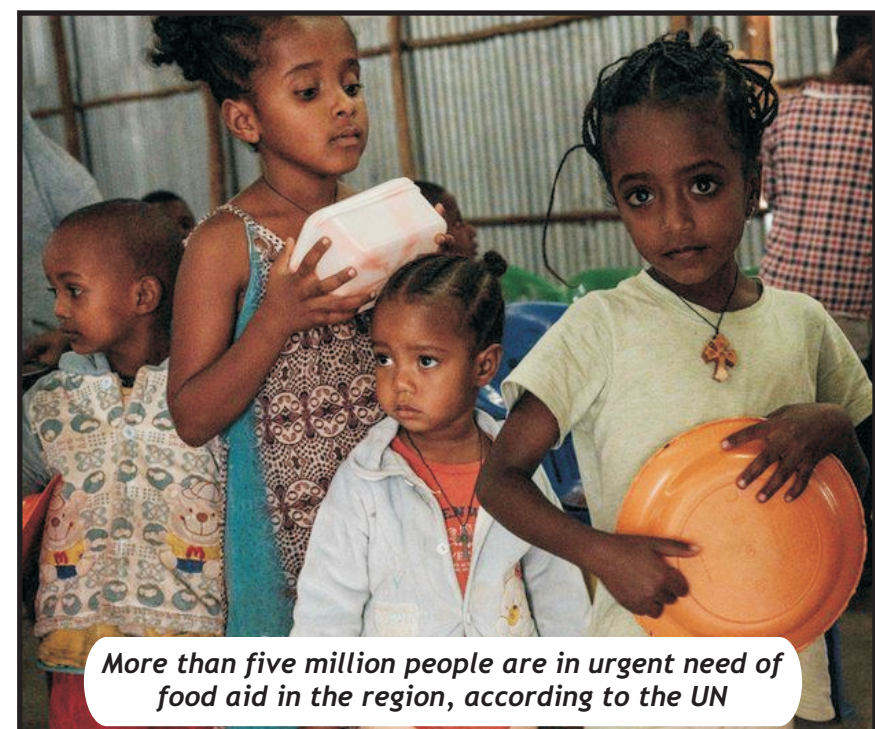


Protesters have been calling for King Mswati to initiate democratic reforms

Eswatini government has denied reports that King Mswati has fled the country following clashes between security forces and demonstrators. "I would like to take this opportunity to assure Eswatini and the international community that His Majesty King Mswati III is in the country and continues to lead in working with Government to advance the Kingdom's goals," a statement by acting Prime Minister Themba Masuku said.

The king was reported to

have fled the country following clashes between the security forces and demonstrators protesting against the absolute monarchy in the southern African country. Protests against the king who ascended to the throne 35 years ago, began at the weekend. The demonstrators are calling for King Mswati to step down as part of democratic reforms, including free elections. On Tuesday, the acting prime minister appealed for calm and restraint amid continued protests. BBC



More than five million people are in urgent need of food aid in the region, according to the UN



# EDITORIAL

## Depoliticizing the COVID-19 fight

**RECENT OFFER** BY the leader of the opposition Alternative National Congress Alexander B. Cummings to help the Government of Liberia in the current fight against the coronavirus, and subsequent acceptance by President George Manneh Weah is a welcome signal that should unite Liberians around a national cause void of politics.

**MR. CUMMINGS IN** a recent statement offered to work with the government in whatever reasonable way in tackling the resurgence, which experts say is the Delta variant.

**HE SAID THE** Cummings Africa Foundation is open to working with authorities of the Ministry of Health to identify urgent gaps in the national response to yield quick interventions. The ANC leader revealed that he has sent out SOS call to the international community, especially the United States, the European Union, and all friendly nations of the world, for much-needed help with vaccines, medical supplies, ventilators, and other support for hospitals and community clinics across the country.

**IN NO TIME,** President Weah accepted the offer from the opposition politician, indicating that he is willing to listen to and work with Mr. Cummings, void of political hindrance, adding "The coronavirus is no joke...Liberians are losing their lives every day to the plague. During a national crisis of this nature and magnitude, all hands of good citizens, void of political affiliation, are required on deck."

President Weah said if the help being offered by Cummings is without a political trace, it would go a long way in beefing up the health sector and finding a remedy to the unanticipated health crisis.

**WE WELCOME THIS** spirit of collaboration, particularly in times of national crisis such as the current health pandemic that has taken the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of Liberians, and millions around the world.

**WE CHALLENGE OTHER** opposition political leaders in the country to emulate the ANC leader's example, and the corresponding reception from the President in joining hands to kick coronavirus out of Liberia.

**IT IS IN** such critical period when the nation needs all of its best to stand up for a united cause. The gesture by both Weah and Cummings clearly demonstrate leadership that transcends selfish interest and blinded self-ego.

**LIBERIA IS OUR** common patrimony, and whether you are in position, opposition or no position, come out with strategies and tangible support to save the ship from sinking, because when this nation goes down or when the people perish, we would have no place to come home and politicians would have no one to lead.

**LASTLY, THE CORONAVIRUS** is deadly. It does not pick and choose. It has neither special friends nor foes, but rather moves on the rampage, destroying precious souls. Its next victim could be a current official or a politician aspiring to become the next President or our future scientists, doctors, educators, engineers, pastors and imams or social workers.

**The New Dawn**  
TRULY INDEPENDENT

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# COMMENTARY

By Michael J. Boskin

## Beware America's Soaring Public Debt

**S**TANFORD - America needs to rein in its soaring national debt. But US President Joe Biden seems eager to do just the opposite. The risks are too big to be ignored.

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, President Barack Obama ran the largest budget deficits of any president since World War II (adjusting for the automatic revenue and outlay effects of the business cycle). His successor, Donald Trump, surpassed him.

Biden plans to top them both. Though America's gross federal debt now stands at 107% of GDP - a post-WWII record - the Biden administration's 2022 budget has the country running by far the largest-ever peacetime deficits.

To be sure, I support policies to mitigate the short-run economic pain caused by a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic and help spur recovery, as long as the long-run cost is reasonable. But Biden's spending plans don't meet that condition. Instead, they would create huge deficits that persist long after the economy is back to full employment.

For the five fiscal years from 2022 to 2026, the Biden administration would run deficits of 5.9% of GDP, on average. That level was reached only once between 1947 and 2008 - in 1983, when the unemployment rate averaged above 10%. But the administration's projections put unemployment at 4.1% in 2022 and 3.8% from 2023 and onwards.

Biden claims his proposals will add only modestly to the public debt (which is set to grow anyway, owing primarily to ever-rising expenditure on Social Security and Medicare). But there are good reasons to believe otherwise.

For starters, the Biden administration hopes to offset higher spending by increasing corporate and capital-gains taxes. But these tax hikes are unlikely to pass an evenly divided US Senate as proposed. Moreover, such taxes are particularly harmful to growth, so if some version of them is enacted, the Biden administration will likely find that its revenue projections were overly optimistic.

Biden's spending proposals also include several expensive entitlements, such as improved home care for the elderly and people with disabilities, universal free preschool, and two years of free community college for young adults. History suggests that such programs are likely to become permanent, with costs that grow far in excess of projections.

Meanwhile, even as China and Russia build up their militaries, Biden has placed a lower priority on defense spending, with an increase that does not keep up with inflation. Under his administration's budget, defense spending will fall to its lowest share of GDP since before WWII.

Some argue that the US has nothing to worry about. Deficits supposedly don't much matter when an economy borrows in its own currency; the US Federal Reserve just needs to buy up the debt from the Treasury. And with government-borrowing rates lower than the projected

growth rate, the debt can be rolled over forever. Deficit finance becomes a "free lunch."

These claims merit considerable skepticism. The reasons why are highlighted in recent technical papers by me, my Hoover Institution colleague, John Cochrane, Greg Mankiw and Laurence Ball (of Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University, respectively), and Boston University's Larry Kotlikoff, along with his co-authors.

Historically, huge debt buildups have usually been followed by serious problems: sluggish growth, an uptick in inflation, a financial crisis, or all of them. We cannot be certain which problems will occur or what debt-to-GDP ratio will signal trouble for which countries. And the US does have the advantage of issuing the world's leading reserve currency. But inflation risks are rising - a trend that more deficit-financed spending will only accelerate.

Higher debt also increases the temptation to stoke inflation, particularly if foreigners hold a large share of it. The grossly simplistic assumption that debtors are rich and creditors are poor is likely to reinforce this temptation, especially in a political climate where many politicians and voters support tax and other policies that target the wealthy.

Yet another problem is that more public debt will eventually push interest rates higher, crowding out investment and harming the economy's potential growth. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) expects ten-year Treasuries to rise sooner and faster than the Biden budget does.

While large changes in interest rates are unlikely in the near term, the fact is that financial markets and government and private forecasters have often failed to anticipate them - for example, during the inflation of the 1970s and the disinflation of the early 1980s. After 2008, all grossly underestimated how long the Fed would keep its target interest rate at zero.

Sooner or later, there will be another crisis. If the US government continues to expand its debt now, lack of fiscal capacity could hamstring its policy responses when the economy really needs the support. In the meantime, the advanced-economy debt deluge is making it harder for poor countries with limited debt capacity to respond adequately to the COVID-19 crisis, worsening the human tragedy.

Despite all of this, the argument that the US can finance its debts for free is pervasive, and it is encouraging elected officials to disregard fiscal discipline. This raises the risk that the Biden administration will not only spend too much; it will effectively throw money away, by funding projects with low - even negative - returns, much as the Obama administration did with its 2009 "stimulus."

The content of Biden's spending proposals is not encouraging on this score. Consider the \$2 trillion American Jobs Plan. It is billed as an "infrastructure bill," yet only a small percentage of the spending it includes would go toward traditional infrastructure. And even here, the CBO estimates a rate of return half that of the private-sector investment that will be crowded out.



# OPINION

By Paola Subacchi

## In Bitcoin We Trust?

**L**ONDON - Many regard the market for Bitcoin - the world's leading cryptocurrency - as a game of winners and losers played out among hedge funds, amateur investors, geeks, and criminals. The huge risk inherent in a highly volatile anonymous digital currency is best left to those who understand the game well, or who don't really care because they can mitigate the risk or absorb any losses. But Bitcoin recently has become more attractive for countries and individuals with limited access to conventional payment systems - that is, those least equipped to manage the underlying risk.

Earlier this month, El Salvador became the first country to adopt Bitcoin as legal tender, enacting legislation that will take effect in September. This means that Bitcoin can be used to pay for goods and services throughout the country, and recipients are legally obliged to accept it.

Salvadorans are not new to this type of monetary experiment. The US dollar became legal tender in El Salvador in 2001 and is the currency used in domestic transactions. At that time, the government of President Francisco Flores allowed the dollar to circulate freely alongside the national currency, the colón, at a fixed exchange rate.

Dollar advocates argued that the expected benefits of macroeconomic stability would outweigh El Salvador's loss of economic sovereignty, monetary independence, and even seigniorage - the difference between the cost of producing coins and banknotes and their face value. But purchasing power suddenly plummeted and left the economy even more dependent on remittances, which have averaged about 20% of GDP per year over the past two decades.

Using Bitcoin as legal tender will exacerbate the monetary constraints that dollarization revealed - notably, the lack of an independent macroeconomic-institutional framework around which to shape domestic policies. Moreover, Bitcoin is much more volatile than the dollar. Between June 8-15, its value swung between \$32,462 and \$40,993, and in the period from May 15 to June 15, it ranged from \$34,259 to \$49,304. Such wide fluctuations - and the fact that they are entirely market-driven, with no scope for policymakers to manage the swings - make Bitcoin an unsuitable instrument for macroeconomic stabilization.

El Salvador's president, Nayib Bukele, tweeted that Bitcoin will facilitate remittance transfers and considerably reduce transaction costs. The fees that migrants must pay to send their money home are scandalously high, despite many calls by the United Nations and the G20 to reduce them. According to the World Bank, the average global cost of sending \$200 internationally is approximately \$13, or 6.5%, well above the Sustainable Development Goal target of 3%.

Nonetheless, in 2020, low- and middle-income countries received remittances of \$540 billion - only slightly less than the 2019 total of \$548 billion, and much larger than these countries' inflows of foreign direct investment (\$259 billion in 2020) and overseas development assistance (\$179 billion in 2020). Reducing the fees to 2% could increase remittances by as much as \$16 billion per year.

The large but globally fragmented remittance business relies on electronic transfers via commercial banks' payment systems, and banks charge hefty fees for the use of this infrastructure and the benefit of a safe and reliable international network. But high fees are not the only issue. Many migrants don't have a bank account in the country where they work, and their families back home may also be among the 1.7 billion unbanked people worldwide. Furthermore, some migrants may need to transfer money to countries that either are not integrated into the international payment system or are restricted in their ability to receive cross-border transfers - for example, Syria or Cuba.

Bukele is right about the need to challenge this system, including by providing low-cost and low-risk alternatives. But Bitcoin is the wrong tool. Yes, it allows people to transfer value directly and globally, without the costly third-party intermediation. But its volatility makes it at best an asset - and an extremely risky store of value - rather than a means of exchange. The risk of a sudden drop in its price means that migrants and their families back home can never be sure about the amount transferred.

Rather than dismiss El Salvador's Bitcoin adoption as just another example of the crypto craze, we should reflect on why many people around the world are willing to embrace cryptocurrencies for non-speculative purposes. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that the current international financial system serves them either poorly or not at all.

Innovations in digital money, such as the M-Pesa mobile money service in Africa, have made significant inroads into many developing countries' payment systems. But more needs to be done to provide the infrastructure and regulatory frameworks to support digital money. For now, the terrain remains patchy.

Coordinated cross-border policies are urgently needed to ensure that Bitcoin and its variants don't do more harm than good in developing countries. Unless both the public and private sectors embrace critical reforms and make basic banking services available to all at low costs, people and governments will increasingly be attracted by Bitcoin and other low-cost, high-risk, and murky alternatives to traditional banking.

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# O-PED

By Tom Brookes,  
Gernot Wagner

## Economics Needs a Climate Revolution

**B**RUSSELS/NEW YORK - Nowhere are the limitations of neoclassical economic thinking - the DNA of economics as it is currently taught and practiced - more apparent than in the face of the climate crisis. While there are fresh ideas and models emerging, the old orthodoxy remains deeply entrenched. Change cannot come fast enough.

The economics discipline has failed to understand the climate crisis - let alone provide effective policy solutions for it - because most economists tend to divide problems into small, manageable pieces. Rational people, they are wont to say, think at the margin. What matters is not the average or totality of one's actions but rather the very next step, weighed against the immediate alternatives.

Such thinking is indeed rational for small discrete problems. Compartmentalization is necessary for managing competing demands on one's time and attention. But marginal thinking is inadequate for an all-consuming problem touching every aspect of society.

Economists also tend to equate rationality with precision. The discipline's power over public discourse and policymaking lies in its implicit claim that those who cannot compute precise benefits and costs are somehow irrational. This allows economists - and their models - to ignore pervasive climate risks and uncertainties, including the possibility of climatic tipping points and societal responses to them. And when one considers economists' fixation with equilibrium models, the mismatch between the climate challenge and the discipline's current tools becomes too glaring to ignore.

Yes, a return to equilibrium - getting "back to normal" - is an all-too-human preference. But it is precisely the opposite of what is needed - rapidly phasing out fossil fuels - to stabilize the world's climate.

These limitations are reflected in benefit-cost analyses of cutting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The traditional thinking suggests a go-slow path for cutting CO2. The logic seems compelling: the cost of damage caused by climate change, after all, is incurred in the future, while the costs of climate action occur today. The Nobel prize-winning verdict is that we should delay necessary investment in a low-carbon economy to avoid hurting the current high-carbon economy.

To be clear, a lot of new thinking has gone into showing that even this conventional logic would call for significantly more climate action now, because the costs are often overestimated while the potential (even if uncertain) benefits are underestimated. The young researchers advancing this work must walk a near-impossible tightrope, because they cannot publish what they believe to be their best work (based on the most defensible assumptions) without invoking the outmoded neoclassical model to demonstrate the validity of new ideas.

The very structure of academic economics all but guarantees that marginal thinking continues to dominate. The most effective way to introduce new ideas into the peer-reviewed academic literature is to follow something akin to an 80/20-rule: stick to the established script for the most part; but try to push the envelope by probing one dubious assumption at a time. Needless to say, this makes it extremely difficult to change the overall frame of reference, even when those who helped establish the standard view are looking well beyond it themselves.

Consider the case of Kenneth J. Arrow, who shared a Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1972 for showing how marginal actions taken by self-interested individuals can improve societal welfare. That pioneering work cemented economists' equilibrium thinking. But Arrow lived for another 45 years, and he spent that time moving past his earlier work. In the 1980s, for example, he was instrumental in founding the Santa Fe Institute, which is dedicated to what has since become known as complexity science - an attempt to move beyond the equilibrium mindset he had helped establish.

Because equilibrium thinking underpins the traditional climate-economic models that were developed in the 1990s, these models assume that there are tradeoffs between climate action and economic growth. They imagine a world where the economy simply glides along a Panglossian path of progress. Climate policy might still be worthwhile, but only if we are willing to accept costs that will throw the economy off its chosen path.

Against the backdrop of this traditional view, recent pronouncements by the International Monetary Fund and the International Energy Agency are nothing short of revolutionary. Both institutions have now concluded that ambitious climate action leads to higher growth and more jobs even in the near term.

The logic is straightforward: climate policies create many more jobs in clean-energy sectors than are lost in fossil-fuel sectors, reminding us that investment is the flipside of cost. That is why the proposal for a \$2 trillion infrastructure package in the United States could be expected to spur higher net economic activity and employment. Perhaps more surprising is the finding that carbon pricing alone appears to reduce emissions without hurting jobs or overall economic growth. The problem with carbon taxes or emissions trading is that real-world policies are not reducing emissions fast enough and therefore will need to be buttressed by regulation.

There is no excuse for continuing to adhere to an intellectual paradigm that has served us so badly for so long. The standard models have been used to reject policies that would have helped turn the tide many years ago, back when the climate crisis still could have been addressed with marginal changes to the existing economic system. Now, we no longer have the luxury of being able to settle for incremental change.

The good news is that rapid change is happening on the political front, owing not least to the shrinking cost of climate action. The bad news is that the framework of neoclassical economics is still blocking progress. The discipline is long overdue for its own tipping point toward new modes of thinking commensurate with the climate challenge.

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## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

# CPJ, rights groups call on EU to uphold Burundi Human rights commitments, including press freedom

*In this February 3, 2016 photo, policemen and soldiers patrol the streets after a grenade attack of Burundi's capital Bujumbura. CPJ and human rights groups are calling on the EU to uphold human rights benchmarks set in 2016 when the EU suspended direct financial support to the country in the wake of the 2015 political crisis. (Reuters/Jean Pierre Aime Harerimama)*

By Tom Gibson/CPJ EU Representative  
on June 21, 2021

The Committee to Protect Journalists and other human rights groups on Monday June 21, 2021 called on European Union High Representative Josep Borrell and EU foreign ministers in a letter to uphold benchmarks set in 2016 when the EU suspended direct financial support to the Burundian government over its failure to protect human rights, democratic principles, and the rule of law in the wake of the country's 2015 political crisis.

These benchmarks, according to the Council of the European Union's 2016 decision, included an end to the intimidation of journalists, the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against journalists, and the assurance that journalists are able to work in complete safety in the country.

The EU must now use its leverage to seek guarantees from the authorities that all journalists can operate freely and safely in Burundi, and call for effective investigations into the 2016 disappearance of Iwacu journalist Jean Bigirimana as well as other serious abuses of press freedom, the letter said.

## Read the full letter below

Open Letter

The EU Should Honor Its Commitments to Human Rights in Burundi

Dear EU High Representative/Vice-President,  
Dear Foreign Ministers of the EU member states,

As the Council of the European Union (EU) and its preparatory bodies review the situation in Burundi and related EU policy, the undersigned organizations wish to express their concern that the EU and some of its member states appear willing to overlook the lack of meaningful human rights progress and widespread impunity for past and ongoing serious human rights violations in the country.

Despite a series of recent one-off gestures by the Burundian government regarding public freedoms, the Council should maintain its position that sustainable and tangible progress regarding the opening of political and civic space and the fight against impunity are necessary to address fundamental human rights concerns in Burundi. The EU should not rely on promises of human rights reforms from the Burundian authorities, and insist instead that they meet concrete benchmarks proving their commitment to ensuring accountability and embarking on a human rights-respecting path.

Ongoing Human Rights Violations and Widespread Impunity

In March 2016, in light of Burundi's failure to respect its obligations under the Cotonou agreement relating to human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, the EU decided to suspend direct financial support to the Burundian government. This decision was taken in response to killings, torture, enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests of thousands of Burundians, amidst a political crisis around the contested third mandate of late President

Pierre Nkurunziza. The police violently cracked down on protestors, and after a failed coup attempt in May 2015, several radio stations were attacked and forced to close. More than 400,000 people, including most leading civil society activists and independent journalists, fled the country.

The UN Commission of Inquiry on Burundi has stated that it believes crimes against humanity were committed in Burundi since 2015, possibly even during the 2020 election period.

On 25 May 2020, Évariste Ndayishimiye, the ruling party candidate, was declared the winner of the presidential elections, which took place in a context of widespread repression; several opposition members were killed and many arrested. Access to social media was blocked and there were no independent international observers.

During Ndayishimiye's first year in power, there have been some limited improvements. For example, the president pardoned four journalists arrested in 2019, initiated a dialogue with media representatives in Burundi - leading to the lifting of

government has produced a technical roadmap regarding human rights and other reforms, but it is vague and noncommittal and avoids sensitive issues - notably dealing with impunity for the many crimes committed since 2015.

No Sustainable Progress on 2016 Benchmarks

In the annex to its 2016 decision, the Council included a "schedule of commitments", on which it expected specific and concrete progress from the Burundian government before lifting the EU's restrictive measures. The Burundian government has failed to implement reforms in most of these areas, almost all of which remain relevant today:

Ndayishimiye has made efforts to rein in members of the youth league of the ruling party, the Imbonerakure, leading to a reduction in their involvement in human rights abuses in many provinces. However, in other provinces, they continue to perform law enforcement duties - despite having no authority to do so - with the explicit encouragement of government and ruling party officials. Imbonerakure, some of whom are armed, have arrested, ill-treated and killed suspected opponents, sometimes in collaboration with, or with the support of, local government officials, police or intelligence agents. Some of their members have been involved in fighting Burundian armed opposition groups in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, as recently as in May 2021.

Despite repeated promises, there has been only a limited reopening of private media stations closed by the government in 2015. Since the EU's 2016 decision, only Radio Bonesha has re-opened, in 2021, after signing a working agreement with the National Communication Council (CNC), the state body that regulates the media. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Voice of America remain suspended since 2018. In 2021, the media landscape in Burundi remains severely restricted. The few independent media outlets that are allowed to operate exercise self-censorship and avoid controversial issues. Journalists are regularly threatened or harassed by government and ruling party officials. There have been no

credible investigations into the 2016 enforced disappearance of Iwacu journalist Jean Bigirimana or other serious human rights violations against journalists.

Independent civil society organizations and human rights defenders are unable to operate freely and safely in Burundi. The suspension of several civil society organizations in 2015 has not been repealed. The human rights defenders who left Burundi for their safety in 2015 and 2016 have been unable to return; their organizations have been closed down or suspended, destroying Burundi's once vibrant human rights movement. Most civil society organizations operating inside Burundi refrain from directly criticizing the government. Human rights defender Germain Rukuki is serving a 32-year prison sentence, and a verdict on his latest appeal is overdue. Nestor Nibitanga, another human rights defender sentenced to five years in prison in 2018, was among those granted a presidential pardon in 2021.



some restrictions - and pardoned more than 5,000 other prisoners (although only around 2,600 had been released by late May).

But many of Ndayishimiye's repeated promises to deliver justice and promote political tolerance remain unfulfilled. The president has appointed ruling party hardliners to key positions, including Gervais Ndirakobuca, the current minister of interior, community development and public security, who is under EU sanctions. Furthermore, while reports of serious human rights violations have decreased, human rights groups continue to document cases of torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary arrests, and unidentified dead bodies are still found in different parts of the country.

Ndayishimiye has shown greater openness than his predecessor towards the EU. In February 2021, the Burundian government and representatives of the EU and its member states in Burundi resumed a political dialogue, on hold since 2016. Foreign minister Albert Shingiro visited Europe in April. The Burundian government has produced a technical roadmap



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

President Weah fails to exercise leadership

-Dr. Cassell
By Lewis S. Teh

Amid speculation about of an imminent lockdown of the entire country as a result of the third wave of the deadly Corona virus, the

Roberts International Airport, the nation's main gateway to the world.

Dr. Cassell in a news conference Monday, June 28, 2021, said health workers in charge COVID testing at the RIA were induced to allow travelers from high risk countries to enter Liberia.

yet real that while we made so much progress in containing the incident rate of Covid-19, over the past several months which largely has been due to lessons on intervention learned from the past Ebola epidemic in Liberia", he laments.

He says however when those healthcare intervention and public health measures are compromised by greed at the Covid testing entity, as evidenced by reliable and credible sources of individuals travelling from India, considered a high zone, bribed their way from testing for fear of being pronounced positive, which has consequently resulted to catastrophic effect on the lives of the public.

He adds that for countries such as Liberia with poor health infrastructure where many of its citizens cannot afford cost of food and medical services amid a public health crisis of this magnitude can quicken the result of the devastating medical complication and a significant loss of lives.

The PLP leader says it is not enough to hold an emergency cabinet meeting but



political leader of the opposition People Liberation Party (PLP) Dr. Daniel Cassell criticizes President George Weah for his alleged failure to exercise leadership at the

He accuses President Weah of failure to hold those in charge of testing at the airport liable for 'criminal negligence' in executing their assigned duties.

"It is very unfortunate but so

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

Lofa shuts down Covid - hit daycare

-As cases hit 29 in the county

A report reaching the NewDawn newspaper says the Lofa County School System on Tuesday, 29 June shut down the Liberty Daycare, a newly established school in Voinjama, after it was found that test results of two kids from the same family returned positive of Coronavirus.

A correspondent for local broadcaster Truth FM told the station's afternoon show State

been infected with the virus and he may have possibly transmitted it to them.

The report suggests that the kids have already recovered from the virus, but the county school system has immediately shut down the daycare, noting that the report about the kids being infected "actually brought fear" in Lofa.

One of the affected kids is from the first grade class which is said to have 21 students, while



GOL restricts funeral services

-as COVID-19 rages

By Jonathan Browne

In an effort to tightening health protocol and COVID-19 preventive measures, the Government of Liberia thru the Ministry of Health issues an addendum to recent Revised Covid-19 National Guidelines with immediate effect, restricting all funeral services only at funeral homes until otherwise.

funeral homes, but in Mosques for funeral ritual before burial, would respond or comply with the addendum.

However, the additional restriction comes amid daily increase of confirmed COVID-19 cases of the Delta variant, one of the latest strains of the deadly virus.

As of 10:00 pm Monday, June 28, 2021 the Ministry of Health thru the Incident Management System, announced 106 new confirmed cases, four (4) new

deaths and 41 new recoveries.

Monday's statistics brings to total, 3,900 confirmed cases in Liberia, including 1,458 Active Confirmed Cases, 127 deaths, and 2,315 recoveries.

Broken down, Montserrado County has the highest number of confirmed cases of 3,188 with 76 deaths followed by Margibi County, 165 confirmed cases with eight deaths; Nimba, 86 confirmed cases with 15 deaths; Bong 84

of the Nation on Tuesday that the infected kids were still in school when their test result arrived, indicating that they were positive.

As of Tuesday, the County Health Team in Lofa was said to have recorded 29 confirmed cases of Covid - 19, and that two of them had already recovered while 27 remained active cases.

The father of the two infected kids is said to have

the other is in kindergarten class which is said to have 14 students.

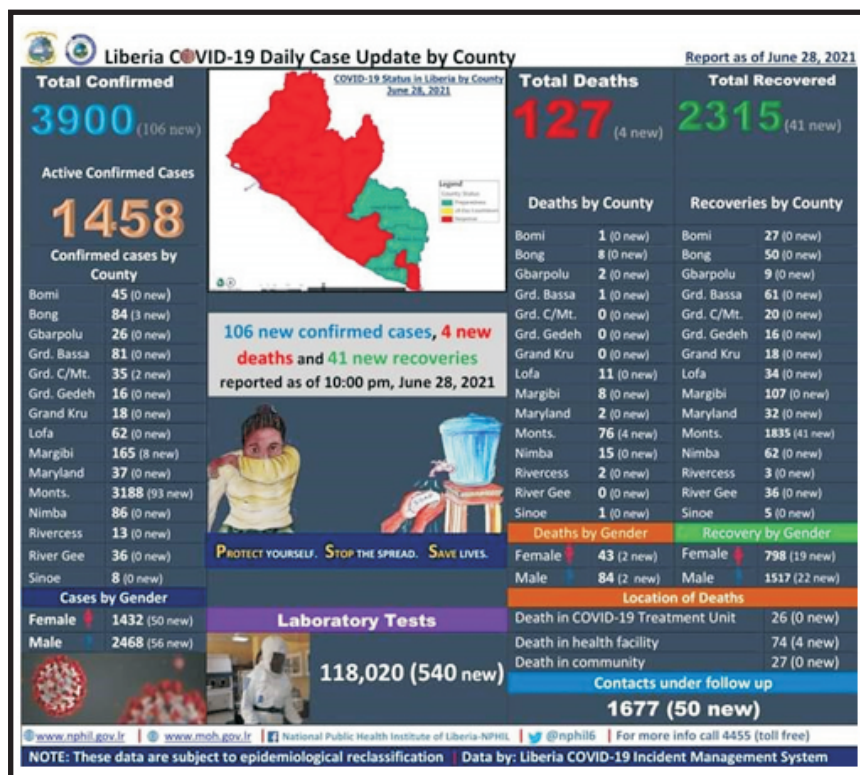
Liberty Daycare is reported to have about 104 students, but nearby is also a bigger school called Akoi Royal Academy that is said to have about thousand students remains operational along with other schools. The county health team in Lofa is reported to be following up with the students.

This is in addition to the 20 persons attendance regulation already in place across the country.

The Health Ministry gives no detail on what necessitated this addendum in the face of already stringent measures announced, and raises concern that something might have happened at a home funeral or church funeral service.

Liberia's Minister of Health, doctor Wilhemina S. Jallah, signed the addendum, dated June 29, 2021.

It is not clear how Liberians of the Muslim religion, who do not take their dead relatives to



confirmed cases with eight deaths; and Lofa, 62 confirmed cases with 11 deaths, among others.

Yesterday, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ranked Liberia's COVID-19 crisis to Level 4, indicating that the West African nation has Very High Level of COVID-19 at the moment.

Accordingly, the CDC issued a travel advisory, cautioning U.S. citizens to avoid travel to Liberia for now.

The advisory posted Monday, June 28, 2021 on the website of the Embassy of the United States near Monrovia says if a U.S. citizen must travel to Liberia, said traveler should get fully vaccinated

before coming.

However, the CDC warns that because of the current situation in Liberia, even fully vaccinated travelers may be at risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 variants.

The Government of Liberia on Thursday, June 17, 2021 placed restriction on travelers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the last 14 days, country said to be highly infected with the Delta variant that is ravaging Liberia.

However, critics say the travel ban is belated, as travelers from these highly affected countries, particularly India that suffered over one million deaths from new variant

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**MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

**MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

**Snowe on ECOWAS Mission -Visits ECOMIG in Gambia**

The Chairman of the Political Affairs and Security Committee of the ECOWAS Parliament, Senator Edwin Snowe has paid an official visit to the Headquarters of the ECOWAS Military Intervention in The

The ECIWAS security envoy discussed among other things the restoration of democracy to The Gambia with emphasis on the upcoming elections in December.

The visit of the ECOWAS Chairman of the Political Affairs

Head of the ECOWAS Military Intervention in The Gambia provided an introduction on ECOMIG's mandate; an overview of the Political and Security situations; the scope of ECOMIG deployment, as well as activities, achievements, challenges, and way forward in restoring democracy to The Gambia.

He disclosed that the constitution review process, truth, reconciliation, and reparation processes, as well as the voters' registration exercise are activities that are characterizing the political landscape of the country. He emphasized that the contending issue relative to the draft constitution is whether or not the first five years of President Barrow's term should be considered as the start of his mandate. He also disclosed that the TRRC ended its public hearing on 28th May 2021 and is expected to deliver its report in early July of this year.

Addressing the security situation in the country, the Head of Troops divulged that the security situation throughout the country is relatively calm but remains unpredictable. He reiterated ECOMIG's support for the conduct of operation ZERO CRIME by a taskforce of local

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Gambia or ECOMIG, ahead of that country's election in December.

Snowe was accompanied by the Special Representative of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Ambassador Vabah K. Gayflor.

and Security Committee was commissioned by the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Rt. Hon. Dr. Sidie Mohamed Tunis.

Briefing the Chair on Political Affairs and Special Representative of the President of the ECOWAS Commission, the

**Senate confirms Tonpo as Deputy Minister**

By Ethel A Tweh

The Liberian Senate Tuesday, June 29, 2021 constituted itself into a committee of a whole and unanimously confirmed its outgoing director of Press Mr. Jarlawah A. Tonpo as Deputy Minister for Press and Public Affairs in the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, replacing former Minister Eugene Farhgon.

Mr. Tonpo had worked at the Legislature for 17 years first as Media Consultant from 2004 to 2005 during the NTLA, as Deputy Director of Press and Public Affairs for the Liberian Senate from 2006 to 2011, and as Director of Press for the Senate from 2011 to 2021.

President George Weah nominated him early Thursday, June 24, 2021 as Deputy Minister for Public Affairs, replaces former Deputy Minister Eugene Fahngon, who was relieved of his duties on Wednesday's night.

Currently, Mr. Tonpo holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication and

Master's of Arts degree in International Relations from the University of Liberia and currently a Master's candidate in Public Administration from the University of Liberia.

Recently, President George Manneh Weah relieved with immediate effect Deputy Information Minister for Press and Public Affairs at the Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism, Eugene Fahngon of his

post. Mr. Fahngon's removal is as a result of spreading false information regarding the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic currently ravaging the country.

The President warned that he would not hesitate to take similar action against any other official of government engaged in activities that undermine established government policy.



Mr. Jarlawah A. Tonpo

**Cummings Foundation**

Starts from back page

COVID, but it drastically reduces the severity and your chances of death."

The assessment visits come days after President George Manneh Weah welcomed Mr. Cummings' offer to help the government curbs the spread of the coronavirus here.

"As the COVID crisis worsens with an increase in infections and several deaths being reported, I am pleased to share that the Cummings Africa Foundation will get involved to help resolve this crisis," a statement released over the weekend revealed.

The foundation disclosed that a small team including Dr. Wede Brownell, the Country Director of the Cummings Africa Foundation, Mr. Cummings and his Chief of Staff Atty. Moriah Yeakula paid a visit to the Fidelity Hospital on 20th Street, Sinkor, Monrovia.

"We were pleased to meet with the administrators and are grateful for their cooperation," the statement added.

The ANC political leader warned Liberians that COVID is raging but it can be defeated "if we follow the rules and guidelines as provided by Ministry of Health."

He urged that people must continue to wear their masks, wash their hands frequently, stay away from crowds, take the COVID tests and vaccines and go to the nearest health

center when they feel sick.

He continued that just as Liberians defeated Ebola together and collectively, they can defeat COVID, saying they must stay safe, follow the rules and also pray for the country.

Recently Mr. Cummings made an international appeal for help as the coronavirus rages in Liberia, and also offered to work with the government in whatever reasonable way in tackling the resurgence, which experts say, is the Delta variant.

He said the Cummings Africa Foundation is open to working with authorities at the Ministry of Health to identify urgent gaps in the national response to yield quick interventions.

Cummings in his statement made a series of recommendations to the Weah administration to take siege of the health situation which include to recast the budget to provide funding for the purchase of beds, personal protective equipment (PPEs), masks, vaccines, ventilators, oxygen, and massive awareness.

Cummings also proposed the need to solicit additional support from Liberians in the diaspora and the donor community; increase the hazard pay of existing health workers and employ more health workers and employ more health workers contact tracers and to immediately close all schools and ensure the completion of the semester from home, pending the end of the crisis.

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**GOL restricts funeral**

Cont'd from page 6

of the virus entered Liberia between April and May this year in their numbers when Britain, France and other Western nations immediately imposed restriction.

Health Minister Jallah re-emphasized compulsory wearing of masks in public, social distancing (3 feet) regular hands washing, and use of sanitizers, among other precautionary steps.

Schools and churches are allowed to remain open, but with strict adherence to the measures outline above, while public gatherings at wedding, party, night vigils/wakes and funerals are restricted 20 attendees with social

distancing observed.

Banks are mandated to allow 10 customers at a time in the services areas, while customers waiting outside in queue stand three feet apart.

Public transport, particularly taxis are required to carry three passengers in the back seat with one in the front seat to any destination, while tricycles carry two passengers and motorcycles one to avoid close contact.

Doctor Jallah suspends transportation of confirmed COVID-19 dead bodies in and out of Liberia during this latest surge and asks airlines and funeral homes to comply accordingly.



# Français

## COVID-19 : Les sénateurs proposent un verrouillage total du pays

Les sénateurs Jonathan Boy Charles Sogbie et NyonbleeKarnaga-Lawrence, respectivement des comtés de River Gee et de Grand Bassa, appellent le président George MannehWeah à procéder à un verrouillage total du pays afin de contenir la propagation rapide de la Maladie du coronavirus.

Dans son poste sur Facebook ce week-end, la sénatrice Karnaga-Lawrence, présidente nationale de la Collaboration des partis politiques de l'opposition (CPP), a exhorté les citoyens à acheter assez de nourriture en vue d'un éventuel verrouillage, soulignant qu'il y a eu plus de décès ces derniers temps que lors de la première crise.

« Préparez vos familles à un confinement dans un jour ou deux, procurez-vous des aliments non périssables (riz, farine, plantain vert, sucre, lait, huile, sardines, viande, beurre, semoule de maïs, serments) et faites tout pour rester à la maison », a-t-elle

déclaré.

« Prévenons !! Arrêtez de faire de la politique avec un virus mortel. Le virus ne fait pas de discrimination, plus de nouvelles sur les décès aujourd'hui encore, nous nous soucions plus de prendre la bonne décision que la décision populaire, de verrouiller et de contrôler la propagation », indique le message.

Pour sa part, le sénateur Sogbie a déclaré que le pays, en

particulier les comtés qui ne sont pas encore touchés par le coronavirus, devrait être verrouillé pour éviter la propagation continue du virus.

Il a déploré qu'il y ait plus de décès dans le pays, bien qu'il n'y ait aucune preuve statistique pour lier ces décès au virus. Il a cependant déclaré que la possibilité que

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## COVID-19 : Le Libéria atteint le niveau d'alerte le plus élevé, le niveau 4

Le Centre américain de Contrôle et de Prévention des Maladies (CDC) a revu à la hausse le niveau d'alerte de la COVID-19 au Libéria, le situant au niveau 4, le niveau le plus élevé, selon la catégorisation du CDC. Il a ainsi demandé aux citoyens américains d'éviter de s'y rendre pour le moment. Le communiqué publié le lundi 28 juin 2021 sur le site Web de l'ambassade des États-Unis près de Monrovia indique que tout citoyen américain qui veut se rendre au Libéria doit se faire vacciner avant de s'y rendre. Le CDC a pourtant mis en garde qu'en raison de la situation actuelle au Libéria, même les voyageurs entièrement vaccinés peuvent être à risque de contracter et de propager d'autres variantes de la COVID-19.

La COVID-19 du Libéria a été identifiée comme la variante Delta, l'une des souches les plus récentes du virus trouvée en Inde et en Grande-Bretagne.

Les statistiques de l'Institut national de santé publique du Libéria du 26 juin 2021 portent le nombre total de cas confirmés dans le pays à 3

736 ; cas confirmés actifs : 1342 ; décès : 120, guéris : 2274 et tests effectués : 117.221, entre autres.

"Les voyageurs doivent suivre les recommandations ou les exigences au Libéria, notamment porter un masque et respecter une distance de 6 pieds les uns des autres", a indiqué l'avis de communiqué.

Le CDC classe généralement la gravité du virus en quatre niveaux : Niveau 1 : Faible, Niveau 2 : Modéré, Niveau 3 : Élevé et Niveau 4 : Très élevé. Il n'a pas détaillé comment le Libéria a passé les trois premiers

niveaux pour atteindre le niveau 4.

« Les voyageurs doivent suivre les recommandations ou les exigences au Libéria, notamment porter un masque et rester à 6 pieds les uns des autres. » Le Libéria, le Madagascar et la Guinée-Bissau sont trois pays d'Afrique, parmi les pays d'Asie, des Caraïbes, d'Amérique du Sud et d'Amérique latine classés au niveau 4.

La Sierra Leone, la Guinée, le Nigeria, le Ghana, le Burkina Faso, la Gambie, le Mali, le



## Éditorial

### Dépolitiser la lutte contre le COVID-19

La récente offre du leader de l'opposition et l'acceptation ultérieure du président George MannehWeah concernant la lutte contre la propagation de la COVID-19 sont les bienvenues, ce sont là des gestes susceptibles d'unir les Libériens autour d'une cause nationale, loin des débats politiques qui les divisent.

Dans une récente déclaration, M. Cummings a proposé de travailler avec le gouvernement de quelque manière raisonnable que ce soit pour lutter contre la résurgence d'une autre souche du coronavirus intitulée Delta au Libéria.

Il a indiqué que la Fondation Cummings Africa est disposée à travailler avec les autorités du ministère de la Santé pour identifier les lacunes dans la réponse nationale afin de procéder à des interventions rapides. Le leader politique de l'ANC a laissé entendre qu'il a lancé un SOS à la communauté internationale, en particulier aux États-Unis, à l'Union européenne et à toutes les nations amies du monde, pour que le pays bénéficie d'aide en matière de vaccins, de fournitures médicales, de ventilateurs et d'autres soutiens aux hôpitaux et aux dispensaires communautaires à travers le pays.

Sans perdre de temps, le président Weah a accepté l'offre, se disant prêt à écouter et à travailler avec M. Cummings, sans aucune entrave politique. « Le coronavirus n'est pas une blague... Beaucoup de Libériens meurent chaque jour à cause de cette maladie. Quand il y a une crise nationale de cette nature et de cette ampleur, toutes les bonnes volontés sont les bienvenues, peu importe leur affiliation politique. »

Le président Weah s'est dit convaincu que l'offre de Cummings n'a aucun arrière-goût politique et qu'elle contribuera grandement à renforcer le secteur de la santé et à trouver une solution à la crise sanitaire.

Nous nous félicitons de cet esprit de collaboration, en particulier en période de crise nationale telle que la pandémie sanitaire actuelle qui a déjà coûté la vie à des centaines, voire des milliers de Libériens, et des millions dans le monde.

Nous exhortons les autres leaders politiques de l'opposition d'imiter l'exemple du leader de l'ANC et la réaction positive subséquente du président. Il est temps qu'ils se donnent la main pour bouter le coronavirus hors du Libéria.

Dans une période aussi critique que celle-ci, la nation a besoin de toutes les forces pour sa défense. Les gestes de Weah et de Cummings mettent en exergue clairement un leadership exemplaire qui transcende tout intérêt égoïste et tout ego aveugle.

Le Libéria est notre patrimoine commun. Peu importe le camp auquel on appartient, que l'on soit à l'opposition ou fasse partie de la majorité au pouvoir, il est temps qu'on propose des stratégies et qu'on soutienne de manière tangible la lutte contre cet ennemi commun afin de sauver le navire d'un naufrage, car si cette nation coule ou le peuple périt, à quoi servira la politique ?

Enfin, le coronavirus est mortel. Il ne choisit pas. Il n'a ni amis ni ennemis spéciaux, mais se déchaîne plutôt, détruisant des âmes précieuses. Sa prochaine victime pourrait être un fonctionnaire actuel ou un politicien aspirant à devenir le prochain président ou nos futurs scientifiques, médecins, éducateurs, ingénieurs, pasteurs et imams ou travailleurs sociaux.



# Français

## COVID-19 : Les sénateurs

ces décès soient dus au COVID-19 n'est pas moins évidente.

Selon Sogbie, en raison de l'urgence du virus mortel, le Sénat a accepté la proposition du budget de 2 millions de dollars américains pour la lutte contre le virus.

Bien que le ministère de la Santé n'ait pas fourni de détails sur la façon dont l'argent devrait être dépensé, Sogbie a noté que la valeur monétaire est logique, ajoutant que rien n'est important que la vie et que le gouvernement est dans l'obligation absolue de protéger les vies et les propriétés.

Il a poursuivi en disant que bien que son comté, River Gee, n'ait pas été touché, il nécessite son attention et ses efforts pour enrayer la propagation du virus.

« J'ai écrit à la plénière du Sénat libérien pour demander le verrouillage total du pays, en particulier des comtés qui ne sont pas touchés.

Sur la base de la communication, le ministère de la Santé a reçu un mandat supplémentaire pour reconcevoir ses stratégies de lutte contre le virus. Le ministère examine la préoccupation et nous nous attendons bientôt à des progrès dans cette direction », a-t-il déclaré.

Mais l'ancien attaché de presse de la présidence, Jerolinmek Matthew Piah, résidant actuellement aux États-Unis, a déclaré que le verrouillage n'est pas une solution médicale dans la lutte contre le coronavirus, suggérant plutôt la nécessité de millions de kits de test, l'isolement, la vaccination des personnes, la fourniture de traitements et réduire les foules lors d'événements, entre autres.

« ... Le confinement n'est pas une solution médicale à une crise médicale. C'est une sorte de solution rapide que vous envisagez, et puisque les gens apprennent aussi par l'expérience, si je devais compter sur l'expérience des États-Unis, je n'opterais pas pour le verrouillage », a déclaré M. Piah sur Prime FM lundi, le 28 juin des États-Unis

"Ce qui a été prouvé scientifiquement depuis cette situation médicale, c'est que la vraie solution est de tester les gens, de les isoler, de les traiter et ensuite de les protéger. C'est à ce moment-là que la vaccination intervient", a ajouté M. Piah.

M. Piah, qui a servi pendant l'administration de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf en tant qu'attaché de presse présidentielle lorsque Ebola a frappé le Libéria, a appelé les citoyens à prendre en main le problème du coronavirus pendant que le gouvernement fait le nécessaire pour que le virus puisse être vaincu.

« Si nous avons vaincu Ebola, c'est parce que les gens ont choisi la vie plutôt que la mort ; ce sont les communautés qui ont pris les devants, qui ont pris les choses en main, guidées par leurs chefs. La même chose est requise ici », a-t-il déclaré

Donnant un exemple sur l'Amérique où il est actuellement basé, M. Piah a rappelé que lorsque le coronavirus a commencé là-bas, le processus difficile a été institué avec l'idée que le verrouillage était la solution.

Selon lui, de nombreux États sont passés au confinement, et pourtant 600 000 personnes sont mortes et 33 millions de personnes ont été infectées parce que « le confinement n'est pas une solution médicale ».

La mise en garde de Piah contre un verrouillage intervient à un moment où les opinions du public sont partagées sur ce que devraient être les mesures à prendre avec la troisième vague de coronavirus au Libéria.

Certains pensent que les écoles devraient être fermées, le verrouillage imposé et l'armée déployée en plus des récentes mesures anti-Covid-19 instituées par le ministère de la Santé.

Selon M. Piah, les écoles devraient être fermées et les élèves évalués sur la base de leurs performances du premier semestre pour déterminer s'ils peuvent être promus ou non, pendant que la préparation est en cours concernant la vaccination et la réduction de la vague actuelle avant l'ouverture de la prochaine année scolaire.

Cependant, M. Piah a soutenu que le virus est déjà dans les communautés, se demandant si pendant un verrouillage, quelqu'un restera chez lui 24 heures sur 24 et s'il n'y aura pas de mouvement au sein des communautés qui puisse encore favoriser la propagation du virus.

"Ce sont donc les choses que vous pouvez faire lorsque vous n'avez pas la solution scientifique qui consiste à davantage de tests, d'isolement, de traitement, éventuellement de protection par la vaccination. Si vous n'avez pas cela, vous essayez de trouver des moyens de le faire. Mais faut-il un verrouillage pour le faire ? Je ne pense pas », a-t-il conclu.

## COMMENTAIRE

By Michael J. Boskin

### Attention à l'explosion de la dette publique américaine

**S**TANFORD - L'Amérique doit maîtriser sa dette nationale qui est en train d'exploser. Or, le président américain Joe Biden semble désireux de faire exactement le contraire. Les risques sont trop grands pour être ignorés.

Au lendemain de la crise financière de 2008, le président Barack Obama a enregistré le plus gros déficit budgétaire de tous les présidents depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale (en tenant compte des variations automatiques des recettes et dépenses liées au cycle économique). Son successeur, Donald Trump, l'a dépassé.

Biden prévoit de les surpasser tous les deux. Alors que la dette fédérale brute des États-Unis s'élève désormais à 107 % du PIB - un record depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale - le budget 2022 de l'administration Biden fait en sorte que le pays enregistrera de loin le plus gros déficit jamais enregistré en temps de paix.

Certes, je soutiens les politiques visant à atténuer les souffrances économiques à court terme causées par une crise comme la pandémie de COVID-19 et à stimuler la reprise, tant que le coût à long terme est raisonnable. Mais les plans de dépenses de Biden ne remplissent pas cette condition. Au contraire, ils créeraient d'énormes déficits qui persisteraient longtemps après le retour de l'économie au plein emploi.

Pour les cinq exercices fiscaux de 2022 à 2026, l'administration Biden prévoit des déficits de l'ordre de 5,9% du PIB en moyenne. Ce niveau n'a été atteint qu'une seule fois entre 1947 et 2008 - en 1983, lorsque le taux de chômage était en moyenne supérieur à 10 %. Or, les projections de l'administration montrent que le chômage devrait s'établir à 4,1% en 2022 et à 3,8% à partir de 2023.

Biden affirme que ses propositions ne feront augmenter que modestement la dette publique (qui devrait de toute façon augmenter, principalement en raison des dépenses toujours croissantes de la sécurité sociale et de l'assurance-maladie). Mais il y a de bonnes raisons de croire le contraire.

Pour commencer, l'administration Biden espère compenser la hausse des dépenses en augmentant les impôts sur les sociétés et les plus-values. Mais il est peu probable que ces hausses d'impôts soient adoptées telles quelles par un Sénat américain divisé pratiquement à parts égales. De plus, ces taxes sont particulièrement préjudiciables à la croissance. Dès lors, si une version de celles-ci était adoptée, l'administration Biden serait probablement obligée de reconnaître que ses projections de revenus étaient trop optimistes.

Les propositions de dépenses de Biden incluent également plusieurs programmes sociaux coûteux, tels que l'amélioration des soins à domicile pour les personnes âgées et les personnes handicapées, une école maternelle gratuite universelle et deux ans de collège communautaire gratuit pour les jeunes adultes. L'histoire suggère que de tels programmes sont susceptibles de devenir permanents, engendrant des coûts qui dépasseront largement les prévisions.

Pendant ce temps, alors même que la Chine et la Russie renforcent leurs armées, Biden a accordé une moindre priorité aux dépenses de défense, prévoyant une augmentation inférieure à l'inflation. Dans le cadre du budget de son administration, les dépenses de défense tomberont à leur plus faible part du PIB depuis avant la Seconde Guerre mondiale.

Certains prétendent que les États-Unis n'ont rien à craindre. Les déficits n'ont apparemment pas beaucoup d'importance lorsqu'une économie emprunte dans sa propre monnaie ; la Réserve

fédérale américaine n'a plus qu'à racheter la dette du Trésor. De plus, étant donné que les taux d'emprunt publics sont inférieurs au taux de croissance prévu, la dette peut être renouvelée pour toujours. La finance déficitaire devient une possibilité de « raser gratis ».

Ces affirmations appellent un grand scepticisme. Les raisons sont soulignées dans des articles techniques récents par moi-même, mon collègue de la Hoover Institution John Cochrane, Greg Mankiw et Laurence Ball (respectivement de l'Université Harvard et de l'Université Johns Hopkins), ainsi que par Larry Kotlikoff de l'Université de Boston et ses co-auteurs.

Historiquement, les énormes accumulations de dette ont généralement été suivies de graves problèmes : croissance atone, hausse de l'inflation, crise financière, ou le tout ensemble. Nous ne pouvons pas prédire avec certitude les problèmes qui se produiront, ni le ratio dette/PIB qui signalera des problèmes à venir pour chaque pays. De plus, les États-Unis ont l'avantage d'émettre la principale monnaie de réserve au monde. Mais les risques d'inflation augmentent - une tendance qui ne fera que s'accélérer si les dépenses financées par le déficit augmentent.

Une dette plus élevée augmente également la tentation d'alimenter l'inflation, en particulier si les étrangers en détiennent une part importante. L'hypothèse grossièrement simpliste selon laquelle les débiteurs sont riches et les créanciers pauvres est susceptible de renforcer cette tentation, en particulier dans un climat politique où de nombreux politiciens et électeurs soutiennent les politiques fiscales et autres qui ciblent les riches.

Un autre problème encore est que l'augmentation de la dette publique finira par pousser les taux d'intérêt à la hausse, évinçant l'investissement et nuisant à la croissance potentielle de l'économie. Le Congressional Budget Office (CBO) s'attend à ce que les bons du Trésor à dix ans augmentent plus tôt et plus rapidement que ne le prévoit le budget Biden.

Bien que des changements importants des taux d'intérêt soient peu probables à court terme, le fait est que les marchés financiers et les prévisionnistes publics et privés ont souvent échoué à les anticiper - par exemple, lors de l'inflation des années 1970 et de la désinflation du début des années 1980. Après 2008, tous ont grossièrement sous-estimé combien de temps la Fed maintiendrait son taux d'intérêt cible à zéro.

Tôt ou tard, il y aura une autre crise. Si le gouvernement américain continue d'augmenter sa dette maintenant, le manque de capacité budgétaire pourrait entraver ses réponses politiques lorsque l'économie aura vraiment besoin de soutien. En attendant, le déluge de dette dans les économies avancées complique la possibilité des pays pauvres, qui disposent d'une capacité d'endettement limitée, de répondre de manière adéquate à la crise de la COVID-19, aggravant la tragédie humaine.

Malgré tout cela, l'argument selon lequel les États-Unis peuvent financer leur dette gratuitement est omniprésent et encourage les élus à ignorer la discipline budgétaire. Cela augmente le risque que l'administration Biden dépense non seulement trop, mais qu'elle gaspille en réalité de l'argent en finançant des projets à rendement faible, voire négatif, comme l'administration Obama l'a fait avec son « stimulus » de 2009.

Le contenu des propositions de dépenses de Biden n'est pas encourageant sur ce point. Considérez le plan américain pour l'emploi de 2 000 milliards de dollars. Il est comptabilisé comme une « facture d'infrastructure », or seul un petit pourcentage des dépenses prévues irait vers des infrastructures traditionnelles. Et, ici encore, le CBO estime un taux de rendement moitié moins élevé que celui de l'investissement privé qui sera évincé.



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# IMS, Last Mile Health conduct COVID-19 awareness

The Incident Management System at the Ministry of Health and Last Mile Health are currently conducting a weeklong community engagement and awareness activities cross several counties in Liberia.

The rigorous awareness targets all districts in Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Rivercess, and Grand Gedeh counties.

A press release from the Ministry of Health says a total of sixteen (16) teams are being mobilized to work with

Communication Pillar.

Dr. Jallah said the launch of the 'Mask Wearing campaign' by Last Mile Health and the Incident Management System is in consistent with the Government of Liberia, and the Incident Management System's desires to ensure Liberians and foreign Nationals' abide by the health measure of wearing mask to avoid spread of the COVID-19.

She praised Last Mile Health for its tremendous support to the IMS, including other interventions in the Health system.

Also speaking, Last Mile

social behavior change materials on the Dos & Don't of COVID-19 to ensure Liberia contains further spread of the Delta variant of the COVID-19

Meanwhile, the Last Mile Health has presented two thousand sermon guide to the Inter Religious Council of Liberia, to aid religious leaders to enable them properly disseminate information on the COVID-19 pandemic across the country.

The sermon guide provides guidelines and specific COVID-19 messages for religious leader to disseminate to their various congregations, especially during the continued surge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Receiving the guide on half of the Islamic Community, Imam Abdullah G. Mansaray, President of the Interfaith Religious Council, (IRCL) lauded the initiative by Last Mile Health and the Incident Management System to reach out to all across the country in its effort to containing the spread of the COVID-19.

Imam Mansaray stated that the Interfaith Religious Council will continue to be the beacon of hope amidst continued despair of Liberians in the wake of the surge in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

He said the sermon guide will accelerate continued awareness on the Coronavirus pandemic by religious leaders in Liberia, through various sermons by both Christians and Muslims in Liberia about the danger COVID-19 poses to the health and economic growth of the world.

Imam Mansaray called on religious leaders to use the sermon guide as an important catalyst to changing the behavior of their various congregations attitude towards the fight of COVID-19 by abiding by all measures put in place by health authorities and the Government of Liberia. **-Press Release**

# Liberian returnees accuse gov't of 'abandonment'

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong County

Liberian returnees residing in Lutheran Global Village, Bong County say they have been abandoned by the Government of Liberia despite many calls for support to their livelihoods.

They told our Bong County correspondent during a recent interview that the government has done nothing about their welfare since they repatriated from Guinea about ten years ago.

According to the administrator of the town, Morris Sulun-ker-menie, they have always engaged the Liberian Refugee Repatriation & Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) about the challenges they are faced with, but to no avail.

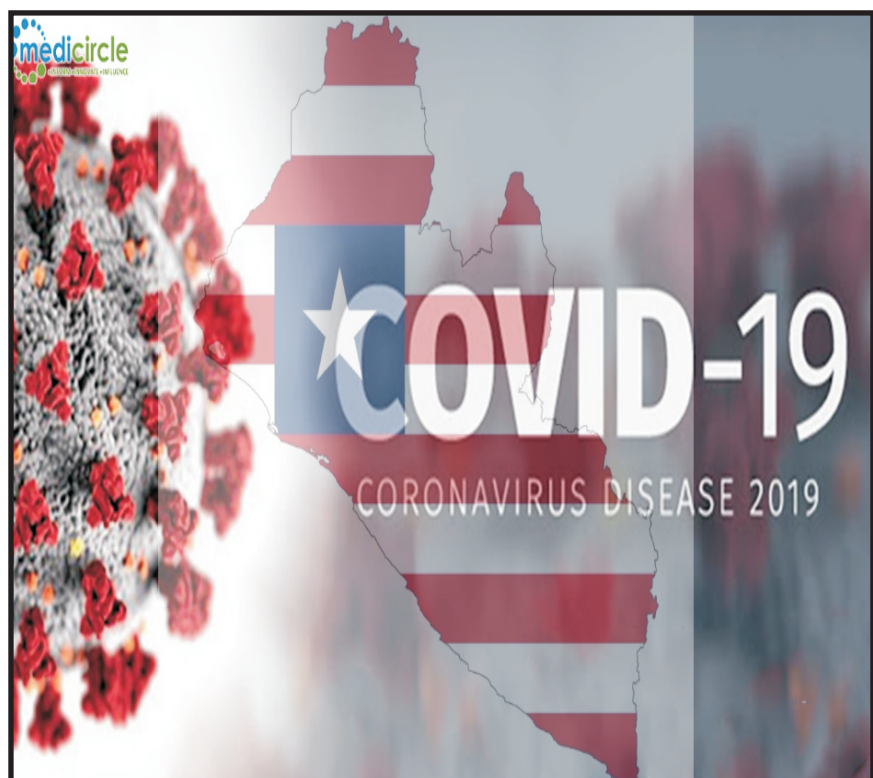
Mr. Sulun-ker-menie said houses in the town were constructed through the

alleged abandonment. She said their town was also allegedly left out during the distribution of materials, referencing the Covid-19 stimulus package as an example.

"They can always come and jump over this town, we have been crying on them to help us but no way. Recently when people were taking names for the Covid-19 rice, they left us out. So why are they treating us like this? What wrong did we do to come to our own Country?" she added.

Our correspondent who visited the town over the weekend says many of the returnees escaped to Guinea in search of refuge during the devastating civil war that led to the death of about 250,000 from 1989 to 2003.

When the conflict ended, some of them voluntarily returned to Liberia and had no



community leaders and the Montserrado County Health Team, while four teams from the rest of the counties are now in full gear to ensure public awareness.

The awareness focuses on distribution of 500,000 locally made face masks to community leaders, school authorities, the Liberian Marketing Association, and civil society organizations.

The Minister of Health and Chairperson of the Incident Management System, Dr. Wilhelmina S. Jallah, lauded Last Mile Health for its timely support to the Risk

Health Country Director, Madam Marion Subah stated that her organization remains committed to Liberia's health delivery system, especially ongoing fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Madam Subah said Last Mile Health as part of the support to the Incident Management System, has allocated awareness support to other counties in which it operates.

The release says the ongoing exercise involves robust community engagement activities, including distribution of 500, 000 face masks, outreach activities using moving stage methodology, distribution of



support of the Asia Focus Australia, an organization within the Lutheran Church in Australia, and not the Government of Liberia as has been speculated.

"We have been here for ten years now but we have not received anything from the government. We have been calling on them to help us through the LRRRC but sometimes they will only say that they got the message, but they can't come to help us" he added.

Mr. Sulun-ker-menie said lives for former Refugees in the area are becoming unbearable as the only junior High school they constructed is currently in a very deplorable condition.

Kruba Kennedy, one of the women leaders of the town, told journalists that life continues to be unbearable for inhabitants of the community as a result of the government's

alternative but to begin a new life in Global Village, Zota District.

Officials at the LRRRC have not spoken to the citizens' concerns about whether or not they have been sending support to them as all efforts to contact them have proven fruitless.

The LRRRC is mandated by an act to coordinate, monitor and supervise all humanitarian activities in Liberia.

The commission is government's lead agency for repatriation, resettlement and reintegration. It is also responsible for the general coordination of activities including inter-agency coordination, and organization of sectoral meetings, as well as community mobilization which is a key activity by the commission.

The mobilization of relief assistance to persons of concern and vulnerable, and refugees

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# Several Red Cross officials indicted

An indictment has been secured for the arrest and criminal prosecution of several former officials of the Liberia National Red Cross, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission or LACC, has revealed.

Those listed by the LACC are the Red Cross former President Emmanuel Kparh,

closed One million (US1,000,000.00) United States Dollars of Funds given to the organization by the Swiss Red Cross and the Liberian Government during the battle against Ebola in 2014.

The LACC said the four former Officials of the Red Cross criminally diverted the funds to personal use through the breaking of procurement rules,

investigations show that the two chapters did see the funds. MrKparh also took in his possession another US Dollars 20 thousand and 2 million Liberian Dollars to lobby with the Legislature for increased subsidy for LNRC but no evidence was shown to justify that the amount was pay to the Legislature.

The Liberia Anti-corruption commission said it is surprised that Mr. Kparh carried out financial gangsterism by collecting close to Seventy thousand (u\$70,000.00) United States dollars for board member compensation and used it for private gains without delivering it to the boards' members.

The LACC says it wants Mr. Emmanuel Kparh and three other former officials of the Liberia National Red Cross to turn themselves in immediately or could face arrest and be handcuffed in the public square.

The Country's Anti-graft office wants to use this situation to warn all public officials currently handling funds related to the fight against COVID-19 to be mindful as there will be accountability in the future for the management of these funding. The LACC says it will accept no excuse for the mismanagement illegal disbursement and misappropriation of public money during an emergency period.



Cllr. Kanio Gba-Gbala

former Secretary General FayiahTamba, Procurement Supervisor KoboiWolokollie and Director of Finance Sekou Kamara.

The four indictees, according to a LACC statement issued Monday will be prosecuted for the mismanagement of monies

laid down financial management regulations and through dangerous collusion among themselves.

In a specific case, the LACC said the former president took custody of the over 20 thousand United States Dollars for support to two LNRC chapters-Sinoe and Grand Gedeh Counties but

# Snowe on ECOWAS

Cont'd from page 7

security agencies to combat crime, an exercise that has yielded much result. He revealed that at current, the Mission has a total of 1000 men actively deployed across different parts of the country.

Addressing the troops, the Chairman of the Parliament's Committee on Political Affairs, Peace, Security and African Peer Review Mechanism thanked the troops for the sacrifice and dedication to serve the region. He recalled ECOMOG's successes in Liberia and Sierra Leone and expressed strong anticipation that similar accomplishments will be replicated in The Gambia. He pledged Parliament's unflinching support for ECOWAS operations in The Gambia and wished the troops well as it strives to restore much needed democracy in the West African State.

Recall that in early 2017, The Gambia experienced the

first democratic change of leadership since independence, ending 22 years of rule of former president YahyaJammeh.

After weeks of political stalemate following presidential elections on 1 December 2016, on January 19, 2017, on the first day of his term, President Adama Barrow was inaugurated while in temporary exile in the Gambian Embassy in Senegal; at the time incumbent president Jammeh refused to accept electoral defeat. However, domestic, and international political pressure combined with the threat of military action by an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) mission in The Gambia (ECOMIG) finally prompted Jammeh to leave the country, paving the way for the return of President Barrow on 26 January 2017.

The ECOMIG mandate has been extended by ECOWAS Heads of States various times and was recently extended to run until December 2021.

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# No need for lockdown yet

By Ethel A Tweh

The Minister of Health Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah has told the plenary of the Liberian Senate that there is no need for a lockdown now. Appearing before the Senate Tuesday June 29, 2021, Dr. Jallah said citizens and residents are in compliance with health protocols.

She was invited to respond to Senate's inquest relative to lockdown measures as a result of the resurgence of the deadly Coronavirus in the country.

Doctor Jallah said whilst it is true there has been an increase in the number of active cases and rises in death as a result of the health crisis currently confronting the country, health authorities have not considered any decision for a lockdown.

She noted that such decision would require addressing some economic situations of the citizenry, and there's no assurance of

resources yet to attend to welfare of the public.

The Minister however, suggested rigorous enforcement of the measures already in place and also indicated that should entertainment centers continue to violate the 9PM closure, authorities would consider adjusting the time downward to 6PM. Dr. Jallah indicated that some entertainment centers

have already been closed due to gross violation of the stipulated measures.

The Senate's inquest was based on a communication from Rivergee County Senator Jonathan Boye-Charles Sogbie to the august body, calling for a lockdown due to the alarming rate of increase of the Coronavirus here. -  
Editing by Jonathan Browne



Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah

# CBL expands MPC

Starts from back page

contributing to monetary policy formulation to visit its website at https://cbl.org.lr/.

The establishment of a CBL Monetary Policy Committee is a recent development in fulfilment of Part IV, Section 17, Count 1 of the amended and restated CBL Act of 1999

that was approved by the National Legislature in October 2020. It calls for the establishment of a Monetary Policy Committee with the mandate of undertaking appropriate monetary policy decisions at regular intervals, with a view to ensuring price stability and economic growth.

# President Weah fails

Cont'd from page 6

President Weah's failure to not hold accountable those in charge of Covid-19 testing at the RIA for engaging in practices that are characteristics of criminal negligence which has resulted not only to the increased incident and death rates, but

overwhelmed the poor. "To protect the public from further reoccurrence, this act of gross criminal negligence on the part of the management of the Covid-19 testing company needs to be fully punishable by law", Dr. Cassell notes.



## Cummings Foundation continues assessment tour



The Cummings Africa Foundation continues its assessment tour of hospitals on Monday as it prepares to make interventions in the fight against the raging coronavirus here.

The foundation visited the St. Joseph Catholic Hospital, where it met with the administrators and medical leadership of Catholic Hospital in Monrovia.

The visit comes days after the Cummings Africa Foundation has embarked on needs assessment visits to few hospitals in Montserrado, Margibi and Nimba Counties

“The situation is dire, but the Cummings Africa Foundation (CAF) will do what we can to help address it while our consultations continue this week with other hospitals. Tomorrow we will visit Margibi and Nimba which are also the hardest hit

counties in addition to Montserrado,” Cummings who doubles as the political leader of the Alternative National Congress or ANC said Monday.

Cummings: “I want to personally thank our healthcare workers for their sacrifice and commitment to saving lives. What they do inspite of the challenges and dangers, is pure patriotism and our country owes them a depth of gratitude.

To our citizens, do not despair. I know how hard it is waking up to several deaths news. My wife Teresa and I have had our own share of the shock and sadness, but we cannot lose hope in our ability to defeat COVID.

Please continue to follow the rules. Wash your hands. Wear your masks over your nose and mouth. Avoid crowded places. Visit the nearest hospital when you feel sick. Take the COVID vaccine to protect yourself. Remember the vaccine may not prevent you from getting

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

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## CBL expands MPC membership to private sector

**-As it moves towards becoming the peoples bank**

The Central Bank has begun extending the membership of its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to individuals from the private sector and academia as it gravitates towards becoming the people’s bank.

The new members will enrich the Committee with their private sector background and contribute to the making of more informed monetary policy decisions that will bring about price

stability and accelerated economic growth.

It is hoped that by mid-July two individuals with good standing and unimpeachable characters will join the MPC, bringing its membership to seven. The new MPC members, coming from academia and the private sector, will have a master’s degree in Monetary Policy, Economics, Banking, or Finance, as well as a minimum experience of 10 most recent years in these areas.



To ensure the monetary policy decision process remains objective and void of political influence, the new members will not belong to any political party or be members of any of the three branches of Government. They will also not be officials or employees of a financial institution or beneficial owners of an equity interest in a financial institution.

CBL is now undertaking a recruitment drive and encourages those interested in

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