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DATE	BUYING	SELLING
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023	L\$186.0055/US\$1.00	L\$187.8914/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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Meet booted out lawmakers



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Continental News

Power restored in Guinea-Bissau capital after two days

Turkish company Karpowership has restored power to Guinea-Bissau's capital after

spokesperson for the company told the BBC that Karpowership was "grateful" for Guinea-Bissau's efforts to pay the bill, which made

Bissau, a city with a population of more than 400,000, in the early hours of Tuesday. Some public hospitals used generators to carry out surgery, local journalist Assana Sambu told the BBC.

But they did not have running water because there was not enough electricity, and hospital directors appealed for power in order to cook food for their patients. Another journalist, Alberto Dabo, said he resorted to drinking water from a well because water supplies had been cut amid the sweltering heat which reaches 40C. Media outlets were also affected by the power cut, with state-run Rádio Nacional among those that stopped broadcasting,

Guinea-Bissau has one of the lowest electricity connection rates in Africa, estimated at 10% nationally and 20% in the city of Bissau, according to the African Development Bank. Power outages in Bissau are frequent, with some parts of the city going without power for more than four hours a day. The World Bank said in 2020 that Guinea-Bissau's "electricity sector has been trapped in a downward spiral for decades" due to political instability, poor management, lack of planning and "vested interests". Karpowership supplies electricity to six other African countries - Ghana, The Gambia, Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Senegal and Sierra Leone. BBC



Guinea-Bissau has one of the lowest electricity connection rates in Africa

cutting off supplies over an unpaid bill of \$15m (£12m). The company resumed operations late on Wednesday after receiving a payment of \$6m from the government.

Bissau had been plunged into darkness for nearly two days, with hospitals affected and radio stations off-air.

The country is one of the poorest in the world and has been beset by instability since independence. In 2019, its government signed a deal with Karpowership, one of the world's biggest floating power plant operators, to supply the country with all its power. A

it possible to resume electricity supplies. "Following a protracted period of non-payment, our fuel suppliers were no longer able to withstand the delay and had no option but to pause work," the spokesperson added. Energy Minister Isuf Baldé confirmed that \$6m of the \$15m bill had been settled. "In a small and poor country like Guinea-Bissau, carrying out a transfer operation of this level, \$10m, takes time," he said. He added that the contract with Karpowership needed to be renegotiated because costs had almost doubled since it came into effect, making it unaffordable. Power was cut in

Kenyan president approves divisive healthcare law

Kenya's President William Ruto has approved controversial legislation that will see the biggest shake-up of the health sector in more than 20 years. His plan revolves around promoting universal healthcare, and requires all workers to contribute 2.75% of their salaries towards a new health fund. The government says it will make healthcare more affordable and accessible for poorer Kenyans.

But it has proved unpopular with many Kenyans, who see it as a new tax.

They say it is the latest in a series of measures that Mr Ruto has introduced, worsening the cost-of-living crisis, despite the fact that he won elections last year with a promise to ease the financial difficulties of families.

Some also fear that the new healthcare fund will be beset

Employers, who are required to match their employees' contributions, have opposed the 2.75% deduction as too high.

They say that it will hurt businesses and aggravate the cost-of-living crisis, which fuelled a wave of protests across Kenya earlier this year. In June, Mr Ruto signed the Finance Act, another unpopular piece of legislation that introduced a 1.5% housing levy payable by both employers and employees, to help the government to provide affordable housing at a time when prices are so high that many urban Kenyans cannot afford to buy homes.

Some health and civil society organisations have also spoken out against the health plan, saying that the 2.75% deduction is substantial, considering the recent rise in fuel prices and living costs. "This rate takes a lot more from distressed salaried citizens, whose incomes support large households of family and services," the Kenya Faith Based



President Ruto has taken a series of controversial measures since he took office last year

Malawi music star Thomas Chibade dies aged 37

Tributes are pouring in for one of Malawi's biggest music stars, Thomas Chibade, following his death at the age of 37.

Chibade's emotive compositions in reggae and Afro-pop genres were popular among young Malawians.

His fans described him as a "fine vocalist" with a "golden voice". He died at a hospital in the capital, Lilongwe. The cause of his death is unclear, but some local media report that he succumbed to malaria. Chibade, nicknamed Chenkhumba, rose to fame in the early 2000s with his album Zatusira, a Chichewa word which loosely translates as "It has come out".

The album includes one of Chibade's best known hits Mawu anga, or My words.

"His melodies resonated with people of all ages. He was a true artist who could evoke emotions and

memories through his music," one of his fans posted on Facebook. Renowned Malawian author Wonderfull Mkhutche expressed shock over the young singer's death, saying he was a "talent gone too soon". Fellow musician Njaliwe Chalera, popularly known as Xkesh, said it was a "sad moment" for the music industry. "Thomas Chibade's

contribution to the music industry and his impact on the lives of many musicians in Malawi will always be remembered," Chalera posted on Facebook.

Chibade's death comes a few weeks after another popular musician, Atoht Manje, died shortly after performing on stage. BBC



by corruption, like the existing one, meaning they are often unable to access the health services they are entitled to.

But parliament has backed Mr Ruto, passing the Social Health Insurance Bill, along with three other health bills, on Tuesday.

Currently, Kenyans pay between 150 Kenyan shillings (\$1; £0.80) and 1,700 shillings monthly to a National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). It will be replaced with a new fund, with the minimum contribution set to double and most salaried workers contributing a higher proportion of their pay. Kenya's Health Minister Susan Nakhumicha has said that the new plan is better as it "will allow Kenyans of all walks of life to contribute according to their income".

She said lower earners currently pay a higher percentage of their income than the better off.

Health Services Consortium said in September. Kenyans will be required to register to the proposed National Social Health Insurance Fund to access public health services and those who fail to enrol would be denied services.

The government will help Kenyans who cannot contribute towards the fund through a kitty of 26 billion shillings.

The new fund will replace the current NHIF, which has lost billions of taxpayer-contributed funds to corruption, denying many paying Kenyans access to healthcare.

Some Kenyans fear that the new fund will have more money, and there will be more corruption, while they will still be denied healthcare by the state. Critics also fear that the new social healthcare body will spend most of the collected funds on administrative expenses like the current NHIF, leaving few resources for direct healthcare costs,

EDITORIAL

COMMENTARY

By Lennie Bazira,
Prossy Muyingo

A need to heed recommendations by international observers

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS MONITORING the electoral process in Liberia are providing series of recommendations to Liberian authorities to enhance future polls and strengthen the country's democratic process.

THE ELECTORAL INSTITUTE for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) through its Elections Observation Mission (EISA-EOM) outlines challenges it observed during Tuesday, 10 October elections polls ranging from underrepresentation of young people in elective offices, growing engagement of youth as militants by political parties, delay in distributing the Final Registration Roll for public scrutiny, delay in releasing regulations on collation and tabulation of results, lack of substantial issue-based or policy-focused campaign messages, widespread misinformation about elections on social media to weak communication strategy, and low visibility of NEC's programs.

ESIA THEREFORE, URGES the Government of Liberia to promulgate into law provisions on compulsory gender quotas for female candidates in line with Liberia's international commitment to affirmative action.

IT ALSO CALLS on government to explore possibility of legally moving Election Day to a timeframe that does not coincide with the rainy season to reduce logistical challenges and risks while facilitating voter's participation.

"ENFORCE THE RULES in the election law by prosecuting offences such as voter trucking. To the NEC, strengthen public communications with emphasis on key processes making it more proactive, timely and precise. Collaborate with CSOs to improve the conduct of civic and voter education", the group recommends.

FOR ITS PART, election observers from the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, recommends that to address congestion and long queues at polling precincts, reforms may be introduced in the electoral laws to reduce the number of voters per polling unit, taking into cognizance the need for such reforms.

THOUGH THESE ARE but few of the recommendations from foreign observers here, with more to come, we think they are germane and should claim immediate attention of authorities of the National Elections Commission and the Government of Liberia in order to enhance our electoral process.

Compensating Community-Health Workers

C LARKSVILLE, MD/KAMPALA - At least six million women worldwide provide unpaid or grossly underpaid labor in community-health centers, often in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Many work as community-health workers. But, though this is a skilled job that should be salaried, only 34 countries offer CHWs accreditation, training, and salaries, leaving the majority exploited and therefore less effective for their patients. If we are serious about making "health for all" a global priority, this must change.

CHWs are crucial to strengthening health systems at the national level: they have been proven to improve maternal- and child-health services, expand access to family planning, and support prevention and care for both noncommunicable and infectious diseases. Deploying CHWs who consistently provide just 30 lifesaving health services in countries with the highest disease burden would save as many as 6.9 million lives annually and reduce child mortality by almost half. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how resilient community-health programs can provide essential services even in the face of great adversity.

But such programs will reach their full potential only with service design that adheres to evidence-based best practices. That means treating CHWs as professionals who require training, fair pay, and safe working conditions. When used as a stopgap solution or a source of cheap labor, CHWs are less effective than their well-resourced counterparts.

In Africa, up to 85% of CHWs are unpaid, and, worldwide, CHWs' essential medicines are out of stock one-third of the time. In Uganda, our home country, there is a shortage of health-care workers, so CHWs have stepped up to fill the gap. Though these workers provide vital services to their communities, performing many of the same tasks as their salaried supervisors, they often receive little or no pay.

Why are CHWs, who are often women of color, expected to work and save lives without recognition or remuneration? It is clear that this is also a gender-rights issue. Patriarchal norms and power dynamics condition women to accept no or low wages for what should clearly be paid work. For example, women from low-income households and with low levels of education often view this type of unpaid work as an opportunity that might lead to paid work or an asset like a mobile phone or bicycle.

Unpaid work in health care can also bring women social recognition. In many contexts, it is seen as honorable work that families will approve of for a woman. As a result, CHWs tend to juggle these positions with piecemeal paid jobs and family responsibilities.

These women face an unenviable dilemma: If they give up their work as CHWs to find full-time employment that can support them, who will provide much-needed health care for their communities? Backed into a corner by systemic inequalities and traditional gender roles, they often continue to overextend themselves, sacrificing stability, economic security, career progression, and their own well-being in the process.

To redress this entrenched social and economic injustice, professional CHWs must become the norm, not the exception. At minimum, CHWs must be accredited to ensure that certain standards are met; paid a competitive wage; continuously trained and supported by a dedicated supervisor; and integrated into health systems, including primary health-care facilities and wider monitoring and evaluation systems. That way, they can be proactive in surveillance and see patients without point-of-care user fees. In short, CHWs must be salaried, skilled, supervised, and supplied.

After years of being marginalized and isolated, CHWs are now organizing and establishing in-country networks, largely using digital technology, to achieve these goals. More than 5,000 CHWs and aligned health organizations across 40 countries have come together via the Community Health Impact Coalition to translate shared research and advocacy work into policy change at the national level. Our shared mission is to ensure that all LMICs, including Uganda, adopt policies for professional CHWs.

The global community must decide whether it will fairly compensate those who, for decades, have propped up health systems in LMICs, or continue to exploit a largely female workforce. The moral choice is clear. Countries that professionalize CHWs and integrate them into a robust health infrastructure will be in the best position to make progress toward "health for all" - including for the women delivering the bulk of the care.



Lord, wheplay this Apple Man coming from?

By Othello B. Garblah

Dear Father,

This man is becoming a serious concern to our entire village. I mean everybody jus talking about him, since we fini the voting bisnay last week.

Da wha kina man you talking about so my son?

Father, ehn da this Apple Man here. I mean nobody know wehplay the man coming from and we jus hearing him name all over the place. All the people them we know thinking they wor coming to do something by far better, this Apple Man jus came and put sand in allor them gari.

You say whatin?

Father, da na fun ooh. Right now, people are even thinking that people put the man inside the election so he can steal some people owner votes.

Can you imagine?

Father, bor who will believe da kina thin sef. The way the Voting House people owner thing them look leh bullet proof, da wehplay da one will pass.

Bor come to think of it Father, the man name really ringing too oo. I say nobody saw him coming. Me who weh say I be village town crier sef, I never heard him name until the day I went to do my voting.

Is it true da the man wor put inside the place to make sure nobody win first round?

Aah, Father da orlor question there ay too big for my mouth ooh, bor the way the man running with somer the votes sef can make people to think all kina way too mehn.

The man na put no picture up during the campaign, nobody knew about him, one soon morning we jus see the man show face on the ballot paper-boom him name jus start ringing all over the place.

Wait oo, my son, the man da spirit?

Father, the man da na spirit, bor nobody know him sef. Imagine man leh Taxi Driver and Poor Man Lawyer them who everybody know around here, the man jus come and da na small beating him gave them in those villages.

My son you na sure something behind this thing here?

Father, da the one everybody talking about right now. In fact, some people called him the mystery man. Anybody who hear him name the first thing they can say is "wehplay this man coming from?"

Yor will balance.

Father, balancing pa, da na small balancing we doing ooh, becos da na small flogging the man flogging my man them ooh. And we na even geh over it yet sef.

So, whatin the people at the voting house saying?

Aah Father, da whatin the people will say na, they are jus doing their

OPINION

By Riana Pfefferkorn,
Callum Voge

Curbing Government Internet Surveillance

STANFORD/PRAGUE - Government efforts to access private communications are nothing new. In decades past, such attempts at prying were often justified on national-security grounds. Today, however, policymakers point to child safety and disinformation as reasons to limit privacy protections. Established democracies are often leading this charge, inadvertently paving the way for the world's autocrats.

But people around the world are not taking these policies lying down. They speak out, using events like Global Encryption Day to highlight the importance of privacy and security not just for their own lives but for their communities and societies. And as vociferous opposition continues to stymie government efforts to expand surveillance powers, it has become clear that public pressure works.

Encryption, which scrambles digital data so that it can be read only by someone with the means to decode it, has become ubiquitous because it keeps information confidential and secure while authenticating the identity of the person with whom one is communicating. Today, billions of people use encryption to send digital messages and emails, transfer money, load websites, and protect their data. The gold standard in security is "end-to-end" encryption (E2EE), as only the participants have access to the data - not even the service provider can decipher it.

Despite its immense value and global appeal, encryption is under threat worldwide. It is used by law-abiding citizens to protect themselves, but also by bad actors to hide their malicious activities. For this reason, law-enforcement authorities oppose encryption designs, especially E2EE, that prevent them from accessing data.

But even after decades of research, there is still no known way to grant law enforcement access without undermining encryption's privacy and security features. The makers of encrypted devices and services have therefore resisted calls to build in "backdoor" government access, which would make all of their users more vulnerable.

The harmful online activities that concern police do not happen only in encrypted spaces. Hate speech, disinformation, and other objectionable content remain a pernicious problem on social-media platforms and other sites, motivating a worldwide legislative push to force tech companies to improve their services. The British Parliament, for example, recently passed the Online Safety Bill (OSB) after several turbulent years during which civil-society pressure changed its scope significantly. The final version focuses mainly on the removal of illegal content and mitigating risks to children.

Yet the OSB still has serious flaws. For example, Parliament failed to include language safeguarding encryption. Moreover, the law gives Ofcom, the United Kingdom's communications regulator, the authority to compel social-media platforms and messaging services to mass scan their users' files and communications for evidence of child sexual abuse.

No one contests that fighting child exploitation is immensely important. But Ofcom's power covers E2EE messaging services, which, by definition, cannot be accessed by service providers. Thus, the only way these services could comply with an Ofcom order is by making fundamental changes to their encryption design.

In other words, the OSB gives Ofcom the power to force service providers to undermine their own encryption. Apple, Meta, and Signal have all promised to pull their E2EE apps from the UK rather than comply with any government order to diminish their users' privacy and security. In response, Ofcom has publicly vowed not to use its new authority, at least for now.

And with good reason: important bodies have concluded that scanning technologies are not sufficiently accurate, would limit fundamental rights, and would likely fail the proportionality test - the disadvantages would outweigh the advantages.

Furthermore, criminals could easily circumvent these controls by encrypting content with a separate application. Ofcom would be wise to tread carefully, lest it risk the privacy and security of internet users for the sake of unproven and potentially ineffective technologies.

Ofcom's (supposed) forbearance recalls Australian authorities' conduct since the passage of a contentious 2018 law granting new governmental powers to compel communications providers to add backdoor access to their products. Civil-society and cybersecurity experts raised alarms about the law's dangers for privacy and security, and legislators themselves admitted the bill was flawed, but it passed anyway.

Five years later, not a single compulsory notice has been issued. This may reflect a deliberate choice: exercising such a power risks political blowback. Wield the sword too enthusiastically, and it might be taken away; better to keep it sheathed in favor of other, less controversial tools. Then again, government forbearance might also indicate that the controversial new power was unnecessary in the first place.

Public scrutiny of government powers keeps them in check. That is how a democracy is meant to work. In promising not to use its new tool, Ofcom appears to have grasped that the government's legitimacy is at stake. But as the UK bill inspires similar legislation in other countries, some of which are less democratic and have a track record of weaponizing digital technologies against their citizens, this nuance will likely be lost.

The first test will come in the European Union, where legislators are fighting over a draft regulation to expand tech companies' child-safety obligations. Like the UK bill, the proposed Child Sex Abuse Regulation (CSAR) has already gone through numerous revisions, as member states lock horns over protecting E2EE.

Derisively called "chat control," the draft CSAR has been widely decried for potentially forcing European service providers to scan all public and private communications, which would amount to an illegal general monitoring obligation. Recent reporting stoked these concerns by revealing that Europol, the EU's law-enforcement agency, requested unlimited access to and use of the data produced beyond the purposes identified in the regulation; it appears to have no intention of restraining itself. Continued public pressure is necessary to push for reform of "the most criticized draft EU law of all time."

If government surveillance is a concern in an established democratic entity like the EU, what hope is there for beleaguered democracies like Turkey, India, and Brazil, much less autocracies? Fortunately, the public movement in support of encryption is growing, with advocacy groups like the Global Encryption Coalition leading the charge.

By engaging with civil society, technologists, and the public, governments can design regulations that respect privacy, data security, and freedom of expression while still helping protect users from harm. Doing so is the only way to make sure that the internet works for everyone.

Preliminary Statement by Ambassador Joseph N. Boakai, Standard-bearer of Unity Party, following the October 10, 2023 Elections

October 19, 2023

Fellow Citizens, Dear Liberians

God is good. All of the time God is good. All praise goes to God Almighty whose grace and mercy have kept our nation.

Led by divine grace and a deep penchant for change, On Tuesday, October 10, 2023, the Liberian people stood in long lines across our beloved country to exercise one of the most sacred rights offered by the Liberian Constitution to all Liberian citizens - the right to vote.

The Liberian People in countless numbers who stood in patiently in lines (pregnant women, the elderly and many others) never seen in recent times to democratically remove President Weah from the presidency of Liberia. Liberians decided to vote competence over incompetence, accountability over the brazen looting of our state resources, progress and development and progress over retrogression and mediocrity.

As is now evident from the results of the presidential election announced by the National Elections Commission (NEC), the Liberian people, in their righteous rage, have sent President

Weah a clear warning that his days in the presidency are numbered and casket which symbolized his campaign was an indication of the demised to a failed presidency and to make President Weah a one-term president.

Through their votes, the Liberian people have presented to President Weah and his CDC the reality they feared the most throughout these elections - a second-round face-off against me, the Liberian people and our broad-based alliance - the Rescue Team. Liberia has won!

I therefore want to take this time to express profound thanks, appreciation and deep gratitude to the Parties of the UP Rescue Alliance, all our partisans and sympathizers dispersed throughout the length and breadth of this country who exercised their rights and cast their votes for the Rescue Ticket. We want to thank all other Parties who engaged this process to ensure a peaceful and competitive process. We have proven that a united and determined people can resist violence and demonstrate to the world that we are different.

We want to thank the local and international observers, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), United Nations, European Union, United and States and all others who continue to walk with us on this very tortious journey.

With your votes and support, we have made history. We proved that a people determined to achieve a noble goal can prevail. Despite the looting of our national coffers, the violation of every decent rules protecting our young democracy, the scare tactics and intimidations, threats to our supporters and government employees and the campaign of fear, President Weah and his CDC were unable to break the resolve of our people.

On the journey to October 10, 2023, you, our people, defied rain and thunder; you defied the scorching sun and the suffocating heat; you defied sleep and fatigue. You walked long distances and crossed many rivers and creeks in common bond and solidarity with the Rescue Mission. You did so because you love Liberia deeply.

My fellow Liberians, our country needs to be fixed from a broken governance system. Our country needs to be swept of corruption. Our country needs to be redeemed. Our country needs to be reunited. Indeed, our country needs to be rescued.

To achieve these lofty goals, we need every Liberians and residents alike. I am convinced that all the talents and ideas we need to rebuild our country cannot be found in a single party, tribe, county, region or religion. That is why I am committed to forming a government of inclusion when we ultimately achieve our grand goal of democratically evicting President Weah from the Executive Mansion in a few weeks.

We shall form a government that truly reflects the political, ethnic, regional, and religious, and gender diversity of our country. We shall form a government in which the true value of a Liberian is not determined by loyalty to party but by loyalty to country, competence and love for country.



We are, therefore, reaching out to our brothers and sisters in the other political parties unite: "In Union strong success is sure. We will overall prevail."

We plead with everyone to join the Rescue Team and finish the job to make our country to breathe freely again. Liberia will rise again and flourish under our leadership.

Together, we can, and we will effectively tackle the KUSH epidemic in our country and save the future of our young people. We want to bring honor to our families, stop the bleeding of our resources, offer a responsible government and res cue our country. We will not let you down!

To achieve this, we crave your sense of patriotism (A call to our elders, our youths, our mothers and all Liberians). Our journey is not over, We have a runoff. This is the real test to our commitment. I am convinced with God our helper, We will Prevail!

Together, LET US THINK LIBERIA; LET US LOVE LIBERIA; AND LET US REBUILD LIBERIA.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

“Fallah condemns the ransacking and criminal invasion of the New Dawn Newspaper”

Mr. Austin S. Fallah, a US-based Liberian professional, vehemently denounces the despicable and criminal assault on the New Dawn Newspaper's sanctity. This barbaric violation of actions of a select few. He urges them to stand resolute in their journalistic duties to the noble profession, the Liberian people, the international community, and those beyond Liberia's borders who rely on their reporting for

act committed by undemocratic and uncivilized individuals who seek to thrust Liberia back into the abyss of turmoil, thereby eroding the hard-fought gains the Liberian press has achieved over the years.

Furthermore, Fallah issues an impassioned plea to the Liberia National Police, urging them to leave no stone unturned in their quest for truth. He implores them to rigorously investigate whether any political party or political figures bear culpability in this nefarious crime and to ensure that they face justice under Liberia's legal system.

Fallah declares, "As Liberians prepare for a runup upcoming election, no individuals driven by criminal intent should be allowed to obstruct the exercise of their constitutional right to choose a visionary leader capable of improving their lives."

He calls upon all media organizations and the Press Union of Liberia to maintain unwavering vigilance in delivering objective and impartial news during these critical election times.

Lastly, Fallah reassures, "Do not waver, for a new era is on the horizon, where your unwavering commitment to human rights, freedom of expression, progress, and the common welfare of the Liberian people and nation will receive the full recognition it deserves."

Senator-Elect Dopoh declares neutrality in runoff

By Kruah Thompson

Newly elected Senator of River Gee County, Francis Saidu Dopoh, II, says he will not support any of the two Presidential Candidates that are going for runoff in the 2023 election.

Incumbent President George Manneh Weah of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change and his main challenger, former Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, lead the first round of polling, but none of the two obtain 50 percent of the total votes cast plus one, as required by law to be declared winner.

During a media engagement at the Capitol Building on Thursday, October 19, Senator-Elect, Dopoh said his intention to remain neutral in the runoff between incumbent President Weah and former Vice President

which informed his decision to have contested as an independent candidate, which ultimately led to his victory.

He vows to maintain his status as an Independent Candidate, while diligently fulfilling his duties in serving the people of Rivergee County. When asked about guiding the people of the county in the upcoming runoff election, he expressed his willingness to collaborate on governance matters but emphasized that he will remain independent.

At the same time, he noted that the county already has a senator in the legislature, with whom he intends to collaborate in pursuing shared interests while striving to bring the best outcomes for River Gee.

He stressed the importance of prioritizing the people's interests



Mr. Austin Fallah

press freedom by a gang of hooligans and undemocratic malefactors, with the sinister aim of undermining the constitutional right of a free press in Liberia, stands as an abhorrent affront to the very foundations of democracy. In a passionate address to the New Dawn Newspaper, Fallah offers his heartfelt condolences to the management and fervently implores them not to succumb to the malevolent information about the country's critical affairs, especially during this pivotal juncture in its history. This dedicated young Liberian professional seizes this opportunity to call upon all patriotic Liberians, diplomatic missions, political parties, presidential candidates, human rights organizations, and the global community to unequivocally and vociferously denounce this heinous criminal



Francis Saidu Dopoh, II

Boakai is to enable him directly work with the people, rather than appealing to any authority.

With 98.4 percent of the votes already announced, President Weah maintains a narrow lead of less than one percent over Mr. Boakai. Mr. Weah receives 791,661 votes, representing (43.79 percent) while Boakai has 786,205 votes or 43.49 percent, respectively. As a result, both candidates will now enter a runoff election, where they will compete for the presidency, seeking endorsements from various political parties and leaders.

However, acknowledging the significance of his role as Senator-Elect of River Gee, Dopoh revealed that there are internal disagreements within the opposition Unity Party,

over party allegiance, believing that representatives who prioritize party over the people often face consequences at the ballot box.

Dopoh, who highlighted the role of the legislature in shaping government's agenda, pledged to ensure that River Gee County's interests are well-represented in government policies. Particularly, he emphasized infrastructure, education, healthcare, and aligning county policies with national regulations and projects.

He assured the county that his primary focus and commitment would be fulfilling his responsibilities as a senator, saying "I have been elected to serve the people of River Gee County, and that remains my utmost priority." Editing by Jonathan Browne

MCSS holds 2023 graduation today

The Superintendent of the Monrovia Consolidated School System (MCSS) Isaac Saye-Lakpoh Zawolo, is today, Friday, 20 October expected to preside over the joint graduation ceremonies of four MCSS senior high schools at the SKD Basketball Gymnasium in Paynesville.

The Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Wesseh Blamo, is expected to serve as keynote speaker for the graduation ceremonies of William V.S. Tubman High School, G.W. Gibson High School, Pipeline Junior & Senior High School, and D. Twe Memorial High School, respectively.

During the ceremonies, prominent individuals and business institutions, including some MCSS alumni will be awarded and inducted into the MCSS Hall of Golden Partners, for their immense contribution to the school system.



MCSS Superintendent Isaac Saye-Lakpoh Zawolo

Honor roll students, who attained outstanding academic success will also be recognized and awarded to inspire all students of the system to strive for academic excellence in all subjects. The MCSS provides primary & secondary education to the population of Monrovia metropolitan area, Liberia. It was created by government through a legislative enactment on December 24, 1964, to ensure proper and effective conduct of schools in Monrovia under the supervision of the government.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Rerun in Nimba District#4 today

-as Weah maintains slack lead
By Naneka A. Hoffman

The chairperson of the National Elections Commission (NEC) Daviedetta Browne Lansanah, Progressive results announced by the National Elections Commission for the two top candidates in the race for Presidency give President



says re-run for the Presidential, Senatorial and Representative Elections at two polling places in Precinct Beo Lontuo, Electoral District#4, Nimba County will be held today, 20 October 2023.

The precinct suffered violence during polling day on Tuesday, 10 October when group of individuals forcibly entered there and reportedly took away ballot boxes, but Police retrieved those boxes subsequently.

George Weah 43.84% of the votes, while his main challenger, Joseph Nyumah Boakai trades with 43.34%.

Ms Lansanah says all is set for the conduct of these elections, as electoral magistrate and Police have already been deployed there, including NEC's permanent and temporary staff.

The NEC Boss further discloses seven (7) arrests have been made so far from the disruption of counting process in the Beo Lontuo

Precinct, Electoral District#4.

She explains that those arrested are George Josephus, Menwongbaye Sieden, Nelson Gomah, Gonmieta y Gomie, Emmanuel Luoh, Hanson Cooper and Hakkaton Miahn.

She says Police in Nimba have levied multiple charges against these suspects, ranging from obstruction of government's function, criminal mischief, theft of property to tampering with public records. Others, who were involved with the violent acts on polling day are said to be on the run.

Meanwhile, Madam Browne-Lansanah says regarding payment of temporary staff, payrolls for election workers from Lower Montserrado, Maryland, River Gee, Rivercess, Lower Lofa, Upper Montserrado, Margibi, Upper Nimba, Lower Nimba and Grand Gedeh have been submitted and disbursements are being processed via mobile money transfer for temporary staff, who worked in these magisterial areas.

However, she notes that payment for temporary staff from the remaining magisterial areas will be processed as soon as the payrolls are submitted. Editing by Jonathan Browne

PUL expresses Concern Over Freedom FM's Allegations of Political Division within the AFL

The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) has expressed deep concern regarding the recent broadcast on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, by Freedom FM. The radio station, owned by the Deputy Director of the National Security Agency (NSA), made serious accusations about political divisions within the ranks of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).

According to Freedom FM, (20) commissioned officers within the AFL are allegedly being decommissioned and dismissed from the force outside the established standards. During an evening talk show, a host and manager at Freedom FM, Abraham Wheon claimed that Major Gen. Prince C. Johnson, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia, is allegedly administering the AFL in a politically biased manner in favor opposition Leader Joseph Boakai. Wheon, urged

active-duty soldiers of the AFL who did not support President Weah in the initial round of voting to switch their allegiance due to perceived inadequate leadership within the Liberian Military.

The American Government maintains a Defense Attaché in Monrovia to work with the Armed Forces of Liberia on its professionalism. The AFL was restructured after the Civil Wars and has built itself ever since as a force for good in the eye of the Liberian public. The Press Union of Liberia finds these allegations deeply troubling and potentially damaging to the reputation and integrity of the Armed Forces of Liberia. As an organization committed to upholding the principles of responsible journalism and promoting ethical standards within the media industry, the PUL stresses the importance of accurate, fair, and unbiased reporting throughout the election process.

Unsubstantiated claims and divisive narratives can undermine the cohesion and morale of our armed forces, an institution vital to our nation's security and stability.

The Press Union of Liberia calls upon all media outlets, including Freedom FM, to exercise caution and responsibility in their reporting, especially when dealing with sensitive matters involving national security and the integrity of our military forces. The PUL encourages a respectful and constructive dialogue that fosters understanding and unity among all sectors of our society.



Critical Minerals Africa Summit defines the future minerals economy

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, October 18, 2023/ -- A high-level panel at Critical Minerals Africa 2023 - organized by Energy Capital & Power (https://www.EnergyCapitalPower.com) - discussed how sustainable practices, localized supply chains and integrated mining operations will help secure critical minerals supplies of the future.

Moderated by Olimpia Pilch, Founder and COO of Critical Minerals International Alliance, the panel featured Kwasi Ampofo, Head of Metals and Mining, BloombergNEF; Alex Benkenstein, Head of the Climate and Natural Resources Programme, South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA); Dr. Marit Y. Kitaw, Interim Director, African Minerals Development Center (AMDC); Deshan Naido, Managing Director, AQORA; and Duma Sisulu, Co-Founder & Chief Analyst, Parime Battery Minerals.

The panel sought to explore

the same enthusiasm around funding supply. There is a shortfall in supply, which then spikes demand. Every time the price drops - for example, in nickel - there will be producers who are unable to match the current supply at that price. We will then have a continuation of these supercycles, which is not sustainable," commented Duma Sisulu.

"If the critical minerals supply chain doesn't change, then we have failed as Africans. We have the opportunity to do what the international oil giants did 50-60 years ago. We have the bargaining power for the deposits that sit on the continent," said Deshan Naido. According to the panel, the future of Africa's critical minerals will involve mining companies diversifying their operations across multiple sectors, while fostering synergy among mining and energy sectors, owing to Africa's acute energy deficit. Establishing value-added activities will also be essential to maximizing resource efficiency and ensuring the



A panel at the first-ever Critical Minerals Africa summit on Wednesday identified key factors shaping the future critical minerals market and how Africa can position itself as a global hub Access Multimedia Content

the future of Africa's minerals economy in light of growing demand for clean energy technologies and mounting pressure to decarbonize existing mining activities and maximize resource efficiency.

Speaking to the scope of demand growth for energy transition mineral and metals, Kwasi Ampofo noted: "We currently use 50 million metric tonnes of metals going into transition technologies and accompanying infrastructure. By 2050, if we reach the scenario based on current policies and economics, we will need about 140 million metric tonnes. If we reach the net-zero scenario, this goes up to 250 million metric tonnes."

In evaluating the strength of Africa's currently local and regional supply chains, panelists evaluated strategies that can be implemented to ensure their resilience and build more localized value chains, which can help achieve market stability.

"There's a lot of discussion around demand, but we don't see

sustainability of the extractive sector.

"Africa does not have to accept its position within global supply chains... Mineral processing is energy intensive and requires a steady supply. This is not an absolute barrier - it can be rectified - which has been seen by the influx of investment by mining companies in South Africa to invest heavily in renewable energy technologies," stated Alex Benkenstein.

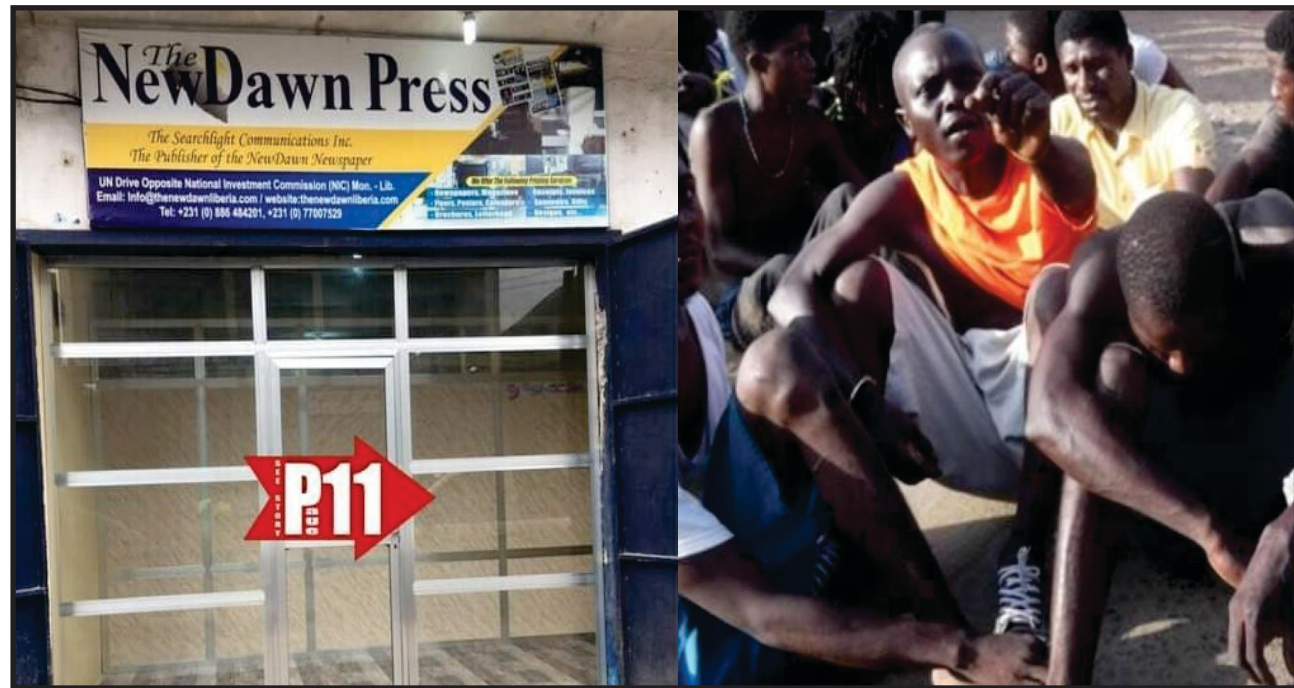
"The only way to transform lives is to add value - job creation, skills transfer, economies of scale, transformation and growth. This gives us the opportunity to set the agenda - we need processing, refining and value addition," emphasized Dr. Marit Y. Kitaw.

The Critical Minerals Africa 2023 summit is currently taking place from October 17-19 and serves to position Africa as the primary investment destination for critical minerals. The event is held alongside the African Energy Week 2023 conference (https://AECWeek.com/) on October 16-20, offering delegates access to the full scope of energy,

Français

Des criminels prennent d'assaut les locaux du journal NewDawn

Le journal NewDawn, l'un des principaux quotidiens locaux du Libéria, a été pris pour cible dans la nuit mardi et mercredi 18 octobre 2023 par une centaine de criminels endurcis armés de différentes armes meurtrières. La direction du journal a officiellement porté plainte auprès de la Police nationale du Libéria (LNP). M. Othello B. Garblah, directeur général (PDG)/rédacteur en chef du journal NewDawn, a informé l'inspecteur général de la police, le colonel Patrick Sudue, des attaques organisées répétées perpétrées contre le journal. NewDawn a été confronté à plusieurs reprises à des attaques de criminels appelés ici zogoes (jeunes défavorisés).



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La direction du journal a officiellement porté plainte auprès de la Police nationale du Libéria (LNP).

M. Othello B. Garblah, directeur général (PDG)/rédacteur en chef du journal NewDawn, a

contre le journal.

"Nous vous transmettons les salutations de Searchlight Communications Inc., éditeurs du journal New Dawn et nous plaignons officiellement auprès de votre honorable bureau des attaques organisées répétées perpétrées contre les bureaux de notre journal", a écrit M. Garblah.

Situé entre Centre Street et UN Drive, juste en face de la Commission nationale des investissements, le journal

M. Garblah a expliqué que tôt mercredi matin, vers 1h30 du matin, plus de 100 hommes armés de ciseaux cassés, de machettes, de gourdins et de pierres ont attaqué les locaux du journal New Dawn.

M. Garblah a déclaré que l'attaque est produite alors que les travailleurs imprimaient l'édition du mercredi 18 octobre 2023 du journal.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Second tour de la présidentielle au Liberia : George Weah réussira-t-il son pénalty ?

Les résultats de la présidentielle au Libéria sont connus. Comme l'avaient déjà annoncé les sondages, ce sont les deux poids-lourds que sont le président sortant, George Weah et son opposant, Joseph Boakai, qui caracolent en tête avec respectivement 43, 79% et 43, 49% des suffrages exprimés. Ainsi donc, il y aura, comme en 2017, un second tour qui opposera les deux adversaires de longue date, à moins que d'éventuels recours n'apportent la preuve contraire. Cela dit, on ne peut que se féliciter de ce que, contrairement à ce que l'on constate sous d'autres cieux, la publication des résultats de la présidentielle n'ait pas donné lieu à des scènes de violences au Libéria. C'est tout à l'honneur des acteurs politiques libériens qui ont su faire montre de responsabilité et de maturité. Car, le Liberia qui

revient de loin, aurait pu toucher le fond si les turpitudes de ses fils et filles, l'avaient plongé dans une crise post-électorale. En tout cas, tous ceux qui voudraient la preuve que les Libériens croient en la démocratie, en ont désormais une.

C'est le lieu de tresser des lauriers à la Commission électorale qui a su rester à équidistance des chapelles politiques

Car, au Gondwana, un second tour avec un président sortant

candidat à sa propre succession, n'est pas envisageable si bien que généralement, le nom du vainqueur à la présidentielle est connu avant même l'ouverture des bureaux de vote. Les exemples sont légion sur le continent africain, notamment dans sa sphère francophone où bien des dirigeants refusent de s'imaginer une autre vie en dehors du pouvoir. Si fait

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Éditorial

Il faut tenir compte des recommandations des observateurs internationaux

Les observateurs internationaux qui surveillent le processus électoral au Libéria donnent une série de recommandations aux autorités libériennes pour améliorer les futurs scrutins et renforcer le processus démocratique du pays.

L'Institut électoral pour une démocratie durable en Afrique (EISA), à travers sa Mission d'observation des élections (EISA-EOM), a fait un état des lieux des défis qu'il a observés lors des élections du mardi 10 octobre, dont notamment la sous-représentation des jeunes dans les postes électifs, l'engagement croissant des jeunes comme des milices politiques des partis, le retard dans l'exhibition de la liste électorale définitive, le retard dans la publication des réglementations sur la collecte et la tabulation des résultats, le manque de messages de campagne substantiels basés sur des questions ou des politiques, la désinformation généralisée sur les élections sur les médias sociaux et une stratégie de communication faible, et la faible visibilité des programmes de la NEC.

L'ESIA exhorte donc le gouvernement du Libéria à promulguer dans la loi des dispositions sur les quotas obligatoires de genre pour les candidates féminines, conformément à l'engagement international du Libéria en faveur de l'action positive.

Il a appelé également le gouvernement à explorer la possibilité de déplacer légalement le jour du scrutin à une date qui ne coïncide pas avec la saison des pluies afin de réduire les défis et les risques logistiques tout en facilitant la participation des électeurs.

"Appliquer les règles de la loi électorale en poursuivant les infractions telles que la transhumance des électeurs. À la NEC, il faut renforcer les communications publiques en mettant l'accent sur les processus clés, en les rendant plus proactives, plus rapides et plus précises. Collaborer avec les OSC pour améliorer la conduite de l'éducation civique et électorale", recommande le groupe.

Pour leur part, les observateurs électoraux de la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO) recommandent que, pour remédier aux embouteillages et aux longues files d'attente dans les bureaux de vote, des réformes soient introduites dans les lois électorales afin de réduire le nombre d'électeurs par unité de vote.

Bien que ce ne soient là que quelques-unes des recommandations des observateurs étrangers ici, et d'autres sont à venir, nous pensons qu'elles sont pertinentes et devraient attirer l'attention immédiate des autorités de la Commission électorale nationale et du gouvernement du Libéria afin d'améliorer notre processus électoral.

Les élections sont cruciales pour consolider la paix au Libéria. Un scrutin crédible produit un résultat qui sera acceptable pour la majorité de la population et fera progresser la gouvernance démocratique. Tout ce qui ne permet pas aux électeurs de choisir librement les dirigeants de leur choix est contre-productif et n'est pas sain pour le pays.

Cependant, le processus menant au déroulement effectif des élections est encore plus important. C'est pourquoi il est nécessaire que les parties prenantes, y compris les acteurs et les arbitres, travaillent ensemble pour organiser des élections crédibles afin que les résultats soient validés par les observateurs nationaux et internationaux pour le bien du pays.

C'est pourquoi nous pensons qu'il est important que nos autorités électorales et le gouvernement prennent ces recommandations très au sérieux pour améliorer le processus.

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Français

Starts from page 8 Des criminels prennent

« Ce faisant, ils ont blessé deux de nos employés et emporté des objets de valeur, notamment des téléphones et une moto. La moto a ensuite été récupérée par certains agents de l'unité anti-vol », a déclaré M. Garblah.

« Ce n'est pas la première attaque contre nos locaux de journal par ces individus de la rue communément appelés « Zogoes », a-t-il ajouté.

L'année dernière, le PDG de NewDawn a déclaré qu'à peu près le même nombre d'hommes avaient fait irruption dans les bureaux du journal, après qu'un

de leurs hommes, parti voler, ait été arrêté par le personnel de l'institution.

"Hier soir, il a fallu l'intervention des agents de l'Unité Anti-Vol pour sauver notre personnel des mains de ces Zogoes qui ont leur base sur la rue Centre, non loin de nos bureaux", a expliqué M. Garblah.

« Comme notre personnel de nuit, nos agents de sécurité ne sont pas armés et ne peuvent pas repousser physiquement ces Zogoes qui arrivent souvent en masse avec toutes sortes d'armes mortelles pour causer des blessures corporelles », a-t-il encore informé la police.

Starts from page 8 Second tour de la présidentielle au Liberia :

qu'ils passent leur temps à tripatouiller les Constitutions de leurs pays respectifs. En conséquence, bien des élections débouchent sur des violences avec en prime le déchirement du tissu social. Mais en concédant un second tour en dépit de sa qualité de

président sortant, George Weah montre la voie à suivre à bien des chefs d'Etat africains pour qui on n'organise pas des élections pour les perdre. Mieux, il a ordonné que tous ceux qui, y compris les siens, sont accusés de fraude électorale, soient arrêtés et jugés. C'est le lieu aussi de tresser des lauriers à la Commission électorale qui a fait un travail remarquable et a su rester à équidistance des chapelles politiques au point qu'aucun candidat ne l'a accusée de rouler pour tel ou tel camp. Sous d'autres cieux, elle cristallise toutes les attentions quand le choix de ses dirigeants ne fait pas l'objet d'une bataille rangée. On l'a vu en République démocratique du Congo (RDC) où le pouvoir et l'opposition ont passé le temps à se crêper le chignon autour de la composition de la Commission électorale nationale indépendante (CENI), en rajoutant ainsi au climat de suspicion déjà préexistant. En tout cas, après un premier tour dont le déroulement a été globalement apprécié par les observateurs internationaux, le Liberia n'a pas droit à l'erreur. L'exploit en football ne

garantit pas toujours le succès en politique

Il doit garder la tête haute et cela, même après la proclamation des résultats du second tour qui promet d'être très serré entre George Weah et son principal challenger. En effet, s'il est vrai que le président sortant jouit d'une grande popularité auprès de la jeunesse, force est de reconnaître qu'après son premier mandat, il a fait de nombreux déçus, notamment à cause de certaines de ses promesses non tenues. Non seulement les conditions de vie des couches défavorisées ne se sont pas améliorées, mais aussi la corruption qu'il avait promis de combattre, a manifestement progressé au point que Washington n'a pas hésité à sanctionner cinq hauts responsables libériens dont un proche de George Weah. Surfant donc sur les problèmes de gouvernance de son adversaire, l'opposant Joseph Boakai a ratissé large en nouant des alliances avec des barons locaux dont l'ex-seigneur de guerre et sénateur, Prince Johnson qui, pourtant, avait soutenu George Weah en 2017. Certes, il est vrai qu'en politique, 2 x 2 ne donnent pas forcément 4 comme en algèbre, mais au regard de la donne actuelle, on peut dire que George Weah a du mouron à se faire ; tant il n'est pas sûr de réussir son pénalty comme à la dernière compétition. Il a beau chausser les crampons et faire des dribbles, il lui sera difficile de remporter le match ; tant il semble esseulé. Comme quoi, l'exploit en football ne garantit pas toujours le succès en politique.

Présidentielle au Liberia: George Weah et Joseph Boakai au coude à coude, selon des résultats provisoires



President Weah

Amb. Boakai

Les deux principaux candidats, George Weah et Joseph Boakai sont toujours au coude à coude. Mais sur la base de 98,50% des bulletins dépouillés, on peut d'ores et déjà dire qu'il y aura un second tour. Il devrait se tenir au début du mois de novembre.

D'après les derniers résultats annoncés par la

Commission nationale des élections (CNE), George Weah obtient 43,79% des suffrages. Il est suivi de près par Joseph Boakai qui est crédité de 43,49% des voix.

Les résultats sont donc trop serrés pour qu'il y ait un vainqueur dès le premier tour. Selon le Code électoral, pour remporter le scrutin dès le premier tour, il faut obtenir au moins 51% des suffrages.

Incidents

Ce mardi, au début du point presse, Davidetta Browne-Lansana, la présidente de la CNE, a précisé qu'il y avait des bulletins manquants à cause, selon elle, d'urnes qui auraient été détruites.

Vendredi, cette responsable avait mentionné un incident survenu dans le Comté de Saino, où des procès-verbaux de résultats avaient été volés. De présumés coupables ont été arrêtés.

Ce genre d'incident semble ralentir la proclamation des résultats dans leur globalité. Une annonce qui tient d'ailleurs en haleine le pays depuis quelques jours, poussant la mission d'observation de la Cédéao à publier un communiqué pour appeler au calme. Cette mission demande aux partis politiques d'éviter les annonces prématurées de résultats afin de baisser les tensions autour de la Commission nationale des élections.

Sénégal: des détenus de la prison de Ziguinchor en grève de la faim



Dans le sud du Sénégal, en Casamance, 180 prisonniers ont entamé une grève de la faim pour dénoncer leur détention préventive qui dure pour certains depuis 4 mois sans avoir été présentés à la justice.

Parmi les grévistes de la faim, il y a quatre mineurs âgés de 15 à 17 ans, selon une association de la société civile qui leur a rendu visite. Arrêtés au mois de juin suite aux manifestations qui ont secoué le pays après la condamnation de l'opposant Ousmane Sonko, leurs familles demandent leur libération immédiate pour qu'ils puissent retrouver les bancs des écoles où ils sont inscrits.

Vingt-six autres personnes ont été arrêtées à Ziguinchor suite à ces émeutes, les 150 prisonniers restant sont des détenus de droit commun. Mais tous dénoncent des périodes de détentions préventives trop longues, plus de quatre mois pour certains.

Madja Diop Sané, coordonnateur de l'organisation Vision citoyenne, a sonné l'alerte : « Ces détenus n'attendent rien d'autre que d'être auditionnés sur le

fond de leur dossier. Maintenant, pour ceux qui peuvent bénéficier de la liberté provisoire, d'en bénéficier, pour ceux qui doivent attendre le jugement, ils attendront le jugement. Mais il faudrait d'ores et déjà qu'ils soient entendus sur le fond de leur dossier, parce que maintenir des gens en prison, ne pas les auditionner, c'est un problème.

» Mais avec un seul juge d'instruction à Ziguinchor, le problème est chronique, et l'embouteillage, avant que chaque dossier ne soit examiné, évident. L'association Vision citoyenne demande donc la nomination d'un deuxième juge et qu'il y ait une durée limite pour l'instruction.

« Ce qu'on voudrait, c'est que les questions judiciaires, surtout les questions d'instructions puissent avoir un

décali, car au Sénégal, on peut parler d'instructions. Mais on vous met en prison 3 mois, 5 ans, sans pour autant vous juger, ça pose problème ! », poursuit Madja Diop Sané, de l'organisation Vision citoyenne. Les 180 prisonniers, eux, promettent d'interrompre leur grève de la faim uniquement lorsqu'ils seront présentés à un juge. Ils se plaignent également de la mauvaise qualité de la nourriture et du prix du téléphone trop élevé. La direction de la prison de Ziguinchor n'a pu être jointe à ce sujet.

À Dakar, six femmes arrêtées suite aux émeutes du mois de juin et détenues à la prison liberté 6, ont également entamé une grève de la faim depuis une semaine, selon le parti de l'opposant Ousmane Sonko, pour exiger la libération immédiate des détenus dits politiques.

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ARTICLE

ARTICLE

The Appleton Phenomenon and Liberia's Electoral Fluidity

Dr. George Wah Williams
Civic Activist and an Int'l Electoral Observer & Engineer
 October, 2023

October 2023 Abstract: Liberia's most recent presidential and legislative elections have ignited numerous topical issues thumping the headlines in conversations - private and public. Across party lines, the issues lifted, but not limited to the slowness of the data center processing of votes, the excessively high number of invalid votes, and inadequacies in the vote counts from centers closest to the headquarters of the National Elections Commission (NEC) in Monrovia.

As valid as these issues remain, the Appleton factor in Liberia elections has left more questions than answers and perhaps will continue spotlighting future elections for decades. This paper is an attempt to make sense of the Appleton mystery and its implications for future elections in Liberia.

Introduction:

Edward "Eddie" Appleton, I got to meet in the early 80s, through a brother who was then a student at Cathedral High School on Snapper Hill. The two were strong buddies and have maintained that relationship even today. The last time I saw Eddie was at this brother's 50th birthday in North Carolina. Eddie the character has always impressed me to want in on the social spotlight. Like many others in our generation, had never projected any semblance of political ambition or desire to partake in national or community politics. The truth is, Eddie and I interacted in passing, so my observations are limited by my rare interactions with the gentlemen.

But here is a larger story. While there were 20 contestants in the race for the presidency of Liberia, NO one I have spoken to had heard of Eddie in any way. Eddie, dad, Cllr. Wade Appleton came more prominently into the limelight, I believe after the Tolbert assassination and the incumbency of Samuel Doe. Always nicely cut and decked, Eddie's crowd-pulling strength circled around Central Monrovia. He did play basketball but didn't cement himself as a brand in basketball circles. Schooling in Brewerville meant only the stars were known to us, Jessie Harmon, D-Jaal, and Siafa Varney...

All of this begs the question, how did an unknown candidate attain the number of votes over and beyond other much-publicized candidates? A number of theories abound, explaining the probabilities.

In no particular order, the first of the theories that come in handy is that of mistaken identity. Many purport that checking the box in favor of Eddie could have been a case of mistaken identity. Whose identity could have been mistaken? There is a possibility, considering Liberia's increasing literacy levels, that Eddie could have benefitted from a Weah look-alike or an Alexander C. name similarity.

While these propositions might seem improbable to the scrutinous eye, the likelihood of a vision-poor or illiterate voter examining the ballot from the top and checking the box near the picture or name resembling his choice is practically high. Even educated people routinely make such mistakes in other areas of life like sending the wrong text to someone seemingly bearing near similar identities.

Notwithstanding, another proposition - bordering on technology - is that of the quality of the tallying booklet imported by the NEC. Pundits have proffered that the defect of the booklets was such that writings on the duplicates lower down in the pile tended to spill over to other sections leading to votes misallocation.

This suggestion is less plausible considering that instances, where such occurred, would rather spill downwards and not above. Appleton is positioned at the very top of the ballot invalidating this proposition.

Meanwhile, there is an improbable electoral fraud circulating which - for all intents and purposes - seems most unlikely since this writer does not believe the candidate to possess the quality of infrastructure required to influence electoral fraud on the belly of the widespread votes he's attained so far.

The reason for this is simple. Had Appleton the resources to finance the scale of fraud, he would have chosen to publicize himself better than he did. Moreso, the candidate has never been known - to me at

least - to be a risk-taker on the opposite end of the law. So this proposition, I rule out this until proven otherwise.

Finally, there is an advantage of placement on the ballot that might explain why so many votes could have represented Eddie in the results. With the many long queues at voting centers, commentators suggest that voters might have been increasingly worn out and once given a ballot, checked the very first candidate they saw. Now this is possible, but not like considering the systematic collection of votes received across the country.

So where does this leave us? Several factors might explain why a little-known Eddie Appleton could have accumulated an unexpected number of votes over his better-known rivals. By far the strongest argument likely informing the sudden rise of Eddie may lie in his apparent charisma and appeal - but to whom?

Eddie is indeed a flashy crowd-puller, but to a

Another area of reform - though indirectly associated with the "Appleton Phenomenon" is the centralized vote processing currently employed by the NEC.

- The Over-centralization of the tally processing is susceptible to infringements since the overall results ultimately rest on the accuracy of the data-entry personnel. Perhaps a framework in the operationally centralized in the counties rather than in Monrovia. This will help with the disaggregation of data for healthier public access. In terms of the "Appleton Effect" this decentralization could ensure that ballot of a more localized scrutiny of the votes is undertaken. From an institutional reform standpoint, situations such as the "Appleton Phenomenon" and the increasing quantity of invalid votes and turnout present ample opportunities for research and engagement.

- Operational Transformation: Transforming the NEC into a knowledge generation and management entity rather than simply an operational vehicle for gathering and counting votes will enhance the "operationability" and responsibility of the NEC to the execution of its mandate. Setting up a structure focused on the understanding of electoral operations, administrative, and programmatic challenges and seeking local opportunities for improvement and overcoming identified problems.



Cllr. Wade Appleton

community that almost does not exist in these times. Whether the votes received were a combined protest against the leading candidates and the incumbent still does not explain how Appleton the phenomenon outclassed Gongloe and Cummings.

Though it remains inarguable that Mr. Appleton is the unknown factor in these elections, his unexplained 1 rise in the vote count raises election concerns and could spike motivations for electoral reforms going forward. "What are the implications for future elections in Liberia?"

Implications: Having served in several electoral capacities over my short professional life, a number of changes have to be effected to safeguard future elections from any similar situations. The first of many that pops up is:

- Ballots and Candidates: A system to streamline the number of candidates at all levels of the electoral process has to operationalize in helping our mostly illiterate populations deal with the innumerable maze of options from which to select. Perhaps a framework that filters the top five ranking candidates for a presence on the ballot. Setting a ballot performance threshold could prove useful to the process. Most folks heard of any association of Appleton with the electoral process only after the NEC's first announcement of results - which was unfortunate.

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Meet booted out lawmakers

By Lincoln G. Peters

Several lawmakers included those who endorsed incumbent President George Manneh Weah's 2023 re-election bid have been booted out by newcomers after they lost their re-election bid following the 10 October 2023 polls.

Pro-Weah lawmakers booted out include House Speaker and an executive of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) Bhofal Chambers, Montserrado Electoral District #8 Representative and CDC executive Moses A. Gray, and Rep. Jimmy Smith of Montserrado District 2.

Others are CDC Montserrado District #7 Rep. Solomon George and Rep. CDC Montserrado District #14 Rep. Abraham V. Conneh.

Additionally, Bomi County District #1 Representative Finda Lassana, Bomi Senator Morris Saytumah, and Lofa Rep. Mariamu Fofana, among others, were booted out.

On 13 June 2023, over 50 Senators and Representatives jointly endorsed President Manneh Weah's re-election bid ahead of the 10 October 2023 polls. On the list of lawmakers who endorsed President Weah were members of the ruling CDC Legislative Caucus. From Montserrado County,

President Weah attracted Representatives Moses Acarous Gray, Dixon Seboe, Solomon C. George, Frank Foko, Jimmy Smith, Thomas Fallah, Abu Kamara, Edward P. Flomo, Abraham Conneh, and Goerge Samah.

However, among the dozens of lawmakers from Montserrado County who endorsed the re-election bid of President Weah, three lawmakers managed to return to the Legislature.

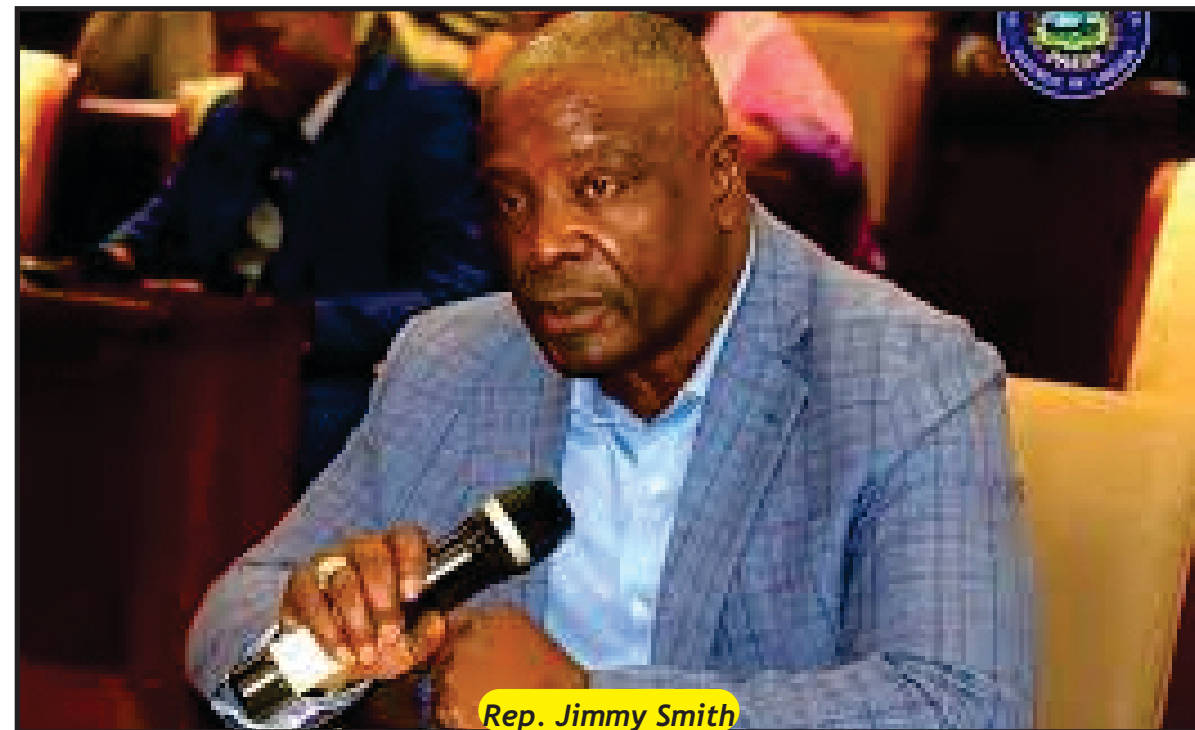
Those re-elected are District #15 Representative Abu B. Kamara, District #13 Eward P. Flomo, and District #9 Rep. Frank Saah Foko. Unfortunately, Representatives Gray of District #8, Smith of District #2, George of District #7, and Conneh of District #14 are not returning in January 2024.

Grand Kru County lawmakers who endorsed Mr. Weah were Fornati Koffa, Albert Chie, and Numeni Bartekwa. Meanwhile, all three lawmakers have maintained their seats in the Legislature.

From Maryland County, President Weah received the support of Gble-bo Brown, P. Mike Jury, Speaker Bhofal Chambers, and Isaac Roland. Mr. Speaker Chambers has lost his district seat, meaning he won't return to the Capitol this January.



Rep. Moses A. Gray



Rep. Jimmy Smith



Rep. Solomon George



Rep. Abraham V. Conneh

Boakai alludes to runoff

Starts from back page

round face-off against me and our broad-based Team," Amb. Boakai stated. Boakai argued that as evident from the results of the presidential election announced by the NEC, the Liberian people, in their righteous rage, have served President Weah a clear warning that his days in the presidency are numbered.

Boakai believed that very soon, the final verdict would be delivered to make President Weah a one-term president.

According to the opposition politician, Liberia has since witnessed gross incompetence, corruption, and brazen looting of state resources, with no accountability.

Amb. Boakai believes that the alleged lack of leadership and retrogression has been the order of the day.

"I, therefore, want to take this time to express my profound thanks and appreciation to the Parties of the UP Alliance and all our partisans and sympathizers, dispersed throughout the length and breadth of this country, who exercised their franchise by casting their votes for the Rescue Ticket," said Amb. Boakai.

"With your votes and support, we have made, and will continue to make history," he pointed out.

He stated that they have proven, in a resounding tone that a people determined to achieve a noble goal can prevail.

He said despite using millions upon millions of dollars obtained from questionable sources and intimidating opposition supporters, President Weah and his CDC were unable to break the ironclad resolve of the people.

Amb. Boakai also pointed out that despite the massive irregularities, they fought a good fight and defeated the ruling CDC.

"On the journey to October 10, 2023, you, our people, defied rain and thunder; you defied the scorching sun and the suffocating heat," said Boakai.

He said his supporters defied sleep and fatigue, walked long distances, and crossed many rivers and creeks just to share the good news of the Rescue Mission.

"You did so not so much because you love Joseph Nyumah Boakai or Jeremiah Kpan Koung. You did so because you love and deeply care for Liberia," he concluded.

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Boakai alludes to runoff

-vows to retire President Weah

By Lincoln G. Peters

Opposition Unity Party (UP) presidential candidate Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai has

the former Liberian vice president addressed his supporters at a press conference on Thursday, 19 October 2023, having seen

Friday in Nimba County does not show prospects of preventing a run-off.

A presidential candidate must obtain 50 percent plus one of the total valid votes to be declared a winner. 20 presidential candidates contested in the October 2023 polls.

Delivering his post-election address at the UP-Rescue Center in Monrovia, Amb. Boakai said there is no doubt that the majority of the Liberian people who stood in lines on Election Day, Tuesday, 10 October 2023 went to exercise their rights to eject President Weah from the presidency.

He said Liberians had rejected Mr. Weah for his alleged dismal performance over the past six years during which his party, the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) ruled the country.

"Through their votes, the Liberian people have presented to President Weah and his CDC a reality that they feared the most throughout these elections the possibility of a second-



Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai

alluded to the possibility of a presidential runoff between him and incumbent President George Manneh Weah.

Ahead of the National Elections Commission (NEC) releasing the full tally report,

majority of the progressive tally reports.

Both men are sharing close percentages from the total votes counted so far, and a re-run ordered by the NEC this

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