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

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023	L\$185.1974/US\$1.00	L\$187.1350/US\$1.00

These are indicative rates based on results of daily surveys of foreign exchange market in Monrovia and selected cities of Liberia. These rates are collected from the Central bank, commercial banks, parallel market and the license forex bureaux. The rates are not set by the Central Bank of Liberia.
Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL.

The New Dawn

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Gongloe takes on Weah and Boakai



Party Standard Bearer, Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe



Senator Jeremiah Koung

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Continental News

Google to Train 20,000 Nigerians in Digital Skills

Google plans to train 20,000 Nigerian women and youth in digital skills and provide a grant of \$1.6 million to help the government create 1 million digital jobs in the country, its Africa executives

told Google Africa executives during a meeting in Abuja. Shettima did not provide a timeline for creating the jobs.

Google Africa executives said a grant from its philanthropic arm in partnership with Data Science Nigeria and the Creative Industry

increase youth participation in the digital economy. The government is also working with the country's banks on the project, Shettima added.

Google director for West Africa Olumide Balogun said the company would commit



Participants walk past glowing signs during a conference tagged "Google for Nigeria" in Lagos, Nigeria

said on Tuesday.

Nigeria plans to create digital jobs for its teeming youth population, Vice President Kashim Shettima

Initiative for Africa will facilitate the program.

Shettima said Google's initiative aligned with the government's commitment to

funds and provide digital skills to women and young people in Nigeria and also enable startups to grow, which will create jobs.VOA

Death Toll From Militia Clashes in Libyan Capital Jumps to 45

The death toll rose Wednesday to 45 people killed in clashes earlier in the week between rival militias in Libya's capital Tripoli, medical authorities said, in what appears to be the most intense spate of violence to shake the capital this year.

The clashes erupted late on Monday between militiamen from the 444 brigade and the Special Deterrence Force and continued into Tuesday evening. Tensions flared after Mahmoud Hamza, a senior commander of the 444 brigade, was allegedly detained by the rival group at an airport in Tripoli, according to local media reports. Hamza was later released as part of a deal aimed at quelling the violence, the reports said.

Malek Mersat, the spokesperson for Libya's Emergency Medicine and Support Center, said Wednesday that the death toll had risen from 27 to 45, as more casualties were confirmed. An additional 146 were injured, up from 106 on Tuesday. It remains unclear how many of the dead were militiamen or civilians.

On Wednesday, Libyan security forces patrolled the streets and fanned out across Tripoli. The country's Interior Ministry said security forces

were deployed to areas where the fighting was most intense, including the southern Fernaj neighborhood and the al-Shouk Road. A situation room was set up to monitor developments, although by Wednesday a tentative calm had returned to the city.

The violence underscored the fragility of war-torn Libya following the 2011 uprising-turned-civil-war, which toppled

array of well-armed militias and different foreign governments.

Tripoli has seen similar episodes of violence in recent years, although most have lasted only a couple of hours.

"We heard many promises about imminent efforts to promote genuine security sector reform and militia disarmament," said Jalel Harchaoui, a Libya specialist and associate fellow at the Royal United Services



Libyan security forces stand guard in Tripoli on Aug. 16, 2023. Clashes between rival militias in Libya's capital killed at least 45 people and left residents trapped in their homes, unable to escape the violence, medical authorities said.

and later killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi. Amid the chaos, militias grew in wealth and power, particularly in Tripoli and the west of the country.

Since 2014, Libya has been divided between rival administrations in the east and the west, each supported by an

Institute. "No progress whatsoever was made on those fronts."The 444 brigade and the Special Deterrence Force are two of the largest militias operating in Tripoli. Both have previously been backed by the administration based there.VOA

Chinese Social Media Platforms Fail to Control Racism Against Black People: Report

A new report by Human Rights Watch finds that racist content denigrating Black people is increasingly common on the Chinese internet, and that major social media platforms and Chinese authorities have failed to address the issue systematically.

HRW analyzed hundreds of videos and posts on popular Chinese social media platforms, including Bilibili, Douyin, Kuaishou, Weibo and Xiaohongshu, since late 2021. It found that content portraying Black people based on offensive racial stereotypes has become rampant.

It says much of the content is created to generate money.

"There are clicks and viewership involved, and that usually means profit for social media content creators," Yaqiu Wang, senior China researcher at HRW, told VOA.

Racism fueled by stereotypes and censorship

According to the report,

In some cases, these women will receive death or rape threats or experience doxing, meaning their personal information is shared online without their consent.

In 2019, a "study buddy" program involving foreign and Chinese students at Shandong University became the target of racist and sexist attacks online. Some netizens accused the school of assigning Chinese female students to foreign male students, particularly Black students. Some Chinese female students involved in the program experienced harassment and intimidation on campus.

Wang from HRW says the rampant circulation of racist content against Black people and Africans on Chinese social media is prompted by the Chinese government's portrayal of Africa as a "poor, backward" continent that needs investment from China.

"This gives Chinese people the impression that Africans are less developed, less intelligent and less diligent, and it contributes to the rampant racism [against Black people] in China," she told VOA in



A man uses his smartphone in Beijing on Aug. 26, 2021. Human Rights Watch in a new report Aug. 16, 2023, found that racist content against Black people is increasingly common on the Chinese internet.

one type of video that's widely shared on Chinese social media usually portrays Africans as poor and dependent while framing Chinese people, who are often the content creators of those videos, as wealthy providers of jobs, housing and money.

In addition to stereotypes against Black people, online content featuring interracial relationships often attracts hostile comments or threats to individuals in the photos or videos.

HRW found that Chinese internet users will accuse Black people married to Chinese people of "contaminating and threatening" the Chinese race and unleash online threats against Chinese women who share photos with their Black male partners.

a phone interview.

Videos or posts that promote racial equality or criticize racism in China will often be censored after becoming a trending topic on Chinese social media platforms. "Unlike the U.S., where racism is widely discussed in the media and academia, there is no press and academic freedom in China, so it's hard for good content on racism to spread," Wang said.

Lack of incentive to censor racist content online

Even though most Chinese social media platforms have community guidelines that ban content promoting racism and discrimination, the HRW report argues that the amount of racist content on the internet suggests that these platforms either fail to enforce content moderation based on their guidelines or their existing policies are inadequate to address racist content.VOA

EDITORIAL

COMMENTARY

By Jayati Ghosh

Bloody campaign is unwarranted

The Myth of Global Grain Shortages

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.

NEW DELHI - In recent years, soaring food prices and the growing frequency and intensity of floods, droughts, and other extreme weather events have prompted warnings of a looming grain shortage, potentially spelling disaster for the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations. Although climate change poses the greatest medium to long-term threat to global food security, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is frequently cited as the immediate cause of the current hunger crisis. But this is a red herring.

To be sure, the war has disrupted wheat exports from both Russia and Ukraine, two of the world's leading producers, throwing critical trade relationships into disarray. Given that Ukraine and Russia previously accounted for more than a quarter of global wheat exports, policymakers and commentators attributed the surge in prices in early 2022 largely to supply shortages caused by the conflict.

But while the global wheat price index rose by around 23% in the months following Russia's invasion, prices began to drop in June 2022. By December, they had returned to pre-war levels. Even when acknowledged, this trend was attributed to the success of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), a United Nations-backed agreement that lifted the Russian blockade of Ukraine's grain exports. Conversely, Russia's recent decision to pull out of the deal has raised concerns about its potential effects on the global grain trade.

These concerns are misguided for two reasons. First, the global wheat supply (both total production and the traded amount) has remained steady since the onset of the Ukraine war. The Agricultural Market Information System, administered by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, incorporates data from the International Grains Council to provide estimates of supply, usage, and trade. Between July 2021 and June 2022 - a period when wheat prices peaked - global production rose by five million tons while trade volumes increased by three million tons. Over the same period, stocks rose slightly (by three million tons).

Most notably, the total wheat supply (defined as production plus opening stocks) exceeded utilization by as much as 275 million tons. This surplus challenges the prevailing narrative of a global shortage. Similarly, global supply is estimated to have exceeded demand between July 2022 and June 2023, suggesting a consistent trend.

Second, governments and the media tend to emphasize specific regional shortages while overlooking increases in production and trade in other parts of the world. In reality, wheat is produced globally, which means that shortages in one region could be offset by increased production in another.

So, what caused the surge in wheat prices? To answer this question, we must follow the money. The global grain market operates as an oligopoly, with the four largest grain traders - Archer-Daniels-Midland, Bunge (which recently merged with Viterra), Cargill, and Louis Dreyfus - controlling more than 70% of the market and Glencore

accounting for another 10%.

In the early stages of the Ukraine war, especially between March and June 2022, the Big Four grain traders reaped record profits and revenues. Cargill's annual revenues were up 23%, to \$165 billion, while Louis Dreyfus's profits soared by 80%. These gains reflected price hikes that were not aligned with real-world demand and supply dynamics.

Moreover, grain futures markets experienced a flurry of activity between April and June 2022. Financial investors, including pension funds, increased their share of long positions in the Paris wheat futures market from 23% in May 2018 to 72% in April 2022. Ten "momentum-driven" hedge funds reportedly earned \$1.9 billion by capitalizing on the food-price surge triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Instead of preventing or containing such financial maneuvers, regulators in the United States and the European Union allowed them to continue unabated.

Surprisingly, most of Ukraine's grain exports did not reach the world's poorest countries. Instead, 81% of the 32.9 million metric tons exported under the BSGI went to high-income and upper-middle-income countries, mostly European countries such as Spain, Italy, and the Netherlands, as well as China and Turkey. Low-income countries received 3% of Ukraine's grain exports and 9% of its wheat (most to Bangladesh). Given that food-importing African countries received only a fraction of these exports, the fears that the deal's breakdown would lead to mass starvation across the continent seem vastly exaggerated.

The BSGI seems to be more about facilitating exports from Ukraine - a laudable goal in its own right - than about addressing world hunger. In addition to the Russian blockade of its maritime routes, Ukraine's overland routes have been compromised by the implicit import restrictions imposed by Central and Eastern European countries such as Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania, which aim to shield struggling local farmers from competitively priced Ukrainian grain. But, as others have pointed out, the BSGI primarily serves the interests of the agribusiness giants trading in Ukrainian grain and the financiers backing them.

While global hunger has surged in recent years, it is not because of a shortage of grain. Instead, plummeting exports, dwindling foreign-exchange revenues, capital flight, and higher debt-servicing costs have diminished many countries' ability to import foodstuffs.

To address these challenges, we must shift our focus. Rather than distribute grain as charity, global policymakers must mitigate impoverished countries' foreign-exchange vulnerabilities and take measures to support increased domestic and regional production of essential food items. We can still win the fight against global hunger, but only if we recognize the real causes of our current predicament.

Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is a member of the Club of Rome's Transformational Economics Commission.

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OP-ED

By José Manuel Barroso

What We Must Learn from COVID-19

GENEVA - Hardship, crisis, misfortune, and mistakes often provide the most valuable insights. The COVID-19 pandemic is a case in point. For all the suffering that the virus has caused, it has also highlighted the steps that countries must take, both collectively and individually, to prepare for future global public-health emergencies. Now, with the pandemic seemingly in the rearview mirror, the question is whether political leaders around the world will take its lessons to heart.

This is not a trivial question. Over the past few decades, disease outbreaks have triggered a recurring cycle of panic and neglect among policymakers. But in light of the human, economic, and social devastation wrought by COVID-19, we can and must break this pattern.

If COVID-19 has taught us anything, it is that factors such as climate change, human encroachment on wildlife habitats, population growth, urbanization, and low-cost travel make it increasingly likely that we will face more devastating pandemics in the not-too-distant future. A 2021 study found that the “yearly probability” of extreme epidemics could “increase up to threefold” in the coming decades. It would be extremely reckless not to take decisive action now to mitigate this looming threat.

Another crucial lesson from COVID-19 is that all countries must have robust health systems capable of responding quickly and effectively to an emergency while simultaneously addressing ongoing health-care needs. Even well-resourced countries struggled to perform this complex balancing act during the pandemic, resulting in millions of deaths and severe economic damage.

Governments around the world owe it to their citizens to make significant and sustained investments in areas such as disease surveillance, outbreak-response capabilities, primary health-care services, and health-care worker training. Such investments are needed not only in wealthier countries but also in lower-income countries that cannot afford them on their own.

All of this underscores the imperative for wealthy countries to step in and provide critical assistance. Throughout the pandemic, these countries’ governments, recognizing that deadly pathogens are indifferent to national borders, repeated the mantra that “no one is safe until everyone is safe.” And yet, despite this lofty rhetoric, lower-income countries found themselves last in line for diagnostics, vaccines, treatments, and other crucial supplies. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (whose board I chair) had to wait months before the COVAX facility it established in 2020 managed to overcome vaccine hoarding and export bans and start shipping significant quantities to the countries most in need.

The good news is that ensuring equitable access to vaccines and other crucial interventions is an achievable goal. There are several steps that governments can take to prepare for the next pandemic and ensure that all countries, regardless of their wealth, have the resources they need to manage the crisis.

First, rather than raising money during an emergency, innovative financing tools could secure funding in advance and ensure that it is ready to be deployed immediately. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis showed that concentrating a large share of the world’s vaccine manufacturing in the Global North can severely hinder equitable access. With that in mind, the African Union Commission and Gavi have recently announced a joint effort to establish vaccine-manufacturing facilities in several dozen locations across Africa. This manufacturing network could minimize potential supply bottlenecks and enhance the availability of other vital vaccines, such as for cholera, for which current production fails to meet demand.

Initiatives like the pandemic accord, which is currently being debated among the World Health Organization’s member states, promise to promote greater equity and effectiveness in pandemic prevention and response. While negotiations over the details are still ongoing and will most likely continue until the agreement comes to a vote at the 2024 World Health Assembly, governments could benefit from participating in the process and should commit to abide by the accord once it is approved.

Although COVID-19 no longer dominates news headlines, it is crucial that we maintain the political will to establish equitable vaccine access and not revert to our pre-pandemic complacency. Today’s political leaders have a historic opportunity to foster a more inclusive global order, and they have a responsibility to act boldly before the next public-health emergency. Failing to do so will condemn us all to relive the traumas of the past three years.

OPINION

By Diane Coyle

Unlocking AI’s Potential for Everyone

CAMBRIDGE - Artificial intelligence is moving fast. People are using generative AI and large language models (LLMs) to build new services and perform existing tasks, and the underlying technology itself is advancing quickly. As the Nobel laureate economist Michael Spence observes, this wave of adoption could well yield significant productivity gains, after almost two decades of lackluster growth. Every day brings news like Google’s recent announcement that its AI has helped American Airlines reduce contrails by 54%, reducing each flight’s climate footprint.

But the news isn’t all good. As matters stand, AI is more likely to help Big Tech companies cement their dominance. They are the ones with the resources to develop and maintain the most powerful AI models, and they are already moving quickly to bundle LLMs with their existing services. These developments come at a time when antitrust authorities around the world are already growing increasingly concerned about tech companies’ market power.

To be sure, some commentators - including one Google engineer, in an internal memo - argue that this fear is overblown, owing to the presence of open-source LLMs that technically allow for anyone to compete in the market. But even if there is a blossoming of smaller new entrants, Big Tech’s dominance still looks secure. A recent paper comparing open-source models to the AI application programming interface (API) services that Big Tech companies are providing to third parties finds that the latter perform much better on most criteria.

Perhaps that will change. But, for now, the leading LLMs’ performance continues to improve with increased investment, and they may be approaching tipping points where they will be able to demonstrate new and unexpected capabilities. Deep pockets matter.

Given Big Tech’s sheer power in many countries, it is little wonder that policymakers are struggling to devise forceful, effective, and coherent responses. In some jurisdictions, policymakers and industry leaders are already locked in political stand-offs. For example, Meta (Facebook) recently blocked news links originating from Canada in response to the Canadian government’s requirement that platforms compensate news publishers. A similar spat occurred previously in Australia, where the government has since announced new plans to fine online platforms for abetting the spread of misinformation.

In the United Kingdom, a much-criticized “online safety bill” has led some tech companies to threaten to pull out of the market altogether. And in the United States, Congress has considered pro-competition interventions such as the proposed Open Markets Act, and newly activist antitrust authorities within the Biden administration have brought various suits against Google, Amazon, Meta, and Apple.

But while some policymakers do have deep knowledge about AI, their expertise tends to be narrow, and most other decision-makers simply do not understand the issue well enough to craft sensible policies. Owing to this relatively low knowledge base and the inevitable asymmetry of information between regulators and regulated, policy responses to specific issues are likely to remain inadequate, heavily influenced by lobbying, or highly contested.

So, what is to be done? Perhaps the best option is to pursue more of a principles-based policy. This approach has already gained momentum in the context of issues like misinformation and trolling, where many experts and advocates believe that Big Tech companies should have a general duty of care (meaning a default orientation toward caution and harm reduction).

In some countries, similar principles already apply to news broadcasters, who are obligated to pursue accuracy and maintain impartiality. Although enforcement in these domains can be challenging, the upshot is that we do already have a legal basis for eliciting less socially damaging behavior from technology providers.

When it comes to competition and market dominance, telecoms regulation offers a serviceable model with its principle of interoperability. People with competing service providers can still call each other because telecom companies are all required to adhere to common technical standards and reciprocity agreements. The same is true of ATMs: you may incur a fee, but you can still withdraw cash from a machine at any bank.

In the case of digital platforms, a lack of interoperability has generally been established by design, as a means of locking in users and creating “moats.” This is why policy discussions about improving data access and ensuring access to predictable APIs have failed to make any progress. But there is no technical reason why some interoperability could not be engineered back in. After all, Big Tech companies do not seem to have much trouble integrating the new services that they acquire when they take over competitors.

In the case of LLMs, interoperability probably could not apply at the level of the models themselves, since not even their creators understand their inner workings. However, it can and should apply to interactions between LLMs and other services, such as cloud platforms.

If I subscribe to Microsoft 365, for example, I should still be able to use Google’s PaLM2, rather than being forced also to use Microsoft’s Copilot or GPT-4 add-on. This principle was established back in the landmark 2001 antitrust decision against Microsoft’s bundling of Internet Explorer, and again in the 2007 verdict against its bundling of Windows Media Player.

A firm commitment to apply the same principles to LLMs would go a long way toward preventing further market concentration. If AI is going to deliver on its promise for society, it needs to be widely accessible to all and subject to the improvements that come with free and fair competition.

Diane Coyle, Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge, is the author, most recently, of *Cogs and Monsters: What Economics Is, and What It Should Be* (Princeton University Press, 2021).

FEATURE ARTICLE

Personal History of Nedia G. Warner

Nedia Gbalee Warner. was born on July 8, 1997, unto the union of Cllr. T. Negbalee Warner and Mrs. Mardia Potter Warner. She began her primary education at the Isaac A. David Sr. Memorial School and subsequently enrolled at the Liberian Turkish Light International School ("Light") from where she graduated with a High School diploma in 2014 as the Salutatorian of my class. During her years at Light, Gbalee was one of two students selected to represent Liberia at the International Environmental Project Olympiad (INEPO) in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Upon her high school graduation, she enrolled at Minnesota State University, Mankato, USA, where she obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Urban and Regional Studies. In addition to that, she and as part of her program's requirement, she also completed a 9-month internship program at the Blue Earth County Environmental Department.

Following her graduation with a Bsc, she returned home to Liberia and enrolled at the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia. During her time at the law school, she served in many leadership roles ranging from her membership of the Legislative Assembly of the Law Student Association (LAWSA) to the position of Speaker of the House of the same said LAWSA.

In addition to her service in LAWSA, she was also actively part of many high performing student-based organizations including a study group which she organized. Ms. Warner also served as the Chairperson of the Academic Committee of the Noble Second Floor, a group comprising of law students and alumni with the aim



Mrs. Mardia Potter Warner

of promoting academia and giving back to the law school and society at large.

Recently, June 2, 2023, she participated in the 103rd Graduating Class Convocation of the University of Liberia where she graduated as Valedictorian of the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law and obtained a Bachelor of Law with distinction (Magna Cum Laude). Prior to and since her graduation, she has been actively interning at the Heritage Partners & Associates law firm.

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ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

Stop sending the wrong signal

There is a proverbial saying that when "your Christmas will be good, you can tell from the early morning hours." Thus, recent violent events which marred the opening days of campaign ahead of the October 10, 2023, Presidential and Legislative elections no doubt signaled clear and present danger over the country.

The fact that these eruptions of violence are coming just on the heels of signing the Farmington Declaration by political parties and a peace deal by all presidential candidates at the National Elections Commissions Headquarters days before campaign kickoff speaks volumes of the level of commitments by political actors in this year's election.

These actions draw parallel to the famous God Father movie in which Michael Corleone is, on one hand, being asked: "Do you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Personal Savior-yes" and on the other side "pew, pew, and paw, paw, as he gunned down other family members. "Do you denounce violence, yes" and on the other side "Bang, bang".

These early actions of violence if not corrected going forward could undermine the entire electoral process and plunge Liberia into another round of chaos which could reverse all gains made over the last two decades.

The National Elections Commission needs to be firmed in punishing political parties who are in violation of campaign rules no matter who is involved.

Why it is true that stakes in this year's elections are high, violent provocations, intimidations, threats, spewing of invectives, and innuendos are not campaign messages, rather they are actions and instruments of anti-peace.

Like NEC, the media too need to play a critical role in ensuring that it tries as much as possible not to be engaged in airing or disseminating messages of anti-peace coming out of the mouth of politicians.

Liberians have over the last 5 years heard all kinds of stories about politicians including the incumbent, they now want to listen to messages that can inform their decisions to vote right not provoke them into violence.

This election is about the future of Liberia and its people and should not be reduced to a personality or celebrity contest with supporters being unleashed to run amok.

Over the last 176 years, Liberia with all its rich natural resources is listed among the 10 poorest countries in the world and if not the first three poorest countries in South Saharan Africa.

Mismanagement of the country's resources, corruption, and poor leadership has left Liberia underdeveloped infrastructure-wise with one of the lowest per-human capital ratio.

According to a recent World Bank study, Liberia presents some of the worst HC outcomes in the world. Liberia's Human Capital Index (HCI) is 0.32 (of a potential 1.0), which is one of the lowest values worldwide.

This means that a child born today in Liberia can be expected to be only 32% as productive when they grow up as they could have been if they had access to the benchmarks of complete education and full health.

The study further revealed that this low score means that many children in Liberia have their future limited by the circumstances in which they are born, but it also entails difficulties for the economic development of the country. These alarming statistics show why this election is very crucial.

Therefore, Liberians are eager to listen to concrete messages from politicians on how they can change the trajectory of the nation to deliver a positive outcome, not to hear rhetoric, threats, intimidation, and provocation of violence.

At 176, and with the kind of rich natural resources, Liberia should be a paradise and beacon of hope for Africa, with the rightful leadership, not a problem to its neighbors.

This is why it is expected that the violent events which characterized the first two weeks of campaign should be condemned by all regardless, instead of trading blame. NEC should ensure that parties comply with the campaign rules to avoid a repeat of two parties holding rallies in the same vicinity.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Rep. Gray fulfills US\$7,000 pledge

By Lewis S. Teh

Montserrat County Electoral District Representative, Acarous Moses Gray, has fulfilled pledged of US\$7,000 to students of the William V.S. Tubman High

mistake his visit to the students as campaigning, adding that he normally visits public schools across the district.

According to him, he has been providing 100 scholarships for students at Tubman High and Nathan E. Gibson High School, noting that with

Therefore, he said as a means of ensuring that President Weah's agenda is fostered, there is a need to elect people who will support the President's "good agenda."

According to the former chief scribe of the ruling CDC, it is unfortunate that some of those contesting against him allegedly failed to push the agenda of Tubman High, when they served six years of leadership at the Capitol but want to come around the school at a time he (Gray) has done so.

He promised to ensure that extra fund is placed aside separately for all MCSS-operated schools if elected the third time as lawmaker for the district. Besides, the District Eight lawmaker also promised to provide US\$2000 to the Student Council President of Tubman High before opening of school to help renovate the school's basketball court.

He advised students, who are electorate, to engage the elections peacefully, void of conflict. In response, Student Council President Charles F. Thomas, said the fund received will be used to various classrooms and give the campus a facelift. Student Thomas cautioned students against carrying misinformation about the fund donated by Rep. Gray.

India celebrates growing trade with Liberia

Indian Ambassador to Liberia Mr. Pradip Kumar Yadav says bilateral trade between the two countries has been growing steadily since the opening of the Indian Embassy near Monrovia.

Amb. Pradip says two years back when he landed in Monrovia during the Covid time, he had a challenging mission to establish the Embassy as early as possible.

"I take pride in saying that since the opening of the Embassy in Monrovia, the Incredible India has emerged as a preferred destination for higher education and medical treatment among our Liberian friends," he said at India's 76th Independence Anniversary celebrated at the Monrovia City Hall Tuesday, 15 August 2023.

He detailed that Indian exports to Liberia rose from US\$ 225.65 million in 2020-21 to

privileged," Amb. Pradip continued.

Amb. Pradip stated that he and his colleagues worked hard day and night and he takes pride in saying that despite numerous challenges, they now have a fully functional Embassy with Passport, Visa and other consular services being provided from Monrovia.

He said Passport services commenced in March and Visa services in June 2023.

According to Amb. Pradip, the Embassy has been working closely with the friendly Government of the Republic of Liberia under the able leadership of President George Manneh Weah, and the Foreign Minister Mr. Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah Sr.

He added that visits from both sides are going on, notable being the 2 visits of the Liberian Deputy Minister of Defense for Operations to India in less than a



Representative, Acarous Moses Gray

School in 12th Street, Sinkor.

Rep. Gray presented the amount during a visit to the school campus on Tuesday, August 15, in fulfillment of promise made to students of the institution.

He noted that leaders must always be willing to shoulder responsibility something, he said he as a sitting lawmaker would never shy away from.

According to the CDC lawmaker, nobody should

President Weah's commitment to education and payment of WASSCE fees, it is a great endeavor. Gray said it is the responsibility of every lawmaker to ensure that President Weah's agenda is achieved, because it is not just in the interest of the President, but the supreme interest of Liberia. He frown at those making decisions on the basis of party's mandate, but rather to make wise decisions for the good of Liberia.

You are an embodiment of hope --Representative Foko tells President Weah

By Lincoln G. Peters

Montserrat County Electoral District #9 Representative Frank Saah Foko has described President George Manneh Weah as an embodiment of hope and inspiration to the dream of youthful Liberians.

Mr. Foko said since the inception of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC)-led government, the dreams of Liberian youth have been awakened due to President Weah's presence in leadership.

The CDC lawmaker told an interview with journalists this week that President Weah is a role model and a hope to the dreams of Liberian youth.

"The ascendancy of President Weah to the presidency has brought hope and inspiration to Liberian youth," said Mr. Foko.

He said President Weah has told Liberians that no matter their background and family status, they can achieve

something bigger.

"President Weah as Liberian President, has given hope to youth and many native Liberians that they can achieve more and become who they want to [be]," he added.

Mr. Foko said President Weah didn't overlook him

when he wanted to replace his former boss, the late Representative Munah Pelham

Youngblood.

He explained that President Weah chose him as a young man to also use him as an inspiration for other young people and to enable them to pursue their dreams, no matter their status in life.

"Because of what the President has done for me, I'm grateful. This President chose

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11



Representative Frank Saah Foko



257.15 million in 2022-23.

Amb. Pradip stated that India is not interested in increasing Indian exports alone, but it has also been striving to boost Liberian exports to India too.

He noted that it resulted to Liberian exports to India rising from a modest US\$ 6.95 million in 2020 to US\$ 26.80 million in 2022-23.

"Rice is India's main export to Liberia and let me clarify that there is no ban on the export of Par-boiled rice from India to Liberia, which is the variety of rice imported by Liberia," he explained.

Amb. Pradip disclosed that India and Liberia not only share decades old very warm and cordial relations but many other aspects too.

"Our Prime Minister believes in 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas'- Everyone together for Everyone's progress. HE the President of Liberia also has a vision - 'Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development' for the upliftment of the under-

year.

He said India has provided numerous fully-paid scholarships to Liberian students, teachers and government officials including from the Armed Forces of Liberia.

"Today itself 2 students have landed in India for under-graduate courses in prestigious Delhi University on ICCR's Africa Scholarship Scheme," he said.

Since its Independence, Amb. Pradip said, India has made commendable all-round progress despite the pangs of partition and numerous challenges.

During Covid-19 pandemic, he continued, India indigenously developed Covaxin and Covishield vaccines which were administered to Indians to save them from Covid-19.

India also helped many friendly countries including Liberia with the supply of these Covid vaccines and other medical supplies.

"Today India is not only the Pharmacy of the World but also

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

You are an embodiment of hope --Representative Foko tells President Weah

By Lincoln G. Peters

Weah's presence in leadership. something bigger.

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"Because of what the President has done for me, I'm grateful. This President chose a native boy like me and lifted me up," he said.

"For me to be a lawmaker today it's all because of him, and my presence as lawmaker has inspired many youth," Foko noted.

He said when President Weah visited his district, he presented his three years' report to him to tell him that more will be done for the next six years if elected.



President Weah

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The worst is yet to come

-Adama Dempster

By Naneka Hoffman

The Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia has said that until the National Elections Commission conducts its tasks independently by investigating and holding violators of campaign and electoral violence accountable on the basis of electoral guidelines and the Farmington River Declaration, there would be more violence.

Addressing a news conference in Monrovia recently, the Secretary General of the CSHRAPL, Adama K. Dempster, warned that the worst is yet to come, and there has to be punishment or penalty for those involved in violations.

He explained that the human rights community is monitoring and documenting various accounts of the elections, and respect for electoral guidelines and the Farmington River Declaration signed by all sides is fundamental.

He stressed that human rights in elections applied to all sides,

adding that no one party or candidate has more rights than the other.

"When people or institutions signed and agreed to a policy or protocol/guidelines and they are found violating those very agreements they should call to book." He maintained that they should be punished regardless of being ruling party, opposition or independent candidates.

Meanwhile, Mr. Dempster has reminded that the human rights community, civil society, religious community, the Liberian people, regional and international communities seek peaceful elections in Liberia.

He condemned all those involved in electoral violence whether they are private individuals or members of political parties. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Faith Network calls for violence-free campaigns, elections

By Naneka Hoffman

Faith and Justice Network (FJN), a leading advocate for peace, justice, and democracy within the Mano River Basin, is calling on Liberian political parties, coalitions, alliances, and Independent Candidates to campaign across the country void of violence, as Liberians go to elections on October 10th.

Speaking on Monday, August 14, the Regional Executive Director for the Network, Rev. Dr. Tolbert Thomas Jallah, said as Liberia approaches this crucial moment in its democratic journey, it is of utmost importance that the electoral process remains free of violence and intimidation, emphasizing that it is the collective responsibility of all political parties to uphold the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

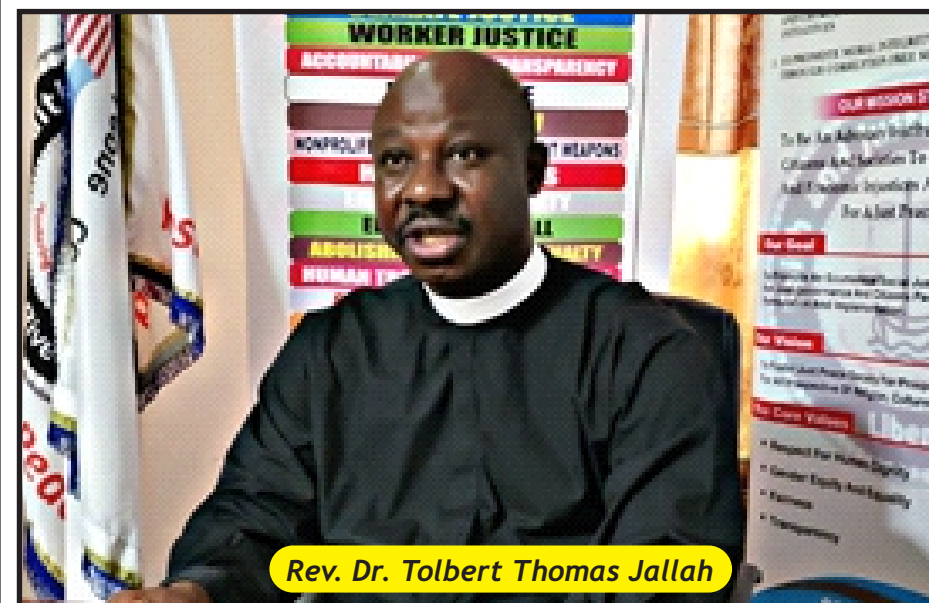
Rev. Dr. Jallah adds that as the nation prepares to exercise its democratic rights, faith-based institutions in the country have a pivotal role to play in shaping discourses surrounding the elections. He says churches are spaces of moral guidance and reflection, which makes them

prioritize respectful dialogue, constructive engagement, and adherence to ethical campaign practices, adding that engaging in acts of violence or promoting hatred not only undermines the democratic process but also damages the social fabric of the nation.

"We urge all politicians to rise above divisive tactics, personal attacks, and inflammatory political rhetoric. Instead, let's focus on discussing the policies, strategies, and solutions that can address the pressing challenges facing Liberia. Engaging in respectful dialogue not only demonstrates your commitment to democratic principles but also inspires citizens to participate actively in the electoral process."

Meanwhile, the FJN is calling upon stakeholders, including civil society organizations, media outlets, and international partners to collaborate in creating an environment conducive to peaceful elections.

Dr. Jallah wants Liberians to collectively denounce violence, hate speeches or misinformation that could mar the electoral process while assuring the FJN remains committed to the



Rev. Dr. Tolbert Thomas Jallah

ideal platforms to encourage respectful dialogue among political contenders and their supporters.

However, the Liberian prelate notes that Liberians have a right to express their political preferences through peaceful means and it is imperative that elections are conducted transparently and fairly.

He says it includes providing citizens with accurate and unbiased information, ensuring access to polling stations and preventing any form of voter suppression or intimidation.

The FJN executive director also underscores the significance of creating an environment where citizens can exercise their democratic rights without fear, coercion, or threat to their safety.

The Network urges candidates in the race and party leaders to

principles of peace, justice, and democracy.

"We believe that by embracing respectful dialogue and fostering a culture of political tolerance, Liberia can move closer to realizing its full potential as a united and prosperous nation."

Faith and Justice Network is a non-political organization dedicated to promoting peace, justice, and democratic values in the Mano River Basin countries that include Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast.

Through advocacy, education, and community engagement, FJN strives to create a society where citizens' rights are respected, and the rule of law prevails. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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Français

La NEC se dit prête pour les élections présidentielle et législatives

La Commission électorale nationale (NEC) a voulu rassurer les candidats à la présidentielle en se disant

Sirleaf à Old Congo Town.

La présidente de la NEC Davidetta Browne-Lansanah a déclaré que la commission a réussi

de sensibilisation et d'éducation civique des électeurs à l'échelle nationale et le remplacement en cours des cartes d'électeurs perdues et endommagées.

Par la voix de sa patronne, la commission électorale a dit reconnaître le rôle de l'Organisation des Nations Unies dans la promotion d'un environnement pacifique et durable au Libéria, ce qui permettra l'organisation des élections crédibles, libres, équitables, transparentes et inclusives.

Elle a reconnu le rôle important des Nations Unies dans la fourniture de matériel, de financement et d'un soutien accru aux activités électorales.

« Cela donne un sens de l'honneur d'une manière extraordinaire qui approfondit la démocratie au Libéria », a dit la patronne de la NEC.

Plus tôt ce mois-ci, Madame Lansanah avait annoncé qu'au moins 2,4 millions de Libériens ont été inscrits sur la liste électorale. Elle a réaffirmé l'engagement de la commission à organiser des élections crédibles, libres, équitables, transparentes et inclusives. Elle a en outre dit que la NEC a l'intention d'organiser des réunions avec les parties prenantes au niveau régional pour que d'autres Libériens se familiarisent avec le processus électoral.

« Avec cela, à ce stade, tout est prêt pour les élections présidentielle et législatives du 10 octobre 2023. La

l'opération d'enrôlement biométrique des électeurs et procédé à l'exposition de la liste électorale préliminaire, rendu publique la liste électorale, reçu les dossiers de candidature des candidats et publié les listes finales de candidats.

Madame Browne-Lansanah a fait valoir que la NEC a lancé une campagne

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Commerce et ses partenaires lancent la 3e phase du concours de plans d'affaires pour jeunes startups

Le ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie, en partenariat avec le Business Startup Center (BSC) de Monrovia, avec le soutien du PNUD dans le cadre du projet de création de moyens de subsistance et d'emplois, annonce le début de la troisième phase de la cohorte 2023 du Concours de plans d'affaires pour les jeunes créateurs d'entreprise pour les jeunes ambitieux intéressés à créer leur propre entreprise.

Le concours cible 300 jeunes issus de sept comtés : Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, Nimba et Lofa, qui participeront à deux jours de formation aux compétences commerciales et à un concours de subventions de démarrage d'entreprise de 500 USD.

Les jeunes apprendront la planification commerciale et financière et présenteront leurs idées commerciales à un panel de

juges dans l'espoir d'obtenir des subventions pouvant atteindre cinq cents dollars américains (500,00 USD). Ils bénéficieront également d'un accompagnement et d'un mentorat lors du développement et de l'affinement de leurs idées commerciales.

Le concours vise à favoriser l'esprit d'entreprise chez les jeunes du Libéria, en identifiant leurs besoins et leurs défis et en développant des solutions innovantes et créatives.

La soumission des

candidatures commence le 16 août et se termine le 27 août 2023.

On s'attend à ce que les candidats présentent des idées commerciales de tous les secteurs de l'économie, y compris l'agriculture, les technologies de l'information, les transports, la transformation des aliments, la fabrication, la santé et le long de toutes les chaînes de valeur concernant

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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

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La NEC se dit prête

commission restera engagée à tous les niveaux avec les candidats, qui ont tous signé l'accord de Farmington », a-t-elle déclaré.

Pour sa part, la représentante résidente de la Commission de la CEDEAO et chef de la Commission de la CEDEAO au Libéria, l'ambassadrice Josephine Nkrumah, a souligné la question cruciale de l'insécurité et de la désinformation.

Elle a insisté sur la nécessité de dénoncer ces maux car ils sont susceptibles de provoquer la violence. Madame Nkrumah, au nom du chef de la Commission de la CEDEAO, le Dr Omar Alieu Touray, a déclaré que la CEDEAO est disposée à collaborer de façon continue avec l'organisation des Nations Unies sur les droits de l'homme. Elle a réaffirmé l'engagement de la CEDEAO à échanger avec les parties prenantes pour l'organisation des élections pacifiques libres, équitables, transparentes, crédibles et inclusives.

Elle a exhorté les

candidats au respect de la Déclaration de Farmington River ainsi que de toutes les lois et réglementations pertinentes du Libéria.

S'exprimant également, M. Leonardo Santos Simão, Représentant spécial du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies et chef du Bureau des Nations Unies pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et le Sahel, a appelé les parties prenantes à redoubler d'efforts pour une élection pacifique.

M. Simão a déclaré que le forum des parties prenantes démontre leurs capacités et leur engagement envers la paix. Il a noté que l'élection marquera une étape importante dans le repositionnement de la démocratie libérienne. Il a réaffirmé le soutien continu de l'ONU à une élection pacifique.

Tous leurs efforts, y compris la signature de la Déclaration de Farmington River et le maintien de l'esprit de paix, doivent être conformes à la loi sur la Commission électorale nationale, a-t-il insisté.

Les candidats à la présidence ont réaffirmé leur engagement en faveur des élections non violentes, libres, justes et transparentes.

Starts from page 8

Commerce et ses partenaires

les secteurs clés.

Le PNUD et le gouvernement du Libéria, par l'intermédiaire du ministère du Commerce et de l'Industrie, s'emploient à soutenir le développement d'un secteur privé fort et dynamique grâce au développement des entreprises qui visent à contribuer à la réduction de la pauvreté et à l'autonomisation des jeunes et des personnes vivant avec un handicap (PWD).

En 2022, le concours de plans d'affaires a attiré 954 candidatures des sept comtés ciblés. Les 300 meilleurs candidats ont été invités à la formation aux compétences commerciales et au pitch.

Les 300 entrepreneurs/entreprises ont eu accès à des subventions allant jusqu'à 500 USD pour démarrer et développer leurs entreprises

dans les domaines de l'agriculture, des technologies de l'information, des transports, de la transformation des aliments, de la fabrication, etc.

Ces entreprises élargissent leurs activités, créent des opportunités de revenus et d'emplois et fournissent des biens/services à leurs clients tout en contribuant à la croissance et au développement économiques.

Il est conseillé à tous les candidats de postuler avec un numéro d'argent mobile enregistré à leur nom. Les candidats devront présenter une carte d'identité nationale avant de participer à la formation en compétences commerciales et financières. Les candidatures féminines sont fortement encouragées à postuler.

Les candidats ayant bénéficié des deux dernières cohortes du concours de plans d'affaires ne sont pas éligibles pour postuler à ce concours.

Niger : discussions « difficiles » entre membres du Conseil Paix et Sécurité de l'UA sur les sanctions de la Cédéao



La communauté internationale a les yeux braqués sur le Niger, depuis le coup d'État du 26 juillet. Un communiqué final sur la réunion du Conseil Paix et Sécurité (CPS) de l'Union Africaine, qui s'est tenue à Addis-Abeba le 14 août 2023, est toujours attendu. La question des sanctions décidées par la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest contre le Niger n'a pas fait consensus au sein du CPS, comme des diplomates africains l'ont expliqué à RFI. Une réunion « difficile », « très franche », et « très longue » confie une source diplomatique africaine qui y voit le signe d'une prise de conscience des États membres d'une situation inédite. « Il y a eu

six coups d'État en moins de trois ans », sur le continent, rappelle cette source.

Conséquence : « Nous sommes face à une réalité à laquelle nos textes continentaux ne correspondent plus » et les séances du Conseil Paix Sécurité, dit-elle, deviennent de plus en plus « difficiles ».

Selon cette même source, le cœur des débats a porté sur le positionnement de l'Union africaine par rapport aux décisions de la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Cédéao). « Certains, au sein du Conseil, ont souhaité, assure-t-elle, pouvoir émettre des réserves et demander des clarifications dans la séquence qui pourrait conduire » à l'option militaire envisagée par la Cédéao.

Les pays membres du CPS négocient depuis le 14 août les termes exacts d'un communiqué final. De son côté, un autre diplomate africain, qui a participé à la réunion, affirme que les pays d'Afrique australe et d'Afrique du Nord étaient « vent debout contre toute intervention militaire ». Les pays d'Afrique centrale, toujours selon cette source, ont eux aussi exprimé leur désaccord. À l'issue de la réunion, le texte de communiqué est entré dans un « processus silencieux » selon les mots d'un diplomate. Les pays membres du Conseil Paix et Sécurité négocient depuis le 14 août ses termes exacts. Car il s'agit d'un document qui « nous engage collectivement », a tenu à rappeler notre source.

Mali : le groupe jihadiste du Jnim impose un blocus à la ville de Tombouctou

Au Mali, le Jnim impose un blocus à Tombouctou. Le Groupe de soutien à l'Islam et aux musulmans, lié à al-Qaïda, interdit depuis plusieurs jours aux camions de marchandises d'entrer dans la ville. Les autorités locales tentent de rassurer les populations et, pour le moment, rien ne manque dans la ville. Dans une série de messages audios diffusés en début de semaine dernière - ils ont commencé à circuler à partir du 8 août 2023 -, le commandant du Jnim pour la région de Tombouctou, Talha Abou Hind, annonce qu'il ne laissera plus passer aucun camion en provenance d'Algérie et de Mauritanie, d'où proviennent la plupart des marchandises consommées à Tombouctou, mais également de la région malienne du Mema, plus au sud. Il affirme également que ses hommes se mobilisent autour de la ville pour « une guerre totale » contre l'État malien, qui a « fait appel à Wagner [groupe paramilitaire russe, NDLR] comme il avait appelé Barkhane et Takuba [des forces militaires française et européenne qui ont depuis quitté le Mali, NDLR] ». Routes bloquées Ces derniers jours, la menace a été mise à exécution : selon les nombreuses sources jointes à Tombouctou, plus aucun camion en provenance d'Algérie, de Mauritanie mais également des villes maliennes de Bambara Maoudé, Mopti ou Goundam, n'a pu entrer dans la ville. Les transporteurs attendent aux frontières, restent bloqués dans la région de Taoudeni ou rebrousse

chemin. Les véhicules des particuliers, eux, peuvent circuler.

Pas de pénurie

Pour autant, selon les témoignages recueillis par RFI, c'est le calme qui règne actuellement à Tombouctou. Pas de pénurie, les commerçants disposent de stocks et certaines marchandises arrivent encore en provenance du sud. «



J'étais au marché ce matin, rien ne manque », témoigne un habitant. « Si la situation dure, ce sera difficile », redoute tout de même un commerçant. « Nous avons confiance : pour le moment rien d'alarmant », assure un notable de la ville. Les autorités rassurent Si les habitants de Tombouctou ne cèdent pas à la panique, quelques dizaines de familles - aucun chiffre précis n'a pu être recoupé - ont pourtant décidé de quitter la ville. Certaines par crainte de la menace jihadiste, d'autres - majoritairement arabes - parce qu'elles redoutent la réaction de l'armée malienne et d'éventuels amalgames. Une situation face à laquelle les autorités militaires et administratives locales tentent de rassurer : par communiqué ou lors de déclarations publiques, le gouvernorat de Tombouctou et le commandement militaire de la zone ont affirmé leur mobilisation au service de tous, demandé aux populations de rester dans la ville et de vaquer librement à leurs occupations. Sollicité par RFI, le gouvernorat n'a pas donné suite.

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LIBERIANS

DEBATE

Topic: Campaign Violence

By Naneka A. Hoffman

Recent campaign violence between supporters of the governing Coalition for Democratic Change and the opposition Unity Party at Vamoma House in Montserrado County Electoral District#9 that left several persons wounded still dominate discussions among the public. The NEW DAWN has been randomly soliciting views of some citizens in Monrovia on the violence that seemed to have sent a very bad signal about the 2023 Presidential and General Elections, as compiled below.



Z. Kwaque Coleman

come out with timetable before political parties go in the streets to campaign. It has been a longtime; let say almost six years before NEC could announce this electoral process. If and only if, NEC wanted to avoid problems, they could have come up with schedules for all political parties to inform them that you may go in the street from this time to this time, but that was not done until all of the political parties decided to go in the streets and campaign. I think it was negligence on the part of the NEC, for not coming up with dates for political parties before the campaign.

First of all, I want to shift the blame on NEC, for one fact that as it relates to elections, by now NEC should have

come up with a schedule as it relates to campaign activities because this issue of elections has been a very long time. I expected the NEC to

Well, as a peaceful citizen and member of the mighty Congress for Democratic Change, first I condemn the act (violence) between the both parties because violence is against our electoral law; violence can't develop our country and whenever we are going for elections, I think we need to be peaceful because we all are fighting for one goal which is Mama Liberia. When it comes to the issue of violence, let's look at the both parties, people from the opposition always say that CDCians are violators, but even themselves, they are because I listened to Mo Ali's press conference, referring to the individual whose ears were cut by a

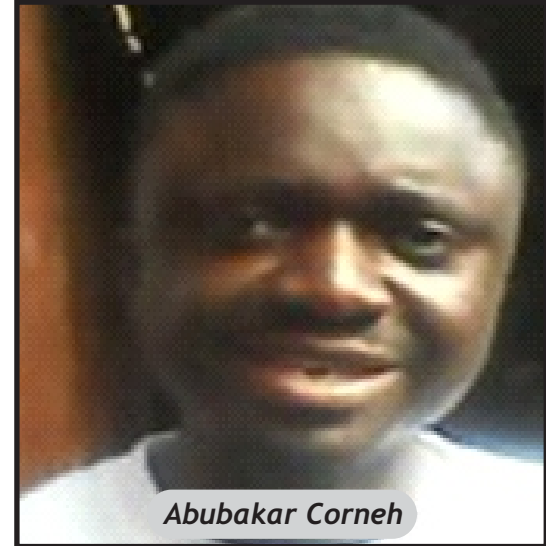


Abraham B. Kiadii

Unity Party partisan. If that individual wasn't fast to go on the radio and denied the allegation, it was going to be a problem, so for that not to go fast, let us do away with violence in the country and see how best

we can be peaceful. If party A is running their campaign in district one or in whatever district in the county, let's give them the chance; let them do their campaign and when they leave from there, we will go there.

I see it very much embarrassing and I think it was the of Unity Party, they intend to cause violence in these elections, and we are asking the ruling establishment to do everything possible to avoid Unity Party, because they have no strategy of winning these elections, so what they want to do is to make noise and cause violence in this country, so everything can spoil,



Abubakar Corneh

and we are not going to bow. The ruling party should do everything possible to avoid all their temptations.



Lahi D. Sonii

Firstly, let me condemn what actually took place this gone week between supporters of CDC and Unity Party. I think as Liberians, we

need to think wisely in whatever we are doing because elections are just for a time and we remain as one people in the country. So, whenever we meet as citizens of this country in these political campaigns, we should know how to engage each other, because if we cause harm on another citizen from another political party, that will not be a good thing, so I think we the citizens of this country should proceed well or peacefully.



Titus Siakor

It wasn't a good sign for our country to see our people fighting one another all because of party level. I think we need to stay away from violence and keep

the peace. Let us respect each other's views no matter our differences. Liberia first, Liberia last. Elections will come and go but we remain as Liberians, so let us maintain the peace.

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Gongloe takes on Weah and Boakai

By: Emmanuel wise Jipoh

country's democracy in jeopardy.

at the poll in October.

"This country does not belong to CDC, nor the Unity Party (UP). This country belongs to every Liberian and if they continue to project that this country belongs to

The caution by Cllr. Gongloe comes in the wake of recent violent clashes between supporters of CDC and Unity Party that left four persons sustaining various

Liberian People's Party Standard Bearer, Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe has cautioned rivals incumbent President George Weah and former vice president Joseph Boakai against inciting violence



Party Standard Bearer, Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe

doing the ongoing presidential campaigns which began on August 5.

The Human Rights Lawyer turned politician said such acts would undermine the nation's hard-earned peace and democracy.

Addressing reporters Tuesday following a meeting at the National Elections Commission (NEC) stakeholder forum with presidential candidates under the theme: Fostering the Confidence of Electoral Process Towards the Farmington River 2023 Declaration, Cllr. Gongloe was specific in cautioning President Weah and his main rival former Amb. Boakai against inciting violence, noted that such acts have the propensity to cause chaos and destruction in the Country. Cllr. Gongloe pointed out that the power candidates are vying for belongs to the people while admonishing them to remain and make their cases to the people who in return are expected to vote for candidates based on their track records.

"Liberia Peace will not be undermined by anyone", he said. "I'm appealing to the CDC and Unity Party to stop raising tension in the country that will create fears in the people," Cllr. Gongloe said noting that Liberians are generally afraid of violence, and continuous acts of violence will put the

degrees of bodily injuries here.

Supporters of the two parties engaged in a bloody clash last Thursday, while holding separate rallies in Montserrado District Number 9. The LPP Standard Bearer pointed out that such violence displayed was wrong particularly during this political process, when both understand how far Liberia has come in maintaining the peace.

"President Weah and Amb. Boakai, cannot be threatening Liberians who fled from their own country during the war. This is totally unacceptable. We will not allow these two to undermine our democracy," Cllr. Gongloe continued.

Also speaking Opposition Democratic People Party of Liberia (DPPL), Standard Bearer Rev. David Kaimu, lashed at the two political parties (CDC & UP) for ensuing violence that will undermine the peace of Liberia. Rev. Kaimu said Liberia as the oldest African Republic can not afford violence in the pending Presidential and Legislative elections. He denounced the act while cautioning the CDC and UP to desist from violence or they'll overwhelmingly be rejected

India celebrates growing

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among the top 6 medical tourism destinations in the world," said Amb. Pradip. He further said India is among the top 5 Economies of the world,

and it is an IT leader. Amb. Pradip indicated that the Silicon Valley of the US is thriving with Indian innovators and IT experts. "Indian Space Research Organization's Moon Mission

- Chandrayaan-3 has been successfully launched on July 14, 2023 and would land at the Moon in the next few days."

Now is the time

By Thomas Domah, Nimba County

Presidential Candidate Joseph Nyumah Boakai's running mate, Senator Jeremiah Koung, says the pending October 10, 2023 elections is the only opportunity the people of votes-rich Nimba County have to enter the Presidency.

Sen Koung, who hails from Nimba himself, notes that in the past, Nimbaians had blamed the Unity Party Standard Bearer Boakai, for not seeking their welfare by choosing his running mate from the county in the previous election.

He urges Nimbaians not to allow such opportunities to past, saying "We from one of the biggest counties in the country can't continue to be allowing smaller counties to fool us."

"In the past, we Nimbaians blamed Ambassador Joseph Boakai for not being able to choose his running mate from Nimba County but thanks God that this time around, he was able to get his running mate from Nimba County", he says.

According to him, the people of Nimba will not blame Ambassador Boakai for anything now, because he was able to listen to their request and select his

offer and yet vote them out because funds being used by the CDC are from the national coffer that belong to all Liberians.

"The way the country is going, you the voters are watching; you can tell the story for yourself, no one can tell you the suffering."

Addressing huge gatherings in several towns and villages in Nimba, Senator Koung noted that the people of Nimba have suffered for too long and fought to reach the Presidency, but there have been no way for them to get there.

He says now is the opportunity with the Unity Party under Ambassador Joseph Boakai, which is a welcoming development, rallying his kinsmen to embrace the rescue mission and reelect the UP to power.

According to him, smallest counties have been representing the bigger counties in Liberia, but this time around, citizens from bigger counties such as Nimba, Bong, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Lofa should unite and present a common front.

He says the people of Nimba should support the rescue team by voting Amb. Boakai and Senator Prince



Senator Jeremiah Koung

running mate from the county.

The Nimba County Senator urges his kinsmen to support the Rescue Team of the Unity Party by making the pending October election as a one round victory for the party.

He calls on Nimbaians not to reject any offer from the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change, but accept every

Yormie Johnson, not to allow any other political party to get votes from the county.

According to Koung, when Liberians reelect the Unity Party, living conditions in the country, including job opportunities, agriculture, health education and roads will improve.

You are an embodiment

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a native boy like me and lifted me up," he said. "For me to be a lawmaker today it's all because of him, and my presence as lawmaker has inspired many youth," Foko

noted. He said when President Weah visited his district, he presented his three years' report to him to tell him that more will be done for the next six years if elected.

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Justice Minister warns political parties

-Against militarizing their supporters

By: Emmanuel wise Jipoh

"I want to caution political parties to demilitarize their regalia. "They should not carry attire that look like the National Security attires way that will be tantamount to exercising state- power," Cllr.

crucial poll.

He explained that the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has deployed maximum security in every quarter of the country to calm down violence and restored peace doing political activities across the country, while reassuring the protections of all Presidential and Legislative Candidates.

"We are going to ensured maximum security, our men are already deployed to every aspirant, and we will continue to do that in the regional area. "We are at the periphery to ensure that every activity during the elections is carried out in order," said Cllr. Dean.

He urged Liberians to be peaceful at every time and tune down rhetoric to maintain their democracy as the country strives to move forward after long years of civil unrest.

For her part, NEC Chairperson Davidetta Browne Lansanna reassured the NEC readiness to conducting a free-fair, transparent and inclusive credible elections across the country.

Justice Minister Cllr. Frank Musah Dean Jr. has warned political parties here to desist from militarizing their supporters



Justice Minister Cllr. Frank Musah Dean Jr.

downing different Regalia and carrying National Security attires.

Dean said. Meanwhile, he assured citizens of maximum security doing the ongoing electoral when he spoke to reporters shortly after NEC's stakeholder meeting with Presidential Candidates ahead of the

Minister Dean said such practice of wearing national security attire by partisans doing the ongoing political campaigns is against the law.

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