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VOL.11 NO. 142

FRIDAY, AUGUST 20, 2021

Lofa clears Samukai's 50%



Senator-Elect Brownie Samukai

P11



Ms. Ellen Corkrum

P10

Ellen Corkrum pleads guilty

-in U.S. court

3G good

4G better

Dial *352#

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Continental News

Teenagers become pawns in Ethiopia propaganda war

The fog of war is a term usually used to describe confusion on the battlefield, but when it comes to Ethiopia, it could just as easily be applied to the bitterly fought information war surrounding the escalating conflict between Tigrayan rebels and government forces.

When the BBC was recently offered an interview with teenagers allegedly caught fighting for the rebels, we cautiously accepted. "I was playing football with friends when I was forcefully recruited by Tigrayan fighters to join their ranks," one 17-year-old told us, on the phone from Afar, a state which borders Tigray.

The conflict began in Tigray in northern Ethiopia in November, but has since spread to the neighbouring regions of Afar and Amhara, where the TPLF rebels recently captured Lalibela, a town famous for its rock-hewn churches.

"I was taken by force to the war front," said another teenager, who told us he was in Year 10 at school in Tigray. "My family couldn't say anything because they feared for their life."

A 19-year-old woman said: "We didn't get any military training. They took us to Afar. They threatened to kill our family if we didn't join the fight." The teenagers told us that around 50 adolescent boys and girls were rounded up near Tigray's capital Mekelle and forced to fight, before being captured by Afar's regional forces, who are allied to the federal government.

The first sign something wasn't right was when the Afar authorities, who offered us the interviews, insisted we conduct

them in Amharic - Ethiopia's lingua franca - and not their native language, Tigrinya.

Then, when we listened back carefully to the recordings, our suspicions were confirmed - at times, we could hear the regional authority spokesman telling the teenagers what to say.

Similar interviews were broadcast on local Ethiopian television channels, with teenagers paraded slowly past the cameras looking like bored senior high school students, some with injuries

apparently incurred in the fighting. The Tigray conflict began in November following months of feuding between Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), once the dominant party in the federal government, over the prime minister's reform programme. Troops from Eritrea also entered the conflict on the side of Mr Abiy.

The prime minister accuses the TPLF of becoming a terrorist organisation, while it insists that it is the legitimate government in its home region of Tigray. The Ethiopian government has been accusing the Tigrayan fighters of using child soldiers ever since they recaptured Mekelle in June, eight months after government troops took control of it.

The New York Times published a story on this key turning-point in the war

including photos of Tigrayan fighters, some of whom appeared to be underage. The paper described them as "highly motivated young recruits" inspired by the "catalogue of horrors that has defined the war - massacres, ethnic cleansing and extensive sexual violence". Since then, Prime Minister Abiy and his army of social media supporters have accused the Tigrayan rebels of forcibly recruiting child soldiers, doping them with drugs, and pushing them to the front lines.

TPLF spokesman Getachew Reda denied that teenagers were forced to join the group's ranks.

"If there is a problem with regard to teenagers - 17, 18, 19-year-olds, although 18 is the legal age to join the army - these are children whose parents have been subjected to untold suffering by the Eritreans, by Abiy's forces, by Amharic expansionists," he told the BBC.



DR Congo to make sign language official

The government in the Democratic Republic of Congo plans to make sign language as the fifth official language, adding to Swahili, Lingala,

Kituba and Tshiluba.

It will be formally taught in schools to help people who rely on sign language to access government services more easily. "It's a community that for

long has been marginalised because of the communication challenges," DR Congo's minister for people with disabilities, Irene Esambo, told the BBC.

There have been cases of people dying while seeking treatment because they could not express themselves and others lost court cases because of the difficulty in communicating, according to sign language teacher Nicola Tshilomba.

Sign language experts from different provinces in the country are meeting for the next 30 days to agree on signs to be used so that there is a uniform approach in schools.

The government also plans to launch a sign language dictionary.

DR Congo has an estimated two million people with sight and hearing disabilities, according to the World Health Organization's 2012 report. BBC



Sign language will be taught in schools

Nigerian city bans beggars and hawkers



Lagos state authorities say hawkers and beggars are a nuisance

The Lagos state government in Nigeria has banned street begging and has formed a special team to stop the "menace", local media report. The team is expected to begin operations in the next few days. A state official in charge of youth and social development told journalists that beggars on the streets were a nuisance to law-abiding citizens.

Olusegun Dawodu said beggars and hawkers, who included children, were being transported from other parts of the country to the city.

He said the "business" was

demeaning and an abuse to humanity, especially the children who were being forced into it. He added that some of the beggars and hawkers were linked to crime in the city - by assaulting and robbing city residents. "The activities of these people in our streets impede human movement and vehicular traffic, constitute environmental nuisance and security threats," Mr Dawodu is quoted by local media as saying.

The move came days after the police raised the alarm over criminals disguising themselves as beggars and attacking Lagos residents. BBC

EDITORIAL

So the suspended port managers have fled the country

WE HAVE LEARNT reliably that the suspended manager of the Port of Buchanan in Grand Bassa County Charles McArthur Gull and Chief Statistician Amara Kamara currently facing investigation for diverting over US\$300,000.00 of port fund to a private account have absconded. How this happened we are not interested but one thing that should be clear is they did not act alone.

THE LAST INFORMATION we gathered from the management of the National Port Authority last week is that the suspended officials, who reportedly confessed to diverting the amount were being forwarded to the Liberian Anti Corruption Commission for thorough probe.

NOW WE ARE hearing that they have absconded to the United States of America. To have them brought back to Liberia to face justice would require serious legal battle, including extradition request that might drag for months or years.

IN FACT, WE also gathered that the actual amount of money diverted into private account in Monrovia is US\$900,000.00, contrary to what the NPA management had reported. But if the NPA management claimed to have conducted preliminary investigation with the suspended officials at which they confessed to diverting the public money, then it ought to know their whereabouts.

WE ARE ABSOLUTELY flabbergasted that the two officials, having been suspended for alleged impropriety which they admitted to, were never apprehended whatsoever even as they were said to being transferred to the LACC. We clearly see a connivance or complacency here.

SOMEONE NEEDS TO account how possible was it when the guys, already being investigated though without any formal charge would escape the country without trace. Someone, probably a mole within the government could have been keeping them abreast of happenings and eventually helped them to run away.

SUCH BEHAVIOR PORTRAYS the government negatively and sends wrong picture about many people's motive for coming to public service. They see government job as an opportunity to steal and amass wealth quickly.

WE RECOMMEND THAT ANY future investigation on how Charles McArthur Gull and Amara Kamara, under investigation left Liberia for the United States should include the management of the NPA to help with said investigation.

HONESTLY SPEAKING, THE handling of public funds under the Weah administration leaves much to be desired, particularly in the face of a health pandemic and serious economic challenges. Those responsible should not go with impunity.

SIMILARLY, THE PUBLIC is watching with eagle's eyes on development at the National Transit Authority (NTA) where millions of dollars are been reportedly siphoned by its managing director, Harbie Macauley, evoking employees' protests and calls for his dismissal.

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+231-775407211 Managing Editor: Othello B. Garblah; Editor-In-Chief: Jonathan

COMMENTARY

By Djoomart Otorbaev

Friends of the Taliban?

BISHKEK - The days and nights following the Taliban's capture of Kabul and the collapse of the Afghan government have been remarkably calm. Most shops and businesses are closed. Ordinary Afghans are hiding in their homes. The Taliban are acting as a police force, protecting the city from marauders. And yet, in this moment of relative stillness, Afghans are facing a monumental realization: they now live in a completely new country.

In defending his decision to withdraw all American troops from Afghanistan, US President Joe Biden acknowledged that events unfolded "more quickly" than US officials had anticipated. According to Biden, that is because Afghanistan's political leaders, including President Ashraf Ghani, "gave up and fled the country," and "the Afghan military collapsed, sometimes without trying to fight." Afghanistan's acting defense minister, General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, defended the military, tweeting, "They tied our hands from behind and sold the country. Curse Ghani and his gang."

Whatever happened in Kabul's corridors of power last week, now it is the Taliban that occupies them. But who are the Taliban, which the world's mightiest country spent more than \$2 trillion attempting to defeat, and what will their return to power mean for Afghans and their neighbors?

The Taliban are not a unified force, but rather a motley collection of groups with conflicting interests. There are significant differences between the "civilized" political wing represented by the political office in Doha, influential clergy, and the numerous warlords on the ground. Afghans' prospects depend crucially on which elements of the Taliban prove dominant. That is why it is essential to identify and support the more moderate Taliban leaders.

Here, there might be good news. The latest information suggests that Taliban co-founder and political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar will become Afghanistan's new leader. He has positioned himself as a pragmatic, experienced, and thoughtful leader, capable of uniting influential Taliban groupings around him and negotiating effectively with international actors. On August 17, Baradar arrived in Afghanistan.

Moreover, Taliban leaders have also pledged to create an "inclusive Islamic government." According to Suhail Shaheen, a Taliban spokesperson, such a government would include non-Taliban Afghans, including some "well-known figures." One such figure could be former Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who has formed a coordination council to manage a peaceful transfer of power. That council - which is now in Doha to meet with Taliban leadership - also includes Abdullah Abdullah, chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, and former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Ironically, this sort of "inclusivity" would exclude many of the Taliban's more radical segments, raising the risk that the extremists will seek partnerships with terrorist groups like al-Qaeda or the Islamic State. But the bigger risk would arise from efforts to turn Afghanistan into a mono-ethnic (Pashtun) state, based on a winner-take-all mindset. This would almost

certainly reignite civil war.

Beyond building an inclusive government, the Taliban will need to strengthen its army and police force, and establish diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. Among the group's fastest friends are likely to be Russia and China. Zamir Kabulov, a Russian presidential envoy to Afghanistan, says that the Kremlin maintains good relations with the Taliban, so Russia is not worried about what is happening in the country. On a recent phone call, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, that they should "protect the legitimate interests" of their respective countries in Afghanistan, "report on the situation, and support each other."

The Taliban might also find willing partners in Afghanistan's Central Asian neighbors. The leaders of Afghanistan's ethnic Uzbek and Tajik communities - the warlords Abdul Rashid Dostum and Atta Mohammad Noor - did flee the country after the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif, which they had been defending. Many commentators viewed this as a rejection of the Taliban. But I believe that it reflects an unwillingness to continue fighting, and expect both men to return to Afghanistan soon.

More broadly, Central Asian countries seem to be cautiously optimistic about the potential for cooperation with a Taliban-led Afghanistan. After all, Baradar has pledged not to "allow the emergence of a threat and danger from Afghanistan" to Central Asian countries, and has welcomed the Uzbek-initiated plan to construct the "Kabul Corridor" railway from Termez in Uzbekistan to Peshawar in Pakistan via Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul. In fact, with the United States gone, the vision of a "Greater Central Asia" with more open trade and improved infrastructure among the countries of the region could gradually become a reality.

Afghanistan's future will also be shaped by the policy of the US and its allies. America's humiliating defeat and chaotic retreat has severely undermined its international standing. The question now is how much responsibility, if any, the US will take for ensuring the Afghan people's well-being, given the leading role it played in destroying their country.

For now, the Biden administration says it is waiting for the Taliban to demonstrate their commitment to governing inclusively and preventing terrorism. But the US and its allies must do more to help ordinary Afghans. Given the people's lack of confidence in Western partners, independent Western-led initiatives are unlikely to work. Afghanistan's neighbors and Russia must be involved.

The first step should be to convene a special international conference on Afghanistan involving all interested parties, with China and Russia central players. Donor countries must be united under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council, and with the involvement of the UN system and multilateral development banks, they should create a special fund to assist in Afghanistan's reconstruction.

On the diplomatic level, whether one likes it or not, Russia, with its deep influence in Central Asia, holds the key to rebuilding Afghanistan. If the West embraces this process, perhaps its relations with Russia can improve as well.



Lord, you want to tell me LP people were chopping money and they were not reading?

Dear Father:

You must hear this one. Water don pass gari as Naija man will say. It na be small wahala dey for LP headquarters. Monkey and baboon don divide kola nuts.

My son whatin dey happen?

Oh Father, you haven't heard? They say the big people from LP headquarters were enjoying chopping money and they forgot to read over their own constitution till it ended up at the Election House.

You say whatin? Da gees oo.

Ah Father, that the one you shouting in small voice like that. You want to tell me you na hear this thing yet. Um, they say the people were busy having party drinking and dancing at the meeting, while the chairman and his secretary were just writing and signing.

And where this one happen my son?

Hmm, they say da in one of our village fiefdom oo. They had gathered there to talk their party matter and write new law and instead of all of them paying attention, it looks like the little cash the Businessman was sharing around full their eyebolts and they forgot to read until the paper ended up at the Election House.

You na think they were suffering from hangover from the party or maybe some of them had sour-belly from the food and drinks that they ate at the meeting.

Ah, then da na small thing they did there oo.

But Father this Business pekin too da man oo. The guy had them drinking and eating, while at the same time lining their pockets for the road. So for them everything was alright. Now, they are all over the place calling the man all kinds of names and how he was this and that.

Oh, but they didn't know all that one first before they put him there or maybe the liquor cleared from their eyebolts now or the money fini. They will balance!

Ayaka! You na hear the other one sef. They say the man want to sell the party to the Footballer comes 2023 to get his money back and even make more profit.

Tell me something!

Da what I am telling you na Father. The man da businessman and they say he get him own agenda different from the other big people them.

But wait oh my son, let me understand something ya, what is so big about this one constitution that they making all this palaver over?

Um, Father that the thing that give the big people power to control their member them. And everybody is binding by what that document say if you want to be in that particular party there.

So, you mean they didn't know that the man was putting plenty thing there to give him power at least for the small time they voted him there for?

Father, I think the people were not really thinking. They were just there chopping money. You na hear what the man say about the Light at the Traditional Council, I na know if that candlelight or flashlight-the man say da him gave him money to go do campaign. So tell me na, how he will be able to read the paper the man give to him na?

But wait oo Father, what all the noise for sef, da whole country the people sell for smoke fish, you think they na happy they received money for the party-puah, let go and eat my dry rice ya.



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA Liberia Land Authority

96 Ashmun Street, Monrovia
Liberia, West Africa
Monrovia, Liberia



August 16, 2021

INVESTIGATIVE SURVEY NOTICE

THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY INFORMED THAT THE LIBERIA LAND AUTHORITY HAS DULY AUTHORIZED SURVEYOR TOM W. NIMELY # .097 TO REPRESENT THE LIBERIA LAND AUTHORITY IN AN INVESTIGATIVE SURVEY BETWEEN CECELIA IRENE BLACKSTON, THE KING WALTER ESTATE AND OTHER ADJOINING PARTIES.

THOSE WITH CLAIMS TO THE DISPUTED LAND ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- CECELIA IRENE BLACKSTON WITH CLAIM TO SEVENTY – ONE (71) ACRES OF LAND AND NO MORE.
- THE KING WALTER ESTATE WITH CLAIM TO ONE HUNDRED (100) ACRES OF LAND AND NO MORE.

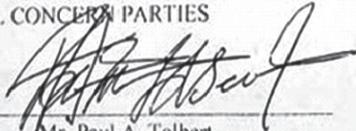
GOVERNMENT SURVEYOR (TOM W. NIMELY #097) WILL COVER ANYONE WITHOUT A SURVEYOR BUT HAS A CLAIM TO THE DISPUTED PROPERTY.

THIS SURVEY TAKES PLACE ON SATURDAY AUGUST 21, 2021 AT 11:00 AM.

THE LAND IN QUESTION IS LYING AND SITUATED AT BEN TOWN, LOWER MARGIBI COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

ALL ADJECENT PARTIES AND THOSE CONCERNED ARE ASKED TO BE PRESENT WIT THEIR DEEDS, DOCUMENTS, DIAGRAMS AND TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVE ON THE DAY OF THE SURVEY TO VERIFY THEIR CLAIMS. LET THIS SURVEY NOTICE CLAIM THE ATTENTION OF THE BELOW LISTED:

- ✓ MR. ALFRED CHEA
- ✓ MADAM JANET LORPU KENNEDY
- ✓ THE SDA UNIVERSITY
- ✓ CORNER MARKERS T.S / S.S & R.I. / P.C.V & P.T.V
- ✓ MADAM MARY DORAH
- ✓ OFFICE OF THE MARGIBI COUNTY LAND ADMINISTRATOR
- ✓ OFFICE OF THE CITY MAYOR OF MARSHALL
- ✓ LIBERIA NATIONAL POLICE
- ✓ ALL CONCERN PARTIES

SIGNED: 
Mr. Paul A. Tolbert
Coordinator
Liberia Land Authority





REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA)
MONTERRADO COUNTY)

IN THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CIVIL LAW
MONTERRADO COUNTY SITTING IN ITS
JUNE TERM, A.D. 2021.

BEFORE HIS HONOUR: J. KENNEDY PEABODY...ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING

IN RE: GETTY GBO SMITH
MONROVIA, LIBERIA
.....PLAINTIFF
VERSUS
LAWRENCE SGTANLEY HUNTER
MONROVIA, LIBERIA
.....DEFENDANT

DIVORCE FOR INCOMPATIBILITY OF TEMPER

WRIT OF SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, TO THE SHERIFF/DEPUTY SHERIFF OF MONTERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, G R E E T I N G S:

YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED TO SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION THE ABOVE NAMED 2ND RESPONDENT/ 2ND DEFENDANT(S) IN THE ABOVE ENTITLED CAUSE OF ACTION, TO APPEAR BEFORE THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT, MONTERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, SITTING IN ITS JUNE TERM, A.D. 2021, SAME BEING THE 21ST DAY OF JUNE, A. D. 2021, AT THE HOUR OF 10:00 A.M.

YOU ARE FURTHER ORDERED TO SUMMONS THE RESPONDENT/DEFENDANT (S) HEREIN TO FILE HIS ANSWER TO THE PLAINTIFF(S) COMPLAINT, ON OR BEFORE THE 14TH DAY OF AUG., A.D. 2021, THAT UPON THEIR/HIS/HER FAILURE TO APPEAR, JUDGMENT BY DEFAULT WILL BE RENDERED AGAINST HIM/HER/THEM.

MEANWHILE, YOU WILL RETURN THE ORIGINAL WRIT OF SUMMONS TO MY OFFICE ON/OR BEFORE THE 14TH DAY OF AUG., A. D. 2021, WITH THE OFFICIAL RETURNS ENDORSED ON THE BACK OF THE ORIGINAL AS TO THE MANNER OF ITS SERVICE.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF COURT
THIS 4TH DAY OF AUG., A.D. 2021.

COURT'S SEAL


ELLEN HALL KAMARA
CLERK OF COURT

FEATURE

FEATURE

Understanding the Budgeting Process in Liberia

By S. Karweaye

The nation's attention has once again been captured by controversy over the budget formulation and implementation after an interview conducted by President Weah in Kakata, Margibi County on August 16, 2021. During the interview, a journalist asked the President about the Liberia National Fire Service complaining about the agency low budgetary allotment. The President responded by saying "I am from the Executive; I don't create a budget."

In the past several years, we have analyzed national budgets; their context, content, effectiveness, and relevance to critical development challenges. We came across wasteful spending, wrongful priorities, and the absence of clear-cut developmental visions and plans for the nation's whole. While the Government has a statement of intentions for 2018-2023 encapsulated in 157 pages "The Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD)" and a dodgy Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), most of the counties did not even attempt that, and certainly had no articulated visions, plans and medium-term programs to anchor their annual budgets.

Development theory and experience support the proposition that budgets need to be predicated on long-term visions, economic strategies, and plans to be effective instruments of societal progress. Unfortunately, this is not the case for Liberia. Either the government budgets are not anchored on coherent visions and plans or where there are development plans, the budgets are at variance with the visions. Worse still, besides policy incoherence and perhaps in consequence of implementation discontinuities. Audit reports from the General Auditing Commission (GAC) on County Development Fund (CDF) and the Social Development Fund (SDF) indicate Liberia has been plagued by the phenomenon of abandoned projects. Similarly, the National Oil Company of Liberia is alleged to have wasted over US\$32million and the institution became virtually insolvent, with the departure of the former heads Robert Sirleaf, Randolph McClain, and other top officials leaving with hefty severance pay. Former President Sirleaf is on record to have publicly said she took responsibility and no one was brought to book. The 2019 GAC report on the US\$25 million used to mop-up excess Liberian dollars on the market shows many discrepancies between what the Central Bank reported and what the investigators found. These and other examples point to a fundamental malaise - our failure to articulate a national vision, coherent economic strategy, national development plans, and annual budgets to translate these into concrete outcomes and progress.

The importance of focusing on the national visioning and development planning process and their link to the budget cannot be over-emphasized. Unfortunately, this is not always the case in Liberia. In the last fifty years, a handful of countries have transformed their countries from low to middle and high-income through careful visioning, sound development planning, and focused implementation under competent leadership. China has not only grown at more than 10% per annum on average for 30 years but lifted more than 400 million people out of poverty since the leadership began implementing economic reforms in 1978.

The President's statement of "I am from the Executive; I don't create budget has generated lots of debates on social media with some saying his statement was correct while others are saying his statement was wrong. For the sake of the ongoing debate, we will first describe the Liberian government budgeting process. How are budget priorities determined and who does? How are budgets prepared, reviewed, and implemented? What does sound budgeting mean for our political



economy and progress as a nation? What can we learn from the past when things worked slightly better? And what country experiences are available for Liberia as lessons for the future? We intend to spend the next couple of articles explaining budgeting and addressing some of these questions. We hope that our citizens will be better enlightened about the subject and demand accountability from those in power.

The first step in our budget preparation is the President issuing directives to the Minister of Finance and development planning and proposing a budget in line with his government vision for Liberia (The PAPD). This is followed by producing a Medium-Term Fiscal framework (MTFF), mandated in the Public Financial Management Law of 2009. The MTFF shows projected expenditure and revenue plans for a few years in advance. Next in the budget preparation process are stakeholders' consultations. This entails consulting with the international financial institutions, donors, and legislative leadership on the broad budget direction, size, and proportions. Then Ministry, Department, and Agencies (MDAs) expenditure ceilings are set; that is each MDA is given an envelope - a maximum amount available for its recurrent and capital expenditure needs for the following year. The medium-term sector strategies for MDAs are then prepared by the Department of Budget within the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, which translates into Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for presentation. After all the above is done, the Minister of Finance then issues a budget call circular which is like a framework for the MDAs to prepare their budget proposals, but within their 'envelopes'.

When the MDA budgets have been verified to comply with the requirements, the draft is forwarded to the President for his approval. The President then forwards it to the Two Houses of the National Legislature. The budget is a 'money bill' which is required by our constitution to be passed by the Two Houses, but the House with its 73 members and more representative of the Liberia population, has the upper hand in event of disagreements with the Senate. Our constitution gives the Senate a greater say in presidential appointments but confers inherent superiority to the House concerning the appropriation of public funds.

Like every bill, the Budget - referred to as Appropriation Bill or Supplementary Appropriation Bill - goes through a First (or Introductory) Reading and debate in plenary and

sessions. It is then referred to the Appropriation and other sector committees for more detailed review and scrutiny to move the Bill to the Second Reading. At this point, the various MDAs are invited to justify and defend their draft budgets in a way similar to "public hearings". For instance, the Minister of Information and his staff defend the budget of his ministry and its parastatals before the legislative committees on Information or Media and so on. And it is at this point, MDAs 'lobby' legislative committee to increase their allocations, re-introduce projects that may have been screened out or rejected by the Executive Branch, and promises of financial "quid pro quo" for budget distortions negotiated and agreed. The respective projects and numbers which constitute the revised budget are now referred back to the two houses for debate and passage in plenary sessions. It is unlikely that the two houses will come up with the same list of projects and numbers which make up the budget for presentation to the president for approval. If some degree of harmonization is necessary; the two houses usually appoint a committee to undertake this with equal membership from each. In the unlikely event that the Committee fails to agree, the two houses go into a joint house to vote on the budget - a process that ensures that the House version of the Money Bill is passed for approval. As soon as the budget has been harmonized, the finalized Appropriation Bill is sent to the President for his approval. In the event, the President fails to approve, the Bill lapses unless passed by a two-thirds majority of the legislature thereby no longer requiring presidential approval. Once enacted the budget becomes a national law that cannot be changed or modified in any way without recourse to the legislature.

In conclusion, the Constitution of Liberia places the power of the purse with the national legislative branch. Article 34 states: "no monies shall be drawn from the treasure except in consequence of appropriations made by legislative enactment and upon warrant of the President. . ." The legislature passes legislation, including decisions about taxes and spending (although the President must agree for it to become law). The President, who heads the government's executive branch, is required to submit an annual budget, but that is merely a statement of proposed priorities. The national legislature may or may not consider some of those proposals. The President can veto spending bills or tax legislation (although the legislature can override the veto). The President implements the budget decision.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

AFL considers joint exercise with neighboring countries

By Kruah Thompson (Intern)

The leadership of the Armed Forces of Liberia is considering the establishment of a training center where foreign armed personnel from neighboring Ghana, Sierra Leone and other countries can participate in a joint training

participation and they are looking to train other AFL personnel in the deployment of UN Mission, engineering and peacekeeping.

Brigadier General Geraldine Janet George, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia, told the Ministry of Information's regular Thursday

Army that are deployed in Mali and South Sudan to benefit from the peacekeeping training.

She expressed hope that by the end of August, a team will be sent to Liberia for assessment in order to see the help that can be provided.

In 2013, a total of 45 AFL personnel were deployed in Mali on the UN Peacekeeping Mission. However Brigadier Gen. George said AFL has a plus-size company in the region today, adding that based on their contributions in Mali, the UN keeps requesting the army to increase its strength in the region.

The UN has also changed the mission of the AFL from camp security to base security, extra severe peace and UN personnel.

"There are fourteen military staff offices in Mali and four military observers in both north and south," she said, adding that in Mali, the UN has increased the AFL's budget to international military application.

Also addressing the Covid-19 crisis in the country, the Deputy Army Chief of Staff indicated that the AFL has made significant contributions to the fight against Covid by transporting medical equipment across the county.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



exercise in Liberia.

AFL Personnel who recently participated in the annual war simulation training exercise known as Northern Strike in Michigan, United States of America, recently returned to Liberia following their successful

press briefing on 19 August that the AFL wants to have its own center where foreign armed personnel from Ghana, Sierra Leone and other neighboring countries can participate in the training process.

She said the reason for this partnership is for the Liberian

Increase advocacy on gender quota

-Gender Minister tells stakeholders at mock parliament

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection with support from UN Women ends a two-day mock Parliament sessions each in Margibi and Grand Bassa Counties.

According to a release, the Mock Parliament is aimed at promoting and strengthening collaboration mechanisms and advocating for increased women's political participation through inclusion of the enforceable 30 percent gender quota provision in Liberia's electoral law.

Speaking during the opening sessions held in both counties from August 12-13; 16-17, 2021 respectively - Gender, Children and Social Protection Minister Williametta E. Saydee-Tarr told participants that

Liberian women continue to be underrepresented in politics, as women's participation in leadership and decision-making has remained an all-time low, globally.

She said Liberia has committed to taking action to increase women's political participation and representation by signing and ratifying a number of



Gbarpolu lawmaker submits bill for community college

Gbarpolu County Electoral District One Representative Alfred G. Koiwood has submitted a communication to the House Plenary, seeking for an act to create a community college in his county.

Rep. Koiwood in his communication addressed to Speaker Bhofal Chambers and members of that august body recently said, having been fully guaranteed by the

as well as the essence for decentralizing tertiary education in leeward counties.

Koiwood, who also chairs the House Committee on National Security, added that realizing high illiteracy rate in Liberia, which according to him, is approximately at 65% of which Gbarpolu County is of no exception, coupled with not having a tertiary establishment, thereby restricting its youth to



Rep. Alfred G. Koiwood

Constitution of Liberia for equal access to educational privileges and facilities for all citizens with emphasis that every Liberian has equal right to education, such proposal is necessary.

He said the call is also proper, considering the foreseeable needs for the creation of a community college in the county in order to enhance higher education

secondary education.

The communication is quoted as saying that if the bill is passed into law, it will provide an opportunity to Gbarpolu citizens and surrounding counties to achieve tertiary education.

The Lawmaker's bill was read in plenary with a motion passed by members of that body for submission to the committee on higher education for review and recommendation.

international and regional human rights instruments, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women (CEDAW); the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR); the Protocol to the Africa Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (ACHPR-PW); the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), and the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (PDGG), among others.

"Currently, the legal framework governing elections, including laws on elections and on political parties, the independent

electoral commission statutes and laws are still not gender sensitive. Still, efforts to amend the elections law have not yet been successful despite five (5) attempts since 2005:, said the Minister.

She noted that the latest attempt is through the Electoral Law Reform that is ongoing, and that in 2014, the Legislature amended Section 4.5 of the New Elections Law (NEL) that stipulates:

"A political party or coalition in its submission to the Commission, of its list of candidates for an election should endeavor to ensure that the governing body and its list of candidates has no less than 30% of its members from each gender."

Minister Saydee-Tarr

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Lofa clears Samukai's 50%

By Lincoln G. Peters

Citizens of Lofa County on Thursday August 19, paid off US\$173,276.050 as the remainder of their Senator-elect former Defense Minister Brownie Samukai's portion of the AFL soldiers' personal pension saving funds.

The amount brings to total a little of US\$191,000, of the former defense minister's 50% portion of the soldiers money following an initial deposit of US\$18,000.

Samukai and two other former officials of the Ministry of Defense under the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf regime were convicted for misappropriating the soldiers' pension fund and were asked to restate the

legal challenges brought by state prosecutors from the Ministry of Justice and Businessman Simeon Freeman's Movement for Progressive Change party (MPC) against his certification by the National Elections Commission (NEC) as Lofa Senator on grounds of his conviction in his criminal trial.

The full bench of the Supreme Court is yet to take a decision on whether Samukai should be denied from taking up his Senate seat due to his conviction.

But he is before the high court on appeal against presiding Chambers Justice Joseph Nagbe's decision blocking the NEC from certifying the convict until the disability imposed on him is removed according to law.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court upheld a ruling by the

Speaking in an interview with Judicial reporters after the presentation of a check to the Sheriff at Criminal Court "C," the National Coordinator of the Friends of Samukai, Abass Mark Biaty said the money is their own portion instructed by the court in order to clear Lofa County Senator - elect Samukai.

According to him, the money was raised by the Friends of Samukai who are residing in the diaspora, Lofa and Nimba Counties and other neighboring countries in order to facilitate his seating as Lofa County Senator.

"We the people of Lofa County, Nimba County and the diaspora and other friends of the Senator have gathered here today to present the sum of \$173,276.05 to add to the previous 18,000 USD that we paid," said Mr. Biaty.

He explained that they have made the payment in order to officially clear Mr. Samukai from the AFL pension saving saga as they await the Supreme Court for its final judgment. "We are tired of not being represented at the Liberian senate", Mr. Biaty said.

Also speaking, the Deputy Chairman of the Friends of Senator - elect Brownie Samukai and former Lofa Development Superintendent Madam Younger S. Sherman said as people of Lofa County, they stand by what they believe in, noting that they have made up their minds to support Senator - elect Samukai and nothing can stop it.

Madam Younger narrated that they as citizens of Lofa made the payment in order to give him his victory despite politics being played by people.

"We are waiting on the court's response and ruling as we have played our part. However, I can assure you that we will in subsequent time, install our hardworking, caring and integrity Senator - elect into office and those who have thought this day will not come will be made [ashamed]," she said.

"Because it was really unthinkable after the court said run and then the same court said don't take seat until you pay," she added.--
Edited by Winston W. Parley



amount or face jail sentence. The initial 50% payment had been due and sentencing would have been carried out had this payment not been made.

The money was paid into the Armed Forces of Liberia Welfare Account at the United Bank for Africa (UBA) Sinkor branch.

Mr. Samukai is yet to be seated as Lofa County Senator since the 8 December 2020 special senatorial election due to lingering disputes over his conviction. He had initially overcome the actual dispute arising from the election itself before a prohibition was filed to the Supreme Court seeking to bar him from taking his seat.

Samukai faces separate

Criminal Court "C" and sentenced Samukai, his deputy Joseph P. Johnson and Mr. James Nyumah Dorkor to serve a term of two years each in a common jail.

However, the Supreme Court ruled in the corruption case that the sentences shall be suspended provided that the convicted officials restate the full amount of US\$1.147, 656m or (pay) 50 percent within the period of six months, and following that, make appropriate arrangement to pay the remaining percent in one calendar year.

Should the defendants fail on these mandates, the Supreme Court said they shall be incarcerated in common jail and remain there until the full amount is paid.

Females lag behind

Starts from back page

number indicates clearly more males are being vaccinated than their female counterparts.

"I don't know why, but as per data, we have 11,098 males who have taken their vaccines and this number accounts for 66 percent", he discloses.

He says on the other hand, 5,728 females have been vaccinated since the J&J jab was launched on August 5, representing 34 percent.

"...and we want to use this as a passionate appeal, we want our women to see this as a challenge to men; we don't want you to defeat us but to at least come close to us. You women are the doctors in the home when it comes to the wellbeing of the home", he underscores.

On deployment to other counties, Clarke says beginning today, Friday, August 20th, the team will be in additional five counties, including Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Margibi and Grand Bassa to administer the jabs to citizens.

However, he says they are working along with the Margibi Health Team in the wake of the unfortunate fire disaster that left the C.H. Rennie Hospital in the county burnt down, to adjust schedule there, if they are not ready.

Fire gutted the Rennie Hospital in Kakata, Margibi County at about 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 15, 2021, forcing hospital authorities to transfer in-patients to other health facilities in Kakata and Bong County.

No casualty was reported but major components of the hospital, including its emergency room, pharmacy, administrative offices and records room are destroyed completely.

County Health Officer Dr. Augustine Fannieh, blames the incident on electrical fault.

However, Clark continues that the entire vaccination process is going to be digitized where the team will use online platform to issue vaccination cards to residents in every county capital, while rural residents will receive paper cards to go receive their jabs.

At the same he discloses that the second doses of 96,000 of the AstraZeneca vaccines arrive in the country today, Friday, 20 August onboard Air Brussels via the Roberts International Airport in Margibi County, noting that the vaccines will be used to

complete the second doses for those who received the first doses between June and July.

Earlier, Liberia's Minister of Health, and head of the incident management system doctor Wilhelmina S. Jallah dispelled rumors that Marburg virus reported in Guinea is in Liberia.

"I Like to begin by informing the public that there is no sign of Marburg virus here in Liberia", says doctor Jallah, adding the case in Guinea had died and health authorities here are on the alert.

He says it is prudent to make the clarification to allay the fear of the public of a likely crossover to Liberia.

Marburg virus disease (MVD), formerly known as Marburg haemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness in humans. The virus causes severe viral haemorrhagic fever in humans.

Also giving an update on the status of COVID-19 in the country, the Minister of Health notes that as of yesterday, Thursday, August 19, 2021, there are only eight cases reported, while six patients are in treatment unit waiting for test results, and six counties are responding to the virus.

She lauds citizens for adhering to the health protocols by wearing mask whenever they appear in public, saying, I can't stop thanking you because when we wanted you to abide by our measures you did, for this we want to thank you, but don't stop until we all can get out of this."

Dr. Jallah reveals total number of cases is 5,0527 with six counties responding, including Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Lofa, Margibi and Maryland, respectively. Montserrado County is said to tap the list with 23 cases, while the other five counties have one or two cases.

"Nobody on oxygen in our treatment unit; all those that are there, just waiting to be discharged. Over all, Liberia is doing so well in the fight against COVID-19."

She then urges citizens to turn out at various designated health centers to take the Johnson and Johnson vaccines, excluding those who took the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

"These vaccinations are safe; it's being provided by the U.S. government to help fight the virus, so if you really want to avoid coming in contact with COVID-19 than the vaccine is important", the minister emphasizes. -
Editing by Jonathan Browne



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Français

Weah veut une résolution commune pour les élections partielles

La plénière du Sénat libérien a mandaté son comité sur les commissions et agences autonomes et la magistrature pour examiner une proposition du président George Manneh Weah qui sollicite une résolution conjointe du pouvoir législatif sur l'organisation des élections partielles dans quatre circonscriptions électorales du pays.

La commission est chargée de rendre compte de ses conclusions à la plénière le jeudi 26 août 2021. L'action de la plénière du Sénat a été déclenchée par une communication transmise mardi 17 août 2021 par le président Weah au nom de la Commission électorale nationale (NEC).

"Je suis heureux de transmettre des communications explicites de la Commission électorale nationale, m'informant de la possibilité d'organiser les élections partielles dans les comtés de Bomi, Bong, Grand Gedeh et Nimba comme

l'exige la loi", a déclaré le président Weah.

Il a également informé le parlement de ce que la NEC a proposé de réduire les élections partielles et de les tenir à la même date, notant que la commission se réjouit d'organiser ces élections partielles au plus tard le 16 novembre 2021. Elle souhaite ainsi une résolution commune du parlement.

"Honorable Président Pro-Tempore, compte tenu de ce qui précède, je demande une résolution conjointe au parlement, laquelle résolution donnera mandat à la Commission électorale nationale d'organiser les quatre élections partielles au plus tard le 16 novembre 2021", a dit le président

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Pres. George M. Weah

Le comité sénatorial a-t-il commis une gaffe lors de son enquête sur le naufrage du navire Niko Ivanka?

Les réactions contre le rapport du comité sénatorial sur le naufrage du navire Niko Ivanka mettent en exergue des problèmes de procédure qui, selon nos sources, pourraient mettre à mal la fiabilité dudit rapport.

L'agent de l'autorité maritime qui s'est confié à ce quotidien sous le couvert de l'anonymat a déclaré que le fait que le comité sénatorial n'a pas impliqué l'autorité maritime du Libéria dans ses conclusions constitue une erreur de procédure, d'où son

incapacité de soulever les questions difficiles avant de rendre public le rapport.

Mais, il faut noter que le Sénat avait signifié dans son rapport qu'au cours de l'enquête, M. Nagbe, le patron de l'Autorité Maritime, ne s'était pas rendu disponible parce que, selon lui, les enquêteurs du sénat ne l'avaient pas convoqué à temps. Ce journal a appris que, depuis le 28 avril 2021, le navire Niko Ivanka avait effectué 10 voyages entre le port de Monrovia et le port de Harper dans le comté de Maryland sans aucune faute, et

que l'autorité maritime a fait des demandes de paiement de frais à la société HYLAEA Shipping qui gère le navire.

Une autre source a posé la question de savoir pourquoi, en dépit du fait que l'Autorité Maritime ait interdit le navire, elle n'a pas signifié cela à l'autorité du port en émettant une ordonnance de suspension immédiate.

En plus, les Forces armées du Libéria auraient confirmé qu'elles n'avaient eu connaissance d'aucun ordre de suspension pour empêcher le navire de naviguer.

L'Autorité maritime du Libéria, en collaboration avec la Garde côtière nationale du Libéria, a secouru environ 11 personnes, dont les deux capitaines chinois qui ont dirigé le voyage. Mais le comité, qui a mené sa propre enquête, a déclaré que la NPA "a commis une bétise et n'a pas bien fait son travail".

Son président, le sénateur Stephen J.H. Zargo, a expliqué que le navire, qui, selon le commissaire maritime du Libéria, Lenn Eugène Nagbe, n'a jamais été enregistré ou autorisé à

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Éditorial

Un déficit persistant de leadership dans le Libéria de Weah

L'absence d'un leadership proactif dans la structure gouvernementale nuit gravement à l'administration de George Weah qui est au pouvoir depuis près de quatre ans maintenant. La mauvaise gouvernance alimentée par la corruption, les violations constitutionnelles, le favoritisme politique et l'incompétence, entre autres, est visible partout, depuis le plus haut échelon du gouvernement jusqu'aux fonctionnaires subalternes.

Les récentes vagues de protestations de masse des citoyens lésés à travers le pays démontrent un manque total de leadership dans l'administration.

Les expériences désagréables ont montré leurs têtes laides d'abord à Grand Cape Mount, en particulier à Robertsport, où des citoyens lésés sont descendus dans la rue parce que leur sénateur élu, Simeon Taylor, n'a pas encore pris son siège au Sénat en raison de contestations judiciaires qui durent presque un an, leur privant ainsi une représentation, en dépit du fait d'avoir fait leur choix dans les urnes le 8 décembre 2020. Une manifestation similaire s'est produite à Lofa où les citoyens veulent que leur sénateur élu, J. Brownie Samukai, qui fait face à une bataille juridique, siège au Sénat.

À Margibi, des commerçants ont barricadé la rue parce qu'on veut les relocaliser de force. Monrovia a été témoin de deux manifestations violentes et sanglantes, ayant fait plusieurs blessés. Des étudiants de l'Université du Libéria dirigés par le Student Unification Party (SUP) protestaient contre les cours en ligne, un programme mis en place par l'administration. Mais ils ont été violemment dispersés par la police anti-émeute à l'aide de grenades lacrymogènes. Il y a eu plusieurs blessés parmi les étudiants.

Pas plus tard que la semaine dernière, des citoyens lésés, dont pour la plupart des malinkés, ont marché de la Japan Freeway au temple de la justice et au siège de la police nationale dans le centre-ville de Monrovia, réclamant la dépouille mortelle d'un des leurs, qui serait mort du fait de la brutalité policière.

Toutes ces réactions distinctes des citoyens se sont produites en raison de l'absence d'une chose : le leadership. De Lofa à Cape Mount en passant par Margibi et Montserrado, les dirigeants n'ont pas fait preuve de leadership pour rassurer les citoyens que leurs intérêts étaient protégés. À l'Université du Libéria et le long de la Japan Freeway, si les dirigeants avaient été proactifs, les citoyens ne seraient pas descendus dans la rue pour protester.

Il faut rappeler à ceux à qui l'on a confié le pouvoir qu'ils sont placés à ces postes pour régler les problèmes avant qu'ils ne tournent mal, une responsabilité élevée qu'ils ne devraient jamais minimiser, comme l'indiquent ces expériences désagréables.

Il est temps que les dirigeants, de la Présidence au cabinet, en passant par la police, la justice et le surintendant du comté, rassemblent leurs actions pour diriger comme les dirigeants qu'ils devraient être pour rendre notre société stable et unie. Il ne faut pas qu'ils soient des leaders uniquement par le nom, mais par le fait qu'ils font preuve d'un leadership proactif pour maintenir la confiance des personnes qu'ils dirigent.

Cela empêcherait les citoyens de descendre dans la rue pour exprimer des griefs uniquement pour subir des blessures de la part des agents de police cruels et brutaux qui sont fidèles non pas au peuple et à l'État, mais à des dirigeants insensibles et corrompus qui gouvernent de manière égoïste.



Français

Weah veut une résolution commune

Weah. Plus tôt le 5 août 2012, la présidente de la commission électorale avait informé le président de ce que le ministère des Finances et de la Planification du développement avait mis à disposition 99% des fonds pour le financement des élections partielles, d'où son intention de procéder à l'organisation de ces élections. Dans sa communication, Mme Davidetta Browne Lanssanah avait en outre dit qu'en vertu du délai de 90 jours inscrit dans la constitution en son l'article 37 qui porte organisation des élections partielles en vue de combler les sièges vacants, la NEC

voudrait recevoir la résolution conjointe du parlement d'ici le 18 août 2021. La NEC a en outre prévenu le président du risque de reporter ces élections partielles jusqu'en 2022 si la résolution commune du parlement retardait au-delà d'août 2021. La NEC devrait organiser des élections partielles dans un certain nombre de comtés dont les représentants en exercice avaient remporté les élections sénatoriales spéciales du 8 décembre 2020. Les représentants des comtés de Bomi, Bong, Grand Gedeh et Nimba avaient été élus au Sénat libérien, ce qui a créé des sièges de représentants vacants depuis ces élections.

Le comité sénatorial a-t-il

navigation, n'avait pas de système d'information automatique (AIS) pour assurer le suivi en cas de détresse, et que la NPA elle-même n'a jamais eu de trace des personnes à bord.

Présentant ses conclusions au Sénat lors de la séance le mardi 17 août, le sénateur Zargo a félicité le ministère de la défense pour un travail bien fait, notant que grâce à son intervention, certaines personnes qui se trouvaient à bord du navire ont été secourues.

Il a cité le ministre de la Défense Daniel Ziankan. Il a fait savoir qu'il leur était difficile de localiser le navire pendant la mission de sauvetage en raison de l'absence d'un système d'information automatique.

"N'eut été l'invention de la Garde côtière nationale, la situation aurait été pire. Il faut féliciter la défense parce qu'elle a fait un excellent travail. Mais beaucoup de gens passent par nos eaux parce qu'elles ne sont pas surveillées", a-t-il dit.

Il révèle qu'à la suite de la catastrophe, les prix des produits de base se sont enflammés dans les comtés du Maryland et de Sinoe dans le sud-est où le navire se dirigeait lorsqu'il a coulé à environ six (6) milles marins au large de la côte de Marshall City dans le comté de Margibi, parce que les navires qui transportent habituellement des marchandises vers les deux comtés sont actuellement bloqués à Monrovia, dans le cadre d'une enquête en cours. Zargo a dit qu'au cours de l'enquête, le commissaire Nagbe ne s'est pas présenté car il n'avait pas reçu la

communication à temps, tandis que le directeur général de l'autorité portuaire nationale, Bill Tweahway, n'avait que peu de connaissance du navire ou du nombre de personnes qui étaient à bord. Cependant, la direction de la NPA a annoncé la semaine dernière la suspension du superviseur du port de Monrovia pour avoir prétendument autorisé la navigation du navire. La NPA a déclaré que M. George D. McGill avait été remis au ministère de la Justice pour un interrogatoire plus approfondi.

« George D. McGill est le superviseur du port de Monrovia, il a, sans l'approbation et la notification de la direction, autorisé la navigation du navire naufragé. Et donc la NPA a constitué un comité interne et le comité a établi qu'il l'a fait sans l'approbation de la NPA », a déclaré Malcolm Scott, directeur des affaires publiques de la NPA, lors d'une conférence de presse mercredi dernier.

Le 19 juillet, l'Autorité maritime libérienne a annoncé qu'au moins 15 passagers étaient portés disparus et 11 autres sauvés du navire en perdition dans les eaux côtières libériennes.

Ni l'Autorité maritime ni la direction de la NPA ne semblent disposées à accepter la responsabilité de la catastrophe qui a entraîné des pertes de vies humaines et la suspension indéfinie des examens de fin d'année. Par ailleurs, la Chambre des représentants devrait publier ses propres conclusions aujourd'hui. Le président George Manneh Weah a ordonné au ministère des Finances et de la Planification du développement de débloquer 100 000 dollars américains pour la préparation des funérailles des victimes de la tragédie de Niko Ivanka, selon un communiqué de la présidence.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Djoomart Otorbaev

Quels alliés pour les talibans ?

BICHKEK - Les jours et les nuits qui ont suivi la prise de contrôle de Kaboul par les talibans, et l'effondrement du gouvernement afghan, ont été incroyablement calmes. La plupart des boutiques et des entreprises sont fermées. Les Afghans ordinaires restent cachés à la maison. Les talibans agissent tels une force de police protégeant la ville des maraudeurs. Or, dans ce moment de relative immobilité, les Afghans vivent une prise de conscience majeure : ils vivent désormais dans un pays totalement nouveau.

Pour défendre sa décision de retrait de l'ensemble des troupes américaines d'Afghanistan, le président américain Joe Biden a expliqué que les événements s'étaient déroulés « plus rapidement » que prévu par les dirigeants américains. Selon Biden, tout s'explique par le fait que les responsables politiques afghans, y compris le président Ashraf Ghani, aient « baissé les bras et quitté le pays », et que « l'armée afghane [se soit] effondrée, parfois sans même tenter de combattre ». Le ministre de la Défense en fonctions en Afghanistan, le général Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, a défendu son armée en tweetant « Ils nous ont lié les mains dans le dos, et ils ont vendu le pays. Maudits soient Ghani et sa bande ».

Quels qu'aient été les événements dans les coulisses du pouvoir à Kaboul la semaine dernière, ce sont désormais les talibans qui les occupent. Mais qui sont les talibans, contre lesquels la plus grande puissance mondiale a dépensé plus de 2 000 milliards \$, et que signifiera leur retour au pouvoir pour les Afghans et leurs voisins ?

Les talibans ne sont pas une force unifiée, mais plutôt un ensemble hétéroclite de groupes aux intérêts parfois contraires. D'importantes différences existent entre la branche politique talibane « civilisée » du bureau politique de Doha, le clergé influent, et les nombreux chefs de guerre sur le terrain. Les perspectives des Afghans dépendent considérablement de la question de savoir quels éléments des talibans se révéleront dominants. C'est pourquoi il est essentiel d'identifier et de soutenir les dirigeants talibans les plus modérés.

Sur ce point, une bonne nouvelle semble se dessiner. D'après les dernières informations, le cofondateur des talibans et chef politique, le mollah Abdul Ghani Baradar, deviendrait le nouveau dirigeant de l'Afghanistan. Il se présente comme un dirigeant pragmatique, expérimenté et réfléchi, capable d'unir autour de lui les groupes talibans influents, et de négocier efficacement avec les acteurs internationaux. Baradar est arrivé en Afghanistan le 17 août.

Par ailleurs, les dirigeants talibans ont promis de former un « gouvernement islamique inclusif ». D'après Suhail Shaheen, un porte-parole des talibans, ce gouvernement pourrait inclure des Afghans non talibans, dont certaines « personnalités de renom ». Parmi ces personnalités pourrait figurer l'ancien président afghan Hamid Karzai, qui a formé un conseil de coordination pour gérer une transition pacifique du pouvoir. Ce conseil - actuellement présent à Doha pour rencontrer les responsables talibans - inclut également Abdullah Abdullah, président du Haut conseil pour la réconciliation nationale en Afghanistan, et l'ancien Premier ministre Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

Aspect ironique, cette forme d'« inclusivité » exclurait un grand nombre des segments talibans plus radicaux, accentuant le risque de voir les extrémistes nouer des partenariats avec des groupes terroristes tels qu'Al-Qaïda et l'État islamique. Le plus grand risque résulterait cependant d'efforts consistant à changer l'Afghanistan en un État mono-ethnique (pachtoune), dans un état d'esprit du tout au vainqueur. Cela redéclencherait quasi-certainement une guerre civile.

Au-delà de la formation d'un gouvernement inclusif, les talibans vont devoir renforcer leur armée, leur police, et établir des relations diplomatiques avec le reste du monde. Parmi les amis les plus rapidement ralliés par le groupe devraient figurer la Russie et la Chine. Zamir Kabulov, envoyé du président russe pour l'Afghanistan, affirme que le Kremlin entretient de bonnes relations avec les talibans, raison pour laquelle la Russie n'est pas particulièrement inquiète de ce qu'il se passe dans le pays. De même, dans une récente conversation téléphonique, le ministre chinois des Affaires étrangères Wang Li a appelé son homologue Sergey Lavrov à « préserver les intérêts légitimes » de leurs pays respectifs en Afghanistan, « à s'informer l'un l'autre de la situation, ainsi qu'à se soutenir mutuellement ».

Les talibans pourraient également trouver des partenaires dans les pays centre-asiatiques voisins de l'Afghanistan. Les dirigeants des communautés ethniques ouzbèke et tadjike d'Afghanistan - à savoir les chefs de guerre Abdul Rashid Dostum et Atta Mohammad Noor - ont certes quitté le pays après la chute de Mazar-e-Charif, qu'ils luttèrent pour défendre, ce que de nombreux commentateurs ont considéré comme un rejet des talibans. Or, je suis convaincu que cela reflète plutôt une volonté de cesser le combat, et que les deux hommes seront bientôt de retour en Afghanistan.

Plus largement, les pays d'Asie centrale semblent prudemment optimistes quant au potentiel de coopération avec un Afghanistan dirigé par les talibans. En effet, Baradar a promis de « ne laisser émerger en provenance de l'Afghanistan ni menace, ni danger » pour les pays d'Asie centrale, et a salué le projet initié par l'Ouzbékistan pour la construction de la voie ferroviaire « Kaboul Corridor » depuis Termez en Ouzbékistan jusqu'à Peshawar au Pakistan, via Mazar-e-Charif et Kaboul. En effet, avec le départ des États-Unis, la vision d'une « Asie centrale élargie », caractérisée par un commerce plus ouvert et de meilleures infrastructures dans les pays de la région pourrait progressivement devenir une réalité.

L'avenir de l'Afghanistan sera également façonné par la politique des États-Unis et de leurs alliés. La défaite humiliante de l'Amérique, et son retrait militaire chaotique, ont sévèrement mis à mal sa stature internationale. La question est désormais de savoir quel degré de responsabilité - si cette responsabilité est endossée - les États-Unis assumeront dans le bien-être de la population afghane, compte tenu du rôle majeur qu'ils ont joué dans la destruction du pays.

Pour l'heure, l'administration Biden attend que les talibans démontrent leur engagement consistant à gouverner de manière inclusive ainsi qu'à prévenir le terrorisme. Or, les États-Unis et leurs alliés doivent accomplir davantage pour venir en aide aux Afghans ordinaires. Par ailleurs, compte tenu du manque de confiance de la population afghane dans les partenaires occidentaux, il est peu probable que les initiatives indépendantes menées par l'Occident fonctionnent réellement. Russie et pays voisins de l'Afghanistan doivent participer à la démarche.

La première étape doit consister à organiser une conférence internationale spéciale en Afghanistan, impliquant toutes les parties intéressées, avec en acteurs centraux la Chine et la Russie. Les pays donateurs doivent se réunir sous les auspices du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies, et créer, avec la participation du système de l'ONU et des banques multilatérales de développement, un fonds spécifiquement dédié à la reconstruction de l'Afghanistan.

Sur le plan diplomatique, que cela lui plaise ou non, et compte tenu de son poids majeur en Asie centrale, la Russie détient la clé de la reconstruction de l'Afghanistan. Si les pays occidentaux adhèrent au processus, peut-être pourront-ils au passage améliorer leurs relations avec la Russie.

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China Focus: China holds celebration of 70th anniversary of Tibet's peaceful liberation

By Cheng Zhuo, Xu Lingui, Feng Qidi, Guo Likun, Hou Weili, Lin Jianyang, Meng Na, Wang Di, Zhang Yunlong, Bai Shaobo, Fu Shuangqi

LHASA, Aug. 19 (Xinhua) -- China on Thursday held a grand gathering to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the peaceful liberation of Tibet.

More than 20,000 people from various ethnic groups attended the event held in Lhasa, capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

President Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, wrote inscriptions "building a beautiful and happy Tibet and together fulfilling the great dream of national rejuvenation" on congratulatory plaques presented at the event.

The national flag of the People's Republic of China was raised at the beginning of the celebration. People sang the national anthem.

A congratulatory message from the CPC Central Committee, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the State Council, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the Central Military Commission was read.

Wang Yang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the CPPCC National Committee, attended the gathering and presented congratulatory plaques and banners.

Wang also addressed the event.

Wang, who is leading a central delegation to Tibet, said the delegation is entrusted by the CPC Central Committee and Xi to jointly celebrate the 70th anniversary of Tibet's peaceful liberation with people of all ethnic groups in Tibet.

Wang called the peaceful liberation of Tibet in 1951 "a major victory in the cause of liberation of the Chinese people and China's reunification," saying it marked a historic transition with epoch-making significance for Tibet.

"Since then, Tibet has embarked on a path from darkness to brightness, from backwardness to progress, from poverty to prosperity, from autocracy to democracy, and from closeness to openness," Wang said. "A thriving socialist new Tibet is standing tall and firm at the rooftop of the world."

In the old Tibet, the reactionary and barbarous feudal serfdom was practiced.

With the establishment of socialist system and regional ethnic autonomy, the rights of people of all ethnic groups in Tibet to equal participation in the governance of state affairs and to administration of affairs of the autonomous region are fully ensured.

At present, Tibet has over 35,000 deputies of people's congresses and over 8,000 CPPCC members at various levels, 90 percent of whom are ethnic minorities, Wang said.

In the old days, agriculture and livestock in Tibet



were at the mercy of nature; industry was non-existent; and a round trip between Xining and Lhasa would take more than six months.

The GDP in Tibet soared past 190 billion yuan (about 29.3 billion U.S. dollars) in 2020 from merely 130 million yuan in 1951, Wang noted.

During the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020), Tibet hosted close to 160 million tourist visits.

Now 140 flights connect Tibet with the rest of the country and the world.

In the old Tibet, over 90 percent of Tibetans struggled for subsistence, and up to 95 percent were illiterate. Today, hunger and poverty is a thing of the past for people of all ethnic groups in Tibet, and per capita living space in Tibet is close to 40 square meters.

Meanwhile, the 15-year public-funded education is conducted across the region, ending the long-standing issue of school drop-out, Wang noted.

The average life expectancy has risen from 35.5 years in 1951 to 71.1 years.

Highlighting progress in ethnic unity in Tibet, Wang said separatist and sabotage activities committed by the Dalai group and hostile external forces have been crushed.

The central government has invested huge manpower, resources and funding to preserve and develop Tibet's fine traditional culture, Wang noted.

The Tibetan language is used extensively. Precious classics such as Epic of King Gesar were saved and collated. Close to 800 projects including thangka, Tibetan opera and Tibetan medicine have been placed on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Religious beliefs of all ethnic groups are fully respected, Wang said.

More than 1,700 temples in Tibet have full access to water, electricity, the Internet, fire fighting and other facilities. All of the 46,000 monks and nuns are covered by the government's social security scheme.

The Potala Palace, the Jokhang Temple and other temples and sites have been renovated and are under protection.

"Since the 18th CPC National Congress, Tibet has entered a new era, an era in which greater development and bigger changes have been made and more benefits delivered to the people than in the past," Wang said.

The region ranks among the top three in China in terms of annual average growth rate, and it has topped the country in terms of growth of per capita disposable income of rural residents for many years. Around 628,000 people have been lifted out of poverty.

"Together with the rest of the country, Tibet has, as envisaged, finished the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects," Wang said.

Tibet has reached a new historical starting point in pursuing its economic and social development, Wang noted, stressing the need to always follow the leadership of the CPC and march steadily on the path of building socialism with distinctive Chinese features.

"Only by following the CPC leadership and pursuing the path of socialism, can Tibet achieve development and prosperity," Wang said.

Stressing harmony and stability in Tibet and national security and stability in the border areas, Wang said officials and the general public of all ethnic groups should be mobilized to forge an ironclad defense against separatist activities.

He also called for efforts to ensure that religions in China are Chinese in orientation and guide Tibetan Buddhism in adapting itself to socialist society.

"No one outside China has the right to point fingers at us when it comes to Tibetan affairs," Wang said. "Any attempt or maneuver designed to separate Tibet from China is doomed to fail."

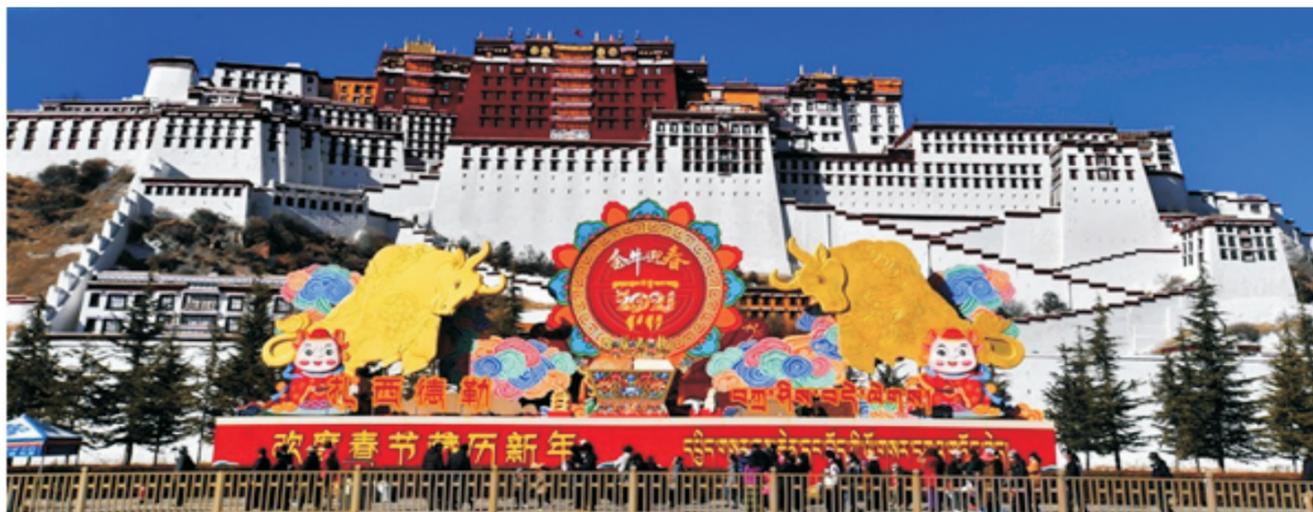
Urging fostering a strong sense of the Chinese nation as one community and advancing ethnic unity and progress, Wang said the Chinese culture has always been a bond that fosters a sense of togetherness and belonging among people of all ethnic groups in Tibet.

He demanded all-round efforts to teach standard spoken and written Chinese language and foster and share the cultural symbols and images of the Chinese nation among all ethnic groups.

Wang said the people-centered development philosophy should be followed and high-quality economic and social development should be promoted.

He also promised that the CPC Central Committee's input in and support for the development of Tibet will only increase, not decrease.

He reiterated the CPC Central Committee's support to Tibet in building a national demonstration region on ecological conservation, piloting a comprehensive ecological compensation program, and conducting comprehensive scientific research on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.



Ellen Corkrum pleads guilty

Liberian fugitive Ms Ellen Corkrum, who escaped justice here following her indictment by the Grand Jury of Montserrado County in 2013 on multiple charges including economic sabotage and criminal facilitation, pleads guilty to bank fraud in America, totaling US\$6 million, reports the United States Attorney's Office in Atlanta, Northern District of Georgia.

Report issued Wednesday, 18 August 2021 by the Northern District of Georgia Attorney's Office posted on its website says Ms Corkrum, using multiple names, brazenly defrauded the U.S. government's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) by submitting six false and fraudulent PPP loans between April 27, 2020 and June 17, 2020, requesting a



total of US\$7,943,591.50, of which US\$6,017,066.50 was disbursed.

Sentencing for Corkrum, who goes by the name Hunter Van Pelt, 49, of Roswell, Georgia, is scheduled for January 4, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., before U.S. District Judge Mark H. Cohen.

The Paycheck Protection Program", the district court says, "helps businesses keep their workforce employed during the COVID-19 crisis."

Acting U.S. Attorney Kurt Erskine explains, "When these funds are diverted by fraud, such as in this case, workers and the businesses that employ them unfortunately suffer."

Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite Jr. from the U.S. Justice Department's Criminal Division says Corkrum, going by the name Van Pelt, brazenly exploited this devastating national emergency for her personal gain, and is now being held accountable for the fraudulent conduct.

"PPP fund should be reserved for legitimate

businesses and their hard-working employees who have suffered economically as a result of the pandemic. The Department of Justice is committed to ensuring that anyone who takes advantage of COVID-19 relief programs will be brought to justice", he is quoted as saying.

Ellen Corkrum is said to have changed her name to Hunter Van Pelt in July 2016 and submitted the PPP loan applications under both names.

In each of the applications, she falsely represented the average monthly payroll and the number of employees working for the relevant company. Van Pelt also submitted false IRS records, false bank statements and false payroll reports in connection with those applications and Federal agents were able to seize approximately US\$2.1 million of

the fraudulent proceeds.

To achieve her plans, she owned or controlled six entities thru which she sought the PPP loans namely; Georgia Nephrology Physician Associated, United Healthcare Group & Co., Nephrology Network Group LLC, First Corporate International, Corkrum Consolidated Inc., and Kiwi International Inc., respectively.

According to Chris Hacker, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta, the Paycheck Protection Program is key to survival for many small businesses during the COVID-19 crisis.

"It is particularly disturbing that anyone would try to capitalize off a federal program at those businesses' expense. The FBI will persist in its efforts to stop such fraud", Chris maintains.

The report says the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act is a federal law enacted on March 29, 2020, which is designed to provide emergency financial assistance to the millions of Americans who are suffering the economic effects caused by the

COVID-19 pandemic.

One source of relief provided by the CARES Act was the authorization of up to \$349 billion in forgivable loans to small businesses for job retention and certain other expenses through the PPP. In April 2020, Congress authorized over \$300 billion in additional PPP funding. Additional funding was authorized by Congress in December 2020.

The PPP allows qualifying small-businesses and other organizations to receive loans with a maturity of two years and an interest rate of one percent. PPP loan proceeds must be used by businesses on payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities. The PPP allows the interest and principal to be forgiven if businesses spend the proceeds on these expenses within eight weeks of receipt and use at least 75 percent of the forgiven amount for payroll.

"To support small and community banks, the Federal Home Loan banks can accept Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans as collateral when making loans to their members," says Special Agent in Charge Edwin S. Bonano of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, Office of Inspector General.

The case is being investigated by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Federal Housing Finance Agency Office of Inspector General.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Huber, Deputy Chief of the Complex Frauds Section, and Department of Justice Trial Attorney Chris A. Wenger are prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. Back in 2013 Ellen Corkrum was indicted by the Government of Liberia along with former First International Bank, a commercial bank in a collusion in which her fiancé Melvin Johnson was to execute an unauthorized transfer of US\$56,750 from the account of the Liberia Airport Authority (LAA) where she served then as managing director under the administration of ex-president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (no relations) before fleeing Liberia. **-Report compiled by Jonathan Browne**

Increase advocacy

Cont'd from page 6

explained the phrase "should endeavor to ensure" has proven ambiguous and open to numerous interpretations as to whether Section 4.5 requires political parties to present a candidate list that has no less than 30 percent women or requires them to earnestly attempt to do so.

She told stakeholders to increase advocacy on the gender quota and other law reforms for women.

"I am optimistic that at the end of the ongoing nationwide Mock Parliament sessions, you will have some level of greater opportunity to seize the momentum being generated to accelerate constructive engagements with the Legislative Branch of government including strategic gender and judiciary committees in both Houses", the Minister noted.

In a special remark, Madam Marie Goreth Nizigama, County Representative, UN Women calls for inclusive citizens' engagements in decision-making processes that will bridge the gap of gender inequality. The UN Women Rep stressed the urgent need for more supportive gender-responsive, legal provisions

that domesticate the signed International Treaties.

According to Madam Nizigama, increasing women in leadership will help build a safer, inclusive and more stable society.

Margibi County Electoral District #3 Representative Ellen Attoh Wreh, lauded the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and UN Women for organizing what she termed an enlightening initiative. Rep. Wreh urged participants to utilize knowledge gained from the mock sessions for the advancement of a gender balanced society.

Stakeholders in attendance include: County leaders, Academics, Parliamentarians, Political Party leaders, Representatives of Civil Society Organizations, Members of the Judiciary, the Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY) and the Liberia National Student Union (LINSU) amongst others, drawn from Rivercess, Sinoe, Grand Bassa, Montserrado and Margibi Counties, respectively.

The Mock Parliament will continue in Bomi, Nimba and Grand Gedeh Counties beginning Thursday, August 19 to Tuesday, August 31, 2021. **-Press Release**

GENERAL PRINTING SERVICES:

- * Newspapers * Magazines * Flyers * Posters
- * Calendars * Brochures * Letterhead
- * Receipts * Invoices * Souvenirs etc...

August 17, 2021

SURVEY NOTE

Based upon the request of Mr. John J. Norris the undersigned Registered land surveyor and Resident County Surveyor has been duly Authorized to re-survey one Acres of (1.70) land in St. Francis Road Paynesville, Montserrado County.

The land to be resurveyed is lying and situated in Paynesville, Community Montserrado County. The resurveyed will commence on Saturday, August 21, 2021 at the hour of 11:00AM.

Therefore, all adjacent property owners are ask to be present on the site with their deeds, diagrams and other relevant documents with their technical representative (surveyor) to verify their claims to avoid future land dispute.

This notice should claim the following persons or properties owner:

1. K.B.R
2. J.B.D.
3. C.A.A
4. Yaya
5. Gew Mayai
6. Community Chairman
7. Who It May Concern

Signed: Richard B. Smith
Authorized Surveyor
Cell#: 0770787127

SURVEYOR'S LICENCE
Name: Moses T. Johnson
Lic: #002
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Approved:

Females lag behind in vaccination

-Health authorities reveal



2921 at the Ministry of Information's weekly press briefing, the head of immunization at the Ministry of Health Mr. Adolphus Clarke said based on statistics, a total of 16,0821 persons have received the J&J vaccine.

" So As we speak today in Liberia, 16,0821 persons have received their Johnson and Johnson COVID 19vaccines"

"What that means is that given the projection we did in Montserrado, we are doing very well, and we are averaging not less than 1,201 persons on a daily basis; as you may be aware, we started administering the J&J vaccines on August 5 and now see the number of people who have taken their vaccine.", he explains.

Mr. Clark notes that the

By Lewis S Teh
Health authorities here reveal that with a total of 16,821 Liberians vaccinated with the Johnson & Johnson

jab, females are far behind their male counterparts with turnout just at 5,728 against 11,098 males vaccinated.
Giving update on the enrollment Thursday, August 19,

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

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