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MARKET BUYING AND SELLING RATES
LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 07, 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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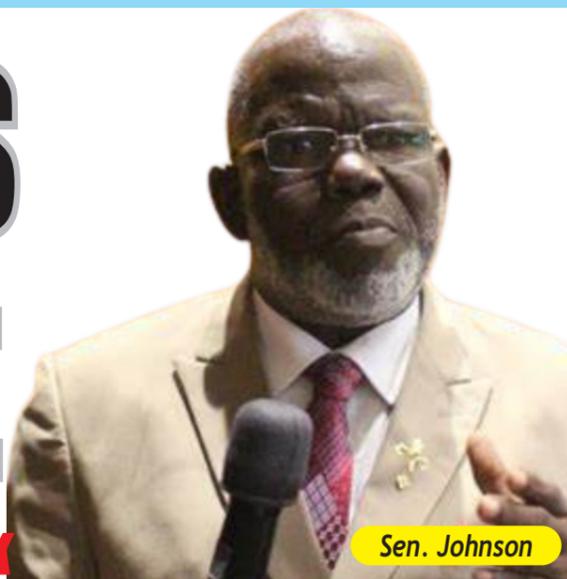
Embarrassing

-Fall outs from CDC rally



Gongloe sees emerging conflict

-Amid Weah and PYJ verbal attack



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Continental News

UN Peacekeeper Killed in Attack on Helicopter in DR Congo

A United Nations peacekeeper from South Africa was killed and another wounded in an attack on their helicopter in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo on Sunday, the organization said.

(MONUSCO). South Africa's military also confirmed the incident. "An Oryx helicopter came under fire in Goma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo on Sunday February 5, 2023," the South African

cowardly attack on an aircraft bearing the UN emblem", adding that "attacks against peacekeepers can constitute a war crime". UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called on Congolese authorities "to investigate this heinous attack and swiftly bring those responsible to justice", said his spokesman Stephane Dujarric in a statement. On March 29, 2022, eight UN peacekeepers – six Pakistanis, one Russian and one Serb – were killed when their helicopter crashed over a combat zone between the Congolese army and M23 rebels. Militias have plagued the mineral-rich eastern DRC for decades, many of them a legacy of regional wars that flared during the 1990s and the early 2000s. Since November 2021, the M23 rebel group has seized chunks of territory and come within miles of the east's main commercial hub Goma. East African leaders called Saturday for an immediate ceasefire in eastern DRC, at an extraordinary summit called to find ways of calming the raging conflict. The talks were hosted in Burundi by the seven-nation East African Community (EAC), which is leading mediation efforts to end the fighting in the vast central African nation. VOA



In this file photo, Indian soldiers, serving in the U.N. peacekeeping mission in DR Congo (MONUSCO)

The aircraft came under fire at around 3:00 pm (1200 GMT) during a flight to Goma, the provincial capital of Nord-Kivu province, where it was able to land, a spokesman told AFP. The source of the fire that struck the helicopter was not yet known and its precise location had yet to be determined, said Amadou Ba, a spokesman for the UN mission in the DRC

National Defense Force (SANDF) said in a statement. "A crew member was fatally shot, another suffered injuries but managed to continue flying the chopper and landed safely at Goma Airport. "The SANDF is in the process of informing family members of the soldiers who were involved in this unfortunate incident." MONUSCO chief Bintou Keita said she "strongly condemns this

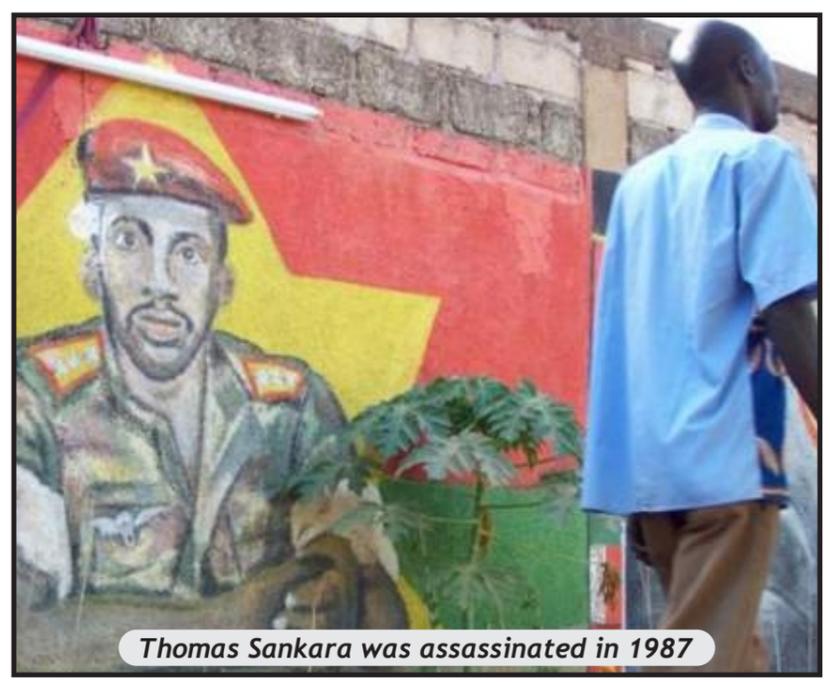
Family of Thomas Sankara boycotts burial plans

The remains of late Burkina Faso President Thomas Sankara are to be buried where a memorial to him already stands, but his family is boycotting the ceremony and says the site is "inadequate for all the burden it contains".

He took power after a coup in August 1983 and was killed four years later, in another coup led by his friend and brother-in-arms Blaise Compaore - who remained in power for 27 years. In 2014, a popular uprising led to the end of his regime and he took refuge in neighbouring Ivory

coast. In April, a military court in Ouagadougou sentenced him in absentia to life in prison for his role in the assassination of Sankara and his companions, following a long-awaited trial. BBC

"We believed and continue to believe that it is fundamental that a space be found that allows to gather and appease hearts, and not to divide and increase resentment," the Sankaras added in their statement on Sunday, calling the place chosen by the government "conflictual and controversial". The bodies of Sankara and his 12 companions were first buried in a cemetery on the outskirts of the capital Ouagadougou, and then exhumed in 2015, for the purposes of legal proceedings. Sankara is considered by many a pan-African icon for his progressive policies on health, education and agriculture.



Thomas Sankara was assassinated in 1987

Mali Expels UN Peacekeeping Rights Chief after Criticism of Russian Military Presence

Mali's military government has ordered the rights chief with the U.N. peacekeeping mission in the country to leave by Tuesday. Mali's military government ordered the U.N. peacekeeping mission's human rights chief on Sunday to leave the country within 48 hours. Guillaume Ngefa-Atondoko Andali is director of the human rights division of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). A government statement read on state TV station ORTM by presenter Ibrahim Traore, and later posted to the

accused Mali of working with Russian mercenaries to fight Islamist insurgents, but the government says it only works with official Russian instructors. Several journalists and rights groups have reported on alleged abuses committed by Russia's Wagner Group of mercenaries in Mali. The U.N. peacekeeping mission, MINUSMA, did not immediately comment on the announced expulsion and does not have a spokesperson in Mali. Mali in July expelled MINUSMA's spokesman Olivier Salgado after he tweeted about the arrival of Ivorian troops as support for a U.N. contingent. Mali's military government said the 46 troops were "mercenaries," detained



A U.N. vehicle patrols the streets in Bamako, Mali, July, 29 2013.

station's Facebook page, declared Andali persona non grata, or unwelcome. He says this measure follows the destabilizing and subversive actions of Mr. Andali, in flagrant violation of the principles and obligations that must be observed by United Nations officials. The statement said Andali was biased in his selection of witnesses testifying at the U.N. Security Council. Malian activists Aminata Cheick Dicko at a January 27 security council meeting accused Mali's government of working with "Russian military partners" who committed rights abuses. The Malian government's statement did not mention Dicko by name but accused Andali of selecting "usurpers" to speak to the council. Several countries have

them for seven months, and in December sentenced them to 20 years in prison for conspiring against the government. Three female troops released in September were sentenced to death in absentia. The government finally released them all in January under threat of sanctions by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Separately, Mali's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Sunday that Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov would be visiting Mali today and Tuesday. French troops helped Mali in 2013 after Islamists took over the north of the country but withdrew their forces last year over concerns about Mali's working with Russian mercenaries. Mali's military overthrew the government in August 2020 after popular protests over its failure to stop the insurgents. VOA

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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 Nimbaians 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 Kenneth Rogoff

Too Soon for Global Optimism

LONDON - Many of those who attended this year's meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos were struck by the jubilant mood of the CEOs in attendance. It was hard to reconcile the optimism of these business leaders with the short-term and long-term economic uncertainty caused by the war in Ukraine.

To be sure, there are grounds for cautious optimism, like China's 180-degree turn on its draconian zero-COVID strategy. Soon, the country could see a huge wave of "revenge spending," driven by pent-up demand from consumers who have spent much of the past three years in lockdown and now have the equivalent of trillions of dollars in savings to spend. Many have pinned their hopes for a global recovery on this scenario, hoping that Chinese shoppers can boost growth and push oil prices back to \$100 a barrel. But regardless of what happens in China, India continues to enjoy strong growth, aided by purchases of discounted Russian oil.

Europeans, for their part, seem thrilled by over-confident forecasts that the continent's economy will not fall into recession in 2023 - or at least not a bad one. Even Italy has revised upward its growth estimates and is now expected to grow by 0.6% this year. Given that climate change is at the top of the European Union's policy agenda, it is ironic that global warming seems to have saved Europe from the gas shortages and price spikes that many analysts had predicted.

Many Europeans might also argue that the United States is more at risk of a significant recession, given that the full effect of the Federal Reserve's aggressive interest-rate hikes will not be felt until later this year. They would be half right, as the US would need a healthy dose of luck to bring down inflation to the Fed's 2% target without a major downturn. At the same time, European policymakers seem scared that the clean-energy subsidies included in the US Inflation Reduction Act will siphon off much-needed investment from the continent.

But whatever economic growth these countries experience is contingent on the war in Ukraine. With no endgame in sight, the war could severely destabilize the global economy, causing both short-term and long-term disruptions.

For example, suppose that Russian President Vladimir Putin becomes exhausted and desperate enough to use battlefield nuclear weapons. In that case, all bets are off, and a global stock market crash would be all but certain. But China's likely response remains far less clear. If Chinese President Xi Jinping denounced Putin for using nuclear weapons but at the same time continued to buy Russian oil and commodities, the West would be forced to impose secondary sanctions on the countries enabling the Russian war machine - namely, India and China.

While it is difficult to quantify the long-term growth effects of today's heightened geopolitical tensions, the International Monetary Fund estimates that deglobalization could shrink global GDP by 7%, perhaps even more if combined with technological decoupling. The net-zero transition, already a herculean challenge, will be far more difficult to accomplish in a fragmented global economy.

Meanwhile, defense spending, which many already expected to rise by at least 1% of global GDP over the next ten years, will probably increase further. While US President Joe Biden has repeatedly said that he will not start World War III over Ukraine, a second Cold War, which seems far more likely, would be awful as well, even if we discount the growing risk of regional nuclear wars and nuclear terrorism. Whatever one thinks of the benefits of globalization, we will miss one of its primary benefits: international stability.

The Ukrainian people understandably want to restore their pre-invasion borders and receive NATO guarantees of future security and hundreds of billions of dollars in reconstruction aid, as well as bring war-crime charges against Putin and his cronies. They are clearly not going to be cowed by Putin's nuclear threats. But Germany's reluctance to provide Ukraine with modern tanks suggests that Western leaders, in general, are uncomfortable with the prospect of NATO directly engaging in war with Russia.

The West's plan, at least for now, seems to be to supply Ukraine with enough equipment to help it regain some of its territory (but not so much that Putin lashes out), or at least force a stalemate. While economic sanctions are a key part of the Western strategy, it would be utterly naïve to think that sanctions alone could end the war. The only place where sanctions helped produce regime change in modern times is South Africa in the 1980s and early 1990s. Back then, the world was largely united against South African apartheid. But that is not the case with the war in Ukraine.

Russia's invasion caused an inflationary spike that affected the entire world. But at this point, an escalation will likely have a deflationary effect in the short term, as consumers and markets will panic. Long-term growth prospects do not look promising either, as the balkanization of the global economy will likely exacerbate uncertainty.

It is certainly possible (albeit unlikely) that Putin's regime will implode and that whoever succeeds him will seek peace. It is also possible that Russia will stick to its plan of re-colonizing Ukraine and that it will eventually become a de facto Chinese economic colony. There are many other possible outcomes, but an early return to peace in Europe is not yet one of them. The world's business leaders may have forgotten about Ukraine, but they will not be able to ignore it.

OP-ED

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.

OPINION

By Mamta Murthi

Preparing Now for the Next Health Emergencies

WASHINGTON, DC - The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the weaknesses and lack of preparedness of health systems globally. When the virus was at its peak, many low- and middle-income countries struggled to save lives while sustaining essential medical services such as maternal health care, routine childhood immunization, and the treatment of non-communicable diseases.

After this traumatic period, it is tempting to hope that the worst is behind us. Unfortunately, the future is likely to bring more frequent public-health crises, owing to climate change, urbanization, deforestation, water shortages, land-use changes, the transmission of pathogens from animals to humans, and conflict-induced fragility.

To limit the impact of the coming crises on lives and livelihoods, governments must take urgent action to boost the resilience of their health systems. According to a recent World Bank report, a resilient health system is integrated, enabling more rapid identification of threats and risk factors; agile, and thus able to respond quickly to evolving needs; absorptive, to contain shocks; and adaptive, to minimize health service disruptions.

The World Bank has been working with low- and middle-income countries on this resilience agenda. Our \$34 billion global health portfolio includes more than 240 projects that help countries take a comprehensive approach to improving outcomes, especially for poor and vulnerable people, by strengthening primary care and key public-health functions. For example, in June 2022, the World Bank approved \$258 million for Pakistan’s National Health Support Program, which aims to strengthen the health workforce and equip community health centers to respond better to emergencies and deliver quality services, particularly to the most vulnerable communities.

The newly created Pandemic Fund is an additional tool to fill critical gaps by helping channel much-needed financial support to developing countries as they shore up prevention and response measures and improve readiness before the next health crisis.

Established with the support of the G20, the fund is governed by an inclusive board comprising representatives from sovereign donors, recipient-country governments, philanthropic foundations, and civil-society organizations. The Pandemic Fund has already secured pledges of \$1.6 billion, and the first round of funding has just been announced.

These additional, long-term resources will help countries strengthen their public health systems, raise risk awareness, improve early warning functions, and expand the number of community health workers. Strong risk communication and community engagement can increase trust and build the solid partnerships that underpin a swift and efficient crisis response.

As countries progress toward post-pandemic recovery, they face additional challenges such as inflation, debt sustainability, climate change, aging populations, a high burden of chronic disease, and challenges to socioeconomic and gender equality. Resilient health systems can mitigate the impact of these challenges by improving the readiness of services to prevent and manage other health crises and by strengthening essential functions.

Needs and approaches will vary across countries and regions. For example, Cambodia, located in a hotspot for emerging infectious diseases, plans to enhance multisectoral collaboration to incorporate human, animal, and environmental health. Kenya seeks to bolster its surveillance and laboratory capacity for infection control. And Bangladesh aims to increase the capacity of its health facilities, workforce, and microbiology laboratories for coping with future pandemics.

Around the world, robust health governance and strong public-health institutions, backed by stable legal and regulatory frameworks, will be crucial to ensure evidence-based decision-making and crisis planning. Countries will also need to create fiscal space and attract and use external resources wisely, with the understanding that investing in integrated and resilient systems will deliver the greatest impact. The most cost-effective investments strengthen public-health functions, health promotion, disease prevention, and primary health-care services, thereby minimizing disruptions when shocks hit. By preventing the much larger costs associated with public health emergencies, such outlays yield long-term dividends.

Building resilience requires partnerships within and beyond the health sector, as well as engagement with civil society and the private sector, which played an important role in the COVID-19 response. Protecting against health shocks also involves boosting research capacity and embracing innovation by fast-tracking new medical technologies or expanding digital technology in health-care delivery.

The task is immense, but past crises offer valuable lessons and show what can be achieved. For example, the Ebola outbreak of 2014-16, which killed more than 11,000 people in West Africa, accelerated the establishment of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention across the continent, improving the region’s surveillance and monitoring capacities.

As the COVID-19 pandemic wanes, this, too, is no time for complacency. We have all witnessed the pandemic’s devastating effects. The World Health Organization estimated that nearly 15 million excess deaths worldwide in 2020 and 2021 could be attributed to COVID-19, which has also undermined hard-won gains in poverty reduction, education, health, and gender equality.

Enhancing resilience and readiness requires decisive action. With more crises sure to come, countries that make the right political choices for lasting and sustained policies now will be in the best position to protect the health of their populations and economies.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

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.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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ECC flags CDC's election violations

The Elections Coordinating Committee (ECC) has flagged the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC's) alleged flagrant violation of the regulation on the conduct of political parties and

President when the official campaign period outlined in the election timeline has not started," the ECC said.

Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC) has set the official campaign period for 5 August to 8 October 2023 for this year's presidential and

added. The ECC further observed that in the days leading to the rally, the CDC erected billboards that displayed the picture of the President in various parts of Monrovia.

It added that the NEC has failed to take any action in keeping with Section 12 of its Regulation.

But the ECC warns that the NEC's failure to enforce its Regulation sets a dangerous precedent and undermines its neutrality as an independent Election Management Body (EMB).

In another development, the ECC said it is deeply concerned with the statement made by Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor describing most Election Magistrates as corrupt.

"The ECC calls on the Vice President to provide evidence to prove her assertion against the Magistrates," it noted.

The ECC recalled that Vice President Howard-Taylor further stated that the Magistrates needed to be rotated or changed.

It however pointed out that the Vice President has no authority to call on the NEC to rotate or to change any Election Magistrate. It warned that the Vice President's statement is an attempt to interfere in the operations of NEC and undermines its independence.

'Opposition sensing early defeat'

-Government replies to Cummings' pre-campaigning allegation

By Lincoln G. Peters

The Government of Liberia says the opposition here is sensing its defeat ahead of the October 2023 presidential and legislative elections following a claim that the ruling party is doing early campaigning.

In an interview on the Voice of America's DayBreak Africa Monday, 6 February 2023, Information Minister Ledgerhood Rennie accused opposition leader Alexander B. Cummings of crying wolf for no reason.

"How can the re-nomination ... of President [George Manneh] Weah amount to any violation of the NEC [National Elections Commission] Law when in fact

Weah of engaging in an early election campaign outside the NEC timetable.

He claimed that this is because the Weah-led regime has done nothing for the Liberian people, and they have decided to make him a one-term president. Cummings told the VOA Monday that they are looking at all the legal implications surrounding the alleged election violation that the CDC is engaged in and they may likely complain to the international community.

However, Minister Rennie bragged that Mr. Cummings is crying wolf as the opposition community is sensing defeat after seeing the crowd that turned out on Saturday in support of President Weah's re-election.

"I think Mr. Cummings is just

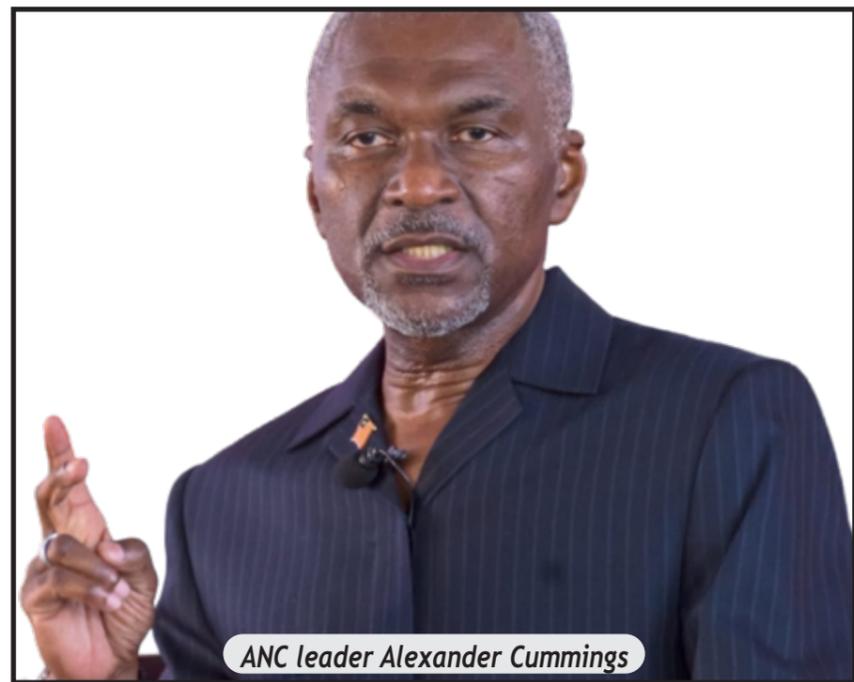


coalitions. After the CDC petitioned incumbent President George Manneh Weah for his second term bid, the ECC said Monday, 6 February 2023 that the political rally organized by the ruling party on 4 February 2023 was a campaign activity.

"The rally was characterized by wearing T-Shirts and printing banners depicting the picture of the

legislative elections. The ECC, Liberia's largest domestic election observation network, claimed that the CDC's rally was a flagrant violation of Section 12 of the NEC's Regulation on the conduct of political parties and coalitions.

"This violation undercuts the principle of a "level playing field" required for the conduct of a fair and credible election," the statement



ANC leader Alexander Cummings

Police interrogate man, who attacks wife with acid water

By Thomas Domah, Nimba County

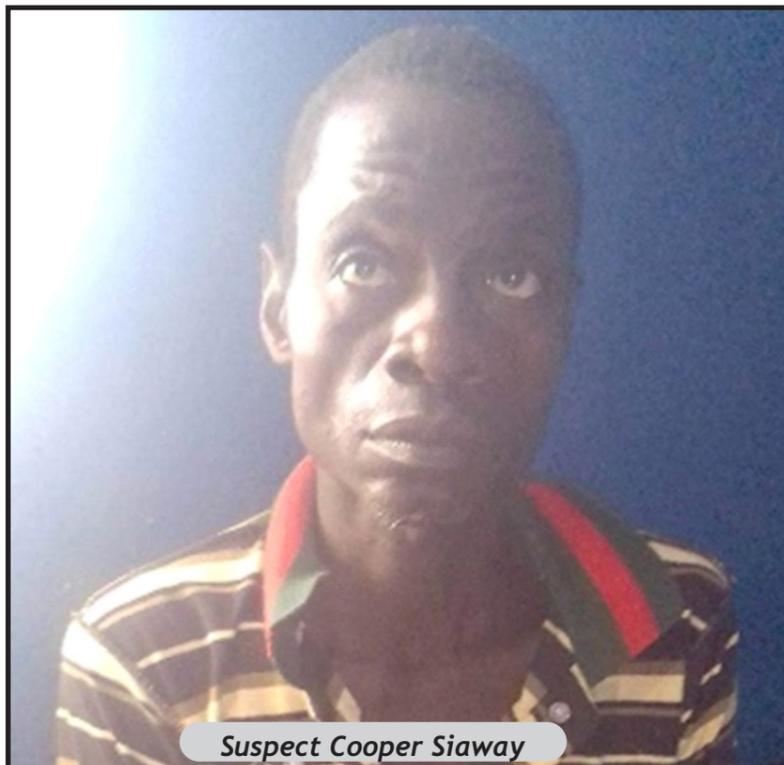
The women and children division of the Liberia National Police in Karnplay, Nimba County has detained a 40-year-old man, who recently beat his wife and later wasted acid water on her private parts, for allegedly denying him sex.

The incident occurred in Behplay Town, electoral district#4, Nimba when Suspect Cooper Siaway accused his wife of denying him sex. Suspect Siaway is a father of five children, four of whom he had with the victim, who is a Guinean national.

Residents of Behplay Town narrate that the suspect kept the acid water in their room up to night hours, when he requested for sex from his wife, but the woman allegedly denied, something that led him to wasting the acid water on the woman's private parts.

The 32-year-old victim is currently receiving medication at the Karnplay Health Center, while Suspect Siaway faces

government to investigate and bring Suspect Cooper Siaway to book. Violence against women in rural Liberia increased last



Suspect Cooper Siaway

Police interrogation. Several women groups in Nimba have expressed disappointment over the act and called on

year into 2023, thereby affecting more women across the country. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

he didn't call on his supporters to vote[for] him?" Mr. Rennie argued.

He contended that President Weah told the country that he will be running for the second term and so his supporters decided they will petition him. On Saturday, 4 February 2023, supporters of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change assembled at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium (ATS) to petition President Weah for his second term bid.

But following the event, members of the opposition as well as the Election Coordinating Committee (ECC) claimed that the political rally organized by the ruling party on 4 February 2023 was a campaign activity.

The NEC has set political campaigning for 5 August to 8 October 2023. For some time now there have been posters bearing President Weah's photos on the streets of Monrovia with the caption 'CDC one million rally.'

Mr. Cummings, political leader of the Alternative National Congress (ANC)/Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) accused President

playing defeat because of the awesome support that came for the President, not just in Monrovia but across the country," Minister Rennie explained.

Rennie added that Cummings and other opposition leaders are accusing the CDC government falsely after seeing a massive turnout in favor of President Weah during CDC's 'one million rally.'

He said Cummings's allegation is false and misleading, noting that President Weah does not violate the Elections Law of the country.

The Information Minister believes that if the CDC had violated the law, the NEC would have raised the concern.

The government chief spokesperson indicated that President Weah is on his way to re-election, and the support shown him on Saturday has left the opposition panicking. "I don't see anything like [a] violation. There is no campaign poster in the street; rather, it's a poster to say come and support President Weah's re-election," Rennie insisted. "How does this amount to campaigning? It doesn't amount to campaigning. It doesn't state vote [for] President Weah, and if it does say that, it's a whole different ball game."

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

GVL reports challenges, loss in 2022

Monrovia - Oil palm developer Golden Veroleum (Liberia) Inc. (GVL) says it has experienced significant losses, driven mainly by high cost of materials imported into the country. The company laments that ailing economy and global price increases pose serious challenges to its operations in Liberia.

operations. Besides, Management spent over US\$5 million in 2021 and more than US\$12 million in 2022 for essentially the same quantity of materials, constituting a 64% increase in expenditure. Contributing to the operational difficulties, it adds that the road from Buchanan, Grand Bassa County towards the ITI Bridge has been severely damaged

roads and wooden bridges are severely damaged between mill and bulking, the whole supply chain is completely disrupted, the mill stops processing and the estates slows down the harvesting activities. In addition, trucks get damaged and have frequent breakdowns.

“GVL’s operations depends highly on fuel supply. Poor inland transportation certainly disrupts fuel supply resulting to higher logistics cost and the inability to operate at efficient capacity due to high fixed overhead cost during the six months’ rainy season.”

Management also points to poor port infrastructure particularly, at Harper Port affects shipping activities, noting that during the rainy season, international vessels hesitate to berth due to rough waves along the pier, although GVL in collaboration with National Port Authority has invested to install Pneumatic Fenders to prevent vessels hitting berthing structures.

However, the release says despite these challenges, GVL continues to sustain its operations in Liberia, expressing optimism that factors that directly impact and/or undermine its operations could be addressed and mitigated with joint efforts from government and the company in the new year. GVL says it expects increases in production and improvement in operational efficiency by applying agronomy best practices. **Press release**

during the six months’ rainy season. The release continues that resulting delay in transporting goods and other materials from Monrovia to the operation sites forces GVL to find transportation alternatives, and that the company and the Ministry of Public Works are currently rehabilitating 272 kilometers of roads from Sinoe through Grand Kru to Maryland County.

The project, which has been ongoing for the past three years, is being fully supported and funded by the Government of Liberia through GVL taxes.

Crude Palm Oil (CPO) is being transferred from the Tarjuowon Mill to the Bulking Station at the Greenville Port using tankers, but when the

NAYMOTE Liberia trains 50 young women in politics

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland county

Fifty young women in Maryland and River-Gee counties have benefited from two days training on the WAWiE Protocol, ahead of Liberia’s General and Presidential elections.

The training was organised by Naymote Partners for Democratic Development and funded by the Peace Building fund through UN Women Liberia.

WAWiE Protocol is Violence Against Women in elections and politics. It defines violence against women in politics as any act or threat against women in politics, women activists, women socialists and women candidates and as well targets women who participate in public or political life because they are women and often are perpetrated in highly gendered ways. The document was signed by the National Elections Commission

commission is committed to building and strengthening Liberia democratic society and will ensure sustainable peace through the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections.

“This can only be a reality when all Liberians both men and women have equal opportunities to engage in the electoral processes as voters, candidates, electoral staffs or simply supporters of a political parties” the NEC representative said. Mr. Saydee added that when women and men have equal opportunities, societies are stronger, peaceful and prosperous. He also said the National Elections Commission has an action plan which is geared towards supporting the implementation of the protocol between the commission and registered political parties to address violence against women in elections and politics especially, as the country draws closer to the



GVL signed a concession agreement with the Government of Liberia to develop 220,000 hectares of land with oil palm in Southeastern Liberia, but the company says it has only developed a little over 19,000 hectares since 2010 due to multiple challenges.

The company notes through a release the global economic situation, prolonged COVID19 related restrictions and the conflict in Ukraine continue to pose significant challenges to its operations, mainly as a result of significant price increases in fuel and other supplies. According to the release, GVL imports fertilizer, lubricants and other equipment into Liberia to support its

ECC flags CDC’s election

Start from page 6

It, therefore, called on the NEC to resist any form of external control and influence from political parties or those holding public office. “The pre-campaigning activity and attempt to influence the NEC are early warning indicators of challenges ahead of the October 2023 elections.” Established in 2010, the ECC’s members include the Center for Democratic Governance (CDG); the Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP); and the Center for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (CECPAP).

The Institute for Research and Democratic

Development (IREDD); Naymote Partners for Democratic Development (NAYMOTE-PADD); West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP), and the Women NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL), are

also members of the ECC. The group works in partnership with Democracy International with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



(NEC) and political parties’ executives on February 18, 2022 with support from UN Women.

During the start of the two days exercise, Naymote Liberia Gender Coordinator, Faith Smith said based on the under representation of women in the legislature and local government, her institution, under the project, is promoting inclusive political participation and the elimination of violence against women in politics project.

Madam Smith said those who were trained on the WAWiE Protocol will carry on awareness on the prevention of violence against women in political and electoral processes, using door to door, town hall meetings, radio talk shows and community engagement approaches. She continues that the objective of the training is to build the capacity of Naymote’s mentees and CSOs on the protocol and as well help to educate more young people to adhere to the document.

The training, according to her, is part of increasing awareness on women’s Political Participation and Violence Against Women in elections and politics.

NEC deputy magistrate assigned in River-Gee county Joseph Saylee, noted during the training that the

October elections.

Speaking on behalf of the Liberia National Police, deputy commander of Police in River-Gee County Mr Youlue Collins and deputy commander of Police in Maryland county Layee M. Massaley, quoted Section 6.0 of the Scope of Operation (SOP) for security in election, which calls for strengthening women’s role in electoral violence, prevention and peace building.

“We agreed that the police shall enforce the SOP by ensuring priority is given to female electorates pregnant women, breast feeding mothers, elders and people living with disabilities during election period”. According to the LNP officers, the police will work with the media to promote and raise awareness on the privileged access of special group which includes female electorate, pregnant women, breast feeding mothers, elders and people living with disabilities to ensure these people have access to polling places.

“LNP will ensure women aspirants and candidates are also protected as provided for by the WAWiE protocol, stereotyping of all kinds against women in elections will be strictly prohibited”.

Français

Le président Weah se représente pour achever son travail

Le président sortant, George Weah, a déclaré qu'il se présentait à la prochaine présidentielle comme on s'y attendait généralement pour

programme en faveur des pauvres a pris de nombreuses initiatives audacieuses pour apporter les changements transformateurs dont le Libéria a besoin pour croître et prospérer.



achever ses projets inachevés.

S'adressant à des milliers de supporters ici samedi au stade Antoinette Tubman de Monrovia, M. Weah a déclaré que le Libéria a fait d'énormes progrès sous sa direction au cours des cinq dernières années, un programme qu'il souhaite poursuivre au cours des six prochaines années. M. Weah a expliqué que son

Il a pris la parole après que son parti l'ait investi candidat lors d'une cérémonie symbolique pour se représenter à l'élection présidentielle dont le premier tour est prévu en octobre.

Weah, 56 ans, a été élu président du Libéria en 2017 à la suite du second tour face à l'ancien vice-président Joseph N. Boakai, qui est désormais l'un de ses principaux adversaires lors des prochaines élections de 2023.

« C'est par devoir envers notre

pays et la confiance que vous avez placée en moi, les idéaux que nous partageons tous que j'ai l'honneur d'accepter d'être investi comme candidat à la présidence du CDC », a déclaré Weah à une foule de partisans ajoutant : « Je serai sur le bulletin de vote ». Il a dit qu'il le faisait avec un profond sentiment d'humilité, car son deuxième coup à la présidence lui donnera l'occasion de poursuivre et de terminer son programme impératif.

Bien qu'il n'ait pas énuméré ses réalisations, Weah a déclaré que certaines des initiatives qu'il a prises au cours des cinq dernières années représentaient de nouvelles approches stratégiques du développement, tandis que certaines étaient des formules éprouvées pour l'édification de la nation.

Il a expliqué que ces stratégies étaient toutes conçues pour fonctionner ensemble afin d'élever le Libéria et les Libériens vers un niveau de vie plus élevé. M. Weah est resté extrêmement confiant et est certain d'une réélection, affirmant qu'il a beaucoup fait pour le peuple à court terme et que le peuple est satisfait de son leadership.

Cependant, les affirmations du président

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Le chef de la division droits de l'homme de la Minusma expulsé du Mali

L'expulsion du dirigeant onusien intervient après l'intervention critique d'Aminata Dicko au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU le 27 janvier. Elle suit par ailleurs celle du représentant de la Cédéao et celle de l'ambassadeur de France, après le départ de Barkhane.

Quarante-huit heures, c'est le délai annoncé officiellement par le porte-parole de la junte malienne dans un communiqué à la télévision pour que Guillaume Ngefa-Atondoko Andalé quitte le territoire. Motif invoqué : la partialité supposée du directeur division droits de l'homme de la Minusma. Les autorités de transition l'accusent d'avoir mis en avant Aminata Dicko comme représentante de la société civile au Conseil de sécurité il y a neuf jours. La vice-présidente de l'observatoire Kisal n'avait pas hésité à dénoncer la situation sécuritaire du pays et l'implication, selon elle, des nouveaux alliés russes de

l'armée nationale dans de graves violations... ce qui avait rendu Bamako furieux.

L'ONU a dit à RFI « regretter la décision du gouvernement malien », tout en affirmant que la Minusma « continuera l'exécution de son mandat, y compris en ce qui concerne les droits de l'homme ». L'organisation nous a en outre confirmé que ce n'était pas le directeur de la division droits de l'homme qui a invité Aminata Dicko, comme le laisse entendre la junte, mais bien le Japon directement, qui présidait le Conseil en janvier. Quoi qu'il en soit, Guillaume Ngefa est dans le

collimateur des autorités maliennes depuis longtemps. Il a failli se faire expulser il y a six mois déjà.

Le Congolais dirige la division droits de l'homme et protection de la Minusma depuis sa création en 2013. Cette division est chargée d'enquêter sur les crimes commis par tous les acteurs présents au Mali : elle avait d'ailleurs documenté les allégations d'exactions de Barkhane à Bounti en 2022. Et elle réclame en vain l'accès à des sites d'exactions supposés de l'armée, le dernier en date



Éditorial

Le sénateur Prince Johnson encore ?

L'ancien chef rebelle devenu évangéliste et politicien, le sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson du comté de Nimba, qui a assassiné des centaines de civils non armés, dont des femmes et des enfants dans les années 90 au plus fort de la guerre civile libérienne quand il a pris d'assaut une partie de la ville de Monrovia, se dit être en danger de mort.

Animant un point de presse à Monrovia, les dirigeants du Mouvement pour la démocratie et la reconstruction (MDR) du sénateur Johnson ont dit avoir reçu des informations de source haut placée concernant une prétendue tentative d'assassinat de leur leader politique. Ils accusent l'administration Weah de vouloir ôter la vie à Prince Johnson.

Lors de cette conférence de presse jeudi dernier, à laquelle ont assisté plusieurs dirigeants du parti, dont le sénateur Jeremiah Koug, PYJ lui-même, et le vice-président Mensco Wolloh, le parti a déclaré qu'il a dit avoir saisi la communauté internationale pour ouvrir une enquête sur la prétendue menace. « Nous avons reçu des informations d'une source haut placée selon lesquelles l'on prépare une tentative d'assassinat de prince Y. Johnson », a déclaré le vice-président Wolloh.

Le sénateur de Nimba a récemment annoncé son divorce d'avec le président George Weah pour son refus présumé de tenir les promesses qu'il a faites au peuple Nimba lors de la campagne présidentielle de 2017.

À noter que Prince Johnson a soutenu M. Weah au second tour de l'élection présidentielle qui l'a porté au pouvoir.

Mais il accuse aujourd'hui le pouvoir d'avoir confisqué les fonds de développement du comté Nimba au cours des cinq dernières années, des fonds qui s'élèveraient à plusieurs millions de dollars américains, et de n'avoir pas tenu sa promesse de donner de l'emploi aux gens du Nimba.

Nous ne sommes pas très préoccupés par l'accord ou le protocole d'entente en vertu duquel PYJ a contracté un mariage politique avec le président Weah. Mais pour nous, le fait que l'ancien chef des rebelles du Front national patriotique indépendant du Libéria (INPFL) qui a abattu des centaines, voire des milliers de civils non armés par des exécutions sommaires pendant la sanglante guerre civile, assiste à une conférence de presse sur une prétendue menace contre sa vie est ridicule.

Nous nous demandons quand le sénateur, sanctionné par le gouvernement des États-Unis pour vente et achat de votes, a-t-il appris l'importance de la vie humaine qu'il a arbitrairement enlevée à des personnes innocentes, affamées et terrifiées par le nez de son pistolet pendant la guerre civile.

Des gens comme Tecumsey Roberts, un célèbre musicien libérien et des centaines d'autres personnes sans défense n'ont jamais eu l'occasion, sous la surveillance du maréchal/sénateur Prince Johnson, de s'alarmer des menaces qui pesaient sur leur vie, quand il sortait son pistolet en argent et mettait brusquement fin à leur vie.

Il est ridicule aujourd'hui que l'homme qui a commis certains des pires crimes odieux, y compris des crimes contre l'humanité comme des massacres, appelle la communauté internationale pour le protéger. En ce sens, l'évangéliste devenu politicien insinue que sa vie est plus importante que les milliers de personnes qu'il a tuées au cours de la guerre civile sous prétexte de libérer le pays. En fait, qui est vraiment après sa vie ? Malgré toutes les atrocités qu'il a commises contre des civils non armés, PYJ est revenu d'exil du Nigeria et a été récompensé par un siège au Sénat, où il siège depuis 18 ans sans signaler aucune menace contre sa vie, pas même de la part de parents et d'amis de ceux qu'il a tués de sang-froid.

Nous ne pouvons qu'encourager PYJ, qui s'est opposé avec véhémence aux appels en faveur d'un tribunal pour crimes de guerre au Libéria, à rassembler le courage et à permettre au tribunal de venir afin qu'il puisse avoir l'opportunité de faire face à ses accusateurs et de se disculper plutôt que de donner de fausses alertes.

Français

Le président Weah se représente

Weah d'avoir mis en place de nouvelles approches stratégiques du développement, en particulier son programme pro-pauvres pour la prospérité et le développement (PAPD), ont été largement critiquées ici parmi la population. Beaucoup ont affirmé que le programme visait à appauvrir les gens pendant que lui et ses alliés s'enrichissent.

Mais comme si ces critiques ne suffisaient pas, le président a apprécié que ses partisans restent avec lui. « Vous êtes restés avec moi. Vous êtes coincés avec moi. Et nous avons gagné ! Nous avons gagné !! Et nous gagnerons encore ! Ils continuent de vous accuser parce que vous êtes derrière moi. On dit que vous ne savez rien ».

Et pour taquiner ses rivaux, il a dit « Appelez-moi Prezzo, ils ne peuvent pas s'en empêcher. C'est pourquoi ils ne font que parler. Mais ils oublient de savoir que même s'ils doublent leurs chaussettes, ils ne peuvent pas mettre leur pied dans mes chaussures. Je ne sais pas pour eux, mais nous sommes cools. Je ne les connais pas, mais nous sommes cools.

Même s'ils doublent leurs chaussettes, ils ne peuvent pas mettre leur pied dans mes chaussures ».

Cependant, M. Weah a reconnu que les défis en matière de leadership ont été énormes, mais il a dit que dans chaque défi, il a vu des opportunités d'améliorer les choses comme indiqué dans leur plan de développement national, l'Agenda en faveur des pauvres pour la prospérité et le développement (PAPD).

Annonçant sa nomination plus tôt, le président du parti, Mulbah K. Morlu, a déclaré qu'il était submergé par les contributions au développement et l'expertise en leadership du président Weah. Il a expliqué que c'est alors qu'ils ont décidé de lui permettre de se présenter pour un deuxième mandat afin d'atteindre ses objectifs de développement pour le Libéria.

Le président Morlu a déclaré que le président Weah transforme l'État de la manière qui lui revient et qu'il mérite donc un second mandat pour achever sa quête du Libéria.

Pendant ce temps, une photographie émergente d'un officier lourdement armé du Service de protection de l'exécutif (EPS) a soulevé des sourcils ici au milieu des craintes qu'une telle décision ne soit une recette pour le chaos et une menace pour la démocratie.

Libre circulation dans l'espace CEDEAO : Le Représentant de la CEDEAO au Bénin visite le poste frontalier juxtaposé de Malanville Gaya entre le Bénin et le Niger.

Dans le cadre de ses activités, en particulier celles relatives à la promotion de la libre circulation des personnes et des biens, conformément aux instruments de la CEDEAO, le Représentant Résident de la CEDEAO au Bénin, SE Amadou

Au cours de la mission, des séances d'informations avec l'ensemble des acteurs du Poste frontalier juxtaposé en particulier la sécurité, l'immigration, les services des douanes et des eaux et forêts des deux côtés de la frontière y compris les forces navales chargées de la sécurité et



DIONGUE, a entrepris, du 1er au 3 février 2023 une visite au poste frontalier juxtaposé de Malanville Gaya entre le Bénin et le Niger, situé à 750 kilomètres de Cotonou.

Cette mission comprenait également le Directeur de l'Afrique et du Moyen-Orient du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et de la Coopération de la République du Bénin.

de la navigation sur le fleuve Niger ont été organisées.

Ces séances de travail ont permis notamment d'identifier les défis auxquels sont confrontés ces différents acteurs dans la mise en oeuvre des instruments communautaires sur la libre circulation des personnes et des biens.

La mission a rendu une visite de courtoisie au Préfet du Département de l'Alibori.

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 oeuvre 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.

LIBERIANS DEBATE

Topic: Security

By Naneka A. Hoffman

Liberians are still grappling to understand why members of the elite Executive Protection Service (EPS) that protects the Presidency wore ruling Coalition for Democratic Change rally T-shirts on Saturday, February 4th to accompany President George Manneh Weah at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium for a One Million Men march and subsequent endorsement to contest for a second term.

Many citizens have expressed disappointment in the act by the EPS and called on the government to avoid a re-occurrence, as compiled below.



Sekou Tulay

“EPS officers wearing party T-shirts is improper and unconstitutional. The reason that made it

improper and unconstitutional is there’s no part of the world that you will see executive protection agency wearing partisan clothes in the sense as long you are a Liberian, you are entitled to work in government. The Government of Liberia isn’t only for a particular political party. You can be an opposition and be opportune to work in government. Why if President Weah was going to appoint Mr. Alexander Cummings to serve as minister of finance and Mr. Cummings was serving in that capacity and entitled to an EPS. Any EPS officer with Mr. Alexander Cummings, will you force that person to wear partisan T-shirt to be with Cummings? No. So, I say it’s unconstitutional

“If you see EPS officers wearing party T-Shirt which of course we know that the state security has been compromised by President Weah, they never did it with their willing minds. They did it against their will because if you don’t wear the party T-shirt, as partisans did you could lose your job. Our President is a man that is quick to get malice for people, so those boys wore those T-shirts not with their willing minds. They are state securities and we still consider them to be state security. We want for the international community to come and help us with our elections. We know that President Weah wants to rig the election and we know that the elections will be staged-managed. If you see security forces wearing partisan T-shirts that



Cyrus Massaquio

means the security forces that should stand for justice, are one-sided. We are scare, so we are asking the international community to help us because as citizens, we don’t have guns and we don’t have right. If you get guns in our country, you get right. So, we are asking international community to help us with our elections. We don’t want it to be staged-managed. We wasted free six years, so we don’t want to waste another six years because the people are recruiting all types of security such as Sabu unit and blue unit. So as a people, we need better elections in this country, so we are calling on the international community.”



Siaffa Kanneh

“There is conflict of interest. The state security should be there to neutralize conflict, but to be one-sided it means that the international community needs to come in because these are things that led to the civil war when the Armed Forces of Liberia was tribalized. You can remember

under President Samuel K. Doe and when Charles Taylor came and members of the state security were also loyal to the regime, which contributed to the destabilization of the State. So, automatically, other people felt dissatisfied and they decided to go through the jungle and the international community spent millions of dollars in restoring peace. Then 2018 we witnessed the first post-war democratic transition and our fight is for our democracy to maintain the path that our President will transition well to the next incoming president. But if state security that should be playing an independent role in safe-guarding the process, is seen in party T-shirts is a threat to our peace, so the international community needs to come in. We can’t guarantee our safety in the hands of partisan state security.”

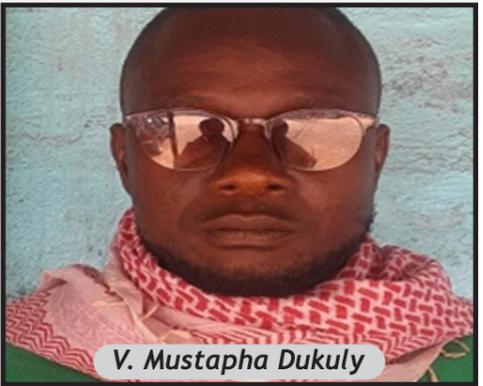
“Seriously, this is very bad and unconstitutional and we need to put our feet on the ground to see how best we can go against these guys. I call on the opposition community to get in their numbers and speak against it because that indicates that our security sector isn’t secured for us, and we are going to elections on October 10. It will be faulty because the people, can they cheat? Yes, cheating will be in the elections because



Emmanuel Barh

looking at state security officers wearing a party T-Shirt holding arms, so we are calling on the international community to see how best they can provide security for us Liberians to see how best we can go for our elections, if they can’t provide security for us, I don’t think that we will go to the elections.”

“That’s unactable under the pillars of democracy and under pillars of safe-guarding the citizens. We must not accept the polarization of state security; we have said this too long that the security apparatus of Liberia has been turned into militias. They are no longer loyal to the State but to the power in position. Therefore, wearing party T-shirts to attend political rally by state security, we as members of the revolutionary and Intellectual class, we will make sure that these unactable bad elements in our security sector are picked out and disrobed to face the law. There must be a demarcation between



V. Mustapha Dukuly

state security and militias. Militias are formed to protect a special regime and national state security is to protect the people, even if the government goes wrong, such as violating the law. National securities are there to ensure that the rule of law is observed. If the securities continue to be polarized and to attend political rally, we say that is unacceptable and we will make sure that those unacceptable elements within the security are brought to justice.”

Embarrassing

Gongloe sees emerging conflict

Images of state security officers particularly agents of the Executive Protection Service (EPS) donning party paraphernalia, while heavily armed with high grad military weapons at the ruling party political rally has been described as embarrassing.

On Saturday February 4, heavily armed agents of the EPS were seen in party T-

“These gangster-looking individuals wore CDC insignias and political paraphernalia including T-Shirts which made them indistinguishable between CDC militias and state security,” the CPP statement said.

The party stated that such display is a deeply disturbing development, and a dangerous sign of things to come.

“If these rifle-carrying

national security duties. It is deeply disturbing and wholly unacceptable to turn state security into the personal militia of the President, city mayor, or the ruling party.”

Government response
The government in its response said it takes seriously due cognizance of these concerns coming from local and international quarters of the donning of the CDC paraphernalia by some members during the party’s rally.

The Government further went on to say that these concerns are legitimate and terms the EPS Officers’ behaviour as embarrassing which it attributes to over-exuberance and lack of knowledge of the standard operating procedures of the service.

The Chairman of the Joint-Security of Liberia, Justice Minister Counselor Frank Musah Dean Jr. has mandated the head of the EPS Director Trokon Nathaniel Roberts to ensure that henceforth such unprofessional display by any member of the EPS does not recur.

In a mandate to the National Security Forces of Liberia, Justice Minister Dean reminded all military, paramilitary, and other related security institutions of their oath to defend and protect all citizens and residents of the country in a manner that demonstrates neutrality, professionalism, and decency.

Meanwhile, the Government of Liberia wants to reiterate its expressed commitment to the conduct of free, fair, transparent, democratic elections in an environment that is secure and open to all stakeholders and participants regardless of political affiliation.

The government says it will not allow Saturday’s regrettable action on the part of some members of the EPS to put a dent in the enviable record of the Weah-led Administration of successfully conducting several elections in the country.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Presidential hopeful and renowned human rights lawyer Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe says verbal attacks between President George Manneh Weah and Nimba County Senator Prince Y. Johnson are early warning signs of conflict.

Speaking Monday, 6 February 2023 on local broadcaster Truth FM, Cllr. Gongloe said he sees early warning signs of conflict if the Liberian Council of Churches and other Liberians do not intervene.

Cllr. Gongloe recommended an intervention in the dispute between President Weah, Liberia’s former international soccer icon-turned-politician, and Senator Johnson, a former warlord-turned Nimba’s political godfather.

“I am speaking as a human rights lawyer and historian. Maybe our people have

government should take this allegation seriously and probe into it and come out with the finding to the public,” he said further.

The human rights lawyer suggested that Mr. Johnson’s claim should not be pushed under the carpet, and it should not just be taken as a political statement.

He continued that he sees early warning signs of conflict, urging the Liberian Council of Churches (LCC) to come in and mitigate this emerging conflict between the two leaders.

He noted that the LCC is not supposed to sit down, clap and just let it go.

He indicated that both Mr. Weah and Mr. Johnson are using the pulpit in the Church which should be used for the message of God, to exchange verbal attacks.

As such, Cllr. Gongloe wants the Council of Churches to get involved.

The Liberian People’s Party



shirts of the ruling Congress of Democratic Change (CDC) as they marched along with President George Weah and other senior government officials towards the Antoinette Tubman Stadium for the president’s endorsement ceremony.

The images have received condemnation from both local and international observers with some saying that the images signal fears and intimidation ahead of the much anticipated 2023 general and presidential elections.

In a statement issued Monday February 6, the opposition Collaborating Political Party (CPP) drawing the attention of both local and international community said the unchecked display and bearing of arms and assault rifles by individuals during the CDC rally is alarming.

individuals were CDC militias, the CPP demands an explanation and independent investigation on how they came into possession of such weaponry in a political gathering, and why these arms were allowed to be exhibited in such threatening manner. The CDC cannot and will not be permitted to intimidate Liberians and threaten peaceful citizens in such belligerent and hostile manner,” the CPP added.

The opposition CPP went on to caution that party militias must never be permitted to act as and with the authority of state securities.

However, it said on the other hand, if the rifle-toting persons are state security, “we call for their immediate suspension, investigation, prosecution and dismissal. State security personnel should not be allowed to wear political attires while carrying out their



forgotten about history,” Cllr. Gongloe said when he began cautioning Liberians on the conflict.

“Senator Johnson has said that there is [a] threat on his life to kill him. I think the

(LPP) standard bearer noted that both Mr. Weah and Mr. Johnson have a huge following, and using their pulpit in the manner that they are doing, it needs the intervention of all Liberians.

Rifle-toting CDC militias?

Start from back page

turn state security into personal militias to the President, city mayor, or the ruling party.”

On Saturday, 4 February 2023, the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) held a rally to petition President Weah for his second term bid. But photos emerged of well-armed men in the crowd wearing CDC T-shirts and caps.

The CPP noted that over the past five years of President Weah’s failed administration, Liberia continues to see a breakdown of law and order. It claimed that the regime continues to

display a public display of false impressions that the President and his officials are above the law. CPP said these acts of blatant disregard for the law endanger and undermine the nation’s peace, security, and democracy.

“For six years, state security forces have morphed into a hostile partisan force against peaceful citizens and critics of the government,” the CPP claimed. It said it is deeply concerned that the lawless display on Saturday at the CDC petition charade appears to have been sanctioned by the President.

JUDICIAL BRANCH
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

IN THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
CIVIL LAW COURT, MONT. CO.

BEFORE HIS HONORABLE... OUSMAN F. FEIKA... ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE

THE PETITION OF MARK M. COLE PETITIONER, BY AND THRU HIS LEGAL COUNSEL, PRAYING THIS HONORABLE COURT FOR A DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME IN FAVOR OF PETITIONER TO BE KNOWN, CALLED AND REFERRED TO AS "AARON Y. SAYE."

COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME

THE PETITIONER BY AND THRU HIS LEGAL COUNSEL FILED A PETITION BEFORE THIS COURT REQUESTING THIS HONORABLE COURT TO ORDER THE CHANGE OF HER NAME FROM MARK M. COLE TO "AARON Y. SAYE".

During the hearing, the Petitioner testified that the Change of his name requesting this Honorable Court is intended to reclaim his biological and parental name. After conducting the necessary interrogations required by law in these proceedings, the Court observed that the intention is just and legal and that there is no objection to the change of name proposed by him.

That the Petitioner having shown with justification and satisfaction that she was born on December 21, 1987, in Nimba County, Republic of Liberia, and that he was born unto the union of Mr. James W. Saye and Madam Batty S. Saye of Nimba County, Republic of Liberia; and that the Change of his name will substantially promote his interest in all of the understandings and more firmly and that he has met all legal requirements for the Change of his name in this jurisdiction.

The Petition having been heard, same is hereby ordered granted and we now render that the name MARK M. COLE be changed to "AARON Y. SAYE" beginning this 23rd Day of JANUARY, A.D. 2023. That all documents signed by the Petitioner herein prior to this decree remain valid.

THIS DECREE shall be registered in the Office of the Registrar of DEEDS and other Official Documentations within(10) days from this date and also be published twice in any recognized Newspaper operating in the Republic of Liberia within twenty(20) days from this date. AND IT IS HEREBY SO ORDERED.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THIS HONORABLE COURT, THIS 23rd DAY OF JANUARY, A.D. 2023.

COURT SEAL: [Signature]

HIS HONOR OUSMAN F. FEIKA
ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING
SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CIVIL LAW COURT

REGISTERED ACCORDING TO LAW IN VOLUME 02-023 PAGE(S) 00010458

REGISTRAR, NATIONAL ARCHIVES CENTER/MONT. CO. R.L.

Rifle-toting CDC militias?

-As CPP demands a probe

The Collaborating Political Parties (CPP), has alarmed over the alleged lawlessness and dangerous display and brandishing of assault rifles by suspected Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) militias.



militias. In a release issued Monday, 6 February 2023, the opposition party was also alarmed over state securities who wore CDC political paraphernalia during its so-called petition ceremony of President George Manneh Weah in Monrovia. The CPP has called for international attention to

"These gangster-looking individuals wore CDC insignias and political paraphernalia including T-Shirts which made them

indistinguishable between CDC militias and state security," the CPP statement said. While the CPP condemns these and other lawless activities, it also noted that 'as Liberians move to elections to end President Weah's six years of misrule,' it wants the international community

"Accordingly, the Liberian people reject his lies and 419 leadership even as he allegedly spent over US\$3.5 million plus free rice and T-Shirts and offered free transportation to Liberians to attend his so-called petition ceremony on Saturday, February 4," CPP alleged.

The party said it is deeply disturbed by these developments which it said are signs of dangerous things to come.

"If these rifle-carrying individuals were CDC militias, the CPP demands an explanation and independent investigation on how they got such weaponry in a political gathering," the statement continued.

CPP said it also wants to know why those armed men were allowed to exhibit assault rifles in such a threatening public manner.

"Party militias must never be permitted to act as and with the authority of state securities," the statement cautioned.

If the rifle-toting persons are state security, the CPP calls for their immediate suspension, investigation, and prosecution.

It argued that state security personnel should not be allowed to wear political attires while carrying out their national security duties.

"It is totally unacceptable to

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

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