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TRULY INDEPENDENT

VOL.11 NO. 109

FRIDAY, JULY 02, 2021

PRICE LD\$40.00

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TRULY INDEPENDENT

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-to help stop the spread of covid-19



Pres. Weah and Pres. Macron

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Continental News

Namibia's mortuaries at capacity amid Covid surge

Namibia's President Hage Geingob has said his country is facing a "dark and sombre moment" as coronavirus deaths and cases rapidly increase.

The southern African nation is currently experiencing the worst daily death rate on the continent.

The health system is stretched and the country's mortuaries "have reached maximum capacity", Health Minister Kalumbi Shangula said. The president announced new restrictions to stem the rise in cases.

These include extending a night-time curfew and stopping movement between the country's regions.

Addressing the nation, Mr Geingob said that 513 Namibians had died from the virus in the last 15 days.

This is a huge blow for a country of just 2.5 million.

On average, 15 people per million are dying every day in Namibia, a higher number than Seychelles (13 per million) and Tunisia (7.5 per

million), and among the worst rates in the world, according to the Our World in Data website.

South Africa, which has the continent's highest number of total deaths from coronavirus - just over 60,000 - has a daily death rate of three per million.

Everyone in Namibia has either buried a close relative who has died from Covid or knows someone who has, said

the health minister, who was speaking after the president.

"Our country is literally in an existential struggle against this pandemic. We are in a fight for our very lives," Dr Shangula added. Coronavirus cases have trebled since the beginning of June and the situation is likely to continue to get worse until mid-August at the earliest, the president

told Namibians. Hospital capacity has been increased and the country is taking steps to boost the supply of medical oxygen. Last week, Dr Shangula told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme that the country's oxygen reserves had been exhausted.

Less than 5% of Namibians have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine.

The vials that the country received have almost all been used up but more deliveries are expected in July and August, the health minister said. The country has now set aside \$34m (£25m) to buy more doses. Walking around the capital, Windhoek, I see a tale of two cities.

Half of the people I encounter are conscientious about hygiene and social distancing, while the other half act as though the virus doesn't exist.

And even though the government has implemented restrictions, there's some confusion. You have to use sanitiser before going into the

shops, but there is no limit on how many people can enter. You can't buy or be served alcohol in shops or cafes on certain days, unless the restaurant is in a hotel. So these rules are baffling some and they are getting worried.

I spoke to one woman whose family lost six members in the past two weeks, leaving her and her two-year-old nephew alone. She says the virus is treating her community like a game of dominos: once one person is knocked down, you are just waiting for your time.

Another man told me he doesn't believe the vaccine will actually work, despite scientific evidence that it does. He is refusing to let his family get the shot, even though he knows several people who have died from the virus.

While there are mixed feelings on how to stop the spread of the virus in Namibia's capital, one thing is for sure: people are angry about further lockdown restrictions and wish the government would have done more, sooner. BBC



Namibia's president has urged people to stick to new restrictions to help fight the spread of the virus

Burkina Faso president takes over defence ministry

Burkina Faso's President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré has taken over as the country's defence minister in a cabinet reshuffle announced on Wednesday.

The president will be assisted in the role by Col Maj Barthélémy Simporé, according to a presidential

decree.

It comes three days after President Kaboré had asked the opposition to postpone its protests scheduled for July 3 and 4. Opposition leaders said the protests are meant to pay tribute to victims of terrorism and to also denounce the government's handling of jihadist violence in the country.

They had called for the resignation of Prime Minister Christophe Dabiré and Defense Minister Chériff Sy.

Suspected jihadists staged an attack in Solhan in the north-eastern region on 4 June in which more than 130 people were killed. It is considered to be the deadliest attack in Burkina Faso since April 2015. BBC

Zuma foundation condemns 'angry court' for jail term



A majority decision by South Africa's highest court to sentence Jacob Zuma to 15 months in jail was "judicially emotional and angry and not consistent" with the constitution, the former president's foundation said.

The Constitutional Court on Tuesday found Mr Zuma guilty of contempt for defying its order to appear at an inquiry into corruption while he was president.

It gave him five days to hand himself in to police.

In a late night statement on Wednesday, the Jacob Zuma Foundation said that Mr Zuma's lawyers would soon provide "legal advice on the

options available".

The former president testified only once 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.

"Our Patron has expressed his doubts about the lawfulness of the Zondo Commission, the biased manner in which it is being conducted, and the fact that it has been transformed into a 'slaughterhouse' and a forum in which all kinds of unsubstantiated and defamatory allegations have been made against him," the foundation said. BBC



The Burkinabè army has been battling jihadists in the northern regions

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

Published by the Searchlight Communications Inc.,
UN Drive, P.O. Box 1266 Opposite National Investment Commission,
Monrovia-Liberia. Tel: +231-06484201, +231-77007529, +231-886978282 /
+231-775407211 Managing Editor: Othello B. Garblah; Editor-In-Chief: Jonathan

COMMENTARY

By Kevin Rudd

The Virus Next Time

BRISBANE - As more developed countries begin to feel as though they have made it to the other side of the COVID-19 crisis, two striking realities are coming into view. First, one can clearly see just how vulnerable many developing countries still are to rapidly escalating outbreaks of the type we are witnessing in India. The results of failing to distribute the most effective vaccines equitably and strategically are being laid bare.

Second, with more dangerous and contagious variants continuing to emerge, we do not have the luxury of delaying work toward a new international system for pandemic preparedness and response. We must start that project immediately. And fortunately, the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR), chaired by former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark and former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has just published a blueprint for how to do it.

The question now is whether governments are ready not just to listen but to act. The answer will determine whether we can prevent future epidemics from becoming global catastrophes. I know from my own government's experience during the 2009 swine flu (H1N1) pandemic that it is crucial to confront these crises with immediate, far-reaching, and coordinated action. Thanks to eight months of work by the IPPR, policymakers now have a comprehensive set of recommendations for transforming how we manage pandemic risks.

Chief among the panel's proposals is a call for pandemic preparedness and response to be elevated to the highest level of political leadership through a new Global Health Threats Council, which should be based at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The panel has also proposed an International Financing Facility for Pandemic Preparedness and Response to help share the burden in future global health crises. Either through direct contributions or a kind of assessed contribution, this mechanism would fund both ongoing preparedness and rapid-response measures in low- and middle-income countries.

The IPPR has offered the kind of emphatic, dispassionate, and actionable guidance that governments need and - in this case - have demanded through the World Health Organization. Four years ago, the Independent Commission on Multilateralism (ICM, which I chaired) tried to raise the alarm about the growing threat of pandemics in its report Global

Pandemics and Global Public Health. We were aghast at the poor state of the global health architecture at a time when cross-border health crises were becoming more frequent and posing unprecedented risks. Those risks have since materialized in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to issuing a clear warning, the commission's report made a series of bold recommendations to strengthen the multilateral system in the face of potential global health crises. Its proposals for clearer rules for verification and early-warning mechanisms have now been echoed in the IPPR's recommendations, as has its call for a more empowered independent WHO secretariat. We are still waiting for progress on all of these fronts.

We cannot afford to let the IPPR's report fall on the same deaf ears. And yet, that is exactly what seems to be happening. The 74th World Health Assembly just voted to spend six months studying the panel's report before even considering taking any action. Such delays are simply unacceptable.

The COVID-19 crisis has borne out an uncomfortable truth that is emphasized in the IPPR's report: namely, that many of the national and global institutions established to deal with global pandemics are not fit for purpose, or have not been properly activated. From the moment in late 2019 and early 2020 when the existing International Health Regulations failed, the COVID-19 outbreak became a global catastrophe. And since then, our national and global economic responses have been too slow, tepid, and uncoordinated - a failure that the post-2008 G20 architecture was supposed to prevent.

The current crisis could still become much worse before it gets any better. We are already witnessing a breakdown of global supply chains, which will lead to terrible economic, political, and public-health outcomes. We need to get back on track now so that we can fight not only future pandemics but also this one.

The IPPR's report could not be timelier. The G7 summit in Cornwall on June 11-13 is an opportunity to concentrate our efforts with backing from the highest political levels. COVID-19 has been costly for all of us. The ICM's 2017 report anticipated that we would be here one day and identified the solutions we would need to implement. Let us use the IPPR's findings to enact meaningful reforms and show real leadership, so that this pandemic will be the last one to catch us off guard.



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?

O-PED

By Shashi Tharoor

India Looks West

NEW DELHI - Recent conciliatory moves by India's nationalist government on its western flank have rightly aroused global interest. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's calculus appears relatively simple. Faced with continued Chinese aggression on India's northern frontier and a likely Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan, improving relations on the country's western flank, with Pakistan, seems prudent.

In recent weeks, there have been reports of secret back-channel talks between Indian and Pakistani security officials - facilitated by the United Arab Emirates - aimed at easing bilateral tensions. A February 2021 ceasefire along the Line of Control separating Indian and Pakistani forces in the disputed Kashmir region has so far held, permitting an atmosphere of near-normalcy in the area.

India has also been talking to the Taliban, which it long derided as surrogates for the Pakistani army, reflecting the increasing likelihood that the mullahs will reclaim power in Kabul following the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in September. Furthermore, India has kept two of its consulates in Afghanistan closed since last year, a long-standing Pakistani demand that it had resisted for two decades.

And in late June, Modi's government held surprisingly amicable talks in New Delhi with 14 mainstream Kashmiri political leaders. Almost all of them had been arrested during the government's crackdown in the state of Jammu and Kashmir that began in August 2019, and had been demonized by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party since then.

All of this points to a policy shift by a government conscious of the pressures on India's northern frontier. Chinese troops have failed to disengage since the spring of 2020, when they advanced across disputed territory in the Ladakh region and later provoked a military encounter that took the lives of 20 Indian soldiers. With China doggedly refusing to withdraw, despite 11 rounds of talks, India's insistence on restoring the status quo ante looks increasingly forlorn.

Hostility with China is likely to endure, in which case India cannot afford escalating tensions to its west. Indian-Pakistani relations are at their lowest level in recent times, owing to a series of incidents, beginning with the terrorist attack on Mumbai in November 2008 and culminating in the 2019 Indian air strike on Balakot in Pakistan. And the Indian government outraged Pakistan with its August 2019 decision to strip Jammu and Kashmir of its constitutionally guaranteed autonomy and reduce its status to a "union territory," directly administered from Delhi. The Pakistani government subsequently mounted a worldwide campaign, working especially with Islamic countries but also at the United Nations, to censure India and force it to rescind the move.

Modi had remained implacable until recently, so the three-and-a-half-hour meeting with Kashmiri leaders was a surprise development. The leaders, who included four former chief ministers of Jammu and Kashmir, spanned the spectrum of the region's main political parties. The Modi government had previously denounced some of them as corrupt dynasts, accusing them of milking the state for their own benefit. But now they were welcomed with sweet words and deferential protocol by Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah (India's second most powerful politician), and other senior officials.

The government's crackdown in Jammu and Kashmir has not achieved any of its proclaimed objectives - namely, to inaugurate a new era of peace and development, eliminate terrorism, break the political grip of a few families, and hasten the region's integration with the rest of the country. But it would be wrong to see the government's recent talks with the Kashmiri leaders as an admission of defeat.

The discussions focused on three issues. One was an agreement to carry out, with the Kashmiri parties' cooperation, a new demarcation of the state's political constituencies, which will likely enhance the Jammu region's representation in the state assembly. The other agenda items were elections across Jammu and Kashmir, and restoration of its statehood.

Rather than a defeat for the Indian government, therefore, the talks seem to have shifted the goalposts. The earth-shattering news in August 2019 was the abolition of Article 370 of India's constitution, which guaranteed Jammu and Kashmir's special autonomous status. But that matter was not even discussed, because it was deemed to be sub judice (petitions on the matter are pending before the Supreme Court). Instead, the main issue was restoration of statehood, which the government had in any case promised "at an appropriate time."

This could lead to a politically viable trade-off, whereby the central government gives Jammu and Kashmir statehood if state leaders agree to go quiet on Article 370 and leave the matter to the judiciary. If that happens, as seems likely, Kashmiris will have the illusion of wresting a concession while the Modi government's real victory - the revocation of autonomy two years ago - goes unchallenged by the Kashmiri parties.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's global campaign against India to restore the state's autonomy has gone nowhere. Pakistan's leaders have their own reasons for wanting to resume dialogue with India, but they needed to see some movement from Modi's government to justify it. Talks with Kashmiri leaders leading to something like the restoration of statehood may constitute enough progress to warrant further discussions. The Indian government will thus chalk up another win if it enters new bilateral talks without making any real concession on the preconditions that Pakistan has been loudly declaiming for two years.

These recent developments are early moves in a slowly unfolding regional chess game. The situation in Afghanistan, the implications of China's close economic ties with Pakistan through the Belt and Road Initiative, and the evolution of the insurgencies led by both the Afghan Taliban and its Pakistani equivalent, have yet to play themselves out. Simmering Kashmiri militancy could boil over, while Pakistan - if it is unable or unwilling to stem terror attacks from its territory on Indian targets - could again prove duplicitous in its peace overtures.

There are too many unknowns for any side to have victory in sight. But for now, at least, India appears to be making the right moves.

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Govt. announces adjustments in school calendar

By Kruah Thompson (Intern)

In the wake of resurgence of the coronavirus in the country, the Ministry of Education has announced adjustments in the official calendar for academic

pandemic.

Speaking at the Ministry of Information regular press briefing on Thursday, July 1, 2021 in Monrovia, he said early childhood education that includes nursery, ABC, K1 and K2 are to conduct assessment

At the same time Minister Kesselly said Grade 3 assessment test will begin Monday, July 12, 2021 while Liberia primary school certificate examination (LPSC) for grade 6 will be administered on Tuesday, July 13, 2021 to Wednesday, July 14, 2021.

Also the Liberia junior high school certificate exam (LJHSCE) for grade 9th begins from July 15 and ends on July 16, 2021. The Deputy Education boss added that all lower and upper basic (grade 1 to 9) school final exams must be administered on Wednesday, August 10, 2021.

During the briefing, he also disclosed that all senior secondary school (grade 10th and 11th) final exams will commence on Monday, September 27, thru Thursday, September 30, 2021.

Importantly, both senior and secondary school (12th grade) final examinations are to be administered beginning Wednesday, September 1st, to Thursday, September 7th, 2021. All senior secondary schools (grade 10th to 12th) are to conduct classes until September 30, 2021.

Meanwhile, Deputy Minister Kesselly said decision on reopening of schools for next academic year will be made public depending on the prevailing covid-19 variant as

exams and close on or before July 10, 2021, while basic education that covers grade 1-9 will condense the 5th and 6th making period with key and critical content that are appropriate and necessary for absorption, or for fair assessment and achievement.



2020/2021.

Deputy Education Minister for planning, research and development, Alton Kesselly, said adjustment in the calendar is to enable the Ministry to be responsive to the challenges the country now faces as a result of the

Weah suspends deputy LIS boss

President George Manneh Weah has suspended the Deputy Commissioner General for Operations at the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS), Abigail N. Wisseh.

An Executive Mansion dispatch from Paris, France says Madam Wisseh was suspended on Thursday, 1 July 2021 by the president for

Minister for Press and Public Affairs Eugene Fahngon from his post as a result of spreading false information regarding the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic currently ravaging the country.

Mr. Weah then warned that he will not hesitate to take similar action against any other official of the government engaged in activities that undermine



Deputy Commissioner General for Operations, Abigail N. Wisseh

administrative reasons. Her indefinite suspension takes immediate effect, according to the Executive Mansion.

Though details are not available regarding Madam Wisseh's case, however this latest development comes just a little over a week after Mr. dismissed with immediate effect, Deputy Information

established government policy.

Without delay, President Weah nominated Mr. Jarlawah Tonpo as Deputy Minister for Press and Public Affairs at the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), replacing former Deputy Information Minister Fahngon.--

Press release

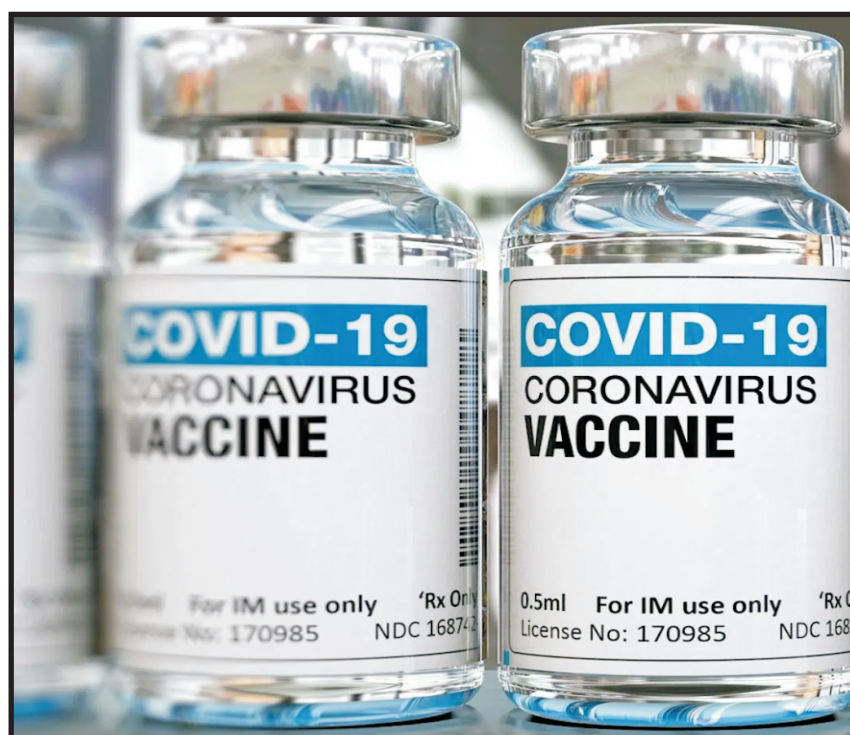
Liberia: Over 350,000 persons to obtain COVID-19 Vaccination

Over 350,000 persons are expected to obtain covid-19 vaccination as the World Bank approved additional financing to the Liberia COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Project.

The gesture is to enable affordable and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines here.

The financing, in the total amount of \$8 million grant (\$7 million International Development Association-IDA and \$1 million Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Multi-Donor Trust), will support the purchase of vaccines and their deployment, reaching approximately 386,000 people. The resources will also help strengthen systems of vaccination programs more broadly and support other COVID-19 response activities.

"In the wake of a third



Covid-19 wave that is more devastating than the first two, we believe that ramping up the vaccination program in Liberia, as in other countries, will be a game changer," said Dr. Khwima Nthara, World Bank Country Manager in Liberia. "Hope people will take full advantage

of this opportunity and get vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones," He added.

Under the original project that was approved on April 9, 2020, the World Bank has supported Liberia purchase 10 ambulances, 20 ventilators,

120 motorcycles, diagnostic laboratory equipment, and also supported counties in implementing COVID-19 preventive measures. This Additional Financing has become necessary given the evidence from the west on impact of vaccines on disease transmission and bringing the COVID-19 situation back to normal. The Bank financed vaccines will contribute to increasing the number of Liberians covered by vaccines. The project will also support roll out of the vaccines to the

last mile and including support to intervention started under the parent project, Liberia COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Project.

"The financing for Liberia comes at a time when there is a rise in new cases and full blown third wave making the need for vaccines as an added intervention more critical," said Co-Task Team Leaders Noel Chisaka, Anthony Theophilus Seddoh and Opope Oyaka Tshivuila Matala.

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Maryland County records 10 new cases, 1 death

By Patrick N. Mensah,
Maryland County

The Maryland county health team in southeast Liberia has reported 10 new confirmed cases of the Coronavirus, days after it released two of the three patients that were recently tested positive of the virus.

County Health Officer Dr. Metheodius George, said increment in cases of the virus in county is quite

The County Health Officer lauded the county health team for the role played in tracking the recent COVID-19 cases after patients showed signs and symptoms especially, respiratory symptom.

Dr. George noted that most of the recent cases are people who were brought to the emergency unit after they interacted with family members and community dwellers.

"I am worried, though the County has a rapid diagnosis test

various communities but because everyone hasn't been tested yet so you can't tell as to who are the carriers. Those that we interact with or those that have been tested of the virus came from communities, so we that are living within those communities and have interacted with those people on a daily basis need to be more careful or come to the health facilities for test", he cautioned.

He advised residents to report anyone showing signs and symptoms of respiratory distress or any other symptom to immediately visit health facilities in the county.

Speaking of the discharge of two patients, including the recent one on June 29, Dr. George said it has so far reduced fear among the local population following resurgence of the virus.

He said based on past experience with Ebola, coupled with professional skills, they were able to successfully apply requisite medication which eventually saw the two patients reunited with their families.

"We are proud of our people and partners who have been showing care by getting themselves and their loved ones vaccinated because of this trend, Maryland County Health Team is on top and we are hoping that we will achieve more", he added.

Dr. George as health workers, they will do all they can to break the chain of transmission but encouraged residents to abide by all of the health protocols.

On Tuesday, June 22, 2021, the County Health Team recorded its first three confirmed cases and several contacts of the COVID-19.

Editing by Jonathan Browne



different from last year.

"So presently in Maryland County, we have confirmed 13 cases, initially it was three but for the past two to three days, 10 more cases have been added", he said.

He added that out of the 13 confirmed cases, six are in treatment unit, three discharged; three are home-based with one death.

He stressed that the sudden increment in cases is regrettable because those cases are from the community.

that can give result within 15 minutes and when a person is proven positive, their specimens will be taken to the defense unit and also to the national laboratory for respiratory test, we still need to encourage our people not to panic but rather to observe all health protocols."

He urged citizens, especially residents of communities where cases are surfacing, to adhere to preventive measures prescribed by the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL).

"This virus is within our

2021 human trafficking report downgrades Liberia

By Jonathan Browne

The United States government releases the 2021 Trafficking in Persons report on Liberia, places the country on its Tier 2 Watch List, for failure to meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. However, it says the Government of Liberia is making significant efforts to do so.

The report released Thursday, July 01, 2021 says, these efforts include opening a new shelter for child trafficking victims, initiating an investigation into a high-profile labor trafficking case in cooperation with foreign governments, and allocating funding to NGOs to conduct awareness raising campaigns.

However, the report says the government did not demonstrate overall increasing efforts

compared to the previous reporting period, even considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity.

"The government identified fewer victims, initiated fewer investigations, prosecuted fewer defendants, and did not convict any traffickers", the report reads, and observes that law enforcement officials in the country continued to lack adequate resources and understanding

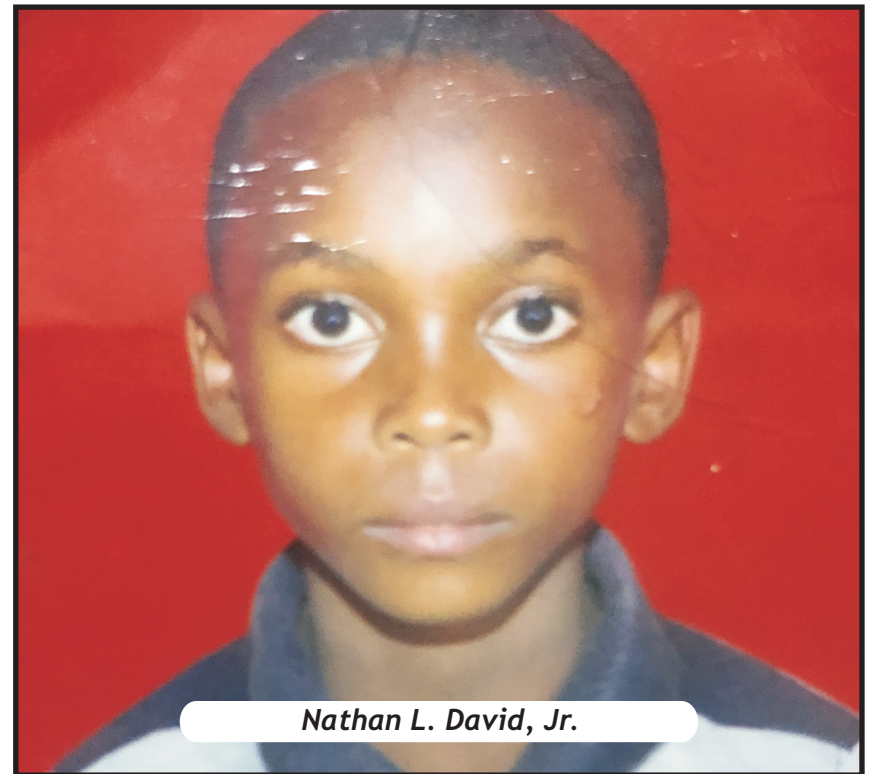
Boy, 9, writes Pres. Weah

Nine-year-old Nathan L. David, Jr. has written President George Manneh Weah, appealing for assistance to get back in school.

Nathan is a 4th grade dropout because his father is jobless and does not have money to pay his tuition, which is stifling his educational sojourn.

and go to bed at 10:pm every day just to escape the lashes from the landlord because my daddy is jobless and not able to pay rent", Nathan's letter read.

He laments that since his father lost his job, "things have turned the other way for me. All I could dream is to become the best Mathematician of Liberia at age 14 and has dropped out of school."



Nathan L. David, Jr.

Led by his father into the offices of the New Dawn on Wednesday, June 20, 2021, he read verbatim content of his letter, asking the President to come to his rescue.

"Tears come down my cheeks when I see my school mates in school. I now consider myself as a child who is existing and not living because I eat by coincidence

The lad reminds President Weah of his promise to make education one of his focus points. "But why is it that all I hear on the radio is politics, chaos, etc?", he asks.

Nathan also appeals to lawmakers and humanitarians to help him return to school and help his father get a job to support him.

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of trafficking to effectively investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes, while shelter services for victims remained insufficient, and the government did not support NGOs providing care to victims, hence, Liberia is downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List.

The report recommends increase efforts to investigate and prosecute trafficking cases, including internal trafficking cases and officials accused of complicity.

It calls for training of law enforcement and judicial officials on identifying, investigating, and prosecuting trafficking cases under the 2005 anti-trafficking law, and

amendment of the 2005 anti-trafficking law to remove the requirement of force, fraud, or coercion in child sex trafficking cases.

It says the government should amended the law to prescribe penalties for adult trafficking that are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with the penalties for other grave crimes; expand victim services, particularly for victims outside the capital, males, and victims requiring long-term care.

It also calls increase financial or in-kind support to NGOs that support trafficking victims as well as allocation of financial and in-kind resources, as feasible, to the anti-trafficking task force, among others.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

House restless over illicit drugs claim

The Director for Press and Public Affairs of the House of Representatives says the leadership and members of the House are very concerned about recent allegation levied against a member of that body by a senior officer of the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA).

Speaking to this paper

investigation of the matter.

Tuesday, this week a day full of tension and drama on Capitol Hill when LDEA Commander Martha Massaley was whisked out of the Chambers of the House of Representatives while being grilled by the Plenary for linking an unnamed member of the 54th Legislature to illicit drug trafficking.

Commander Massaley, who

Chambers has been probing deeply into statements the DEA officer that some members of that august body are running a drug cartel.

Massaley told a group of students in Paynesville at a forum in observance of International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking that she and some other agents intercepted a lawmaker along the Somalia Drive, trafficking illicit drugs.

She said the unidentified lawmaker told her the matter would go nowhere and that he (lawmaker) was going to support the team or the agency with a vehicle to fast-track its operations in an effort to appease them from making arrest.

Her statement since went viral with call for her to name the specific lawmaker or lawmakers allegedly involved so they may be name, shame and possibly prosecuted.

Atty. Garr says the LDEA commander by now should be able to identify the lawmaker who she reportedly found illicit drugs with or face arrest for bringing the first branch of government to public ridicule.

According to him, failure of the LDEA officer to have arrested the suspect on the scene or impounded the illicit drugs makes it unbelievable.

He notes that the officer's failure to have taken security action against the lawmaker makes her to be an accomplice to the crime if such existed.



Thursday, July 01, 2021 at the Capitol Building in Monrovia, Atty. Nelson Garr said it is unfortunate that a senior officer of the LDEA would make such grave allegation and that the House of Representatives is deeply concerned, and that there should be further

had appeared stronger and highly spirited, was rushed to an unnamed hospital when she suddenly turned frail and unable to stand and sit after she had endured more than three hours of questioning by members of the House on the allegation.

The House of Representatives presided over by Speaker Bhofal

AFL commandant faces police probe

-As army chief opts capital punishment for rape

By Winston W. Parley

Armed Forces of Liberia or AFL Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Nyankun E. Williams faces police probe in relations to allegations of rape.

Liberia's Army Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Prince Charles Johnson, III, says Col. Williams has been turned over to the Justice Ministry for investigation in relations to the allegation.

"If any of my personnel are called and when investigated and go through that process, if I'm called by the president and advice I will definitely stand by that - capital punishment. Yes!" Gen. Johnson said Thursday, 1 July during a live talk show on OK FM in Monrovia.

Col. Williams was in April this year relieved of his post as Commandant of the Armed Forces Training Command

(AFTC) on allegation of rape and forwarded to the Military Police to face investigation.

But the Military Police Unit which is the investigative arm of the Armed Forces of Liberia on

17 May informed the public that it had concluded the investigation and submitted its findings to the AFL High Command for further actions.

Subsequently in May this

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Lieutenant Colonel Nyankun E. Williams

Be economic transformer

-Pro Tempore Chie tells NIC

Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert T. Chie has challenged the National Investment Commission and its partners to continuously play a major role in the economic transformation of the country by aggressively promoting investment opportunities, and supporting the growth of foreign direct investments.

Speaking Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at the second Liberia Business and Investment Forum (LIBIF), a virtual event in Washington D.C, USA, Pro-Temp Chie noted that the NIC should advocate for and strengthen the domestic private sector, well as ensure that the economic and social development objectives of the people of Liberia are achieved by and through favorable

United States and other Countries and commit the Liberia Senate in the creation of an enabling environment through the enactment of appropriate legislation and diligent discharge of oversight for the growth of the private sector".

Senator Chie at the same time joined other participants of the forum to underscore the importance of investment in agriculture, health and tourism sectors.

He added that these are crucial areas that every country needs to invest in, if she much achieves economic prosperity, agriculture being the leading sector of the economy.

He at the same time mentioned that until 1979, the country's economy was among the more developed and fastest-



Pro-Tempore Albert T. Chie

investment environment that guarantees security.

Chief recalled that he had the privilege of attending a similar investment forum in Washington, D.C. over a decade ago, than as Assistant Minister for Energy at the Ministry of Mines and Energy, adding that the energy sector was one of the key investment areas highlighted at the forum.

Since that he averred that the sector has attracted attention due to policy and regulatory reforms that were suggested at that forum and subsequently implemented by the Government of Liberia.

Pro-Temp Chie: "At this forum our Country anticipates numerous dividends as we look forward to working along with investment partners from the

growing in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Pro-Temp also pointed to the Liberia Sugar Corporation, LIBSUCO in Maryland County, the plywood business in Sinoe County, the fishing business of the Mesurado Group of companies and so forth.

Senator Chie indicated that following the 1980 coup d'état, the economy experienced a drastic decline which even became worse by the civil war that caused a brain drain and loss of capital.

He added that investment in the soil has the capacity to yield huge returns and healthy benefits that will culminate in National Food Security, noting that there are opportunities for rice concession, food preservation and packaging,

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10

Français

Les États-Unis recommandent des mesures pour améliorer la transparence budgétaire du Libéria

Le rapport de transparence budgétaire 2021 du département d'État américain sur le Libéria a recommandé plusieurs mesures pour améliorer la transparence financière dans le secteur public. Il est surtout question de rendre les documents budgétaires accessibles au public dans un délai raisonnable.

Le Libéria n'a pas fait bonne impression dans le rapport 2021 du département d'État américain sur la transparence fiscale. Le rapport a été publié récemment à Washington, D.C.

Le rapport demande en outre, entre autres, au gouvernement du Libéria de rendre publique la dette des entreprises d'État, de veiller à ce que le budget soit substantiellement complet et que les comptes hors budget soient soumis à un audit et une surveillance adéquate.

Il recommande la production et la publication d'un budget supplémentaire

lorsque les recettes et les dépenses réelles ne correspondent pas à celles du budget promulgué, et que le gouvernement veille à ce que l'institution supérieure de contrôle respecte les normes internationales d'indépendance.

Les États-Unis suggèrent de rendre publics les rapports d'audit de l'institution supérieure de contrôle dans un délai raisonnable, de veiller à ce

que les critères et procédures utilisés pour attribuer les contrats et les licences d'extraction de ressources naturelles soient conformes aux exigences fixées par la loi ou la réglementation et de fournir des informations de base sur les prix d'extraction de ressources accessibles au public.

Le rapport note qu'au

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



La coalition internationale met en garde contre la progression de l'EI en Afrique

Les 83 pays et organisations membres de la coalition internationale contre l'organisation Etat islamique ont mis en garde lundi 28 juin contre la montée en puissance de cette organisation en Afrique.

Pour la première fois depuis 2019, une réunion de la coalition s'est tenue en présentiel à Rome au niveau ministériel. Plusieurs pays africains ont participé à cette réunion comme le Centrafrique, la RDC, la Mauritanie, le Maroc ou la

Libye. Le Burkina Faso, le Ghana et le Mozambique ont aussi été invités.

La situation au Sahel et en Afrique de l'Ouest où l'influence de l'EI et de ses ramifications s'accroît a été évoquée : l'Italie a appelé à former un nouveau groupe de travail pour lutter contre,

« la menace croissante provenant de l'EI en Afrique » et la France a appelé, de son côté « maintenir une pression très forte ».

Quant aux au leadership de cette coalition, les Etats-Unis ont

plaidé le multilatéralisme comme meilleur moyen pour lutter contre le danger de l'EI.

« Le président Biden a clairement indiqué que les Etats-Unis voulaient travailler avec leurs partenaires du monde entier, a insisté Marissa Scott-Torres, porte-parole du département d'Etat américain, au micro de Houda Ibrahim. Dans le cas de Daech, en 2018, la coalition a convenu de concentrer initialement son action sur l'Afrique de l'Ouest et le Sahel et à porter une attention accrue aux activités des succursales et des affiliés de Daech dans le monde entier. »

Marissa Scott-Torres rappelle qu'en novembre 2020, les Etats-Unis et le Nigeria ont convoqué « une réunion virtuelle avec les membres de la coalition mondiale contre Daech et des représentants des Etats d'Afrique de l'Ouest et des organisations régionales concernées pour discuter de la menace de Daech en Afrique de l'Ouest et des moyens pour la coalition de contribuer aux efforts collectifs visant à assurer la défaite durable de Daech en Afrique de l'Ouest et de Boko Haram. »



Éditorial

COVID-19 : Le gouvernement devrait aller au-delà des simples mesures barrières

Le fait que le gouvernement du Libéria, par l'intermédiaire du ministère de la Santé, a publié la semaine dernière des directives nationales révisées sur la COVID-19 après l'augmentation du nombre de décès et des personnes infectées au quotidien montre que le gouvernement joue du bout des lèvres avec le peuple libérien quant à la gestion de la pandémie.

C'est un secret de polichinelle que les autorités ici, même au plus haut niveau, rechignent à appliquer les mesures de prévention de la COVID, en encourageant des rassemblements de masse, comme c'est le cas lors de la tournée nationale du président George Weah au cours des trois à quatre derniers mois, où les barrières, la distanciation sociale, le lavage des mains et le port des masques ont été totalement ignorés.

La résurgence du virus au Libéria est attribuée à une nouvelle variante indienne qui est plus mortelle que celle qui venait de Wuhan, en Chine, en 2019.

En moins d'un mois, le taux de mortalité n'est pas seulement alarmant, mais effrayant.

Avec des frontières poreuses et mal surveillées à travers le pays, associées à une sécurité plutôt détendue au principal aéroport international Roberts qui a été témoin d'un afflux de visiteurs étrangers, en particulier d'Inde et d'autres pays asiatiques au cours de cette même période, on devrait s'attendre au pire. Ce n'était qu'une question de temps.

Maintenant, nous voici en tant que nation, toutes les lumières de toute la région de la CEDEAO étant braquées sur nous. Nous sommes désormais considérés comme ceux qui représentent un risque pour les 14 autres États membres.

Les mesures nationales révisées publiées dernièrement sont ainsi dénuées de sens. Il faut au contraire des mesures strictes à tous les niveaux sans crainte ni faveur. Il nous faut un leadership exemplaire cette fois-ci si nous voulons réussir ce combat.

L'un des problèmes critiques des directives qui continuent de faire l'objet de critiques est d'autoriser le maintien de l'ouverture des lieux de rassemblement comme les bars et les boîtes de nuit jusqu'à 21h00 ! C'est comme si on donnait une carte blanche aux gens de propager le virus.

Nous avons du mal à comprendre comment un groupe de personnes ivres dans un bar peut observer la distanciation sociale, pour ne pas dire le port de masques. Le gouvernement dit penser aux conséquences économiques de la fermeture de ces lieux. Mais il semble ignorer les répercussions imprévues des activités dans ces lieux.

Le Libéria risque de devenir un enfant problématique pour toute la région, à moins que des mesures efficaces soient prises pour mettre fin à la menace. N'est-ce pas ce que les autorités veulent ? Il nous faut appliquer de manière stricte les mesures préventives.

Enfin, il ne faut pas qu'il soit uniquement question de mesures barrières. Il faut aussi et surtout renforcer les capacités de nos agents de santé et de nos hôpitaux de répondre aux cas quotidiens. Il nous faut plus d'oxygène, de ventilateurs et de lits. Il nous faut du vaccin en toute urgence.

Français

Les États-Unis recommandent

cours de la période d'examen, le gouvernement du Libéria n'a pas rendu ses documents budgétaires, y compris la proposition de budget de l'exécutif, le budget adopté et le rapport de fin d'année, accessibles au public dans un délai raisonnable.

Il indique que les informations sur les obligations de la dette, à l'exception de la dette des entreprises publiques, étaient largement et facilement accessibles au grand public, mais les recettes d'aide étrangère, en grande partie basées sur des projets, n'étaient ni correctement prises en compte dans le budget ni soumises au même audit et la même surveillance nationale que les autres postes budgétaires.

« Des écarts importants entre les recettes prévues et réelles au cours de la période d'examen ont compromis la fiabilité des informations budgétaires. L'institution d'audit suprême n'a pas respecté les normes internationales d'indépendance et n'a pas rendu ses rapports d'audit accessibles au public dans un délai raisonnable.

Le Département d'État a déclaré que les critères et les procédures d'attribution des licences et des contrats d'extraction de ressources naturelles étaient décrits dans la loi, bien qu'il y ait eu des rapports de corruption et d'application incohérente des réglementations dans la pratique. Il a indiqué que des informations de base sur l'attribution d'une partie de l'extraction de ressources naturelles étaient accessibles au public.

Le rapport a révélé que 74 des 141 gouvernements examinés au cours de la période ont rempli les exigences minimales de transparence budgétaire, tandis que dix-sept des 67 gouvernements qui n'ont pas respecté les exigences minimales ont fait des progrès significatifs.

« La transparence budgétaire est un élément essentiel d'une gestion efficace des finances publiques. Elle permet de renforcer la confiance des marchés privés et sous-tend la durabilité économique », a dit le rapport, avant d'ajouter que la transparence budgétaire favorise une plus grande responsabilité du gouvernement en offrant une

fenêtre sur les budgets gouvernementaux pour les citoyens, leur permettant non seulement de demander des comptes à leurs leaders, mais aussi de participer aux débats publics en étant bien informés.

L'examen annuel de la transparence budgétaire mandaté par le Congrès offre des opportunités d'engager un dialogue avec les gouvernements sur l'importance de la transparence budgétaire, particulièrement importante étant donné la nécessité d'importantes dépenses économiques, sanitaires et sociales pour compenser les chocs de COVID-19.

Il décrit les exigences minimales de transparence budgétaire, passe en revue 141 gouvernements, dont la plupart ont été identifiés comme bénéficiaires de l'aide des États-Unis dans le rapport sur la transparence budgétaire 2014, et évalue en outre les gouvernements qui n'ont pas respecté les exigences minimales de transparence budgétaire au cours de la période d'examen du 1er janvier au 31 décembre 2020.

Le rapport indique également que les gouvernements qui n'ont pas respecté ces exigences ont quand même fait des progrès significatifs en divulguant publiquement la documentation budgétaire nationale, les contrats et les licences au cours de la période d'examen, et que le Département d'État a évalué la disponibilité publique, l'exhaustivité substantielle et la fiabilité des documents budgétaires, ainsi que la transparence des processus d'attribution des contrats et des licences du gouvernement.

Il a dit qu'à partir de cette période d'examen, si un gouvernement a un fonds souverain, il doit divulguer sa source de financement et son approche générale des retraits du fonds.

« La transparence fiscale informe les citoyens sur la manière dont les recettes publiques et fiscales sont dépensées et constitue un élément essentiel d'une gestion efficace des finances publiques. La transparence offre aux citoyens une fenêtre sur les budgets gouvernementaux et leur permet de demander des comptes au gouvernement. Elle contribue au renforcement de la confiance et de la durabilité du marché. Le rapport sur la transparence fiscale (FTR) mandaté par le Congrès est un outil pour identifier les lacunes et soutenir les changements nécessaires », souligne le rapport.

COMMENTAIRE

By Kevin Rudd

Le prochain virus

BRISBANE - Au moment où les pays développés commencent à croire qu'ils ont traversé le pire de la crise de la COVID-19, deux réalités frappantes se font sentir. Il semble tout d'abord évident à quel point la plupart des pays en développement subissent l'escalade des épidémies du type que l'on constate en Inde. Les conséquences d'une distribution des vaccins les plus efficaces de manière équitable et stratégique sont mises à nu.

Deuxièmement, avec des variants du virus plus virulents et contagieux qui se déclarent encore, nous n'avons pas le luxe de retarder les travaux visant à établir un nouveau système international de préparation et de riposte aux pandémies. Nous devons amorcer ce projet dès maintenant. Heureusement, le Groupe indépendant sur la préparation et la riposte aux pandémies (GIPR), coprésidé par l'ex-première ministre de la Nouvelle-Zélande Helen Clark et par une ancienne présidente du Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, vient de publier un plan décrivant en détail la marche à suivre.

La question est maintenant de savoir si les autorités nationales sont prêtes à écouter, mais également à agir. La réponse déterminera si l'on peut empêcher les épidémies futures de se transformer en catastrophes mondiales. Je sais de l'expérience de mon propre gouvernement durant la pandémie de la grippe porcine (H1N1) de 2009 qu'il est crucial de contrer ces crises par des interventions immédiates, coordonnées à grande échelle. Grâce à huit mois de travaux par le GIPR, les responsables politiques sont maintenant dotés d'un ensemble complet de recommandations pour transformer le mode de gestion des risques de pandémie.

Au cœur des propositions du groupe, on retrouve un appel pour un degré plus élevé de préparation et de riposte aux pandémies. L'appel a été lancé aux plus hauts échelons des directions politiques par l'entremise de la création d'un nouveau conseil de sécurité mondial sur les menaces sanitaires, qui serait sis au siège des Nations unies à New York. Le groupe a également proposé une Facilité internationale de financement (FIF) pour la vaccination qui contribuerait à répartir la charge des crises sanitaires mondiales futures. Que ce soit par des contributions directes ou par une sorte de contribution obligatoire, ce mécanisme financerait autant les mesures préparatrices que les interventions d'urgence dans les pays à faible et moyen revenu.

Le GIPR a offert la sorte d'encadrement formel, impartial et réalisable dont les autorités nationales ont besoin et — dans ce cas — qui l'ont réclamé auprès de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé. Il y a quatre ans, la Commission indépendante sur le multilatéralisme (ICM), dont j'étais le président) a tenté de sonner l'alarme sur la menace grandissante des pandémies dans son rapport Global Pandemics and Global Public

Health (Pandémies et santé publique mondiale). Les membres de la commission étaient atterrés du piètre état de l'architecture de la santé mondiale à une époque où les crises sanitaires transfrontalières devenaient plus fréquentes et présentaient des risques sans précédent. Ces risques se sont depuis matérialisés sous la forme de la pandémie de la COVID-19.

Outre cet avertissement clair, le rapport de la commission a proposé une série de recommandations audacieuses visant à consolider le système multilatéral devant d'éventuelles crises sanitaires mondiales. Ses propositions pour des règles plus transparentes de vérification et des mécanismes d'alerte rapides se retrouvent dans les recommandations du GIPR, comme son appel pour un secrétariat de l'OMS autonome et doté de plus de moyens. Nous attendons toujours des progrès sur tous ces fronts.

Nous ne pouvons nous permettre de laisser le rapport du GIPR tomber lui aussi dans l'oubli. Et pourtant, c'est exactement ce qui semble se passer. La 74e Assemblée de la santé mondiale vient de voter un délai de six mois pour étudier le rapport du groupe avant même d'envisager une intervention. De tels retards sont simplement inacceptables.

La crise de la COVID-19 a confirmé la vérité dérangeante ressortant du rapport du GIPR, à savoir que la plupart des institutions nationales et internationales créées pour lutter contre les pandémies ne suffisent plus à la tâche, ou dont les fondements étaient inadéquats. Dès la fin de 2019 et au début de 2020 lorsque les réglementations sanitaires internationales ont échoué, l'épidémie de la COVID-19 est devenue une catastrophe mondiale. Et depuis lors, les mesures économiques nationales et internationales se sont avérées trop lentes, mitigées et non coordonnées — une lacune que l'architecture du G20 postérieure à la crise de 2008 était censée éviter.

La crise actuelle pourrait s'empirer, avant que la situation ne s'améliore. On constate déjà un effondrement des chaînes logistiques mondiales, ce qui pourrait avoir de terribles conséquences économiques, politiques et sanitaires. Il faut rectifier le tir pour pouvoir combattre non seulement des pandémies futures, mais également celle qui sévit en ce moment.

Le rapport du GIPR ne pouvait mieux tomber. Le sommet du G7 en Cornouailles du 11 au 13 juin est une occasion de concentrer nos efforts avec l'appui des échelons politiques les plus élevés. La COVID-19 a été très coûteuse pour nous tous. Le rapport de l'ICM de 2017 a anticipé ce qui arriverait un jour et a recensé les solutions que nous aurions besoin de mettre en œuvre. Il est primordial de s'appuyer sur les résultats du GIPR pour adopter des réformes concrètes et faire preuve d'un dynamisme réel, de sorte que cette pandémie soit la dernière à nous avoir pris au dépourvu.

France commits tangible support to Weah's gov't

French President Emmanuel Macron has assured Liberian President George Manneh Weah of his unflinching support towards the Liberian government's efforts to improve the lives of its people.

During an hour-long special bilateral meeting with French President Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris on Thursday, 1 July 2021, the French President told President Weah that his country's support to Liberia will be tangible so that it is felt by the citizens directly.

Macron said in addition to his country's efforts at capacity building and youth development, additional urban projects will be undertaken by the Agency for

The French President also promised more logistical support and training for the AFL and further cooperation in the area of information exchange.

The discussions also covered the issue of piracy in the Gulf Guinea and the need for both nations to cooperate in order to halt the menace.

The French government further promised more equipment and training for the Liberian Coast Guards, adding that the French Navy will study the option of having its Frigates participate in the fight against piracy in order to ensure that vital maritime commerce is carried out unhindered.

In response, Liberian President George Manneh Weah expressed profound gratitude to the government and people of France for the country's

President Weah called for the continuation of the Franco-Liberia relationship, including the strengthening of collaboration between the French Military and the Armed Forces of Liberia on the Malian peacekeeping mission.

"In this regard", he said, "it is important to note that the Liberian contingent has now been tasked with providing Base Security for the Timbuktu outpost and, as such, more modern equipment and logistics are urgently needed."

Additionally, President Weah enumerated the many other support the French government has rendered to Liberia in recent months, including funding for capacity development, sports, the resumption of flight by Air



Pres. George M. Weah with Pres. Emmanuel Macron

French Development totaling an initial amount of 23 million euros.

He assured Mr. Weah that this assistance will be immediate.

President Macron also informed President Weah that his country will make an immediate donation of some 40,000 test kits and several respirators, adding that France will increase its quota to the COVAX structure.

Mr. Macron also said France will ensure that "Liberia directly benefits and have its population vaccinated."

He highlighted the strong historical ties between both nations, saying that both leaders ought to work harder in order to ensure the relationship yields tangible mutual benefits.

The talks covered a wide range of issues, including French support to the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) in order to enhance its ability to perform its service in Mali.

continued support of Liberia's development drive, especially in the areas of capacity building, infrastructure development and sports.

President Weah also expressed appreciation for President Macron's "gracious support" towards Liberia's engagements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which he said has greatly contributed to the improved fiscal and monetary policy implementation and efficiency the country now experiences.

Mr. Weah informed his French counterpart that his administration continues to work in close collaboration with these international financial institutions, "which sometimes require the formulation of difficult policies, such as the Salary Harmonization Policy."

But he said the policies have been required to make the "necessary corrective measures and structural adjustments" for the good of the Liberian economy.

France, the construction of a new building for Alliance Francaise Institute, and the increase in activities by French businesses and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs).

Regarding ongoing efforts by the Liberian government to curb further spread of COVID, President Weah thanked President Macron and the Government and People of France for "generously providing" a number of ventilators and several thousands of testing kits.

He told his counterpart that Liberia would need millions of additional doses of COVID-19 vaccines to help fight the spread of the virus.

Foreign Minister Dee-Maxwell Kemayah, Defense Minister Daniel Ziankahn and Maritime Commissioner Lenn Eugene Nagbe formed part of the discussions which were followed by a closed door tete a tete between the two leaders.

COVID-19 attacks

Starts from back page

particularly on travelers entering the country.

Citizens also criticize President George Weah for traveling out of the country amid the current peak of the virus. Many think he should stay home and give hope to the population.

But the Minister of Health warns that if Liberians take the fight for granted, the entire country would lose the battle.

She says there is no immediate plan to shut down the country, explaining "We can't at this time close down markets; our people need to eat, and we don't want citizens to die from starvation, but what we can do is to appeal to your conscience to abide by every measure."

She puts total confirmed cases in the country as of June 30th to 4,251 with 40 percent occurring in the same month and 1,619 active cases across Liberia.

She says of the figure above, 2,346 recoveries were recorded in the same period, adding that due to the seriousness of the Delta variant that is making more people to get sick, the recovery period takes longer time.

At the same time Dr. Jallah

reveals that from June 1st to the 30th Liberia recorded a total of 55 deaths, noting that this is something that should scare people.

"I'm terribly hurt that we had to lose huge number of our citizens to COVID-19", she laments, and explains that total deaths from the third wave are 141 with 1,715 contacts being followed in Montserrado county, described as the epic center.

"There are more people here in Montserrado county that are affected, and it will take lots of team work, commitment to get rid of the virus within this epic center."

The Minister adds that about 103 persons are in treatment facilities, 57 of them at Star Base with 47 placed on oxygen.

Liberia received its first consignment of 96,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccines brought in the country in early April. A total of 84,808 persons have taken the first dose, while 5,463 persons received the second dose.

Dr. Jallah appeals to citizens especially, those waiting to take their second dose of the vaccine to be patient, saying, "Don't panic, we are doing everything possible for you to have your second dose of the vaccine."

- Editing by Jonathan Browne

Be economic

Cont'd from page 7

and other agro-business opportunities.

"There are opportunities also for the health sector. We should now progressively strengthen our health sector that faces challenges of diverse proportions. If we must create a vibrant economy, there must be healthy people".

He disclosed that in coming

years, the Liberia Senate will look keenly at the budgetary allocation to the tourism sector to put it on its feet so that it can reach out to private sector interest, adding that Health and Agriculture continue to receive priority in the national budget, and that there is opportunity for increment to respond aggrievedly to the needs of both sectors.

Govt. announces

Cont'd from page 5

well as advice from the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL).

He reminded school administrators, proprietresses, principal association, national teachers association of Liberia (NTAL), private school secretariat and all education stakeholders as well as the public, that the present changes in the 2020/2021 academic calendar is intended to help national government combat and curtail further spread of the deadly corona virus, which poses serious threat to health and national security.

However, he urged school authorities to be in full compliance with the adjusted schedules and absorb the

required lessons within the national curriculum where necessary and appropriate, for the growth and sustainability of the nation's human capacity.

Minister Kesselly reiterated the Ministry's mandate to school administrators to suspend graduation exercises, social activities (field trips, football games, gala day program, parade, queen and king contest) until further notice from the ministries of Health and NPHIL.

He encourage full compliance in the fight against covid-19 thereby observing the preventive measure proscribe by the ministry of health, adding that it must be taken seriously by all Liberian.

-Editing by Jonathan Browne

Soldiers ready for deployment

By Winston W. Parley

Soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia or AFL, have been put on a standby mode ready to be deployed when needed to support health authorities stop the spread of the covid-19 virus.

AFL Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Prince Charles Johnson, III, said both the infantry and the Liberia Coast Guard have been activated to be on the standby to support health authorities when needed to help.

"We are on the standby just in case, based on the recommendation and our own input to the health authority. We standby to deploy and help to stop the spread," Gen. Johnson said

cumulatively since the crisis began in March 2020 to date, and has also recorded 4,098 cases of the virus cumulatively.

The third wave of the virus is considered more deadly than the previous two waves of the virus experienced last year, and health authorities have been cautioning the public to take health protocols more seriously and be inoculated.

The Army Chief indicated that on 27 June this year, the Ministry of Health visited the 14th Military Hospital which was one of the Covid treatment facilities during the previous waves of Coronavirus, saying the facility is prepared just in case Star Base is overwhelmed by Covid cases.

"Our logistic unit, already we have constructed tents at the RIA [Roberts International Airport]. I

military facilities.

He said the AFL has completed 50 percent of its personnel based on the vaccines that the military got. Gen. Johnson encouraged personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia, their dependents and the citizenry to continue to follow the health protocols announced by the Ministry of Health and to also get inoculated.

Earlier on the show Thursday, former NPHIL boss Dr. Mosoka Fallah encouraged people with health complications like blood pressure, diabetes and respiratory tract infections to take the vaccines because "once they have the disease, they will accelerate and they will die."

"So instead of you being afraid when you have these conditions, [they] should be all the reasons why you should take this," Dr. Fallah said.

Explaining the importance of taking the two doses of the vaccines, Dr. Fallah, it has been determined that the protection you get from the first dose is not strong enough, but the second dose will prompt up the system to give you the maximum result.

He said this is why people are encouraged to take their second dose to reduce their chances of getting infected, or face less risk even if they were infected, compared to those who didn't take the vaccine at all.

On the aspect of compliance, Dr. Fallah said Liberia needs to start thinking about something called "behavior modification" in Public Health through which people are deprived of certain privileges [if they refuse to abide by certain protocols]. He suggested that people do not have to be jailed due to their refusal to take vaccines, but their privileges can be reduced to include being deprived of riding public buses, going to public places and green zones being created only for those that have taken the vaccines, among others. "So we can take that same method and use it. People that are difficult we will not put them in jail, but we restrict certain things," he suggested.



during a live talk show on local broadcaster OK FM Thursday, 1 July 2021 in Monrovia.

During the show, Gen. Johnson said the AFL has reactivated its medical unit and it is on standby to support the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL).

12 of Liberia's 15 counties are now in response, while the remaining three counties including Grand Kru, River Gee and Grand Gedeh are still standing and are in preparedness.

Overall, Liberia has recorded a little over 120 coronavirus deaths

AFL commandant faces

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year, the High Command of the Armed Forces of Liberia said it had submitted to the Minister of National Defense Maj. Gen. Daniel Ziankahn (Rtd), for his review and subsequent actions, the findings of the alleged rape case brought against Col. Williams.

According to Gen. Johnson, about a week ago, Col. Williams was contacted by his lawyer, adding that the Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberian National Police is conducting the investigation and has spoken to the survivor, her father and the accused.

Gen. Johnson explained that he still stand by his decision on rape that if anybody is caught in the act of rape, they should face capital punishment.

"Look, if anybody is caught in the act, I think they have cases of almost ten that led to death of young girls, those people should definitely face capital punishment. And I still stand by that, I support that and I stand by that," the Army Chief emphasized.

Gen. Johnson said AFL is about to come up with a release to update the public about where they are so as to avoid speculation, saying the armed forces is zero tolerant when it comes to rape.

The Army Chief contended that armed robbery and rape have been trending here, leading to suggestions that rape be considered a national emergency.

He recalled that during the

interim government of the late Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant, Liberia signed to a law to respect the human rights of people and do away with capital punishment.

However, he explained that in 2008, former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf brought back the issue of capital punishment against armed robbery, terrorism and rape when the commission of such crimes led to another person's death.

He argued that at the time the Sirleaf administration reintroduced capital punishment, there were lot of international presence in the country including the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the U.S. Military which was conducting training for the Liberian army, among others.

On 26 April 2021, Sergeant Obento Roberts, a personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia serving on the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Mali, formally complained a service member for alleged sexual intercourse with his (Roberts') 16 years old daughter.

Based on the allegation, the victim underwent medical examination based on Sgt. Obento Roberts' instructions, and the medical examinations were conducted by a nurse at the sexual gender - based violence (SGBV) One Stop Center at Duport Road.

A copy of the report was submitted to the AFL Military Police investigators, and it was interpreted for the AFL investigators by the Chief Medical Officer Dr. Zoe Parwon.

Cummings Foundation

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jingle, flyers with simple messages and working on a skit for our community radio stations. As these are life-saving messages and public awareness campaigns, I am asking the media, which has been very helpful, to please continue to do their part."

Thirdly, and most importantly, he says the Foundation is trying to help the government succeed in this effort by regularly updating the authorities on what it is doing, and recommend additional steps, as required, to be taken by the government to seriously fight the virus, stop the spread, and end the infections in the country.

Meanwhile, Mr. Cummings reveals that in the next few weeks and months, he will be heard often along with others about the virus and what needs to be done in help each other survive, treat the sick and infected, and end the spread across the country.

"I will be calling on friends

and business partners for help. I will be calling on Liberians in the diaspora to rally around, because we have to give ourselves the best chance to succeed and save each other lives by seriously committing to do our part - to do the things we need to do for ourselves, and for each other. I am sure people will help us, but we have to first help ourselves", he emphasizes.

He encourages citizens to not forget to wear masks at all times, wash hands regularly, avoid crowded places or observe social distancing, go to hospital if they feel sick, take the COVID test and vaccine.

While visiting the United States of America recently, Mr. Cummings offered his services to the Weah administration in fighting the new wave of COVID-19 cases in the country; something, President Weah has welcomed immediately.

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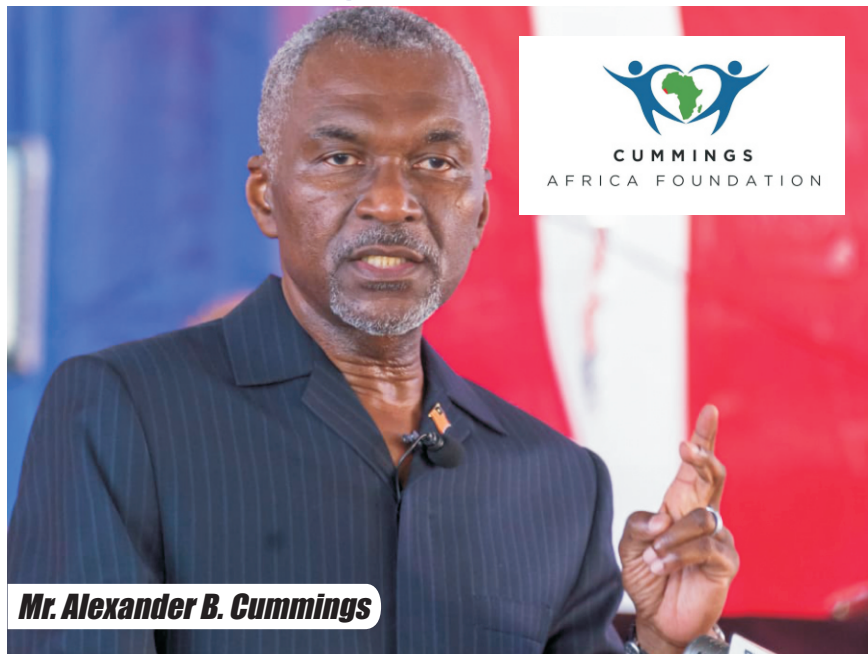


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Cummings Foundation commits US\$150,000 to Covid fight



Mr. Alexander B. Cummings



By Jonathan Browne
The Cummings Africa Foundation has committed US\$150,000, as its initial contribution to the ongoing fight against resurgence of the coronavirus in Liberia.

The head of the Foundation, Mr. Alexander B. Cummings, who is also leader of the opposition Alternative National Congress announced the commitment Thursday,

July 1, 2021 in a statement released in Monrovia.

He says the amount doubles the US\$75,000 the Foundation provided in food and household materials across the country during the lockdown last year, pledging that the Cummings Foundation will continue to do what it can in helping the citizenry during these difficult times, and will assist as best as possible the government in its current response to the

pandemic.

"As I speak, the Foundation is moving quickly to purchase, and hurriedly provide to hospitals, much-needed medical supplies like oxygen, drugs, masks, gloves, gowns, oximeters, cleaning supplies and hand-washing buckets. So far, we have provided oxygen for 50 tanks to Catholic Hospital and procured 20 tanks and 20 regulators for CH Rennie hospital to be delivered this weekend. These are immediate needs we decided to address while the procurement of other materials take time", Mr. Cummings says.

He discloses the Foundation has three-fold approach in the current fight, firstly; it is providing support to some public and private hospitals, secondly, working with community leaders, civil society organizations, and the media to increase public awareness and messaging especially around prevention. "We have already released a

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COVID-19 attacks 13 counties

-Health Minister discloses

By Lewis S. Teh

The Minister of Health and head of the government's Incident Management System Dr. Wilehmima Jallah, discloses here that 13 of the 15 counties of Liberia are battling the third wave of the deadly COVID-19.

Addressing the regular press briefing at the Ministry of Information Thursday, July 1, 2021, she said from the

inception of the third wave of the virus in March, Montserrado county, now considered the high zone, was among few counties that were in respond, but as of June 30th the number has increased to 13 with the exception of River Gee and Grand Kru counties.

"The number of counties that are now in respond clearly indicates that we should continue our mask wearing, social distancing and follow all of



Dr. Wilehmima Jallah

the health protocols, and abide by the measures that were provided by the government; with this we can defeat this virus", the Minister said.

Doctor Jallah emphasizes that the entire COVID-19 fight rests in the hands of every citizen, noting that no one should wait on the government.

However, critics say the government should do more and take leadership by improving scrutiny at the Roberts International Airport,

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