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CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA
MARKET BUYING AND SELLING RATES
LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 06, 2023	LS155.9325/US\$1.00	LS158.1309US\$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.

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Running for unfinished business

-Weah tells partisans

'Very crazy, comical, laughable'



-Government rejects PYJ death threat claim

Sen. Johnson

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Continental News

Nigerian Authorities Call For Calm as Citizens Protest Cash, Fuel Shortages

ABUJA, NIGERIA — Nigerian Central Bank authorities are calling for calm as citizens march in the streets protesting cash and fuel shortages days ahead of the February 10 deadline when the country will switch to redesigned currency. Protesters asked authorities

to minimize inconvenience. He said there are enough of the redesigned currency and reiterated that the deadline to exchange the old bills for the new ones will not be extended beyond February 10. On Sunday, the CBN announced a 10-day extension from January 31 for citizens to

exchange world currencies for the new 200-, 500-, and 1,000-naira bills. But across many states, citizens say the new cash is yet to circulate, bringing business to a halt.

The situation snowballed into protests Friday in Oyo, Delta, Osun and Lagos states. Angry mobs vandalized banks and gas stations. Ogho Okiti, the managing director of BusinessDay Media Ltd. said the new policy, though profitable, is already showing signs of poor implementation.

"What I think is happening is that we're seeing an evidence of poor execution of the policy," said Okiti. "There's the dimension of logistics, there's the dimension of restrictions, then the dimension of accessibility, even to make transfers online you're not able to do that. So, it's putting so much frustration and pressure on the system".

Nigeria is also facing intensifying fuel shortages across the country due to a disruption in the product distribution chain caused by the activities of cross-border smugglers.

On Friday, Buhari called for calm and said he has met with officials to resolve the problem in a lasting manner. Oyo state Governor Sheyi Makinde also addressed residents in a televised broadcast, condemning violence in the state's capital of Ibadan.

"The violence that erupted in part of Ibadan today is condemnable and will not be tolerated," said Makinde. "In response to this I've suspended all campaign activities, I've also met with the heads of security agencies in Oyo state to restore calm. VOA



People queue at a petrol station in Lagos

Friday to circulate the new notes or reverse the currency switch decision. President Muhammadu Buhari assured citizens Friday that the problem will be addressed in a matter of days.

Central Bank of Nigeria Governor Godwin Emefiele told reporters Saturday authorities are taking measures to ensure smooth flow of the cash swap and

exchange world currencies for the new 200-, 500-, and 1,000-naira bills.

But across many states, citizens say the new cash is yet to circulate, bringing business to a halt.

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Ogho Okiti, the managing

Ethiopia PM Holds First Meeting with Tigray Leaders Since Peace Deal

NAIROBI — Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and other government officials held their first meeting Friday with Tigrayan leaders since a November peace deal, officials and state media said.

The two sides evaluated "actions carried out on the implementation of the Pretoria and Nairobi peace agreements so far" and discussed issues that "need further attention," the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation said.

The meeting took place at a resort in southern Ethiopia, it said.

A peace deal between Abiy's government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, signed in South Africa's capital Pretoria in November last year silenced the guns in northern Ethiopia.

Under the terms of the agreement, the TPLF agreed to disarm and reestablish the authority of the federal government in return for the restoration of access to Tigray, which was largely cut off from

the outside world during the two-year war.

Abiy's national security adviser Redwan Hussein said on Twitter that Abiy and other government officials "met today and held discussion with TPLF delegation regarding the progress of the peace process."

"As a result, PM Abiy passed decisions about increasing Flights, Banking & other issues that would boost trust & ease lives of civilians," he tweeted.

Since the deal was signed,

there has been a limited resumption of aid deliveries to Tigray, which has long faced dire shortages of food, fuel, cash and medicines.

Basic services such as communications, banking and electricity are slowly being restored to the stricken region of 6 million people, with the national carrier Ethiopian Airlines resuming commercial flights between Addis Ababa and Tigray's capital, Mekele, last month. VOA



Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and the leader of the Tigray People's Liberation Front party are pictured on a local newspaper

Removal of Omar from Key Committee Sparks Mixed Reaction

WASHINGTON — Somali Americans living in the United States have mixed reactions to the removal of congresswoman Ilhan Omar, a Democrat, from the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

The Republican-led House of Representatives removed Omar from the panel Thursday after her past anti-Israel comments.

"We're not removing her from other committees," House Speaker Kevin McCarthy told reporters. "We just do not believe when it comes to foreign affairs, especially with the responsibility of that position around the world, with the comments that you make, she shouldn't serve there."

The removal prompted rebukes and accusations of

bigotry from Democrats. Republicans said the action made a strong statement against antisemitism but Omar, other Democrats and the White House said it was revenge after the Democrat-held House majority ousted two Republicans from their committees in 2020.

Omar suggested she was kicked out because she is a Muslim woman who immigrated to the U.S. as a refugee. "I am Muslim. I am an immigrant. And interestingly, from Africa. Is anyone surprised that I am being targeted?" Omar said in an emotional floor speech Thursday immediately ahead of the vote, displaying a photo of her younger self on a poster board beside her.

Political revenge Speaking to VOA, Somali Americans have expressed alarm at the decision, describing it as "political revenge" after they said that Omar stood up and strongly opposed the GOP and allies of former president Donald Trump.

Most of them rallied in a fiery defense of Omar. "It's a black day for Muslim Americans, immigrants and people of color," said Hashi Shafi, executive director of the Somali Action Alliance, a Minneapolis-based community organization. "We learned a lesson from it. Omar had served well for Muslims, the voiceless, the people of color and her constituency as well, and we hope she comes back."

Saeed Ibrahim Cagmadhige, a business owner in Columbus, Ohio, said the decision was expected. "She stood up to Trump, she was outspoken about Israel, a country protected by the U.S., so her removal was expected," Cagmadhige said. "We Somalis are sorry. I hope that she returns to this committee or other higher positions in the future."

Khadra Mohamed Shire, a member of the Somali community in Ohio, said this is "anti-American"



U.S. Representative Ilhan Omar, a Democrat, leaves the House chamber at the Capitol in Washington

and will damage the credibility of the U.S.

"GOP and Trump targeted Omar because she is someone who often speaks about the wrong thing on U.S. foreign policy," said Shire.

Accused of making mistakes Some Somali Americans said they welcome the removal of Omar from the foreign affairs panel, accusing her of making a lot of mistakes.

"It seems that she is mainly responsible for her removal, and there are reasons why she has so few friends in Congress," Abdirishaq Sheikh Ali, a member of Somali Americans in Ohio told VOA. "I'm sorry, but I believe she is to blame for such a vote that led to her ... to be removed from the panel."

Abdulkadir Haji, a supporter of the Republican Party who unsuccessfully ran for a seat in the Ohio Legislature, said the move by his party to kick Omar off the panel was unnecessary.

"It was ugly, I didn't recommend that the speaker would have done something like that. [It was a] Waste of time. We have other issues in front of us, including inflation, high gas prices, and the war in Ukraine, which need to be addressed. It was not better to waste time on Omar." VOA

EDITORIAL

Senator Prince Johnson again

FORMER REBEL LEADER-turned evangelist and politician, Senator Prince Yormie Johnson of Nimba county, who murdered hundreds of unarmed civilians, including women and children in the 90s during the peak of the Liberian Civil War when he shot his way to Monrovia is alarming threat on his life.

EXECUTIVES OF SEN. Johnson's Movement for Democracy and Reconstruction (MDR) party alarmed here in a news conference last week Thursday, 2nd February that they received intelligence from a highly placed source of an alleged attempt by the Weah administration to take his life, a claim the government has dismissed as unfounded.

DURING THE NEWS conference last Thursday, attended by several executives of the party, including political leader Senator Jeremiah Koug, PYJ himself, and Vice Chairman Mensco Wolloh, the party said it has called on the international community to investigate the alleged threat on its leader. "We received intelligence from a highly placed source that there is an attempt to assassinate Senate Prince Y. Johnson", Vice Chairman Wolloh alleged.

ALL OF THIS is coming from the Nimba senator after he recently announced a departure with President George Weah for allegedly not fulfilling campaign promises made to the Nimba people. He had pledged support to Mr. Weah in the runoff election that brought the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) to power and turned the MDR over to the ruling establishment.

SPECIFICALLY, PYJ accused the government of failure in releasing county development funds accrued over the past five years of the administration to Nimba, totaling millions of dollars. He also accused President Weah of breaking promises to employ more Nimbiains in government under the political marriage, among others as reason for withdrawing support to Mr. Weah in the pending election.

WE ARE NOT concerned much about the agreement or MOU under which PYJ went into a political marriage with President Weah. But for the former leader of the rebels Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) who sent hundreds, if not thousands of unarmed civilians to death thru summary executions during the bloody civil war, to attend a news conference about alleged threat on his life is laughable.

WE WONDER WHEN did the senator, who is sanctioned by the United States Government for votes selling and buying, get to know about the importance of dear life that he took away arbitrarily from innocent, hungry and helplessly terrified people thru the nuzzle of his pistol during the civil war.

THE LIKES OF Tecumsey Roberts, a famous Liberian musician and hundreds of helpless others never had an opportunity under the watch of Field Marshal/Senator Prince Johnson to alarm about threats on their lives, as he trickled his silver pistol and abruptly ended their lives.

LAUGHABLY TODAY, the man who committed some of the worst heinous crimes, including crimes against humanity like massacres, is calling on the international community for protection. In this sense, the evangelist-turned-politician is insinuating that his life is more important than the thousands he killed in the civil war under the pretext of liberation.

AS A MATTER of fact, who is really after his life? Despite all of the atrocities that he committed against unarmed civilians, PYJ returned from exile in Nigeria and was rewarded with a seat in the senate, where he has served for 18 years without reporting any threat on his life, not even from relatives and friends of those he killed in cold blood. We can but only encourage PYJ, who has vehemently opposed calls for a war crimes court in Liberia to instead, muster the courage and allow to court to come so that he may have the opportunity to face his accusers and exonerate himself than raising false alarms.

COMMENTARY

By J. Bradford DeLong

Utopia or Bust

BERKELEY - My book on the economic history of the twentieth century, published last fall, did not include a chapter on the question of the future or "what we should do next," because my frequent co-author, Stephen S. Cohen, convinced me that whatever I wrote would come to look outdated and silly within six months. He was right: such arguments are better left to commentaries like this one. So, if I had written a final chapter looking to the future, what should I have said?

Prior to the phantom text, I argue that for most of history, humanity was too poor for political governance to be anything but elites ruling through force and fraud to amass wealth and resources for themselves. But in 1870, the rocket of modern economic growth blasted off, doubling humanity's technological competence every generation thereafter. Suddenly, we seemed to have acquired the means to bake an economic pie large enough for everyone to have enough. If we could solve the second-order problems of how to distribute and consume the pie so that everyone felt safe, healthy, and happy, a kind of utopia would be within reach.

Yet something went wrong. Between 1870 and 2010, humanity did not gallop, run, canter, trot, or even walk toward utopia. At best, we slouched - and not even always in the right direction. By the first decade of this century, the engine of economic growth had clearly begun to misfire. Not only could we no longer count on rapid growth, but we also had to account for new civilization-shaking threats like climate change.

The grand narrative of 1870-2010 was about technological triumph, coupled with social-organizational failure. The post-2010 grand narrative has yet to be written, mainly because humanity has been taking hesitant steps in at least four directions.

Some have looked back to the post-World War II social-democratic "New Deal Order," which was born of a shotgun marriage between Friedrich von Hayek, with his exultant confidence in the power of the market to create prosperity, and Karl Polanyi, who stressed the importance of human dignity and rights other than those pertaining strictly to property. The shotgun was held by John Maynard Keynes, who believed in the power of technocratic economic management to maintain full employment, empower workers by making their time more valuable, and euthanize the rentiers through low interest rates.

But that system proved unsustainable in the late 1970s. It could no longer command the support of durable majorities in the world's democracies, and its foundation of Fordist mass production had begun to fracture. The world economy was moving instead to global value chains and, eventually, to the current information-driven mode of production. To speak of

reviving the New Deal today would be like someone in 1690 calling for a return to the eleventh-century feudal order that prevailed under William the Conqueror.

Others, meanwhile, have looked in the direction of doubling down on the neoliberal order that succeeded social democracy. For example, the United Kingdom did this starting in the late 2000s, when Nick Clegg, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, decided that his party's purpose was to persuade voters who didn't like Tories to support Tory rule. The reinvigorated neoliberalism that followed under Prime Minister David Cameron and Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne - not to mention the farcical experiment that Liz Truss and Kwasi Kwarteng recently pursued - delivered little in the way of absolute economic growth and offered a strong warning against moving in this direction.

A third option has been to conjure the spirit of ethnonationalism. Advocates of this direction believe that modern society's principal flaws have less to do with material deprivation than with moral decay owing to the influence of outsiders and those who lack sufficiently deep roots in the blood and soil of the nation: immigrants, moochers, slackers, deviants, rootless cosmopolitans, and other sinister forces. Needless to say, this approach has very little to recommend it, both morally and as a matter of economic policy.

The fourth option addresses something that has been absent, or at least waning, ever since 1870. One could abandon the goal of utopia and return to orienting society around an elite - be it kleptocrats, plutocrats, party bosses, or some combination of these - that is focused on feathering its own nest through force and fraud. The strong would do what they wish, and the weak would suffer what they must. Going down this road, the closest one could get to a "good society" would be to use the new tools of the information age to enact a winner-takes-all hierarchy gently, rather than with the same brutality as in the past.

None of these options is likely to bring improvement, and some aren't even feasible. Neoliberalism's big problem was that it starved society of long-term investment, both in productivity-enhancing technology and in the vast majority of people. Social democracy's problem was that most people did not want to be passive recipients of government benefits; rather, they wanted the social power to earn (and hence to deserve) their slice of the growing pie.

Is it fantastical to think that a productive and effective synthesis of these is still possible? Or is it just that I am an old ox who has been seeking such a synthesis for his entire career? Given the alternatives, I see no other choice than to keep pushing the same burden around the same circle. Like Martin Luther, I cannot do otherwise.

ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

CDCians make statement

-As opposition tears each other apart

At the time members of the opposition bloc are busy tearing each other apart, partisans of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) came out in their numbers on Saturday, February 4, to make a profound statement as they endorsed the reelection of President George Weah ahead of this year's elections.

They were vociferous as they zealously paraded the principal streets of the tiny west African state's capital donned in their party paraphernalia. They were in their thousands.

As they marched towards the Antoinette Tubman Stadium in central Monrovia where they endorsed the reelection bid of President Weah, their statement of intent was clear.

They remained supportive of their standard bearer and want him to continue regardless of allegations of corruption and looming poverty amidst high unemployment in the country.

The pending October election will be Liberia's fourth after more than two decades of back-to-back brutal civil wars. The stakes for this election are high-the incumbent wants to retain power saying, he has some unfinished businesses. At the same time, the opposition believes another term would spell doom for the country.

Members of the opposition continue to accuse the Weah regime of plundering state's resources with impunity. They also accused him of not just rampant corruption and shielding his officials from prosecutions but also of reversing every post war gain made during the previous administration of Liberia and Africa's first female President Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

But the CDC thinks otherwise. They argued that President Weah has done more in the last 5-years than all his predecessors combined. However, despite the resolve by members of the opposition to ensure that President Weah is not given a second shot at the presidency, their words do not match their actions or politics.

The opposition parties continue to prove that they lack unity and remain divided. They would prefer pulling each other down the drain while giving the president an undue advantage ahead of the elections.

Their divisions have forced some non-supporters of the CDC to pledge support to the ruling establishment because of the glaring disunity among opposition members.

For example, members of the former ruling Unity Party cannot stand the sight of Mr. Alexander B. Cummings of the Alternative National Congress who now heads the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) of which the UP and two other parties-Liberty Party and All Liberian Party were a party.

UP and ALP pulled out and filed a case of forgery against Mr. Cummings, while a faction of the Liberty Party headed by its embattled Chairman and Secretary General remains in the CPP. The case against Mr. Cummings was subsequently dropped due to lack of evidence.

But that is not all. A planned opposition rally styled and titled: "We Taya Suffering" failed to attract huge numbers because some opposition leaders were more opposed to the individuals driving the rally rather than its intended reason, which was to speak with one voice in telling the President to fix the system.

The likes of opposition candidate Tiawan Gongloe and the Unity Party leaders were very clear in telling their followers to stay off the rally. Another opposition party-NDPL planned to stage a counter rally in opposing the CPP rally, even though it did not make good its threats.

Again, opposition members troll former Vice President Joseph Boakai on social media when he sought medical attention at the Christian run ELWA Hospital in Paynesville. They were busy trying to prove to the Liberian people that Mr. Boakai is unfit to run for President rather than offering him words of prayers for his speedy recovery.

The opposition bloc is stronger in its crab mentality but very poor when it comes to the Ants' mentality which employs collective efforts to achieve one goal.

It does not require any scientific data for anyone to acknowledge that President Weah will win another six-year term if the opposition bloc remains in its crab mentality.

And rightfully so, the CDC has a foundation on which to base its reelection arguments. The ongoing road construction projects, hospitals, and housing units among others.

However, the CDC faces a major challenge when it comes to defending the state of the country's economy, corruption, and poverty amidst huge unemployment.

But regardless, CDC stands tall against the opposition in retaining power in 2023 unless members of the opposition put away their "crabology" and bury their hatchets to put up an united front.

OP-ED

By Arvind Subramanian

The Age of Verbiage

PROVIDENCE - The annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos used to be the premier destination for renowned academics and public figures to comment on the state of the world. But nowadays, the destination is just a click away. Our social-media-driven news ecosystem is virtually drowning us in expert opinion, inundating us with so much verbiage that little room is left for thoughtful analysis and focused debate - the oxygen of healthy public discourse.

Consider, for example, how quickly and how often the expert consensus shifted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. China did a far better job containing the spread of the virus than many liberal democracies, until its draconian zero-COVID strategy demonstrated the failure of autocracy. And, despite the surge of infections in the weeks since policymakers abruptly abandoned the strategy, it is still possible that China will have fewer excess COVID-related deaths than the United States. Others argued that polarized societies like the US would fare worse than countries with high levels of social trust, until Sweden became a cautionary tale. And India was considered to be performing relatively well until the catastrophic death toll of the Delta variant revealed the scale of the government's mismanagement - and the latter, too, seems slightly less severe in hindsight, following the country's successful vaccination drive.

Then there is the great US inflation debate. Initially, it seemed like Team Transitory - the inflation doves who predicted that prices would go down quickly - had it right. But then the persistence of high inflation vindicated the hawks who had called for the Federal Reserve to engineer a massive recession to restore price stability. Nowadays, the doves are flying high again, as inflation seems to be declining without the Fed having to inflict excessive pain on US labor markets.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, soaring inflation, and the escalating rivalry between the US and China have given us the term "polycrisis" - the Financial Times's word of the year - to describe today's confluence of calamities. But the global economy seems to have escaped the worst, at least for the moment, and the International Monetary Fund expects growth to pick up next year. The Economist now speaks of a "poly-recovery." Similarly, the doom-and-gloom predictions that characterized the spring and summer of 2020, the height of the COVID crisis, did not materialize, and the world economy turned out to be more resilient than many had believed.

And remember the warnings of a "winter of discontent" in Europe and the looming threat of wartime energy rations? Instead, gas prices have been declining steadily since the summer. And many of the same analysts who predicted a few months ago that the Chinese economy was about to collapse were proclaiming that "China is back" just a few weeks later.

The current fickleness of expert consensus is rooted in a media environment that rewards instant theorizing and glib generalizations as long as they are delivered with absolute certainty. When reality exposes the flaws in these hypotheses, the expert caravan simply moves on to the next topic without self-reflection or accountability, leaving viewers and readers dumbfounded.

To be sure, expert opinion is still valuable, despite its increasingly ephemeral nature. But experts inhabit the same world as everyone else, and thus are not immune to the cognitive effects of its frantic pace. Given that institutions like the IMF are tasked with providing real-time analyses and predictions in a rapidly-changing environment, getting things wrong or having to pivot on a dime is an occupational hazard. And arguably, the warnings and instant analyses might be responsible for policy actions that preempt worst-case scenarios. Howling like a wolf can sometimes keep the real wolf at bay.

Still, one cannot deny the fact that there are too many overconfident experts making too many predictions about too many issues too quickly these days. A basic economic principle is useful here: the 24-hour news cycle has created a huge need for expert opinion, and the market has simply created the supply to meet the growing demand.

But some correction is required. When he received the Nobel Prize in economics in 1974, Friedrich von Hayek famously suggested that his fellow laureates take an economist's Hippocratic oath: avoid commenting publicly on matters beyond one's immediate expertise. Winning such a prestigious prize, he said, should come with a certain responsibility. The same could be said of all current purveyors of elite opinion.

While voluntarily reducing one's profile may not seem appealing to many experts and intellectuals, it is the only way to avoid debasing the public discourse. Without a modicum of self-restraint, the constant stream of hot takes might end up undermining the informed debate that undergirds all open societies. To paraphrase Ludwig Wittgenstein, whereof one cannot say anything of substance after considered reflection, thereof one must be silent.

Arvind Subramanian, a senior fellow at Brown University, is a distinguished non-resident fellow at the Center for Global Development and the author of Of Counsel: The Challenges of the Modi-Jaitley Economy (India Viking, 2018).

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“Kick Weah Out in October”

—Presidential hopeful pleads with Liberians

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan

Presidential hopeful Dr. Max O. Vargbelee has pleaded with Liberians to kick President George Manneh Weah out through the ballot this October 2023, claiming that he has lost the

of the former footballing legend. He said corruption has become endemic at every level of Liberia, making the country under Mr. Weah one of the most politically corrupt nations in the world. The Liberians United for Change Political Leader stated

“their time.” He maintained that even Weah himself has gotten rich overnight just within less than six years in the country’s position. Dr. Vargbelee referenced the 2022 United States Treasury Department report which announced sanctions on three senior Liberian officials for alleged corruption. The US report accused Weah’s former Minister of State Nathaniel McGill of a variety of corruption schemes, including directing warlords to threaten political rivals, bribery, and the misappropriation of state assets. The report also accused Sayma Cyrenius Cephus, Liberia’s former Solicitor general, and Chief Prosecutor of shielding suspected criminals, blocking investigations into government corruption, and interfering with evidence to ensure the conviction of political rivals. For the former Managing Director of Liberia’s National Port Authority, the report accused Bill Twehway of funneling money from the port into private accounts. Because of these and many more, Dr. Vargbelee said the country’s progression has been stepped on by the Weah-led administration. He called on every Liberian who means well for the country to “kick” out the CDC government for the progress of the country.



trust and confidence of the people. Dr. Vargbelee in a telephone interview with our Bong County correspondent recently said the Country has turned into a complete mess and is hanging on the shoulders of Weah and his corrupt officials. He alleged that Mr. Weah and his officials continue to squander the resources that everyone should be benefiting from. He said this is despite the high expectations of the Liberian people which led to the overwhelming election

that Weah has done absolutely nothing in punishing corrupt leaders. “Weah has failed the Liberian people; he and his officials have taken corruption as their normal life even though they were against this when they were in opposition,” said Vargbelee. “Today, our people are suffering at the hands of these wicked people and yet they hear the cries everywhere but do nothing to salvage the situation,” he added. According to him, 90% of Weah’s officials intend to get rich because they feel it is

Speaker Chambers donates 17-seated bus to CDC

House Speaker Bhofal Chambers has donated a brand new 17-seated bus to the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change. The donation, according to Speaker Chambers, is a way of the people of Pleebo-Sodoken District that he represents in the House in identifying with the ruling CDC. The Maryland County District#2 Lawmaker says he wants the bus purposely used for the operations of the party. He attributes the success of the CDC-led government to people whom he referred to as committed and supported partisans. Speaker Chambers calls on members of the ruling Coalition to prioritize peace above whatever in the pending 2023 General and Presidential elections slated for October 10th.

He assures CDC Chairman Mulbah Morlu of his continuous support in ensuring that President George Weah is reelected for 2nd term. In remarks, Chairman Morlu

Speaker for what he terms, responsibly handling the affairs of the Legislature since the inception of the CDC-led government in 2018. Speaker Chambers and



thanks Speaker Chambers for the donation and, for continuously standing with the party despite his position in government. He further praises the

Chairman Morlu spoke on Friday evening, February 3, at the CDC headquarters in Oldest Congo Town, outside Monrovia. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

Lonestar Cell MTN and Give Directly partner to reduce poverty

(Monrovia, Liberia) Lonestar Cell MTN partnered with Give Directly to lift over 22,000 impoverished residents in rural Maryland county out of poverty by installing ten cell phone towers to give residents access to network coverage, allowing Give Directly to enroll and financially empower residents. The new cell phone towers linked to the Lonestar Cell MTN network will enable Give Directly, a non-profit organization, to provide cash transfers to residents in rural Maryland county through the mobile money platform. Residents will also have access to voice and data services on the network. Give Directly identifies poor people and communities below the poverty line, usually in developing countries, and

Income Program in Maryland County called the “Maryland UBI Program.” Under this program, Give Directly partnered with Lonestar Cell/MTN and funded the construction of 10 3G cellular network towers in hard-to-reach areas and in the most remote locations with no cellular network connectivity in four districts: Whojah, Nyorken, Gwelekpoken, and Karluway #1. To ensure Mobile Money is the medium of transfer, Give Directly commissioned the construction of these towers to ease and reduce the burden on the Program Recipients to access their transfers and improve other basic social service needs, like communication. “The money we provide enables residents to begin lifting themselves out of poverty with dignity because they become empowered and can choose for



directly distributes unconditional cash via cellphone payments instead of the traditional aid sector donation approaches, like food. The strategic goal is to restore the recipient’s dignity, agency, and trust that they are best positioned to decide what is best for them and their families, financially. “Mobile money bridges the gap in the financial sector. With the Lonestar Cell MTN network, digital payment processes enable Give Directly more efficiency with respect to registration and payment of eligible recipients. These processes require stable network coverage with a good reception signal. “With Mobile money, Give Directly pays recipients with a touch of a button,” said Operations Officer Bobby Lekpeye. First of its kind, Give Directly launched the Universal Basic

themselves what goods and services to purchase. In this way, we are also ensuring that the local economy thrives,” said Give Directly Country Director Joseph J. Yarsiah. He added that Give Directly partnered with Lonestar Cell MTN because of its well-established eco-system of mobile money merchants and agents to support residents’ purchasing and savings needs. “This partnership with Give Directly enables Maryland residents to expand their lives. Financial digital inclusion of the unbanked is not just a national priority but an essential component of lifting up Liberians,” said Mobile Financial Services General Manager Chris Ssali. “The Give Directly cash transfers program helps lift rural Marylanders out of poverty. This initiative is a critical way Lonestar Cell MTN is leading digital solutions for Liberia’s progress,” he said.

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“Karfiah or Kpehe Should not be Elected”

-Former Agriculture Minister

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan

Former Agriculture Minister Dr. Mogana Flomo Jr., says “Businessman” Johnny Kpehe and Representative

that in any attempt to have him elected, his inferiority would contribute to the backwardness of the already underdeveloped Bong County.

Johnny and Karfiah are the two top names in the Senate race for Bong in the upcoming October elections.

“I am yet to understand why people keep jumping around for a little boy who has no quality of a leader,” said Dr. Flomo.

“Are you kidding me? Do you mean the Bong County people want to make Johnny Senator? Look, this will be the worst thing to ever happen in this County.”

Flomo kicked against taking someone from anywhere only because he is sharing money and making him Senator for a traditional County like Bong.

For Karfiah, the former Agriculture Minister said he has failed the people of electoral District #5 and Bong County by extension.

According to him, Representative Edward Karfiah has served for about 12 years and 2024 will be the best time for him to rest.

He said that Karfiah in his 12 years run has done nothing substantial that should trigger his elevation despite chairing a critical committee at the lower house.

Dr. Flomo referenced Senator Moye who left his position as a Deputy Speaker to contest the 2020 senatorial race; adding that Moye’s ascendancy to the position has changed absolutely nothing.

He wants the Bong County citizens not to be moved by instant gratification but should forge dividends for the future generation.

Flomo on the other hand wants to replace Dr. Henrique Flomo Tokpa who was elected during the 2018 senatorial by-election to replace Jewel Howard Taylor, Liberia’s current vice President.

Flomo contested in the 2020 election and finished 3rd to Senator Prince Moye and Henry Yallah who is currently lobbying for the vice Standard Bearer post of Movement for Democracy and Reconstruction-MDR.



Edward Karfiah do not deserve to be elected in the October 2023 elections.

Dr. Flomo told an interview over the weekend in Bong County that Johnny Kpehe is inexperienced and does not have the attribute of a leader.

He warned that electing him would be a disaster for the county.

He said besides money, Kpehe does not have a single quality of a leader, stating

MOH suspends officials

-Turns them over to LACC for investigation

By Kruah Thompson

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has suspended two of its Margibi County health term officials for being implicated in an alleged corruption scandal.

Liberia’s Minister of Health Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah said Friday at a news conference that they have put the acting health team in place to continue the provision of health services in the county.

On 2 February 2023, local media here reported a leaked audio exposing some officials of the Margibi County health term discussing ways to collect kickbacks from vendors associated with MOH.

Minister Jallah said the Ministry has recalled all the staff of the Margibi County

health team who were implicated in that scandal.

“The MOH will be turning over all suspects to the LACC for investigation. The outcome

she noted

According to her, the content of this news article simply borders on corruption, and the Ministry strongly rejects corruption.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jallah



of the LACC [Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission] investigation will inform the next decision of the ministry,”

assured the people of Margibi that normal services delivered to them will not be under threat under her watch.

Government to end FGM in Montserrado county

The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection in partnership with UN Women is expected to finally end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practices in Montserrado county.

According to a press release, the program to end FGM will be held today, Monday, February 6, in Todee District, Montserrado County.

Representatives of the Government of Liberia, the European Union (EU), the Embassy of the United States, civil society organizations, and religious leaders, amongst others are expected to attend today’s ceremony.

Hence, today, Monday,

under 18 years old. However, the ban expired in February 2019.

Additionally, the punishments included rehabilitation and fines which are determined on a case-by-case basis – none of which deterred practicing communities.

Traditional leaders have significant power and influence over the Liberian community and often over policymakers. Once girls reach age 18, they will face immense pressure to undergo FGM to remain in the community.

The temporary ban on FGM was not as effective as initially anticipated during its one-year existence as a law. This was mainly due to a lack of knowledge on the existence of the ban and a lack of coordinated multi-sectoral implementation by state agencies.



February 6, is being observed as International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation around the world.

It is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day that takes place on February 6 each year as part of the UN’s efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation, first introduced in 2003.

In Liberia, dozens of women are living with the aftereffect of this harmful practice and many more are at risk.

FGM is heavily encroached in Liberian culture, dating back many centuries. Strong taboos surrounding the practice and associated Sande secret societies make tackling the practice challenging.

Liberia remains one of the three West African countries that do not have a law criminalizing FGM despite being a signatory to ratified regional and international human rights instruments that condemn the practice as a human rights violation, containing the Maputo Protocol.

On her last day in office in 2018, former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf signed an executive order on the Domestic Violence bill to ban FGM on girls

With the existence of the Executive Order, the number of Sande bushes in Liberia has increased with the practice now extending to 11 counties from the previous 10.

Other than the temporary ban on FGM, there has never been any solid attempt at making FGM illegal in Liberia. The few cases that have gone through the justice system have been covered under Section 242 of the Penal Code which speaks to malicious and unlawful injuries towards another person by cutting off or otherwise depriving him or her of any of the members of his body, finding a person guilty of a felony. This is punishable by up to five years in prison.

In July 2011, the members of the politically influential Sande secret society who had kidnapped and forcibly subjected Ruth to FGM were sentenced to three years imprisonment; however, they appealed the judgment and were released on bail. The appeal has been pending at the Supreme Court with no hearing date set and the perpetrators remain free.

In March 2017, 16-year-old Zaye Doe died in the Tappita area,

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

NEC share information on BVR with LMA

The National Elections Commission (NEC), over the weekend conducted a one-day information sharing meeting on the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) and the 2023 General Elections with the leadership and members of the Liberia Marketing Association, (LMA), of Liberia.

The meeting was requested by the NEC, through its Gender Section and held on the compound of the Commission on 9th Street, in Sinkor. Nearly 100 members of the Liberia Marketing Association and its leadership attended the one-day

Registration (BVR), process

She said real objective of the BVR is to register all Liberians 18 years and above.

However, the NEC Boss says, when a registrant citizenship becomes questionable, that registrant will be allowed to present a valid passport, a birth certificate, certificate of naturalization, and the National Identification Registry, NIR card. Additionally, she said that registrant can also bring two Liberian voters or a traditional leader who will agree that the registrant is a Liberian.

Responding, the President of the Liberia Marketing Association, Madam



information sharing meeting with authorities of the NEC.

Speaking during the information sharing meeting, NEC Boss, Madam Davidetta Browne Lansanah said, the Commission is depending on the Liberia Marketing Association to help spread the information regarding the BVR process.

Madam Browne Lansanah informed the Liberia Marketing Association leadership and members not to be afraid of the Biometric Voter

Elizabeth Samborla thanked the NEC for the interaction, adding that this was the very first time for LMA leadership and the NEC Board of Commissioners to discuss election matters face to face.

The Liberia Marketing Association President said the NEC will succeed in its mandate to conduct free, fair, transparent and credible 2023 General Elections because they have directly involved the LAM and its leadership into the electoral process.

'Very crazy, comical, laughable'

Start from back page

Party (UP) in a press statement issued late Friday evening, 3 February 2023, said it is deeply troubled and concerned about the alleged threat of assassination made by Mr. Johnson.

The statement under the signature of UP National Secretary General Mr. Amos Tweh urged the Weah-led government to speak clearly to the veracity of this grave allegation.

It urged the government to launch a prompt investigation to ascertain the facts and circumstances that gave rise to such troubling accusation.

According to the UP, in less than nine months to the 10 October 2023 legislative and presidential elections, Liberians cannot afford to witness any reversion of the already deteriorating security situation.

The UP statement called on the United Nations, European Union,

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and foreign embassies to make appropriate diplomatic interventions.

The opposition party warned that the allegation from the MDR seems very grave and could undermine the peace and stability of the nation.

"The UP notes that threats on the lives of leaders of the opposition bloc are becoming increasingly concerning as these threats create the stage for electoral violence and voter apathy," the party warned.

The former ruling party also urged President Weah's government to heed to the challenge of Senator Johnson to publish the turnover note the Unity Part government presented when Weah assumed the helm of the Liberian presidency.

MoH launches school-based vaccination campaign

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Health (MoH) has launched a nationwide school-based vaccination campaign intended to prevent the spread of Covid-19 among school-going kids in Liberia.

The vaccination campaign is being implemented by the Government of Liberia through the Ministries of Health and Education in collaboration with development partners.

Health Minister Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah during the official launch of the campaign said COVID-19-related vaccines, including the Pediatric Pfizer vaccine, will be administered to students between the ages of five and eleven on their school campuses.

Dr. Jallah said the key objective of the campaign is to boost the immune systems of the kids and prevent them from contracting the virus and other diseases.

She called on parents not to panic, but to go to the school campuses to sign the consent form, which will allow their children to be vaccinated.

"This is about the health of our children so we are calling on their parents to take this campaign very seriously."

"Let them make themselves available to sign the consent form for their kids to be vaccinated. I know they are quite aware that if a kid contracts any illnesses besides covid-19, that child's education gets affected."

"So the first and most important thing is to ensure the wellness of your kids before anything," said Minister Jallah.

Dr. Jallah stated that vaccinators will be posted at the various school campuses to roll out the vaccination campaign.

Speaking further, Education Minister, Professor D. Ansu Sonii said the vaccination campaign is consistent with the vision of the Liberian Government and partners to have a healthy and strong population.

Professor Sonii encouraged parents to continue to send their children to school; describing education as the only tool that can tackle illiteracy and alleviate poverty in the family.



Republic of Liberia
NATIONAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION
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MONROVIA, LIBERIA
Email: info@necliberia.org



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA).

30 January 2023

The National Elections Commission of Liberia is seeking applications from qualified and interested Liberians to work as Biometric Voter Registration staff for the 20 March – 11 May 2023 voter registration exercise. The categories of applicants are:

1. Voter Registration Supervisors
2. Voter Registrars
3. Computer Technicians
4. Clerks

All applicants must be Liberian citizens currently residing within Liberia, 18 years and above for all of the categories; must be computer literate; must have experience working with digital devices such as cameras, smart phones, tablets, etc.

Applicants must have a university degree, or be a college graduate or a trained professional, depending on the category of position.

Additionally, applicants must have proper identification such as a previous voter ID card or other genuine identification cards.

Applicants must also have an active **Mobile Money/Orange Money number** fully registered in his/her name. A second party number will not be allowed.

Application must be done online at jobs.necliberia.org.

Applicants can access the application link (jobs.necliberia.org) on the National Elections Commission's Website - www.necliberia.org or visit the NEC Liberia Facebook page.

Qualified females are encouraged to apply.

Online applications start on January 30, 2023 and end on February 6, 2023.

NOTE: Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted for further screening.

Signed: _____
Director of Human Resource/NEC.

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Français

Weah se réengage dans la lutte contre le changement climatique

Le président George Weah renouvelle l'engagement de son gouvernement à assurer une gestion durable des forêts au Libéria et à renforcer la

changement climatique, d'où la nécessité urgente de combattre ce phénomène. Son gouvernement, selon lui, se mettra au-devant de la lutte contre le changement

renouveler les engagements pour assurer la gestion durable des forêts au Libéria. Ce forum fait partie de la vision de notre nation pour gérer nos forêts de manière durable et contribuer aux efforts mondiaux de lutte contre le changement climatique, tout en tirant parti des paiements de carbone pour le développement national et communautaire », a déclaré le président Weah.

D'après lui, le gouvernement du Libéria a fourni un rapport sur l'état de l'environnement pour la première fois en 2006 et un plan d'action national pour l'environnement en 2021, lesquels rapports misaient sur les politiques de développement et les décisions d'investissement dans les secteurs clés à l'avenir.

Le dirigeant libérien a rappelé que le Libéria conserve la plus grande réserve forestière restante de la haute Guinée, et que le pays est également reconnu comme l'un des principaux points chauds de la biodiversité dans le monde.

Il dit qu'au vu de cela, le gouvernement crée actuellement une nouvelle

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



résilience.

S'exprimant le jeudi 2 février lors d'un forum de haut niveau sur la résilience forestière et climatique au complexe ministériel Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (EJS) à Congo Town, M. Weah a fait état des efforts audacieux de son gouvernement pour lutter contre la crise climatique.

Le président Weah a dit ne pas prendre à la légère les effets néfastes du

climatique.

« Cette rencontre marque une étape importante pour le Libéria dans ses efforts collectifs pour atteindre les objectifs de gestion durable des forêts et de financement climatique, par le biais de l'Agenda en faveur des pauvres pour la prospérité et le développement (PAPD) », a dit le chef de l'État.

« J'ai hâte de discuter de la manière dont nous pouvons renforcer le partenariat et

L'État ivoirien veut identifier et organiser l'accueil des réfugiés burkinabè

Le Conseil national de sécurité ivoirien note un « afflux récent » de quelque 8 700 réfugiés venant du Burkina Faso. Ces réfugiés se sont installés dans le nord et le nord-est de la Côte d'Ivoire. Des dispositions sont en train d'être prises pour faire face à cet afflux de réfugiés, dans cette zone où des opérations de sécurisation sont toujours en cours.

D'après le Conseil national de sécurité, les « afflux récents » de réfugiés concernent les départements de Kong, de Téhini et de Ouangolodougou. Des mouvements de populations que certains habitants tiennent à relativiser : « Beaucoup de gens ont des familles de part et d'autre de la frontière, ce n'est pas nouveau », affirme un fonctionnaire.

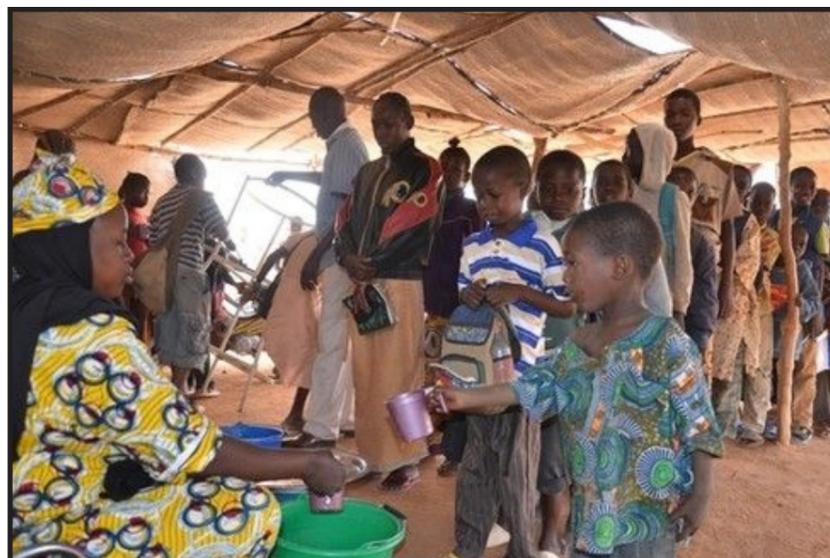
Ce phénomène est toutefois « lié aux attaques fréquentes par des groupes armés au Burkina », glisse un habitant de Kafolo. « Le

tarissement du fleuve Comoé, en cette saison sèche, favorise ces mouvements de personnes », poursuit cette source.

La frontière est fermée depuis deux ans, en raison du Covid. « Les gens contournent les routes pour éviter les tracasseries policières et passent par des pistes, à bord de tricycles », explique un habitant de Ouangolodougou, saisi par la peur : « On ne sait pas qui est qui, il peut y avoir des infiltrations à tout moment, [...] or à bord de ces moto-tricycles, les bagages des voyageurs ne sont pas contrôlés. »

Pour l'instant, la plupart des réfugiés sont hébergés dans des familles. Jeudi, le Conseil national de Sécurité a instruit le Premier ministre d'identifier 8 700 réfugiés comptabilisés ces derniers temps, pour leur aménager des sites d'accueil.

Depuis les attaques de Kafolo en juin 2020 et en mars 2021, les opérations de sécurisation du nord et du nord-est du pays ont permis de contenir l'insécurité côté ivoirien.



Éditorial

Se préparer pour les élections d'octobre

Les Libériens se rendront aux élections présidentielles et générales le 10 octobre, dans exactement neuf mois, pour, ou bien élire un nouveau président ou reconduire le président sortant George Manneh Weah et sa coalition pour le changement démocratique.

C'est pour la deuxième fois depuis 1997 que les Libériens organisent eux-mêmes des élections. Les élections de 1997 qui ont porté l'ancien président emprisonné Charles Ghankay Taylor ont été organisées par l'organisation régionale, la CEDEAO, tandis que l'ancienne Mission des Nations Unies au Libéria (MINUL) a organisé les élections en 2005 et en 2011.

Les élections de 2017, peut-être les plus enviables de l'histoire récente, ont été organisées par l'administration de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, qui était sur le point de partir, après avoir ainsi terminé deux mandats réussis, inaugurant la première transition pacifique d'un président démocratiquement élu à un autre en plus de 70 ans.

Les Libériens ont beaucoup à gagner en termes de paix et de respect de la façon dont ils se conduisent maintenant jusqu'en octobre, et au-delà dans la consolidation des dividendes démocratiques de la règle constitutionnelle et de la stabilité.

Déjà, la Commission électorale nationale a publié le calendrier pour l'inscription biométrique des électeurs, qui s'étend du 20 mars au 19 avril, dans la première phase tandis que la deuxième phase est prévue du 21 avril au 11 mai 2023.

Il est temps que la NEC, le président sortant Weah et les membres de l'opposition de se préparer adéquatement avant les élections pour éviter les erreurs de dernière minute qui pourraient avoir tendance à inverser le sens de l'aiguille de l'horloge.

Les élections sont des exercices démocratiques et tout doit être fait de part et d'autre pour qu'elles soient ainsi dans l'intérêt général, car la meilleure voie est toujours celle de la justice, de la paix et de l'unité.

Les politiciens devraient adapter leurs messages, en gardant à l'esprit qu'ils ont le devoir impérieux de préserver le caractère sacré de l'État qu'ils cherchent à gouverner, qui est notre patrimoine commun.

Par conséquent, l'électorat devrait aller au-delà des t-shirts de campagne, des bannières et des dépliants pour examiner de manière critique les candidats et leurs messages afin de déterminer pour qui voter et confier leur avenir au cours des six prochaines années.

Cela ne peut être possible que si les Libériens font du Libéria l'objectif ultime en allant aux urnes, s'ils réussissent à placer l'intérêt du pays au-dessus de leurs intérêts égoïstes.

Français

Weah se réengage dans la lutte

zone protégée, pour étendre le réseau de zones protégées déjà existant dans le but d'atteindre les objectifs nationaux et internationaux et les engagements de conservation, ce qui permettra de stimuler le potentiel de l'écotourisme et créer plus d'emplois pour les Libériens.

Le président Weah a réitéré son appel au Libéria et aux autres pays de la région à travailler avec les partenaires au développement et le secteur privé pour établir et rendre opérationnel un marché africain du carbone.

« Les mesures que nous prenons aujourd'hui en tant que gouvernement, avec le soutien de nos partenaires au développement, contribueront non seulement à réaliser le développement socio-économique du Libéria, mais contribueront également à sauver la forêt et la planète », a-t-il dit.

Il a fait savoir que le gouvernement s'emploie à développer davantage les capacités des communautés

à gérer leurs forêts, y compris la planification et la formalisation de l'utilisation des terres.

« Nous améliorons les politiques et révisons les lois et réglementations pour que la foresterie commerciale soit plus durable. Bien sûr, il y a encore des défis et des problèmes, mais nous demeurons inlassables dans nos efforts pour y faire face. Plus tôt que tard, sous ma direction, nous surmonterons ces défis afin que les ressources forestières profitent à tous les Libériens ».

Il a dit que le Libéria procède avec beaucoup d'optimisme en travaillant avec les partenaires au développement pour l'amélioration de la gouvernance du secteur forestier et créer la possibilité pour les communautés tributaires des forêts de développer des emplois durables et des entreprises génératrices de revenus.

Pour rassurer tout le monde, le président a dit que son gouvernement resterait engagé et démontrerait par des actions que le Libéria se tient aux côtés du reste du monde dans la lutte contre le changement climatique.

Côte d'Ivoire: une «mystérieuse maladie» fauche 20 personnes dont 18 enfants près de Bouaké

L'inquiétude demeure à Kpo-Kahankro, un village situé au centre de la Côte d'Ivoire, où 20 personnes sont mortes depuis le mois de décembre pour des raisons qui restent encore inexplicables. Une « mystérieuse maladie », d'après les mots du ministère de la Santé, qui touche surtout les enfants.

ont aussi été admis en urgence au Centre hospitalier universitaire (CHU) de Bouaké, souffrant des mêmes symptômes.

Le ministre de la Santé, Paul Dimba, s'est rendu sur place le mardi 31 janvier. Il a assuré que la situation était « désormais sous contrôle ». Selon le ministère, des spécialistes en infectiologie, en épidémiologie, et des équipes médicales ont été dépêchés sur



90% des victimes sont des mineurs : 18 enfants, âgés de 1 à 8 ans, sont décédés dans ce village qui se trouve à 7 km de Bouaké, selon des sources locales recueillies par l'AFP. Deux femmes ont également succombé. À chaque fois les mêmes symptômes : des convulsions, des vomissements et des diarrhées. 33 autres habitants de Kpo-Kahankro

place pour tenter de définir la nature de cette épidémie. Cependant, l'Institut national de l'hygiène publique (INPH), qui mène ces investigations, n'a pas encore rendu ses conclusions.

Selon une source proche du dossier, un herbicide pourrait être la cause de ces multiples décès. Le ministère de la Santé doit s'exprimer devant la presse à ce sujet mercredi prochain.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Willem H. Buiter

En finir avec le plafond de la dette

NEW YORK - Le 19 janvier 2023, le stock total de la dette fédérale des États-Unis a atteint 31 400 milliards \$, se heurtant ainsi techniquement au plafond réglementaire de la dette du pays. Le Trésor recourt actuellement à des « mesures extraordinaires » pour gagner du temps, afin de permettre au Congrès d'élever ou de suspendre ce plafond avant que les paiements des intérêts ou du capital ne deviennent exigibles. L'incapacité à y parvenir signifierait le défaut souverain.

Si vous doutez que cela puisse arriver, détrompez-vous, car cela s'est déjà produit. En 1790, sous la direction d'Alexander Hamilton, le Trésor américain prend en charge la dette des États, et reporte à 1801 le remboursement des intérêts. En novembre 1814, la guerre de 1812 ayant conduit à la destruction du Trésor et de la Maison-Blanche, le gouvernement ne possède plus suffisamment d'or et d'argent pour rembourser les intérêts sur sa dette. En 1862, le gouvernement fédéral refusera de la rembourser en billets verts imprimés l'année précédente.

Plus tard, en 1933, à la demande du président Franklin D. Roosevelt, le Congrès refusera d'honorer l'obligation du gouvernement d'effectuer ses paiements en or à un prix fixe sur les « Liberty bonds ». De même, en avril et mai 1979, une défaillance technique conduira le Trésor à manquer l'échéance du remboursement de 122 millions \$ en bons du Trésor exigibles, et certains investisseurs devront attendre plus d'une semaine pour être payés.

En vertu de l'article 1, section 8, de la Constitution des États-Unis, le Congrès jouit seul de l'autorité d'emprunter pour le compte du gouvernement fédéral. Le plafond de la dette a été instauré par le Liberty Bond Act de 1917, qui l'a initialement fixé à 11,5 milliards \$. Avant cette législation, le Congrès autorisait chaque dette fédérale émise. Depuis sa création, le plafond de la dette n'a toutefois cessé d'entraîner des affrontements chaotiques entre les conservateurs budgétaires du Congrès et les administrations présidentielles en exercice.

Depuis 1960, le Congrès est intervenu à 78 reprises - 49 fois sous une présidence républicaine, et 29 sous une présidence démocrate - soit pour relever le plafond de la dette, soit pour le reporter ou le suspendre temporairement, soit encore pour remanier sa définition. Outre l'épisode de défaut accidentel de 1979, nombreuses ont été les collisions évitées de justesse. La plus récente remonte à 2011, lorsque S&P Global Ratings a revu à la baisse la notation de crédit à long terme des États-Unis, la faisant passer de AAA à AA+, même si le pays a finalement échappé au défaut souverain, et le Congrès élevé en fin de compte de 2 400 milliards \$ le plafond de la dette.

Ce chaos périodique et les mesures exceptionnelles relatives au plafond de la dette sont à la fois coûteux et inutiles. En raison de cette contrainte artificielle sur la dette active, les conflits entre dépenses publiques et recettes fiscales doivent généralement être résolus à deux reprises au moins, une première fois lorsque les programmes de dépenses et de recettes franchissent les obstacles parlementaires et sont signés par le président, puis à nouveau chaque fois que le plafond de la dette se rapproche.

Tout est ici en réalité question d'arithmétique pure et simple. Le stock de la dette publique est un artefact historique. Excepté en cas de défaut, il ne peut être changé. Le Congrès et la situation

économique du pays (susceptible d'être influencée par les programmes budgétaires) déterminent les dépenses publiques fédérales (hors paiement des intérêts) et les recettes fiscales fédérales. Rapprochés des paiements d'intérêts sur le stock de la dette, ces chiffres nous indiquent le déficit budgétaire fédéral pour la période actuelle. Ajoutez au déficit actuel le stock initial de la dette de la période actuelle, et vous obtenez le stock initial de la dette de la prochaine période. Cet exercice peut être répété pour les périodes futures, afin de déterminer la séquence entière des stocks futurs de la dette publique.

Il n'existe par conséquent aucune logique à ajouter un plafond supplémentaire de la dette à l'arsenal budgétaire et financier du Congrès. La limite de dette déterminée par le Congrès est soit redondante, soit incohérente. Elle se révèle redondante lorsque l'obligation n'est pas contraignante, et incohérente lorsque l'obligation est contraignante, dans la mesure où elle bloque des politiques budgétaires et de dépenses auxquelles le Congrès a déjà conféré force de loi. Les cas de redondance n'entraînent pas de dégâts, mais font passer l'État pour un idiot. Les cas d'incohérence, en revanche, se révèlent à la fois coûteux et potentiellement catastrophiques.

Cette problématique peut être résolue de plusieurs manières. Soit le plafond de la dette l'emporte, auquel cas le Congrès doit réduire les dépenses et/ou augmenter les impôts dans la mesure nécessaire pour maintenir la dette en dessous du plafond. Soit c'est le déficit qui prévaut, et le Congrès se contente alors d'élever ou de suspendre le plafond afin que puissent être mis en œuvre les programmes de dépenses et de recettes qu'il a déjà approuvés. Dernière possibilité, le Congrès ne fait rien, et laisse les États-Unis entrer en défaut de paiement.

Un scénario de défaut non accidentel entraînerait des conséquences extrêmement sérieuses. Compte tenu du rôle du dollar américain en tant que monnaie de réserve mondiale, et de l'importance des titres du Trésor américain au sein du système monétaire et financier planétaire, un tel événement engendrerait probablement une crise financière et une récession grave aux États-Unis comme à travers le monde.

Que faire alors ? Le Quatrième amendement de la Constitution américaine énonce que « la validité de la dette publique des États-Unis [...] ne sera pas mise en question ». Cette disposition, à laquelle on peut ajouter le bon sens pur et simple, plaide en faveur d'une abolition de facto du plafond de la dette. Il n'existe aucune autre option concrète.

Révoquer l'autorité constitutionnelle du Congrès d'emprunter, ce serait aller trop loin, et même si elle était réalisable, cette option nécessiterait trop de temps. Une meilleure solution consisterait à conférer au Congrès, via la loi, l'autorité tacite d'élever automatiquement le plafond de la dette (à supposer que ce plafond soit contraignant, comme il l'est aujourd'hui) pour chaque période actuelle et future, à hauteur du déficit induit par les programmes fédéraux de dépenses et de recettes déterminés par le Congrès et approuvés par le président.

Cette solution équivaldrait à une suspension permanente du plafond de la dette. L'heure et venue de prendre au sérieux la Constitution, l'arithmétique, l'économie ainsi que le bon sens, et d'en finir une bonne fois pour toutes avec le plafond de la dette.

Traduit de l'anglais par Martin Morel

Willem H. Buiter, ancien économiste en chef de Citibank, et ancien membre du Comité de politique monétaire de la Banque d'Angleterre, est conseiller économique indépendant.

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Are Liberians better off than they were five years ago?

By S. Karweaye

There are two things politicians do not have control over - time and history. One day, whether they like it or not, their time in power will end. Secondly, the duty of writing their history belongs to others and not the politician. When a politician seeks to write his own history, he only indulges in self-adulation. That may be exactly what President George Weah sought to do in his 6th State of the Nation Address (SONA) on January 30, 2023.

During the SONA, Mr. Weah said he has fulfilled the promises he made in 2017 of giving power, improving the economy, empowering youths, and sustaining peace. In short, President Weah posited that Liberians are in a better place today than in 2017.

Finding Librarians who say they are better off today is like looking for a needle in the bed of an ocean. Mr. Weah's policies have not translated into positive economic growth and real sector development. In the last five years, Liberians have come to realize who their president really is, considering the much hype about his "Love for the country or the Man got the country at heart."

Faced with the hydra-headed socio-economic challenges under the Unity Party-led government, the electorates in 2017 believed all that the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) sold to them. Five years down the line, Liberians now know better and are living in regrets. The regrets are emanating from the failed promises of the present administration led by Mr. George Weah.

Since Mr. Weah ascended to the presidency in 2018, Liberia's insecurity situation has worsened, spreading from Monrovia to rural Liberia where killings and abuse of the rules of law have become rampant. In 2020, four auditors died mysteriously including Emmanuel Barten Nyeswua, director-general of the Liberia Internal Audit Agency; Gifty Lama, acting manager for tax service, Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA); Albert Peters, assistant commissioner for audit of LRA and auditor George Fanbutu of the LRA. Their deaths remain unsolved. The murders and rampant criminality have made nightlife nonexistent in Liberia which has badly diminished the night economy.

The nation's economy is in tatters and has been so since he took over the mantle of leadership in 2018. Despite his assurances and reassurances, the economy has continued to remain prostrate. Liberia is approaching a fiscal cliff with severe debt servicing in 2022 amounting to US \$89.37 million, or 11.46% percent of the national budget according to Mr. Weah in his 6th SONA.

Mr. Weah admitted that his government continues to lack the capacity to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). He is right! Previously, Liberia attracted \$16 billion in FDI during the regime of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf but under Weah, this figure slumped to a mere \$87 million in 2020 according to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's 2021 World Investment Report. Mr. Weah's policy options have helped to create an unfriendly investment climate in Liberia. Liberia was rated 172 on the World Bank's "Ease of Doing

Business" Index in 2017 but under Weah, Liberia was rated 175 in 2019.

Poverty is rife compounded by ever-rising rice, gas, and other basic commodities prices. It is estimated 64% of the population in Liberia lives below the poverty line and 1.3 million of those live in extreme poverty according to the World Food Programme (WFP). While 16% of children are physically not in school in Liberia and the infant mortality rate is 76 per 1000 live births according to UNICEF data.

The World Happiness Report (WHP) established by the United States captures more holistically, all aspects of economic performance. The World Happiness Report on 6 indicators: GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom, generosity, and corruption. The World Happiness Report is the first report to rank countries by how their populations feel. Liberia is ranked 97th out of 146 countries on the 2022 report meaning Liberians are among the most unhappy people in the world.



Under Mr. Weah's leadership, the country dropped places from 175 in 2017 to 178 in 2021 on the Human Development Index. The Global Human Development Index (HDI) published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. According to the index, life expectancy dropped by 3.4 years from 63.7 years in 2018 to 60.7 years in 2021.

Over the past five years, the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) has continued to print money for the government, whose overdraft facility with the CBL reached \$382 million (20.4 percent of total public debt) in 2021. The CBL is also operating a range of direct lending schemes for the agricultural, manufacturing, extractive, public corporation, construction, etc. All these make nonsense of the apex bank's monetary tightening initiatives.

In the meantime, prices of basic commodities continue to gallop. Everyone is hurting and a chunk of the country poorest is being wiped out. High import tariffs and the current exchange rates regime of the CBL are the major factors stifling supply, thus fuelling a surge in prices of various commodities which leaves the people poorer. All of these unorthodox policies have ensured that rising prices of Liberia's staple rice, fuel, and other commodities, while purchasing power has more than halved, wiping out large sections of the population.

Mr. Weah's policies have also seen to it that most of the institutional safeguards put in place after the return to democracy in 2006 to foster responsible fiscal and monetary policies as well as put inflation in check have been

disregarded and rendered redundant. The country's fiscal deficit increased from 4.8 percent of GDP in FY2017 to 17.6% of GDP in 2021. Liberia's total debt stock was US\$736 million according to the November 1, 2017 debt sustainability, prepared by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). Debt servicing in 2017 was US\$30.2 million in 2017/2018 approved budget. According to Mr. Weah during his 6th SONA, as of November 30, 2022, Liberia's total debt stock is at US\$1.96. Debt repayments eat up US \$89.37 million of the government revenue in 2022. The Liberian dollar has plummeted to repeated lows during Weah's time in office.

Despite rice being its staple food, the country produces way less for domestic consumption. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), national rice production was estimated at 270,000 tonnes, similar to the five year average and slightly below the previous year. The FAO statistics placed Liberia among the highest importers of rice in the world, wheat, and sugar. Rice for human consumption accounts for over 80 percent of imports, and whole wheat and maize account for about 13 percent and 6 percent, respectively. Sadly, these are all products that can be grown locally and, if managed properly, could be exported, but Weah opted to give the agriculture sector less than US\$ 7 million and relies on donor support for the sector.

Liberia's electricity grid fails more often than it delivers power and cannot in truth be regarded as a grid anymore. Homes go without power for days in Liberia including in the capital of Monrovia and the rapid jump in fuel. The gasoline price is US\$5.90 or L\$895 per gallon while diesel fuel will now be sold for US\$6.90 or L\$1,050 per gallon ensuring that even some of those who could afford it at previous prices and have power generators can no longer keep their generators running.

Many Liberians laugh at claims in Mr. Weah's speech when he said "together, we have worked together to improve governance and to strengthen the fight against corruption and public accountability." Corruption has risen to unimaginable proportions under Mr. Weah's watch. Today, the complicity of state and non-state actors has seen Liberia consistently lose millions of dollars in corruption which the government appears helpless in reining in. Also, theft of humongous sums of taxpayers' money have been reported, most of them carried out by serving public officials in the current administration. The annual corruption index ranking by Transparency International has seen Liberia drop from the 122nd position in 2017 to 142nd in 2022, a drop of 20 since Weah ascended to the presidency.

Recently, the nation was greeted with an unsavory melodrama when the country's Minister of State for Presidential Affairs and Chief of Staff to President George Weah, Nathaniel McGill; Solicitor General and Chief Prosecutor of Liberia, Sayma Syrenius Cephus and Managing Director of the National Port Authority (NPA), Bill Twehway were sanctioned by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) for public corruption. Nothing has been done to these officials except mere resignation from their positions.

Running for unfinished business

'Very crazy, comical, laughable'

-Government rejects PYJ death threat claim

By: Emmanuel Wise Jipoh

Incumbent President George Weah says he is standing for reelection as widely expected to complete his unfinished projects.

Addressing thousands of supporters here on Saturday at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium in Monrovia, Mr. Weah said Liberia has made tremendous progress under

that we all share that I have the honor to accept to be invested as the presidential candidate of the CDC, Weah said to a jeering crowd of supporters adding "I will be on the ballot."

He said he was doing so with a deep sense of humility as his second shot at the presidency will provide him the opportunity to continue and finish his imperative agenda.

been widely criticized here among the population. Many claimed that the agenda is aimed at making people poorer while he and his allies get richer.

But as if those criticisms were not enough, President appreciated his supporters for sticking with him. "Yor stuck with me. Yor stuck with me. And we won! We won!! And we will win again!! They keep accusing you that because yor are behind me, yor don't know nathing."

He also threw jibes at his rivals using a local vibe saying "Call me Prezzo, they can't help it. That's why they just talking. But they forget to know that even if they double their socks, they can't fit in my shoes. I don't know for them, but we cool. I don't know about them, but we cool. Even if they double their socks, they can't fit in my shoes."

However, Mr. Weah, acknowledged leadership challenges have been enormous, but noted that in each and every challenge, he has seen opportunities to make things better as captured in their national development plan, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

Announcing his nomination earlier, party chairman Mulbah K. Morlu said they are overwhelmed by the developmental contributions, and leadership expertise of President Weah. He explained that is while they have resolved to allow him stand for the second term to complete his developmental goals for Liberia.

Chairman Morlu said President Weah is transforming the state in the rightful way, and therefore deserves a second term to complete his quest for Liberia.

Meanwhile, emerging photograph of heavily armed officer of the Executive Protection Service (EPS) has raised eyebrows here amidst fears that such move is a recipe for chaos and threat to democracy.

By Lincoln G. Peters

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Information has rejected a claim by Nimba County Senator Prince Y. Johnson that it has plans to arrest or assassinate him.

Mr. Johnson, a former warlord turned politician, accused the regime of plotting against his life due to his critical stance against it.

Johnson and his Movement for Democracy and Reconstruction Party (MDR) supported President George Manneh Weah in the 2017 presidential run off.

Last week, MDR said it had received intelligence from a "highly placed source" of an alleged attempt by the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) government to assassinate Mr. Johnson.

The party held a press

after him. "We received intelligence from [a] highly placed source that there is an attempt to assassinate Senate Prince Y. Johnson," said Chairman Wolloh.

Responding to the allegation via the Voice of America over the weekend, Information Minister Ledgerhood J. Rennie described Mr. Johnson's assertion as 'crazy, comical and laughable.'

Mr. Rennie clarified that there is no such plans by the government of President Weah to have the senator arrested, or assassinated.

Rennie argued that Johnson has done nothing against the law of the country to get arrested.

Minister Rennie maintained that the Government of Liberia has no interest in arresting the senator, nor does it seek to assassinate him because he has done nothing against the law.

He also explained that the government has nothing to do with the Senator, adding that there is no



his leadership over the last five years, an agenda he wishes to continue over the next six years.

Mr. Weah explained that his Pro-Poor agenda has taken many bold initiatives to bring about the transformative changes that Liberia needs to grow and prosper.

He spoke after his party coronated him at a symbolic ceremony to run for reelection in October.

Weah, 56, was elected Liberia's 24th President in 2017 following a run-off election with former vice President Joseph N. Boakai, now one of his main challengers in the pending 2023 elections.

"It is out of duty to our country and trust you reposed in me, the ideals

Although he did not list his achievements, Weah said some of the initiatives he took during the last five years represented new strategic approaches to development, while some were tried and tested formulas for nation-building.

He explained that those strategies were all designed to work together to lift Liberia and Liberians to a higher standard of living.

Mr. Weah remained overwhelmingly confident and is certain of a re-election, saying he has done much for the people in short term and the people are satisfied with his leadership.

However, President Weah's claims to have put in place new strategic approaches to development particularly his Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) has



conference attended by several of its executives including political leader Senator Jeremiah Koung, former political leader Senator Johnson, and MDR Vice Chairman Mensco Wolloh.

The party called on the international community to investigate the alleged threat on its leader.

Chairman Mensco Wolloh said Senator Johnson is an institutional person, who has been advocating for the people of Nimba and there was no reason why someone should go

warrant of arrest, and there is no investigation ongoing against him.

Rennie wondered why the government will want to arrest the Nimba senator.

"To be coming out to the public and the international media to tell them that the government had planned to arrest him is just crazy," said Mr. Rennie.

"And to speak that is comical and laughable because there is no reason for anyone to do so," he noted.

Meanwhile, opposition Unity

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VP Taylor foresees constitutional crisis

Start from back page

opposition against the bill. They believe that the bill was anti-democracy, unconstitutional and intended to cause chaos.

They also noted that it was purely aimed at enabling President Weah to rig the pending elections and continue inflicting wounds on ordinary citizens.

Expressing his discontent, Mr. Kabineh Fofana noted that the current 54th

Legislature, headed by members of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change wants President Weah to get re-elected at all costs in 2023.

He said the Legislature and the President want magistrates that they will control to ensure that Weah wins the 2023 elections si that they can maintain their jobs.

"The bill is not necessary, and it is not right because some

of these people were trained with taxpayers' money and they have grown over the past years to manage elections," said Mr. Varlee Kromah. "And it's time for them to implement what they have learned. You want to change them and bring those you can control and influence. It's unacceptable," he added. -*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Government to end FGM

Start from page 6

Nimba County in the Sande bush during forced mutilation. The traditional leaders (Zoes) subjected Zaye and 25 more girls to FGM despite the government ban on Sande Secret Society operations, including FGM.

Also On 28 September 2021, Parker's 15-year-old daughter was abducted by traditional leaders in Liberia, known as the zoes, and taken from Mount Barclay, a town

near the capital Monrovia, to the Sande Bush. There, she was forcibly initiated into the zoes' secret society. For these women, initiation includes female genital mutilation (FGM).

The National traditional council and the Government of Liberia, along with the UN Women's Goodwill Ambassador for the abolishment of FGM in Africa, during her visit to Liberia in 2022, conducted a ritual event to end FGM practice in all parts of Liberia.

VP Taylor foresees constitutional crisis

By Lincoln G. Peters

VP Howard-Taylor accused all election magistrates across the country of being allegedly corrupt and demanded that they be replaced immediately. "I can tell y'all for free that most of the electoral magistrates are corrupt,

"We have 2023 election coming up in a few months and this is the few time that we have a presidential election where half of the Senate and House of Representatives will be going to elections," said Madam Howard-Taylor.

She said any process that takes longer than necessary ... with so many issues will be taken to the Supreme Court and there will be a constitutional crisis.

"So, I want to say in advance, internal dispute resolution processes are not free and fair. However, I want to say to you for free that most of the election magistrates are corrupt and should be replaced and changed," she concluded.

On Tuesday, 9 August 2022, President George Manneh Weah requested lawmakers to return from their break to discuss critical national issues for the period of 30 days which began on 15 August 2022 and would have ended Tuesday, 13 September 2022.

Among others, the issues included a request for legislators to pass an amendment of the New Elections Law which called for the immediate dismissal and retirement of all election magistrates across the country.

But several Liberians strongly expressed disappointment and

Liberian Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor says she foresees a serious constitutional crisis in the upcoming October Presidential and legislative elections.



VP Taylor

Over the weekend, she warned that this could occur if the National Elections Commission (NEC) doesn't change and replace all election magistrates across the country.

they need to be rotated, they need to be replaced, and they need to be changed into where ever they need to go," said VP Howard-Taylor.

She claimed that changing all elections magistrates will provide an environment where people will feel that they are free to participate.

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