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# Continental News

## French journalists expelled from Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso has expelled journalists from two leading French newspapers, in the latest move against France by Burkina Faso's military



Burkina Faso has been taking a tough line against France since Capt Ibrahim Traoré (C) took power last year

colony. Douce said plain-clothed security officers had visited her house on Saturday and said her accreditation was being withdrawn. Douce's reporting "obviously ended up seeming unbearable" to the military regime that seized power in a coup last September, Le Monde's Director Jérôme Fenoglio said in a statement. Libération said the investigation by Faivre into children and adolescents allegedly being killed in a military barracks was likely to have displeased the authorities. "These restrictions on freedom of information are unacceptable and the sign of a

## UK insists Rwanda is safe for migrants

power that refuses to allow its actions to be questioned," it said. The expulsion of the journalists is the latest sign that Capt Ibrahim Traoré's regime is cracking down on French media. It had earlier suspended broadcasts of two state-owned media outlets, France 24 and Radio France International (RFI).

France 24 was suspended last month after the authorities accused it of being a "communications agency" of the militants by broadcasting an interview with the head of al-Qaeda's North Africa wing, Yezid Mebarek, who is also known as Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Anabi. France 24 described the allegation as defamatory, saying it had never invited the al-Qaeda leader to speak directly on its programmes, and had "simply reported his words in the form of a column, ensuring the necessary distance and context".

In December, RFI was suspended after being accused of broadcasting false reports, which it denied.

Burkina Faso was once a staunch ally of France, but the military regime has been turning its back on the former colonial power.

Instead, it is seen to be strengthening ties with Russia in a bid to defeat militant Islamists who have wreaked havoc across the region.

In February, French troops pulled out after the regime asked them to leave. BBC

Suella Braverman has insisted Rwanda is a safe country for migrants, despite evidence that 12 Congolese refugees were shot dead by police there in 2018. When asked on BBC One's Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg programme about the shootings, the home secretary said she was "not familiar" with the case. The government plans to send some migrants to Rwanda if they arrive in the UK through illegal routes.

The High Court has found Rwanda to be safe, Ms Braverman said. But she acknowledged the plans were still facing a legal challenge.

She also refused to commit to a date for achieving the government's goal of stopping small boats crossing the Channel.

And it was notable that Ms



Watch: Braverman is confronted with evidence that several refugees were shot dead by police in Rwanda in 2018

Braverman would not repeat her previously stated hope of getting legal immigration under 100,000 a year - not least because there is tension in the cabinet over what is realistic.

Under the government's proposals, people who arrive in the UK through illegal routes could be sent to Rwanda on a one-way ticket to claim asylum there. In December the High Court ruled the plan was legal, but the decision is going through an appeals process.

Ms Braverman was asked about evidence from the United Nations refugee agency, dating from 2018, that a group of Congolese refugees were shot during protests over cuts to food rations. After being shown a video of the aftermath, the home secretary said: "That might be 2018, we're looking at 2023 and beyond."

"The High Court, senior expert judges, have looked into the detail of our arrangement with Rwanda and found it to be a safe country

and found our arrangements to be lawful."

She added that Rwanda has "a track record of successfully resettling and integrating people who are refugees or asylum seekers".

The government's legislation made provisions for individuals to challenge the decision to send them to Rwanda in "extreme circumstances" of "unforeseeable, serious and irreversible harm", she said. The Rwandan government has said the actions of the police in 2018 were a last resort and that there was violence at the protest. Last month several papers reported that a source in the Home Office had claimed there were plans to get flights to Rwanda off the ground by the summer.

But the government has not committed to a timeframe publicly. Ms Braverman said she believed the Rwanda policy would have "a significant deterrent effect"

## Steenhuisen re-elected SA's main opposition leader

South Africa's main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, re-elected John Steenhuisen as its leader on Sunday, as it campaigns to unseat the ruling African National Congress (ANC) in next year's national elections.

Mr Steenhuisen garnered 83% of the votes, to beat his opponent, former Johannesburg executive mayor Mpho Phalatse, who only obtained 17%. He will lead the party for the next three years.

In his acceptance speech, Mr Steenhuisen said the DA will work with other "like-minded parties" ahead of the 2024 elections.

He, however, ruled out working with the ruling ANC and the smaller opposition

party, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in the upcoming elections. Mr Steenhuisen took over the reins of the party in November 2019 following the resignation of then DA leader,



John Steenhuisen will serve a three-year term

Mmusi Maimane. President Cyril Ramaphosa will be seeking re-election under the ANC - whose popularity has declined in recent years. BBC

so that people would stop making the journey across the Channel to the UK. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has made stopping small boat crossings one of his top priorities and he will be under pressure to show progress has been made before the next general election, which has to be held by January 2025. The home secretary refused to commit to a date for achieving this goal. She said she wanted to deliver on the pledge as quickly as possible but said the government could not control timeframes for the ongoing legal challenge over the Rwanda policy. "There's a hearing later this month, we need to wait for the court to adjudicate," Ms Braverman said. "I can't control court deadlines and therefore we will respect any decision from the court but we have to abide by the timelines set by the judges." Labour's shadow communities secretary Lisa Nandy said the Rwanda policy was "a con trick being perpetrated on the British people", as it would most likely never materialise. She added that it had cost the taxpayer "a huge amount of money and hasn't seen a single person go to Rwanda". BBC

# EDITORIAL

## Minister Ansu Sonii's US\$3 billion request is lip service

US\$3 BILLION recently requested by the minister of education D. Ansu Sonii, to put Liberia's education system on par with international standards is just not realistic, but mere lip service to such an important sector. The amount being requested by the minister is over three hundred times the country's budget, which is unattainable in this century and perhaps century to come.

IT, THEREFORE, presupposes that Liberia may not even get on par with countries in the subregion lest to talk of global standards.

What minister Sonii is not saying or failed to acknowledge is lack of political will by government to improve education in Liberia. All that is being said about tuition-freed public universities, payment of WASSCE fees, and free public schools are cosmetic. The crust of the challenges in the sector are still glaring and enormous.

WE NEED a complete overhaul of the education curriculum from primary to tertiary level with vigorous move towards staff development and competence. As it is presently, all that we have are round pegs in square holes.

THE EDUCATION minister is not telling Liberians what he is doing with money being allotted for education in the national budget, when public schools across the country are dilapidated, leaving poor students to learn in an uncondusive environment with poor-quality lesson presentation due to unqualified staff.

THIS YEAR, US\$50 million has been allotted in the national budget for education. What will this amount be expended on when thousands of supposedly teachers in public schools are not on payroll, but are yet expected to remain professional?

AMID THE poor state of the education system, universities and colleges are springing up everywhere under the watch of the ministry of education. Attempt by the Commission on Higher Education recently to apply the standard or demand qualifications require for those serving as presidents and vice presidents of universities in the country was aborted by minister Sonii. The ministry does not need US\$3 billion to enforce this simple policy.

HOW DO we improve performance of students, particularly 12th graders writing the WASSCE when the Head of WAEC Liberia Dale Gbotoe is lamenting on dismal performance in the sciences that should be crucial area of concentration in our schools? What plans are there to tailor the curriculum towards WASSCE and prepare teachers to present lessons that would address this deficiency?

MINISTER SONII should be talking about ways in addressing pressing challenges confronting the sector than requesting money that he has no plan for. Instead, it is political will that is lacking.

IT DID not take Ghana quarter of a billion to have its student pass the recent WASSCE with the highest overall score in the entire subregion. This enviable achievement was as the result of dedication, sincerity, and love for country.

UNLESS WE Liberians stop paying lip service to critical areas such as education, health and security, among others, we are not going anywhere as a nation.

# COMMENTARY

By Julia Kaufman,  
Jane Wanjiku 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.

## OP-ED

By Simon Zadek

# A Silent Revolution in Sovereign Finance

**G**ENEVA - In a world beset by crises, one is not getting nearly enough attention: the sovereign-debt emergency faced by half of the world's emerging and developing economies. Fortunately, a new innovation in sustainable finance has emerged that may help countries to avert debt disaster, while tackling other crucial challenges, especially nature degradation and climate change.

To be sure, there have been valiant efforts to use traditional political and technocratic channels to address the looming wave of sovereign-debt crises. Bodies like the G20 have produced frameworks, instruments, and initiatives aimed at providing a lifeline to debt-distressed countries, and institutions like the World Bank have attempted to convince major creditors, including the new generation of major sovereign creditors such as China, to offer debt relief. But, with sovereign-debt risk taking a back seat to what are widely viewed as more imminent domestic and regional systemic crises, little meaningful progress has been made.

The consequences of inaction are far-reaching. Fiscally strained governments cannot meet their populations' fundamental needs, with ever-larger numbers of people confronting food and fuel insecurity. Beyond the humanitarian dimensions of this situation, the resulting social and political distrust and instability undermines global cooperation on shared challenges, from climate change to conflicts like the Ukraine war.

Against this dire backdrop, sustainability-linked sovereign debt could be a game-changer. The mechanism is simple: sovereign borrowers define performance targets in relevant areas, such as greenhouse-gas emissions and deforestation. If they meet the targets, they are rewarded with lower debt-servicing costs.

For example, last year, Uruguay issued \$1.5 billion in sustainability-linked bonds (SLBs), maturing in 2034, and could see its associated debt-servicing costs fall by up to 60 basis points. The project-based "green bonds" of the past, by contrast, delivered an advantage of just a few basis points, at best, while requiring debtors to bear the considerable costs of defining, monitoring, and reporting the "use of proceeds."

Debt-distressed countries can secure even larger reductions in debt-servicing costs if sustainability-linked performance agreements are backed by public guarantees to lenders. In fact, of the seven pathways for scaling up the sustainability-linked sovereign financing approach presented in a new report from the Sustainability-linked Sovereign Debt Hub (for which I am Convener of the Advisory Board), the one with the highest potential for tackling the current crisis is credit enhancement.

Along this pathway, sovereign credit risk is transferred to guarantors such as multilateral development banks, bilateral development-finance institutions, and private insurers. A credit guarantee, insurance policy, or other credit-enhancement mechanism improves the debt's rating, thereby reducing the sovereign issuer's servicing costs and unlocking additional funds. This in turn expands debtor countries' fiscal space, unlocking more resources to invest in both meeting performance targets and advancing other priorities.

Already, credit enhancement has facilitated debt-refinancing in Barbados and Belize, with both countries channeling some of the cost savings toward financing coastal restoration. Best of all, if the combination of greater debt sustainability and improved nature and climate outcomes bolsters resilience and productivity, sovereign risk - and overall debt-servicing costs - will fall further, setting in motion a much-needed virtuous cycle.

Scaling up credit enhancement to support sustainability-linked sovereign financing would require cooperation involving multilateral development banks, the OECD countries, and other major sovereign creditors, such as China. While ambitious in today's fractured world, such a mechanism would underpin a value-for-money approach to addressing both the debt crisis and broader sustainability challenges.

Other pathways identified in the Sustainability-linked Sovereign Debt Hub report include standardization of instruments and metrics - crucial to lower the cost of issuance and oversight of performance-based strategies, and to reduce the likelihood of greenwashing. Strengthening institutional capacity is also essential, especially for under-resourced low-income issuers. And efforts must be made to increase market awareness of, and private sector appetite for, sustainability-linked debt.

If these pathways are taken, emerging-market and developing-economy sovereigns could issue \$250-400 billion in SLBs by 2030, according to estimates by NatureFinance, up from just \$3.5 billion at the end of last year. Under these projections, SLBs could comprise 6-9% of the projected 2030 stock of external public debt owed by emerging and developing economies.

Of course, performance-based sovereign-financing instruments are nothing new, and their track record is far from perfect: debt-distressed countries have often faced contentious forms of macroeconomic, fiscal, and institutional conditionality. And when it comes to debt, development, or sustainability, there has never been a silver bullet.

Nonetheless, by linking debt relief with efforts to address broader challenges like climate change, and enabling debtors to set their own performance targets, SLBs may be able to succeed where traditional political approaches have failed to mitigate short-term sovereign-debt risks and bolster long-term sustainable development. A silent revolution in sovereign financing may already be in the making.

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## OPINION

By Mohamed A. El-Erian

# The Fed's Credibility Problem

**C**AMBRIDGE - Reacting to Silicon Valley Bank's sudden collapse, André Esteves, a senior Brazilian banking executive, recently told Bloomberg that "SVB's interest rate risk would've been obvious to any banking intern in Latin America." To some, this remark will sound rather rich coming from a region that has had no shortage of banking-sector problems. Nonetheless, Esteves's sentiment is revealing, because it reflects mounting concerns around the world about the US Federal Reserve's policymaking and its adverse spillover effects on other countries.

There are good reasons to be concerned. Just in the last three years, the Fed has mishandled its interest-rate hiking cycle, faced insider-trading allegations, stumbled in its supervision of banks, and, through inconsistent communication, fueled rather than calmed market volatility on several occasions.

These failings are becoming increasingly consequential for the public. Inflation has remained too high for too long, robbing people of purchasing power and hitting the poor particularly hard. Last month's bank collapses were deemed serious enough for the authorities to "break the glass" by triggering the "systemic risk exception"; but this response could now impose a larger burden on all depositors. These developments, including the threat of less credit availability, have increased the risk of the US falling into recession, fueling income insecurity in what would otherwise be considered a strong economy.

The Fed's problems should worry everyone. A loss of credibility directly affects its ability to maintain financial stability and guide markets in a manner consistent with its dual mandate of maintaining price stability and supporting maximum employment. I personally cannot recall a time when so many former Fed officials have been so critical of the institution's economic projections, which in turn inform the design and implementation of its monetary policy.

International complaints about the Fed's failings (and their adverse global spillovers) have been cropping up everywhere. Last October, Edward Luce of the Financial Times captured the mood well in a commentary with the headline, "The world is starting to hate the Fed." And more recently, during their press conference, the Swiss officials dealing with the forced emergency sale of their country's second-largest bank pointed to SVB's failure as contributing to their problems.

Nor can I remember a time when markets have been so dismissive of the Fed's forward guidance. The divergence between the Fed's stated 2023 interest-rate trajectory and market expectations has been as wide as a full percentage point recently. That is a remarkably large gap for the central bank at the center of the global financial system. Markets continue to go against everything they have heard and read from the Fed by pricing in a rate cut as early as June.

Inconsistent Fed communication has not helped. Recent research finds that "Market volatility is three times higher during press conferences held by current Chair Jerome Powell than those held by his predecessors, and they tend to reverse the market's initial reactions to the Committee statements."

No wonder there have been extreme moves within the part of the yield curve that is heavily influenced by the Fed, and which serves as the basis for a host of domestic and international financial activities. Over the last few weeks, for example, the two-year yield traded in a highly unusually range of 1.5 percentage points, fueling talk - and not just within the specialized financial media - of "bonkers bond trading."

These divergences all come on the heels of earlier Fed mistakes. After persisting in its characterization of inflation as "transitory" for most of 2021, the Fed then failed to act promptly once it had belatedly "retired" that misdiagnosis. As a result, it ultimately had to slam on the brakes with an unprecedented series of four consecutive 0.75-basis-point hikes.

At this point, there is no denying that the world's most powerful central bank has slipped in its analysis, forecasts, policymaking, and communication. That is the bad news. The good news is that the Fed can still right the ship by adopting a better strategic approach for its analysis and actions, and by addressing two major structural problems.

The first problem is groupthink: the Fed's decision-makers seem to lack the viewpoint diversity and comprehensive expertise found in other major central banks. They would do well to follow the Bank of England's example and add two independent external voting members to the Fed's policymaking committee.

The second problem concerns basic accountability. While the Fed chair does appear before Congress twice per year, those hearings are not conducive to focusing on what really matters: Fed policy design and implementation. The process needs another layer of due diligence, with specialists in the field also reporting to Congress ahead of regularly scheduled testimony.

There has been much debate about whether the Powell-led Fed will be remembered alongside the (Paul) Volcker Fed for having conquered inflation, or alongside the (Arthur) Burns Fed for having opened the door to stagflation. My worry is that it may end up being remembered in a category of its own, as the Fed that undermined its own credibility, its political autonomy, and America's crucial anchoring role at the center of the global economy.

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**MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

**MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

**Farmers hail EU-funded integrated rice-fish farming technology**

Beneficiary farmer groups of the EU-funded DeSIRA Integrated Rice Fish Farming System (IRFFS) Project have hailed the project's technology after recording high yields.

One farmer, Augustine Moore, said that he has recorded three harvests per

increase the number of IRFF ponds after we saw that the technology could change the course of our operations for the better," said Mr. Kollie.

Like Moore and Kollie, agriculture remains the primary source of income for approximately 80 percent of the country's population, the Liberia Institute of Statistics

174 youths and 170 Women-Head-Homes (WHH) have adopted the integrated rice-fish technology introduced across the project counties - Gparpolu, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Maryland, and Gbarpolu counties.

Also explaining to journalists other innovations of the EU-funded project, the Agro-Mechanic and Processing Specialist of the project, Dr. Ahouansou Roger said that the project has introduced a variety of labor-saving devices to reduce farmers' workload and accelerate their productivity. He also disclosed that plans are underway to train farmers on the operations and maintenance of the locally fabricated equipment that the DeSIRA-IRFFS Project is introducing.

Power tillers, moldboard plows, disk ploughs, rakes, driving seats, drum seeders, upland seeders, and rice harvesters were a few farm machines seen at the project's headquarters in Suakoko Bong County.

Earlier, the Project Coordinator/AfricaRice Country Representative Dr. Inoussa Akintayo said his team's efforts are synergies of efforts directed at curbing the impact of climate change on food production. He added that the adoption of the IRFFS technology, especially by women and youth is welcoming. He stressed that climate-smart farming methods like the IRFFS technology should be encouraged among farming communities to discourage other activities that could harm the environment.

"We are preparing to improve our living conditions today, but we should also think about the next generation," said Dr. Akintayo. "Today we have the forest, but the next generation may suffer when we poorly manage what we have now."

Multi-national organizations AfricaRice and WorldFish are implementing the initiative in partnership with national institutions which include the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI), and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). The project target groups are the integrated rice-fish farmers who benefit through access to research, innovations, and technologies that will improve the sustainability and productivity of their businesses.

and Geo-Information Services (LIGIS) revealed.

Despite the number of people that are involved in the sector, agriculture productivity has reportedly been low.

Climate change, low-performing farm inputs, poor extension services delivery, and limited farm-to-market linkages are a few contributing factors. As part of efforts to address the low food productivity in the country, the Project Communication Specialist Mr. George A. Harris said the European Union's initiative aims to improve food and nutritional security. He said it aims to increase farmers' income by employing a climate-smart approach that keeps the environment intact while producing food.

"The IRFFS project aims to improve food and nutrition security by transforming low-yielding, climate-risky traditional rice-fish production systems into more climate-resilient, high-yielding, resource-use-efficient systems in Liberia."

"With the IRFFS technology, farmers can utilize the lowland to produce food while keeping our environment intact as well," said Harris.

Harris further revealed that



year-equivalent to 5 tons per hectare, since the adoption of IRFFS technology. Moore told journalists touring the project's beneficiary farms in Margibi County over the weekend.

The tour led by the DeSIRA-IRFFS Project Coordinator, Dr. Inoussa Akintayo, saw beneficiaries narrate their adoption journey of the IRFFS technology to journalists.

Additionally, the communication and visibility visit allowed participating journalists to witness other activities that the EU-funded DeSIRA Integrated Rice Fish Farming System Project team is carrying out to meet its objectives.

Alfred Kollie, Assistant Farm Manager at the Karsor Farm, another beneficiary farm of the EU-funded IRFFS project, said that his team has received quality training on the IRFFS technology since the project intervened in the county.

"Before, we were growing only fish, but we adopted this technology after assessing the benefits that it brings. The project team guided us during the construction of the first set of IRFFS ponds."

"Later, we decided to

**Transport Ministry employees**

*Starts from back page*

all entities that generate higher revenue for governments should be catered to as the strongest in the CDC government.

He explained that it was on this basis that LRA was given 4%

and that they will get back to them by Wednesday, April 5th, 2023.

Meanwhile, If the Ministry of Transport's demand for employee salary adjustment is not met despite Minister Tweah's promise of



Finance Min. Samuel Tweah

of government revenue to spend on their own to enable them to generate more government revenue. "This has contributed to the overwhelming revenue performance that is seen at LRA today," he argued.

He told the protestors that he is aware of the strong revenue performance of the Ministry of Transport but what he is not aware of is employees being paid below 100 USD.

According to him, when President Weah announced that no government employees in his administration will make below 150 during his state of the nation address, it took effect in February of this year.

Therefore, it is a surprise to hear that people are making below 150 at the Ministry of Transport. adding that if people are making such an amount after president Weah's SONA address, then he sees the need to ask the Minister why it is that way.

Henceforth, Minister Tweah said the protester's claims are legitimate and his technical team is already looking into it,

redress, it could lead to a variety of consequences.

Employees may become disillusioned and less motivated, leading to a decrease in productivity and work quality. This could, in turn, lead to delays in the ministry's work and negatively impact the transportation sector as a whole.

Additionally, failing to fulfill the promised salary adjustment could result in increased tensions and even increase protests among the ministry's employees, potentially causing disruptions to normal operations.

If the issue persists for an extended period, it could also harm the ministry's reputation and make it more difficult to attract and retain qualified employees in the future.

Ultimately, it is important for the Ministry of Finance to follow through on its promise to adjust employee salaries in order to maintain a motivated and productive workforce and ensure the smooth functioning of the transportation sector.

*Starts from page 6*

**Musu Family urges GOL to**

fateful night.

The police investigators, according to the family, told the late Charloe's parents to go and ask Cllr. Scott to tell them the truth about how their daughter died.

The investigators also showed to the father, photos from a smart phone of one of the senior police officers, at which time the father said he saw the late Charloe Musu lying on the floor in a pool of blood.

The family adds that the police authorities promised to provide transportation to take the father and mother on the crime scene to see how secure the house is so that they too can

believe that there was no strange entry and exit.

According to the family, it's a mystery how the Police have a photo of the late Charloe Musu lying on the floor of the house in a pool of blood when there was no police presence during the incident and up to the time she was taken out of the house to the Faith Clinic and then the Redemption Hospital in New Kru Town subsequently.

This, they said, leaves them to also wonder whether the police had somebody on the scene during the attack or the attacker/murderer had taken a photograph of the late Charloe and sent same to the police.

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## UL and IAGP to develop Gender and Security Studies programs

The University of Liberia (UL) and the Nigerian-based International Academy for Gender and Peace (IAGP) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) following a two-day West Africa Regional Conference on mainstreaming gender in the security sector in Africa.



UL Vice President for Institutional Development and Planning, and Chairperson of the Conference Planning Committee, Associate Prof. Weade Kobbah-Boley, witnessed the signing. The purpose of the MoU is to develop academic and educational cooperation based on equality and reciprocity and to promote sustainable partnership and mutual understanding between UL and IAGP.

UL and IAGP aim to undertake cooperation in multiple areas. They may include but are not restricted to running programs for Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Gender and Security Studies collaboratively. The two institutions may engage in joint research activities: joint assessment and appointment of relevant staff on the faculty of their collaborative programs. They may organize and

participate in seminars, symposia, short-term academic programs, and academic meetings. Additionally, they may exchange research and educational materials, publications, and academic information.

They may give each other technical assistance and engage in other academic activities that may be considered beneficial to both institutions from time to time. Speaking during the signing, UL Vice President Prof. Dr. Moses Moroe Zinnah said UL President Prof. Dr. Julius J.S. Nelson, Jr., and the University Administration remain committed to exploring demand-driven academic programs.

“If you listened over the last two days, what we discussed is an emerging area of interest. How to integrate both men and women as partners to ensure security in our sub-region, of course globally,” said Dr. Zinnah.

For his part, IAGP President Prof. Frederick McFadden Terhemba Tyoor said he was looking forward to formidable exploits in the area, applauding the progression of the program between UL and IAGP.

“We are here to formalize this relationship which automatically means that the Academy is the University of Liberia; the University of Liberia is the Academy, and therefore, a lot of joint academic activities will begin from today,” said Prof. Tyoor.

## LEC signed contract with an Ivorian-Liberian own company

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland County

ABEDO is a joint venture of an Ivorian and Liberian Company which will now provide electricity in Maryland, River Gee, Grand Gedeh, and some parts of Nimba County.

The signing ceremony was held at Harper City Hall on March 31, 2023, and brought together citizens and local government officials.

Speaking during the program, Maryland County Superintendent George A. Prowd said the signing of the MoU is a hope that LEC activities will improve in the covered counties with respect to the availability of meters, expansions, stability, and accuracy under the company.

He said Maryland has had a grid of electricity for more

than a decade now, but the system has been characterized by inaccuracies, an unfair billing system, and unavailability of electric power



in most parts of the county. However, he welcomed the company and thanked the Government of Liberia for such

an undertaking that is intended to solve the blackout issues in the Southeast.

The signing of the MoU came months after time tribal

leaders from Yokudee Pedebo in Harper District gave local

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

## Musu Family urges GOL to release Coroner's report

The family, in a release issued here Sunday, April 2, notes that in the wake of strange discoveries on the remains of their daughter during the recent autopsy conducted by the State, they are suspicious of the government's delay in coming up with the Coroner's report or to share a copy with them since February 27, 2023.

According to the family, on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, based on their request, which was granted by the Ministry of Justice with prohibition on photographing, they viewed the front part of the body of the late Charloe Musu at the St. Moses Funeral Parlors along with



Family of the late Charloe Musu are calling on government to release result of Coroner's examination on the remains of their daughter.

members of the press and civil society before the autopsy, but the pathologist refused to allow them view the back side of the corpse.

The family continues that during the conduct of the autopsy, the pathologist turned the body around, at which time it was discovered that the deceased's under pants (backings) were removed and part of her hair extracted, amid political conspiracy theory by the ruling CDC that Cllr. Gloria Musu Scott might be involved in her daughter's death for ritual purposes.

The release notes that these discoveries were made after State Pathologist Dr. Kolee said, the report of the autopsy would have been released in two weeks plus or minus, because of the toxicology examination which would be done from a reference lab out of Liberia, and that the autopsy conducted by him is scientific and the result will be the same even if done by other practitioners (pathologists) subsequently.

The family wonders why is the government hiding the coroner's examination report for more

than a month since it was performed on February 27, 2023), but immediately following the conduct of the autopsy on Tuesday March 21, 2023, the Police released preliminary report of the autopsy in which they said the cause of death was severe bleeding or loss of blood as a result of multiple stabbing.

It says the government's failure to release the Coroner's report or share a copy with the family, leaves enough grounds to believe that the physical examination conducted by the Coroner of Montserrado County on the body did not find the extraction of her hair and other strange things noticed during the conduct of the autopsy.

The Musu Family also reiterates earlier alarm that on Wednesday,

March 22, 2023, the Police, through the Family Lawyers, requested the appearance of five (5) family members including Gertrude Newton, Alice Johnson (AC), Godson Y. Kollie and the biological parents of the late Charloe Musu, Magistrate Alphonso C. Musu, Sr. and Lucy Musu, father and mother, for questioning, but upon arrival at the LNP Headquarters, police investigators, surprisingly had a separate meeting with the father and mother of the late Charloe Musu in which they denied lawyers presence on grounds that they (parents) were not subjected to investigation but rather Police authorities wanted to express empathy/sympathy with them.

However, it notes that shockingly, during the said meeting behind closed doors, police authorities indulged in manipulating and inciting the father and mother against the family by, among other things, asking whether the both of them had been to the house where the incident occurred to see that

the house is very protected and there is no evidence of anybody entering or leaving the house that

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 5

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## “Say no to tribal politics”

By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan  
Senatorial aspirant Johnny Kpehe has cautioned leaders and residents of the county against divisive and tribal politics.

The criteria is set for those contesting for the Representative, Senatorial and Presidential positions. So, I want to caution you all to look up to what the constitution says rather than listening to people who want to divide you for little or nothing” Kpehe

the Tutsi by extremists in the country’s leadership.

According to the UN, about nearly one million ethnic Tutsi and Moderate Hutu were killed in the 100 days of Rwanda most notorious modern genocides.

The Bong County Senatorial Aspirant said he does not see tribalism as a factor for development; maintaining that patriotism is the way forward to a nation’s growth and development.

According to Kpehe, the message of divisive and tribal politics has the propensity to undermining the fragile peace of the County.

He added that aspirants vying for elected positions at the district and county levels should present a platform that will have positive impacts on the lives of the suffering masses instead of hit messages that will tear apart the county’s sustainable peace.

He also spoke on Sunday, in Gbarnga following an endorsement from the “Lorma Community” to contest for the Senate seat in Bong County. Johnny at the same time presented two thousand United States Dollars as an initial contribution for the construction of a Modern Town Hall for the Community.



Aspirant Kpehe Cautions Bongese

undermine democracy and further place the country in the state of instability.

He said if Bong County and Liberia should continue to enjoy its existing peace, there should be no room for tribalism in the country’s growing democracy.

“The constitution is very clear about who to contest.

adds.

His statement comes amid reports that he comes from Lofa and is not a member of the Kpelleh tribe but wants to contest in Bong County.

He reminded Bong County citizens about the Rwanda genocide, the culmination of decades of division and incitement of hatred towards

## Weah is yet to appoint Head for Standards Laboratory

-employees demoralized

By: Naneka A. Hoffman

President George Weah is yet to appoint a head at the Liberia Standards Authority at the Ministry of Public Works since it was transitioned from the National Standards Laboratory and endorsed on July 1, 2022.

A source at the entity disclosed that it has been nine months since the President signed the Act into law, but the LSA is yet to function, and a director general has not been appointed there.

According to the source, the President should have appointed Mr. Stephen Y. Manbu, as head of the institution but this is yet to happen.

The source notes that the enactment of the Liberia Standards Authority is not just for mere show but to address international barriers faced by business people in the country who are trying to compete with colleagues or competitors in the ECOWAS region, the African Union (AU), and Europe.

This paper gathers that often, goods and services from Liberia are denied because they don’t meet required standards or

certificated hence, the LSA was enacted into law to break these barriers.

However, since then, it is dormant and has not staffed to perform its statutory functions.

Under the Act, Goods and Services coming into Liberia should be tested and verified by the Liberia Standards Authority in accordance with standards set by the World Trade Organization (W.T.O) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

President Weah to appoint a head for the institution.

The Act establishing the Liberia Standards Authority provides a legal framework for the development, promotion and maintenance of standards in the country, including conformity assessment as well as calibration and promotion of quality in both public and private sector organizations, among others.

On July 15, 2016, Liberia officially became the 163rd member of the WTO whose



But this is not happening because of the dormancy of the LSA, which is not in the interest of the country.

As a result of the situation, staffers at the institution are demoralized and appealing to

Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) came into force on February 22, 2017, after ratification by two-thirds of the WTO membership. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

## “I am tired of having sex for money”

-30-year-old woman seeks help from addiction

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh

“I am tired of having sex for money and living street life. I need a new life, and we all here need a new beginning, but it is too hard for us. Where do we go? No rehabilitation center, help from government, our family has abandoned us, and we have stayed in the ghetto years in years out”, laments Matee Kallon, a drug addict.

She continues, “This has become our style of living, this is what we depend on; we need people who will support and take us from the street, provide us capacity so that we can learn, and help ourselves, and our children. Matee narrates that she hails from Nimba County, along the Ivory Coast Border, and is tired of living a

in the ghetto, sometimes we are faced with torment, torture and are beaten; our money we sexed for are taken away from us; this is an unfortunate situation I find myself into and want to change. Sometimes I feel guilty of myself, I feel like taking my life away, but yet again, it starts all over again as soon as I take a kush”, she narrates. A mother of two, Matee notes that she has consumed drugs like marijuana, cocaine, heroin and kush, among others and in the end, she has sex for money to support her habit. However, she says she is ready and willing to quit if maximum support is provided to end the lifestyle, pleading to all, including government to come to her aid to quit drugs.

This is a reality. Drugs or substances are on the increase in Liberia, with majority of the country’s youth involved in the



disadvantaged life. Speaking in an interview with the New Dawn, she explains how she was introduced to drugs by her boyfriend at age of 19 and has never thought of quitting till now.

“Drugs have my life and everything I have tried to make it work has proved futile. I have been doing drugs since 2012, I don’t have help. After my boyfriend taught me to do drugs, ever since my life has become miserable. I have tried everything possible to quit but nothing seems to work for me.” “I have sex for money as minimum as 300 Liberian dollars to support my habit. I stay here

habit. The Weah Administration with support from the United Nations took an initial step in launching a rehabilitation fund drive last year to curtail the increase of drug users and disadvantaged youths.

They continue to pose threats to the peace and stability of the State despite the launch of a US\$13.9 million fund drive for At-Risk Youth in June 2022.

Despite the launch, not much has been seen from the government to enable the disadvantaged youths (Zogos) leave the street and taken into a rehabilitation home. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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# Français

## BVR ne sera pas prolongé

La Commission électorale nationale (NEC) a déclaré que l'opération d'inscription biométrique des électeurs (BVR) en cours dans les comtés de Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Bomli et Gbarpolu ne sera pas prorogée.

l'opération d'inscription des électeurs dans les comtés de la phase un ne sera prolongée au-delà du 9 avril 2023.

Elle a déclaré que le contrat est un contrat générique établi pour un mois, du 18 mars 2023 au 17 avril 2023.

Le président a déclaré que les huit jours du 9 avril au 17 avril seront utilisés par le personnel

dans la phase un se termine le 9 avril 2023 et qu'il n'y aura pas de prolongation", a déclaré avec insistance Madame Browne Lansannah.

Elle a exhorté les Libériens de 18 ans et plus à utiliser les 9 jours restants pour terminer leur inscription et a assuré que davantage de cartes d'électeur seront déployées dans les centres d'inscription pour s'assurer que les électeurs éligibles s'inscrivent.

La présidente Browne Lansannah a déclaré qu'il n'était pas nécessaire que les électeurs éligibles des comtés de la phase 1 paniquent, car ceux qui se présenteront aux centres d'inscription dans le délai imparti seront enregistrés.

Entre-temps, la NEC a mis fin aux services d'Antoinette Yancy, l'une de ses employées temporaires, qui occupait le poste de registraire à l'école d'anglais et d'arabe de Namuwa dans le district n° 10, pour des actes contraires à son statut d'employée.

Mme Yancy a été licenciée à la suite d'une enquête qui a établi sa participation à des activités qui avaient tendance à miner l'intégrité et la crédibilité de la commission.



S'exprimant lors d'une conférence de presse vendredi, la présidente Davidetta Browne Lansannah a précisé que les contrats du personnel temporaire expire le 17 avril 2023 et que

temporaire pour compiler les rapports, récupérer l'équipement et le matériel déployés sur le terrain et traiter le paiement du personnel.

"Permettez-moi de répéter que l'opération d'enrôlement

## Cour préparée pour les élections de 2023

La Cour suprême de Libéria est judiciairement prête pour les élections présidentielle et générales de 2023, selon le juge en chef libérien Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh.

La juge Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh a fait la révélation au cours du week-end dans un message devant les membres de l'Association nationale du barreau libérien (LNBA) au complexe ministériel de l'EJS à Old Congo Town.

"La Cour suprême est judiciairement prête à entendre et à régler tous les différends électoraux, quelle que soit leur ampleur... Nous sommes résolus à rendre la justice de manière uniforme, sans crainte ni faveur. Pour aller au-delà de l'art de la scène grandiloquente de la bonne gouvernance et d'un sens politique astucieux, les mots doivent être accompagnés d'actions substantielles", a affirmé la juge en chef Yuoh.

"Cependant, je m'en voudrais si je ne profite pas de cette occasion pour réitérer la nécessité pour les justiciables, les partis

politiques et les candidats indépendants de se protéger avec les meilleurs et astucieux avocats qui feront de leur mieux", a-t-elle exhorté.

Elle a dit que cet avertissement est conforme à l'avis de la Cour suprême sur le sénateur du comté de River Gee, Jonathan Boye Charles Sogbie, contre la Commission électorale nationale (NEC) 2016 et les affaires Abu Kamara contre NEC de mars 2017.

Elle a noté que dans «notre» sphère juridique, les allégations doivent être étayées par des preuves factuelles.

« À l'approche des élections, sachez que ce banc ne sera ému que par des preuves solides et

convaincantes et non par des idéologies politiques, des foules ou un argot politique récemment créé de bastions », a-t-elle déclaré.

"La Cour suprême a toujours soutenu que le concept d'un candidat revendiquant un bastion sur une zone géographique électorale particulière ne trouve aucune base factuelle ou légale dans les procédures judiciaires car il est complètement douteux, spéculatif et incertain", a expliqué le juge en chef Yuoh.

Au cours du week-end,

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 09



## Éditorial

### 3 milliards de dollars pour améliorer le système éducatif

Le ministre de l'Éducation, D. Ansu Sonii, a demandé 3 milliards de dollars américains récemment pour moderniser le système éducatif du Libéria et le mettre au même niveau que les normes internationales. Cette demande n'est tout simplement pas réaliste.

Le montant demandé par le ministre est cinq fois supérieur au budget du pays tout entier. Nous pensons par conséquent que cela ne sera réalisable au cours de ce siècle et peut-être au siècle prochain.

Cela présuppose donc que le Libéria ne peut même pas se mettre au même niveau que les pays de la sous-région, encore moins des pays du monde.

Ce que le ministre Sonii ne dit pas ou n'a pas reconnu, c'est le manque de volonté politique du gouvernement pour améliorer l'éducation au Libéria. Tout ce qu'ils disent sur la gratuité des universités publiques, le paiement des frais d'examen n'est rien que de la parole. La croûte des défis dans le secteur est toujours énorme.

Nous avons besoin d'une réforme complète du programme d'enseignement du niveau primaire au niveau universitaire. Le ministre de l'Éducation ne dit pas aux Libériens ce qu'il fait avec l'argent alloué à l'éducation, étant donné que les écoles publiques du pays sont délabrées, les élèves apprennent dans un environnement peu propice, les cours sont d'une mauvaise qualité en raison du fait que le personnel n'est pas assez qualifié.

Cette année, 50 millions de dollars américains ont été alloués à l'éducation. Comment ce montant sera-t-il dépensé pendant que des milliers de soi-disant enseignants des écoles publiques n'ont pas de salaire, portant on s'attend à ce qu'ils fassent preuve de professionnalisme ?

Avec le mauvais état du système éducatif, les universités et les collèges surgissent partout sous le regard du ministère de l'éducation. La tentative récente de la Commission de l'enseignement supérieur d'appliquer la norme ou d'exiger les qualifications requises pour les présidents et vice-présidents des universités du pays a été avortée par le ministre Sonii. Le ministère n'a pas besoin de 3 milliards de dollars pour appliquer cette simple politique.

Comment pouvons-nous améliorer les performances des élèves, en particulier les élèves de 12e année qui sont en classe d'examen quand M. Dale Gbotoe, directeur d'examen, se lamente sur les performances lamentables dans les matières scientifiques qui devraient être le domaine dans lequel nous concentrons nos efforts dans nos écoles ? Quels sont les plans pour adapter le programme et préparer les enseignants à présenter des leçons pour combler cette lacune ?

Le ministre Sonii devrait parler des moyens de relever les défis urgents auxquels le secteur est confronté plutôt que de demander de l'argent pour lequel il n'a aucun plan.

Il n'a pas fallu au Ghana un quart de milliard pour que ses élèves réussissent le récent WASSCE avec les notes les plus élevées de toute la sous-région. Cette réalisation enviable est le résultat de son dévouement, de sa sincérité et de son amour pour son pays.

Si nous, Libériens, n'arrêtons pas de faire semblant de parler de domaines critiques tels que l'éducation, la santé et la sécurité, entre autres, nous n'irons nulle part en tant que nation.



# Français

## Cour préparée pour

L'Association nationale du barreau libérien a organisé une assemblée générale annuelle au complexe ministériel EJS à Congo Town.

Le programme a réuni plusieurs délégués et participants, dont des membres du corps

diplomatique, des juges actuels et passés, des juges associés de la Cour suprême et des avocats.

Le programme a été célébré sous le thème : "Au-delà de la rhétorique et de l'impunité : la loi, la gouvernance et les élections de 2023 - la base de la nécessité démocratique au Libéria".

## Le groupe terroriste Boko Haram change de méthode dans la région du lac Tchad

Le groupe terroriste Boko Haram fait de plus en plus recours aux enlèvements contre rançons, ce qui pousse la population à fuir. Illustration avec un des départements de cette région, celui de Fouli.

Au Tchad, l'administration, les ONG et les journalistes opérant dans la région du Lac, dans le sud-ouest du pays, sont formels : le groupe jihadiste Boko Haram a changé de modus operandi depuis environ six mois. Plus aucune attaque de grande envergure depuis des mois dans la région, les jihadistes de Boko Haram opèrent désormais de nuit et par petits groupes de six à huit combattants, en évitant

Mais ce ne sont pas les seules cibles des jihadistes de Boko Haram, poursuit le préfet de Fouli. « Des jeunes garçons et des jeunes filles aussi. Parfois, ils s'échappent de Boko Haram. D'autres sont échangés contre rançons, et il y en a qui sont gardés comme combattants. » Et certaines parmi ces filles sont forcées d'épouser les jihadistes.

Conséquence : cette insécurité, conjuguée aux inondations qui ont frappé récemment toute cette région, a causé un déplacement massif de la population des îles du lac Tchad pour la terre ferme. « Des ONG sont en train d'intervenir, mais il y a trop de monde », environ 45 000 personnes, regrette encore Adoum Mahamat Mbomi.

La station est devenue si



l'armée tchadienne.

« Boko Haram a changé ses méthodes d'action. Il a commencé à enlever les personnels de l'État ou des ONG pour les échanger contre des rançons », explique le préfet du département de Fouli, Adoum Mahamat Mbomi.

alarmante que les forces vives de la région du lac Tchad viennent de se réunir dans « un Forum contre la nébuleuse Boko Haram » il y a un peu plus d'une semaine à Bol, leur capitale. Ils demandent au gouvernement d'installer plus de bases et de patrouilles militaires ou encore d'armer les chasseurs du coin.

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## À Treichville, le PPA-CI de Laurent Gbagbo courtise la jeunesse ivoirienne



En Côte d'Ivoire, la fête de la Renaissance s'est achevée hier soir. Cette fête initiée par le parti d'opposition du PPA-CI, célèbre l'acquiescement définitif par la CPI de Laurent Gbagbo, il y a deux ans. Pour l'ex-président ivoirien, c'était surtout l'occasion d'aller à la rencontre de ses militants, et notamment des jeunes.

Samedi était organisée une rencontre au Palais de la Culture de Treichville. Le parti de Laurent Gbagbo tente de courtiser les jeunes avec des promesses pour les élections locales de cette année.

Wilfried N'Gbakre est entrepreneur. Il s'est inscrit sur les listes électorales tout récemment et devrait voter pour la première fois cette année. Jusque-là, ce jeune de 28 ans ne s'intéressait pas à la politique. Mais la figure de Laurent Gbagbo le séduit. Wilfried est donc venu avec sa liste de doléances pour améliorer la situation des jeunes. « Les jeunes ont besoin de travailler. Il faut les garder, comme ça ils n'iront pas dans d'autres pays », selon lui.

Plusieurs jeunes militants du PPA-CI ont fait le déplacement en groupe, de l'intérieur du pays, pour écouter leur leader.

Il y a aussi de nombreux sympathisants, qui ne sont pas membres du parti. À l'image d'Abrow Obed. « On a besoin d'un programme concret, on a besoin de sentir la jeunesse grandir. » Sur scène, c'est Me Habiba Touré, l'avocate personnelle de Laurent Gbagbo et membre du comité scientifique, qui dévoile quelques propositions du PPA-CI envers les jeunes. « Et c'est parce que vous voulez des solutions maintenant qu'à l'occasion des élections locales, ce sera l'occasion pour le PPA-CI de mettre en œuvre des mesures urgentes, afin que la jeunesse ait

pu juger et voir : est-ce que le PPA-CI tient ses promesses ? Est-ce qu'on peut leur faire confiance pour 2025 ? Chaque candidat du PPA-CI devra obligatoirement intégrer des jeunes dans les conseils municipaux et régionaux.

»  
Du réalisme face aux jeunes  
Les jeunes sont surexcités, malgré plus de 4 heures d'attente. Laurent Gbagbo s'installe enfin sur son fauteuil : et il insiste en précisant avoir apporté les chaises baoulés de son salon. Il précise qu'il lui manque juste son jus de coco. De quoi, détendre l'atmosphère, qu'il veut conviviale.

Le débat est modéré par un journaliste. Puis quatre jeunes du public saisissent le micro pour transmettre leurs préoccupations. « Je suis au carmel, mais j'ai effectué le déplacement tellement cet événement me tenait au cœur. Pourquoi nous la jeunesse ivoirienne devrions-nous avoir confiance en votre leadership au détriment des leaders des autres partis politiques ? », interroge une étudiante.

Laurent Gbagbo répond avec un brin de réalisme. « On n'est pas obligé de faire confiance à tel homme politique ou en tel autre. Les hommes politiques sont comme des commerçants. Chacun vend sa marchandise.

Toi tu viens au marché, tu regardes, tu achètes ce qui te plaît. »

L'ancien président donne son avis sur les violences électorales, le panafricanisme, la décentralisation... et il conclut en donnant quelques conseils. « Il faut se battre. Ce que je vous souhaite, à chacune et à chacun, c'est d'arriver au sommet. »

## Geoffroy-Julien Kouao : «Laurent Gbagbo a une seule obsession, 2025» et la présidentielle ivoirienne

« On voit bien que Laurent Gbagbo est prêt pour la bataille présidentielle de 2025 », estime le politologue Geoffroy-Julien Kouao après un meeting organisé par le parti de l'ex-chef de l'État, le 31 mars 2023. « Il veut s'adresser aux jeunes et il sait qu'il n'est plus jeune », ajoute le chercheur au sujet de la stratégie électorale de l'ancien président, âgé de 77 ans.

Le Parti des peuples africains - Côte d'Ivoire (PPA-CI), la formation de Laurent Gbagbo, a célébré la « fête de la Renaissance », lors d'un meeting à Yopougon le 31 mars et lors d'une rencontre avec des jeunes sympathisants le 1er avril 2023.

C'était la première fois que l'ex-président (2000-2011) organisait une rencontre d'une telle ampleur depuis son retour au pays en juin 2021. Une occasion donc, pour l'ancien chef



d'État de 77 ans, de mobiliser ses troupes, à quelques mois des élections municipales et régionales.

« Il donne la parole à ses lieutenants qui sont jeunes pour dire : voici la relève »

Le tout, avec deux cibles en tête : l'électorat jeune et la présidentielle de 2025, selon le politologue Geoffroy-Julien Kouao. « Laurent Gbagbo voulait jauger de sa popularité après son retour, explique-t-il au micro de notre correspondante Bineta Diagne.

# 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.

# S/Court hears CPP demarcation case today

Liberia's Supreme Court is due to hear a petition requesting it to compel the National Elections Commission (NEC) to demarcate constituencies before conducting 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

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 [the] 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 voter registration 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.

"The CPP has filed a petition before the full bench of the Supreme Court concerning the constitutionality of the action of the National Elections Commission to conduct voters registration without constitutionally demarcating constituencies into which a voter is to be registered," the CPP said.

"The CPP is not seeking the



ANC leader Mr. Cummings NEC Boss Davidetta-Browne-Lansanah

ongoing Voter Registration exercise.

Last month, the opposition Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) filed a petition asking the court to address the constitutionality of the NEC's conduct of Voter Registration without the demarcation of the constitutional electoral constituency following the conduct of the national census. The nation's highest court set 4 April 2023 as the date for the rival parties to engage in legal argument in the case at 10:00 a.m.

The Supreme Court wants the government through the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and the NEC to explain why it should not grant the CPP request. The Court on Thursday, 23 March 2023 commanded its Marshall to notify the authorities to appear and file their returns on Wednesday, 29 March 2023 at 9:00 a.m. "You are hereby commanded to notify the

hour of 10:00 a.m., and that they are cited to be present for same," the court said.

The Court ordered the appearance of the parties nearly a week after the CPP had filed its petition to compel the NEC to demarcate constituencies before conducting the ongoing Voter Registration exercise.

Made up of the Alternative National Congress (ANC) of Mr. Alexander B. Cummings and a faction of Liberty Party (LP), the opposition CPP accused the electoral house of attempting to conduct Voter Registration in the absence of demarcated electoral districts.

In the petition, 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

Starts from page 6

## LEC signed contract with an

government officials an ultimatum to provide a new transmitter.

The residents erected roadblocks and gave the ultimatum after several promises made by the caretaker of the Liberian Electricity Corporation in the county had failed.

According to the residents, it has been nearly a year since they were promised by LEC Caretaker Manager Mr. Wallace Dennis that the company was proving the county with transmitters.

The residents and traditional leaders headed by Eric Dickson set traditional roadblocks on Wednesday, October 4, 2022, putting traditional charms and talismans on transmission

poles - and dared "anyone calling themselves man" to climb the poles.

The traditional block lasted for four days, causing residents of other towns and cities to sleep in darkness. The charms and talismans were removed days later following several appeals but the government was given a two-week ultimatum to make good on its promises. The town of Yokudee and other small nearby villages in the Pedeboe Border area hosts the transmission lines from Ivory Coast which crossed into Liberia over the Cavalla River. But have not had electricity for more than seven years since their 50KVA transformer was allegedly removed to replace a damaged one in central Harper during

the regime of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Several promises, including one from current incumbent ruling CDC's Senator James Biney, during his 2020 midterm campaign, came to failure, according to reports. Pedeboe town is an area in Maryland County that borders Ivory Coast. Meanwhile, this paper has gathered that several issues continue to confront the smooth implementation and subsequent free flow of electricity from the West Africa Power Pool, these include poorly planted poles, skipped communities, lack of meters for customers amidst the absence of a power substation on the Liberian side of the border. -Edited by Othello B. Garblah.

# NEC warns lawyers, politicians

By Lincoln G. Peters

Liberia National Election Commission (NEC) is warning lawyers and politicians here ahead of the 2023 general and presidential elections that it will trash every and any unnecessary election case intended to delay the process.

Making a remark on behalf of the chairperson of NEC, Madam Davidetta Brown- Lasannah at the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) two-day annual General Assembly held at the EJS Ministerial Complex in Congo Town over the weekend, Commissioner Boakai A. Dukuly argued that NEC will not waste time hearing unnecessary election matters.

"This time, we will not allow any lawyer to keep us holding their case too long. We will send you forward to the Chief Justice. Sometimes, I can hear the Supreme Court saying you are supposed to decide on this before sending it here. We know, that once you (Supreme Court) decide it, it's decided that's why

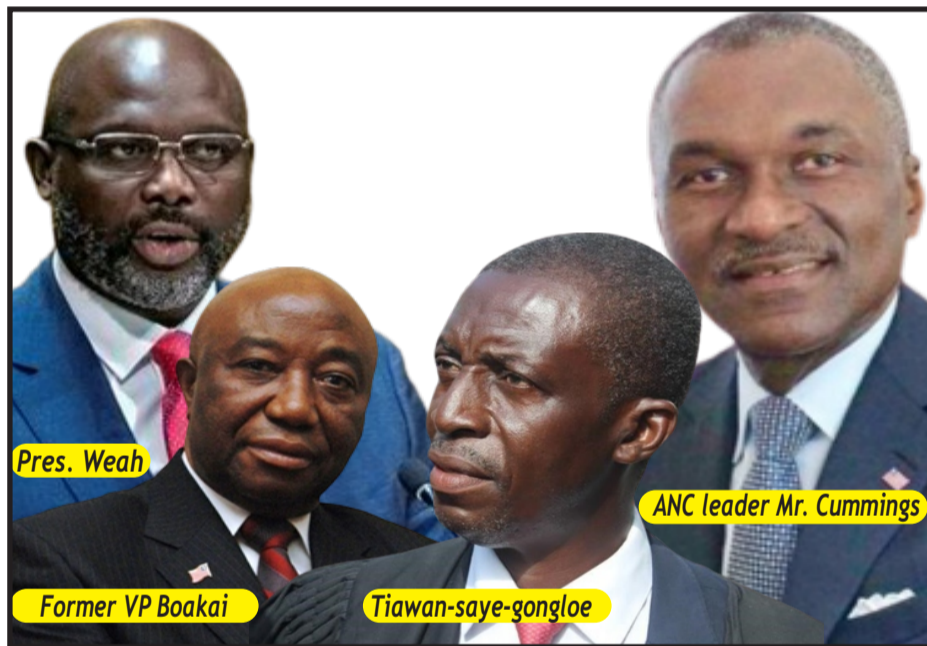
on the Election Law" Mr. Dukuly said.

"Now, they are doing voter registration. Therefore, if you have to bring cases that have to do with Election, you will just be wasting our time. We ask you to please live by what the status provides. Moreover, we want you to pay some attention to the Election Law. According to Justice Banks, they are divided into sections," Commissioner Dukuly explained.

Commissioner Dukuly was quick to point out the excitement of NEC over the news that the LNBA is volunteering to conduct Civic and Voter Education (CVE) awareness through their training.

Meanwhile, the LNBA ended its two-day annual General Assembly over the weekend. The program brought together several delegates and participants, including members of the diplomatic corps, current and past justices and associates justices of the Supreme Court, and lawyers.

The program was held under the theme: "Beyond Rhetoric and Impunity: Law, Governance and



Pres. Weah

ANC leader Mr. Cummings

Former VP Boakai

Tiawan-saye-gongloe

we do that," he stated.

He also pleaded with lawyers who will be appearing before the commission in hearings relating to the 2023 election disputes to be conscious of the statutory time limit provided for disposing of election matters before the NEC. He said repeated requests for continuants would delay the electoral process and cast blame on the commission.

"We plead with you, we have only 30 days to hear and dispose of election matters and concerns. I am told that the Supreme Court would live within seven days to dispose of cases if they received all the documents. So, you must be ready to do that for us, we plead with you. The chair is happy that you are joining us to discuss and educate

2023 Elections-The Basis for Democratic Necessity in Liberia."

On the first day, Friday, March 31, there was CVE session on topics ranging from election dispute, filing, hearing, and adjudication. This was delivered by former Associate Justice Micah Wilkins Wright and Cllr. Arthur Tamba Johnson.

Accordingly, Trends and Outlook of the Supreme Court in the adjudication of election matters were also delivered by former Minister of Justice Cllr. Benedict Sannoh.

At the closing, another CVE session on the topic: Constitutional and Statutory Steps Preparatory to the Conduct of Elections," was delivered by former Associate Justice Kabineh M. Ja'neh. -Edited by Othello B. Garblah

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## Transport Ministry employees rally for fair wages

**- amidst soaring living costs**

By Kruah Thompson  
Thousands of employees of the Ministry of Transport took to the streets on Monday, April 3, 2023, demanding a salary



adjustment to reflect the rising cost of living, as finance Minister Tweah Promises Swift Action.

The protesters, who were joined by union leaders and other supporters, gathered outside the Ministry's headquarters, chanting slogans and holding up placards.

The demonstration caused significant disturbance to residents in the area, with police deployed to maintain

order. The protestors vowed to continue their strike until their demands are met, raising concerns about the potential impact on the country's transport sector.

Jaspy N. White the Assistant Director for Statistics and Research at the Ministry of Transport who is also the spoked person for the disenchanted employees said, the institution is one of the lowest paid entities under the CDC administration.

He claims employees of the entity are paid 60 to 70 USD as their gross salary, while other revenue-generating institutions like the Liberia Revenue Agency (LRA)/are paid

even higher salaries. Something he describes as unfair to employees who are chastised by car owners daily.

"It is on record that this is the only Ministry that continues to raise the highest revenue in the Republic of Liberia. Evidence shows that last fiscal period, the Ministry of Finance gave us the task to generate 7.5M and we were able to raise 12.5 million dollars."

Mr. White argued that you cannot be a higher revenue generator for the government and be underpaid while other revenue-generating institutions are paid higher salaries.

"Therefore, it is against this backdrop that employees of the ministry have gathered to express their dissatisfaction." Mr. White says, "If the Ministry of Finance Director is taking 1,750 United States Dollars as the salary the Director of Transport should also take the same USD1750 and this should cut across to all revenue generating institutions in the country."

In response, to the protester's claim, Finance Minister Tweah told the gatherings that he believes

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