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NEC Chairperson Madam Davidetta Browne-Lansanah

NEC assures candidates of readiness for elections



No change in Indian rice export policy



-Embassy clarifies

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Continental News

Military Sources: 26 Nigeria Troops Killed in Ambush; Rescue Helicopter Crashes

At least 26 members of the Nigerian security forces were killed and eight wounded in an ambush by gunmen in central Nigeria late Sunday, two

"We lost 23 soldiers, including three officers, and three Civilians JTF [vigilantes] in the encounter while eight soldiers were injured," said the first source, following "a serious fight" along

helicopter while on a "casualty evacuation mission" crashed on Monday after take-off from Zungeru.

"The aircraft had departed Zungeru Primary School enroute for Kaduna but was later discovered to have crashed near Chukuba Village in Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State," spokesman Edward Gabkwet said in a statement.

He said efforts were under way to rescue those aboard and that preliminary investigations had been opened into the cause of the crash. Barely a week goes by in Africa's most populous nation without attacks or kidnappings by criminals known as "bandits" in the northwest and center of the country.

The gangs, who have been notorious for mass school abductions, maintain camps in a vast forest straddling the states of Niger, Kaduna, Zamfara and Katsina. Northwest and central Nigeria have for years been terrorized by bandits who raid remote villages where they kill and abduct residents for ransom, as well as burn homes after looting them.

Impunity as well as insufficient security and wider government presence has allowed the violence to fester, experts say. VOA



military sources told AFP. Additionally, an air force spokesman said a helicopter rescuing the wounded crashed on Monday morning in the area, where the army is fighting criminal groups, without specifying whether the crew and passengers had survived.

The two military officers asked not to be identified because they were not authorized to speak on the incident while military authorities were not available for comment.

the Zungeru-Tegina highway.

A second officer gave the same toll and said the bandits also suffered "heavy casualties". He also said that communication had been lost with an air force helicopter dispatched to evacuate the casualties, with 11 of the dead and seven of the injured aboard.

He said the helicopter was carrying 11 of the dead and seven of the wounded. He added that the aircraft had crashed because of gunfire from "bandits."

A Nigerian air force spokesman confirmed that its Mi-171

Barbie banned for 'corrupting morals' in Algeria

Algeria has banned the popular Barbie film three weeks after its release in the mainly Muslim North African nation.

The culture ministry has asked cinemas to withdraw the Hollywood blockbuster immediately. The movie promoted homosexuality and did not comply with Algeria's religious and cultural beliefs, an official source told the Reuters news agency.

Cinemas in the cities of Algiers, Oran and Constantine have been packed, according to 24H Algérie news website.

The film was officially being banned for "damaging morals", the privately owned news website said, adding that since its release viewings had sold out every day.

There has been criticism in the Arab world about the movie's social values, with Kuwait banning Barbie last week to protect "public ethics". The film, starring

Hollywood A-listers Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling, is a coming-of-age story based on the children's toy, where Barbie journeys to the real world and explores her identity. Around the time of the film's release, director Greta Gerwig told the New York Times that it was supposed to be "funny" and that her hope for the movie was for society to "let go of the

things that aren't necessarily serving us as either women or men". Barbie has received a warmer welcome from leaders in other countries, such as the UK and Spain, where British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and the Spanish royal family were pictured on cinema outings to see it. Since the movie's release it has grossed more than \$1bn (£786m) worldwide. BBC



Algerian officials are worried that the film, which features an A-list cast including Margot Robbie as Barbie

Sudan's Top Army General Accuses Rival Paramilitary of War Crimes

In a rare televised speech Monday, the head of Sudan's military accused the rival paramilitary force of committing war crimes as all-out civil war threatens to engulf the northeast African country.

Sudan was plunged into chaos in April when months of simmering tensions between the military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, exploded into open fighting in Khartoum and elsewhere. In a speech broadcast on Sudan TV, Burhan accused the RSF and Dagalo of committing violations under the falsehood of promising to restore democracy.

"How can you bring about democracy by committing war crimes?" he said, in a speech celebrating Sudan's annual armed forces day. Earlier this month, rights organization Amnesty International accused both sides of committing extensive war

capital, on Friday. Some 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of Nyala, Arab tribesmen in RSF vehicles raided the Kubum area of South Darfur last week, burning down the local market and sacking a police station, the legal group said in a separate statement. At least 24 people were killed in the attack, it said.

Last month, Karim Khan, a prosecutor from the International Criminal Court, told the United Nations that he would be investigating alleged new war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur.

The nearly four-month conflict has also reduced the capital, Khartoum, to an urban battlefield. Across the city, RSF forces have commandeered homes and turned them into operational bases, residents and physician groups say. The army, in turn, has struck residential areas from the air and with artillery fire. Over 2.15 million people have since fled Khartoum state, according to U.N. data. The country's health minister, Haitham Mohammed Ibrahim, said in June that the



Sudan's Army chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan speaks in Khartoum, Dec. 5, 2022. Burhan accused, Aug. 13, 2023

crimes, including deliberate killings of civilians and mass sexual assault. In its 56-page report, the group said almost all rape cases were blamed on the RSF and its allied Arab militias.

In Darfur, the scene of genocidal war in the early 2000s, the conflict has morphed into ethnic violence, with the RSF and allied Arab militias targeting African communities in the western region, U.N. officials say.

Last week the violence intensified in South Darfur province, killing dozens. The Darfur Bar Association, a Sudanese legal group focusing on human rights in the western Darfur region, said at least five civilians died in crossfire during intense clashes between the military and the RSF in Nyala, South Darfur's

conflict has killed upward of 3,000 people but there has been no update since. The true tally is likely far higher, say local doctors and activists.

Meanwhile, Meta, Facebook's parent company, confirmed to The Associated Press that it had suspended the RSF's account and the account belonging to Dagalo. Meta told the AP in an email that the group had violated its Dangerous Organizations and Individuals policy but did not provide any further details.

On its website, Meta says the policy aims to clamp down on "organizations or individuals that proclaim a violent mission or are engaged in violence." In a statement sent to the AP on Monday, the RSF said the closure of the accounts infringes on the public right to impartial information. VOA

EDITORIAL

COMMENTARY

By Biniam Bedasso,
Susannah Hares

Bloody campaign is unwarranted

A Well-Being Agenda for Poor Students

LAST THURSDAY'S (AUGUST 10, 2023) bloody clash between rival supporters of opposition Candidate Joseph Nyumah Boakia of the Unity Party (UP) and the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) in Electoral District#9, Montserrado County left zealous youth wounded in a campaign for the October 10th elections was totally unwarranted. No Liberian or partisan of a political party has to die or has to be disfigured just for the love of a candidate.

AFTER IT ALL, we Liberians have to coexist as one nation whether members of a winning party or losing parties. And there will be many losing parties as only but one out of the 20 candidates in the race, including incumbent President Weah will be declared winner either in the first or second round.

SO WHY DO we inflict injuries on one another during campaigns for the sake of rival candidates? Do Liberians have to go to such extreme to demonstrate love and loyalty for a particular candidate? We think not.

AS LPP'S PRESIDENTIAL Candidate Cllr. Tiawan S. Gongloe has pointed out, political campaign should not be about enmity, but competition of ideas, ideas of how our candidates or candidates of our choice intend to improve the nation and all of its people, not only partisans, if elected President or member of the legislature.

HOWEVER, THE VIOLENCE that transpired on August 10th in District #9 barely five or six days into the campaign was not only unfortunate but highly disappointing especially, after political parties' leaders and candidates had expressed before the citizenry and international partners their commitment to violence-free elections.

SADLY ALSO, WE did not see leadership demonstrated at the highest level of the political parties that were involved in the clashes except denial by the ruling CDC and threats from the opposition UP that it would use every means at its disposal for self-defense.

WE THINK THAT was below the belt. Both the incumbent administration and those desiring leadership should exercise tolerance and maturity in responding to crisis, which is one of the marks of good leadership.

IN OUR WISDOM, ALL that was needed is for leaders of the two parties, thank God, they both have served our country at the highest level - President Weah being at the helm of power for six years and is seeking a second term and Amb. Boakai, who had served as Vice President for 12 years and wants to come to the presidency.

SO WHY WAS it so difficult in calling their respective followers and supporters to order, that citizens had to suffer wounds? Why was it so difficult for both leaders to call each other before coming out? Campaign should not be about enmity, but in Liberia, dare say Africa, this is what it is.

THERE IS YET a long way to go, as campaign is officially expected to end on October 8, 2023, for Elections Day on October 10th. The denial and the threat coming from both sides are sending wrong signals to the electorate and creating fear in the entire population of the kind of canvassing to expect one mar by terror and blood perhaps, as we go to the polls, which is absolutely unwarranted.

LONDON - There is growing concern that children in developing countries are not learning enough in school. Even before pandemic-related school closures, 57% of ten-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries were unable to read and understand a simple text - the definition of "learning poverty." The COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated the situation, leading large donors and global institutions to launch a program aimed at improving foundational skills.

But if well-intentioned efforts to tackle learning poverty do not account for the complex and interrelated challenges that prevent children in poor countries from achieving academic success, they risk reproducing existing inequalities in educational outcomes.

For the more than one billion children worldwide who live in multidimensional poverty - lacking access to adequate nutrition, health care, safety, and sanitation - the barriers to learning extend far beyond the school gates. They may suffer from the psychological stresses of poverty or be hungry at school, both of which impede learning.

Perhaps violence threatens them inside or outside the classroom, or they are at risk of being married off young and dropping out of school. Overreliance on technical solutions designed to address the proximate causes of learning poverty from the supply side could leave many of these children behind.

Policymakers in low- and middle-income countries and aid organizations tend to decouple education policy from the underlying issues of poverty and social vulnerability. This can partly be attributed to the fact that the Washington Consensus advocated small government in developing countries, limiting their ability to implement broad-based social policies in conjunction with expanding schooling.

The advent of New Public Management reforms, which emphasized quantifiable performance based on narrowly defined organizational objectives, also likely discouraged education ministries from addressing well-being more broadly or encouraging intersectoral collaboration.

As for donors, their laser focus on channeling resources to cost-effective projects with specific and measurable outcomes has seemingly diverted attention from more complex problems that extend beyond the classroom. An overview of the education strategies of major multilateral and bilateral aid organizations shows that their inclusion and well-being agendas are too often limited to girls' education and children in fragile states or marginalized regions, leaving other forms of deprivation unaddressed.

Consider, for example, school meals, an area where education policies and anti-poverty measures intersect. Since the start of the pandemic, lower-middle-income countries have expanded their school-meal programs by an average of 12% - three times higher than their wealthier counterparts. This contrasts sharply with the 4% contraction, on average, in school-meal coverage in low-income countries, which usually have the

neediest children but lack the fiscal space to expand meal programs.

The prevailing view in Uganda, a low-income country where the provision of school meals is patchy, is that the government has only a narrow role to play in education - a view enshrined in the country's legislation. As Joyce Moriku Kaducu, the minister of state for primary education, puts it,

"Education is a shared responsibility. The government and parents have different roles to play. The government ensures that there is a conducive environment for learning by providing infrastructure, teachers, and learning materials. Parents have the core responsibility of sending learners to school, ensuring the learner is appropriately dressed, and that the learner is well fed, even at school."

This narrow view of the state's role in education prevails among donors and policymakers and has been ingrained by the neoliberal notion of minimal government intervention.

The tendency to draw an artificial boundary between a child's education and overall well-being is also evident in the "smart buys" report. Produced by a panel of high-profile international experts and sponsored by many of the largest donors in global education, the report classifies school meals as an "effective, but ... relatively expensive" way to deliver learning outcomes. In the panel's view, "education systems face budget constraints, and they need to allocate scarce resources toward whatever interventions will deliver the most learning gains for the most children and youth on a given budget."

In fact, providing school meals - a form of transfer to households - is less of an economic cost to society than a direct fiscal cost to government. Moreover, spending on programs with multisectoral benefits does not necessarily have to be constrained by the education budget.

By the same token, some donors are fixated on the false dichotomy between intervention in early childhood and during school attendance. The United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office, for example, notes that feeding children before the age of two is more effective than feeding school-age children. Apart from the moral issue at stake, it is unclear how allowing school-age children to go hungry can be cost-effective from an educational perspective. When examining the evidence, it makes little sense to separate the educational, nutritional, and safety-net benefits of school meals for children and their families.

Breaking through such conceptual silos in governments and donor bureaucracies could be the first step toward adopting a much more holistic approach to education policy and resource allocation. More fundamentally, better learning outcomes requires greater comprehension of the realities of school life for poor children. Like all children, they will learn best when they are free from hunger, illness, and violence.

OP-ED

By Sergio Díaz-Granados

Redefining the EU-Latin America Relationship

PANAMA - In July, eight years since their last gathering, heads of state and government from the European Union and from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) met in Brussels. The summit ended on a promising note: through its Global Gateway program, the European Union will invest €45 billion (\$49.5 billion) by 2027 to support a fair green transition, an inclusive digital transformation, and human-development outcomes in LAC.

As Jean Monnet, the architect of European unity, reportedly observed, all people are ambitious, but they are ambitious either “to be” or “to do.” In today’s “polycrisis” world, action matters more than pageantry. Ordinary citizens expect concrete results from multilateral commitments, and it is time to deliver.

To this end, the EU-LAC relationship must be redefined. The recent period of piecemeal engagement, with a focus on only some issues or on relations between certain countries, has led to significant gaps in trade and sustainable development. Both sides would benefit from a more expansive agenda linking the regions as a whole, rather than agreements between small blocs of countries aligning on environmental, commercial, and investment matters.

According to a recent Elcano report, expanding and harmonizing trade agreements between LAC countries and the EU would create an immense economic space - 1.1 billion people and total GDP of more than €21 trillion, similar to that of the United States. Finalizing the EU-Mercosur agreement would be a crucial step in the right direction.

To realize this potential, European policymakers must view LAC not merely as a source of raw materials, but rather as an equal partner in addressing global challenges. The region has a proven track record in devising innovative solutions: the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, for example, were born at the Rio+20 Summit and are a product of LAC countries’ efforts to build a more equitable and resilient world.

The fight against climate change, in particular, will require large-scale investment and rapid innovation, especially in new materials and forms of mobility, digital services, and management of natural resources. Climate action also creates opportunities for cross-border technology transfer and strengthening agribusiness. The Global Gateway program can advance these goals, but we must make headway before the next meeting of European and LAC heads of state and government in 2025.

CAF - Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (of which I am executive president) has formed a partnership with the European Commission and the Inter-American Development Bank to bolster the new EU-LAC investment agenda.

So far, the partnership’s dynamic private-sector roundtables have identified more than 130 projects to fund, ranging from bringing digital connectivity to 85% of Colombians by 2026 to scaling up hydrogen production in Chile and Uruguay and rolling out renewable energy in Jamaica. Other initiatives are focused on sustainable urban mobility in Bogotá, Quito, San José, and São Paulo, sanitation and chronic child malnutrition in Ecuador, and food security in Guyana.

With Spain holding the presidency of the Council of the EU until the end of this year, our shared vision of a robust bi-regional alliance will have a greater chance of becoming a reality. Shifting from fragmented ties to a more cohesive partnership, the two regions can move forward using the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as their roadmap.

To advance this goal, CAF is working with the Spanish government to encourage dialogue. The collaboration has already proven fruitful: all European and LAC ministers of economy and finance will convene on September 15 in Santiago de Compostela to discuss the future of the bi-regional relationship.

Rather than merely give the appearance of close collaboration, the ambition of CAF and other regional actors is “to do,” as Monnet put it. We want to help build a strong EU-LAC alliance that advances a bold investment agenda and advances both sides’ interests and prosperity. As mounting existential problems increasingly call for joint action, European and LAC countries must build on recent progress toward a stronger and deeper relationship.

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OPINION

By Gordon Brown

The Taliban’s Gender Crimes Against Humanity

EDINBURGH - Gender persecution is a grievous crime against humanity. Having established gender apartheid by denying girls and women access to education, many members of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan can and should be held accountable under the International Criminal Court’s Rome Statute.

On the second anniversary of the Taliban’s reconquest, the ICC’s chief prosecutor should take legal action against the individuals responsible for what are the most egregious, heinous, and vindictive abuses of human rights systematically and viciously imposed on girls today. If allowed to continue without sustained international opposition, these abuses will set a terrifying precedent for other regimes where discrimination against women remains endemic.

The time is right to do so: after two years of ever-intensifying repression, there appears to be division within the regime in Kabul, which has far too casually implemented a series of edicts from religious clerics based in Kandahar. To complement the independent actions of the ICC, the international community can take several initiatives now that could add pressure for policy changes.

Leaders from Muslim-majority countries should form a delegation and visit Afghanistan to meet not only with the Taliban but also with the country’s religious elders. But even before that happens, these leaders and their Western counterparts must step up their efforts.

The United States, the United Kingdom, and other global powers should follow the European Union’s lead in sanctioning those directly responsible for denying girls education. They should make resources available to online platforms to provide remote education and do more to finance underground schools for all of Afghanistan’s children, male and female, so that schooling can proceed even in the face of the current ban. Such initiatives could also help Afghan girls access education beyond the country’s borders in Pakistan and help sustain at least some of the progress made in the two decades before August 2021. At the same time, if the Taliban does reverse course and agrees to grant girls consistent and unrestricted access to education, the world must be ready to offer financial support.

The legal recommendations stem from an exhaustive review spearheaded by scholars detailing the grim situation facing Afghan girls and the Taliban’s violation of international human-rights treaties. Their efforts painstakingly document just how far the regime has gone in excluding women and girls from secondary and tertiary education, and just how far Afghanistan has fallen short of upholding the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The Taliban regime has also disregarded its responsibilities under the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Its discriminatory practices against women and girls blatantly breach these conventions and have rightly drawn widespread condemnation. The CEDAW Committee, the CRC Committee, and other notable figures have all denounced the Taliban’s regressive policies. Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Afghanistan, told the UN Human Rights Council that “grave, systematic, and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid.”

Of course, Afghanistan has not ratified the instruments essential to implementing the CEDAW, the ICESCR, or the CRC. Nonetheless, the international community could pursue accountability through other means, including the reporting requirements and monitoring mechanisms that were established under these treaties. These allow bodies like the CEDAW Committee to enlist rapporteurs whose investigations would maintain continuous scrutiny of the Taliban’s actions.

International criminal law offers an even larger window through which to sanction the Taliban. The United Nations has acknowledged education as an “enabling right” that is crucial for realizing other human rights, and the Taliban’s educational prohibitions clearly constitute gender-based persecution. According to the ICC’s December 2022 Policy on the Crime of Gender Persecution, actions that deprive individuals of their fundamental rights - including education - fall under this category.

Many countries could also leverage their domestic legal frameworks to condemn and respond to the Taliban’s suppression of women and girls’ rights, including, potentially, through targeted sanctions.

All of these options should be on the table, because the need to assist Afghan girls has become more urgent than ever. Of the 80 edicts issued by the Taliban between August 2021 and last January, 54 target women and dismantle their rights. Recently, the regime issued additional bans on women and girls’ participation in university medical exams, visits to cemeteries, and other activities. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs has become the feared Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, and the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission has been dissolved, while legislation guaranteeing gender equality has been invalidated.

Even under intensifying repression by the Taliban, many Afghan women and girls remain defiant, attending covert schools and seeking university-level education online. Tragically, however, global support for their cause has been underwhelming.

To be sure, many governments, including in other Muslim-majority countries, have voiced objections to the Taliban’s policies, citing religious scripture that disapproves of such discrimination. Their condemnations should be applauded, but protecting Afghan women and girls’ rights also demands a greater international mobilization.

As we in the international community respond to these issues, we must urge the ICC to use the anniversary of the Taliban’s return to power to open an investigation into its grave rights violations. The regime’s blatant disregard for international treaties, and especially its exclusion of women and girls from education, must no longer be ignored.

The spirit of the Afghan people is withstanding even the harshest punishments that the Taliban can mete out. Afghanistan’s women and girls continue to fight for their rights despite the reality of near-certain retribution. The world must stand with them.

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Ex-rebel general asks for reward

-for participating in Liberian Civil War

By Thomas Domah, Nimba County

One of the ex-rebel generals that fought the 14 years of civil war in Liberia is calling on his kinsman in Nimba County to

for such leadership to be given to me”, Duo demands.

He promises to unite the people of Nimba and promote development if elected senator comes October.

reward”, he maintains.

Sen. Duo, who is a member of jailed former President Charles Ghankay Taylor’s National Patriotic Party (NPP) that is part of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change, urges Nimbaians to support the re-election of President George Weah for continuous development across all 19 Administrative Districts of Nimba. Candidate Duo made the call in Gboa Zotuo town when 12 towns converged and pledged support to the re-election of President Weah. He seeks to replace incumbent Senator Prince Johnson, who is vying for a third term. Johnson was a key allied of President Weah but severed ties with the President in 2022 over disagreement and subsequently crossed over to former Vice President Joseph Boakai, producing running mate for Mr. Boakai in the pending elections.

Also speaking, Nimba County Inspector Mack Gblynwon, currently campaign manager in the county for the re-election of President George Weah, urges fellow Nimbaians not to support the Rescue Ticket of Senator Jeremiah Koung and Ambassador Joseph Boakai. He argues that one county can’t elect a President, so Nimbaians should not waste their votes on Senator Koung and Amb. Boakai. Inspector Gblynwon names ongoing road constructions across the country and payment of community colleges’ fees since 2018, including WASSCE fees for 12th graders, among others. CDC Nimba County chairperson, Reginald Mehn, pledges to campaign in all 19 Administrative Districts of Nimba for the reelection of President Weah. Editing by Jonathan Browne



Ex-rebel general Roland G. Duo

reward him with political power. Ex-rebel general Roland G. Duo, says he and other former generals, including the leader of the defunct rebel INPFL Senator Prince Yormie Johnson, and defunct NPFL general, former Senator Adolphus Saye Dolo, fought in the civil war and they were rewarded with senatorial seats with PYJ spending 18 years in the senate, stressing that now is his time to be rewarded by the people of Nimba. Speaking in Nimba during a political rally on Sunday, August 13, 2023, General Dolo, who is vying for the senate, noted that Senator Johnson fought for only nine (9) months and has been awarded 18 years in the Liberian Senate for such fight.

“We all fought and killed people in Liberia; Senator Prince Johnson, who only fought for 9 months and ran away, was awarded 18 years leadership, so there is a need

Candidate Duo reveals that he is friendly with President George Weah, while Vice President Jewel Taylor is his mother, so he is close to the seat of power, adding that reelecting President Weah and Vice President Taylor will bring more development to Liberia. General Dolo is among several former warlords listed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for prosecution for committing heinous crimes and crimes against humanity during the brutal civil war in the country. Also listed by the TRC are Sen. PYJ and Sekou Damate Conneh, among others. He pledges to fight tribalism in Nimba if elected and to promote development across the county. “We all liberated this country. I, Roland Duo, fought for 14 years; PYJ ran away after fighting for 9 months and moved to Nigeria. I fought throughout for you people, so please give my

Aids Commission moves to fight stigma and discrimination

By Bridgett Milton

The National Aids Commission of Liberia in collaboration with partners has planned a three-day conference to end stigmatization and discrimination here.

Addressing a news conference on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, in Monrovia, the Chairperson for the National Aids Commission, Theodosia Kolee, said the conference, which runs from August 31- September 2, 2023, will be held under the Theme, “End Stigma and Discrimination; Get Involved!”

It is aimed at strengthening coordination and collaboration in holistically addressing societal stigma, discrimination, and violence against people living with HIV.

Madam Kolee says over the years, people living with HIV, key and vulnerable populations have suffered different forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination in the country.



USAID launches Forestry, Biodiversity, and Conservation Center

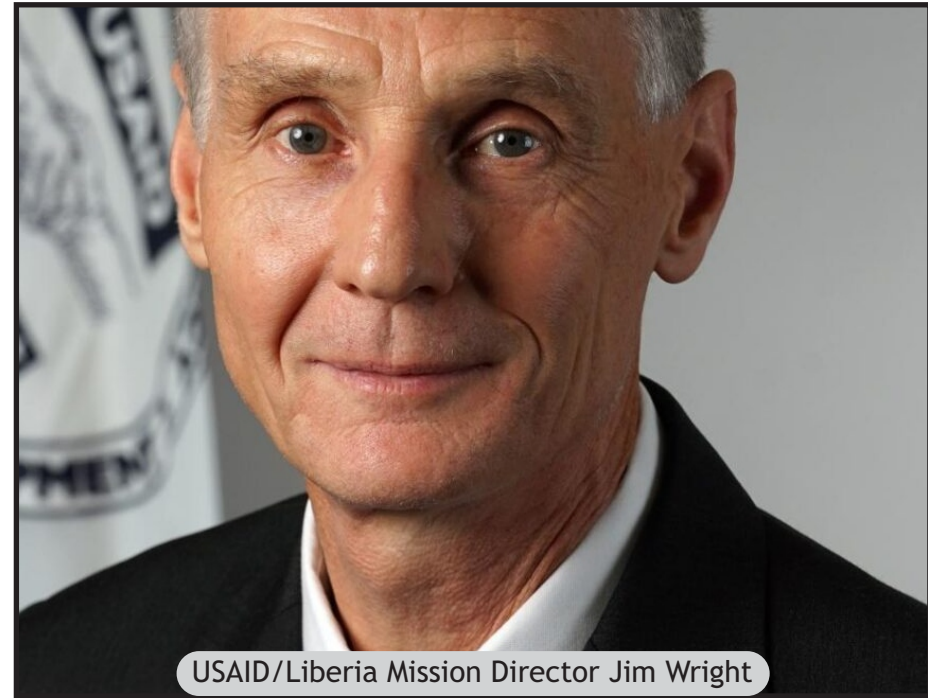
The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has launched a Forestry, Biodiversity, and Conservation Center at the University of Liberia. According to the Embassy of the United States in Monrovia, the Center is a major part of an ongoing USAID project that is partnering with historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other higher education institutions in the United States to strengthen the capacity of Liberia’s forestry and biodiversity workforce.

The Center will lead the development of a national curriculum for forestry, biodiversity, and conservation that aligns with global standards for sustainable forest management. It will also design a social inclusion strategy to empower and help provide

Liberia to derive economic benefits from its vast forest resources,” but he added that it is “equally important to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of forest communities before entering agreements for the use of their ancestral lands.” The President of the University of Liberia Dr. Julius Nelson said the university was proud to house the Forestry, Biodiversity and Conservation Center and thanked USAID for supporting forest protection and conservation in Liberia.

The new Forestry, Biodiversity, and Conservation Center at the University of Liberia is supported by collaborations with the University of Georgia, Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee University, the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College, and the University Consortium for Liberia in the United States.

This launch is in line with



USAID/Liberia Mission Director Jim Wright

sustainable livelihoods for women, youth, and rural, forest-dwelling communities.

Speaking during the launch of the Center on Wednesday, August 9 at the University of Liberia Fendell Campus, USAID/Liberia Mission Director Jim Wright, hailed the partnerships with HBCUs, which he said will provide “unique opportunities for Liberian and American students and faculty to collaborate on research that promotes more inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development.” Mr. Wright praised Liberia for being the custodian of the largest remaining portions of the ecologically sensitive Upper Guinean Forest.

He said it is “proper for

USAID’s other conservation and forest protection programs in Liberia. These projects include the Conservation Works Activity which is working to establish new protected areas and improve livelihoods for communities in and around proposed protected forest areas. USAID is also supporting eco-tourism ventures in Cape Mount and Nimba Counties that promote the sustainable use of forests for tourism activities while creating jobs for local communities.

Additionally, USAID, in partnership with the United States Forest Service, has helped the Forestry Training Institute in Tubmanburg, Bomi County develop a conservation-focused curriculum to train forest rangers and other workers who protect Liberia’s forests. Press Release

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Weah promises reintroduction of cadet program

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh

President George Manneh Weah has promised Liberian youths that he will reintroduce Cadet Program to help enhance

capacities of every Liberian youth attending high school.

"I promise you the young people, it is not just the free-tuition fees that the government has paid for you

the WASSCE [West African Senior School Certificate Examination] fees for senior high school program, President Weah said he desires to empower every Liberian youth. President Weah recalled that he worked as a cadet at Liberia Telecommunications as a high-school student, earning US\$50 U which empowered him to foster his education. Mr. Weah continued that he will work hard to develop the nation and leave a legacy in the minds of Liberians.

Meanwhile, the incumbent has urged young people to open their eyes to political lies or rhetoric from failed politicians.

He pleaded with them to make the right decision for their future and the nation.

For her part, Liberian Vice President Madam Jewel Howard-Taylor rallied Liberians to stick to the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) government. She said the government is on an irreversible path, urging their supporters to vote for incumbent President Weah in a resounding one-round victory. She indicated that the choice is in the electorate's hands to vote for Mr. Weah for continued development, transforming their lives, and improving the country, rather than those who will push development backward.



President Weah

their capacities for job experience and prepare them as future leaders.

On his re-election campaign tour of Montserrado Monday, 14 August 2023 in the Du-port Road community, Mr. Weah shared with his supporters, including hundreds of young people, his plan for the next six years. President Weah affirmed his commitment to a program that he said is designed to foster development, give experience, and build the

over the last five years. I've said to my finance minister [Samuel] Tweah, in our lives, we were all cadets, so that program needs to come back," said Mr. Weah. He said if he is re-elected, his government will bring back the cadet program through which every 12th, 10th, and 9th-grade student will be employed to gain job experience.

Five years on, following the implementation of the free-tuition scheme for students and

Commerce and Partners launch 3rd phase of Youth Startup Business Plan Competition

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry in partnership with the Business Startup Center (BSC) Monrovia, with support from UNDP through the Livelihood & Employment Creation project, announces the commencement of the third phase of the Youth Startup Business Plan Competition 2023 cohort for ambitious young people interested in starting their own businesses.

dollars (US\$ 500.00). They will also benefit from coaching and mentorship support when developing and refining their business ideas.

The competition aims to foster entrepreneurship among Liberia's youth, identifying their needs and challenges, and developing innovative and creative solutions. Submission of applications begins on 16 August and runs up to 27, August 2023.

It is expected that applicants will come forward with business ideas from all sectors of the economy including agriculture, information technology, transportation, food processing, manufacturing, health, and along all value chains about the key sectors. UNDP and the Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry are working to support the

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 5

The Competition targets 300 youth drawn from seven counties: Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, Nimba, and Lofa counties, who will participate in two days of business skills training, and competition for business start-up grants of USD500. The youth will learn about business and financial planning and present their business ideas to a panel of judges in the hope of securing grants of up to five hundred United States



Spotlight Initiative Renovates Criminal Court E in Lofa County

Spotlight Initiative in Liberia implemented by the Government of Liberia, with funding from the European Union through UNDP, has handed over the newly renovated Criminal Court E in Lofa County to the Government of Liberia.

The handover ceremony held August 14, 2023, at the Judiciary Circuit Court in Voinjama, Lofa County, represents a significant milestone in Liberia's pursuit of justice, human rights protection, and legal infrastructure advancement.

Criminal Court E, a crucial pillar in Liberia's justice system, has undergone extensive refurbishment aimed at creating an improved and conducive environment for the fair and efficient handling of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) related cases.

confidence of the court. Also making remarks at the event, UNDP Liberia Pillar Head for its Inclusive Governance Portfolio James Monibah, stressed that the renovation of the court is part of the agency's overall support to the Government of Liberia in strengthening access to Justice and the Rule of law especially addressing sexual violence.

Monibah urged the citizens, to report cases of rape and reiterated that it should not be made a home matter. He reminded the Judiciary of its responsibility to take care of the assets and sustain the programme and the CSOs to increase awareness and engagement with the communities on SGBV issues.

The CSO Coordinator of PYCOSI Liberia working in Lofa County, Mohammed Kamara emphasized the need for increased support to the witness protection programme. Kamara said the



The renovation project included the establishment of an in-camera victim protection room, prioritizing the rights and privacy of survivors during trial proceedings. The handover ceremony witnessed the formal transfer of responsibility and ownership of Criminal Court E from UNDP to the Government of Liberia. It serves as a success to the joint efforts and commitment to strengthening Liberia's justice system, as well as advancing the protection of vulnerable individuals' rights, particularly survivors of SGBV.

absence of witnesses especially with the difficult economic situation in the country, is one of the contributing factors to delays in the judicial process of SGBV cases.

On behalf of the Gender theme group, Beatrice Kanneh reiterated the need for citizens to trust the system by reporting cases of sexual violence. "The Court will help us protect the identity of survivors and bring dignity to them," Kanneh noted.

The handover of the renovated Criminal Court E represents a significant step forward for Liberia's justice system and its dedication to safeguarding the rights of its citizens. This event marks a clear demonstration of collective efforts in promoting access to justice, protecting the vulnerable, and ensuring that the voices of survivors are heard, and their rights upheld.

Speaking during the ceremony, the Assistant Court Administrator Counselor William Kollie urged party litigants to make use of Criminal Court E in settling SGBV cases, instead of their homes.

Counselor Kollie expressed appreciation to the European Union (EU) and its partners including UNDP, for the support and reaffirmed the Judiciary's commitment to the training of its staff as it is a specialized area of work to uphold the

The event recognizes and appreciates the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

WHO donates dozens of medical supplies to MOH

By Lincoln G. Peters
The World Health Organization (WHO), one of Liberia's biggest health partners, has donated several health equipment and drugs to the Ministry of Health. The

program. The initiative intends to increase access to healthcare across the country, and to facilitate the government's efforts in addressing the growing concerns of at-risk

mental health medicine, will benefit four counties which include Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Margibi, and Bomi. During the official donation and turning over ceremony, Health Minister Dr. Wilhelmena Jallah signed on behalf of the government and received the donation, while Dr. Peters Clement signed on behalf of WHO. Dr. Clement described the donation as a boost to Liberia's struggling and recovering health sector.

According to him, the donations are intended to strengthen the Liberian health sector and the capacity of MOH as the country is still struggling to recover from the COVID-19 outbreak.

"This will help the intensive care unite. We have medicine ... for those that [are] working in the intensive health unite to also safe them. We also have the mental health medicine to help Liberia as the country has embarked on its at-risk youth program," Dr. Clement noted. He further indicated that the donation is aimed at improving and enhancing immunization since most children were unable to get



donation is intended to boost Liberia's health system in its recovery process following the COVID-19 crisis.

The donation program was held Tuesday, 15 August 2023 at the Ministry of Health in Congo Town.

Several employees of the Ministry of Health and WHO representatives graced the

youth. The items donated include cartoons of mental health medicine, Lab supply, GIS Galaxy tablet A7 Lite, Clora, Tissues, Antimicrobial Care, pharmadeam, ICU Supplies, patient monitor, ICU, and Oxygen concentrator, among others.

The items, especially the

MPW promises more road developments if Weah is reelected

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh
Assistant Public Works Minister for Operations Kaustella Kialain Sarsih has assured Liberians of more development of roads if incumbent President George Manneh Weah is reelected this October. The Public Works official pleaded with potential voters for one round victory.

Ms. Sarsih addressed reporters when she led her supporters Monday, 14 August 2023 to show their support for the Weah-Taylor presidential bid in Montserrado County Electoral District #4. Assistant Minister Sarsih stressed that giving President Weah a second term would pave the way for more developments, including road connectivity across the country.

Under the Weah-Taylor regime, she said work construction work has been done several roads including the ELWA to Coco Cola-Road corridor in Montserrado, and the Kanweaken to Fish Town road in River Gee, southeast Liberia.

She also named the Tapita to Toe Town road corridor, the Toe Town to Zwedru road, the Ganta to Sanniquellie road and the

Sanniquellie to Yekepa road corridors.

She further named the Gbarnga to Salayea road corridor, and the ELWA to RIA road corridor which is in progress, among others. Minister Sarsih has rallied her constituents to ensure that Mr. Weah is reelected in a one-round victory to continue the development. President Weah has told his supporters that there is a lot more to do, telling them that they made the right choice by electing him in 2017 when his opponents said he knew

nothing. "But in five years, I've done than any president did in their entire term," Mr. Weah alleged.

"I have built more hospitals, I've given you free tuition for you to go to school and empower yourselves. I'm building more roads, and creating more new jobs, then they say I've done nothing," he said. For his part, Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah, Jr., boasted of the Weah-Taylor administration for augmenting doctors and health workers' salaries from USD\$700 to US\$2,000. Minister Tweah said President Weah is striving for his government to succeed.



"Empowering Communities: UNDP Drives Awareness on Human Security Project"

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) successfully conducted a comprehensive three-day workshop in Gompa City, Nimba County, aimed at enhancing digital literacy and community engagement on the critical topic of Human Security. The initiative focused on training key project stakeholders to grasp the essence of the Human Security framework and harness digital technology to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This training, which took place from August 9th to 11th, 2023, was conducted in collaboration with UN agencies including the International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and UN Women, all deeply engaged in the Human Security Project.

Marking the third in a series, this workshop targeted untouched communities, from earlier sessions in Gbarnga and Saclepea. The core objective was to foster a heightened

Ministry of Internal Affairs, provided a succinct overview of the Human Security Project. Parley revealed that the initiative is set to directly benefit 3,000 individuals and indirectly impact 10,000 beneficiaries, encompassing women, youth, People living with Disabilities (PWDs) and vulnerable people with special needs. The project's timeline spans three years.

Robert Dorlaie, the UNDP focal point for the Human Security Project, expounded on the concept of the smart village, highlighting its potential to elevate the quality of life for community residents through enhanced access to essential social services. He mentioned that plans for the smart village's energy supply will be harnessed via solar power, which will also contribute to the energy needs of local businesses.

Dorlaie cautioned against overemphasising internet connectivity as a solution for smart villages, citing the example of how agricultural decisions could be influenced by environmental factors rather than digital connectivity.



awareness of the Human Security Project and solicit context-specific solutions from stakeholders. These solutions will be instrumental in addressing the multidimensional human security challenges faced by diverse communities, anchored in the framework of the SDGs.

During the inaugural ceremony, Amos Suah, the Mayor of Gompa City, underscored the importance of maintaining peace and avoiding violence, irrespective of political affiliations, especially as the country approaches elections. Mayor Suah urged participants to carry this message back to their families and communities, emphasizing the pivotal role of peaceful coexistence in nation-building.

Czar Parley, the focal point for Human Security at the

Stanley Kamara, Senior National Economist at UNDP, delved into the distinctions of Human Security programming and approaches. Kamara emphasized that education in this sphere is instrumental in fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

He positioned the Human Security project as a collaborative initiative within the United Nations Sustainable Cooperation framework, aligned with Liberia's national development agenda.

Danieletta Sleyon, Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy, emphasized gender mainstreaming and human rights integration for a more equitable society. Sleyon stressed the importance of legal literacy, urging participants to familiarize themselves with Liberia's constitution and legal instruments to protect their rights.

Sleyon spoke about ongoing

Français

Le Libéria aura de sérieux problèmes s'il change de président, à en croire le parti au pouvoir

Le président de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC), la Coalition au pouvoir, a

d'État en Israël et dans d'autres pays européens, M. Morlu a donné lundi une conférence de presse au siège de son parti à Congo

que le président Weah a déjà mis en place la fondation pour changer les choses au Libéria. Il a supplié les libériens de lui accorder un autre mandat de 6 ans pour pouvoir finir



déclaré que changer de président mettrait en péril l'avenir du Libéria.

"Rappelons-nous que le Libéria est entre de bonnes mains et qu'il est donc risqué de procéder à un changement au milieu de ce voyage", a déclaré Mulbah K. Morlu le lundi 14 août 2023.

De retour d'une visite

Town. Selon lui, élire un opposant à la tête du pays sera un désastre.

Le président de la CDC a déclaré que le Libéria a été en sécurité au cours des six dernières années sous le commandement du président sortant George Manneh Weah et que cela ne vaut pas la peine qu'on le change. Il a fait valoir

ce qu'il a déjà commencé.

« Nous avons pour mandat d'assurer une victoire au premier tour, et ce mandat ne peut pas être déformé », a-t-il déclaré. Il a prié les partisans de la CDC de ne pas s'en prendre aux opposants ou à leurs affiches à cause de la colère, car la meilleure façon d'exprimer sa colère est de voter pour une victoire

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Togo : la Conférence des évêques préconise la levée des sanctions de la Cédéao contre « le peuple frère » du Niger

Après avoir demandé trois jours de prières en signe de solidarité envers « le peuple frère du Niger », les évêques du Togo appellent les décideurs politiques de la sous-région à revoir leur copie en levant les sanctions imposées par la Cédéao. Selon eux, cela faciliterait la rencontre de tous les protagonistes autour d'une table de négociation.

Mgr Benoît Messan Alowonou, président de la Conférence des évêques du Togo (CET), s'est exprimé au micro de notre correspondant à Lomé, Peter Sassou Dogbé.

« Ce n'est un secret pour personne que la situation économique de nos pays est très fragile. Nos populations ne sont pas encore sorties de la crise sanitaire. Alors que nous vivons encore dans cette crise, la guerre de l'Ukraine, qui se déroule à des milliers de kilomètres, a elle aussi des conséquences sur la vie déjà précaire des habitants

de nos pays, et ceci sur tous les plans. Voilà que, nous-mêmes, chez nous, nous proposons des solutions de crise qui amèneront la violence et la guerre. »

« La conférence des évêques du Togo, dans sa déclaration sur la situation qui prévaut au Niger, suggère la levée des sanctions imposées par la Cédéao. Les victimes de ces sanctions ne sont pas seulement les cibles visées, mais plutôt toute la population de notre région. »

Déclaration de la Conférence des évêques du Togo (CET) sur la

situation qui prévaut au Niger

À vous tous, frères et sœurs dans le Seigneur, Hommes et femmes de bonne volonté, Acteurs et décideurs politiques, Considérant notre appel pour un Triduum de prières et d'adoration sur toutes les paroisses de notre pays le Togo, les 8, 9 et 10 août 2023 en faveur du pays frère le Niger, en réponse à l'invitation à la solidarité et à la prière du Président des

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Éditorial

Une campagne sanglante est injustifiée

L'affrontement sanglant et totalement injustifié de jeudi dernier (10 août 2023) entre les partisans rivaux du candidat de l'opposant Joseph Nyumah Boakia du Parti de l'unité (UP) et de la coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC) dans la circonscription électorale n° 9 du comté de Montserrado a fait des blessés. C'est regrettable. Aucun Libérien ou partisan d'un parti politique ne devrait mourir ou être défiguré juste pour l'amour d'un candidat.

Après tout, nous n'avons d'autres choix que de cohabiter comme une seule nation en tant que libériens, que nous soyons membres du parti qui aura gagné ou qui aura perdu. Et il y aura de nombreux partis perdants car sur les 20 candidats en lice, un seul sera déclaré vainqueur au premier ou au second tour de la présidentielle.

Alors pourquoi s'infliger des blessures les uns aux autres pendant les campagnes au nom de la politique ? Les Libériens sont-ils obligés de s'adonner à une telle extrémité pour démontrer leur amour et leur loyauté envers un candidat particulier ? Nous pensons que non.

Le candidat Tiawan S. Gongloe l'a souligné. Une campagne présidentielle ne devrait pas être une question d'inimitié, mais une compétition d'idées, des idées sur la façon dont nos candidats ou candidates de notre choix ont l'intention d'améliorer la nation et l'ensemble de son peuple.

Cependant, la violence qui s'est produite le 10 août dans le district n° 9 à peine cinq ou six jours après le début de la campagne était non seulement malheureuse mais très décevante, surtout après que les dirigeants et les candidats des partis politiques aient exprimé devant les citoyens et les partenaires internationaux leur engagement envers des élections apaisées.

Malheureusement aussi, nous n'avons pas vu de leadership démontré au plus haut niveau des partis politiques impliqués dans les affrontements, à l'exception du déni du parti au pouvoir et aux propos de l'opposition qui menace d'utiliser tous les moyens à sa disposition pour se défendre.

Nous pensons que c'était en dessous de la ceinture. L'administration en place et ceux qui souhaitent diriger doivent faire preuve de tolérance et de maturité dans leur réponse aux crises, ce qui est l'une des marques d'un bon leadership.

Dans notre sagesse, tout ce qui était nécessaire, c'est que les dirigeants des deux partis, Dieu merci, ils ont tous deux servi notre pays au plus haut niveau - le président Weah étant à la tête du pays depuis six ans et cherche un second mandat et Boakai, qui fut vice-président pendant 12 ans et veut accéder à la présidence.

Alors pourquoi était-il si difficile de rappeler à l'ordre leurs fidèles et sympathisants respectifs, que des citoyens aient dû subir des blessures ? Pourquoi était-il si difficile pour les deux dirigeants de s'appeler avant de sortir ? La campagne ne devrait pas être sur l'inimitié, mais au Libéria, osons dire l'Afrique, c'est ce qu'il en est.

Il reste encore un long chemin à parcourir, car la campagne devrait officiellement se terminer le 8 octobre 2023 et les élections auront lieu le 10 octobre. Le déni et la menace venant des deux côtés envoient de mauvais signaux à l'électorat et font craindre toute la population.

Français

Starts from page 8

Le Libéria aura de sérieux

au premier tour. « Il nous faut maintenant commencer à faire campagne dans les églises, dans les mosquées, et dans toutes les tranchées, car nous avons un mandat révolutionnaire à gagner au premier tour. Nous avons promis aux partenaires internationaux que cette élection serait libre, équitable et transparente. Nous ne comptons pas seulement sur des paroles creuses, nous ferons campagne, nous travaillerons et agirons comme des gagnants au premier tour », a-t-il dit.

Il a cependant reconnu

que la CDC aura du mal à gagner deux comtés du pays, à savoir les comtés de Nimba et de Lofa. Toutefois, les résultats récents des élections partielles à Nimba et Lofa sont, selon lui, des raisons suffisantes pour croire que la CDC gagnera au premier tour.

Pour rassurer les partisans de la CDC, il leur a dit qu'ils ne seraient pas exclus des plans du gouvernement en termes de création d'opportunités. « Aucun soldat ne sera laissé pour compte, il nous incombe donc de nous battre et de nous assurer de gagner », a-t-il promis.

Starts from page 8

Togo : la Conférence des évêques

Conférences Episcopales Réunies de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CERAO/RECOWA),

Considérant l'exhortation à la retenue, au discernement et au bon sens dans la gestion de la situation socio-politique au Niger, des Cardinaux, Archevêques et Evêques des CERAO/RECOWA aux autorités politiques, en date du 04 août 2023, Considérant la réelle interdépendance entre nos populations des pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, sur le plan sociale, économique et sécuritaire, Vu les conditions de vie déjà précaires de la population nigérienne et de celles de nos pays, exposées et menacées par le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent,

Vu que les violences et les guerres sont toujours source de fragilisation et de paupérisation des populations, Nous, Archevêque et Evêques du Togo, réaffirmons au nom de l'Eglise Famille de Dieu au Togo, notre solidarité avec le peuple du Niger et en appelons à la conscience et au sens de responsabilité des décideurs politiques et les invitons à privilégier coûte que coûte la voie diplomatique de négociation, de dialogue et

de médiation dans la recherche de solution à la crise qui prévaut au Niger, en écoutant les cris de détresse du peuple nigérien.

Dans le but de converger les protagonistes de la crise vers une table de négociation, nous suggérons la levée des sanctions imposées par la Communauté Economique Des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO), dont les premières victimes sont les populations civiles, notamment les femmes et les enfants.

Nous saluons la courageuse, sage et prudente position des dirigeants de beaucoup de pays dont le Togo, des leaders politiques et de la société civile de notre sous-région, qui privilégient la voie du dialogue dans le discernement et la responsabilité devant l'histoire.

Nous remercions tous ceux qui ont prié dans notre pays durant les trois jours susmentionnés, et qui continuent de porter la situation du Niger dans leurs prières au quotidien. En réitérant notre proximité aux Evêques et au peuple frère du Niger ainsi que notre attachement à la valeur de la paix sociale, nous continuons d'implorer du Seigneur la grâce d'un retour rapide au calme et à la compréhension mutuelle, pour le bien de tous.

Les juges n'ont pas le droit de faire de la politique, prévient la juge Mardea



La juge Mardea Tarr Chenoweth de la Cour pénale, au Temple de la justice de Monrovia, a mis en garde ses collègues juges et magistrats contre toute implication dans des activités politiques. « Un juge ne devrait pas se présenter à des réunions politiques et indiquer son soutien aux candidats à des postes politiques, ni permettre à sa femme de donner un soutien politique à quelque partie que ce soit », a dit la juge Chenoweth.

La juge Chenoweth a prononcé l'exposé des juges lors de l'ouverture officielle du mandat d'août des

tribunaux pénaux « A », « B », « C », « D » et « E » le lundi 14 août 2023, à Monrovia.

Elle a déclaré que les articles 77 à 84 de la Constitution libérienne confèrent à la Cour suprême du Libéria le pouvoir d'examiner et de trancher définitivement les questions et différends électoraux dans le cadre du système multipartite.

Il s'agit, selon elle, des mouvements de protestations contre l'adhésion à des partis politiques, le refus d'enregistrement des partis politiques, les élections et les recours contre les violations des lois électorales.

Selon elle, il serait embarrassant pour la Cour suprême lors d'un examen et d'une décision sur des questions impliquant des partis politiques si des juges et des magistrats sont membres des parties en conflit. Le juge de la Cour pénale « E » a déclaré que même si un juge de la Cour suprême a droit à son point de vue personnel sur les questions politiques..., il serait dans son intérêt en tant que juge, magistrat ou juge de démissionner publiquement de ses affiliations politiques avant sa nomination.

"Nous nous attendons à ce que nos juges et magistrats n'assistent aux réunions d'aucun parti politique, ni ne portent aucun attirail, tels que des t-shirts ou des casquettes appartenant à des partis politiques", a-t-elle expliqué.

L'opposant Boakai met en garde la coalition au pouvoir

L'opposant Joseph Nyumah Boakai a demandé à la Coalition démocratique (CDC) au pouvoir de renoncer à la violence électorale, avertissant qu'aucun individu n'a le monopole de la violence.

M. Boakai, porte-drapeau du Parti de l'unité (UP), ancien parti au pouvoir, s'est adressé à des dizaines de partisans le lundi 14 août 2023 au quartier général de l'équipe de campagne « Rescue Mission » de son parti à Sinkor, quelques jours après des affrontements sanglants entre les partisans de l'UP et de la CDC.

L'ancien vice-président libérien a prévenu la coalition au pouvoir que prochainement l'UP ne s'inclinera pas pour qu'on marche sur ses partisans, car personne n'a le monopole de la violence.

« Je veux leur dire que ce n'est pas dans la nature du Parti de l'unité d'entrer dans la violence. Mais nous voulons leur faire comprendre, surtout aux militants de la CDC, que l'UP ne va plus permettre qu'on leur marche dessus sans réagir », a-t-il averti. « Nous n'allons pas faire ça. Permettez-moi de dire ceci, personne n'a le monopole de la violence », a ajouté Boakai.

Le parti d'opposition a réuni ses militants lundi pour la nomination des membres supplémentaires de l'équipe de campagne après avoir reporté le processus jeudi dernier en raison des affrontements qui ont fait des blessés graves.

Plusieurs hauts responsables, dont la sénatrice du comté de Grand Bassa Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence, le sénateur du comté de Montserrado Abraham Darius Dillon et Madame Mandela Cooper ont honoré la

rencontre de leur présence.

Il y avait également le sénateur du comté de Bong Prince Moyee, le sénateur du comté de Gbarpolu Gbotoe Karneh, l'ancien sénateur Arma Jallah, l'ancien sénateur du comté de Bomi Sando Johnson et le sénateur Wellington Smith, entre autres.

Le leader politique Boakai a fait de nouvelles nominations aussi bien au niveau national qu'au niveau régional. Il a expliqué que le premier jour de la campagne, la CDC du président George Manneh Weah a défilé avec un cercueil portant sa photo pour dire qu'il est mort. « Je n'ai pas de problème avec eux parce que le cercueil avec lequel ils ont



défilé pour mettre en scène ma mort sera utilisé après les élections pour enterrer la plupart d'entre eux », a-t-il maudit.

Il a en outre déclaré que le souci de l'UP est d'aller à cette élection pour la gagner afin de redonner espoir au peuple libérien. « Le pays souffre, et notre objectif ultime est de retirer ce pays des mains de la CDC et de redonner espoir à notre peuple », a-t-il déclaré.

Il a accusé M. Weah et son gouvernement CDC d'avoir volé les derniers publics du pays et de s'être adonné à la corruption. « Il a apporté plus de souffrance, de drogue et de pauvreté au peuple libérien. Et donc, ça suffit. Nous reprenons notre pays pour restaurer le respect », a déclaré le chef de l'opposition.

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FEATURE

ARTICLE

Liberia: 2023 Presidential Election Updates One

By Dagbayonoh Kiah Nyanfore II

Additionally, it portrays him as a saint of corruption, despite available documents or facts, including the New Dawn report contradicting the assumption. Boakai had described himself in Sirleaf's administration as "a race car parked in the garage." However, under his leadership as Senate president, the body passed 66 bogus concession agreements out of 68, according to Moore Steven, a London-based accounting firm.

Like Weah, Boakai was born poor. He completed the College of West Africa (CWA), a prestigious junior and senior high school, in Liberia in 1966. Some of his schoolmates who knew him at the dormitory remembered him as a quiet, easy-going guy who loved playing checkers. He mainly associated with his tribe members from Lofa County. The late Willie Knuckle willed his social skills to Boakai in the school yearbook. Boakai graduated from the University of Liberia. Former presidents Samuel Doe and Amos Sawyer appointed him minister of agriculture and the Liberian Petroleum Company manager, respectively. From 2006 - 2017, he served as vice president under President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

COLLABORATING POLITICAL PARTIES

CPP considers itself as the alternative to CDC and UP. It views that both parties have ruled Liberia without tangible outcomes and caused suffering and abject poverty. They have spoiled the country, "making the same mistakes and expecting a different result," says CPP's leader Alexander Cummings.

Like UP, the party accuses the administration of corruption and holds that Liberia needs fixing. CPP will fix the country. Hence, it calls Cummings and his running-mate Charlene Brumskine fixer one and two, respectively. Upon becoming president, the administration will take a different approach involving macroeconomic restructuring and stabilization. The CPP administration will increase the national budget to \$1 billion. The government will use a more significant part of the budget for national development. "I am ready to fix the country," Cummings repeats.

However, CPP's critics argue that Cummings and his running-mate are novices lacking government experience. Putting the government in their hands would be like having the blinds lead the way. Cummings is a former Coca-Cola executive, and Brumskine is an international lawyer. Both have worked in the private sector. Because of their corporate experience, their supporters say the pair would bring investments and employment to Liberia. The running-mate is the daughter of LP's founder, Charles Brumskine, mentioned earlier.

But governmental experience is not always necessary for election success and effective public administration. For instance, Donald Trump, a businessman without experience in government, won the US 2016 presidential election against a well-experienced Hilary Clinton. She was a former senator and secretary of state.

Cummings ran in 2017 as ANC standard bearer. He received 7% of the total votes in the first round. ANC did not win a single legislative seat. But some analysts viewed his performance as better, considering his first time in a national election. For example, he took second place in Monserrado County, better than Boakai and Brumskine.

Unlike Weah and Boakai, Cummings was born to middle-class parents. But like Boakai, he graduated from CWA. Cummings did his university education in the US. He became a corporate executive and lived in America for many years. Critics say that with his wealth, he did not help Liberia during the civil crisis.

He headed ANC after its first political leader, Cllr. Kwame Clemens forcefully left the party. Upon returning to Liberia after the war, Cummings established the Cummings Foundation, which provides charitable assistance in Liberia. President Sirleaf appointed him to the board of BWI, Booker T. Washington Institute. Some friends and supporters had advised him to first run for the senate or become a vice president candidate before running for the presidency. Still, he refused, wanting to become president. As stated before, he unsuccessfully ran for president in 2017.

OTHER CANDIDATES, AND CALL FOR FAIR AND PEACEFUL ELECTION

One of the new candidates in this election is Counselor Tiawon Gongloe, the standard bearer of the Liberian People's Party (LPP). LPP, under the Alliance for Peace and Democracy, and the Freedom Alliance Party of Liberia, has



unsuccessfully participated in Liberian presidential elections since 2005. It ran as LPP in 1997. In the 2005 election, it joined the United People Party to form the Alliance for Peace and Democracy, winning three seats in the Senate and five in the House. LPP is a grass-root, pan-Africanist, and progressive party founded by Togba-Nah Tipoteh and other progressives in 1983.

Gongloe is a native son of Nimba. His candidacy could take significant votes from the county and make Nimba competitive. Like Boakai and Cummings, Gongloe sees corruption as a major problem. Using the broom as his symbol, he intends to sweep corruption in the government if he wins. In July this year, he and some of his supporters staged a campaign parade against corruption in Monrovia.

Gongloe is a popular human rights lawyer known for advocating social justice. He was a minister in the Sirleaf administration. However, John Morlu, a Sirleaf official, rated her government as the most corrupt administration in Liberian political history. Besides financial misappropriations, according to New Africa, she employed 20 of her family members in the government, though, in the 1970s, she criticized the late President William Tolbert for nepotism. Noble prize winner Leymah Gbowee, who served as an advisor in the Sirleaf administration, resigned because of the corruption in the government. President Sirleaf had admitted to being unable to fight corruption. No record indicates Gongloe's stance on corruption during the president's regime, nor has his camp spoken about his past corruption stance. Gongloe received praise for visiting the other political parties urging for a peaceful election.

Another new candidate is Sara Beysolow Nyanti, one of the two female contenders for the presidency. She is the standard bearer of the African Liberation League, a recently formed grass-roots party. Nyanti calls herself a non-politician, believing that politicians have failed Liberia. She seeks "to transform Liberia through education, development," and women's business empowerment. She is a former UN diplomat.

Women's candidacy in this election is regrettably low, though females are over 50% of the Liberian population and, as indicated, are registered voters more than the males in this contest. Of the one thousand thirty (1,030) political candidates registered with NEC for this election,

15% are females, and 85% are males.

There have been initial local opinion polls, some giving Weah and Boakai the lead. A recent survey by OK FM radio gave Boakai a far lead over Weah. But the polls are unscientific. The bigger the sampling size, the better is the accuracy. In 2017, a local poll continually gave Boakai a lead over Weah. But the International Political Polls had Weah leading. Though polls are not always correct and not gospels, in most cases, they correctly tell who is leading and who is not. There will be more surveys as the campaign advances.

The campaign is on. Each party seeks support, endorsements and sells its message to the electorates. Over two months ago, of the 103 legislators, about 30% endorsed Boakai. Most of the remaining lawmakers gathered at CDC's headquarters and pledged support to Weah. Interestingly, many of the president's backers are opposition legislators, including UP partisans. Apparently,

because of this move, they are running for re-election as independents. For instance, UP former Chairman Senator Varney Sherman of Cape Mount County and Sinoe County Senator Milton Teahjay campaign as independents. This factor could hurt Boakai. The candidates have personal supporters who will vote in the presidential election. Most recently, a church group endorsed Cummings, saying he is the right person to lead Liberia.

CDC has shown its campaign schedule, involving canvassing the 17 districts of Montserrado County, spending five days in Nimba and three days in Bong Counties. It would end the campaign in Monrovia two days before the election. This schedule is strategic, focusing on the three counties previously discussed. As mentioned, Weah was a senator of Montserrado County. His

mother was a Nimbain bore in Nimba County, where he is said to have brought many developments. His vice president, Jewel Taylor, was a two-term senator from Bong County. Capturing these counties would be crucial. As of this writing, the other parties have yet to make their schedules known to NEC as required.

Both national and international entities have called for a peaceful, fair, and transparent election. Early this year, the political parties signed the Farmington Declaration in Liberia, pledging a violence-free election. Moreover, in July this year, former Nigerian President Jonathan Goodluck led a delegation of permanent Africans to Liberia regarding a peaceful election. Also, ECOWA and African Union representatives visited Liberia on the same matter. A group of young Liberians recently signed a non-violent manifesto for the election. Whoever wins this election, the loser or losers might not readily accept defeat. In most African presidential elections, the losing candidate cries fault, justly or unjustly. An election dispute, as just occurred in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, could create a problem and possibly instability. One suggestion for this situation is implementing a fair, credible, and transparent election. Foreign and party observers must be present in the counting of the ballots. The Liberian National Election Commission, the Supreme Court, the media, and the international community must commit to this effort. The interest of the country must be number one. An election is the essence of democracy to foster peace, unity, and national development. I am glad that the political parties have signed the Farmington Declaration. I hope they will abide by it. I am also happy that the African leaders have shown interest and concern about the Liberian election. Liberia cannot return to the dark days of civil war and conflicts. As I did in 2017, I will give further updates on the election.

Dagbayonoh Kiah Nyanfore II is a Liberian national. He is a permanent resident of the US and is in Liberia, covering the election. He is an author and a political commentator specializing in elections. He has covered elections in America and Liberia since 2000. He is a graduate of Georgetown University. Contact: dagbayonohnyanfore66@gmail.com.

NEC assures candidates of readiness for elections

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh

credible election.

The National Elections Commission (NEC) has assured presidential candidates that all is set for the

She acknowledged the significant role of the United Nations in providing materials, funding, and

Josephine Nkrumah, highlighted the crucial issue of security and misinformation. She urged that they must be denounced because they have the propensity to provoke violence.

Madam Nkrumah, on behalf of ECOWAS Commission head, Dr. Omar Alieu Touray, said the ECOWAS offers its continuous partnership and collaboration with the United Nations on human rights.

She reaffirmed ECOWAS' commitment to engaging with stakeholders to ensure the conduct of a free, fair, transparent, credible, inclusive peaceful election. She urged compliance with the Farmington River Declaration as well as all relevant laws and regulations of Liberia.

Also speaking, Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, called on stakeholders to exert more efforts towards a peaceful election.

Mr. Simão said the stakeholder's forum demonstrates their abilities and commitment toward peace. He noted that the election will mark a significant milestone in the repositioning of Liberia's democracy.

He reaffirmed the UN's continuous support towards a peaceful election. He urged that all their efforts, including the signing of the Farmington River Declaration and keeping of the spirit of peace, must be [in] adherence to the National Elections Commission law.

The presidential candidates reassured their commitment to non-violent, free, fair, and transparent elections.



NEC Chairperson Madam Davidetta Browne-Lansanah

conduct of the October presidential and legislative elections. The commission held a stakeholder forum with presidential candidates Tuesday, 15 August 2023 under the theme: Fostering the Confidence of Electoral Process Towards the Farmington River 2023 Declaration.

The forum was held at the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Ministerial Complex in Oldest Congo Town.

NEC Chairperson Madam Davidetta Browne-Lansanah said the commission has conducted a successful Biometric Voters Registration (BVR) exercise and carried out an exhibition of the preliminary voter roll.

She added that the commission has released the final registration roll, carried out the candidate nomination exercise, and released the final candidate listings. Madam Browne-Lansanah detailed that the NEC has launched a nationwide Civic Voters Education (CVE), and the ongoing replacement of lost and damaged voter registration cards.

The NEC Boss stressed that the commission recognizes the role of the United Nations in nurturing a peaceful and sustainable environment in Liberia that will enable the conduct of a free, fair, transparent, and inclusive

enhanced support to electoral activities. Madam Browne-Lansanah said this gives a sense of honor in an extraordinary way that deepens the democracy in Liberia.

Earlier, Madam Lansanah announced this month that at least over 2.4 million Liberians are expected to participate in the upcoming voting exercise. She reaffirmed the commission's unwavering commitment to ensuring the conduct of a free, fair, transparent, and inclusive credible election. She disclosed further that the NEC will continue to conduct stakeholder meetings at regional levels to have other Liberians acquainted with the electoral process. "With this at this juncture, all is set for the 10th October 2023 Presidential and Legislative elections," she said.

"The commission will remain engaged at all levels with candidates, with the candidates who have signed the Farmington agreement, committing themselves to a peaceful election," Madam Lansanah said.

For her part, ECOWAS Commission Resident Representative and head of the ECOWAS Commission in Liberia Ambassador

No change in Indian rice export policy

The Indian Embassy near Monrovia says there is no change in export policy of Nona Basmati Rice (Par Boiled Rice) and Basmati Rice, which forms the Bulk of Rice exports. Through a release issued here, the Embassy noted that bulk of the rice imported by Liberia from India is parboiled rice.

"In order to ensure adequate availability of Non-Basmati White Rice in the Indian market and to allay the rise in prices in the domestic market, the Government of India has amended the Export Policy of above variety from 'Free with export duty of 206' to 'Prohibited' with immediate effect," the release said.

The Embassy issued the clarity following a recent publication by this paper in which opposition Movement for Progressive Change (MPC) Presidential Candidate

a ban imposed on exportation of rice by India, one of the biggest exporters on the global stage. According to Mr. Freeman, Liberia is expected to face serious rice shortage and food insecurity due to India's refusal to export rice based on some global factors.

The top 5 rice exporting countries in the world include India, Thailand, Vietnam, Pakistan, and the United States of America which generated approximately three-quarters (72.8%) of the global value for rice exports in 2022.

He further indicated that the Government of India had allegedly banned the exportation of rice due to the war between Ukraine and Russia. Also, he said that the Indian government pointed out that their reason to ban the exportation of rice was due to the climatic condition. He



Simeon Freeman warned the Government and people of Liberia of a serious looming rice crisis. The businessman-turned-politician cited

said they are keeping rice, sugar, and other agricultural products to themselves until a remedy is found.

Starts from page 6 Commerce and Partners launch 3rd phase

development of a strong and vibrant private sector through business development that is aimed at contributing to poverty reduction and the empowerment of young people and People Living with Disabilities (PWDs).

their operations, creating income and employment opportunities, and providing goods/services to their clients while contributing to economic growth and development.

In 2022, the Business Plan Competition attracted 954 applications from the targeted seven counties. The best 300 applicants were invited to the business skills and pitch training. All 300 entrepreneurs/businesses accessed grants up to US\$ 500 to start and expand their enterprises in agriculture, information technology, transportation, food processing, manufacturing, etc.

All applicants are advised to apply with a registered mobile money number in their names. Applicants will be required to submit a national identification card before participating in the Business and Financial Skills Training. Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply. Applicants who have benefited from the last two cohorts of the business plan competition are not eligible to apply to this competition.

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Spotlight Initiative Renovates

involved, including the European Union/United Nations Spotlight Initiative, UNDP, government officials, judiciary representatives, Civil Society Organizations, and community members, who contributed to the rehabilitation and refurbishment of Criminal Court E. Within the Spotlight Initiative in Liberia, UNDP works to strengthen institutions to deliver

quality and essential services in the prevention and response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence and harmful practices at the national, sub-national, and community levels.

The Spotlight Initiative funded by the European Union, is a multi-national partnership designed to

eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, as well as increase access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services. The United Nations System implements various activities under the Programme.

Weah vows to reintroduce cadet program for students

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh
President George Weah has promised to reintroduce the national cadet program to assist students across the

second term, President Weah affirmed his commitment to programs that he says are designed to foster development, create experiences and build

going to school in 12th grade, 9th grade, and 10th grade, while they're going to school, we as government will do our best to employ them so that they can have the experience to work, before coming to college, this is not a joke; the President says.



President Weah

Mr. Weah says that five years on, following the implementation of free tuition scheme for students, and paying WASSCE fees for 12th graders, it's his desire to empower every Liberian youth, who are the future leaders of the country.

The President himself is a beneficiary of the cadet program that was introduced by slain President Samuel Kanyon Doe in the 80s, giving high school students an opportunity to work in government and earn minimum income while in school.

Mr. Weah reflects on how he worked at the Liberia Telecommunication Corporation during his high days, earning US\$50 monthly as a switch operator. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

country. The President says his government is committed to reintroducing the program for young people to enhance their capacities thru job experience. Speaking to hundreds of youth here on Monday, August 14th in Duport Road community, Montserrado County Electoral District#4, as part of his ongoing campaign for a

capacity of every Liberian youth attending high schools, if re-elected. "I promised you the young people, it is not just the free-tuition fees that the government has paid for you over the last five years. I've said to my Finance Minister Tweah, in our lives, we were all cadets, so that program needs to come back, where every child in this country, every child that's

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