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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.
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DATA DA LIFE



Continental News

Chad Opposition Leaders Get One-year Suspended Terms

Six opposition leaders arrested after violent anti-French protests in N'Djamena were on Monday handed one-year suspended sentences for disturbing public order, Chad's public prosecutor told AFP.

They were also fined 10 million CFA francs, or about 15,000 euros, said prosecutor Moussa Wade Djibrine, who had sought two-year prison terms.

The swift trial opened Monday morning at a court at Moussoro, around 300 kilometers (180 miles) from the capital, with defense lawyers boycotting the hearing amid a heavy police presence.

The case comes against a backdrop of political tension with a military junta in power following the death of the country's veteran leader more than a year ago.

An authorized march in the capital on May 14 against France's military presence in Chad turned violent.

Seven petrol stations belonging to the French oil major Total were attacked and 12 police officers injured, according to a police toll.

In the aftermath, the authorities carried out a



Uprooted petrol pumps lie in the forecourt of a Total petrol station after an anti-French protest in N'Djamena

string of arrests among the march organizers, who denied any responsibility for the violence.

Those charged included Max Loalngar, coordinator for Wakit Tamma, Chad's main opposition coalition, and Gounoung Vaima Gan-Fare, secretary of the Chadian trade union federation.

The six were charged with disturbing public order and destruction of property. They had begun a hunger protest on May 23. Trade unions, opposition political parties, armed groups and international NGOs had called for the six to be released immediately and

unconditionally.

"We will appeal, a suspended sentence is still a sentence," said Wakit Tamma's lawyer Laguerre Ndjarrandi.

"The court has been kind, it's not a bad thing to calm things down," communication minister Abderaman Koulamallah told AFP. Moussoro court's public prosecutor Abdoulaye Bono Kono later announced: "The leaders of Wakit Tamma were released after sentencing."

Chad has been under military rule since President Idriss Deby Itno, who had ruled with an iron fist for

three decades, was killed in April 2021 during operations to crush rebels in the north of the country.

He was succeeded by his son Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno, a four-star general, now the transitional president.

His junta vowed to hold "free and democratic elections" within 18 months after staging a proposed nationwide "dialogue." A reconciliation forum should have started last month but has run into problems.

Armed groups have warned that Monday's trial

further compromises the national dialogue. The political opposition has already withdrawn from the organizing process. France has thousands of troops in the Sahel, including in Chad, under its Barkhane mission.

But in February, Paris announced it would withdraw its troops from Mali and deploy them elsewhere after falling out with the junta in Bamako.

On May 16, Deby, reacting to the violence that had unfolded two days earlier, attacked what he called "false and unfounded allegations" that French troops would redeploy to Chad. VOA

Mali Junta Adopts 24-month Transition to Democratic Rule



Supporters participate in a demonstration called by Mali's transitional government after ECOWAS

Mali's military junta will take 24 months from March 2022 to restore civilian rule after an August 2020 coup, its spokesman said on Monday, the latest move in negotiations with regional bloc ECOWAS to lift sanctions crippling the economy. The West African country's military leaders have been under pressure to restore democracy since they toppled the government and failed on a promise to hold elections in February, prompting sanctions from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

"The duration of the transition is set at 24 months," the transitional government spokesman Abdoulaye Maiga said on national television, with a start date of March 26, 2022.

Maiga said the decree followed an "advanced stage of negotiations with ECOWAS" and Mali hoped sanctions would be lifted.

"The adoption of this decree is proof of the willingness of (Malian) authorities to dialogue with

ECOWAS," he added. Mali's putsch leaders and regional heads of state have been at odds over a proposed five-year election timeline that was then revised to two - a delay that was previously rejected as too long by ECOWAS. Read full story

The ECOWAS bloc did not immediately comment on the 24-month decree adopted on Monday.

The length of the transition has also caused a rift with Mali's partners including the United States and former colonial power, France. Maiga said both the ECOWAS mediator on the crisis, former Nigeria President Goodluck Jonathan, and heads of state had been informed of the 24-month decree.

"We are hopeful... the sanctions will be lifted imminently," he said, adding that an electoral timeline would follow.

West African heads of state met in Ghana's capital Accra over the weekend to discuss the situation and agreed not to lift sanctions, which include border closures and restrictions on financial transactions, unless interim leaders proposed a shorter transition. VOA

Ethiopian Police Refuse to Release Journalists Granted Bail

Ethiopian authorities have refused to release three detained journalists, despite a court order they be given bail. Solomon Shumye, Meaza Mohammed and Temesgen Desalegn appeared Tuesday morning before the Federal First Instance Court and were granted bail of about \$190 each. However, the federal police force immediately appealed the judge's decision at the High Court. The High

Court overruled the lower court's decision, and the three journalists were returned to police custody.

Their lawyer, Henok Aklilu, told VOA he was expecting that to happen but will continue to seek their release.

"These things have been very much common when politically motivated cases come to court, especially journalists who are very much critical of the regime," he

said. "So, I was not surprised. You know, they give you bail in the lower court and it will be overturned by the higher court."

The three journalists are among 19 arrested last month in a crackdown aimed at reporters who have been critical of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government.

The government accuses the journalists of inciting violence and disturbing the country's peace through their work.

Henok told VOA it is not clear when the journalists will next appear in court.

"So, we were appealing to the court that they release this unreasonable suspicion by the police to arrest someone. But the police, you know, the police are the police. They come up with all kinds of stories, which are not substantiated by any real evidence," he said.

Authorities have accused Temesgen Desalegn, editor of privately owned Fetehe magazine, of inciting violence and public disturbance through unspecified interviews published on YouTube.

Solomon Shumye, a current affairs talk show host, is accused of inciting violence on his show. It is not clear what accusations Meaza Mohammed faces. VOA



Ethiopia Holding Journalists in Detention Centers Without Charge

EDITORIAL

Boakai should seize the opportunity to reconcile the opposition bloc

IT IS BUT time that former Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, who is also leader of the ex-ruling Unity Party, truly demonstrate his slogan 'Liberia First' by seizing the current moment to, for once, reconcile the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) in order to move ahead.

NOW THAT THE government has thrown out the CPP Framework Document case and dropped criminal charges against Mr. Alexander B. Cummings, political leader of the Alternative National Congress (ANC), Boakai has another opportunity to step out and show leadership by reuniting the CPP for the sake of the hundreds of thousands of Liberians, who look up to the Collaboration to provide them a future, as an alternative government in waiting.

BUT WHAT WE see is that Ambassador Boakai seems to be behaving like JONAH in the Holy Bible, who God instructed to go to Nineveh and warn the inhabitants to desist from wickedness and turn to God, but he refused and tried escaping when he was swallowed by the whale and remained in the whale's belly for three consecutive days before being spilled out.

THE CPP LONGS for genuine leadership, but the older statesman did nothing to resolve the internal wrangling. Instead, he cited disagreements among leaders of constituent parties of the Collaboration and eventually quitted, abandoning the ship without a captain.

HE DID NOT stop there. The UP leader even went to court and testified against his own brother, Mr. Alexander Cummings! We do not blame him for going against Cummings, for there were forces working from behind in the dark to make sure the CPP break up.

THIS HAS FAILED. The CPP should return to status quo ante, and put its acts together, for the Liberian people are yearning for reliable leadership. They still believe CPP holds the future. Their hope should not be dashed or traded for anything else.

AND WE BELIEVE strongly that it is only him (Boakai) that can execute this mission at this time, which is why the entire CPP Framework Document saga has been thrown out of the window. It is time to start afresh again, for to err is human and to forgive is divine.

FORGIVENESS IS THE gateway to progress. No personal ego should be higher or bigger than the Motherland. Liberia is the common patrimony that we all belong to. The ruling CDC can only be given the run for its money in 2023 when the opposition bloc holds together.

BOAKAI SHOULD STOP listening to people with selfish interest and agenda and look beyond his immediate surroundings to call out to Cummings, Urey and Senator Karna Lawrence to sit at a roundtable to discuss the future of the CPP.

WE ARE OF the strong conviction that being an elderly statesman, the onus is on Amb. Boakai to bend over and extend olive branch to the rest of the CPP leadership to sit together and strategize on the common dream of the opposition.

COMMENTARY

By Melvyn Krauss

Getting NATO Back on Track

STANFORD - US President-elect Joe Biden's nomination of Lloyd Austin, a recently retired four-star general, as Secretary of Defense is a further welcome sign that America has come to its senses and will, after January 20 next year, no longer seek to punish its friends and reward its enemies. To demonstrate this shift to the world, Biden should, immediately on taking office, rescind President Donald Trump's order last July to withdraw 12,000 US troops from Germany.

Without costing the US a penny, Biden would dramatically repudiate Trump's isolationism and throw a wrench into Russian President Vladimir Putin's divide-and-rule strategy in Europe. Reversing the troop withdrawal would also strengthen NATO, Germany, and Chancellor Angela Merkel - whose potential successor will be chosen in mid-January by her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) - as they battle Putin and homegrown anti-Western populists.

Trump claims that he wanted the US troops out because Germany was short-changing the NATO alliance on defense spending, compelling America to make up for the shortfall. But that is nonsense. And as one of the people who previously advocated it, I should know.

For decades, Republican and Democratic presidents never cared that America was spending far more on NATO than Germany was. For a while, I was convinced that they should care, so in 1986 I wrote *How NATO Weakens the West*, a book about German defense free-riding. So gung-ho was I about this idea that I also wrote a commentary for *The Wall Street Journal* entitled, "It's Time to Change the Atlantic Alliance."

But never did I imagine that Trump would use my now-ancient strategic argument as a wrecking ball to demolish NATO solidarity and empower Putin. True, Germany may not be spending enough on defense; the French certainly think so. But the argument that Germany is making a fool of the United States with its frugal defense spending is simply a fig leaf for Trump's determination to reward Putin while rebuking Merkel. Putin has long wanted a reduced US troop presence in Europe, and in Trump, he found a US president who was willing to collaborate with him.

My own thinking about NATO and Germany's contribution to it began to evolve not long after my book was published. While promoting it, I debated Lawrence Eagleburger, who was subsequently US Secretary of State under President George H.W. Bush, and met many serious, well-informed military people. I recognized then that what counted most for the US - and still does - is control over the structure and purpose of European defense, not its cost. The transatlantic Cold War-era "bargain," according to most US military experts, was that America would pay the lion's share of NATO's expenses in return for leadership of European defense.

In fact, I dropped the "Germans are playing us for suckers" line, born of my wish for an effective transatlantic alliance, when I abandoned the conservative populism that had

influenced my early thinking. Moreover, evidence from the 1980s shows that the military experts who criticized my book were right. The transatlantic disputes of that period were not about money, but rather over issues like siting Pershing II missiles in West Germany to counter the Soviet Union's ballistic missiles. West Germans, because of their fraught history and strong peace movement, were wavering on the issue.

After much tumult, and true leadership on the part of the Social Democratic Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and his CDU successor Helmut Kohl, West Germany installed the Pershing IIs in 1983. And they served their purpose well: NATO traded them away in the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with the Soviet Union, a key agreement in defusing the nuclear threat. The Pershing IIs were subsequently destroyed, and rumor has it that some of the scrap material wound up in special ballpoint pens at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, which gave them out as gifts.

Although Trump failed to make German defense spending into a major political issue in the US, it has become a contentious subject in Europe. In a recent interview with *Le Grand Continent* magazine, French President Emmanuel Macron - a staunch advocate of greater European sovereignty in defense matters - strongly criticized German defense minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer for publishing a commentary in *Politico* entitled "Europe still needs America." Europe would need America less, Macron implied, if Germany increased its defense spending.

It is clearly bad for NATO and EU unity when the Union's two most important members are at odds about America's role in Europe. The Western alliance needs a US security guarantee for Germany and other European countries, but this cannot come at the cost of a Franco-German split, which would be another gift to Putin.

France and Germany must heal their current defense rift, and America must maintain its security guarantee for Europe. The continent needs US boots on the ground, not only in Germany but throughout the Baltic states as well. One way out of the conundrum would be for Germany to contribute more to European defense budgets, thus providing a measure of the independence that France seeks, while keeping the US troops it wants.

Biden could start this process of reconciliation between France and Germany - and, more importantly, between the US and its NATO partners - by canceling Trump's planned troop withdrawal. He could then use the resulting leverage and his personal contacts (Biden has attended the annual Munich Security Conference for decades and knows nearly all of the key German foreign-policy players) to persuade Germany to spend more on European defense. The main aim of such a commitment would not be to placate America, but rather to boost Macron, a genuine friend of Germany.

Melvyn Krauss is a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution.

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O-PED

By Mariana Mazzucato, Josh Ryan-Collins,
and Asker Voldsgaard

Central Banking's Green Mission

LONDON - "Mission creep" - the gradual or incremental broadening of an organization's objectives beyond its original scope or focus - is typically regarded as undesirable. According to the conventional wisdom, an organization whose mission creeps is straying from its core purpose, becoming distracted, stretching itself too thin. But what if the new objectives are essential to society's welfare? For central banks, the answer should be obvious.

Over the last few decades, central banks' core purpose was to ensure stable price and financial stability. But, as the existential threat of climate change has become increasingly apparent, their attention has gradually broadened to include climate-related financial risks. And yet this much-needed mission creep has not been adequately translated into action on the ground.

Central banks' impact on climate change became apparent following the 2008 global economic crisis, when many monetary policymakers embraced quantitative easing (QE), buying up huge quantities of government and corporate bonds in an effort to keep long-term interest rates low. That effort succeeded, but central banks' purchases of corporate bonds have been criticized for propping up the high-carbon status quo.

On the regulatory front, financial policymakers have focused largely on disclosure, in line with the approach described by then-Bank of England Governor Mark Carney in September 2015: "More properly our role can be in developing the frameworks that help the market itself to adjust efficiently." To that end, the Financial Stability Board established the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures in December 2015 to develop consistent standards that companies, banks, and investors could use in providing information to stakeholders.

So far, however, this approach has achieved little. The latest European Central Bank Financial Stability Review found that banks' exposure to carbon-intensive sectors had increased since 2015. Moreover, the International Monetary Fund recently concluded that equity valuations in 2019 did not reflect climate risks. While the "green bonds" market has strengthened, green assets are not valued any differently than conventional assets with similar risk profiles.

Our institute's research and a report by the Bank for International Settlements help explain why. Financial actors struggle to calculate their exposure to climate risks accurately, because the risks are subject to "radical uncertainty," making it impossible even to assign a probability to different outcomes. In a situation of "unknown unknowns," the market cannot fix itself.

There is evidence that central banks are coming to their senses with regard to climate change. In November 2019, the ECB included climate considerations in its first strategic review of its role and operations since 2003. The BOE's new governor, Andrew Bailey, has revealed that the Bank is in talks with the United Kingdom's Treasury to adjust its mandate to include climate change. Even in the United States, the previously reluctant Federal Reserve has now identified climate change as a challenge that falls within its remit of supporting financial stability.

ECB President Christine Lagarde and others have also challenged the principle of "market neutrality," which demands that central banks minimize the impact of their asset purchases and other operations on the relative prices of financial assets. This principle has been the main argument against greening QE. Yet according to Lagarde, in the face of market failures - such as investors' inability to price climate risks - "we have to ask ourselves ... whether market neutrality should be the actual principle that drives our monetary-policy portfolio management."

Similarly, ECB Executive Board member Isabel Schnabel has argued that, because "climate change poses severe risks to price stability," "traditional mandates" demand strengthened efforts to "support a faster transition towards a more sustainable economy." The ECB mandate includes a secondary objective (following price stability): to support the European Union's "general economic policies" and contribute to the achievement of their objectives. In the light of the European Green Deal, Schnabel's call gains even more force.

The new rhetoric is welcome, not least because central-bank communications alone can affect financial-market behavior. But now is the time for action, with central banks taking concrete steps to align their operations fully with the goal of achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.

A first step would be for central banks fully to integrate climate-related financial risks into their asset-purchase programs. If credit-rating agencies' existing criteria fail to do this, then the ECB should support the development of criteria that do. Sweden's central bank has begun to move in this direction, by introducing "norm-based negative screening" of its bond purchases.

A second step, particularly applicable to the ECB, is to "green" the refinancing programs by which central banks provide liquidity to commercial banks. EU banks could be given lower interest rates when lending to green assets, in accordance to the EU's new green taxonomy.

Finally, on the financial regulation front, a precautionary approach is needed to reduce uncertainty and avoid worst-case scenarios. Forcing banks to hold more capital against the most unsustainable assets, such as loans financing fossil-fuel extraction, would be an obvious place to start.

None of this is to say that central banks should be left to save the planet on their own. On the contrary, an "all hands on deck" approach is required, featuring coordinated action by public banks, finance ministries, industrial policymakers, and other institutions. The goal is not to level the playing field, but to tilt it toward sustainability.

Central banks have shown time and again that they have the power to maintain the economic status quo. Now, they must use that power to support a long overdue green transition. What some view as "mission creep" has now become, as Lagarde put it, "mission critical."

Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value at University College London and Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, is Chair of the World Health Organization's Council on the Economics of Health for All and the author of *The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy*, *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths*, and the forthcoming *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism* (Allen Lane, January 2021). Josh Ryan-Collins is Head of Finance and Macroeconomics and Senior Research Fellow at the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose. Asker Voldsgaard is a PhD student at the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose.

OPINION

By Eric Posner

America Passed the Trump Stress Test

CHICAGO - The all-but-completed US presidential election has upset a range of lurid predictions. We were told that ballots would not be counted, voting machines would be hacked, state legislatures would order electors to defy the will of the people, armed thugs would intimidate voters, and riots would erupt - with the police taking the side of the "law and order" president. President Donald Trump, true to form, has indeed refused to concede, accused Democrats of fraud, and challenged the election in the courts. But he has no realistic prospect of remaining in office after Inauguration Day.

Those arguing that Trump's post-election behavior amounts to an attempted coup d'état are misreading the situation. Trump's refusal to concede means nothing. His legal challenges are frivolous and have been swatted away by courts. He has lost.

While many Republican voters tell pollsters that the election was stolen, hardly any of them have taken to the streets or pursued tactics that one would expect from people who truly believe that democracy has been subverted. There has been no Hong Kong-style uprising. Trump's attacks on American institutions are largely a form of political performance art.

It is tempting to say that Trump has nonetheless damaged the US electoral system, and American constitutional democracy more generally. The basic claim - repeated with extraordinary frequency over the past four years - is that Trump has subverted certain "norms" that are crucial to the functioning of democracy. These unwritten rules ensure that the two main political parties cooperate, that the will of the people is respected, and that politics does not degenerate into violence. If a president flouts or attacks these norms, they will disintegrate, making democracy impossible.

This worry was certainly legitimate. But, paradoxically, Trump's attacks on American democracy seem to have strengthened rather than weakened it. Consider the election. Political scientists have lamented for decades that too few Americans vote or bother to pay attention to politics. Yet voter turnout this year as a percentage of the eligible population was the highest it has been since 1900. Despite the hardships and constraints of the worst health crisis in a century, people donated money to candidates, argued with each other online, and organized on a massive scale. Notwithstanding the conspiracy theorizing, polarization, and persistent sense of turmoil, these are signs of a healthy democracy.

Similarly, while Trump has attacked the press as the "enemy of the people," often criticizing various journalists by name, major media outlets have flourished. Print and digital subscriptions to *The New York Times*, one of Trump's chief "enemies," have soared, from three million in 2017 to seven million in 2020. CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News all enjoyed record ratings in 2020. Nor is there evidence that journalists or commentators have suppressed stories or opinions because they feared government retaliation.

The judiciary, another frequent target of Trump's criticisms, has also maintained its independence. In addition to rejecting Trump's baseless election challenges, judges have dealt his administration defeat after defeat. Trump's efforts to deregulate the economy, while applauded by conservatives, have been blocked by courts in the vast majority of cases brought before them - and far more frequently than with previous administrations. Courts have also interfered with many of Trump's signature efforts to limit illegal immigration, in some cases sharply criticizing the administration. And while Trump has moved the judiciary to the right, the judges he appointed appear to be taking their jobs seriously.

The larger point is that violations of norms do not always succeed; often, they expose flaws that can be ameliorated through the democratic process. After President Franklin D. Roosevelt violated the norm against serving more than two terms, the norm was codified in the US Constitution with the Twenty-Second Amendment.

And even when violations of norms cause them to disintegrate, that's not always a bad thing. In many cases, the norms reflected past practices and had outlived their usefulness. In retrospect, the presidents who violated them seem farsighted rather than retrogressive. In the nineteenth century, presidents violated norms that prohibited them from campaigning while in office (which was considered undignified) or from appealing directly to the people (rather than working through Congress). These norms disintegrated because earlier notions of elite governance lost their purchase on the polity as democratic ideals strengthened. Political norms, like moral norms, are powerful precisely because they cannot be destroyed by a few prominent people. When they erode, it is because they conflict with emerging principles or new political realities.

By contrast, Trump's attacks on competing power centers in the US political system mostly served to remind people why these power centers are so important in the first place. Trump himself seems to have understood this, considering that his attacks were merely rhetorical. As far as we know, he did not take concrete actions to undermine the press or weaken the courts - for example, by ordering investigations or prosecutions, or pushing legislation that could hamper their activities. Nor did he use law enforcement or other government processes to harass Democrats or other political opponents, as much as he might have wanted to. His incendiary rhetoric backfired - costing him important votes among Republicans and stimulating massive turnout from Democrats, while doing little to harm his targets. Americans' confidence in public institutions, as measured by Gallup, appears not to have declined over the course of the Trump administration (though a downward trend long predates him).

Trump probably hoped (and continues to hope) that by attacking the election, he could sway Republican politicians, judges, and others to overturn the outcome. Perhaps, if enough voters took to the streets, and enough officials calculated that a grateful Trump would award them with future sinecures, these officials would have delivered for him. But that didn't happen.

The main reason it didn't happen - aside from the fact that nearly all electoral officials performed their roles with integrity - is that Trump is not a popular president. Given that he lacked the political support to win the election, it is not surprising that he also lacked the political support to overturn the result.

It will be a long time before historians have fully assessed Trump's impact on America's constitutional democracy. Clearly, his term in office has exposed some serious shortcomings, probably the most important of which are the outsized influence of ideologically extreme voters in the presidential primary process, and the excessive role of money in politics. But American democracy remains strong - at least for now.

Eric Posner, a professor at the University of Chicago, is the author, most recently, of *The Demagogue's Playbook: The Battle for American Democracy from the Founders to Trump* (All Points Books, 2020).



NEC boss, Associate Justice Youh 1st Meeting of WA High Courts for electoral disputes



The Vice President of the Republic of Benin, HE. Madam, Mariam Chabi Talata has officially declared open the first meeting of the West African High Courts for electoral disputes in that West Africa capital, Cotonou.

Liberia is being represented at the Cotonou's meeting by the Chairperson of the National Elections Commission (NEC), Madam Davidetta Browne Lansanah and Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, Sienyenn Youh.

In her opening address, the Vice President of Benin, Madam Mariam Chabi Talata, observed that Africa is not alone when it comes to electoral violence.

Madam Talata further stressed the need to strengthen the internal assessments of institutions to mitigate the many challenges emanating from the conduct of elections, and to provide the necessary tools to correct mistakes that occur in the systems and mechanisms to support transparency, credibility, and integrity of the electoral processes.

A dispatch from Cotonou said, the Beninois Vice President also asked for the promotion of unity and patriotism amongst regional leaders and their institutions by learning together, facing challenges together, considering the aspirations of the people and the maintenance of Sub-regional, African perspective and democracy.


A NEC-Liberia statement issued Tuesday, 7 June 2022, quotes the dispatch from Cotonou, saying over 300 delegates of high ranking government Ministers of Benin, members of parliament, and the judiciary, including those from the Sub-region and the president and members of the ECOWAS Network of Election Commissions (ECONEC) are attending the first high courts meeting.



The Vice President of the Republic of Benin officially opens the High Courts of Electoral



Liberia's two representatives to the Cotonou High Court meeting, NEC Boss, Madam Browne Lansanah and Supreme Court Justice Youh.



ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

**The Chairperson
National Electoral Commission (NEC)
Monrovia
Republic of Liberia**

ECW/PAPS/DPA/EAD/12-05/fgo/2022

12th May 2022

Dear Chairperson,

**First Meeting of Jurisdictions in charge of Electoral Disputes in the Member States,
Cotonou from 7th to 9th June 2022**

In line with the provision under Article 1 (b & c) of the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001), all Member States on the basis of their texts and laws have organized periodic elections to choose their respective leaders.

Elections have often proved to be a source of conflict. Many Electoral processes in the region have resulted in disputes amongst stakeholders thereby undermining social peace and economic development. Article 7 of the above-mentioned protocol provides the need for **"adequate arrangements to be made to hear and dispose of all petitions relating to the conduct of elections and announcements of results"**. Constitutional Courts in the Member States oversee the resolution of all electoral related disputes and therefore contribute to preventing or reducing conflict. Member States' Constitutional Courts have extensive experience in managing electoral processes and in dealing with elections-related disputes.

Against the above, in keeping with the objective of improving electoral processes in the region, the ECOWAS Commission is organizing a **"Workshop on Sharing of Experience of Constitutional Court in the region"** from 7th to 9th June 2022 in Cotonou, Benin.

The objective of this workshop is to create a forum to bring together Heads of the Constitutional Courts of the Region to discuss electoral matters, as well as adjudication matters, as Constitutional Courts in the ECOWAS region are enriched with methods and tools to prevent political and electoral crises. This workshop will bring participants from Constitutional Courts of Member States to share experiences to improve their technical management for preventing political or electoral crises in the future. The workshop will also enable the Commission to create a regional platform/network.

In this regard, you are kindly invited to **personally attend this important workshop** and therefore it would be greatly appreciated if you could forward, your International Passport Data page and contact details (email and telephone number) to the following email addresses by **20th May 2022** to enable us to make necessary logistics arrangements: goke@ecowas.int, Lbarou@ecowas.int.

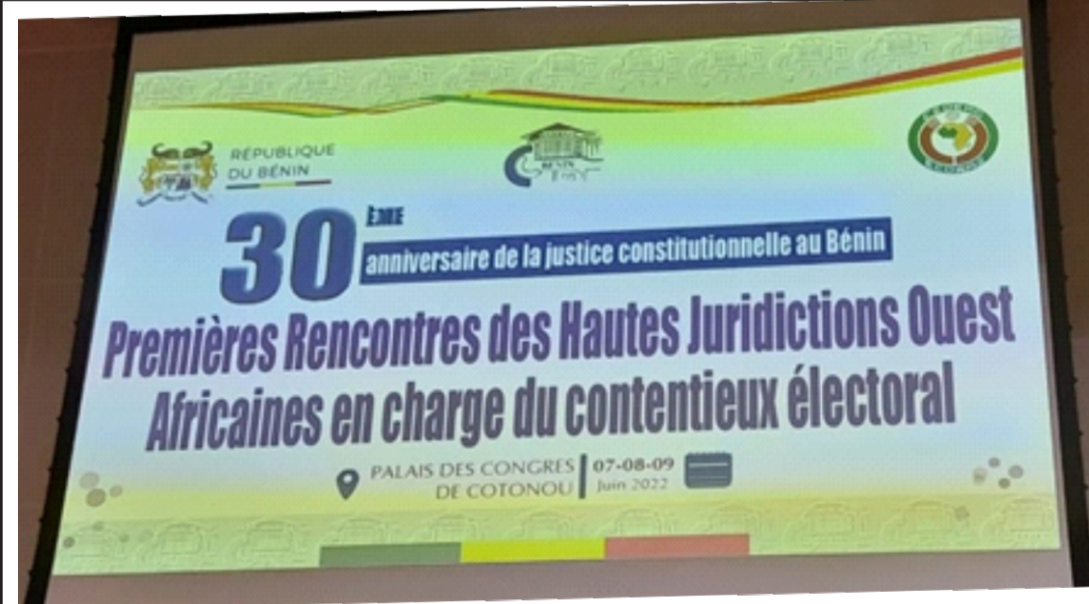
Please note that ECOWAS will bear the cost (air ticket and per diem) of your participation in conformity with the ECOWAS financial rules and procedures.

While thanking you for your usual cooperation, please accept, the assurance of my highest esteem.

General Francis A. BEHANZIN
Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Educate HER Liberia conducts education summits nationwide

The Educate HER Liberia team has embarked on a Country Tour conducting Girls Education Summits in all 15 counties here. The goal of the Girls Education Summit is to provide a platform for women, girls, and community

policies supporting girls' education.

During the summit, school administrators, education officers, traditional, religious, women and girl leaders meet to discuss the key issues and barriers to promoting and ensuring girls

and next steps.

These action plans will also be distributed to the national legislatures, relevant line ministries, donors, civil society organizations and other key education stakeholders to engender their strategic support and

commitment to girls' education. Women's rights groups, autonomous social movements, and media institutions will also be targeted.

Educate HER strives to build strategic partnerships

among Government of Liberia, and civil society organizations for the effective implementation of National Policy on Girls Education.

"We believe that if we can strengthen civil society roles and citizen participation to cause both donors and the Government of Liberia to increase investment in girls' education; and if we increase monitoring, capacity, and coordination among education

education in their communities. Coming out of the discussions, County Action Plans for Girls Education, which outline joint actions to promote girls' education at the county level will be validated. These action plans will roll-out at the county level and quarterly meetings will be held to discuss progress made, challenges and gaps identified, recommendations

leaders to engage local decisionmakers and partners to build strong partnership for joint actions for girls' education in throughout Liberia.

A key focus of the work is to enhance strategic partnerships among line ministries, and civil society organizations and citizens for increased awareness, coordination and monitoring, capacity, and commitment on

Court sentences man to 47 years in prison -after pleading guilty to murder

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland County

The Judge of the 7th Judicial Circuit Court in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County has sentenced a man to 47 years in prison for murder.

The verdict comes days after the man, Moses Mlarmah entered a guilty plea and asked for mercy for the gruesome murder of commercial motorcyclist Mordacious Nyema in Maryland County, southeast Liberia.

The late Nyema was a student of the Pleebo High School in Pleebo District, Maryland County.

On Monday, June 6, 2022, Judge George S. Wiles announced the sentence after the trial jury had on June 1st handed down a unanimous guilty verdict against Defendant Mlarmah, despite his earlier guilty plea and request for mercy.

According to information, during the course of the investigation, Mlarmah admitted to committing the murder and named his accomplices as Leo Williams,

Jeremiah Appleton alias "Open Zipper", and Francis Kla Nyema.

They were arrested by the Liberia National Police, but after investigation the trio denied the allegation.

Meanwhile, during sentencing on Monday, Judge Wiles invited the Ministry of Justice through its Correction Superintendent at the Zwedru Correction Palace to provide information about the

defendant's character.

Judge Wiles said during sentencing: "Wherefore and in view of the foregoing, unanimous guilty against convict Mlarmah and circumstances thereof, the unanimous guilty of the jurors is hereby affirmed, and confirmed that the jurors' verdict against convict Mlarmah is adjudged for the crime of murder."

He said in the statute, the maximum sentence for a murderer is life imprisonment, while the

stakeholders, then girls will have significantly increased access to safe, quality education in Liberia," the Educate Her project team said.

Educate HER is a national coalition focused on ensuring the effective implementation of the National Policy on Girls Education, with specific focus on areas of the policy that addresses key barriers to girls' attendance, retention, and completion

(GARC). This coalition is led by three women-led, women-rights organizations, (Helping Our People Excel (HOPE), CareFound Liberia and the Paramount Young Women Initiative (PAYOWI).

"Educate HER": "Promoting Gender Equity and Equality in Education is a 3-year project supported by Oxfam-IBIS and Global Partners for Education through the Education Out Loud grant.

Starts from back page

Liberia-Israel friendship

father's footsteps"- a reference to the visit of former Israeli President Chaim Herzog to Liberia in 1984.

Earlier, Liberia's Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Hon. Nathaniel F. McGill, conveyed President Weah's request for the establishment of a Trade Mission to Jerusalem, while extending the Liberian leader's sentiments of goodwill to the State of Israel. He recalled the strong ties both countries have shared since the 1947 when Liberia cast a vital vote in favor of the establishment of the State of Israel at the United Nations.

"President Weah wants to rekindle the historic ties our both countries have relished over the years, that is why we have come to deliver a special message from him as contained in this formal letter he has sent to you and your government", Minister McGill said.

Continuing, he said the establishment of a Trade Mission will set the basis for a full diplomatic representation to Israel in the future.

minimum sentence is left with the Judge's discretion.

Judge Wiles added that after Convict Mlarmah shall have served 30 years in prison, he shall be allowed to be placed on parole based on good behavior from the prison facility.

The 7th Judicial Circuit Court Judge noted that the 47 years imprisonment given to the convict will serve as "deterrence to others who are involved in unlawfully and criminally taking human lives."

Convict Mlarmah was indicted during the February A.D 2021 term of court on April 16, 2021, at the 4th Judicial Circuit Court in Maryland County for the crime of murder and criminal conspiracy. But the trial was transferred to the 7th Judicial Circuit Court Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County.

The killing of the motorcyclist, a student of the Pleebo High School led to riots in the streets of Pleebo and Harper. The situation prompted the imposition of a dusk to dawn curfew by President George Weah.

The main prison in Harper was vandalized, paving the way for about hundred prisoners to

escape although many were later rearrested. The residence of House Speaker Bohfal Chambers' in Pleebo was also set ablaze during the melee.

According to the police charge sheet, from March 25 to April 7, 2021, a special investigation team arrested defendants Jeremiah Appleton alias (Open Zipper), Francis Kla Nyema, Leo K. Williams and Alice Davis, thoroughly investigated them, and subsequently charged them with murder.

During police investigation to establish how the motorcyclist was killed, it was revealed that on Thursday, March 25, 2021 at about 9: 45 am, then 22-year-old Suspect Moses Mlarmah, a resident of Pleebo City lured the late Mordacious Nyema into the MOPP palm plantation under the guise of going for a load (two tin of Palm Oil and two heads of banana).

The investigation established that Suspect Mlarmah rode on the deceased's motorbike to the Palm plantation where upon their arrival, he (Moses Mlarmah) pulled out a cutlass and chopped the deceased several times on his neck and the head which led to his death. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

District 7 representative hopeful hosts unity tourney

By Naneka A. Hoffman

Montserrado County District #7 representative hopeful and Chief Executive Director of Joy FM Emmanuel Dahn, says unification and

Speaking over the weekend at BYC Blue Field in PHP community during District7 Unification Tournament Cup grand finale, he said the tournament was intended to

Dahn Foundation. During the final activist Porka Robert was graced as guest of honor.

The program was also graced by several national football stars, coaches and team managers, including residents of the district, who turned out for final encounter between Front Street and Broad Street.

During the heated football encounter, Broad Street was crowned Champions and walked away with 100,000 Liberian Dollars, while West Point came 3rd place, receiving 25,000 Liberian Dollars

Mr. Dahn vows that he is ready and willing to work with everyone in the district for comprehensive unity that would enable speedy development, adding that with unity and peaceful coexistence, talents of young people would be promoted.

"With what I have seen here today shows that there are lots of talents in this district but the talents could be hidden if you don't have anybody to promote it. I want this initiative to continue in order to promote youth activities in our district", he says.

The district #7 representative hopeful thanks the 21 District teams for participating in the Unification Tournament cup, urging the residents to continue to work in

uniting the district and to remember that all hope is not lost because district#7 remains his priority. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

We stand by our findings

--EPA says following Bea Mountain probe



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says it stands by its preliminary findings on the water pollution incident in Grand Cape Mount County and categorically states that the findings were based on scientific analysis and data collected by well-trained technicians and scientists in the field.

conducted following reports here that Bea Mountain Mining Company had allegedly discharged ammonia and cyanide - laden wastewater into the Marvoh and Mafa Rivers in Grand Cape Mount County which reportedly killed fishes, a dog and displaced residents in affected communities.

The EPA however maintains the authenticity of the preliminary findings and the integrity of its work.

"The Agency will move ahead with plans to further widen the investigation including the invitation of a third-party EPA-certified consultant/Laboratory to further determine the cause of death of the aquatic species," the release said. The EPA, therefore, calls on the management of Bea Mountain Mining Corporation to cooperate with the investigation.

Meanwhile, the agency renews its calls on the BMMC to continue the provision of water, fish, and other protein sources to the affected communities.

An EPA statement issued Monday, 6 June 2022 said EPA technicians, and scientists in the field conducted scientific investigations downstream of Bea Mountain Mining Corporation (BMMC) operations and continued upstream to assess the quality of the water, probing the authenticity of the alleged pollution and traced plausible source(s) of pollution.

The initial phase of the investigation included sample collection, social interviews, community engagement, environmental scoping, geospatial data, and drone imagery, the release said.

The investigation was

technical vocational skills training for residents of the district are his major priorities in order to promote and enhance inclusive and contributive working environment.

unite the people of district#7 and promote peace and togetherness.

The District#7 Unification Sport Tournament is an annual event organized and supported by the Emmanuel

Albino Society wants law against discrimination

By Bridgett Milton

The Liberia Albino Society (LAS) has petitioned the National Legislature to enact law that would end discrimination and lack of empowerment of its members nationwide.

According to a petition signed by Executive Director Patricia Logan, LAS is a non-for-profit organization established to champion advocacy for the welfare and wellbeing albinos, including empowerment for its members.

Madam Logan laments that since its existence, LAS has experienced and continue to suffer from barrage of issues and challenges, ranging from lack of empowerment, discrimination, marginalization to many other negative vices that have over the years led to the loss of lives of some of its members across Liberia.

"We want to say enough is enough to the segregation and maltreatment of our members over the years. We want urgent attention to our

plights, in keeping with national and international protocols and instructions as implemented in other countries to include Kenya, Tanzania, and Mali," Madam Logan notes.

She says members of LAS go to school and health care facilities daily, but they do not receive proper attention like their physically challenged counterparts.

She termed the neglect as completely unacceptable and must be discouraged to

the letter.

Logan also appealed for sunglasses, caps, buses, special cream and specialized doctors for their members, who continue to suffer from sun burns due to their special conditions.

"As part of our petition, we call on the national legislature to enact a law that will provide empowerment package for our members with focus on job creation, scholarships and many more", she continues.



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She says they are very tired of being in the same state with no improvement. She said now is the time for practical actions and direct interventions to be taken mainly from their

lawmakers. She said this is not the time for empty talks and promises, but tangible actions to improve albino people lives in the country. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

Français

L'ancien parti au pouvoir veut que les commissaires de la commission électorale soient remplacés

Le Parti de l'unité (UP), ancien parti au pouvoir, demande le changement des responsables de la Commission électorale nationale (NEC), parce qu'il n'a plus confiance dans la capacité de ces derniers à organiser des élections libres, justes et transparentes lors des élections présidentielles et législatives de 2023.

S'exprimant au cours d'une interview exclusive téléphonique avec ce journal le lundi 6 juin 2022, le secrétaire général du Parti de l'unité, Mo Ali, a affirmé qu'il

est important que les commissaires de la NEC soient remplacés parce qu'ils se sont avérés corrompus.

Selon lui, l'UP fait des consultations et qu'il décidera ultérieurement de la marche à suivre. Il a indiqué que le parti ne fait plus confiance à la NEC et la soupçonne d'être corrompue et incompétente.

« La déclaration est très claire et elle parle fort. Nous disons que nous n'avons plus confiance dans la NEC », a déclaré M. Ali en réponse à une question de ce journal concernant un communiqué publié par le parti

le lundi 6 juin 2022.

« Nous ne sommes pas le seul parti politique. Il y a plusieurs autres partis politiques dans le pays qui veulent cela. La NEC s'est avérée corrompue et injuste », a-t-il ajouté.

Selon lui, la commission électorale a également prouvé qu'elle peut facilement être achetée. Ainsi l'UP ne pense pas qu'elle puisse organiser des élections libres, justes et transparentes.

La position du parti d'opposition contre le NEC intervient après que la Cour suprême du Libéria a annulé la décision de la commission refusant à l'UP et au Parti libérien (ALP) le droit de présenter des candidats en leur propre nom à l'élection sénatoriale du comté de Lofa et à l'élection présidentielle et législative de 2023 élections.

La commission avait pris la décision sur la base d'une demande de l'opposition Congrès national alternatif (ANC) et d'une faction du Parti de la liberté (LP) d'opposition d'empêcher l'UP et l'ALP de présenter des candidats conformément à une

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

La SUP exige la publication des diplômes des professeurs d'université

Le Vanguard Student Unification Party (SUP) basé sur le campus de l'Université du Libéria (UL) exige que les autorités universitaires et toutes les autres institutions tertiaires publiques et privées à travers le pays publient immédiatement le profil académique de tous les professeurs des différentes universités ici.

Le SUP dit qu'il soutient la Campagne pour la Cour des Crimes Académiques (CACC) dirigée par l'ancien militant étudiant Martin K.N. Kollie.

Le CACC, par l'intermédiaire de son président, M. Kollie, a récemment dénoncé plus de 30 personnes différentes au Libéria qui servent et travaillent dans des espaces privés et publics et qui prétendent avoir des diplômes.

Le CACC a affirmé que ceux qu'il a dénoncés ont des diplômes totalement faux et faux, affirmant que leurs universités qui leur ont prétendument décerné des

diplômes n'existent pas.

Selon la SUP, elle estime que la publication du profil des professeurs de diverses universités à travers le pays lui permettra, ainsi qu'au CACC et à d'autres citoyens, de procéder à une vérification complète et qualitative des diplômes des professeurs et des récompenses académiques.

Le SUP a ajouté qu'il exigeait un audit des titres de compétences à l'Université du Libéria.

Le président du SUP,

Mustapha N. Kanneh, a déclaré lundi lors d'une conférence de presse à Capitol Hill que, lorsque ce processus sera terminé, il rehaussera l'image de l'Université du Libéria et d'autres établissements d'enseignement supérieur.

Il a affirmé que cela encouragera la transparence et exposera davantage les nombreux membres du corps professoral qui se seraient

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Éditorial

Boakai devrait saisir l'opportunité pour réconcilier l'opposition

C'est le moment ou jamais pour l'ancien vice-président Joseph Nyumah Boakai de démontrer le véritablement sens de son slogan "Liberia First" en tentant, pour une fois, de réconcilier les partis membres de la Collaboration des partis politiques (CPP) afin d'avancer.

Maintenant que la justice a rejeté toutes les charges et abandonné toutes les poursuites pénales contre M. Alexander B. Cummings, leader politique de l'Alternative National Congress (ANC), Boakai a une autre occasion de sortir et de faire preuve de leadership en réunissant la CPP pour le bien des millions de Libériens qui ont placé leur confiance dans la Collaboration pour les sortir de la misère et leur garantir un avenir meilleur.

Mais ce que nous voyons, c'est que l'ambassadeur Boakai semble se comporter comme JONAS dans la Sainte Bible, à qui Dieu a ordonné d'aller à Ninive et d'avertir les habitants de renoncer à la méchanceté et de se tourner vers Dieu, mais il a refusé et a essayé de s'échapper, mais il a été avalé par une baleine et il est resté dans son pendant trois jours consécutifs avant d'être vomi.

La CPP aspire à un véritable leadership, mais le vieil homme d'État n'a rien fait pour résoudre les querelles internes. Au lieu de cela, il a cité des désaccords entre les dirigeants des partis membres de la Collaboration et a finalement démissionné, abandonnant le navire sans capitaine.

Il ne s'est pas arrêté là. Le leader de l'UP est même allé au tribunal et a témoigné contre son propre frère, M. Alexander Cummings ! Nous ne le blâmons pas d'être allé à l'encontre de Cummings, car il y avait des forces qui travaillaient derrière dans l'obscurité pour s'assurer que la coalition éclate.

La CPP devrait donc revenir au statu quo ante et mettre ses actes ensemble, car le peuple libérien aspire à un leadership fiable. Ils croient toujours que la CPP détient l'avenir. Leur espoir ne doit pas être anéanti ou échangé contre quoi que ce soit.

Et nous croyons fermement que c'est seulement lui (Boakai) qui peut exécuter cette mission en ce moment, c'est pourquoi tout le scandale du document-cadre de la CPP a été jeté par la fenêtre. Il est temps de recommencer, car l'erreur est humaine et le pardon est divin.

Le pardon est la porte d'entrée vers le progrès. Aucun ego personnel ne devrait être supérieur ou plus grand que la Patrie. Le Libéria est le patrimoine commun auquel nous appartenons tous. La coalition au pouvoir ne peut avoir la chance de gagner que si le bloc de l'opposition refuse de concilier leurs différences.

Boakai devrait cesser d'écouter les personnes qui ont un intérêt et un agenda égoïstes et regarder au-delà de son environnement immédiat pour appeler Cummings, Urey et la sénatrice Karnga Lawrence à s'asseoir autour d'une table pour discuter de l'avenir de la CPP.

Nous sommes fermement convaincus qu'étant un homme d'État âgé, il incombe à Boakai de se pencher sur cette affaire et de tendre la main aux autres pour s'asseoir ensemble et élaborer une stratégie commune.

Français

L'ancien parti au pouvoir veut que les commissaires

prétendue clause du Parti politique de collaboration désintégré. Partis (CPP).

Mais la Cour suprême a statué ce week-end que l'UP et l'ALP étaient libres de présenter des candidats.

Dans un communiqué de presse publié le lundi 6 juin, le dirigeant politique de l'UP et ancien vice-président du Libéria, l'ambassadeur Joseph Nyumah Boakai, a déclaré qu'il n'avait pas confiance dans la Commission électorale nationale telle qu'elle est actuellement.

Il a dit qu'il ne pouvait pas éviter cette question, alléguant qu'« il y a beaucoup de penchant politique là-dedans, beaucoup d'incompétence et des gens qui ne sont pas patriotes, et nous ne croyons pas qu'ils appartiennent et ne peuvent pas nous conduire jusqu'en 2023 ».

Le communiqué cite Amb. Boakai a déclaré que le mandat du NEC ne lui permet pas de travailler pour un parti politique ou un gouvernement, mais uniquement dans l'intérêt du peuple libérien.

L'ancien vice-président, en réaction à la décision de la Cour suprême rendue le vendredi 3 juin 2022, a noté que la plus haute juridiction du pays avait pris la bonne décision en faisant respecter la Constitution et l'État de droit lorsqu'elle a décidé d'annuler l'obstruction de la NEC à l'enregistrement le candidat de l'UP à l'élection partielle reportée du comté de Lofa.

L'élection partielle en attente de Lofa doit avoir lieu après que l'ancien ministre de la Défense Brownie Samukai, qui a été élu lors des élections partielles de décembre 2020, a été empêché d'occuper son siège de sénateur du comté de Lofa en raison de sa condamnation dans une affaire pénale déposée contre lui.

Amb. Boakai a ensuite félicité le juge en chef et les juges associés de la Cour suprême pour cette décision créant un précédent, qui, selon lui, était un signal au NEC "de faire la bonne chose à tout moment".

Amb. Boakai a également averti le NEC qu'il incombe aux commissaires de faire ce qu'il faut car l'UP sera prêt à contester toute mauvaise décision prise contre "l'opposition et, par extension, les intérêts des électeurs".

Le dirigeant politique de l'UP a ensuite souligné avec force que le maintien de "la paix durablement gagnée au Libéria dépend de la pratique sans entraves d'une politique légitime, qui comprend des élections libres et équitables".

Il a rappelé au NEC la mise à jour de la liste électorale et le besoin urgent d'utiliser le système de vote biométrique lors des élections de 2023, qui ont été recommandés par les observateurs électoraux internationaux en 2007, y compris la CEDEAO.

Boakai a souligné que les élections de 2023 doivent se dérouler dans le cadre d'un "processus transparent car le Parti de l'unité et ses partis politiques affiliés et le peuple libérien n'accepteront rien de moins.

La SUP exige la publication des

cachés derrière de faux diplômes comme une fenêtre pour continuer à être employés dans ces institutions.

L'étudiant Kanneh a déclaré que leur quête est un véritable plaidoyer qui vise à effectuer un audit des diplômes solide qui vise à exposer les malversations académiques et la fraude systémique dans le meilleur intérêt de la marche en avant du pays.

Il a exhorté tous les Libériens patriotes à rallier massivement leur soutien à la juste cause.

Cependant, SUP a révélé que depuis que le CACC a révélé le faux diplôme présumé du doyen du Liberia College, le Dr Josephus Gray et du doyen du Science College, le Dr

James McCain de l'UL, les autorités universitaires n'ont rien fait pour enquêter sur l'allégation.

Kanneh a déclaré que les autorités accusées continuent d'occuper leurs postes à l'université.

Le président Kanneh a indiqué que le SUP considère ce silence peu commun et sans surveillance des autorités universitaires comme un chiffon à la face des étudiants et du public qui considèrent la sainteté et l'honnêteté académiques de l'université.

Cependant, le SUP a appelé au renvoi immédiat de ces doyens et les a déclarés persona non grata sur les campus de l'UL, ajoutant que l'UL ne peut jamais être un paradis pour embaucher des diplômés non mérités et de faux papiers.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Melvyn Krauss

Remettre l'OTAN sur les rails

STANFORD - La nomination de Lloyd Austin au poste de secrétaire de la Défense par le président américain élu Joe Biden, qui fait ainsi le choix d'un ancien général quatre étoiles depuis peu à la retraite, constitue un nouveau signal encourageant, celui d'une Amérique qui a retrouvé la raison et qui, après le 20 janvier prochain, ne cherchera plus à punir ses alliés tout en récompensant ses ennemis. Pour exposer pleinement ce changement au monde, et dès sa prise de fonctions, il serait désormais souhaitable que Biden annule l'ordre donné par le président Donald Trump au mois de juillet, consistant à rapatrier d'Allemagne 12 000 soldats américains.

Sans que cela ne coûte un centime aux Etats-Unis, Biden se désolidariserait ainsi de l'isolationnisme cher à Trump, et mettrait un frein à la stratégie du président russe Vladimir Poutine consistant à diviser pour mieux régner en Europe. L'annulation du retrait des troupes soutiendrait également l'OTAN, l'Allemagne et la chancelière Angela Merkel - dont le potentiel successeur sera choisi mi-janvier - dans leur combat contre Poutine et les populistes nationaux détracteurs de l'Occident.

Trump a prétendu vouloir procéder à ce retrait de troupes américaines parce que l'Allemagne aurait trompé l'alliance de l'OTAN concernant sa contribution financière à la défense, obligeant ainsi l'Amérique à compenser le manque. C'est tout à fait absurde, et je le conteste avec d'autant plus de certitude que j'ai moi-même dénoncé autrefois l'insuffisance de la contribution allemande.

Pendant des décennies, les présidents républicains et démocrates ne se sont jamais offusqués que les Etats-Unis dépendent beaucoup plus que l'Allemagne dans l'OTAN. J'ai considéré à une certaine période qu'ils auraient dû s'en offusquer, et c'est pourquoi j'ai écrit en 1986 How NATO Weakens the West, qui traite de l'Allemagne et de son comportement de passager clandestin en matière de défense. J'étais si persuadé de ma thèse que j'ai également publié dans le Wall Street Journal un article intitulé « Il est temps de transformer l'Alliance atlantique ».

Mais jamais je n'aurais cru que Trump userait de mon raisonnement stratégique, désormais ancien, pour démolir la solidarité de l'OTAN et renforcer Poutine. Certes, l'Allemagne ne dépense sans doute pas assez pour la défense ; c'est ce que pensent clairement les Français. Pour autant, l'affirmation selon laquelle l'Allemagne tromperait les États-Unis en contribuant trop peu à la défense n'est qu'une absurdité de plus pour dissimuler la détermination de Trump à récompenser Poutine tout en réprimandant Merkel. Poutine souhaitait depuis longtemps une présence militaire américaine moindre en Europe, et il a trouvé en Trump un président américain disposé à collaborer avec lui.

Ma propre réflexion concernant l'OTAN et la contribution allemande s'y rattachant a commencé à évoluer peu après la parution de mon livre. Pendant sa promotion, j'ai débattu avec Lawrence Eagleburger, qui a par la suite été secrétaire d'État sous la présidence de George H.W. Bush, et j'ai rencontré de nombreux et très sérieux responsables militaires bien informés. J'ai alors compris que ce qui comptait le plus pour les États-Unis - et encore aujourd'hui - c'était le contrôle sur la structure et l'objet de la défense européenne, bien davantage que les coûts. Le « deal » transatlantique conclu après la guerre froide était le suivant, selon la plupart des experts militaires américains : l'Amérique paierait la majeure partie des dépenses de l'OTAN, et conserverait en échange le leadership sur la défense européenne.

En réalité, j'ai abandonné l'expression « les Allemands nous prennent pour des pigeons », liée à mon souhait d'une alliance transatlantique efficace,

lorsque je me suis affranchi de ce populisme conservateur qui avait influencé ma pensée initiale. Par ailleurs, plusieurs preuves dans les années 1980 démontrent que les experts militaires détracteurs de mon livre avaient raison. Les disputes transatlantiques de l'époque ne concernaient pas les dépenses, mais plutôt des questions telles que l'installation de missiles Pershing II en Allemagne de l'Ouest pour contrer les missiles balistiques de l'Union soviétique. Compte tenu de leur histoire difficile et d'un fort mouvement pacifiste, les Allemands de l'Ouest hésitaient beaucoup sur cette question.

Après de nombreuses tergiversations, et grâce au solide leadership du chancelier social-démocrate Helmut Schmidt puis de son successeur à la CDU Helmut Kohl, l'Allemagne de l'Ouest installera finalement les missiles Pershing II en 1983. Ces missiles serviront d'ailleurs très bien leur objectif : l'OTAN en usera comme d'une monnaie d'échange en 1987 dans le cadre du Traité sur les forces nucléaires à portée intermédiaire (FNI) avec l'Union soviétique, un accord phare dans le désamorçage de la menace nucléaire. Les Pershing II seront par la suite détruits, et la rumeur dit que certains des matériaux résiduels auraient fini en stylos à bille à la bibliothèque présidentielle Ronald Reagan, qui les auraient donnés en cadeau.

Même si Trump n'a pas réussi à faire de la contribution allemande aux dépenses de défense une question politique majeure aux États-Unis, le sujet est devenu polémique en Europe. Dans un récent entretien pour le magazine Le Grand Continent, le président français Emmanuel Macron - fervent partisan d'une plus grande souveraineté européenne en matière de défense - a vivement critiqué la ministre allemande de la Défense, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, qui avait publié dans Politico un article intitulé « L'Europe a encore besoin de l'Amérique ». L'Europe aurait moins besoin de l'Amérique, a sous-entendu Macron, si l'Allemagne revoyait à la hausse ses dépenses en matière de défense.

Ce n'est jamais bon pour l'OTAN, ni pour l'unité de l'UE, que les deux plus importants membres de l'Union soient en désaccord sur le rôle de l'Amérique en Europe. L'alliance occidentale a certes besoin d'une garantie américaine de sécurité pour l'Allemagne et d'autres pays européens, mais pas au prix d'une scission franco-allemande, qui constituerait une offrande de plus pour Poutine.

La France et l'Allemagne doivent réduire leur fracture actuelle en matière de défense, et l'Amérique maintenir sa garantie de sécurité pour l'Europe. Le continent a besoin de soldats américains sur le terrain, pas seulement en Allemagne mais également dans les pays baltes. L'une des issues à cette problématique pourrait consister pour l'Allemagne à contribuer davantage aux budgets de la défense européenne, ce qui apporterait le degré d'indépendance souhaité par la France, tout en conservant les troupes américaines de son choix.

Biden pourrait amorcer ce processus de réconciliation entre la France et l'Allemagne - et plus important encore entre les États-Unis et leurs partenaires de l'OTAN - en annulant le retrait militaire prévu par Trump. Il pourrait ensuite exploiter le levier qui en résulterait, ainsi que ses connaissances personnelles (Biden ayant assisté à la Conférence annuelle de Munich sur la sécurité depuis des décennies, et connaissant presque tous les principaux responsables de la politique étrangère allemande), pour convaincre l'Allemagne d'investir davantage dans la défense européenne. L'objectif majeur d'un tel engagement consisterait non pas à apaiser l'Amérique, mais plutôt à encourager Macron, ami sincère de l'Allemagne.

Traduit de l'anglais par Martin Morel

Melvyn Krauss est membre principal de la Hoover Institution de l'Université de Stanford.

ARTICLE

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Liberia: The Presidency's Budget and Waste

By S. Karweaye

The year 2022 budget is already off to a dramatic start with allegations of massive misappropriation to the tune of about US\$24,866,637.54 being levelled against the Minister of Finance for his failure to remit to the National Road Fund.

According to the audit conducted on the Road Fund by the General Auditing Commission (GAC) for two fiscal years July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2020, and released to the National Legislature last week, the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) collected US\$53,018,871.54 and deposited some of the money in the Consolidated Fund Account instead of the National Road Fund (NRF) account.

According to the Act, "all funds of the NRF shall be held in the Fund Account from which disbursement shall be made solely to finance the approved annual road maintenance expenditure program and directly related costs as hereby required in this Act." The act, among other things, states the primary objective of the Road Fund is to ensure that the country's road assets are sustained and maintained periodically from funds collected from the taxes – which cannot be diverted for any purpose – except to fix roads. The Consolidated Fund Account is the Government general revenue account that is controlled by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP). Of the US\$53,018,871.54 collected, according to the audit report, the MFDP remitted US\$28,152,231 to the National Road Fund thereby leaving a difference of US\$24,866,637.54 which was not remitted.

Appearing before the Senate's Public Account Committee, Samuel Tweah, the Minister of Finance and Development Planning, said that a handful of legislators whom he had conversations with gave him the go-ahead to divert US\$24.8 million intended for the National Road Fund to the payment of civil servants' salaries. He also said he was authorized by the international partners to divert the money from the National Road Fund. Minister Tweah's action violates Chapter 2.2 of the Act that created the National Road Fund, whose source of revenue is taxes collected from motorists solely for the construction/maintenance of roads and bridges across the country.

Question: Should a government that claims to have the interest of its citizens at heart so brazenly loot or misappropriate public funds? Does the average person know the intricacies of how the budget is appropriated? These are questions that must command the interest of Liberians as yet another cycle of wasteful spending unfolds.

In seeking answers to the above questions, we will begin an analysis of the 2022 budget with an assessment of the Presidency's allocations. It includes the Office of the President, Financial Management, Domestic and Special Services, the National Security Council Secretariat, Presidential Advisory Board, Technical Services, Ministry of State without Portfolio, Public Affairs, Public Affairs, Communication and Technology, Finance, Economic and Legal Affairs and Administration, and Management. Indeed, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commissions, General Auditing Agency, Public Procurement, and Concession Commission, National Disaster Management Agency, Ministries, Departments & Agencies (MDAs)- and all executive bodies can be considered part of the Presidency, though under separate budget sub-heads, however

for this article, we look at the Presidency - 'The Executive Mansion', while the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) will be examined in the ensuing weeks. The Executive Mansion is an important budget subhead that overlooks MDAs, some of which are central to Liberia's anti-corruption, transparency, and disaster preparedness.

In the 2022 approved budget, the presidency was authorized to spend US\$20 million of the national budget as compared to the 10.8 million it got in 2021. \$14.5 million of the \$20 million budget of the presidency is apportioned to personnel costs or staff salaries /goods and services while 5.2 million is for non-financial assets and US\$475,000 for a grant. Total allocations across the presidency revealed the following: Office of the President (\$5,4 million), Financial Management (\$343,000), Domestic and Special Services (\$830,500), Technical Services(631,944), Public Affairs, Communication and Technology (\$180,000), Finance, Economic and Legal Affairs (\$42,000), National Security Council Secretariat (\$237,000) and Presidential Advisory Board (\$179,000). Similarly, the Administration and Management of the Presidency have US\$ 11 million, and the Ministry of State without Portfolio \$870,800. As is evident from the above, the highest allocation of \$20 million goes to the Ministry of States and Presidential Affairs (The

the administration of procurement or concession contracts.

This reality should ordinarily lead to increased funding for the PPCC, but President Weah simply cannot be bothered. In 2022, the PPCC got \$952,495 to reduce corruption and improve transparency and accountability in public procurement. While this is an increase over the 2020/2021 special budget allocation of \$254,494, it is a classic example of perverse prioritization when you consider that the Presidency is spending \$1.8 million on domestic travel-daily subsistence allowances and \$1 million on celebrations, commemorations, and state visit, US\$700 on special presidential projects while the PPCC, which is the transparency watchdog of the procurement or concession contracts in Liberia is less funded.

As concerned Liberians, we should ask important questions: if the fight against corruption is sincere, why do the Presidency's domestic travel-daily subsistence allowances or commemorations and state visits allocations are higher than PPCC? Why does the Presidency also think that the welfare package (\$3.7 million) for a few Executive Mansion employees is more important than the transparency and anti-corruption drive?

To use the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) as another example, with Liberia's insecurity issues, threats of global warming, sea erosion, flooding, and other unforeseen disasters, why is the agency not getting higher allocation for research and development? Nowhere in its paltry provision line item for the disaster fund? The consequences could be unpreparedness for disasters which would only lead to an increase in the number of internally displaced Liberia as evidenced by the sea erosion in West Point, New Kru Town, etc. This would hamper the operations of NDMA and impact the timeliness of its response to disasters, Sadly, NDMA gets only \$846,386 in the budget while the presidency gets US\$ 700,000 for Humanitarian Outreach.

Unarguably, almost every item in the approved 2022 Presidency budget redefines the term 'wasteful'. For instance, there is a provision of \$400,000 for the Wroto Town Housing

Project under the presidency and an additional \$700,000 for Special Presidential Projects, but the approved budget cleverly leaves out details of the special presidential Projects. Most ridiculous is spending \$231,000 on generator fuel. The Presidency should simply get connected to the national grid and experience the much-touted 'improvement' in the power supply if it believes in its fairy tales.

Misappropriation of public funds should not be treated with such levity if there is going to be a more even distribution of national income and if there is any hope of closing the wide gap between the rich and poor in Liberia. The populace must not fall for the deliberate distraction tactics of this government whenever their failures manifest. Public accountability must be paramount in the minds of those that have the privilege to work in public service or vying for political office as well as the electorates. The \$24.8 million diverted from the National Road Fund must be accounted for. We must demand accountability and insist on it. The government - beginning with the Presidency - needs to urgently reduce wasteful spending by trimming unnecessary costs and eliminating wasteful provisions to free up funds for investments in human and physical infrastructure. The Presidency should set standards for probity and sensible spending. Unfortunately, the Presidency's current approved budget shows no indication of any real progress or positive change, only the jamboree mentality that has become a hallmark of Weah's government.



Presidency) alone whose only responsibility is catering to the President and his largely 'missing-in-action' deputy.

Analyzing the presidency budget further, it becomes clear that this government is insincere in its fight against corruption and transparency. How can it justify the allocation of \$2.2 million to the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), but \$20 million to the Presidency and \$5 million to the General Auditing Commission (GAC)? It is even more pathetic when one considers that the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) gets a miserable \$846,386 in the 2022 fiscal year. The budgetary provisions can be seen in clearer perspective if you consider that the Presidency intends to amongst others, spend its allocations on renovating the Executive Mansion, presidential humanitarian outreach, foreign travels, allowances, scratch cards, residential property rental, and lease, fuel and lubricants, gas for generators, special presidential projects, celebrations, commemorations, and state visit, etc. while the LACC, GAC, and NDMA-all agencies which render essential anti-corruption and disaster management services get fractions of its allocation.

A closer look at the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) will illustrate the sorry state of affairs in Liberia. Procurement is the single greatest corruption risk in the public sector. Millions of dollars are lost every year through corrupt contracting and untransparent procurement processes for public contracts, especially related to public infrastructure in Liberia. Beyond a shortage of funds, the PPCC faces the challenges of securing staff with significant experience in the procurement or concession process or matters relating to

Teahjay lacks political judgement

By Lewis S. Teh

Senator J. Milton Teahjay lacks political judgment, according to Sinoe County Superintendent Lee Nagbe

lacks political judgement," Chea said adding "How can you be a student at the United Methodist University and later say you will be

individual, who wants to form part of the rebuilding process of Liberia, but such individual must be decisive and not be between twist and turns.

"While it is true that Senator Teahjay has been a founding member of the CDC, he can't entangle himself with two separate political parties", he maintains.

Superintendent Chea: "The Senator needs to be clear as to where he will lend his support this coming election."

According to him, it's very much confusing for Teahjay to admit of being a card carrier of the Unity Party but has vowed to support the re-election bid of President Weah.

When asked whether he (Supt. Chea) would contest in the upcoming legislative elections in Sinoe, says news about his desire to contest is nothing but mere rumor, adding that as chair of the CDC Sinoe Chapter, his prime focus is to ensure that the CDC wins in the county.

Recently, Senator Teahjay publicly announced his desire to support the re-election of President Weah despite being a staunch partisan of the

former governing UP that is now in opposition.

According to him, his decision to support the re-election of Weah is in consultation with his people on grounds that President Weah is proceeding rightly.

Meanwhile, Superintendent Chea has called on the 54th Legislature through the Liberian Senate to pass into law the drugs bill that seeks to make drug crimes here a nonbailable offense.

Chea laments high increase of

drugs abuse in his county and the entire Liberia, saying that the usage of drugs by young people especially school going children is destroying the fabric of the society.

He warns that if nothing is done by national government to give drugs serious attention, there wouldn't be young people left to be called future generation of Liberian leaders because they all would have been decimated by narcotics. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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prior to the incident on Monday, Sergeant Tucker had allegedly been talking about killing himself.

Other residents who live outside Star Base have also narrated that Tucker was seen drinking alcohol excessively and asking them if they had ever seen somebody shoot themselves in the head.

"Tucker had on [a] Yellow T-shirt, but during the day he changed his clothes almost three times, and at night he had on black and white," another eyewitness explained.

"He was on duty and later he was not looking good with the gun in his hand, so his friend went to take the gun from him. But when the guy asked him for it, he refused," the eyewitness added.

While in the process, the eyewitness noted, Tucker's colleague wanted to take the weapon forcefully, and in return, the deceased allegedly shot his friend.

Upon shooting and wounding his colleague, the witness said Tucker also allegedly pointed the gun under his own cheek and shot himself too.

The shooting allegedly left Tucker's head scattered, according to the eyewitness.

According to the resident, they heard the gun sound three times when the heavy rain was falling Monday night.

The witness said when they went out, they discovered that Tucker had shot himself to death and wounded his junior colleague.

Following the incident, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia Maj. Gen. Prince C. Johnson, III, along with other senior AFL Soldiers, drove in the fence at Star Base and inspected the body.

They took the corpse to the John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital for medical pronouncement.

The body was placed in a grey Toyota Pickup and escorted by soldiers at about 8:45-9 am.

Later, one of the soldiers went out to talk to the family including the mother of the deceased, his girlfriend Rose and several other relatives.

The soldiers expressed their regret over the incident, saying they were hurt more than any other person.

The family of the deceased

refused to talk to journalists on grounds that they did not know anything about what had happened.

For her part, Rose, who is said to be Tucker's fiancée, said she never told the deceased that she did not want him anymore. She said both had been having telephone conversations, adding that she just couldn't believe that her boyfriend and children's father had done what he did because of frustration.

Later on Tuesday, 7 June 2022, the Ministry of Defense and the Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Liberia ordered a lock down of the military duty station at the Star Base, Bushrod Island.

According to a release issued, the order came after a fatal shooting at about 2030hrs on June 6, 2022, involving one of its personnel.

"This sad incident resulted in the death of a soldier and severe injury to another who is undergoing medical treatment and care at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center," the release said.

The Defense Authorities said motive behind the shooting is yet to be established. Notwithstanding, they noted that the Provosts Marshall and the Military Police are currently involved with the investigation to establish the motive behind the shooting.

The release added that the Liberia National Police is also involved in aiding the investigation.

"The Ministry of National Defense and the AFL are assuring the public that all is under control and a preliminary report will be provided as soon as possible," the release stated.

It noted that the Ministry of Defense and the Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Liberia acknowledge that protecting military installations, and the people who work and live there from such incidents is a major undertaking.

"Finally, identifying security solutions and gaps on our installations where we served has always been a priority and all recommendations coming from the investigation will be taken seriously."

It said the families of the victims have been contacted and all necessary assistance or support for them has been considered.



Superintendent Lee Nagbe Chea.

Chea.

The vocal Sinoe County recently declared his support for the second term bid of incumbent President George Weah, even though he has admitted being a strong member of the former ruling Unity Party.

"I think Senator Teahjay

graduating from AME University? This I'm finding difficult to understand."

Speaking Monday, June 6 in a live interview on OK FM, the Sinoe County Superintendent said the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) under President Weah welcomes into the party any

AFL soldier in fatal shooting

By Lincoln G. Peters

A soldier of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), Sergeant Prince Tucker has reportedly shot himself to death after allegedly wounding a junior AFL Officer with gunshot Monday night, 6 June 2022.

The incident reportedly occurred at the AFL's Star Base on Bushrod Island where both the deceased and the injured officer were assigned.

Residents from Star Base and its surrounding areas have told our reporter that the incident occurred when the wounded officer attempted taking possession of Officer Tucker's assigned weapon upon noticing that the deceased was acting strangely.

The residents claimed that Officer Tucker had planned to take his own life out of frustration because his fiancée, only identified as Rose, had left him following a quarrel.

Rose, according to the locals' account, packed her belongings and took along with her the children she had by Officer Tucker.

The eyewitnesses say Rose had allegedly accused the deceased of squandering and spoiling money intended for the family. But the eyewitnesses said the deceased had told Rose that he did not squander the money rather, explaining that

he used it to buy a flash screen TV, a freezer and other appliances for the home.

The deceased reportedly intended using the electronics to help generate additional funds and to also keep their children far from other people's dwelling place.

The deceased and his fiancée reportedly had two children, a boy and a girl. Rose allegedly took all of them along because their school had closed at the time of the dispute.

The eyewitnesses explained that Rose rejected her boyfriend's account, telling Tucker that she would return home if he paid her bride price and married her.

"My brother, the woman

and that man had palaver and she left the house. If we are not mistaken, today is exactly three or four months now," one eyewitness who did not want to be named, said.

"She told her husband that she can only come back to the house if he married her and that is the frustration that was in him, we believe so," she added. "He did not tell anybody, but we know," the woman noted.

According to residents of the Star Base, Sergeant Tucker was a very professional, intelligent, quiet and friendly soldier. They said he used to joke and respect everybody, regardless of their age or status in society.

Some women who live with their spouses at Star Base said



SHOT ON A DUAL CAMERA

Liberia-Israel friendship special

-Israeli President Herzog

McGill delivered a special message to him (the Israeli President and Government) on behalf of President George M. Weah.

He said Israel considers Liberia a "strategic partner in Africa" and will therefore work to ensure that "our strategic partnership is advanced for the betterment of both countries".

President Herzog informed the delegation that the potential for all kinds of Israeli investments in Liberia is vast. He named Trade and Commerce, Agriculture, Education, Health and Tourism as areas that require concerted approach by both countries for socio-economic development.

"We have all kinds of the expertise to assist Liberia in its development drive so the sooner we start our engagements, the better it will be", he stressed, while suggesting Israel needs "a big economic delegation to visit Liberia soon".

The Israeli President also expressed his desire to visit Liberia himself in 2023, saying that "I want to follow in my



(l-r) Min. McGill and Israeli President Herzog

Israeli President Isaac Herzog has described his country's relations with Liberia as "special".

President Herzog said both nations have had long-standing diplomatic ties dating back to the formation of the State of Israel.

Speaking in Jerusalem on Monday, June 6, 2022, when he received a high-level Liberian Government Delegation headed by

Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Nathaniel F. McGill the Israeli President noted that his country has deep respect for Liberia.

"Israel has deep respect for Liberia", the Israeli leader said, while noting that "this visit by the Minister [of State] and Delegation from President George Weah is historic."

His comment came after

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