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TRULY INDEPENDENT

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CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA		
MARKET BUYING AND SELLING RATES LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR		
DATE	BUYING	SELLING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022	LS\$150.8067 /US\$1.00	LS\$152.6708 /US\$1.00

These are indicative rates based on results of daily surveys of foreign exchange market in Monrovia and selected cities of Liberia. These rates are collected from the Central bank, commercial banks, parallel market and the license forex bureaux. The rates are not set by the Central Bank of Liberia.
Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL

The New Dawn

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VOL. 12 NO. 002

TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022

PRICE LD\$40.00



New money not for campaign

-Weah allays fears

Liberia's external debts at US\$1.03B

-As domestic debts stand at US\$660M





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Continental News

Military says it has seized power in Burkina Faso

The military in Burkina Faso says it has seized power and overthrown President Roch Kaboré.

The announcement was made on state television by an army officer, who cited the deteriorating security situation for the military takeover.

Mr Kaboré had faced growing discontent over his failure to stem an Islamist insurgency.

His whereabouts are unclear, but the officer said that all those detained were in a secure location.

The coup comes a day after troops seized barracks, and gunshots were heard in the capital, Ouagadougou.

Earlier, the ruling People's Movement for Progress (PMP) party said that both Mr Kaboré and a government minister had survived an assassination attempt.

On Sunday, mutinying troops demanded the sacking of military chiefs and more resources to fight militants linked to the Islamic State

(IS) group and al-Qaeda.

The army statement said Mr Kaboré had failed to unite the nation and to deal effectively with the security crisis which "threatens the very foundations of our nation". The statement was issued in the name of a group not heard of previously, the Patriotic Movement for Safeguard and Restoration or

MPSR, its French acronym.

Although read out by another officer, the statement was signed by Lt-Col Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, who is believed to be the coup leader and a senior commander with years of experience fighting the Islamist militants.

The statement said that

parliament and the government had been dissolved, but promised a "return to constitutional order" within a "reasonable time".

The military also announced the closure of Burkina Faso's borders.

UN chief Antonio Guterres condemned the coup and called on the military to "ensure the protection and the physical integrity" of Mr Kaboré.

Earlier video footage from the capital appeared to show armoured vehicles - reportedly used by the presidency - peppered with bullet holes and abandoned in the street.

Mobile internet services have been disrupted, though fixed-line internet and domestic wi-fi are working. Burkina Faso: The basics

A former French colony, Burkina Faso has suffered chronic instability since gaining independence in 1960, including several coups.

The country's name, meaning "land of the honest men" was picked by revolutionary military officer Thomas Sankara who took power in 1983. He was toppled and killed in 1987.

Since 2015, the country has been fighting an Islamist insurgency that spilled over from neighbouring Mali. This has fuelled anger in the military and damaged the once important tourist industry. Mr Kaboré has not been seen in public since the crisis began but two posts appeared on his

Twitter account before the officer announced he had been toppled. The later one called on those who had taken up arms to lay them down "in the higher interest of the nation". Earlier Mr Kaboré congratulated the national football team on their win in an Africa Cup of Nations match. It is unclear who posted the tweets.

Some security sources say the president and other government ministers are being held at the Sangoulé Lamizana barracks in the capital.

On Sunday, hundreds of people came out in support of the soldiers and some of them set fire to the ruling party's headquarters. The coup comes a week after 11 soldiers were arrested for allegedly plotting to overthrow Mr Kaboré. But discontent has been growing in Burkina Faso over the government's failure to defeat an Islamist insurgency in the country since 2015.

That escalated in November, when 53 people, mainly members of the security forces, were killed by suspected jihadists. And on Saturday, a banned rally to protest against the government's perceived failure led to dozens of arrests.

Similar troubles in neighbouring Mali led to a military coup in May 2021 - one that was broadly welcomed by the public. In Burkina Faso, mutinying soldiers made several demands, including the removal of the army's chief of staff and the head of the intelligence service; more troops to be deployed to the front line; and better conditions for the wounded and soldiers' families. BBC



The army announced it had dissolved parliament and the government

More Anti-Coup Protests as Turmoil in Sudan Continues

Thousands of Sudanese took to the streets in the capital of Khartoum and other cities Monday, activists said, continuing relentless anti-coup protests that have rocked the country since a military coup three months ago. Security forces fired tear gas to disperse protesters in several locations in the

capital, including the area around the fortified presidential palace, which has seen clashes in previous rounds of protests since the Oct. 25 coup, according to the activists.

The military takeover has upended Sudan's transition to democratic rule after three decades of repression and international isolation under autocratic President Omar al-

Bashir. The African nation has been on a fragile path to democracy since a popular uprising forced the military to remove al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019. Protesters, mostly young people, marched Monday in the streets of Khartoum and its sister city of Omdurman, according to the pro-democracy movement. There were also protests elsewhere in the country, including the provinces of Kassala, Red Sea, Jazira and the already restive Darfur region, the movement said.

Footage circulated online showed security forces attempting to disperse protests with tear gas. Protesters were seen taking cover and hurling stones at the troops.

Activist Nazim Sirag said two protesters suffered gunshot injuries in Khartoum. No fatalities were reported Monday.

More than 70 people have been killed and hundreds of others injured in protests since the coup, according to a



Protesters march during a rally against military rule following a coup nearly three months ago, in Khartoum

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local medical group.

Sudan has been politically paralyzed since the coup. The turmoil has further worsened since the resignation earlier this month of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok.

Hamdok resigned earlier this month, citing failure to reach a compromise between the generals and the pro-

democracy movement. He had been reinstated in November in a deal with the military that angered the pro-democracy movement.

The United Nations mission has in the past two weeks been engaged in separate consultations with Sudanese rival factions in efforts to find a way out of the crisis. VOA

EDITORIAL

Looking back
4 years after

PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH Weah is in the fifth year of his administration, having got elected in 2017 and inaugurated subsequently in 2018.

HE ASCENDED TO the Presidency as a populist politician and international soccer icon, winning the minds and admirations of Liberian youth, who constitutes 60 percent of the country's population.

BUT FOUR YEARS after, the euphoria has evaporated and expectations are far from becoming a reality, indicated by the thousands of jobless youth roaming the streets of Monrovia daily in an economy that is at a slow pace in showing hope.

MR. WEAH CAMPAIGNED on the slogan "Change for Hope" which many slum dwellers, particularly ghetto youths thought provided an opportunity to change their standard of life and improve their lots.

HOWEVER, FOUR YEARS after, many of the youth are disillusioned and they expressed their frustrations thru protest votes during the December 8, 2020 Senatorial By-election by electing an opposition instead, right in Montserrado County, once dubbed stronghold of the governing Congress for Democratic Change.

MANY LIBERIANS HAD thought by now insecurity across the country would become something of the past. It isn't so, as jobless and drugs-addicted youth command the streets of Monrovia after dusk, terrorizing peaceful citizens for their personal belongings at gun, knife or cutlass point.

SUSPICIOUS DEATH OF four auditors, including the director-general of the Internal Auditing Agency (IAA) E. BarthenNyenswa in 2020, coupled with the murder of three high profile individuals, two of them sons of two former presidents and an officer of the Liberia Immigration Service in 2021 cast a dark cloud over the nation.

INTO THE FIFTH year of the Weah administration, bread and butter issues are still a challenge for many ordinary Liberians. The economy is generally stagnated with inflation biting amid high prices and dwindling purchasing power.

NOTWITHSTANDING, PRESIDENT Weah has made some gains in infrastructure development, particularly roads, free university education, health, free speech and freedom of the press and peaceful assemble, among others. But systemic corruption at all levels of the government is becoming a drawback to these earnest efforts.

TWO MORE YEARS to go, the government that is seeking reelection would do itself a great favor by publicly demonstrating commitment to fighting corruption and other negative vices bent on eroding its image and credibility.

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

COMMENTARY

By Robert Skidelsky

Quieting the Eastern Front

LONDON - As the world drifts toward a new cold war, democracies and authoritarian states must determine what they want from and owe each other in order to enable constructive cooperation. Democracies cannot simply say that time is on their side, and that they need only hold firm to their principles for authoritarian regimes to collapse. It is easier to imagine the end of the planet than the demise of authoritarian rule.

The current flashpoint is Ukraine (although it easily could have been Taiwan). This "undeclared war" has been simmering since 2014, when the Euromaidan protests led to the ouster of Ukraine's pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich, and Russia's subsequent annexation of Crimea and occupation of the eastern Donbas region. While the West accused Russia of illegally seizing another sovereign state's territory, Russia claimed it was recovering part of the motherland.

These opposing narratives reflect historical differences. Russian policymakers, and many ordinary Russians, have never inwardly acknowledged that their country lost the Cold War, because this would have meant accepting that between 1989 and 1991 the global balance of power shifted decisively in favor of the United States and its European allies.

In reappointing Powell, Biden also took an important step toward establishing his own independence, in particular from his party's strident left wing, which until now has exerted enormous influence. Biden tacked hard toward the center, basing his choice almost entirely on competence and picked a candidate whom many Republicans also endorsed.

Perhaps some of Biden's newfound emphasis on competence will rub off elsewhere in his administration. Having campaigned as a centrist who knows how to cross the aisle, Biden showed it when the stakes were high. This was the most important appointment of his presidency. Anyone who has studied political business cycles knows that the central bank can have an enormous influence by timing interest-rate cuts to gin up the economy just before an election.

At a time when the post-pandemic economy is still incredibly volatile and the tea leaves still hard to read (though frankly the US labor market looks red-hot), the choice of Powell made Fed policy more predictable and easier to interpret. As excellent a choice as Brainard might have proved to be, there still would have been a period of adjustment for markets as they learned to understand her language and signals.

The Wall Street Journal editorial page, certain that the Fed's policy will inevitably lead to ultra-high inflation regardless of who is in charge, dismissed the choice between Powell and Brainard as "Tweedledum and Tweedledee." But that denies some consequential differences. Beyond the regulatory stances for which

progressives praised her, Brainard, who will become vice chair, has shown herself especially open to innovative ideas about the evolution of central-bank policy in a world of low real interest rates.

Admittedly, I have been painting a somewhat sanguine picture of the decision to reappoint Powell. In fact, the most recent figure for consumer price inflation, at over 6%, was eye-popping. True, so far, financial markets seem to believe Powell's argument that most of it is transitory: Medium-term inflation expectations are just over 2% - not yet particularly high by the standards of the past decade. With Powell no longer looking over his shoulder as Biden decides on his reappointment, one might argue that he will no longer feel constrained in tightening monetary policy when the need arises. But has the Fed already waited too long?

It is a tough call. There is a chance that the factors underpinning recent inflation spikes turn out to be transitory, so that the Fed can double down on its dovish policy and later say, "We told you so." Unfortunately, there is also a good chance that wage and price hikes start chasing each other, with inflation proving far from transitory. If that happens, and if the public begins to lose confidence in price stability, it may take a rather significant recession to restore faith.

At that point, some might say that the Fed should just opportunistically recalibrate and tell everyone that it intends to raise its inflation target to 3% or 4%. This scenario was a key recommendation of one of the core papers the Fed commissioned in its 2019 reassessment of its monetary framework. Unfortunately, to allow inflation to drift inexorably higher, and only then tell the public that there is now a higher new normal, would most likely prove extremely destabilizing.

It has long been my view that a much more elegant way to create space for interest-rate cuts in a deep recession involves negative interest-rate policy. True, this would require that the Fed be prepared to avail itself of one of the increasingly many options for discouraging cash hoarding that might otherwise limit the policy's effectiveness.

Of course, the Fed could hike interest rates preemptively, but that might crash markets and put the economy into recession.

There are no easy options for the Fed at his point, and that would have been true had Brainard, not Powell, gotten the nod. So, at the end of the day, give Biden credit for understanding that no matter how much political pressure his administration was facing to bring the Fed to heel, it was better to uphold central-bank independence - and his own.

OPINION

By Anne-marie Slaughter,
Heather Hurlburt

US Security in the Shadow of Insurrection

In the year since a mob of former President Donald Trump's supporters ransacked the US Capitol, America's political divisions have only grown deeper. Democrats and Republicans alike must recognize that without measures to shore up democracy at home, the country's international standing and security will continue to erode.

WASHINGTON, DC - The anniversary of the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol has come and gone, and many Americans are deeply depressed that the country's political divide has only deepened. Though most Republican Party leaders condemned the attack at the time, the GOP has since internalized former President Donald Trump's web of lies and falsehoods about the 2020 election, which he lost by seven million votes. Republicans have largely refused even to participate in the congressional investigation into the matter.

A year after a sitting president tried to overturn the results of a fair and lawful election, the effort to identify and prosecute those responsible now must compete for attention with other security crises: Russian troops massing near Ukraine; Iran nearing the threshold of nuclear breakout; and humanitarian catastrophes in Afghanistan and Yemen. Faced with all this, American leaders will be tempted to draw a bright line between home and abroad. But doing so would be both risky and wrong.

America's profound polarization reflects a society whose members no longer share a core understanding of what it means to be "secure." Americans tend to have widely divergent experiences - across racial, religious, and gender lines - with US domestic security institutions. Trust in the US military and security forces used to be consistently high; now, it is falling, alongside trust in the rest of America's government institutions. Americans no longer agree about who or what constitutes a threat, with Democrats much more likely to cite internal cohesion and political violence, and Republicans more concerned with traditional nation-state foes. Moreover, Americans are divided by ideology and age over whether people and ideas from elsewhere are an opportunity or a threat.

These divisions, and the resulting policy gridlock, would be bad enough in isolation. But the rest of the world is watching, and it sees a society that cannot agree on what democracy is, or on who belongs to the demos. In the World Bank's Combined Polity Score index, the US has been downgraded from a longstanding score of ten, the highest for a democracy, to a five, meaning it is on the verge of anocracy: a democracy with authoritarian characteristics.

Around the world, those who have been inspired by leaders like Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr., are now haunted by images of the Confederate flag being waved in the halls of Congress. Allies whose ties to the US go back to World War II now see US elected officials embracing Holocaust deniers. Neither friend nor foe believes that the US can or will deliver on its long-term promises anymore, whether in the realm of vaccine distribution, climate accords, or nuclear deals.

If you are American and this description sounds exaggerated, you should look to your northern neighbor. In Canada, with which the US shares the world's longest unfortified border, top media outlets marked the January 6 anniversary with a debate over, "What to do about the likely unraveling of democracy in the United States." Back at home, American political scientist Barbara Walter, a leading global expert on civil wars, writes in a new book, "Most Americans cannot imagine another civil war in their country. ... But this is because they don't know how civil wars start."

Americans need to recognize that the erosion of their democracy is as much a foreign-policy matter as it is a domestic one. Those Republicans and Democrats who are still willing to work together on key international issues need to accept that this also requires working together to shore up core democratic norms at home.

Those norms are foundational to everything the US wants to achieve abroad. At a minimum, they include a rejection of violence and hate speech, strong protections for voting rights, and non-partisan election administration. Conservatives who urge the Biden administration to act tougher abroad should stop to consider what constant right-wing harping about the "Big Steal" looks like to the rest of the world. US leaders from across the political spectrum could send a far more compelling message by demonstrating a willingness to repair the cracks in American democracy. The capacity to do that has historically been one of America's greatest strengths.

After all, we have been here before. A half-century ago, American democracy was tested by a president who was forced to resign and by a security establishment that misled the country into a catastrophic war. This prompted a broad effort to address systemic flaws. And while the solutions were imperfect, they nonetheless succeeded in restoring the prestige of US institutions for the next four decades - both at home and abroad.

What might such an effort look like now? Senator Mike Rounds, a Republican from South Dakota, recently mustered the courage to buck Trump, telling ABC News: "The election was fair, as fair as we have seen. We simply did not win the election, as Republicans, for the presidency." That is a good start. But without progress in tackling the full range of problems with US elections - who gets to vote and how the votes are counted - neither Republicans nor Democrats can hold their heads high in the court of global public opinion.

The responsibility doesn't lie only with Congress, of course. In its Interim National Security Strategic Guidance published last March, President Biden's administration made clear that, "our role in the world depends upon our strength and vitality here at home." Since then, Biden has signed bills and implemented policies allocating billions of dollars to research and development in strategic industries, physical infrastructure, and a better social infrastructure.

Again, that is a good start. But suppose the administration took its own logic a step further and declared openly that threats to our democracy are also threats to our security? The Director of National Intelligence has already warned that violent political extremism - a euphemism for domestic terrorism - poses a greater risk to Americans than

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING - NCB

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

The Webbo Rural Teacher Training Institute has received budgetary allocation from the Government of Liberia and intends to apply part of it to fund eligible payments under the contracts for the procurement of the following lot:

Lots	Items	IFB No.	Specification
Lot I	Assorted Food Items	WRTTI/NCB/001/2022	As stipulated in the Bid Document

The **WEBBO RURAL TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTE (WRTTI)** now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the **SUPPLY OF ASSORTED FOOD ITEMS**.

Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procedures specified in the Public Procurement & Concessions Act (PPCA) and approved by the Public Procurement & Concessions Commission (PPCC), and is opened to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as defined in the Guidelines.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the Procurement Unit located on the Institution Campus in River Gee County, Konowroken City or the Sawyerr's Building in the Mulbah Compound on Duport Road, Paynesville, Monrovia. Bidders are also encouraged to inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from **Monday January 24, 2022 to Thursday February 24, 2022 beginning 9:00AM to 4:00PM**. You may call Tel. No.: **0886569016 / 0886356818 / 0777022858 / 0886610195** or email gueve2011@gmail.com / jdwtarty@yahoo.com for inquiry.

A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders for a non-refundable fee of **US\$100.00** and can be obtained from the Procurement Unit of the Webbo Rural Teacher Training Institute (WRTTI) by a representative.

Deadline for submission of bids is **Thursday February 24, 2022 at 12:00 noon**. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the amount of **US\$5,000.00**. Bids coming in after the deadline will be rejected. Submissions will be opened in the presence of Firms/Companies who choose to attend **Thursday February 24, 2022 at 12:30 P.M.** at the Sawyerr's Building in the Mulbah Compound on Duport Road, Paynesville, Monrovia. **PLEASE NOTE THAT ELECTRONIC BIDS ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

All bids must be addressed and submitted to: The Procurement Unit – Webbo Rural Teacher Training Institute (WRTTI), Konowroken City, Webbo Statutory District, River Gee County.

SIGNED:

HEAD OF PROCUREMENT UNIT

APPROVED:

DIRECTOR WRTTI

ANNUAL MESSAGE TO THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH NATIONAL LEGISLATURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

THE CAPITOL BUILDING CAPITOL HILL

MONROVIA, LIBERIA



24 JANUARY 2022

Madam Clar M. Weah, First Lady of the Republic of Liberia;

Madam Vice President and President of the Senate;

Mr. Speaker;

Mr. President Pro-Tempore;

Honorable Members of the 54TH Legislature;

Your Honor the Chief Justice, Associate Justices of the Supreme Court and Members of the Judiciary;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet and other Government Officials;

The Doyen, Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps;

His Excellency, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Liberia;

The Chief of Staff and Men and Women of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL);

Former Officials of Government;

Traditional Leaders, Chiefs and Elders;

Political and Business Leaders;

Religious Leaders;

Officers and Members of the National Bar Association;

Labor and Trade Unions;

Civil Society Organizations;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

Special Guests;

Fellow Liberians;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

I stand before you today in fulfilment of a duty in accordance with Article 58 of the Constitution of Liberia, which mandates that the President of Liberia, on the fourth working Monday in January of each year, is to present the Legislative Program of the Administration for the ensuing session, and report on the State of the Republic, covering the economic condition of the Nation, including expenditure and income.

MADAM VICE PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MR.

PRESIDENT PRO-TEMPORE, AND MEMBERS OF THE 54TH LEGISLATURE, DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

With deep regret and profound sorrow, it is my duty to inform you of a major national tragedy which befell our country on last week Wednesday night, January 19, 2022, in which 29 Liberians died and many more were wounded in a stampede which occurred during a religious crusade in New Kru Town on Bushrod Island in Monrovia.

I am informed by the authorities that those who died included 18 adults (16 females, including 1 pregnant woman, and 2 males), and 11 children (6 girls and 5 boys). Of the 15 persons who were seriously wounded, there were 7 children and 8 adults.

May I now ask you to rise on your feet and remain standing, in remembrance, respect, and honor for those who have lost their lives in this terrible disaster.

I have declared a 3-day State of National Mourning, and have ordered that the national ensign be flown at half-mast at all public buildings throughout the Republic while the Nation mourns.

I have also mandated the Liberia National Police to conduct a full-scale, thorough, and speedy investigation to ascertain whether or not there is criminal culpability, and have met with the religious leadership and pastors of the Christian community to discuss ways to safeguard their congregations at mass events such as rallies and crusades in order to prevent a re-occurrence of this tragedy.

I have also called on health authorities, including the Liberian National Red Cross and the Disaster Management Agency, to assist with treatment and recovery efforts.

I have personally visited the scene of the disaster and met with some of the survivors, and have also led an array of officials of Government to visit the wounded in hospital.

Let us now convey our deepest sympathies to the families of the bereaved, while expressing our gratitude to all those who provided help to the victims in the immediate aftermath of the stampede.

It is worthy to note that the Government has received dozens of messages of sympathy and condolence from the leaders and governments of many countries and international organizations, all of whom have expressed their solidarity with Liberia in our time of grief. In return, other countries which have recently experienced similar disasters, especially those in our sub-region, have received messages of sympathy and condolences from our Government.

I now call upon you to observe a moment of silence for all those who lost their lives in this unspeakable tragedy.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in perfect peace, and may light perpetual shine upon them.
In Jesus' Name. Amen.

PLEASE BE SEATED.

MADAM VICE PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MR. PRESIDENT PRO-TEMPORE, AND MEMBERS OF THE 54TH LEGISLATURE:

Let me now welcome you back from your Annual

Recess as you begin this Fifth Session of constructive dialogue and deliberation in the supreme interest of the Liberian people. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to this Honorable Body for your constant and consistent support to our legislative program. I look forward to working with you during this Fifth Session, in the usual spirit of collaboration and cooperation that we have always enjoyed.

During the period under review, our collaborative efforts have resulted in your passage, and subsequent approval by me, of twenty-three (23) pieces of legislation, which include financing agreements, creation of regional universities, and ratification of international instruments, amongst others. These laws, most especially the financing agreements, have important implications for the growth and development of the Liberian economy.

While I applaud you for your hard work, I want to respectfully remind you that there are still thirty-five (35) pieces of legislation which are pending before you, eight (8) of them from your Third Session of 2020, and twenty-seven (27) of them from your Fourth Session of 2021

Many of these proposed laws have important significance to strengthening our governance and judiciary systems, as well as our relationships within our sub-region.

Others, when enacted by you, will help to ensure and secure financial transactions in support of our monetary and fiscal policies, and will help to prevent our country from being a conduit of illicit financial transactions, money laundering, and terrorist financing.

Taken together, these pending bills constitute a major proportion of our legislative agenda for the ensuing year, although we will be submitting new bills during this Fifth Session for your further consideration.

In the interest of time, a detailed list of the 23 bills passed during your Fourth Session, together with the 35 pending bills presently before you, as well as the three Executive Orders signed by me during the period under review, are attached as an Appendix to this Annual Message.

HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE 54TH LEGISLATURE:

We are counting on you to consider the expeditious passage of these pending bills, as well as the other new bills which we will be submitting to you for your timely consideration during this Fifth Session. It is our fervent hope that we will continue to work together collaboratively, in the best interest of the Liberian People, to timeously execute our Constitutional duties.

MR. SPEAKER:

Two hundred years ago, some of our forebears returned to our shores, after enduring four centuries of bondage in slavery, and helped to found the Republic of Liberia.

As I said during my remarks at the Kick-Off program held this month on Providence Island to commemorate the day that the settlers landed here, we must redouble our efforts to promote unity amongst all Liberians worldwide, and encourage all to make meaningful contributions to the nation-building task of our country. For ... "in union strong, success is sure. We cannot fail..."

We therefore would like to commend the Honorable Supreme Court for its Opinion handed down on the

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

UL hosts International Conference to commemorate Founder's Day

The University of Liberia (UL) will commemorate its founding seventy-one years ago by hosting a two-day international conference at the Ministerial Complex in Oldest Congo Town, outside of Monrovia, on February 15 and 16, 2022.

The conference, styled "The University of Liberia's Renaissance," is expected to bring together UL's faculty, staff, and students, along

long activities of the 2022 National Bicentennial Commemoration, scheduled to be officially launched on February 14, 2022, under the theme: "The Year of the Return". The UL chairs the History Sub-Committee of the 2022 National Bicentennial.

Several presentations are expected to be made during the two-day conference, including a presentation titled, "the Deed for Monrovia," by Dr. C. Patrick Burrowes. Dr. Burrowes will

The Founder's Day will certainly recall memories of Liberia College, the precursor of the University of Liberia. Liberia College opened its doors to students in 1862, with an inaugural class of ten students. Four years later, in 1866, the new college held its inaugural commencement convocation, graduating a single student, Mr. James Henry Evans.

However, the pace of graduation slowed significantly afterwards due to administrative problems, including low enrollment and the lack of resources. For instance, the longest non-graduation period spanned twenty-nine years, beginning in 1874 and ending in 1902.

In spite of these non-graduations, Liberia College had its memorable convocations, including graduating the first female student in 1905 and the largest class of 27 students in 1950. The challenges that confronted Liberia College, and the demand for a new curriculum more responsive to the emerging needs of the nation at the time, led to the formation of the University of Liberia on February 15, 1951.

In that year, 1951, the eighty-nine-year-old Liberia College passed the baton, the task of delivering higher education, to the University of Liberia.

Now entrusted with the mandate and responsibility to educate men and women for the nation, the enrollment profile and graduation rate of the University of Liberia increased astronomically.

Compared to its

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7



with Liberians from all walks of life, senior policymakers, government officials, as well as dignitaries and academics from abroad.

Guests include a twenty-seven-member delegation from the University of Sierra Leone. Others from the sub-region as well as officials from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will be in attendance.

This hybrid conference also forms part of the year-

discuss this historic document with an international panel of scholars and a global audience.

Opening ceremony for the Founder's Day commemoration begins February 15, and on this day several Liberian and international luminaries will take the stage to discuss the Liberian economy, including Mr. Samuel D. Tweah, Minister of Finance and Development Planning and Ms. Rosa Gumataotao Rios, Former Secretary, US Department of Treasury.

Gender Ministry consoles families of stampede victims



The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection is saddened by the tragic incident at the crusade ground on the D. Twe Football Field last week Wednesday in New Kru Town, a suburb of Monrovia which reportedly claimed the lives of at least 29 persons, including 11 children.

The national disaster occurred as a result of a stampede during a church service crusade on Wednesday, January 19, 2022.

The Ministry says its thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families and friends of the deceased as well as those nursing injuries.

According to the Ministry of Gender, upon receiving this sad news, it immediately dispatched a team of social workers led by Assistant Minister of Children and Social Protection on the site to aid those in distress, adding that

currently, the team is documenting survivors - especially children without visible parental attachments.

Additionally, Gender, Children and Social Protection Minister Williametta E. Saydee-Tarr has mandated psychosocial counselors to immediately begin the process of conducting psychosocial counseling to assist the bereaved families in handling the traumatic stress associated with such difficult moments.

It welcomes call by President George Manneh Weah for the Liberia National Police to conduct a full-scale investigation, adding that it is hopeful that at the end of the investigation - stringent measures aimed at protecting public gatherings especially women and children who are usually the most affected, will be enforced. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

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AME University dispatches 5 students to Spain



Five students of the African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU) have departed Liberia

for Spain under a partnership agreement to study at Jaen University in Spain.

Their departure is part of a

Partnership Agreement on Exchange and Academic Cooperation between the AMEU and the Spanish-based University.

A press release from the AME University says the collaboration and exchange of experiences and knowledge, as well as the growing relations between the two institutions are of best interest for the social and cultural progress of both parties.

The beneficiaries include Students Toukpor M. Richards, pursuing studies in Social Work, KoluboNyamahlorpuKoquoi, studying Accounting; McDonald Gbasay, Public Administration; Bobby Kanasuah, Education, and

George Doe-Large, Social Work, respectively.

"The Agreement which is opened to both graduate and undergraduate students, will also include teachers and research staff exchange, an important component of AMEU's academic program and is for a period of a year with annual renewal under a four year span", the release noted.

The release detailed that under the agreement, students will be expected to pay for all personal expenses, including (but not limited to) travel, transportation, meals, books, visas, insurance and entertainment as the host country takes none but in this case, the AME University covered the cost for its students.

The first batch of AME

University students departed for Spain on Saturday, January 22, 2022 via the Roberts International Airport. They will spend their next semester in Spain studying at Jaen University.

Meanwhile, the AME University President, Dr. Alvin E. Attah has lauded the Jaen University for the partnership, stressing it will go a long way in exposing students of both Universities to multicultural educational opportunities.

"We have covered the costs of expenses because we believe you are amongst some of our brightest students and it is incumbent upon you now to make a proper representation of AME University and Liberia at large," Rev. Dr. Attah cautioned the students before their departure. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Labour Congress asks RIA to lift employees' suspension

The Liberia Labor Congress is calling on the Management of the Roberts International Airport (RIA) in Margibi County to rescind the suspension of over 20 employees of the entity and turning them over to the National Security Agency for investigation.

The RIA management recently announced the

conference in Monrovia over the weekend, Labour Congress' Secretary General, Isaac Grant, said the LLC is disturbed by the fact that the dispute has been resolved as a result of a successful social dialogue, which addressed the contentious issues raised by the workers and the management, which led to labor harmony and workers security at the airport.

He said that it is

sanity at workplace and fragrant disrespect to the authority of the Ministry of Labor.

He called on the on the Ministry of Labor to take seize of the matter and remain engaged with the Management of the RIA in keeping with the commitment made during the social dialogue conference in the interest of peace and tranquility

The LLC also reminds the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Nathaniel McGill of his promise to the workers on December 30, 2021 that he will ensure that no worker will be dismissed on account of his or her role during the recent go-slow at the airport.

Meanwhile, the Labour Congress expressed concern about situation unfolding at Bea Mountain Mining Company involving workers, management and community over the company's failure to implement several key development initiatives as contained in a memorandum of understanding.

Mr. Grant said the LLC is deeply unhappy about the employment of foreigners in unskilled jobs earmarked for inhabitants of the community in which the company operates.

At the same time the LLC welcomes intervention of the joint ministerial committee to resolving the matter in order to implement the mineral development agreement.

Editing by Jonathan Browne



suspension of over 20 employees for staging a protest at the airport and preventing an international flight from landing. The protest by the employees affected followed outsourcing of their department allegedly without benefits and salary arrears.

Addressing a press

disappointing to see the RIA management clamping down on workers by issuing unjustified and indefinite suspension to over 20 workers of the entity.

According to Mr. Grant, the LLC views the action of the management of the RIA as a gross disregard for the essence of social dialogue mechanism, which he noted is the fundamental to promoting

Good news for pensioners



By Jonathan Browne

President George Manneh Weah announces his government's intension to expedite payment to pensioners across the country, disclosing that government, through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the Civil Service Agency and the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation, intends to fully reform the entire process of retiring and paying retirees on time.

"In this regard, I am hereby admonishing all relevant entities to accelerate their work and complete the reform by the middle of this year", he urges.

Delivering his 5th Annual Message to the 54th Legislature on Monday, January 24, 2022 at the Capitol President Weah said his administration continues to implement several reforms on the Central Government payroll and pension schemes, citing that government has successfully placed all workers on biometric ID; reduced non-contributory pension scheme from about 17,000 pensioners in 2017 to about 6,000 pensioners to date; expanded social security coverage and increased social security contribution by 300 percent in some instances.

"At the completion of this exercise", he says, "workers who retire today must receive their money the following month" and looks forward to announce this to the Nation during his next annual message in 2023. Meanwhile, President Weah underscores a need for government to continue to show strong gains in the fight against corruption, money laundering and illicit financial flows.

He explains that the administration is strengthening and empowering the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission to prevent fraud and acts of corruption before they occur.

"You will be aware that the House has already passed the new LACC Act giving a broader mandate to the LACC to fight corruption. It is my hope that, in the supreme interest of the Liberian People, the Senate

will soon concur", he adds.

He reports that the House of Representatives has also passed the new anti-money-laundering legislation, which empowers the Financial Intelligence Unit to fight illicit financial flows, such as money laundering, and drug and terrorist financing, while vowing "We will spare no effort to bring Liberia within international compliance in the fight against corruption and illicit financial flows."

Liberia has become major transit center for dangerous drugs such as heroin and cocaine to other parts of the world. The illicit trade is having a serious toll on the youth of Liberia, who are being lured into abuse by traffickers and local dealers.

Opposition politician and leader of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) Mr. Alexander B. Cummings on Sunday urged the Government of Liberia to take a hard look at itself and get serious about stopping harmful drug business in the country by prioritizing youth rehabilitation and mentorship programs to mitigate the uncontrollable flow of disadvantaged youth across the country.

In a press statement issued Sunday, January 23, 2022, Mr. Cummings wondered how many more citizens have to die before the government can grasp the urgency of acting seriously to secure streets and communities here from hardcore criminals propelled by illicit drugs.

His comments were in response to last week Wednesday, 19 January's stampede in New Kru Town which led to the death of 29 Christian worshipers, who were attacked by drugged criminals while returning from a crusade at the D. Twe Memorial High School soccer pitch.

"Today, Liberia is referred to as a transshipment point for Southeast and Southwest Asian heroin and South American cocaine for the European and US markets. This means people are using our country to sell harmful drugs to other countries. The harmful drugs are not just passing through our country but they are selling it to our children, including in our schools ", Mr. Cummings lamented.

Cont'd from page 6

predecessor, Liberia College, the University of Liberia held annual graduations in the first two decades of its formation.

Thus, according to UL's annual convocation programs, thirty-nine consecutive graduations were held beginning in 1951 and through 1990. In contrast, Liberia College held merely nine graduations for the comparable thirty-nine-year period from 1866 to 1905.

However, the University of Liberia unbroken run of graduations was disrupted in 1991, as the civil war that began in December 1989 spread devastatingly throughout Liberia. Consequently, no graduation ceremonies were held in

UL hosts International Conference

1991, 1992, 1993, and 2003. Graduation resumed regularly after the civil war until the outbreak of the Ebola Virus which led to the cancellation of commencement in 2014.

Like its predecessor, the University of Liberia is also famous and renowned for graduating memorable classes throughout its 71-year-old existence including the most recent Centennial Commencement Convocation, Class of 2019, where the University graduated 3,673 students, the highest number of graduates in the history of higher education in Liberia.

This achievement, including the immense contributions the UL has made towards Liberia's social and economic developments are the reasons why the UL is celebrating its

Founder's Day.

Therefore, the University of Liberia will look at its history, its challenges and prospects within the context of the University Renaissance during the two-day international conference.

One of the overarching goals of the conference is to position the University of Liberia, as the nation's highest institution of learning, to deliver on the promise of quality and affordable education for its ever-growing young population.

The UL will also use this occasion to reinvent itself for prevailing challenges and the future of higher education in the Republic of Liberia.

Français

Accord ArcelorMittal : Le gouvernement perdra 2,68 milliards USD rien que pour l'utilisation du chemin de fer

L'ambassadeur des États-Unis au Libéria et le Parlement de l'Union européenne ont exprimé leurs inquiétudes concernant le nouvel accord sur le développement minier (MDA) d'ArcelorMittal, estimant que le pays risque de perdre près de 2,68 milliards de dollars américains rien que pour les recettes provenant uniquement des frais d'utilisation du chemin de fer si le MDA est ratifié dans sa forme actuelle.

Le gouvernement du Libéria et ArcelorMittal sont parvenus à un accord pour modifier l'accord de développement minier (MDA) en septembre 2021, ouvrant la voie à une expansion des opérations de l'entreprise dans le pays et prolongeant la concession d'extraction de minerai de fer pour une durée de 25 ans.

Cependant, le MDA proposé semble être agrémenté de clauses qui donnent à ArcelorMittal des droits exclusifs, tout en empêchant d'autres sociétés minières régionales

potentielles d'utiliser les rails pendant une période de 10 ans.

À la page 6 du MDA-User Access and Future Expansion of the Railroad, l'article 3 e.1 stipule : "Le concessionnaire aura le droit exclusif d'achever l'expansion en cours de la capacité du chemin de fer dans le cadre de son expansion de la mine, du concentrateur et le port de minerai de fer de Buchanan pour atteindre 15 MWMTPA de produits finis (l'expansion en cours de la

capacité ferroviaire).

Les experts disent que cela rend l'accord mauvais car, selon eux, il n'y aura pas de nouveaux utilisateurs pendant la période d'expansion, ce qui entraînera une perte de revenus chez le gouvernement du Libéria et créera des retards dans l'inscription d'autres projets miniers.

Cela signifie que des entreprises comme SOLWAY-

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Burkina : le gouvernement impose un couvre-feu suite à une série de mutineries

Des soldats se sont mutinés dimanche 23 janvier dans plusieurs casernes du Burkina Faso pour réclamer le départ des chefs de l'armée et des « moyens plus adaptés » à la lutte contre les jihadistes qui frappent le pays depuis 2015. Le gouvernement reconnaît des tirs dans plusieurs casernes, mais a démenti « une prise de pouvoir par l'armée ». Dans la soirée, les autorités ont décrété un couvre-feu de 20h à 5h30, jusqu'à nouvel ordre.

Selon le décret

présidentiel, un couvre-feu a été instauré à partir du « 23 janvier 2022 et jusqu'à nouvel ordre » de 20h jusqu'à 05h30 du matin « sur toute l'étendue du territoire » du Burkina Faso, où des mutineries ont éclaté dans plusieurs casernes. Les écoles resteront également fermées ce lundi et mardi.

Jusque tard dimanche soir, le général Simporé s'est entretenu avec certains mutins. Les soldats ont présenté une liste de doléances : plus de moyens pour lutter contre le terrorisme, des changements au sein de l'état-

major et de la direction des renseignements, et une meilleure prise en charge des familles de soldats tombés ou blessés au combat.

Tout a commencé par des tirs entendus dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche. Au petit matin dimanche, dans plusieurs casernes, à Kaya et Ouahigouya dans le nord du pays, mais aussi dans le camp Sangoulé Lamizana de Ouagadougou et la base aérienne de la capitale.

Des manifestants apportent leur soutien aux soldats

Commencé tôt le matin dans la camp Sangoulé Lamizana, les tirs ont continué jusque dans l'après-midi, rapporte notre correspondant Yaya Boudani. Des jeunes soldats en cagoule, fusils d'assaut en main, ont manifesté leur mécontentement. Plusieurs manifestants civils étaient devant le camp pour, disent-ils, apporter leur soutien aux soldats mutins.

Pour les manifestants, il faut que la manière de gérer les affaires changent sur la situation sécuritaire. Ces centaines de manifestants

► CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Éditorial

Le projet REALISER n'est rien d'autre qu'une tactique politique pour la réélection de Weahen 2023

Après avoir passé quatre ans au pouvoir et alors que nous sommes à un an des élections, le président George Manneh Weah vient d'annoncer un ambitieux projet intitulé Recovery of Economic Activity for Liberian Informal Sector Employment (reprise de l'activité économique pour l'emploi dans le secteur informel libérien), REALISE en abrégé.

L'annonce a été faite le week-end dernier. Ce projet, selon lui, sortira les Libériens de la pauvreté et autonomisera les entreprises locales.

On aurait cru que tout plan sérieux cherchant à sincèrement relancer l'activité économique dans le pays devrait être déployé dès la prise du pouvoir de cette administration afin de se donner le temps pour mesurer les succès et les défis et non dans la précipitation à quelques jours des élections.

Selon un communiqué de la présidence, le projet REALISE permettra à plus de 19 000 Libériens vivant dans la région de Monrovia de relancer leurs activités économiques et à plus de 4 000 Libériens vulnérables évoluant du secteur informel de recevoir un soutien pour démarrer de nouvelles activités ou améliorer celles qui existent déjà, tandis que 15 000 Libériens seront également habilités à s'engager dans des travaux publics communautaires dans les zones urbaines.

Nous considérons le soi-disant projet REALISE comme une autre tactique politique pour attirer les électeurs pour la réélection du président l'année prochaine. Rien d'autre. Ce n'est pas un programme bien conçu et durable sur lequel les Libériens pauvres peuvent compter pour améliorer leur vie, mais simplement un peu pour soutenir la réélection du parti au pouvoir.

Le président Weah a promis lors de son investiture que les Libériens ne seraient plus spectateurs de leur propre économie. Que le président dise alors à la nation combien d'entreprises appartenant à des Libériens il a permis de relancer au cours des quatre dernières années de son administration.

Nous nous demandons comment le fait de donner à des jeunes non qualifiés et sans emploi des pelles, des pelleuses, des balais, des râteliers et des brouettes leur permettra de vivre durablement. Le gouvernement devrait être différent par ses programmes des politiciens avides de votes.

Au contraire, nous pensons que le lancement du projet REALISE envoie un signal très faible de la détermination déclarée du gouvernement à autonomiser les Libériens. Il est déterminé à se moquer des citoyens plutôt qu'à améliorer leur sort.

Nous disons que depuis quatre ans rien de tangible n'a été fait dans ce sens car ce n'est pas à un an des élections que quelque chose peut être fait.

Pire encore, le gouvernement n'a pas précisé le budget qu'il avait prévu pour le projet REALISE, mais il a seulement révélé que le gouvernement français, par le biais de son Agence française de développement (AFD), a engagé un total d'environ 9 000 000 € et qu'une équipe est attendue ici de Paris, France pour mener des études de faisabilité.

Nous pouvons parier notre cœur que juste après les élections de 2023, si Weah est élu pour un second mandat, REALISE sera jeté aux toilettes car il n'a jamais été conçu pour la durabilité en premier lieu.

Lorsque le gouvernement qui est lavé dans la corruption et le copinage annonce qu'il est maintenant prêt à améliorer la vie de ses citoyens, nous devons réfléchir deux fois avant d'applaudir cette initiative.

Français

Accord ArcelorMittal :

Libéria, dont les frais d'utilisation sont estimés à 300 000 000 USD, ZOGOTA-Guinée 1 500 000 000 USD, SMFG-Guinée 675 000 000 et WAE-Guinée 180 000 000 USD, seront toutes des pertes pour le gouvernement libérien en raison du monopole qu'exercera ArcelorMittal sur les rails.

L'accord a déjà généré plusieurs controverses tant au niveau local qu'international. Parmi ceux qui expriment des inquiétudes au sujet du troisième MDA amendé proposé par ArcelorMittal figurent des députés de l'Union européenne et l'ambassadeur des États-Unis au Libéria, Michael McCarthy.

Ce dernier fait l'éloge du nouvel accord proposé mais s'inquiète des clauses du document qui accordent au géant de l'acier le monopole de l'utilisation du chemin de fer.

Le diplomate américain espère que le Sénat libérien pourra faire son propre travail pour revoir le MDA dans l'intérêt du peuple libérien et ne pas hypothéquer le chemin de fer à ArcelorMittal.

L'Ambassadeur McCarthy : "Cet accord était en cours de négociation depuis un certain

temps, et le Sénat doit maintenant faire son propre examen, mais les progrès jusqu'à présent envoient un signal aux investisseurs que des accords peuvent être conclus au Libéria."

"Nous espérons également que l'accord, s'il est approuvé par le Sénat, permettra au Libéria de devenir un futur exportateur régional de minerai provenant de la Guinée", a déclaré le diplomate américain.

L'ambassadeur McCarthy n'est pas le seul à exprimer des préoccupations. Le haut représentant de l'UE, Josep Borrell, a exprimé des préoccupations similaires sur l'accord le mois dernier.

L'UE a soulevé des questions sur les possibilités de corruption, la création potentielle d'un monopole ferroviaire et l'implication de la population. L'UE s'est demandé également si le nouveau deal est compatible avec ses objectifs de promotion de la bonne gouvernance et du développement durable au Libéria.

L'Union a demandé à la vice-présidente de la Commission / haute représentante de l'Union pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité (VP/HR) si elle est au courant des polémiques qui entourent l'accord.

Burkina : le gouvernement impose un

sont restés aux côtés des soldats mutins toute la journée, empêchant le passage des véhicules au niveau de l'échangeur de l'Ouest.

Au cours de la journée, des barricades de fortune ont également été érigées dans certaines rues de Ouagadougou avant d'être détruites par la police.

Des manifestants s'en prennent au siège de campagne du parti au pouvoir

Un groupe de manifestants ont saccagé et incendié une partie du lieu qui a servi de siège de campagne présidentielle du parti au pouvoir en 2020. C'était le quartier général de l'équipe de la campagne de Roch Christian Kaboré.

Le rez-de-chaussée de l'immeuble, à plusieurs niveaux, est parti en fumée. Selon les témoins, c'est lorsque ces manifestants ont commencé à s'attaquer au reste du bâtiment, qu'ils ont

été dispersés par les forces de l'ordre. Un important dispositif sécuritaire a été placé pour la protection de l'édifice.

La veille, des manifestations contre la politique sécuritaire du président Roch Marc Christian Kaboré avaient été dispersées par les forces de l'ordre à Ouagadougou et dans plusieurs grandes villes du pays.

Dans une intervention à la télévision dimanche, le général Simporé a assuré qu'« aucune institution de la République n'a été inquiétée ». Dimanche soir, le président a néanmoins décrété un couvre-feu sur toute l'étendue du territoire et jusqu'au nouvel ordre.

« L'armée pointe du doigt des manquements graves liés à l'amélioration des conditions de vie des militaires, au traitement réservé aux soldats tombés au front, mais également à des questions de gouvernance au sein de l'armée, notamment en termes de corruption, en termes de gestion des deniers accordés à l'armement... »

COMMENTAIRE

Par Robert Skidelsky

Mettre fin à la nouvelle Guerre froide

LONDRES - Alors que le monde se dirige vers une nouvelle Guerre froide, les démocraties et les Etats autoritaires doivent se mettre d'accord sur ce qu'ils attendent les uns des autres pour parvenir à une coopération constructive. Les démocraties ne peuvent se contenter de clamer que le temps est de leur côté et qu'il leur suffit de se raccrocher à leurs principes en attendant l'écroulement des régimes autoritaires. Pourtant il est plus facile d'imaginer la fin de la vie sur Terre que la disparition des régimes autoritaires.

L'Ukraine est le point chaud du moment (cela aurait pu être Taïwan). Cette "guerre non déclarée" à ses frontières couve depuis 2014, lorsque les manifestations proeuropéennes de 2013 et 2014 ont conduit à l'éviction du président ukrainien pro-russe Viktor Ianoukovitch, puis à l'annexion de la Crimée par la Russie et à l'occupation de la région orientale du Donbass. L'Occident accusait alors la Russie de s'emparer illégalement du territoire d'un Etat souverain, tandis que la Russie prétendait qu'elle récupérait une partie de la mère patrie.

Ces discours opposés traduisent des différences historiques. Les responsables politiques russes et de nombreux citoyens russes n'ont jamais admis en leur for intérieur que leur pays a perdu la Guerre froide, car ils auraient alors été contraints de reconnaître qu'entre 1989 et 1991, l'équilibre mondial a basculé en faveur des USA et de leurs alliés européens.

L'absence de conditionnalité dans certains cas récents est consternante. Le FMI doit-il accorder des prêts pratiquement inconditionnels à un gouvernement qui restreint les importations de denrées alimentaires destinés à une population sous-alimentée (exacerbant ainsi les problèmes causés par le contrôle du taux de change exercé par ce gouvernement même) ? C'est ce que le FMI a fait au Nigeria en 2020. Dans d'autres cas, il a fait preuve d'un certain laxisme dans sa surveillance généralement rigoureuse, donnant sa caution à des pays dont le ratio dette/PIB explose et qui ne parviendront à se stabiliser que dans de cadre d'hypothèses très optimistes.

Le rapport de la consultation menée par le FMI en 2021 au titre de son article IV pour le Ghana en est un bon exemple. Le Fonds s'est montré encore plus optimiste à l'égard de grands pays émergents comme le Brésil et l'Afrique du Sud, répétant que la lutte contre la pandémie est la priorité absolue - malgré l'explosion du surendettement, la hausse de l'inflation et les problèmes bancaires naissant.

Cette absence de conditionnalité est délibérée. Pendant la pandémie, le Fonds a massivement étendu l'utilisation de son Instrument de financement rapide, un mécanisme de prêt qui n'oblige pas que le pays concerné à

s'engager dans un "programme à part entière" (et qui ne requiert pratiquement que peu de conditions, voire aucune). De manière encore plus visible, le FMI a persuadé ses membres d'approuver une émission d'urgence de 650 milliards de dollars en droits de tirage spéciaux (DTS, l'actif de réserve du Fonds), qui ne sont eux aussi assortis de pratiquement aucune condition. Les DTS sont en fait une aide directe qui va à tous les membres du FMI, y compris la Russie et l'Iran. Pourtant, en raison de la structure obscure de cet instrument, les pays en développement ne reçoivent qu'une petite partie de la somme.

Il existe de solides arguments en faveur d'une refonte de la structure financière du FMI et de son organisation sœur, la Banque mondiale, afin que la majeure partie des fonds qu'ils fournissent prenne la forme de subventions plutôt que de prêts. Depuis des décennies je plaide en faveur de cette transformation, et depuis peu l'idée commence à retenir l'attention. Le FMI étant actuellement structuré comme un fonds renouvelable, il serait rapidement à sec s'il renonçait à être remboursé - ce que certaines ONG n'ont cessé de le lui demander. La seule façon d'éviter cette issue serait que les pays avancés augmentent leur participation budgétaire à l'institution, ce qu'ils semblent répugner à faire.

Elément essentiel, les fonds du FMI ne devraient pas être utilisés simplement pour rembourser des créanciers privés. Or des études montrent que c'est ce qui s'est passé dans les années 1980 et à nouveau plus récemment. Il faut aussi prendre en compte les banques publiques chinoises qui appliquent les mêmes taux d'intérêt que les institutions privées. Il devrait y avoir un moyen de veiller à ce que les prêts du FMI ne servent pas à rembourser les prêts chinois.

Il y a un parallèle frappant entre un FMI bien intentionné et une Fed elle aussi bien intentionnée, cette dernière voulant maintenant agir en faveur d'une plus grande égalité. Après avoir longuement soutenu l'idée que la poussée inflationniste est transitoire, la Fed est maintenant confrontée à un dilemme. A moins qu'elle ne resserre suffisamment sa politique monétaire au cours de l'année (un risque bien plus grand que ce qu'en disent les discours officiels), l'inflation pourrait s'installer durablement. Par contre, si elle abandonne trop rapidement sa politique de relâchement monétaire, cela entraînera une récession. Et on ne peut écarter le risque d'une stagflation.

En ce qui concerne le FMI, la situation désespérée des pays émergents et des pays en développement appelle certes à la plus grande compassion, mais le Fonds n'est pas la Banque mondiale dont la mission est d'apporter une aide. La conditionnalité des prêts du FMI est un élément essentiel pour éviter que ses ressources ne servent à financer la corruption intérieure, la fuite des capitaux et le remboursement des créanciers étrangers. Il ne doit pas oublier sa fonction essentielle de surveillance économique.

ANNUAL MESSAGE TO THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH NATIONAL LEGISLATURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

Twenty-Third of December 2019, which found that certain provisions of the Alien and Nationality Law are inconsistent with the Constitution of Liberia.

For instance, the current Alien and Nationality Law provides that a natural-born Liberian citizen automatically loses his or her citizenship, without any due process of law in a court in Liberia, upon taking up citizenship of another country or acting in some capacity for that country. This law undermines our quest for unity amongst all Liberians - everywhere!

Therefore, as we celebrate the Bicentennial anniversary of the founding of our country, I want to call on the Honorable Members of this 54th Legislature, in particular the Liberian Senate, to consider passage of the Bill currently before you, which seeks to codify the Opinion of the Honorable Supreme Court and make it more true that ... "once a Liberian - always a Liberian."

MADAM VICE PRESIDENT, MR. SPEAKER, MR. PRESIDENT PRO-TEMPORE, AND MEMBERS OF THE 54TH LEGISLATURE:

Our Constitution places upon me the solemn responsibility to report on the State of the Republic, with specific mention of public expenditure and national income.

Revenue collection for 2021, including grants, was \$646 million U.S. dollars, compared to \$653.9 million U.S. dollars in 2020. This apparent decrease is attributable to more international Covid-related funding that was received in Calendar Year 2020. This revenue performance was driven by higher receipts of tax and non-tax revenues, especially taxes on international trade.

Of this amount, domestic taxes was \$577 million U.S. dollars and external resources received from our Development Partners was \$68 million U.S. dollars. The last fiscal year recorded the highest level of domestic revenue performance since the end of the civil conflict. We are all encouraged and challenged to sustain these efforts.

On the other hand, total cash expenditure for the same period under review was \$668 million U.S. dollars. Of this amount, 44 percent was spent on compensation of Government employees, 25 percent on goods and services, 17 percent on domestic and international debt, and 5 percent on Public Sector Investment.

MR. SPEAKER:

For at least the last five decades, Liberia has had a fiscal year that runs from July 1 to June 30. Liberia has been the only country in the ECOWAS sub-region that has run this fiscal year, which is out of alignment with the rest of the countries in the region. We have been encouraged by ECOWAS for nearly two decades now since the end of the civil war to revise our fiscal calendar.

Mr. Speaker I am proud to report that the change has finally taken place, and the year 2022 will be the first fiscal year that is also a calendar year for the national budget and other instruments and processes of the Government.

MR. SPEAKER:

To facilitate this transition, we had to enact a special transitional budget which you approved at \$347.9 million US dollars in the year under review. December 31, 2021 concluded this transitional budget, which was funded exclusively by domestic revenue, and the draft national budget is presently before the House of

Senate for consideration, having been passed by the House of Representatives.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE 54TH LEGISLATURE:

The 2022 budget was passed by the House at \$785.6 million U.S. dollars. This is the largest national budget in the history of Liberia, and with the support of the National Legislature we hope to make it the most transformative. Domestic revenue is projected at \$640.5 million US dollars, or 81.5 percent, while external resources are projected at \$145 million US dollars, or 18.5 percent.

We have increased capital spending in the proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget. In response to the need for more development, we are putting more resources to solving the many development challenges confronting our people in various sectors.

These capital investments will cover roads, electricity, education, national security, health, water and sanitation, transport and several other sectors.

I am thankful that the House of Representatives approved \$10 million U.S. dollars for projects under the County Tour that I undertook in the year under review. These county tour projects will bring serious relief to many of our people, especially those in rural areas.

MR. SPEAKER:

It is very clear that the success of this budget depends on strong revenue measures. It depends on all citizens paying their lawful taxes and doing so in a timely manner. In this regard, the Government in 2022 will support even more vigorously the domestic resource mobilization strategy of the Liberia Revenue Authority.

Government, through the LPRA, has launched a program to keep 50 percent of all real estate taxes collected back to the counties, districts and cities where the real estate taxes are collected. This is a measure to boost real estate taxes by involving local communities and their residents, as well as ensure that part of the money stays at the local level, in keeping with the Decentralization Law that was recently passed under my Administration. The program is being piloted in Margibi County.

MR. SPEAKER:

We are working with the National Legislature to limit tax waivers or tax expenditures, which in the last three years alone have cost us more than \$300 million U.S. dollars. While duty-free privileges and incentives are important to spur development, I believe that, as a country, we have been too generous with these instruments and must now begin to take a more conservative approach.

MR. SPEAKER:

We have made significant progress in restructuring our domestic debt. All legacy debts owed the Central Bank of Liberia, including the debt owed to the former National Bank of Liberia, were bundled into a Restructured and Consolidated Loan at the start of the IMF-supported program two years ago. This Restructured Loan totaled \$487.5 million U.S. dollars. The Government pays an annual interest of \$13.9 million U.S. dollars to the Central Bank of Liberia on this loan and will start to pay principal in the year 2030.

The total stock of domestic debt now stands at \$660 million U.S. dollars and the total stock of external debt now stands at approximately \$1.03 billion U.S. dollars for a total public debt stock valued at \$1.69 billion U.S. dollars as at December 31, 2021.

The total debt stock grew by 6.29 percent compared

to end-December 2020 debt stock of \$1.59 billion U.S. dollars and this growth was from disbursement on both external and domestic loans.

On both domestic and external debt the Government paid the amount of \$83.4 million U.S. dollars in debt service. Of this amount, \$62.8 million U.S. dollars was paid for domestic debt to the Central Bank of Liberia, to commercial banks for Treasury Bonds, and to other institutions, while \$20.6 million U.S. dollars was paid to multilateral and bilateral partners.

The Treasury Bonds, which were issued by the previous Government in 2013, are costing the Government more than \$6 million U.S. dollars in interest annually, just to roll them over to the next period. This is a legacy debt which my Administration inherited. However, in the interest of continuity of Government, it is an obligation that we have to pay.

Therefore, I am pleased to inform you that, working with the IMF, we have allocated \$35 million U.S. dollars to completely redeem these very expensive Treasury Bonds. This will free up space for investment in education, healthcare and other important priority areas.

MR. SPEAKER:

We are almost at the point where the audit of the consolidated revenue account will be current up to any fiscal year. In 2018 my Administration inherited an audit backlog dating back to the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 national budgets. We have worked overtime to conduct these audits and make current the audit of the consolidated revenue account.

With the completion of the Fiscal Year 2019/2020 audit, we are making good progress. The General Auditing Commission is presently conducting an independent payroll audit funded by the World Bank, and is developing a new framework to ensure better audits and financial reporting that is consistent with the Public Financial Management Law.

MR. SPEAKER:

We must continue to show strong gains in the fight against corruption, money laundering and illicit financial flows. The Government is strengthening and empowering the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission to prevent fraud and acts of corruption before they occur. You will be aware that the House has already passed the new LACC Act giving a broader mandate to the LACC to fight corruption. It is my hope that, in the supreme interest of the Liberian People, the Senate will soon concur.

The House has also passed the new anti-money-laundering legislation, which empowers the Financial Intelligence Unit to fight illicit financial flows, such as money laundering, and drug and terrorist financing. We will spare no effort to bring Liberia within international compliance in the fight against corruption and illicit financial flows.

MR. SPEAKER:

With your support our Administration continues to implement several reforms on the Central Government payroll and pension schemes. For example, we have successfully placed all Government workers on biometric ID; reduced non-contributory pension scheme from about 17,000 pensioners in 2017 to about 6,000 pensioners to date; expanded social security coverage and increased social security contribution by 300 percent in some instances.

The Government, through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the Civil Service Agency and the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation, intends to fully reform the entire process of retiring and paying retirees on time. In this regard, I am hereby admonishing all relevant entities to accelerate their work and complete the reform by the middle of this year.

TO BE CONTINUE NEXT EDITION

New money not for campaign

By Winston W. Parley

President George Manneh Weah says government will not print or deliver new local currency into the country during the 2023 campaign time leading to the presidential and general elections, apparently attempting to allay fears that bringing in the new local currency during the campaign could be at the disadvantage of his rivals.

In his quest to secure a second six - year presidential

L\$48.734 billion Liberian dollars arrived in the country in November 2021.

As part of the currency reform approved by you, the members of the 54th National Legislature, the Central Bank of Liberia brought in the first consignment of banknotes totaling L\$4.0 billion Liberian dollars out of the approved L\$48.734 billion Liberian dollars in November 2021.

"We are not bringing money before the campaign, in campaign time. So I want to be on record," said President Weah

delivery of the new currency in 2023, even though the exchange exercise will continue through 2023."

According to President Weah, the first and second consignments of the new family of banknotes are all denominated in the hundred dollar bills only intended to respond to the liquidity demands in December of 2021 and to commence the replacement of mutilated banknotes respectively.

In the interest of transparency and credibility, he said, the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) has ensured that the process is inclusive of the Legislature, media community, the Liberian Marketing Association, the Liberia Business Association, traditional elders and youths, as well as Liberia's international partners, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Kroll through USAID.

"Based on the sound management and good performance of our economy, Liberia received \$345.3 million US dollars in August 2021 under the general Special Drawing Rights allocation to IMF members," he added.

On 26 November 2021, the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) announced the safe arrival of the first 4 billion new 100 Liberian Dollar banknotes, commencing the introduction of the L\$48.734 billion new family of Liberian dollar currency. According to CBL, the new banknotes were safely secured in the vaults of the CBL Headquarters on Friday, 26 November 2021.



term through the ballot, President Weah and the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) will battle an opposition community in the 2023 presidential and legislative elections.

Delivering his 5th State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Capitol Hill Monday, 24 January 2022, President Weah said as part of the currency reform approved by the Legislature, the first consignment of banknotes totaling L\$4.0 billion Liberian dollars out of the approved

amidst applause from the audience.

He said the second consignment of the money is expected in the country this month.

"The bulk of the new currency which will include coins, is expected in the second half of 2022 while the balance will be coming in 2024," said President Weah.

In compliance with the restriction of the Joint Resolution of the Legislature, President Weah continued, "there will be no printing or

Liberia's external debts at US\$1.03B

President George Manneh Weah says his administration has made significant progress in restructuring the country's domestic debt, which stands at US\$660 million, saying the total stock of external debt now stands at approximately US\$1.03 billion.

In his 5th Annual Message delivered at the Fifth Session of the 54th Legislature Monday, 24 January 2022, President Weah said the total public debt stock is valued at US\$1.69 billion as of 31 December 2021.

He also said all debts owed the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), including the debt owed to the former National Bank of Liberia, were bundled into a Restructured and Consolidated Loan at the start of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-supported program two years ago.

This Restructured Loan, according to President Weah, totaled US\$487.5 million and

to the next period.

"This is a legacy debt which my Administration inherited. However, in the interest of continuity of Government, it is an obligation that we have to pay," President Weah indicated.

He explained that working with the IMF, his administration has allocated US\$35 million to completely redeem these very expensive Treasury Bonds and will free up space for investment in education, healthcare and other important priority areas.

He said Article 58 of the Liberian Constitution requires the President to provide details of national income and public expenditure for the previous year, as well as his legislative agenda for the ensuing year, and to comment on the economic condition of the Republic, and the State of the Nation.

"We are almost at the point where the audit of the consolidated revenue account will be current up to any fiscal year. In 2018 my Administration inherited an audit backlog



the government pays an annual interest of US\$13.9 million to the CBL on this loan and will start to pay principal in 2030.

He added that the total debt stock grew by 6.29 percent compared to the end of December 2020 debt stock of US\$1.59 billion and this growth was from disbursement on both external and domestic loans.

"On both domestic and external debt the Government paid the amount of US\$83.4 million in debt service. Of this amount, US\$62.8 million was paid for domestic debt to the CBL, to commercial banks for Treasury Bonds, and to other institutions, while US\$20.6 million was paid to multilateral and bilateral partners," he said.

President Weah continued that the Treasury Bonds, which were issued by the previous Government in 2013, are costing the Government more than US\$6 million in interest annually, just to roll them over

dating back to the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 national budgets. We have worked overtime to conduct these audits and make the current audit of the consolidated revenue account," he said.

President Weah said the General Auditing Commission is presently conducting an independent payroll audit funded by the World Bank, and is developing a new framework to ensure better audits and financial reporting that is consistent with the Public Financial Management Law.

He added "we must continue to show strong gains in the fight against corruption, money laundering and illicit financial flows. The Government is strengthening and empowering the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission to prevent fraud and acts of corruption before they occur."

Teenage girl dies

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started reducing and she got sick. He explained in tears that the victim's mother got concerned about the situation because it had never happened to her before.

Heid said he and the victim's mother pressured the victim to tell them what was going on with her, but the deceased refused to tell them what exactly had happened to her. "The next morning, her mother then carried her to a clinic in Rally Town Market where the doctor at the clinic [said] there was no equipment to do the testing and they recommended a clinic in Clara Town on the Bushrod," said Mr. Heid.

At the Clinic in Clara Town, Mr. Heid explained, health authorities told the victim's family that their little daughter was sexually tampered with both in her vaginal and anus by a big

man. "My daughter was again asked by the doctor, but she refused to disclose it to him also," Heid continued. But Mr. Heid said the deceased later confessed at home, accusing suspect Prince of allegedly raping her. "The boy who lives in the zinc house down here, Prince, called me into his room to send me to buy something for him. When I went to him in the room for the money, he jumped on me and put his [penis] in front of me and in my butt," Mr. Heid quotes his deceased daughter as saying.

He said when the victim's mother asked who did the act, the victim repeated, "I say Prince, Mama. The boy that can sell the nails on the road. He did this thing to me."

The family said they went to the Women and Children Protection Section of the Liberia National Police to report the case, but they were instructed by the police to go to John F.

Kennedy hospital for a test and bring the medical result to the police.

At JFK, Heid said health authorities indicated that the deceased's internal organs were getting rotten and she needed to undergo a major surgery to save her life.

Meanwhile, the Executive Director of World Against Rape, Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence in Liberia, Lian Duke Willie, has threatened to stage a mass protest Tuesday on 25 January 2022 from Camp Johnson Road through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Willie said the protest is meant to show to the international community that rape cases in Liberia are on the increase and still remain a national emergency because there is no tougher punishment for alleged rapists.

Teenage girl **dies** after being raped



By Lincoln G. Peters & Kruah Thompson

A 32-year-old man identified as Prince Durbar has been accused of allegedly raping a 13-year-old girl in Buzzy Quarters, a slum community in Monrovia leading to her death.

The accused, Prince Durbar allegedly raped the victim through both her vaginal and anus. Health

authorities at the state-run John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Sinkor, a suburb of Monrovia, said the level of abuse inflicted against the victim has resulted in her sad death.

The victim's family say the incident occurred Tuesday, 11 January 2022 right after the just-ended National County Sports Meet Final between Nimba and Gbarpolu Counties.

The family say the alleged perpetrator is behind bars at the

Monrovia Central Prison while police conduct an investigation which could lead to a court trial.

The victim's family has narrated that the perpetrator is their neighbor.

The accused was said to be residing under the stairway of the apartment in which the victim and her parents lived.

The bereaved family have expressed shock over the incident, saying they never expected the suspect to do such a thing to their daughter because they took him as their own son.

Speaking in an interview with this paper Monday, 24 January 2022, Mr. Amos Y. Heid, father of the deceased, disclosed that after the County Meet final, his daughter started complaining regularly about headache and stomach pain.

Mr. Heid said the family took it lightly, but after some days, his daughter's body

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