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NEC chair gets top ECOWAS election post

NEC Chair Davidetta Browne Lansanah

ULFA ends strike



-Cites progress in government's response

Christmas season na come!

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Continental News

Court orders SA ex-leader Zuma to return to jail

A South African court has ruled that the country's former President Jacob Zuma should be returned to prison, saying his medical parole was "unlawful".

The time he has spent out of prison should not be counted in his 15-month sentence, the Pretoria court ruled.

Zuma was released on 5 September for an undisclosed medical condition.

He had been jailed for failing to attend an inquiry into corruption during his presidency.

The 79-year-old handed himself in to police in July after a public stand-off, but his jailing, unprecedented for an ex-president, sparked violent protests and looting.

More than 300 people, mostly in Zuma's stronghold of KwaZulu-Natal province, died in the protests. The former leader had testified only once at the inquiry into what has become known as "state capture" - meaning the siphoning off of state assets.

Businessmen have been accused of conspiring with politicians to influence the decision-making process while he was in office. Zuma has repeatedly said he is the victim of a political conspiracy.

Prison authorities say his release on parole was compelled by a medical report, but what ails him has never been disclosed.

He did, however, undergo

surgery after he was imprisoned.

The former president's spokesman said at the time that imprisonment had had "an exponential impact in terms of deteriorating his condition". His lawyers also argued that their client's illness had rendered him incapacitated.

South Africa's main opposition party, the

Democratic Alliance, said the parole was entirely unlawful and made a mockery of prison regulations.

On Wednesday, judges in the High Court in Pretoria ruled that the decision by the top correctional officer to release Zuma on medical parole was "reviewed, declared unlawful, and set aside".

Zuma is expected to appeal the decision. 2005: Charged with raping family friend - acquitted in 2006

2005: Charged with corruption over multi-billion dollar 1999 arms deal - charges dropped shortly before he becomes president in 2009

2016: Court orders he should be charged with 18 counts of corruption over the deal - he appeals, but in 2017 loses a bid to overturn them

2016: Court rules he

breached his oath of office by using government money to upgrade private home in Nkandla - he repays the money

2017: Public protector says he should appoint judge-led inquiry into allegations he profited from relationship with wealthy Gupta family - he denies allegations, as do the Guptas

2018: Zuma approves inquiry into claims of state looting

2018: The National Prosecuting Authority confirms Zuma will face prosecution for 12 charges of fraud, one of racketeering, two of corruption and one of money laundering, relating to the arms deal, which he denies

2021: Begins a 15-month jail sentence after the Constitutional Court orders his arrest for refusing to testify at the commission into state looting. BBC



Jacob Zuma was freed in September for an undisclosed medical reason

Ethiopia's PM led fight-back against rebels

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed evoked memories of the country's kings and emperors by going to the front lines to lead a dramatic fightback against Tigrayan rebels who had threatened to overthrow him.

In extraordinary scenes for a man who was declared the 100th winner of the Nobel

Peace Prize in 2019, Mr Abiy was videoed and photographed in military fatigues, walking through bushy and mountainous terrain, scanning the horizon with a binoculars and addressing soldiers under a clump of trees.

"Those who want to be among the Ethiopian children, who will be hailed by history, rise up for your country today. Let's meet at the front," he said.

Kjetil Tronvoll, a professor in conflict studies at the Oslo New University College in Norway, said there was no doubt that Mr Abiy's decision helped turn the tide against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

"Though the photos suggest that he was close to the front lines and not on the actual battlefield fighting, his decision paid off," he said.

"It boosted the morale of his generals, led to a surge in Ethiopian nationalism, saw national heroes like Haile Gebrselassie come out in support of the war effort, and thousands of people lined up to join the army and the Amhara [ethnic group's] militias." The setbacks the TPLF faced were huge. Its fighters had been around Debre Birhan town, about 130km (80 miles) from the capital, Addis Ababa, before being forced to go back about 400km to Weldiya. This means the rebels lost key towns on the A2 highway that links their stronghold of Tigray to the federal government's seat of



The PM was pictured with commanders on the front line

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power. Prof Tronvoll said that while Mr Abiy rallied his troops on the ground, drones - reportedly obtained from China, Turkey and Iran - played a far greater role in forcing the TPLF to retreat: "China's Wing Loong II allegedly proved to be the drone with the highest military capacity to take out tanks, heavy artillery and to drop bombs against foot-soldiers in open terrain."

At the same time, the government resisted US and European Union (EU) pressure to negotiate a ceasefire, and portrayed Western powers as TPLF allies - a view also expressed by Mr Gebrselassie, an Ethiopian running legend.

"We have seen how Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya have been destroyed or disintegrated. But Ethiopia is a

country with more than 120 million people. So any attempt to destabilise this country could backfire on them," he told state media.

"I know our African brothers and sisters are supporting us and we have been fighting colonialism together for centuries."

Prof Tronvoll said Mr Abiy had set the tone for such rhetoric to win the support of African governments, as well as other countries that were rivals of the West: "At the start of the war, Mr Abiy called the TPLF a junta against whom he was waging a law-enforcement operation."

"But he then embraced the pan-African narrative by calling the TPLF a proxy for imperialist forces, and he was fighting for Ethiopia's glory, like the emperors of the past." BBC

EDITORIAL

Weah government corruption wounds deepen

LAST WEEK THURSDAY, December 9, 2021 economic sanction imposed on a key supporter of President George Manneh Weah, Senator Prince Yormie Johnson (Nimba County) by the United States Treasury Department brings to three, the number of direct interventions by the U.S. Government against graft and uncontrollable misuse of public funds under the Weah-led government.

UNDER ITS GLOBAL Magnitsky Act, the U.S. Treasury records that Senator Johnson has been involved in pay-for-play funding with government ministries and organizations for personal enrichment, detailing that as part of the scheme, upon receiving funding from the Government of Liberia (GOL), the involved government ministries and organizations launder a portion of the funding for return to the involved participants. It says the pay-for-play funding scheme involves millions of U.S. dollars, and that Senator Johnson has also offered the sale of votes in multiple Liberian elections in exchange for money. Hence, Johnson is designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being a foreign person who is a current or former government official, or a person acting for or on behalf of such an official, who is responsible for or complicit in, or has directly or indirectly engaged in, corruption, including the misappropriation of state assets, the expropriation of private assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, or bribery.

SIMILARLY LAST YEAR, on International Anti-Corruption Day, December 9, 2020, the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned Liberia's renowned lawyer and senator, Harry Varney Gboto-Nambi Sherman, for corruption and bribery, blocking his assets.

OFAC NOTED THAT Senator Sherman, who chairs the Liberian Senate Judiciary Committee, offered bribes to multiple judges associated with his trial for a 2010 bribery scheme during the former Sirleaf administration, and he had an undisclosed conflict of interest with the judge who ultimately returned a not guilty verdict in July 2019.

THEN ON THURSDAY, September 10, 2020, the United States Government barred former Liberian passport director Andrew Wonplo and his entire family from traveling to America "due to his involvement in significant corruption."

FORMER U.S. SECRETARY of State under the Trump administration Michael R. Pompeo explained that in his official capacity at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Monrovia from 2018 to 2019, Mr. Wonplo was involved in passport fraud that undermined the rule of law, reduced the Liberian public's faith in the current government's management of identification and travel documents, and compromised the integrity and security of immigration processes.

"THIS DESIGNATION IS made under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2020 (Div. G, P.L. 116-94)", read a statement that was published on the United States Embassy's website in Monrovia in 2020. "In addition to Mr. Wonplo, I am announcing the public designation of his spouse, Dennice Wonplo, and their minor children", Mr. Pompeo added.

THERE ARE MORE officials or former officials to be designated for corruption in Liberia, according to the United States Government, and Liberians are edgy to know who may be the next corruption official to get on the U.S. corruption watch list, especially so when officials at the National Port Authority from the Managing Director down to branch managers are entangled in corrupt deals that breed conflict of interest.

THESE SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS under the current administration are undermining transparency and accountability in the public sector and eroding the trust of both Liberians and international partners with adverse future consequences.

PRESIDENT WEAH SHOULD listen now and take cue from signals coming out of Washington, DC to demonstrate leadership over the state of affairs rather than allow himself to be surrounded by cronies. In other words, the government should match words with deeds in its corruption fight. Anything short of this is nothing but mere lip-service.

CORRUPTION IS DEPRIVING citizens of basic social services, including health, education, safe-drinking water, electricity and security, etc. The Weah administration has a choice to heal the current wounds as a result of corruption or continue to self-destruction.

COMMENTARY

BY DIEGO GAMBETTA,
OZAN AKSOY

Freedom in the Veil

TURIN/LONDON - The latest controversy over the hijab, the headscarf worn by Muslim women, erupted at the end of October. Ironically, the trigger was an anti-discrimination campaign launched by the Council of Europe.

The Council posted a short video on its social media channels comprising a series of images split in half. One side features a woman wearing a hijab, and the other shows the same woman without the head covering. At the end of the video, the text "Beauty is in diversity as freedom is in hijab" appears, followed by the hashtags #celebratediversity and #JOYinHIJAB.

The video caused an uproar in France, where government spokesman Gabriel Attal was quoted by the Financial Times as saying that "one shouldn't confuse religious freedom with the de facto promotion of a religious symbol." Attal called wearing the hijab an "identitarian" position "contrary to the freedom of conscience that France supports." The French minister for youth and sport, Sarah El Haïry, spoke out forcefully against the video and claimed credit for the Council's decision to withdraw it from circulation. Right-wing politicians such as Marine le Pen and Michel Barnier and prominent television pundits added their voices to the criticism of the campaign.

France is not the only European country that restricts the hijab. The inflow of Muslim immigrants to Europe and the threat of violent Islamist groups have made Muslim minorities a target of hostility and discrimination, and the hijab has become a visual symbol of these tensions. Of the 27 EU member states and the United Kingdom, nine have some legal restriction on veiling; there have been legislative proposals to limit the practice in five more. In countries with no national restrictions, some regions have decided independently to ban face coverings. There are only six EU countries - Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Portugal, and Romania - where there has been no public debate so far on restricting the veil.

The supporters of restrictive measures represent a diverse range of perspectives. Many liberal politicians, staunch believers in the secular state, regard religion as a private affair to be kept out of sight. Some feminists view the headscarf as a symbol of patriarchal or religious oppression of women. But the most vociferous backers of bans have been populist, right-wing politicians who find it expedient to hide their xenophobia behind arguments that have broader ideological appeal.

Amid all the grandstanding, little heed is paid to the perspectives of Muslim women. Sociologists long have predicted that modernization would bring about a decline in religiosity and thus in the use of religious symbols such as the hijab. This prediction has been borne out in both Christian and Muslim societies, and as modernization

increases, the frequency of veiling generally decreases.

But there is a crucial nuance in the interaction between prior levels of religiosity and modernization. For example, among highly religious Muslim women, the probability of wearing the hijab increases with women's participation in modern social life, particularly if they are young, educated, and single. This seems true not only in predominantly Muslim countries, but also where Muslims are a minority, as in Belgium. The more Muslim women who identify as deeply religious associate with native Belgians, the likelier they are to wear the hijab. This trend also can be seen in countries where religiosity remains high. For example, in Indonesia, the number of women who wear the hijab has shown a tendency to increase with prosperity.

Studies show that most women do not wear the hijab because of pressure from their families or communities. In fact, the practice is more widespread among highly religious women who, because of their employment status, education, income, and political participation, should be relatively better prepared to resist family pressure.

Veiling seems to be not just an expression of religiosity, but also a strategic decision. Religious women seem to wear the hijab to reconcile their life outside the home with the social norms of their community. Adopting the hijab reassures their communities that their involvement in "riskier" secular lives away from their homes should not be interpreted as an opportunity to engage in behavior contrary to their religious norms. The hijab then signals the resilient piety of truly religious women against the perils that modernization could pose to their reputations.

This understanding of veiling has implications for cultural policy. In Europe, the hijab could be a sign not of segregation, but of integration of Muslims into society. As highly religious Muslim women make more non-Muslim friends and move to neighborhoods where they are the minority, they may choose to wear the hijab as a means to safeguard their pious reputation in the face of modernity. Bans on some forms of the veil would deprive these women of a choice that allows them more freedom, not less.

If wearing the hijab were barred, a woman who wants to signal her piety and her decision to abide by the norms of her own community would be forced to seek alternatives that could be so cumbersome that she decides to stay at home. That, presumably, is not an outcome that many proponents of prohibition desire.

Not all that lies behind the veil is to be feared. The Council of Europe's slogan is, perhaps surprisingly, not far from the truth. There certainly is more "freedom in hijab" than there would be in banning it.

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OPINION

By Bill Emmott

Vicious Crises

Treating the pandemic, climate change, lost public trust, and geopolitical tensions as standalone issues will get us nowhere. Each problem operates in a feedback loop with the others, demanding more holistic thinking and novel strategies to make up for the shortcomings of conventional global governance.

LONDON - Those who are disappointed by the inconclusive outcomes of the COP26 climate-change meeting, US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping's recent virtual summit, or efforts to achieve COVID-19 vaccine equity need to wake up about the world we live in. Under current circumstances, global governance is guaranteed to disappoint.

In a new report, Our Global Condition, I and my colleagues on the Global Commission for Post-Pandemic Policy attribute these difficulties to the fact that we are in the grip of not one but four crises. The only way forward is to recognize the connections between planetary public health, climate change, declining public trust and democratic legitimacy, and geopolitical instability. These issues are interlinked. Treating them as separate domains will get us nowhere.

Environmental stresses increase the likelihood that zoonotic diseases will spread to humans and become pandemics. The social, political, and economic stresses introduced by a pandemic then foster attitudes and behaviors that undermine social solidarity, making it harder for governments to secure public buy-in for strong decarbonization measures. In countries and political systems where trust in institutions and the authority of expertise has been undermined by the legacy of the 2008 financial crisis and the growth of social media, coping with new crises remains an uphill struggle.

This description is especially apt for the United States, the country to which so many look for leadership. The crisis of trust has weakened the US both internally and on the world stage, contributing to the deteriorating relations between the West and China. Following the logic of feedback loops, tensions over the pandemic and climate change have contributed to the world's foremost geopolitical crisis. Yet without US-China engagement and mutual understanding, little substantive progress against either the pandemic or climate change can be made.

Similar dynamics are evident in the failure to deliver a sufficient supply of vaccines to poorer countries, a reality made salient by the emergence of the new Omicron variant in southern Africa. According to the Global Commission's vaccination countdown, Asia, Europe, and the US are on track to have vaccinated 80% of their populations by March-May 2022, whereas most African countries will not have reached that point until mid-2025.

Sino-American cooperation could close this gap, given the two countries' unmatched capital and logistical resources, and also could deal swiftly with the looming sovereign-debt crisis that is likely to strike low-income countries and then the rest of the world in 2022. Unfortunately, there is no prospect of such agreements any time soon.

It is a bleak picture, auguring not imminent disaster but rather continuing disappointment and vulnerability. To confront this situation, we must develop new strategies based on four key principles.

The first principle - and the most immediate task - is to get all populations vaccinated, so that we can accelerate the shift from a pandemic to a more manageable endemic public-health issue. Whether they act alone or in groups, all countries need to place the highest priority on delivering vaccines to Africa and other lagging regions, as well as devoting more resources - medical, financial, logistical, and administrative - to support vaccination programs. Eliminating pandemic-driven uncertainties may also be the surest way to create trust and public buy-in for sustained climate measures and other necessary but costly "build back better" policies.

The second (and longer-term) principle is to recognize that the US-China rivalry plays a central role in global affairs. Neither that rivalry nor the continuing importance of either countries can be wished away. The most urgent task therefore is to define an agenda and create a mechanism for the two superpowers to consult each other and collaborate on global challenges, even as they continue to compete in other fields.

The US and the Soviet Union exercised such discipline during the Cold War. But learning to do so took decades. Neither climate change nor international security nor effective governance can wait.

The third principle is that the trust and legitimacy crisis in the West needs to be taken more seriously. Western democracies' increased vulnerability to extremist politics poses a danger not only to those countries but also to global stability and security. Here, the most urgent tasks are to update democratic rules and institutions for the twenty-first century; regulate social media to make those platforms more responsible; rekindle citizenship through new forms of participation; and expand investments to ensure greater equality of treatment and opportunity.

The fourth principle is a pragmatic one. As with vaccines, countries cannot sit around and wait for proper global governance to provide solutions. Following on the successes of public-private partnerships that delivered safe and highly effective vaccines in record time, confronting today's interlocking crises demands coalitions of the willing to address common, borderless problems. Other areas that could benefit from intense multi-country collaboration include technology to identify and monitor new pathogens and bigger bets on non-carbon energy technologies, such as nuclear fusion.

Our interlinked crises demand an interlinked, concerted response. If that proves impossible, we should not be surprised if countries decide to pursue less consensual means on their own.



With Jones Mallay

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LIBERIA POLITICAL

HOT-FIRE

Is the Nimbaian son, Cllr. Gongloe, an appropriate future presidential material to fight corruption in Liberia?

The New Dawn Newspaper is one of Liberia's historic news tablets, second in rank domestically and first among online media conglomerates outside Liberia. New Dawn is a media force to reckon with among the officially recognized 60 publishing media entities in Liberia with enormous competitive indispensable readership at home and abroad.

Believably, the proactive reportage foundation of the New Dawn newspaper is entirely dependent on a carefully selected cream of well-experienced and seasoned journalists under the auspices of its trusted and dependable editor-in-chief, Othello Garblah who by all accounts unleashed a barrel of competitive positive panorama contours on Cllr. Gongloe, whose nickname: "Poor-man-lawyer." But the question that arose: is the Nimbaian son, Atty. Gongloe an appropriate future presidential icon who is capable and ready to battle systemic corruption and corrupt practices in Liberia?

Historically, Cllr. Gongloe is considered one of the by-products of the late Baccus Matthew's progressive movement in the mid-70s. But the progressives themselves were noted for their superb political agitations, sweet political jargon, impressive street corner forums, extensive demonstrations coupled with unwarranted political announcements.

The political hegemony of the so-called progressives simply didn't have the required presidential charisma to organize, execute and lead. They didn't have the westernized political exposure to govern nor did they have a governing blueprint to manage a political leadership. They were simply ordinary domestic political activists who created a very harmful political atmosphere in the 70s.

The foundation pillars of the progressives in persons of the late Baccus Mathew, former interim president Amos Sawyer, WuoTapie, Weewee Debar, Tonia Richardson, Ezekiel Pajibo, John Karweaye, Lucia MassaleyYallah, and Alaric Togba, Cllr. Gongloe among others did fail the young progressives in most institutions of higher learning in Liberia including students at the University of Liberia were Cllr. Gongloe's political upbringing became obvious. But neither the Cllr., nor other innocent disciples of the progressives knew the rudiments and consequences of their actions in the 70s, yet Gongloe and others were inevitably remote-controlled ideologically and philosophically.

On the other hand, Cllr. Gongloe is on record as working for corrupt regimes of former interim president Amos Sawyer of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), and former president Sirleaf, where there existed systemic corruptions and bad governance and Atty. Gongloe did play a key role as Executive Assistant to president Sawyer for four-years and Solicitor General of Liberia under former president Sirleaf where there was no accountability, no transparency, no justice, no human right.

Corruption ravished those regimes but Cllr. Gongloe did turn its blind eyes to transparency, accountability, Justice, and auditing. The Attorney cannot, therefore, claim to be an authority on good governance as future president when he was tight-lipped on transparency and accountability in corrupt regimes he worked with. Many may wonder, while didn't Cllr. Gongloe speaks for the implementation of good governance in those past regimes?



SPECIAL

FEATURE

Analysis: Why Tiawan S. Gongloe is Best Suited Candidate for President of Liberia

By S. Karweaye

Liberia is a nation-state cursed with bad leadership. The bulk of the problems the country is facing today can be tied to its crop of leaders. And despite the criticism and activism of some notable Liberian activists and critics, their efforts have not translated to a sense to lead for change or a need to rise to the challenges in the country.

In a time when people are better off as armchair critics and activists, Cllr. TiawanSayeGongloe, one of Liberia's astute human rights lawyers, most vocal activists for the rule of law, hastaken his agitation beyond the call for change. He has taken up the challenge to bring about the change he wants to see in Liberia. When people write about Liberia's problems, they conclude that the problems are insurmountable. Some others believe that the youth need to rise to the task and take the mandate to solve Liberia's problems. However, it often never goes beyond the discussionlevel. Elections come and go, and we recycled the same set of leaders, with the samepromises, nonsensical plans, and perhaps just a switch of political parties-from the Unity Party and her coalition (CPP) and the Congress for Democratic Change and her coalition (CDC), or vice-versa. Two coalitions, the same people, and a singular ambition of converting politics to kleptocracy.

Cllr. TiawanGongloe, "Poor-man's Lawyer" as he is affectionately called by Liberians is a gentle giant. His acceptance to run as a presidential candidate in the 2023 election on the Liberian People's party ticket is a breath of fresh air. The Liberian people's Party was formed in 1984. Cllr. Gongloe is not new to governance, a change-propelling and people-focused form of governance. The earliest memories of Gongloe's stepping into politics come from his days as a student in Sanniequellie, Nimba County. In 1976, he joined the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), a pan-African political organization in Liberia. Before 1976, he was a member of the Young Christian Student Movement, which was a catholic apostolic student organization with the motto " See, Judge and Act" promoting and creating awareness within the student population which stimulated his mind to be concerned about what was happening around him. When he entered the University of Liberia, fondly called "UL or LU," he joined the Vanguard Student Unification Party (SUP), arguably the most organized and potent political force in Liberia at the time. By 1978, he has been groomed sufficiently that he became the Co-Chair of the Intellectual Discourse under the late James Logan as Chairman at the University of Liberia. The intellectual discourse was a very good avenue for creating awareness amongst the student population on what was happening in the country. He also became a member of the editorial staff of the University's Spokesman, the fearless news organ in the country. As President of the Nimba Student Association at the UL, Gongloe proved that he got his mandate from the people-the students-and would, therefore, be loyal to those who trusted him with the mandate. He and his colleagues focused on advocating for the truth and better citizens' welfare, which cost him arrests and detentions as a student.

Unavoidably, advocates who desire to liberate the nation from corrupt leaders and internalstrife will always face persecution. An activist or advocate who has not faced persecution needs to rethink their activism and advocacy. This is not a case of a sufferer's mentality. The practice and deeds of activism and advocacy attract hatred, intimidation & imprisonment, especially from the ruling class. Such is the fate of those who choose to challenge the status quo. Should anyonedoubt this, let them think of Albert Porte, WuoTapie, Weewee Debar, Tonia Richardson, Ezekiel Pajibo, John Karweaye, LuciaMassaleyYallah, and a host of other Liberian activists and advocates. All these men were persecuted-incarcerated, tortured, and some were even killed. Another thing they have in common is that in the face of intense oppression, they never failed to speak and fight for the people's rights. TiawanGongloe has faced similar persecutions in the hands of the

government, not once, not twice.

People-focused advocacy is innate for Gongloe. These things are what flow in his veins. He has always been like that, never able to keep quiet in the face of oppression and continue rising to the occasion. TiawanGongloe, "Poor-man's Lawyer" has been advocating good governance since the 1970s. Liberians familiar with the nation's political environment in the '70s would remember the protest of students against the government of President William Tolbert. These protests were ignited as a result of the marginalization of Liberian citizens from the political and socio-economic aspects of society. In their typical repressive nature, the government arrested and tortured some of the students' leaders, while some other protesters lost their lives to the cause. Now, these protests were not fueled by demands for personal gains or recognition, but from an innate push to act. On August 22, 1984, the University of Liberia students protested the arrest of Prof. Amos Sawyer. Before his arrest, Prof. Amos Sawyer had criticized then Head of State, Samuel Doe. Doe was affronted by what he called the "gross disrespect" accorded him by university administrators and students and ordered his minister of defense, Maj. Gen. Gray D. Allison, to the campus to stop the demonstrators. The wave of looting, flogging, and rape that followed left the campus community stunned for years. As a Teacher Assistant, Gongloe was stripped naked and severely beaten by the soldiers after attempting to protect an elderly female staff of the University of Liberia during the soldiers' onslaught. He was hospitalized at the SD Cooper Hospital and was treated. After the raid, he was sacked from the University of Liberia by the military junta.

Upon completion from the Louis Arthur Grimes law School, Gongloe practiced with the Garlawolu& Associates Law Offices where he worked on human rights cases. In 1990, he obtained a human rights fellowship with Columbia University in the United States. When Amos Sawyer was elected as President of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU), he asked Dr. Levi Zangai (Chair of the delegation) along with Cllr. TiawanGongloe (Co-Chair), Nathaniel Beh, and James Fromoyan, etc. to come to Monrovia and smooth thing for the IGNU arrival. In the search for peace, Cllr Gongloe worked with Dr. Sawyer for four years as Executive Assistant to Interim President, providing legal advice and attending most of the peace conferences in search of lasting solutions during our civil conflict in the 1990s (Banjul Peace Agreement, Lome I & Lome II Peace Agreement, Yamoussoukro I, II, III, IV as well as the Cotonou Peace Agreement). After the IGNU was replaced by David Donald Kpormakpor's Council of State, Cllr. Gongloe worked with the United Nations as a member of the UN Observer Mission in South Africa.

For Cllr TawainGongloe, "Poor-man's Lawyer," activism can take different forms, and one which he has been deploying upon his return to Liberia from the UN is the respect for Rule of law. The Rule of Law is a powerful tool for change. It is a tool that is used in activism against repressive and backward governments. Sadly, this tool often falls into the hands of the powerful-the nation's leaders. In 1997, Charles Taylor was elected as the 22nd President of Liberia. TiawanSayeGongloe, "Poor-man's Lawyer," defended journalists, political activists, and the downtrodden during the Charles Taylor dictatorial regime. He was very outspoken about human right violation and abuses by the Liberian security forces under Charles Taylor. In March of 2002, Gongloe was arrested by Charles Taylor's regime in connection with a speech he had delivered in Guinea, wherein he had discussed the role of civil society in achieving peace in the Mano River Union. Gongloe was beaten severely throughout the night of his arrest and subjected to death threats. He was then taken to Cooper Hospital as a result of injuries sustained from the beatings. He suffered from loss of hearing in his left ear, a swollen and bloodied left eye, severe bruising all over his body, and intense internal pain. Gongloe was charged with no offense even



Tiawan S. Gongloe

though he was tortured and detained without Taylor's regime promptly informing him or the world of the charge against him as mandated by international law. Gongloe was again detained by Taylor security forces for several hours on May 12, 2002, at Roberts Field Airport while trying to board an airplane to Sierra Leone to participate as an election observer for the Carter Center election observer team. Upon his release, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International secured Gongloe and his family out of Liberia after fearing his rearrest and torture as one of Liberia's fearless and human rights lawyers. Upon his arrival in the United States, Gongloe was accepted at Harvard School of Government, in Massachusetts as a fellow at the renowned Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University, where he took on examining the failures of the Liberian judiciary system and the role of the justice system in contributing to the failed state. In 2003, TawainSayeGongloe, "Poor-man's Lawyer" was honored as a 2003 Human Rights Watch Defender for his courage and bravery amongst many awards he would receive over the years.

Up winning the 2005 election, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf appointed TiawanGongloe, "Poor-man's Lawyer" as Liberia's first post-conflict Solicitor General. As Minister of Justice and Liberia's Chief prosecutor, he promoted the rule of law and assisted his colleagues through training to enable them to cope with time, speed, and technology that the law practice demanded as Liberia transitioned from war to peace and democratization. As Minister of Labor, he worked tirelessly in putting in action the Liberalization policy to benefit Liberians and Liberia in general.

Gongloe as a prominent human lawyer questioned the nepotism in Ellen Johnson Sirleaf-led government after she appointed her sons and relatives in high profile government positions as well as her massive failure to transform Liberia as was promised by her during the 2005 election. He resigned as Minister of Labor and when President Sirleaf appointed him as Minister of Postand Telecommunications, he declined her appointment. On November 31, 2018, Cllr. Gongloe was elected as president of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA), the umbrella organization of lawyers in the country, where he assisted in strengthening the capacity of the LNBA and getting rid of fake lawyers through a mandatory for every lawyer to carry an LNBA issued license, etc.

Cllr. Gongloe's advocacies and activism are proof that he is people-focused. He has seen beyond the often-preached poverty reduction, rule of law, political stability, financial deliverance, economic stability, infrastructure development, and other promises that other presidential hopefuls often make. He has preached systemic change because he has seen the trustworthy source of Liberia's problems and wants a change-propelling and people-focused form of governance. Cllr. TiawanGongloe, "Poor-man's Lawyer" first appeared on the national scene as raw gold and has passed through fire over the years. There is every proof he came out unscathed, refined, polished, and fit for the occasion. Cllr. TiawanGongloe's actions and track records over the years tell of one thing-he is the President Liberia.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

CENTAL welcomes sanction on PYJ

By Lewis S. Teh

The Center for Transparency and Accountability Liberia (CENTAL) welcomes economic sanction imposed on Nimba County Senator Prince Y. Johnson by the U.S. Treasury Department for corruption.

"Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press, we

December 15, 2021, at his office in Sinkor during a news conference, noting that Sen. Johnson is designated for his "involvement in significant corruption in Liberia through engagements involving millions of dollars in bribery and pay-for-play funding schemes".

Miamen says the sanctions by the United States government brings to three (3) the number of

diplomacy and foreign assistance. Thus, the war against it cannot be left to the Liberian people alone, stressing "It must be fought and won by the Liberian People with significant support and solidarity by our friends and partners in the International community."

Mr. Miamen continues that the process of fighting corruption has to be inclusive, robust, and timely, by ensuring those playing varying roles in promoting, fostering, and sustaining corruption in the country bear full responsibility for their actions.

CENTAL therefore says there is need to go beyond the current designations of public officials to bring to account all those connected to the reported schemes or acts of corruption, for which individuals are being designated/sanctioned.

"We are confident that the U.S. Government exudes authority in these matters and can do much more for the country, especially ordinary citizens whose lives and progress continue to be undermined and stagnated largely due to the corrupt behaviors of their national leaders.

As Corruption often involves multiple players, we encourage the United States to spare no accomplices and beneficiaries of these significant acts of corruption being perpetrated by some



CENTAL Executive Director Mr. Anderson Miamen

highly welcome this action by the United States Government to impose sanctions on Senator Prince Y. Johnson, this is an important display of its commitment to "elevating anti-corruption as a core national security priority".

CENTAL Executive Director Mr. Anderson Miamen made those statements Wednesday,

Liberian Government Officials designated in two years under the Global Magnitsky Act for their involvement in significant corruption, the other two being Senator Varney G. Sherman and former Passport Director, Mr. Andrew Wonploe.

According to him, corruption in Liberia undoubtedly affects the interests of international partners and all aspects of

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Unknown person torches AcelorMittal's rail

By Thomas Domah/ Nimba County

Following a two-day youth conference in Gbarnga, Bong County bringing together affected communities from Nimba, Grand Bassa and Bong counties, an unknown person early Wednesday, December 15, 2021 set ablaze the ArcelorMittal Liberia rail from Yekepa, Nimba County, impeding normal operational activities of the company.

The incident transpired at about 5AM between Zolowee and Sehyikinpa before reaching to the provincial capital, Sanniquellie.

The attacker use tires and other materials to set ablaze the rail which caused the mining company halt transportation of ores yesterday.

Meanwhile, police in Sanniquellie, Nimba County



have launched an investigation into the incident.

Several affected communities in Nimba County have expressed displeasure about a current US\$800 Million Mineral Development Agreement signed

with the Government of Liberia, pending ratification before the Legislature. The MDA seeks additional years for its operation but host County Nimba does not want government to grant

UNDP turns over to Ministry of Agriculture assorted supplies to boost the sector

The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has received over US 200,000 dollars' worth of assorted supplies of power tillers, motorbikes, and 14.3 metric tons of Nerica seed rice to support farmers & extension services.

This support is part of a 5-year UNDP Liberia Livelihood and Employment Creation Project that seeks to engage the poor and vulnerable populations in socio-economic activities to improve income and livelihood.

The project targets vulnerable populations in seven counties- Montserrado, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Sinoe, Lofa, Nimba, and

as a "great accomplishment" for climate-smart operations in Liberia's agriculture sector.

Mr. Fagans expressed appreciation to UNDP promising to ensure that farmers qualified to receive such support will use the supplies to increase their yields using mechanized farming methods, which he considers a test case for the country.

He said that the Ministry of Agriculture has already sent the seed rice to Bong County where some farmers there will soon have access to it.

Also at the brief ceremony, Deputy Commerce Minister for Small Business Debra Neebo mentioned that the Ministry would hold the Ministry of Agriculture accountable for the



Grand Gedeh.

"UNDP Liberia recognizes the importance of the agriculture sector for improving livelihoods & reducing poverty in Liberia," said Deputy Resident Representative for Operations ThanbaniMabodoko when officially turning over the supplies that will be used to help empower farmers.

Mr. Thabani noted that the project has achieved satisfying results so far, including support to vulnerable populations, more than 400 farmers, financial grants and training for more than 50 business start-ups and local agribusinesses.

Receiving the items at a brief ceremony on Tuesday 14, December 2021, Deputy Agriculture Minister Robert Fagans described the gesture

proper use of the supplies given to farmers.

She encouraged the MOA to put in place an effective asset management system that keeps track of the use of all assorted equipment and supplies.

UNDP is working in partnership with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture to support the Government's efforts to strengthen business and enterprise development services for MSMEs by promoting access to finance, capacity building and innovation.

UNDP's five-year Livelihood & Employment Creation project is providing the assistance. The MSMEs Financing Study is one of the key deliverables of the Project.

additional years, complaining of lack of development and social services in communities affected by the company operation.

Meanwhile, Corporation Communication Manager of

AML Winston Daryou, confirms yesterday's incident, but says investigation is being launched to gather facts after which Management will come up with an official statement.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

WONGOSOL pushes bill on women leadership

Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL) has reiterated its resolve to campaign vigorously for the enactment of the Affirmative bill that seeks to have at least 30 percent women elected to public offices and leadership positions in political parties.

“The only and biggest

there is need that law be enacted to compel political parties for women to occupy at least 30 percent of all national elected offices and leadership positions in parties.

Speaking in an interview with reporters in Monrovia Wednesday, December 15, 2021, Madam Salue, Acting Program

WONGOSOL is a network of 104 organizations committed to ending violence against women and achieving gender equality in Liberia. “Our programs support gender equality and women’s empowerment in Liberia”, she says.

Madam Salue also stresses the need for adjustment and fairness in national leadership where men and women will be given opportunity to equally participate in and benefit from decision-making process at all levels.

She discloses that currently, WONGOSOL is a manifestation of the campaign to have more women in leadership positions, so they have embarked on four-day women political and leadership project aimed at improving women’s representation at the Liberian legislature.

She says the forum at the Monrovia City Hall brings together legislative staff and policymakers of the Legislative Branch of the Liberian government.

Madam Salue notes that WONGOSOL is using the forum to build capacity of technical staff of the Legislature to be gender inclusive and gender sensitive in policymaking.



Participants and the technical staffs of the Legislature Branch Of Government

leadership positions given to women in all the political parties is head of Women Wing, I believe it is not fair and must stop”, says Madam Williet L. Salue.

According to her, women are more qualified more than even some of their male counterparts, noting that

Manager, said currently, women do not occupy major positions or leadership positions in political parties in Liberia despite their active works, but is optimism that the proposed law will compel every political party in the country set aside at least 30 percent of elected offices and leadership positions for women.

AFL targets 350 new recruits in January

By Lincoln G. Peters

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) has announced that it has set aside 4 January to 19 March 2022, as time allotted for its nationwide recruitment in four geographical regions in Liberia.

Making the disclosure Wednesday, 15 December 2021 during a press conference held at the Ministry of Defense, Assistant Defense Minister for Public Affairs Sam K. Collins said the recruitment process is intended to boost the security strength of the military.

Mr. Collins said everyone will be served based on a first come, first served basis.

Assistant Minister Collins indicated that this year’s recruitment is targeting 350 persons, but they are going to recruit the first 75 persons and then complete the

process later.

Prior to the Armed Forces of Liberia’s recruitment exercise, the United Nations called on the Government of Liberia to beef up the security’s numerical strength to 20,000 in order to help the country quickly address security

concerns.

Mr. Collins noted that the AFL’s recruitment process will be done for all citizens from the 15 counties who are desiring to join the army.

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ALJA calls for justice for seven-year-old rape victim

Minneapolis, Minnesota: The Association of Liberian Journalists in the Americas (ALJA) says it is shocked and dismayed over reports, which claimed that a seven-year-old daughter of a Liberian diplomat in Abuja, Nigeria was sexually abused by two teenagers on the premises of the Liberian Embassy.

The incident, which reportedly occurred nearly eight months ago, was recently brought to the public’s attention by the father of the victim, Mr. Nat Bayjay, who works at the Embassy as Minister Counselor for Press and Public Affairs.

In a Press Release issued on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, the Association said it is deeply saddened by the reported incident. ALJA says it is heart wrenching that since the reported abuse, the seven-

ALJA says it regretful that Liberia’s Ambassador, Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh, and authorities of the Liberian government in Abuja and Monrovia have dragged their feet on ensuring judicial accountability of those individuals who allegedly abused the girl since the matter was reported to the Liberian government in April of this year.

ALJA also, criticized the authorities for failing to provide appropriate medical, mental health, and social supports to the victim and her family. The Association maintained that the alleged act committed against the victim has both long-term traumatic and economic effects on her if, she is not immediately given the appropriate medical and psychological attention.

Meanwhile, ALJA is calling on the Liberian government to give the current rape case its utmost urgency, cognizant that the abused child is a Liberian



year-old girl and her parents are yet to get legal redress from the Liberian government while the two alleged perpetrators have since returned to Monrovia.

The Association quoting the girl’s father, Minister Counselor Nat Bayjay, says the abusers are reportedly roaming the streets of Monrovia much to the frustration of the victim and her parents. ALJA called on authorities of the Liberian government to ensure that the alleged rapists are arrested and prosecuted for the heinous act committed.

The Association says to mitigate the high incidence of rape in Liberia, the country’s criminal justice system needs to respond swiftly and aggressively in ensuring that the perpetrators irrespective of their ages and social status are held liable for their actions.

citizen, who is entitled to full legal protection by the Liberian government.

Recently Mr. Bayjay spoke about his daughter’s ordeal on several local news network in Monrovia. Then he claimed that his daughter was raped repeatedly over a period of several months; and she suffered serious physical and emotional harm as a result. He lamented that despite the trauma experienced by his daughter, senior staff at the Liberian Embassy as well as the guardian of the perpetrators, who is also an embassy staff, have shown little interest in the wellbeing of his daughter and instead have tried repeatedly to shield the perpetrators.

At the same time, ALJA has described as hypocritical the statement released by the

Français

Boakai n'a aucun projet de société, selon Bility

L'ancien vice-président Joseph Nyumah Boakai dispose d'aucun programme politique ou projet de société pour diriger le pays en tant que président de la République, à en croire le président du Parti de la liberté, Musa Hassan Bility.

Le leader politique du Parti de l'unité et président de la Collaboration des Partis Politiques de l'opposition (CPP), selon Bility, n'a aucun plan pour le pays dont il veut devenir le président.

M. Boakai aurait maintes fois refusé de communiquer son plan et son programme aux dirigeants du Liberty Party en dépit d'un certain nombre d'invitations dont il a fait l'objet à cet effet.

S'exprimant dans une interview avec Mid Night Conversation de Spoon FM le lundi 13 décembre 2021, M. Bility a affirmé que le problème du Liberty Party est dû au fait que la sénatrice Nyonblee Karngar-Lawrence, leader politique, s'entête pour le poste de

vice-président.

« Notre leader politique nous a demandé de soutenir Joseph N. Boakai car celui-ci veut faire d'elle sa colistière », a-t-il dit.

« J'ai refusé avec plusieurs autres et j'ai dit au leader politique qu'avant de choisir quelqu'un comme porte-drapeau, il devrait nous dire son agenda et la personne devrait également être celle qui choisit son partenaire », a expliqué M.

Bility.

Ces derniers jours, le LP, sous la présidence de M. Bility, a suspendu Mme Karnga - Lawrence et le sénateur du comté de Montserrado Abraham Darius Dillon pour des raisons administratives présumées ou pour leur non-paiement des cotisations du parti.

En représailles, Bility a fait

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



de développement communautaire : AML est applaudie

Les communautés de Bong, Nimba et Grand Bassa, où ArcelorMittal Liberia opère, saluent les progrès réalisés dans la mise en œuvre de plusieurs projets de développement par le biais du

Community Development Fund (CDF), qui réserve 20 % du County Social Development Fund (CSDF) de l'entreprise pour une mise en œuvre directe dans les communautés d'impact.

Plusieurs projets de construction de centres de

santé, de réhabilitation de routes et de ponts communautaires et d'autres équipements publics sont mis en œuvre à travers le CDF, à l'approbation des résidents de la communauté et des dirigeants locaux.

S'exprimant lors de l'ouverture d'une conférence de deux jours sur la prévention et l'atténuation des conflits chez les jeunes, organisée par ArcelorMittal Liberia à Gbarnga ce week-end, la surintendante du comté de Bong, Esther Walker, a félicité la direction

d'AML « pour le niveau accru de programmes de développement communautaire et social que mon comté est ravi d'être bénéficiaire ».

« Auparavant, le Fonds de développement social du comté (CSDF) était simplement emballé dans une seule boîte pour le gouvernement central et notre peuple ne pouvait pas ressentir l'impact, mais grâce au CDF, les communautés ont maintenant leurs 20% et ressentent l'impact », a dit la surintendante Walker.

À Bong, des progrès sont en cours dans la construction de trois centres de santé à Zowienta, Gbarta, Boogborn et d'une maison d'attente maternelle à Rockcrusher pour une valeur totale de plus de quatre cent vingt-deux mille dollars américains.

De même, à Nimba, la mise en œuvre des projets CDF dans les communautés est en cours, selon le rapport d'une récente équipe d'inspection technique.

L'équipe a visité des communautés près du mont Yuelliton, notamment les villes de Lugbehyee et

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Éditorial

Les blessures dues à la corruption sous l'administration Weah s'aggravent

La semaine dernière, le jeudi 9 décembre 2021, la sanction économique imposée à un soutien clé du président George Manneh Weah, le sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson (comté de Nimba), par le département du Trésor américain porte à trois, le nombre d'interventions directes du gouvernement américain contre la corruption et l'abus incontrôlable des fonds publics sous le gouvernement dirigé par Weah.

En vertu de sa loi Global Magnitsky Act, le Trésor américain estime que le sénateur Johnson est impliqué dans un blanchiment d'argent avec un certain nombre de ministères et d'organisations gouvernementales pour s'enrichir.

Ces ministères et organisations gouvernementales, après avoir reçu un financement du gouvernement du Libéria (GOL), blanchissent une partie du financement pour le rendre aux participants, dont le sénateur Prince Johnson.

Selon le trésor américain, le programme de financement fictif concerne des millions de dollars américains.

Il reproche au sénateur Johnson d'avoir également proposé la vente des voix des électeurs lors de plusieurs élections libériennes en échange d'argent.

Par conséquent, Johnson est considéré comme responsable ou complice de, ou s'est directement ou indirectement engagé dans, la corruption, y compris le détournement de biens de l'État, l'expropriation de biens privés à des fins personnelles, la corruption liée aux marchés publics ou à l'extraction de ressources naturelles, ou les pots-de-vin.

De même l'année dernière, lors de la Journée internationale de lutte contre la corruption, le 9 décembre 2020, l'Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) du Département du Trésor américain a sanctionné le célèbre avocat et sénateur du Libéria, Harry Varney Gboto-Nambi Sherman, pour corruption et pots-de-vin.

L'OFAC a noté que le sénateur Sherman, qui préside la commission judiciaire du Sénat libérien, a offert des pots-de-vin à plusieurs juges associés à son procès pour un programme de corruption de 2010 sous l'ancienne administration Sirleaf, et il a eu un conflit d'intérêts non divulgué avec le juge qui a finalement renvoyé un verdict de non culpabilité en juillet 2019.

Puis, le jeudi 10 septembre 2020, le gouvernement des États-Unis a interdit à l'ancien directeur des passeports libériens Andrew Wonplo et à toute sa famille de se rendre en Amérique « en raison de son implication dans une corruption importante ».

L'ancien secrétaire d'État américain sous l'administration Trump, Michael R. Pompeo, a expliqué qu'en sa qualité officielle au ministère des Affaires étrangères à Monrovia de 2018 à 2019, M. Wonplo a été impliqué dans une fraude de passeport qui a sapé l'état de droit, réduit la confiance du public dans la gestion par le gouvernement actuel des documents d'identité et de voyage, et a compromis l'intégrité et la sécurité des processus d'immigration.

« Cette désignation est faite en vertu de l'article 7031 © de la loi de 2020 sur les crédits du Département d'État, des opérations étrangères et des programmes connexes (Div. G, PL 116-94) », lit-on dans une déclaration publiée sur le site de l'ambassade des États-Unis à Monrovia en 2020.

« En plus de M. Wonplo, j'annonce la désignation publique de son épouse, Dennice Wonplo, et de leurs enfants mineurs », a ajouté M. Pompeo.

Il y a plus de fonctionnaires ou d'anciens fonctionnaires à désigner pour corruption au Libéria, selon le gouvernement des États-Unis, et les Libériens sont impatients de savoir qui pourrait être le prochain fonctionnaire accusé de corruption à figurer sur la liste de surveillance de la corruption des États-Unis, en particulier lorsque les fonctionnaires de l'autorité portuaire nationale, du directeur général aux directeurs de succursale, sont impliqués dans des accords corrompus qui engendrent des conflits d'intérêts.

Ces blessures auto-infligées sous l'administration actuelle sapent la transparence dans le secteur public et érodent la confiance des Libériens et des partenaires internationaux avec des conséquences futures négatives.

Le président Weah devrait écouter maintenant et s'inspirer des signaux provenant de Washington, DC pour faire preuve de leadership sur l'état des choses plutôt que de se laisser encercler par des copains. En d'autres termes, le gouvernement doit faire correspondre les paroles aux actes dans sa lutte contre la corruption.

La corruption prive les citoyens de services sociaux de base, notamment la santé, l'éducation, l'eau potable, l'électricité et la sécurité, etc. L'administration Weah a le choix de panser les blessures actuelles dues à la corruption ou de continuer à s'autodétruire.



Français

Boakai n'a aucun projet

également face à une suspension du parti sur ordre du leader politique, la sénatrice Karnga - Lawrence.

Mais la Commission électorale nationale (NEC) a dit reconnaître toujours Bility comme le président national du LP.

« Madame Karnga - Lawrence préconise maintenant le retour à la constitution de 2015 qui donne au leader politique le pouvoir absolu de faire n'importe quoi sans se soucier des autres.

Nous avons interrogé M. [Alexander] Cummings pendant huit heures et il nous a expliqué son programme pour le pays, mais pour l'ambassadeur Joseph N. Boakai, c'est le contraire. Il n'a jamais répondu à notre invitation uniquement parce qu'il n'a aucun programme », a-t-ildit.

Par ailleurs, M. Bility a révélé que la semaine prochaine, le Liberty Party organisera une convention nationale à Ganta, dans le comté de Nimba, pour choisir une candidature de la CPP.

Selon lui, les nouveaux textes adoptés en 2021 dans le comté de Bong leur donnent le droit de soutenir un candidat.

« Tout ce bruit sur qui nous soutiendrons ou non prendra fin vendredi prochain lors de la convention à Ganta City, dans le comté de Nimba, car nous montrons publiquement la personne

que nous soutenons », a-t-il déclaré.

« Je ne peux tout simplement pas dire le nom de la personne ici maintenant, mais le monde saura la semaine prochaine », a dit Bility. Le leader politique du Congrès national alternatif (ANC) Alexander B. Cummings et l'ancien vice-président Boakai disputent actuellement la candidature de la CPP pour combattre le président libérien sortant George Manneh Weah aux urnes en 2023.

La CPP qui est composée de quatre principaux partis politiques de l'opposition est visiblement divisée entre M. Boakai et M. Cummings.

Le Parti de l'unité, le Parti du peuple libérien (ALP) et une faction du Parti de la liberté fidèle au sénateur Karnga - Lawrence et le sénateur Dillon semblent soutenir M. Boakai, tandis que l'autre faction du LP fidèle à M. Bility semble soutenir M. Cummings.

Selon M. Bility, ils ont écrit à plusieurs acteurs politiques, dont l'ancien parti au pouvoir, pour la convention de Ganta, mais l'Unity Party aurait décliné l'invitation.

Le président Bility a déclaré que tous les autres chefs de parti seront à Ganta, à l'exception des sénateurs des comtés de Montserrado et de Grand Bassa qui ont été suspendus.

« Si la sénatrice Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence va devant les tribunaux pour arrêter la convention, je n'ai aucun problème et je respecte la loi. Cependant, elle retardera le choix du peuple libérien car elle ne peut pas l'arrêter », a-t-ildit.

de développement communautaire :

Bonlah, où la construction de quatre ponts est en cours dans le cadre du CDF. Ils comprennent le pont Denyii, à la périphérie de Lugbehyye, le pont Yiwaa, le pont Payie et les projets Vilii the Bridge.

L'ingénieur d'AML Estates, Robert Sarwea, a déclaré que les entrepreneurs identifiés par le comité de gestion de projet du comté pour la construction des ponts faisaient de leur mieux pour mettre en œuvre les projets selon les normes les plus élevées et dans les délais.

Conformément aux directives de gestion du CDF, il est exigé qu'AML retienne et supervise les dépenses de 20 pour cent du CSDF sur les projets de développement identifiés par les membres de la communauté directement affectés par les opérations minières de la

société à Bong, Nimba et Grand Bassa. Dans le même temps, la surintendante du comté de Bong, Esther Walker, a appelé les jeunes des comtés de Bong, Nimba et Grand Bassa à toujours suivre la voie de la paix et d'un engagement positif avec ArcelorMittal Liberia pour répondre à leurs préoccupations. La surintendante Walker a déclaré que grâce au dialogue et à un engagement positif avec ArcelorMittal Liberia, le comté de Bong et la société ont pu s'associer pour mettre en œuvre de nombreux projets dans l'intérêt des communautés. « Je suis une surintendante reconnaissante et fière que, sous mon administration, le dialogue avec ArcelorMittal Liberia et les jeunes nous apporte beaucoup de bonnes choses. C'est mieux que la violence ou le blocage de la voie ferrée », a-t-elle déclaré.

COMMENTAIRE

By Diego Gambetta,
Ozan Aksoy

La liberté sous le voile

TURIN/LONDRES - La dernière controverse sur le hidjab, le foulard porté par les femmes musulmanes, a éclaté fin octobre. Fait paradoxal, le déclencheur a été une campagne anti-discrimination lancée par le Conseil de l'Europe.

Le Conseil a publié une courte vidéo sur ses réseaux sociaux, comprenant une série d'images divisées en deux. Un côté présente une femme portant un hidjab, l'autre la montre nu-tête. À la fin de la vidéo, le texte « la beauté est dans la diversité comme la liberté est sous le hidjab » apparaît, suivi des hashtags #celebratediversity et #JOYinhibjab.

La vidéo a provoqué un tollé en France, où le porte-parole du gouvernement Gabriel Attal a été cité par le Financial Times en déclarant : « il ne faut pas confondre la liberté religieuse et la promotion de facto d'un symbole religieux ». Attal a qualifié le port du hidjab de position « identitaire » « contraire à la liberté de conscience soutenue par la France ». La Secrétaire d'État chargée de la Jeunesse et de l'Engagement Sarah El Haïri s'est exprimée avec force contre la vidéo et s'est attribuée la décision du Conseil de la retirer de la circulation. Des politiciens de droite comme Marine Le Pen et Michel Barnier et d'éminents experts de la télévision ont ajouté leur voix aux critiques de la campagne.

La France n'est pas le seul pays européen à vouloir restreindre le port du hidjab. L'afflux d'immigrants musulmans en Europe et la menace de groupes islamistes violents ont fait des minorités musulmanes une cible d'hostilité et de discrimination et le hidjab est devenu un symbole visuel de ces tensions. Sur les 27 États membres de l'UE et le Royaume-Uni, neuf ont des restrictions juridiques sur le voile ; il y a eu des propositions législatives pour limiter la pratique dans cinq autres. Dans les pays sans restriction nationale, certaines régions ont décidé de manière autonome d'interdire les modes de couverture du visage. Il n'y a que six pays de l'UE - la Croatie, Chypre, la Grèce, la Pologne, le Portugal et la Roumanie - où il n'y a pas eu jusqu'à présent de débat public sur les restrictions contre le voile.

Les partisans des mesures restrictives représentent un éventail varié de points de vue. De nombreux politiciens libéraux, fidèles à l'État laïc, considèrent la religion comme une affaire privée à garder à l'abri des regards. Certains féministes considèrent le foulard comme un symbole de l'oppression patriarcale ou religieuse envers les femmes. Mais les partisans les plus véhéments des interdictions ont été les politiciens populistes de droite qui trouvent opportun de cacher leur xénophobie derrière des arguments qui ont un attrait idéologique plus large.

Dans tout ce battage, on ne tient guère compte des perspectives des femmes musulmanes. Les sociologues prédisent depuis longtemps que la modernisation va entraîner un déclin de la religiosité et donc de l'utilisation de symboles religieux comme le hidjab. Cette prédiction s'est confirmée dans les sociétés chrétiennes et musulmanes : à mesure que la modernisation augmente, la fréquence du port du voile diminue

de façon générale.

Mais il y a une nuance cruciale dans l'interaction entre les niveaux antérieurs de religiosité et la modernisation. Par exemple, parmi les femmes musulmanes très religieuses, la probabilité de porter le hidjab augmente avec la participation des femmes à la vie sociale moderne, en particulier si elles sont jeunes, éduquées et célibataires. Cela semble vrai non seulement dans les pays majoritairement musulmans, mais également dans les pays où les musulmans sont minoritaires, comme en Belgique. Plus les femmes musulmanes s'identifient comme membres profondément religieux des Belges autochtones, plus elles ont de chances de porter le hidjab. Cette tendance peut également être observée dans les pays où la religiosité reste forte. Par exemple, en Indonésie, le nombre de femmes qui portent le hidjab a montré une tendance à augmenter conjointement avec la prospérité.

Des études montrent que la plupart des femmes ne portent pas le hidjab en raison de la pression de leur famille ou de leur communauté. En fait, la pratique est plus répandue parmi les femmes très religieuses qui, en raison de leur situation d'emploi, de leur éducation, de leurs revenus et de leur participation politique, doivent être relativement mieux préparées à résister à la pression familiale.

Le voile semble être non seulement une expression de la religiosité, mais également une décision stratégique. Les femmes religieuses semblent porter le hidjab pour concilier leur vie à l'extérieur du foyer avec les normes sociales de leur communauté. L'adoption du hidjab rassure leurs communautés, en montrant que leur implication dans des vies laïques « plus risquées » loin de chez elles ne doit pas être interprétée comme une occasion de s'engager dans un comportement contraire à leurs normes religieuses. Le hidjab signale alors la piété résiliente des femmes vraiment religieuses contre les périls que la modernisation pourrait causer à leur réputation.

Cette compréhension du port du voile a des implications pour la politique culturelle. En Europe, le hidjab pourrait être un signe non pas de ségrégation, mais d'intégration des musulmans dans la société. Alors que les musulmanes très religieuses se font plus d'amis non musulmans et se déplacent dans des quartiers où elles sont minoritaires, elles peuvent choisir de porter le hidjab comme un moyen de préserver leur réputation pieuse face à la modernité. L'interdiction de certaines formes de voile priverait ces femmes d'un choix qui leur autoriserait davantage de liberté, pas moins.

Si le port du hidjab était interdit, une femme qui veut signaler sa piété et sa décision de se conformer aux normes de sa propre communauté serait forcée de chercher des alternatives qui pourraient être si lourdes qu'elle déciderait de rester chez elle. Il ne s'agit sans doute pas du résultat souhaité par de nombreux partisans de l'interdiction.

Tout ce qui se trouve derrière le voile n'est pas à craindre. Le slogan du Conseil de l'Europe n'est peut-être pas si loin de la vérité, même si cela peut nous paraître surprenant. Il y a certainement plus de « liberté sous le hidjab » qu'il n'y en aurait dans son interdiction.

Stakeholders in agriculture call for audit of institutions in the sector

Several farmers are calling for an audit of institutions and organizations managing the agriculture sector in Liberia.

The farmers say there is lack of transparency and accountability in the management and operation of farmer cooperatives, non-governmental organizations and even banking institutions connected to agri-business.

“Cooperatives are not sincere and fair to us. Even loans sourced from the banks come not only with high interest rates, but also with

agriculture programs. Most times selection of beneficiaries is not transparent,” they said.

The farmers were speaking on 10 December 2021, at a validation of proposals for developing financing products and mechanisms from a Study carried out by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Government of Liberia and UNDP commissioned the Study conducted by UNCDF, with the objective of exploring

need for donors implementing the proposed agriculture program to put in place effective and efficient monitoring systems and mechanisms that will ensure the proper management of funds aimed at improving agriculture, so that the money can reach actual farmers. “Liberia is still importing our staple food, rice. Bring the money this time with a good monitoring team,” the farmers said.

Not all farmers are on the same level -effective needs assessment

Some of the farmers argued that the agriculture sector in Liberia is seen as “one size fits all” especially for smallholder farming which is not workable.

They want donors and other financing institutions sponsoring the proposed program to conduct proper needs assessment to incorporate all capable and productive farmers who are producing but not under the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) or the Liberia National Credit Union (LCUNA) frameworks to encourage them and add value to what they produce.

“With an effective needs assessment, building of capacity would mean upgrading to mechanized farming, thus graduating potential farmers to large scale farming. All groups of farmers deserve technological support and supply of farming implements to leave from subsistence to mechanize farming”.

They said experience has shown that whenever donor fund is available, “overnight” farmers or farming institutions emerge but cease to exist after the support dries up.

mechanisms for financing the agricultural sector.

The Study found that farmers in Liberia are trapped in subsistence farming because most financial institutions in the country have not developed specifically targeted loan products suitable to the needs of the country’s farmers and how to spur Micro Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the agriculture sector.

Venting their frustration during the validation, most of the farmers emphasized the



assets like land as security, making it extremely difficult for us to access credit required to upgrade our activities. There is no trickle-down effect of the millions of US dollars support that is pumped into the sector by donors,” they said.

The farmers stressed the need to stamp out corruption. “We the farmers don’t trust especially government institutions either spearheading or implementing various

Jarteh leads Maryland County to victory

By: Naneka Hoffman

Dominic Jarteh scored in his debut for Maryland County, as they pinned host Grand Gedeh 1-0 in the ongoing National County Meet.

Junior Professional FC’s forward scored his first County Meet goal in the annual sports tournament on Sunday, December 12, 2021 at the Albert T. White Stadium in Zwedru City, Grand Gedeh County.

In 2018/2019 Dominic

especially to Frank Allison, for giving me that wonderful pass in the 71st minute and, getting a first 1-0 victory over Gedeh County in Zwedru was a great step to moving forward in this County Meet”.

“We were defeated in the 2019/2020 National County sports meet by Nimba County in the semi-final 1-0, which wasn’t a good sign but yet we are back in the County Meet. It’s not an easy task, every county wants to win. I want my teammates to



scored 20 goals and provided 7 assistance for Junior Professional FC in the Liberia Football Association 2nd

Division league.

He has expressed joy for scoring his first goal in the competition, saying “I just want to take this time and moment to thank the Almighty God for what He has done for me so far and continue to do every day in my life. And also a very big thank and appreciation to my teammates, fans, staffers and

keep the faith and be focus as we continue this Journey”, he said.

Results of matches played so far:

- River Gee 1-0 Montserrado
- Bomi 2-3 Grand Cape Mount
- Gbarpolu 0-1 Lofa County
- Grand Gedeh 0-1 Maryland
- Bong County 1-0 Grand Kru
- Nimba County 1-1 Rivercess County
- Grand Bassa County 2-0 Margibi County

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AFL targets 350

He said the army has divided the country into four zones for the recruitment process.

“We have the central region which consists of Montserrado, Grand Bassa and Margibi Counties and their recruitment center is at the Barclay Training Center in Monrovia from January 4, 2022 and ends February 5, 2022,” said Mr. Collins.

“The western region which includes Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, and Gbarpolu Counties’ recruitment is at Tubmanburg City from February 7, 2022 and ends February 19, 2022,” he added.

Mr. Collins noted further

that recruitment for the northern region which includes Bong, Nimba and Lofa will be done at the Gbarnga Sports Stadium from February 21 and ends March 5, 2022. For the south-eastern region that consists of Grand Kru, River Cess, Maryland, Sinoe, River Gee and Grand Gedeh, he said recruitment will be at the Zwedru Multilateral High School from March 7, 2022 and ends March 19, 2022.

Collins said they are now taking the military to the people to avoid citizens converging at one location which at times contributed to people sleeping along the streets to meet up with time.

Regarding eligibility criteria

for enlistment, he said cadets shall be a volunteer, a citizen of Liberia, fully vaccinated of Covia, and should be between 18-35 years.

For his part, the Chief of Recruitment, 1st Sgt. Austine T. Doe described the recruitment process as a mobile recruitment because they will make sure they get to everyone.

“During our pre-recruitment with the females, we had eight hundred females that participated in the process and they went through successfully and nothing happened to them,” he said.--**Edited by Winston W. Parley**

Paralympic to recruit

Cont’d from page 6

all levels and in all structures,” LNPC says.

To date, the committee has represented Liberia at several internationally sanctioned competitions including the Paralympic Games in London 2012 and at Tokyo 2020.

The LNPC was formed in 2004 and accredited by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and later became a member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) as the sole body sanctioned to represent the IPC in Liberia and to regulate all Paralympic sports locally.

The IPC organizes Paralympic Games and functions as the international

federation for nine sports. Founded on 22 September 1989 in Düsseldorf, West Germany, its mission is to “enable Paralympic athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world.” Furthermore, the IPC wants to promote the Paralympic values and to create sport opportunities for all persons with a disability, from beginner to elite level.

A fifteen-member Governing Board oversees the IPC between meetings of the General Assembly. Dr. Robert D. Steadward became the first President in 1989. Since 2017, Andrew Parsons is current President of the IPC.

NEC chair gets top ECOWAS election post

National Elections Commission (NEC) Chairperson, Madam Davidetta Browne Lansanah, was on Wednesday December 15, unanimously elected as the First Vice President of ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions, (ECONEC), at the ongoing 7th Biennial General Assembly in the Ghanaian Capital, Accra. The NEC-Liberia

here-the much trumpeted December 8, 2020 mid-term Senatorial election and the recently held bi-elections in four counties. Both elections have proven to be credible erasing the questions of independence.

According to a dispatch from Accra, Madam Browne Lansanah's election to the First Vice President position in the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC), elevates

elections organizations and administrations and the development of professional elections officials with integrity within the sub-region.

Madam Lansanah joins her colleagues on the ECONEC Steering Committee seeking to strengthen cooperation for the improvement of electoral laws and practices, sharing of experiences, information technology and election rationalization and pooling of resources to reduce the cost of conducting elections in the Region.

Other elected EBM's Chairpersons at the Accra Assembly include:

Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Benin, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Gambia, Mali and Ghana.

According to the Accra dispatch, the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions, (ECONEC) was founded in February 2008 to promote free, fair, and credible elections.

ECONEC establishment was inspired by the 1991 ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles of freedom, People's Rights and democratization as a reaffirmation to compliment relevant provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the mechanism for conflict prevention, management resolution, peacekeeping and security, as well as the supplementary protocol on diplomacy and freed governance.



NEC Chair Davidetta Browne Lansanah

Chairperson was unanimously elected by Chairpersons of Elections Management Bodies in the West Africa Sub-region in Accra, Ghana.

Madam Browne Lansanah, who takes over from Burkina Faso, will serve as First Vice President of ECONEC for a two-year term.

Her elections comes on the heels of conducting two major successive elections

Liberia and the NEC to the regional stage to influence policy formulation and implementation in promoting free, fair, and credible elections in West Africa.

As First Vice President of ECONEC, the NEC-Liberia Boss has the opportunity to influence the strengthening of public confidence in the electoral process, promotion of independent and impartial

CENTAL welcomes

Cont'd from page 6

Liberian Government Officials."

Miamen insists that all those involved with "pay-for-play schemes which rip-off millions from the country should be designated in addition to Senator Prince Y. Johnson, and those who provided "salaries to Senator Johnson for intelligence services", when already fully paid by the Liberian Government as a Senator should also be named and designated.

He says immediate families of those designated, who are the likely beneficiaries of proceeds of corrupt conduct, have also been covered, adding that what is left to be done, therefore, is to expand the designation to cover enablers and accomplices to these acts of corruption, which do not only take away meager state resources from public-interest programs and activities, but undermine citizens and partners' confidence in the country's governance process.

He further went on to

express optimism that the United States Government has all such information. "Hence, we call on it to timely act on same to send an even stronger message to ordinary Liberians, public officials, and the world at large about her commitment to support national efforts to holistically end the culture of impunity for Corruption and other related crimes in Liberia.

In a press release issued by the U.S. Embassy near Monrovia, the U.S. Treasury under its Global Magnitsky Act details that as a Senator, PYJ has been involved in pay-for-play funding with government ministries and organizations for personal enrichment. It says as part of the scheme, upon receiving funding from the Government of Liberia (GOL), that involved government ministries and organizations launder a portion of the funding for the return to the involved participants.

But Senator Johnson argues: "If supporting President Weah to win and getting the dividends of democracy is termed by my detractors as selling votes, then I will sell more votes."

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anyone who brings their slip, but the process is transparent, the process is fair," said Dr. Johnny.

She said in total 230 persons have been processed for payment as at Wednesday, 15 December 2021.

She explained 175 faculty members' pay slips were verified on the first day, and out of that, 10 persons' slips showed that they did not have disparities. For the remaining 165 persons who were confirmed to have disparities, Dr. Johnny said their money was sent to their individual bank accounts.

Dr. Johnny continued that on the next day, a second batch of verification was done for additional 45 persons for which government has also sent the money to the various banks where their accounts are. She said follow-up is being done regarding payment for the 45 persons.

Further, Dr. Johnny informed ULFA members that earlier on Tuesday, the government of Liberia, UL Administration and ULFA leadership held a meeting of all the stakeholders in relations to the renovations works on the university campuses.

She indicated that the stakeholders want the project to start this December and going to January 2022.

At the ULFA special general assembly, Part-time

Instructors opted for a delay in returning to class, but Dr. Johnny requested a meeting with their leaders scheduled, for Thursday, 16 December 2021.

"We have never ever gone [to] that table without having your interest at heart. As we talked about the full-time instructors, we talked about you too," she told the part-timers.

She informed part-time instructors that there is a firm commitment on the part of the government to ensure that they get their pay this month just as the full-time instructors.

"You have given us the mandate to go back and fight for you and I assure you as we go back today, we are going to continue doing that. Nothing, we will compromise nothing that will bring forth your best interest," she assured ULFA after a vote had been cast to return to class.

"And to our colleagues part-timers, we are going to have a meeting tomorrow. We are going to push forward your case. We know you have a case. We know how you feel, we will take up the issue," she said further.

She vowed that her leadership team will not betray ULFA, no matter the odds, saying standing for ULFA means standing for herself.

"... As I said, we can make things happen. We get the power to make things happen, so thank you for coming and let's reconvene," said Dr. Johnny.

ULFA ends strike

The University of Liberia Faculty Association (ULFA) has ended days of disengagement with all academic activities and agrees to return class anytime the university administration chooses, saying it sees progress in the Government of Liberia's and the University of Liberia (UL) Administration's efforts in addressing the association's demands.

After receiving a status report from the association's president Dr. Edna Johnny and her team of ULFA leaders at a well-attended special general assembly held Wednesday, 15 December 2021, ULFA members voted overwhelmingly to return to class.

The special general assembly saw faculty members showering praises on Dr. Johnny and her leadership team for having worked hard with the

University Administration and the Government in extension in fighting for the best interest of ULFA.

Dr. Johnny reported at the special general assembly that the Government of Liberia has begun paying ULFA members who

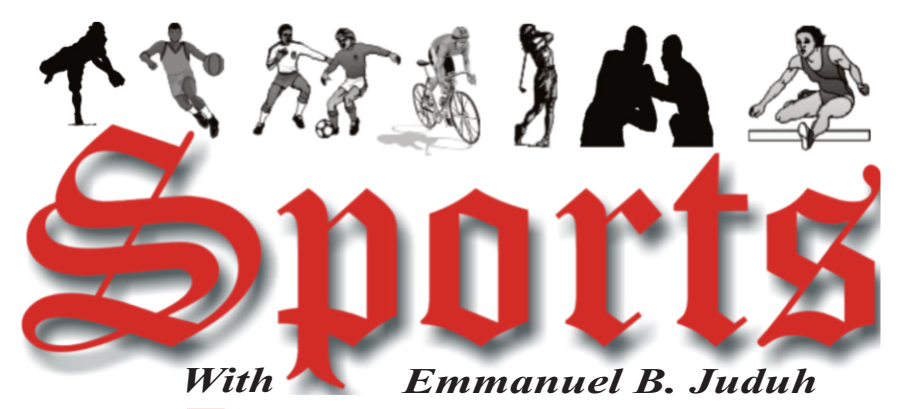
had salary disparity issues, noting that "the process is transparent, the process is fair."

"The formula is there. Once you get disparity you are going to be paid for the third batch. So we are not refusing



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Paralympic to recruit players



The Liberia National Paralympic Committee (LNPC) says as an umbrella organization, it intends to recruit, train and expose physically-challenged

athletes here for national, regional and internationally organized sporting competitions. According to the LNPC, like any other sporting federation or association, its responsibility is

to ensure the national Paralympic team represents Liberia at international sporting competitions. It says the LNPC will continue to work with core values of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to promote without discrimination, sports for people with disability. It promises to expand sporting opportunities from developmental to elite level for persons with disability and to create conditions for athletes' empowerment and promotional activities. "We intend to assist and encourage educational programs and promotional activities by developing opportunities for female athletes and those with severe disability in sports at

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