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LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

| DATE | BUYING | SELLING |
|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2023 | LS160.8534/US\$1.00 | LS162.9290US\$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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'Court inviting chaos'

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ANC Leader Mr. Alexander Cummings Chief Justice Sie-A-Nyene Yuoh



Whapoe warns of gangster's paradise

P11

Dr. Whapoe

-If Weah gets re-elected

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Continental News

Nigerian senator guilty of organ trafficking in UK

A senior wealthy Nigerian politician, his wife and a medical "middleman" have been found guilty of an organ-trafficking plot, after they brought a 21-year-old man to the UK from

only realised what was going on when he met doctors at the hospital. Nigerian street trader trafficked in kidney plot
It was alleged the defendants had tried to convince medics at the Royal Free by pretending he

from London and slept rough for days before walking into a police station in Staines, in Surrey, crying and in distress. Relaying his fears, he told police: "The doctor said I was too young but the man said if you do not do it here he would carry me back to Nigeria and do it there." Jurors heard that Sonia was studying for a masters degree at Newcastle University when she became ill in December 2019.

In 2021, her father enlisted the help of his medically-trained brother, Diwe Ekweremadu, to search for a donor, the court heard.

Diwe Ekweremadu, who remains in Nigeria, turned to a former classmate, Dr Obeta, of Southwark, south London, who recently had a private kidney transplant at the Royal Free with a Nigerian donor. Dr Obeta then engaged with Dr Chris Agbo, of Vintage Health Group, a medical tourism company, as well as an agent to arrange a visa for the donor, the court heard. The victim, who knew the man who had donated his kidney to Dr Obeta, was recruited from a Lagos street market where he made a few pounds a day selling phone accessories from a wheelbarrow. Sonia, who had declined to give evidence, wept in court as she was cleared by the jury and tearfully hugged her father as he was remanded into custody with the other guilty defendants ahead of sentencing on 5 May. BBC



Senator Ike Ekweremadu is a prominent Nigerian politician

Lagos. Senator Ike Ekweremadu, 60, his wife Beatrice, 56, and Dr Obinna Obeta, 50, were convicted of conspiring to exploit the man for his kidney, in the first such case under modern slavery laws. The Old Bailey heard the organ was for the couple's daughter, Sonia, aged 25. She was cleared of the same charge. The victim, a street trader from Lagos, was brought to the UK last year to provide a kidney in an £80,000 private transplant at the Royal Free Hospital in London. The prosecution said he was offered up to £7,000 and promised opportunities in the UK for helping, and that he

was the cousin of Sonia, who has a debilitating illness and remains on weekly dialysis, when they were not related.
While it is lawful to donate a kidney, it becomes criminal if there is a reward of money or other material advantage. Royal Free consultant, Dr Peter Dupont, concluded the donor was unsuitable after learning he had no counselling or advice about the risks of surgery and lacked funds for the lifelong care he would need.
The court heard the Ekweremadus then transferred their interest to Turkey and set about finding another donor.
An investigation was launched after the young man ran away

Odinga demands release of Kenya MPs detained over protest

Four Kenyan MPs have been charged with unlawful assembly after taking part in anti-government protests on Monday, the Reuters news agency says quoting their lawyer.
During the demonstrations police tear-gassed opposition leader Raila Odinga's convoy in the capital, Nairobi.
Running battles took place on the main Kenyatta Avenue between police and demonstrators, some of whom threw stones at the security officers.
The protests also spread to other cities, with a university student reportedly shot dead in Kisumu.
Speaking on Thursday, Mr Odinga condemned what he described as "illegal arrests" -

two of those held were leading members of the opposition in parliament. In all more than 200 people were detained.
Mr Odinga said "these

patriotic Kenyans... have done nothing wrong. We demand that the charges be dropped unconditionally with immediate effect." BBC



Police fired teargas on Monday to disperse protesters

Inside the hidden world of sex work in Somalia

Two women in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, have been talking to the BBC about how they got drawn into the underground world of sex work in a city living under the threat of violence following years of civil war. We have changed their names to protect their identities. Mogadishu's vibrant and bustling Lido Beach offers a glimpse of what the city could become, as it tries to leave the conflict behind. The seaside resorts, upmarket restaurants, hotels and fresh food are huge attractions.
But lingering nearby is an alternative scene - of partying, drugs and sex-fuelled violence.
The women caught up in this hidden side of the city are

leaving home, Fardousa drifted from place to place making new friends, who she thought would look out for her interests, along the way: "I thought they cared about me. Looking back now, I know they weren't real friends." She eventually became addicted to opioids such as morphine, tramadol and pethidine, and joined the underground party scene at Lido Beach, where she was introduced to sex work. Fardousa soon found herself enmeshed in Mogadishu's murky underworld where she went from hotels to strangers' homes to secluded locations.
But now she knows enough potential clients that she can rely on people contacting her by phone. "I wait for my phone to ring and then go out with the men to have sex. Other times, my female friends call me when they have men ready." She



Mogadishu's Lido Beach is a thriving part of the capital's life, but nearby there is a hidden side

young, destitute and often vulnerable in this mainly Muslim nation.
Fardousa, 22, who has been a sex worker for three years, sits in a dark room shaded by red curtains in a bullet-ridden apartment building in Mogadishu's Wardhigley district. Above the screeching noise of the stove, the slim young woman with a soft voice describes what happened to her. Fardousa explains that she left home at 19, a rare occurrence in Somali society where young women generally do not leave the family before they are married. However, a abuse at home or irreconcilable differences with other family members can push some away and this appears to be a growing phenomenon.
"At first I didn't see it as running away but I couldn't bear to live with my stepmother any more," Fardousa says. "She became my father's second wife after my mother passed away when I was young. She was very abusive over the years and despite this, my father would always take her side." After

deals with a variety of clients from all walks of life. "These men at first were male friends of my female friends, then it changed to having sex with different men that I didn't know. I was vulnerable and needed the money for my addiction, just like many other young women in this city," says Fardousa. Because of its nature, there is no official data on the extent of sex work but the testimony from Fardousa and others offers a glimpse into the dangerous environment that many of these young women find themselves in.
Hodan has been a sex worker for two and a half years. Like Fardousa, the 23-year-old ran away from home and found herself immersed in Mogadishu's underground lifestyle consisting of fellow young runaways who have no financial support.
She speaks above the sound of children playing football outside in a steady and calm voice.
"I spend most nights in hotels. The same goes for many of these young women. You meet all kinds of men there but things can take a turn for the worse when you actually go off with some of these men," Hodan says. As sex work is illegal in Somalia, many of these young women find themselves in precarious situations with no recourse to the authorities. BBC

EDITORIAL

2023 electoral glitches: Why NEC is not the only culprit here

FEARS THAT LIBERIA is on the brink of a constitutional crisis, as the country prepares for its October 10 polls, are unimaginable. This is due in parts to several factors and NEC is not the only culprit here.

ELECTIONS, AS WE all know, are processes conducted within a time frame, a delay in executing one event would subsequently affect the proceeding one.

THEREFORE, THE CURRENT looming constitutional crisis cannot be attributed to NEC Commissioners' inability to perform the task ahead as required by law. The Legislative and the Executive Branches of government are equally liable.

ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 80 (c) of the Liberian Constitution, "every Liberian citizen shall have the right to be registered in a constituency, and to vote in public elections only in the constituency where registered...". According to (d) of the same Article, a constituency "shall have an approximately equal population of 20,000, or such number of citizens as the Legislature shall prescribe in keeping with population growth and movements as revealed by a national census; provided that the total number of electoral constituencies in the Republic shall not exceed one hundred."

AT (E), THE CONSTITUTION provides that "immediately following a national census and before the next elections, the Elections Commission shall reapportion the constituencies in accordance with the new population figures so that every constituency shall have as close to the same population as possible; provided, however, that a constituency must be solely within a county."

THE DELAYED CONDUCT of the National Housing and Population Census in 2018, taking place 4-years later, now referred to as the 2022 National Housing and Population Census was the beginning of the brink of the Constitutional crisis created by the Executive Branch of Government aided and abetted by the Legislative Branch, which has since 2018 used "Resolutions" to circumvent constitutional requirements.

HAD THE LEGISLATIVE Branch acted to uphold the Constitution by compelling the Executive to conduct the National Housing and Population Census as mandated by the Constitution and not a "Resolution" to circumvent such an important requirement, NEC would have worked in line with Article 80 (e); because one would expect that a responsible Legislature would have conducted its businesses responsibly.

BUT AS IF THAT has not been enough, funding for the election itself has also been lacking. Few days ago, NEC Chair informed Senators here that as at the 9th of March, 11 days to begin the Voters Registration process, the Commission was yet to receive an initial amount of US\$4 million from the Ministry of Finance to begin the 2023 elections process.

WHAT THIS MEANT was that whatever preparation that should have been made days earlier, had to be pushed ahead due to lack of funding.

THIS INCLUDES DEPLOYMENT of staff, equipment and logistics, payment for rented facilities, etc. These equipment would have been deployed ahead of time and tested days before the first citizen could show up to register. Venues negotiated for would have also been paid for to avoid the current embarrassment, where NEC staffs are being kicked off premises, and would not have reverted to changing registration centers moving some to nearby constituencies.

AGAIN, CREATING ANOTHER confusion ahead of voting day, when a person residing in say, District 3, but had registered in District 8, will be compelled to choose a Representative Candidate that has no responsibility toward his or her District. This is chaotic situation, that must be corrected not just by NEC but the Legislature and the Executive as well.

EACH OF THE two branches of government herein mentioned have played their respective role in creating this chaotic situation. They must now act responsibly to get the country out of this impending chaos - hopefully not by another "resolution."

COMMENTARY

By Julia Kaufman,
Jane Kabubo-Mariara

Localizing Development Research

WASHINGTON, DC / NAIROBI - "Localization" has become a buzzword in international development circles, partly thanks to a push by the United States to shift more aid funding to local actors. But growing awareness of the importance of local expertise is not yet adequately reflected in most development research, which still regularly excludes researchers from low- and middle-income countries.

As matters stand, economic and development research in the Global South is led almost exclusively by academics who do not live there. A 2021 study found that just 16% of the articles published in top development journals between 1990 and 2019 were authored by researchers based in developing countries, and only 9% of presenters at major development conferences were affiliated with universities in developing countries.

Moreover, a recent report by the Center for Global Development shows that local researchers tend to be left out of rigorous impact evaluations of development programs in health, education, and other sectors. While the number of research experts in low- and middle-income countries has grown over the past decade, as have collaborations between academics across geographic regions, developing-country scholars remain underrepresented in academic fora.

The exclusion of developing-country researchers reflects the general failure within academia to regard local contexts. As recent analysis of academic racism has shown, research institutions and processes can reflect and exacerbate bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Their lack of diversity constrains research quality and impact, and impedes efforts to eradicate poverty, improve living standards, and promote prosperity for hundreds of millions of people around the world.

Researchers with deep knowledge of their countries and communities offer critical insights into local priorities and opportunities to inform policy decision-making. And contextual knowledge is not entirely dependent on geography: many in the diaspora can also provide valuable empirical insights for policy.

The Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) - led by one of us (Kabubo-Mariara) - is an example of a Southern-led global organization that supports and promotes the work of local researchers in order to amplify the policy impact of high-quality evidence. PEP uses a "research coproduction" model in nearly all its projects, fostering collaborations among researchers and key government and nongovernment stakeholders to shape research objectives and generate useful evidence.

Consequently, more than half of PEP's projects since 2013 have influenced policy processes and decisions in target countries. For example, recommendations by local PEP researchers concerning the protection of rural women's livelihoods against climate shocks have been integrated into Lesotho's national agricultural policy. And in Pakistan, PEP-supported research on the economic effects of the policy response to COVID-19 has informed the federal budget. In academic settings, over 40% of papers from PEP-supported projects have been published in

international peer-reviewed journals, and half of all projects have been presented at high-level academic conferences.

Another example is the Transfer Project, a multi-country research network launched by UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill which brings together governments and local researchers studying the impact of cash transfers in Sub-Saharan Africa. The organization invests in long-term relationships with government officials to build trust, co-create research, align methods with the questions most relevant to policymakers, and continuously iterate programs. In Ghana, a Transfer Project study prompted the government to expand its cash-transfer program from 1,645 to 150,000 beneficiaries.

Unfortunately, successful initiatives of this kind are still outliers. The most fruitful partnerships are those that enable local researchers and policymakers to generate, synthesize, and use evidence for policy needs by collaborating over time. But despite the growing interest in and capacity for long-term, trust-based partnerships, a large share of development-research funding continues to support one-off projects and short-term consultancies. As a result, many local research institutions face chronic funding challenges and other professional barriers.

To be sure, local expertise is by no means a silver bullet for combating poverty. And, like all empirical research, policy-relevant evaluations may carry risks related to conflicts of interest and require ethical safeguards. But both evidence and experience show that researchers with firsthand knowledge of the countries studied can help identify more relevant questions, understand political constraints, and guide policymakers on how to spend limited public funds more effectively. Last year, a group of PEP researchers launched a call to action to increase the participation of researchers from the Global South in economic development research, citing a series of studies on underrepresentation in the field.

Funders in government, philanthropic foundations, universities, and other grant-making institutions are in a unique position to drive positive systemic change. To do so, they must build on existing support and momentum to provide the researchers closest to decision-makers with the agenda-setting power and resources they need to get relevant information into the hands of those willing to use it.

For philanthropies, this means increasing long-term, flexible support for innovative research organizations to enable them to sustain partnerships over time and produce policy-responsive evidence. Government officials, for their part, must strengthen their commitment to measuring and increasing the impact of their programs. To this end, improving underlying country data systems is essential.

More inclusive, responsive research could help solve the world's most pressing policy challenges. By investing in new opportunities for locally immersed researchers, funders can pave the way for higher-quality research and more effective development policies and programs.



Lord, this population growth is everybody's concern

Dear Father:

Hmm, this huge population growth in the Southeast is concerning ooh. I mean, how the people can be recognized for being the region that is religiously taking contraceptive (doing family planning) yet their population increased by 90%. You say whatin?

Father, da na me talky ooh, that Uncle Sam's Cousin from that Nautic Village ooh. The man wor smiling from ear to ear the other day talking nay doing the time the people announced our village population oo.

The people said our brother them from the Southeast who never used to like plenty borning bisnay na start borning plenty oo.

But Uncle Sam's Cousin wor praising the people after LISGIS announced their population. He said our brother them from the Southeast are noted for religiously taking Family Planning medicines. The thing has been confusing me since. Wait ooh, my son den that wah kinna family planning they been taking na?

Father, me, myself here I don't know oo. I think they need to bring that particularly family planning medicine in town here so the people who want to get pregnant can start taking it too. Because if the people in the Southeast are taking it and are borning plenty then they need to bring some in the city for the people who wan to born ooh. -Phew!

Phew again seh. You can see da God beating all lor them so. How can people be taking family planning and be borning plenty? I think they wan tell us that since their man chopped president all they are doing is jolly, jolly and have either forgotten to take their pills, even though they still collecting them (pills) but something na adding up here.

Maybe like somebody said, since their son chopped president job they all decided to run back to their villages and leave the city alone. But again, me I na too sure because the last time I visited Kru town there was no space to park my car. Let them be there, da God beating all lor them so. Anyway, how is Kasepreko doing these days?

Hmm, the man is on fire. The way the man firing at his own people self it leh he na leaving any room for coming back oo. The man bitter more than bitter leave. Any bad thin you wan to hear about the County Giant and him people just listen to him-the man is tearing everybody apart.

Bor my son, da na this same man who used to fire all over the place for the people?

Father, the man wor only doing him job, bor most of those things he wor saying wor na true. How do I know, because from the way him talking mean da all the good, good thin then him used to talk were so, so lies. Hmm, have you heard about the Wide Mouth pekin and the Sleepy Oldman?

They say the Sleepy Oldman wan to carry the Wide Mouth pekin who can be cussing everybody as him running mate ooh.

Puah, leh them be there they will all balance when the Footballer kick them around leh plastic bag. They say if you cook yourself in tomato cup, they will dish you out with broom stick. Leh them be there all lor them na know wah they wan.

OP-ED

By Jan Eeckhout

The Simplest Fix for Banking

BARCELONA - Last year, the Nobel Prize in Economics went to two economists who study the dynamics of bank runs, as well as to former US Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke for his work analyzing how central banks have dealt with some of history's worst banking crises, such as those in the Great Depression of the 1930s. Half a year later, we are witnessing another bank run whose contagious effects could destabilize economies, trigger recessions, and impose high costs on taxpayers.

Banks play a double role in the economy, taking short-term deposits and savings and then using those savings to lend money over the long term in the form of mortgages, business loans, and other investments. A run occurs when enough depositors come to fear that a bank may go bust, taking their savings with it. They all run to the bank to withdraw their funds, but because the bank has deployed those funds toward the other services it provides, it becomes insolvent. Having witnessed such runs, US President Franklin Roosevelt's administration (followed by others around the world) created insurance schemes to alleviate depositors' fears that they would not get at least some of their money back following a run.

But we now have a technological solution that could end bank runs forever. A country's monetary authority could introduce a central bank digital currency (CBDC) and provide all depositors (taxpayers) with interest-bearing accounts at the central bank. Such a system would eliminate many barriers to financial transactions by making the broader payments system more fluid.

This system would not be anything like the Wild West of cryptocurrencies and speculative pyramid schemes that have cropped up in recent years, nor would it be socialized banking. There are already plenty of fintech companies (Revolut, Wise, N26) offering sleek apps and innovative services that enable instantaneous smartphone payments to other users who bank with competing operators. These same financial operators could access CBDC balances held by the central bank and compete for customers by minimizing transaction costs.

Of course, traditional banks also compete; but they do it worse and at a scandalous cost to customers. If the interbank rate charged by the central bank is 3%, your traditional bank offers you at best 1% on a deposit, taking the other two percentage points as profit.

Traditional banks can exert monopoly power because there is no instantaneous clearance for payments. In the United States, it generally takes at least two working days for a money transfer to enter your bank account. And making matters worse, traditional banks' excessive risk-taking transforms your risk-free deposit into a risky investment when the bank cannot meet your withdrawal request.

With an interest-bearing CBDC, a bank run is impossible. As the lender of last resort, the central bank could issue as much money as needed if depositors wanted to withdraw their money simultaneously. And, owing to fluid, instantaneous transfers between users, competition would deliver a 3% return on those deposits. Other than traditional banks, who could possibly oppose this solution?

To be sure, traditional banks are crucial for the financial system because they create value by making loans. They monitor whether households that apply for mortgages are solvent, and whether business loans will be used for profitable investments. Because lending is always risky, even the most competitive bank will charge a spread on a loan. The same 3% interbank rate at which the bank can obtain funds today may result in a 5% interest rate for a mortgage, or a 9% rate for a risky investment by a tech startup. Some institution, such as a bank, is needed to evaluate and price these risks.

But, because banks can profit by playing with depositors' money and relying on the government to bail them out, they tend to assume too much risk. That is why academics and regulators have long argued that banks should be subject to higher capital requirements. When they cannot use households' savings to finance risky investments or rely on government bailouts, their risk-taking will be sharply reduced.

A CBDC would bring market discipline to the banking sector. Traditional banks would be forced to focus on picking profitable loans, and they would close most of their network of retail branches. Likewise, the credit-card oligopoly that hijacks our credit-less payment system would melt like snow in the sun. In its place, we would get a fluid payment system operated by a network of competitors offering access to your CBDC account. In today's economy, households would receive 3% on deposits that are safely shielded from bank runs.

A CBDC is not imminent, though. Central bankers are scared to slaughter the cash cow of the traditional banks, under the pretext that doing so will lead to the collapse of the banking sector. The private bank lobby will strongly oppose digital innovation and seek to maintain its dominant position at the cost of the stability of the financial system.

Still, we may see CBDCs introduced sooner than anticipated. If one major economy takes the plunge, others will be forced to follow suit or risk seeing their currencies be eclipsed. That is why the Canadian central bank has already signalled its readiness to introduce a CBDC if the US decides to launch its own. If China tries to dominate international transactions with its digital renminbi, other central banks certainly will be prompted to follow suit.

Whoever takes the first major step in disrupting the banking sector, it cannot come soon enough. We already have the tools to end bank runs and ensure financial stability. All we need is the will to use them.



| Role | Finance and Administration Manager | Grade | C Step I |
|--------------------|---|-------|----------------|
| Department | Finance and Administration | Date | March 23, 2023 |
| Reporting Line | Secretary General | | |
| Purpose of the job | Oversee the finance activities, financial controls, and computerized accounting systems in line with the LNRCs Financial Policy and procedures. Provide sound financial advice and effective financial management including compliance as well as manage the administrative functions of the LNRCs. | | |
| Location | National Headquarters. (The post holder will be expected to travel out of location for official purposes). | | |

KEY DUTY:

Responsible for overall financial management, including budgeting and monitoring of project(s) expenditures; financial reporting and auditing; forecasting expenditures; and maintaining and supervising project accounts, books of accounts, banking and financial operations, and all administrative work.

SPECIFIC TASKS

Specific tasks for the job holder will include Team management, Budgeting and strategic planning, Timely and Accurate Financial reporting, Treasury management, Audit, Accounting, Internal controls and Management of Fleet/Procurement/Warehouse.

OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES:

- General departmental workplan and individual staff workplans developed.
- Annual National Society budget developed.
- Quarterly and annual financial report of the National Society prepared.
- Monthly bank balances for **ALL** accounts of the National Society processed and submitted to the Secretary General.
- Preparation and submission of periodic projects' financial reports.
- Adequate cash flow at the National Society assured.
- Management of finances at the Chapter level improved.
- National Society's financial risk matrix prepared, monitored and updated when required.
- Annual National Society general audit and where necessary, project audits conducted.
- Departmental financial approval matrix developed.

QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

- A first degree (University) in Commerce Accounting, Business Administration, Finance, Nonprofit management or related field. Post-graduate diploma preferred.
- Qualified in a recognized professional qualification in Accounting (CPA, etc.).
- Minimum 3-5 years prior experience in a senior management finance position, including at least 3 years with a nonprofit/philanthropic organization
- Minimum 3 -5 years' experience in financial management, in particular in the development, monitoring and reporting on the financial status of the organization and programs
- Minimum three years similar work experience within a fast-paced work environment
- Experience in managing finance staff
- Excellent presentation and facilitation skills
- Excellent coaching and mentoring skills
- Strong team player, collaborative and capable of building effective relationships across a ll level.
- Strong results orientation, with the ability to challenge existing mind-sets
- Good decision – maker with proven abilities to represent the LNRCs at all top levels.
- Problem solving and risk mitigating skills
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint) and other financial software.

For Details, please see the links below:

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HOW TO APPLY: The deadline for submissions of letter of Application, CV and all other relevant certificates and documents is MARCH 31, 2023 4:30 PM. All applications should be submitted to lnrcs.recruitment2016@liberian-redcross.org Please mention "FINANCE AND ADM" in the subject line.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Voters trucking in Liberian Elections

By S.Karweaye

Since the war ended and the return of Liberia to democracy in 2006, the electoral process has been plagued by the tendency to monetize. Liberia has been battling with the hard luck of having responsible leaders. In a democracy, politicians are expected to respect the people equally regardless of their status.

In Liberia, just as in many countries of the world, free and fair elections constitute the central factor in ensuring democratic survival. Unfortunately, in Liberia's case, money plays an important role in choosing who becomes a leader be it president,

residents of Montserrado County to Margibi County to registered including students from the Christ the King Foundation High School in the VOA Community, Montserrado County.

In the 2020 midterm senatorial elections, votes buying were carried out with careless abandon by candidates in Grand Cape Mount and Bomi Counties and in most cases, with the active participation of electoral officials and security agents. This was an important factor in the electoral victory of Mr. Edwin Snowe and Simeon Taylor in each of these counties which created the environment for the occurrence of electoral violence in Bomi and Grand Cape Mount Counties.



senator, or representative. Money politics has become a common feature in Liberia, arising from poverty, apathy, and competition on party manifestos, among others.

Vote buying and selling are consistent with the continued materialization and commercialization of political candidates in Liberia. Those with lower income status become prey for political candidates in vote buying, through the voter trucking scheme –transporting eligible voters from one place to the other to be registered – in exchange for financial gain after registration and voting process .

The ongoing 2023 Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) exercise in Liberia is bringing to light the reality of votes buying through voter trucking. Delegates to the primaries of the two major parties were paid thousands of dollars to induce them to vote for one candidate or the other. This was an important factor in the electoral victory of most candidates at the primaries.

The U.S. The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned designee and former Minister of State for Presidential Affairs and Chief of Staff to President George Weah and senatorial aspirant in Margibi County, Nathaniel McGill has been accused of trucking

The Electoral Act stipulates voter trucking is a violation of the law and provides some form of punishment for such electoral malpractice. But is the National Electoral Commission (NEC) willing to prosecute offenders? For example, Section 10.1a of the law prohibits the trucking of voters. According to the law, such violation constitutes an electoral offense and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months or both. Also, Section 3.1 of the Electoral Act also states: "A person must register to vote at a voter registration Center established by the NEC for the place where he or she ordinarily resides and must vote at the polling place established by the NEC for voters registered at that center."

Therefore, steps must be taken by the government, in collaboration with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in overhauling Liberia's electoral system to make it more difficult for monetary influences and other malpractices. Any meaningful attempt to stem electoral fraud in Liberia must consider the wide gap between the poor and the rich. There is no doubt that poverty has impacted negatively on the electoral behavior in Liberia, as it encourages buying and selling of votes by the electorate, aside from other malpractices.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

CPP pleads with Supreme Court

The Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) have made a passionate plea for Liberia's Supreme Court to attach urgency to the adjudication of alleged constitutional breaches resulting from the process leading to the October 10, General and

before it, in order to safeguard the country's peace and protect its democracy. He made the appeal on Thursday, March 23, following a petition filed last week by the CPP. The CPP petition questioned the constitutionality of the NEC to conduct Voters Registration

He said, like the NEC, no agency of government has any color of rights to ignore any aspect of the country's constitution, noting that to do so is a recipe for danger and disaster. Mr. Brown warned of the fact that elections are problematic and must be held in strict accordance with the Constitution, to safeguard the country's democracy and avert society degenerating into full blown conflict.

"The way the NEC is proceeding with the conduct of the October 10 General and Presidential elections, is not only wrong and dangerous, but it puts the country's rule of law under threat and its democracy at risk," Mr. Brown cautioned. He pleaded with Justices of the Supreme Court to timely and expeditiously address and dispose of elections related violations of the law, in its infant stages, and not wait until it degenerates into conflict before taking actions.

"With one law compromised, all other laws will be compromised. Correct the problem when it is still small. Anything outside the constitution, spells danger, and all of us will pay the price," Mr. Brown said. He pleaded with Liberians, irrespective of political affiliations, to speak out against critical national issues that have the potential to plunge the nation into chaos, noting that the price will be too

without demarcation of constituencies as provided by law.

CPP called the Supreme Court of Liberia attention to the NEC alleged violations of the Articles 80 C, D and E of the Liberian Constitution. Mr. Brown, addressing a news conference, said after a week of the filing of the CPP petition, the court has delayed acknowledgement or serve it on the NEC or assign it to be heard. Report said the court has assigned the case for April 4, 2023.



Presidential elections. This urgent call is being made to avert society descending into chaos and major conflict from problems arising due to the National Elections Commission (NEC) not complying with the constitution.

Ambassador Lewis Brown, Head of Team Cummings, said the court must act independently and with courage to timely and expeditiously address conflict-prone elections related matters brought

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

UL Students, youth sign peace commitment

-Following Peace Symposium At UL

The University of Liberia Student Leaders, political parties' youth league representatives, and eight national youth groups have signed a commitment to maintain a peaceful environment and support a violence-free election process in Liberia, regardless of their political differences.

Held in the Auditorium of the University of Liberia Capitol Hill campus Wednesday, March 22, 2023, the flagship signing ceremony followed the young people's participation in a two-day Peace Symposium from March 20-21, 2023.

Organized by the UL student government with students and youth leaders in the country, the symposium provided young people with a learning

G. Wesseh Blamoh, said it is important to keep the peace in Liberia and on the University of Liberia campus.

"For many years we witnessed violence in our country and even on these campuses. Students died on this campus because of violence. Students got wounded because of violence," said Minister Blamoh.

He, therefore, urged that they work together to maintain a peaceful and non-violent environment on the campuses of the University.

"The only reason for the existence of this University is for students to learn today and become productive citizens tomorrow," he said.

Minister Blamoh pledged that the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs will support all



opportunity on dialogue, social cohesion, and conflict resolution, among others.

Liberian authorities, the University of Liberia Administration, and foreign missions including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations, the European Union, the South African Ambassador, Liberia's Military, and the Police, witnessed the signing ceremony.

The organizers said nine hundred participants were drawn from all campuses of the University of Liberia, seven political party youth wings, and eight national youth groups.

Part of the key takeaways from the symposium was understanding election and the role of youth in a violence-free election, rights-based consciousness, and upholding the rule of law in Liberia.

They also included identifying looming threats, with one example being politicians and their supporters' quest to 'win by all cost' in an election process, among others.

Addressing the participants at the ceremony, Liberia's Minister of State for Presidential Affairs and

stakeholders in the peace equation to maintain a peaceful and non-violent environment.

The President of the University of Liberia, Prof. Dr. Julius Julukon Sarwolo Nelson, Jr., said violence is a threat to peace, security, and development anywhere in the world.

"Violence anywhere is a threat to peace everywhere. Let us all work together to build, to sustain, to maintain a culture of peace and non-violence in the Republic of Liberia," said Dr. Nelson.

He cautioned the students and young people that violence will not solve the problem of the Republic of Liberia.

Despite incidents of disturbances at the University, President Nelson noted that many other good things are happening at the University of Liberia.

However, he said there is a tendency to magnify the wrong things against the good things that are happening at the University.

As such, he said the University of Liberia family has the responsibility to re-brand the perception that when you are here at the University,

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

Africa must urgently invest in economic recovery, Finance Ministers Urge

Addis Ababa, 21 March 2023 (ECA) - Africa should deploy innovative resource mobilization and accelerate economic recovery from multiple crises which have

Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ministers reiterated the urgency of transforming Africa's economies and driving industrialization. They

Ukraine and climate change will hinder Africa's efforts to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063, the Ministers said the triple crises have disrupted food and energy markets, exacerbated food insecurity



eroded two decades of development gains and increased poverty, Ministers of Finance have urged.

In a Ministerial Statement adopted at the 55th session of the Conference of African

underscored the need to expedite economic recovery in Africa which is likely to miss many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Noting that the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in

and caused high inflation rates which have pushed millions of Africans into poverty and economic hardship.

Africa needs to invest

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

ECOWAS Commission holds a stakeholders' sensitization meeting on ECOVISA

The ECOWAS Commission through the Directorate of Free Movement of Persons and Migration has just concluded a sensitization meeting on the

held in October 2022 for their input particularly with regards to the cost, design and processing of the ECOVISA.

The ECOWAS Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, Mrs. Massandjé

Commissioner stressed that the implementation of ECOVISA will stimulate economic activities and boost the tourism drive within the region and therefore urged all participants to take ownership of the process which will yield positive benefits in the region and strengthen the fabric of the integration agenda. She concluded by reiterating the ECOWAS Commission's commitment in propelling actions to foster regional collaboration and coordination towards the implementation of the ECOVISA. The Head of the ECOWAS National Office in Guinea-Bissau, Mrs. Cristina da Silva Pedreira who was also the Chairperson of the Meeting, underscored the importance of the Meeting which she said was a follow-up of the ECOVISA Experts Meeting held in Abuja in October 2022. In attendance were stakeholders drawn from the ECOWAS National Offices, Tourism Industry and Private Sector, representatives of the ECOWAS Commission, the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSO), and the Federation of the West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI). The recommendations emanating from this meeting will inform the deliberations of the Heads of Immigration and Sectoral Ministers towards finalizing the relevant technical specificities.

TOURE-LITSE, in her opening remarks stated that the establishment of a Schengen-type single visa system for the ECOWAS region, was one of the important stages for ensuring the free movement of persons and goods. She added that the ECOVISA which is a priority for the Authority of Heads of State and Government, would alleviate the difficulties encountered by foreign investors, tourists, and visitors whenever they plan to travel to and within the ECOWAS Community space. The

implementation of a multi-country (Schengen-Type) Single Visa System (ECOVISA) for migrants of third country extraction. The sensitization meeting which was held virtually on Wednesday, March 22, 2023 afforded the ECOWAS Commission an opportunity to inform stakeholders on the steps taken towards actualizing the ECOVISA Regime. During the meeting, the ECOWAS Commission also presented recommendations from the previous Experts Meeting



'Court inviting chaos'

By Lincoln G. Peters

Opposition Collaboration Political Parties (CPP) has accused Liberia's Supreme Court of inviting chaos due to its alleged silence on an elections-related matter filed before it. The CPP recently petitioned the nation's highest court seeking a halt to the ongoing Voter Registration. The CPP is concerned that a final census report has not been released to inform a legislative decision in setting threshold or re-demarcating electoral constituencies for the 2023 elections.

It filed the petition against the National Elections Commission (NEC) just before Voter Registration could begin.

But the CPP claims that the

2023 that CPP is concerned about the silence of the Supreme Court.

At the press conference, Amb. Brown said they are drawing the attention of the citizens and the international community to the lawlessness of the country.

"We are asking the court to act now and save the country from this embarrassment. The court is inviting chaos," Amb. Brown warned.

"A political collaboration with authority to do so, filed a petition with the Supreme Court of Liberia, drawing [its] attention to what [it] believes as unconstitutional behavior of the National Elections Commission," said Amb. Brown.

He accused the NEC of proceeding wrongly, reminding it that it is charged with the authority to superintend and



ANC Leader Mr. Alexander Cummings

Chief Justice Sie-A-Nyene Yuoh

President Weah congratulates Greece on Independence Anniversary

The President George Manneh Weah has congratulated the President, Government and People of the Hellenic Republic of Greece on the auspicious occasion marking the Independence Anniversary on March 25, 2023.

friendship subsisting between Greece and Liberia will continue to be deepened in the interest of the two governments and peoples, especially in the sphere of maritime, where a large number of Greek vessels fly Liberia's flag on international waters.

grow for the success of the collective interests.

President Weah prayed that Her Excellency Madam Katerina Sakellaropou, enjoys continued good health, and longevity as she leads her resilient people to prosperity, peace and national cohesion,



Pres. Weah

President Weah then entertained the hope that sustained cooperation in international affairs is crucial to the rules based international order and global security, noting that the bilateral collaboration will continue to

adding that the bilateral cooperation subsisting between the two countries will continue to grow from strength to strength for the benefits of the two countries' mutual interest in the fields of health, science and technology.

Supreme Court is inviting chaos in the country due to its silence to listen, hear and adjourn its petition before the full bench of the court.

The CPP said it is concerned about the constitutionality of the NEC's action to conduct voter registration without constitutionally demarcating constituencies into which a voter is to be registered following the 2022 census.

The CPP is made up of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) of Mr. Alexander B. Cummings, and a faction of the opposition Liberty Party (LP).

They said it does not intend to delay the election process but argued that the lawsuit aims to prevent the electoral body from conducting voter registration in constituencies that have not been appropriately reapportioned to reflect population growth.

Since the CPP's complaint was a field, the Supreme Court of Liberia is yet to hear the matter. The NEC this week began the Voter Registration exercise.

Amb. Lewis G. Brown, Liberia's former Information Minister, now a stalwart of Mr. Cummings' presidential campaign team, told journalists Thursday, 23 March

conduct a credible, and transparent election."The petition was filed on Friday, and today is Thursday, one week later, street jurors are discussing the petition the Supreme Court is yet to cause that petition to be heard or served on the relevant parties so that it's heard and issues adjourned," Amb. Brown noted.

The former Information Minister warned that lawlessness and chaos will only multiply in the country when those with the authority to act decide to not act, even when they are required to do so by the Constitution.

"Election is a trigger for conflict. The best way now to do this is to honor the Constitution. We are appealing to the Supreme Court in this public manner to act and hear this petition because it's inviting chaos and conflict," he warned further.

He wondered if the Supreme Court will hear elections fraud cases when it cannot hear this petition seeking to halt a voter registration process now."We don't want the process stop but listen and hear. Let the law apply to all. My people, this thing we are playing with is fire and it can burn," he concluded.

Français

Découvert des caches d'armes: l'enquête sur les armes au point mort

Les autorités de la police nationale du Libéria semblent avoir suspendu l'enquête sur la découverte d'une énorme cache d'armes militaires de haute qualité dans un conteneur de 40 pieds et à une résidence privée à Brewerville il y a à peine trois mois.

Au cours d'un entretien avec le New Dawn, le porte-parole de la police, Moses Carter, a fait savoir que le traité d'extradition a bloqué l'enquête et que la PNL explore actuellement la voie diplomatique pour que le suspect Benjamin Baker soit extradé afin qu'il fasse face à la loi. Le Libéria et les États-Unis ont signé un traité d'extradition le 1er

d'autres possibilités, dont la voie diplomatique", a déclaré M. Bakers. "Mais pour le moment nous sommes au point mort. Benjamin Baker, qui a expédié les armes au Libéria, est toujours en Amérique, mais nous explorons les moyens de le faire extraditer", a déclaré Carter.

Les colis qui auraient été expédiés sur une période d'un an étaient essentiellement constitués de fusils d'assaut.

Le Libéria, un pays fragile, organise des élections présidentielle et législatives en octobre de cette année. Beaucoup craignent que la violence n'éclate. La cache d'armes et de munitions ne fait qu'accroître cette peur.

Lors d'une conférence de presse conjointe le jeudi 5 janvier 2023 à son siège à Monrovia, la police nationale libérienne a annoncé l'arrestation de Mme Barbara Debra, Ezekiel Tamba et Mme Melvina M. Kpan.

L'inspecteur général de la police, le colonel Patrick Sudue, a expliqué à l'époque que les suspects avaient été arrêtés le jour même de la conférence de presse à divers endroits à Monrovia.

Il a raconté que Mme Barbara Debra avait été arrêtée à Old Road, en banlieue de Monrovia, après que la police eut reçu des

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Les armes et les munitions ont été découvertes au port dans une cargaison confiée à une dame. D'autres découvertes ont été faites chez elle à Brewerville à la suite d'une opération de perquisition et de saisie.

La police a ensuite identifié le nommé Ben Baker comme étant l'expéditeur du colis expédié des États-Unis à Barbara Debra.

novembre 1937 à Monrovia couvrant un large éventail de crimes. Ce traité a été ratifié par les États-Unis le 30 août 1939 et par le Libéria le 16 novembre de la même année.

L'application du traité nécessite des procédures judiciaires couplées à des coopérations diplomatiques.

"Pour l'instant, l'affaire Benjamin Baker a bloqué l'enquête et la police étudie

L'ex-présidente Sirleaf espère obtenir 45 millions de dollars pour le système de santé africain

L'ancienne présidente libérienne, Mme Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a dit espérer obtenir de l'Africa Frontline First Initiative un montant initial de 45 millions de dollars.

Prononçant un discours spécial lors d'un symposium d'une semaine sur les agents de santé communautaires à Monrovia, Mme Sirleaf a affirmé que l'argent va être utilisé pour combler le déficit de financement d'environ 4 milliards de dollars auquel les agents de santé communautaires du continent africain sont confrontés.

Elle a ajouté que le projet vise à soutenir, former et améliorer les services de santé communautaires à travers le continent.

Madame Sirleaf a déclaré qu'elle travaillait avec Africa First Frontline pour obtenir les 45 \$ US pour le soutien de l'initiative des agents de

santé communautaires.

Le montant vise à combler le déficit de financement de plus de 4 milliards de dollars américains auquel la santé communautaire est confrontée sur le continent. "Un effort, je suis particulièrement confiante que l'Africa Frontline First Initiative dans un effort de collaboration pour combler le déficit de financement de plus de 4 milliards

de dollars auquel la santé communautaire est confrontée sur le continent", a-t-elle déclaré. Grâce à un partenariat unique, a-t-elle déclaré, le gouvernement, l'Union africaine, le Centre africain de contrôle des maladies, les donateurs et les experts, Africa Frontline First

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Éditorial

Pourquoi il ne faut pas accuser la NEC la NEC

Pendant que le Libéria se prépare pour les élections du 10 octobre, la crainte d'une crise constitutionnelle due en partie à plusieurs facteurs est énorme.

Les élections, comme nous le savons tous, sont un processus qui se fait selon un calendrier donné, tout retard qu'accuse une opération relative aux élections pourrait affecter la suite de l'opération.

Par conséquent, la crise constitutionnelle imminente actuelle ne peut être attribuée à l'incapacité des commissaires de la NEC à accomplir la tâche qui les attend, comme l'exige la loi. Les pouvoirs législatif et exécutif de l'État sont également responsables.

Selon l'article 80c de la Constitution libérienne, « tout citoyen libérien a le droit d'être inscrit dans une circonscription et de voter aux élections publiques uniquement dans la circonscription où il est inscrit... ». Selon le point (d) du même article, une circonscription « doit avoir une population approximativement égale à 20 000 habitants, ou un nombre de citoyens que le pouvoir législatif aura prescrit en fonction de la croissance et des mouvements de population, comme en témoigne les résultats d'un recensement national, pourvu que le nombre total des circonscriptions électorales de la République ne dépasse pas cent.

Au point e, la Constitution prévoit que « immédiatement après un recensement national et avant les prochaines élections, la Commission électorale procède au découpage des circonscriptions en fonction des nouveaux chiffres de la population afin que chaque circonscription ait autant que possible la même population; à condition toutefois qu'une circonscription soit uniquement à l'intérieur d'un comté.

Le retard du Recensement national du logement et de la population qui devrait avoir lieu en 2018, mais qui a fini par avoir lieu 4 ans plus tard. Le Recensement national du logement et de la population de 2022, a marqué le début de la crise constitutionnelle créée par le pouvoir exécutif, aidé et encouragé par le pouvoir législatif, qui utilise depuis 2018 des « résolutions » pour contourner les exigences constitutionnelles.

Si le pouvoir législatif avait agi pour faire respecter la Constitution en obligeant l'exécutif à procéder au recensement national du logement et de la population comme l'exige la Constitution, la NEC aurait travaillé conformément à l'article 80 (e). On s'attendait en tout à ce que le pouvoir législatif soit assez responsable.

Mais comme si cela ne suffisait pas, le financement de l'élection elle-même a également fait défaut. Il y a quelques jours, le président de la NEC a informé les sénateurs qu'au 9 mars, à 11 jours du début de l'opération d'enrôlement des électeurs, la Commission n'avait pas encore reçu le montant initial de 4 millions de dollars du ministère des Finances pour commencer le processus électoral de 2023.

Cela signifie que même si la commission électorale était prête pour quelque activité que ce soit elle aurait été repoussée en raison du manque de financement.

Fût-ce le déploiement du personnel, du matériel et de la logistique ou le paiement des locaux loués, etc, cela ne changerait rien. Ces équipements auraient été déplorés à l'avance et testés des jours avant que le premier citoyen puisse se présenter pour s'inscrire. Les lieux négociés auraient également été payés pour éviter l'embarras actuel, où le personnel de la NEC est expulsé des locaux, et n'aurait pas recommencé à changer de centre d'inscription en déplaçant certains vers les circonscriptions voisines.

Encore une fois, quand une personne qui réside par exemple dans le district 3 s'inscrit dans le district 8 et veut choisir un candidat qui n'a aucune responsabilité envers son district, que fera-t-il. C'est une situation chaotique, qui doit être corrigée non seulement par le NEC, mais aussi par les pouvoirs législatif et exécutif.

Chacun des deux pouvoirs mentionnés a joué un rôle dans la création de cette situation chaotique. Ils doivent maintenant faire preuve de responsabilité pour sortir le pays de ce chaos imminent.

Français

Découvert des caches d'armes:

informations et découvert son nom et son numéro de téléphone sur le colis en tant que destinataire.

M. Sudue a en outre révélé à l'époque que le colis en question avait été expédié au Libéria par M. Boy Benjamin Baker, qui réside à Taxes, aux États-Unis d'Amérique, et travaille pour American Airline.

Selon le chef de la police, lors d'un mandat de perquisition et de saisie du domicile du suspect à Brewerville, à l'extérieur de Monrovia, la police a découvert des munitions militaires supplémentaires qui étaient cachées dans le plafond de la maison.

Il a dit que pendant que

l'opération de recherche était en cours à la résidence, le suspect Ezekiel Tamba a été retrouvé caché dans le plafond et a été arrêté. Le suspect Tamba est actuellement en garde à vue, avait-il déclaré à l'époque.

«Notre informateur nous a également conduits à Barbara Debra, qui vit à Old Road. Elle est en contact avec le gars qui a envoyé le conteneur au Libéria. Nous l'avons appréhendée. Nous avons également arrêté une certaine Melvina M. Kpan, qui est courtier pour cette société. Lors de notre enquête, nous avons recueilli des informations qui nous ont conduits à Brewerville, G4 Community où se trouve la maison du suspect et avons également arrêté Ezekiel Tamba », a dit Sudue.

L'ex-présidente Sirleaf espère obtenir 45 millions

soutiendront et formeront les pays d'Afrique pour construire des systèmes performants dirigés par les pays. L'ancien président libérien a déclaré que le projet vise à former et à déployer deux cent mille agents de santé communautaires.

"J'ai également pu travailler avec ceux-ci pour pouvoir mobiliser les premiers 45 millions de dollars américains pour le fonds du cabinet pour l'Africa First Fund", a-t-elle déclaré.

L'ancienne présidente Sirleaf a exhorté les participants au symposium à créer des brèches dans les

santé primaires pour la couverture sanitaire universelle."

Le programme vise à favoriser l'apprentissage, l'échange et l'action entre les pays grâce à l'engagement avec les délégations des pays.

Il vise également à présenter l'expérience du pays en matière d'intégration, d'adaptation, de mise à l'échelle et d'optimisation des agents de santé communautaires (ASC) et des programmes de sensibilisation communautaires et dirigés pour des SSP communautaires équitables et de haute qualité.

Madame Sirleaf a souligné qu'investir dans des agents de santé professionnels rend la population

en meilleure santé, plus productive et même plus riche.

Elle a expliqué que l'investissement dans les agents de santé communautaires rend les communautés



ministères, les agences et l'éventail politique et à renforcer ensemble la santé et la main-d'œuvre en Afrique.

Le Libéria accueille pour la première fois le symposium international des agents de santé communautaires à Monrovia avec plus de sept cents délégués issus de 46 pays représentés.

Le symposium est célébré sous le thème : Faire progresser les programmes des agents de santé communautaires pour construire des systèmes de santé résilients et équitables qui accélèrent les services de

plus économes et résilientes, mais donne surtout aux femmes qui sont la pierre angulaire du système de santé le droit d'être reconnues.

Elle a expliqué que lorsque les agents de santé disposent des outils, du soutien et de la rémunération appropriés, ils aident à ouvrir la voie contre les maladies infectieuses, la pauvreté et de nombreux autres virus.

En même temps, elle a encouragé chacun des participants à réécrire l'histoire de l'Afrique afin que le symposium devienne un point de réflexion dans leur cheminement collectif vers la santé pour tous.

Sénégal: des intellectuels interpellent Macky Sall sur le respect des droits et de la justice



Dans un contexte politique électrique à moins d'un an de la présidentielle, plus d'une centaine d'intellectuels signent une tribune adressée au président sénégalais. Fatou Sow, Boubacar Boris Diop, Sophie Bessis ou encore Mamadou Diouf interpellent le chef de l'État sur une « violation des droits » et l'« instrumentalisation de la justice », Ils ou elles sont universitaires, écrivains, ou encore journalistes du Sénégal, des États-Unis, de France, ou du Canada... Les signataires disent s'exprimer « par-delà leurs divergences et différences idéologiques, politiques ou culturelles ». Ils condamnent « les restrictions apportées à la liberté de mouvement des citoyens », et la « continuelle instrumentalisation de la justice ». Parmi eux, Amadou Tidiane Wone, ancien ministre sénégalais de la Culture : « Des actes qui sont posés portent à croire qu'il y a une reprise en main de la justice, notamment du parquet. Nous avons le sentiment de plus en plus exacerbé qu'il y a vraiment une mainmise sur un

certain nombre de procédures, notamment politiques. »

Pour les personnalités signataires, « une menace réelle pèse sur la stabilité et la paix sociale du pays ». Elles lancent un « appel à la raison » au président Macky Sall. « L'initiative, de notre point de vue, poursuit Amadou Tidiane Wone, doit venir du chef de l'État, parce qu'il a des pouvoirs exorbitants qui lui permettent de dire : "Ok, on se calme, voilà ce qu'on doit mettre sur la table comme modus operandi d'un dialogue constructif". À force de tirer sur la corde, elle peut peut-être casser. »

Le pouvoir a régulièrement démenti toute ingérence dans les procédures judiciaires. Après trois renvois, le procès d'Ousmane Sonko pour diffamation doit se tenir le 30 mars.

Le parti Pastef d'Ousmane Sonko a dénoncé ce mercredi l'arrestation du patron de la clinique Suma Assistance, où l'opposant était hospitalisé après les heurts survenus sur son trajet vers le tribunal le 16 mars dernier. Aucun motif n'a été précisé à ce stade de source policière ni judiciaire. Le secrétaire national à la communication du Pastef, El Malick Ndiaye, a par ailleurs été convoqué à la Sûreté urbaine cet après-midi.

La Chambre des représentants part en congé parlementaire pour le premier trimestre

La Chambre des représentants a ajourné le premier trimestre de la 6e session parlementaire pour revenir en mai 2023.

Le premier trimestre de la 6e session parlementaire s'est déroulé du 16 janvier 2023 au 17 mars 2023.

Prononçant son discours de clôture le vendredi 17 mars 2023, le président de la Chambre, Bhofal Chambers, a révélé que la chambre des représentants a tenu en tout 26 séances parlementaires. Au cours de cette période, ils se sont penché sur 13 projets de loi déposés et six projets de loi ont été envoyés en salle de comité, tandis que 7 projets de loi ont été adoptés.

M. Chambers a profité de l'occasion pour appeler ses collègues législateurs à faire passer l'intérêt du peuple libérien en premier.

Il a appelé les législateurs à rester constructifs comme ils l'ont toujours été, ajoutant que l'histoire se souviendra d'eux s'ils se comportent comme de véritables voix du peuple en faisant preuve d'une



représentation positive, d'un contrôle efficace et d'un parlement fonctionnel.

Le président Chambers a ajouté que la pause est conforme au nouveau plan directeur de l'Assemblée législative, qui prévoit que sa pause commence désormais du troisième vendredi de mars au deuxième vendredi de mai de chaque année.

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US 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Liberia BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 5. Governmental Posture Towards International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Abuses of Human Rights

A variety of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating, and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials often were cooperative and responsive to their views.

Retribution against Human Rights Defenders (HRDs): In June, civil society organizations and the international community decried threats of violence received by justice activist Hassan Bility and his team at the Global Justice Research Project, a civil society organization whose work in gathering evidence regarding crimes committed during the country's two civil wars led to the convictions of three war criminals and charges against nearly a dozen more.

Government Human Rights Bodies: The INCHR has a mandate to promote and protect human rights; investigate and conduct hearings on human rights abuses; propose changes to laws, policies, and administrative practices and regulations; and counsel the government on the implementation of national and international human rights standards. The INCHR also created a monitoring unit to receive and analyze reports from field offices and prepare quarterly and annual reports consistent with its statutory mandate.

The government had not implemented most of the recommendations contained in the 2009 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report as mandated in the wake of two civil wars. Even though the president is required by law to submit quarterly progress reports to the legislature on the implementation of TRC recommendations, President Weah had not done so since taking office in 2018. Progress on the majority of the TRC recommendations remained stalled, and impunity for alleged atrocity crimes remained a major challenge. Alleged war criminals from past conflicts continued to avoid accountability, and some held positions of influence in government and politics.

The Human Rights Protection Unit of the Ministry of Justice convened coordination meetings to provide a forum for domestic and international human rights NGOs to identify abuses to the government, but the unit was ineffective.

Section 6. Discrimination and Societal Abuses WOMEN

Rape and Domestic Violence: Rape of a woman or man is illegal, but the government did not enforce the law effectively, and rape remained a serious and pervasive problem. The law's definition of rape does not specifically criminalize spousal rape. Conviction of first-degree rape, defined as rape of a child, rape resulting in serious bodily harm, rape using a weapon, or gang rape, is a nonbailable offense punishable by up to life imprisonment. Conviction of second-degree rape, defined as rape committed without aggravating circumstances, is punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment.

According to an INCHR report, perpetrators of rape enjoyed widespread impunity, in part because bureaucratic obstacles restricted the number of cases that could be heard in each judicial term, as well as institutional weaknesses of government agencies tasked with combating sexual violence. An inefficient justice system prevented timely prosecutions, and delays caused many survivors to cease cooperating with prosecutors. Authorities often dropped cases due to a lack of evidence. Survivors' families sometimes requested money from perpetrators as a form of redress; perpetrators sometimes offered money to prevent matters from going to court.

Government officials allegedly committed acts of sexual violence. Deputy Police Commissioner Joshua During was accused of raping an LNP colleague at police headquarters, and Harper City Solicitor Thomas Togba Kun was charged with sexually assaulting a law client (see section 1.c.).

Although outlawed, domestic violence remained a widespread problem. The maximum penalty for conviction of domestic violence is six months' imprisonment, but the government did not enforce the law effectively. Civil society observers suggested that lack of speedy trials led some survivors to seek redress outside the formal justice system.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): The law does not prohibit the practice of FGM/C, and NGOs reported there was little political will within the legislature to address the issue. According to the 2019-20 Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS), the most recent data available, 38 percent of girls and women between ages 15 and 49 had undergone FGM/C, with a higher prevalence in the northern regions.

Political resistance to legislative prohibition of FGM/C continued because of the public sensitivity of the topic and its association with cultural traditions of certain tribes and secret societies in populous counties. For example, the Sande

society for women and girls combined traditional religious and cultural practices, and members underwent FGM/C as part of their indoctrination ceremonies. On February 21, the National Traditional Council suspended the practice of FGM/C for three years.

Sexual Harassment: The law prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace, but it remained a significant problem at work and in schools. UNICEF reported that sexual harassment in schools in the form of "sex for grades" and "sex for school fees" was common. Government billboards and notices in government offices warned against harassment in the workplace.

On January 31, local radio reported that residents of Maryland County staged a protest at the Maryland Palm Oil concession company and accused the company of harassment of women employees.

Reproductive Rights: There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities.

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection provided access to sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of sexual violence, including emergency contraception as part of the clinical management of rape, through one-stop centers. While public clinics throughout the country provided family planning counselling and a mix of modern contraceptive methods, access to these services at times proved difficult, particularly for women living in rural areas or those with limited financial means.

According to the LDHS, 25 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 reported using a modern form of contraception. Among sexually active unmarried women, 45 percent used modern family planning, while 23 percent of married women used a modern method. Unmet needs for family planning, defined as the percentage of sexually active women who want to postpone their next birth or limit their number of births but did not use a modern method of contraception, increased slightly from 31 percent in 2013 to 33 percent, according to the LDHS. Almost half of all respondents between the ages of 15 and 19 reported an unmet need for family planning, primarily for the spacing of children.

The LDHS estimated the maternal mortality rate was 742 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Postpartum hemorrhage remained the leading cause of maternal mortality and accounted for approximately 34 percent of maternal deaths. In remote areas, clinics often lacked basic infrastructure and facilities, and midwives and health workers sometimes delivered babies at night without electricity. According to the survey, teenage childbearing accounted for 30 percent of all births in 2019-20. FGM/C remained a problem and contributed to maternal morbidity (see the Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting subsection).

There were no legal barriers related to menstruation and access to menstruation hygiene that impacted the ability of women and girls to participate equally in society, including access to education, but economic, social, and cultural barriers remained. On September 21, a civil society group petitioned the government to take action to improve menstrual health by abolishing a tax on sanitary pads and providing menstrual changing rooms in schools. There was no evidence the government took such steps at year's end.

The law is silent regarding school attendance of pregnant students, leaving school administrators to decide the course of action. Adolescent girls were often denied access to school if they became pregnant, and students who became pregnant while enrolled often did not return until after they gave birth due to fear of being bullied and stigmatized. Pregnant girls were sometimes expelled from school due to pregnancy or motherhood status. For example, after being raped by Anthony Mulbah, a math teacher at the Grace Heritage International School System in Monrovia, a pregnant student aged 14 was expelled on the grounds that her presence at the school would be a shame and disgrace and other students would likely mock her.

Discrimination: By law, women may inherit land and property, are entitled to equal pay for equal work, have the right of equal access to education, and may own and manage businesses. In rural areas, traditional practice or traditional leaders often did not recognize a woman's right to inherit land, and women experienced economic discrimination based on cultural traditions discouraging their employment outside the home. Anecdotal evidence indicated that women's pay lagged that of men. Programs to educate traditional leaders on women's rights, especially those regarding land rights, made some progress, but authorities often did not enforce those rights

in rural areas.

SYSTEMIC RACIAL OR ETHNIC VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

Although the law prohibits ethnic discrimination, racial discrimination is enshrined in the constitution, which restricts citizenship and land ownership to those of "Negro descent" only.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The law recognizes 16 Indigenous ethnic groups; each speaks a distinct primary language and has a regional concentration. Long-standing disputes among ethnic groups regarding land and other resources continued to contribute to social and political tensions.

CHILDREN

Birth Registration: The law stipulates children of "Negro" descent born in the country to at least one citizen parent are citizens. Children born outside the country to a citizen parent are also considered citizens but are not entitled to birth registration or issued a birth certificate.

Every child born in the country is entitled to birth registration and certification, regardless of the parents' nationality or socioeconomic status, but if a child born in the country is not of "Negro" descent, the child may not acquire citizenship. "Non-Negro" residents, such as members of the large Lebanese community, may not acquire or transmit citizenship. The law requires parents to register their infants within 14 days of birth but, according to the LDHS, only 66 per cent of children younger than age five were registered. Failure to register births did not necessarily result in restricted access to education and other public services.

Education: The law provides for tuition-free compulsory education in public schools through grade nine. The Ministry of Education nevertheless authorized public schools to charge fees for registration, activities, identity cards, entrance and placement exams, and graduation from kindergarten and grade 12. There were additional fees for early childhood education and night school. The fees prevented a significant number of poor students them from attending school.

Sexual and gender-based violence, early marriage and pregnancy, and unequal division of domestic labor were key constraints for girls' education. Girls comprised less than half of all students and graduates in primary and secondary schools, with their proportion decreasing progressively at higher levels of education. Poor and rural girls experienced the highest levels of disadvantage, with 14 percent completing primary school, 2 percent completing secondary school, and 57 percent having no formal education at all (see subsection Women, Reproductive Rights). Students with disabilities and those in rural counties were most likely to encounter significant barriers to education.

Child Abuse: The law provides for children to be protected from abuse, but it was not effectively enforced. Child abuse was a widespread and persistent problem, and there were numerous cases reported throughout the year, including of sexual violence against children. The government engaged in public awareness campaigns to combat child rape.

Child, Early, and Forced Marriage: Laws regarding minimum age for marriage are inconsistent, setting the minimum marriage age for all persons at either 18 or 21 but also permitting girls to marry at age 16. According to UNICEF, in 2020, the most recent data available, 9 percent of girls were forced to marry before age 15 and 36 percent before age 18.

Sexual Exploitation of Children: The law prohibits the commercial sexual exploitation of children and child pornography. A 2021 amendment to the law strengthened penalties for child sex trafficking offenses and removed the requirement to demonstrate elements of force, fraud, or coercion. Authorities generally enforced the law, although girls continued to be exploited, including in commercial sex in exchange for money, food, and school fees. The minimum age for consensual sex is 18, and statutory rape is a criminal offense that carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Sexual abuse was a pervasive problem in secondary schools, with many teachers forcing girls to exchange sexual favors for passing grades. Orphaned children remained particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Infanticide, including Infanticide of Children with Disabilities: There were no known reports of infanticide. According to a report by the African Child Policy Forum, there were some ritual attacks against children with disabilities who were accused of witchcraft (see also Persons with Disabilities).

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CPP pleads with Supreme

heavy, when law and order breaks down.

Article 80 (c) states that "every Liberian citizen shall have the right to be registered in a constituency, and to vote in public elections only in the constituency where registered..." while (d) of the same Article, says a constituency "shall have an approximately equal population of 20,000, or such number of citizens as the Legislature shall prescribe in keeping with population growth and movements as revealed by a national census; provided that the total number of electoral constituencies in the Republic shall not exceed one hundred."

According to (e), "immediately following a national census and before the next elections, the Elections Commission shall reapportion the constituencies in accordance with the new population figures so that every constituency shall have as close to the same population as possible; provided, however, that a constituency must be solely within a county."

CPP said, despite various public objections over the unconstitutional delays to conduct the census, and concerns around the integrity of the results, the Liberian Government insists that the Census demanded by the Constitution has been conducted. CPP, contends that

although final results have not been announced, preliminary results released show significant changes in the growth and movements of the population and necessitates constitutional actions to ensure adequate and proper representation of the Liberian people in their government. The NEC commenced voters' registration on Monday, March 20.

Meanwhile, the CPP says it is not seeking the court's intervention to delay the elections but rather to ensure that the NEC conducts the processes of the elections according to the Constitution.

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Africa must urgently invest

approximately \$66 billion in its health systems and health infrastructure. Furthermore, financing to close infrastructure deficits amounts to between \$137 billion and \$177 billion by 2025.

In addition, the Ministers recognised that meeting SDG targets to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce inequality within seven years in line with the 2030 Agenda, is becoming increasingly unlikely. Poverty and inequality in Africa will therefore pose high risks to prosperity, peace and security, and to the social contract.

The Ministers, therefore, acknowledged the need to stimulate economic recovery

and to protect vulnerable populations against soaring inflation - which was forecast to reach 12.4 per cent in Africa in 2023. Rising interest rates, and the tightening of monetary policy by central banks to combat inflation have contributed to the worsening of the already limited fiscal space, the Ministers statement said.

The Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will increase intra-African trade in agrifood, services, industry, energy and mining while attracting cross-border investments, the Ministers noted in the statement calling on the ECA to support the continent with strategic thinking and new perspectives

achieve prosperity by 2030 and realize the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

ECA Acting Executive Secretary, Antonio Pedro, in closing the conference, said in order to foster recovery and transformation in Africa, the continent should prioritize skills enhancement, industrialization and economic diversification, infrastructure development, intra-Africa trade and innovative financing.

"We have the mandate to deliver on our promise of shared prosperity to the people of Africa," Mr. Pedro said, adding that sustainable solutions must be developed by Africa and partnership and collaborations were key to a transformed Africa.

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UL Students, youth

you should think about trouble.

"Maybe, this event, organized by our student government with students and youth leaders in the Republic of Liberia should be a new opportunity that we can use the platform to re-brand the University of Liberia," said Dr. Nelson.

Madam Christine N. Umtoni, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Liberia, indicated that peacebuilding among young people is so critical.

She urged that the flagship commitment that the young people made should serve as the basis for sustaining the peace.

Maj. Gen. Prince Charles Johnson, III, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), assured the students and young people that under the new AFL, he will do his part to stick to upholding the rule of law just as the students are signing a commitment to peace.

He said the AFL will not go to the University of Liberia

campus to respond to any demonstration of the Liberia National Police (LNP) has not gone there first to engage the students.

"We are professionals, we will come here, we will dialogue with you, we will engage you and tell you this is my responsibility, [and] this your responsibility, and let both of us respect each other as we do our job," said Gen. Johnson amidst applause from the audience.

National Elections Commission (NEC) Chairperson Madam Davidetta Browne-Lansanah said the NEC joins the students and young people in their strives for a non-violent elections process.

She also urged them to speak about the positive side of their agitation, and not the negative side.

ECOWAS Ambassador to Liberia Madam Josephine Nkrumah said the symposium provided an opportunity to

rethink the role of the youth in nation-building for national transformation, peace, and development.

EU Ambassador to Liberia Mr. Laurent Delahousse stated he did not think that Liberians wanted a repeat of what happened to their country years ago, especially for those who saw the civil conflict.

"There are people who want to use you, do not be manipulated, do not cede to [the] temptation of making money by using your muscles against other people," Amb. Delahousse cautioned the youth.

South African Ambassador to Liberia Prof. Iqbal Jhazbhay, recognized the ultimate sacrifices that many have made in keeping the democratic light on in Liberia.

He also congratulated Liberians for upholding the Accra Peace agreement

Whapoe warns of gangsters' paradise

By Lincoln G. Peters

Opposition Vision for Liberia Transformation Party (VOLT) political leader Dr. Jeremiah Z. Whapoe has warned that re-electing President George Manneh Weah would turn the country into a gangster's paradise.

Addressing a press conference Thursday, 23 March 2023, Dr. Whapoe cautioned Liberians against re-electing Mr. Weah because they will live in a barbaric society. "You think about it, people who are looking for a second term are operating as gangsters in their first term with violence and chaos all over the place," he warned the citizenry.

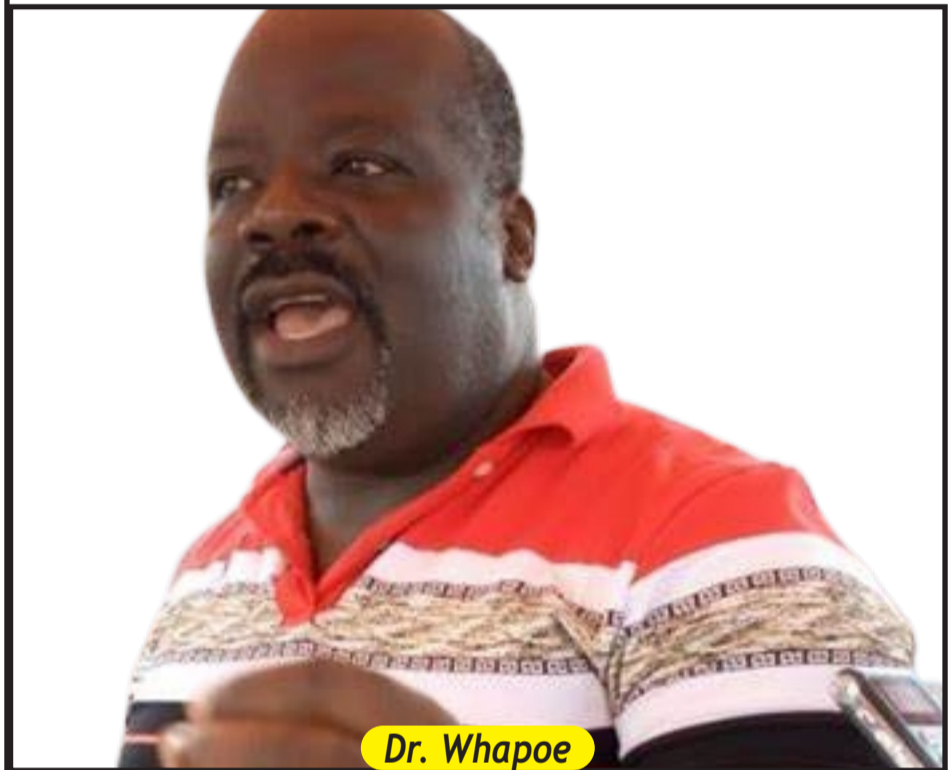
"Think, if you give them the second term, what will happen is that Liberia will turn not just into

he argued that Representative Gray was wrong by moving with thugs and hooligans on the University of Liberia campuses during which students were brutalized.

Dr. Whapoe indicated that the refusal of the Government of Liberia and the CDC to take punitive action against Mr. Gray is a breeding ground for impunity and lawlessness.

"We condemn this act in the strongest terms. However, we again are concerned [about] why the CDC government has failed to take punitive action against Representative Gray," said Dr. Whapoe.

"This action by the government is a complete breeding ground for impunity, lawlessness, and violence. Our state under this



Dr. Whapoe

a gangsters' paradise, but a barbaric society where people will be taking laws into their own hands and might be right."

The VOLT political leader explained that if Liberia transitions to a place of complete lawlessness and distrust in the judicial branch, it will never be a country, but a home of hopelessness. Dr. Whapoe also condemned the recent violence caused by the visit of Representative Moses Acarous Gray and hundreds of his supporters on the University of Liberia campus during which they clashed with students.

According to him, nobody has the right to prevent anybody from exercising their right. However,

government is completely barbaric because there is no justice," he noted.

The opposition leader stated that the CDC government doesn't understand the importance of education that's why Rep. Gray forcefully went to the University campus.

"I think they did that as a calculated plan to abuse human rights. If not so, they would have taken action against Representative Gray and not just arresting peaceful citizens," he argued. "We saw on video Representative Gray and his thugs with deadly weapons brutalizing peaceful students, and so that makes him wrong," he noted.

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Starts from back page S/Court cites Gov't, CPP

after the conduct of a census without constitutionally demarcating constituencies into which a voter is to be registered.

The lawsuit aims to prevent the electoral body from conducting voter registration in constituencies that have not been appropriately reapportioned to reflect population growth.

Liberia's population, according to the provisional census results stands at 5.2 million, an increase of 50.4 percent when compared to

when it was 3.5 million. This represents a population gain of over 1.7 million people in the space of 14 years, with urban growth up by 52 percent and rural growth down by 48 percent.

However, the CPP alleges that if the NEC is allowed to proceed with the first phase of its nationwide voter registration exercise, without considering the census result, it would be a violation of Article 80 of the Constitution of Liberia.

S/Court cites Gov't, CPP

-for election case

Liberia's Supreme Court wants the government through the Ministry of Justice, and the National Elections Commission (NEC) to explain why it should not grant the Collaborating Political Parties (CPP's) request to compel NEC to demarcate constituencies



Justice Min.Cllr. Musa Dean & CPP Leader Mr. Cummings

before conducting the ongoing Voter Registration exercise. Nearly a week after CPP petitioned the Court to compel the NEC to act, the Supreme Court on Thursday, 23 March 2023 commanded its Marshall to notify the authorities to appear and file their returns before the court

on Wednesday, 29 March 2023 at 9:00 a.m. The court has instructed that the NEC and MoJ should show cause why the CPP's petition as prayed for should not be granted. The CPP wants the court to address the constitutionality of the

parties in the above entitled cause of action or their legal representative (s) that the Honorable Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia will hear argument in said cause on the 4th of April A.D. 2023 at the hour of 10:00 a.m., and that they are cited to be present for same," the court said. Made up of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) of Mr. Alexander B. Cummings and a faction of Liberty Party (LP), the opposition CPP filed the lawsuit against the NEC last week accusing the electoral house of attempting to conduct Voter Registration in the absence of demarcated electoral districts.

It contended that following the conduct of the 2022 national census, demarcated electoral districts should reflect changes in the country's population. The CPP said its petition before the Supreme Court is not intended to delay the 2023 presidential and legislative elections. "The CPP is not seeking the intervention of the court to delay the elections," it said.

"We know that Liberians cannot wait to end their sufferings by decisively voting out and bringing to a democratic end the multiple failures in leadership of the George Weah-led administration," it continued. The CPP said like many Liberians, it is concerned about the constitutionality of the action of the NEC to conduct voters registration

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