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Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL.

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Cummmings undecided

Pres. Weah and Mr. Cummings Mr. Cummings and Amb. Boakai

-After meeting Weah and Boakai separately

Opposition demand forensic audit

Mr. Cummings Rev. Nyanti Dr. Moniba

-Of 2023 presidential ballots

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Continental News

Malawi Makes First Large-Scale Wheat Harvest

Malawi Makes First Large-Scale Wheat Harvest

Wheat grain from Ukraine is seen on the docks in Djibouti. Speaking during the start of the first large-scale harvest over the weekend, Ngwira said the wheat

each one of us to work hard to achieve the desired results. Let us all make a move toward that goal by even using modern technology," Chakwera said.

Malawi has long been heavily dependent on imported wheat, and the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has disrupted food supply chains. According to the United Nations, Africa takes up 12.26% of grain imported from Ukraine.

A U.N. report notes that the Russian invasion of Ukraine triggered a shortage of about 30 million tons of grain on the continent, along with a sharp increase in cost. "If we can find markets, it can be another source of forex in the country," said Wisdom Mgomozulu, an agricultural economist and lecturer at Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences. "Because, as you know, wheat is among those high-value cash crops that are highly demanded in the world."

Mgomozulu said to achieve this, Malawi needs to find more sustainable production technologies that can give a comparative advantage, considering that there are already big players in the market. "We need more investment in research. Let's look for more funds and donor partners to finance agronomists and researchers who are trying their best to breed varieties that can be grown here in Malawi.

been tried since 2019. farming will help Malawi save millions of dollars spent on wheat imports. "Malawi imports 200,000 tons of wheat at \$48 million. To get there, it could take us four years to produce enough wheat in Malawi to satisfy ourselves," Ngwira said. "Four years might be seen as a long time, but we are already there and will have the seed available." Agriculture experts in Malawi say wheat farming is expected to produce about 90 metric tons, which is 50 percent of the country's wheat consumption. Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera witnessed the harvest Friday at Mpale farm in Dowa district. "Wheat farming can enable Malawi to be self-sustaining. But this will require



Wheat grain from Ukraine is seen on the docks in Djibouti

seen on the docks in Djibouti. Malawi has made its first successful large-scale harvest of wheat after years of attempts to find a variety of grain suitable for its soil. Wheat farming is seen as a solution to mitigate the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on grain imports to the African continent. Ronald Ngwira, chief executive officer of Malawi-registered U.S. company Pyxus Agriculture Limited, which operates a farm in central Malawi for the diversification of wheat seeds, said about four varieties of wheat have been found suitable for Malawian soil out of about 80 varieties which had

IMF Warns Africa of Economic Vulnerabilities as China's Economy Slows

The International Monetary Fund is cautioning African nations about the possibility of a regional economic downturn and the ripple effects that China's slowing economy could bring.

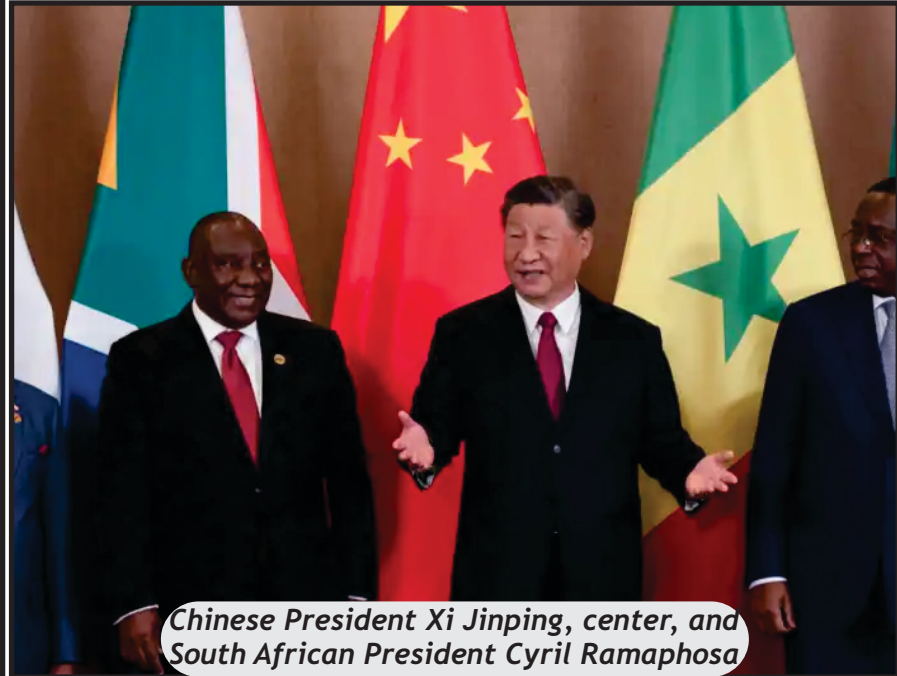
Africa and China have forged economic ties over the past 20 years, making the Asian giant the continent's largest trading partner. Africa exports metals, minerals and fuel to China, while importing manufactured goods and machinery from that country. The IMF says the partnership is threatened by China's economic slowdown and aging population, trade tensions, geopolitics and the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kenya-based businessman Adan Ibrahim, who imports vehicle parts from China, said it was difficult for a long time

African countries affect their trade relations. "When African economies are affected either by drought or other problems that may affect various sectors, the negative effect is felt in China," Iriara said. "If it's ... happening in China, the negative effect is felt in Africa.

"So, it's important that both the Chinese and African economies are doing well to create a more healthy trading relationship," he said. Ibrahim said that as China shifts away from COVID-19 controls, the price of goods has increased and they go unsold.

"The goods that we used to buy with the relatively cheap prices before the COVID are now triple the price that we currently buy with," he said. China's economic recovery from the pandemic slowed in recent months due to a sluggish property market and weak consumer spending. China's trade data showed that exports



Chinese President Xi Jinping, center, and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa

to access Chinese companies due to COVID-19 regulations, including visa restrictions that allowed relatively few people into the country per month. "Up to now they have not reopened well," Ibrahim said. "In terms of movement of people within the country, they even restricted when you travel to China. You [had to] undertake serious checks on health issues. There were ... challenges, both economic and health wise."

In December 2022, China lifted coronavirus restrictions that had prevented easy movement of goods and people.

Gerrishon Ikiara, an international economics lecturer, said the economic problems faced by China and

and imports continued to decline as demand for Chinese goods waned.

Ikiara said Africa needs to find new trading partners to develop its economies.

"If the Chinese economy is slowing down, Africa needs to diversify its trading partners and to diversify either imports or exports to Asia, other parts of Africa, Latin America and the U.S.," he said. "If there is a problem with our exports to China, we need to look for new markets." The IMF is urging African governments to diversify their economies, increase regional trade integration and create a favorable business environment so that local and international corporations can thrive.

Ghana deposits seeds in Arctic Circle 'doomsday vault'

Ghana has deposited seeds in the Arctic Circle's "doomsday vault" in an attempt to ensure the long-term protection of the country's major food crops.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault, a facility nestled in an arctic mountain on the remote Norwegian island of Spitsbergen, safeguards over 1.2 million seed samples, the world's largest collection of crop diversity in any single location.

The vault is owned by the Norwegian government and designed to withstand all natural and human disasters.

According to its operators, the facility provides permanent protection and preservation for food crops to ensure future global food security in the wake of disaster, earning it the nickname "doomsday vault".

Ghana's deposit was made by the West Africa country's Plant Research Institute, CSIR-PGRRI,

and includes key crops like maize, rice, eggplant and black-eyed peas.

The Crop Trust, which runs the seed vault, said it has seeds from almost every country on Earth.

Ghana follows African nations like Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia in making a deposit.

"This, our very first safety back-up, provides a sense of relief that our collections of crop diversity are on the path to being secured in perpetuity for the benefit of all humanity," Daniel Kotey, Senior Research Scientist at CSIR-PGRRI said. BBC



The Svalbard Global Seed Vault is owned by the Norwegian government

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EDITORIAL

Runoff election does not mean war

LIBERIAN VOTERS are bracing themselves for a runoff between President George Weah and former Vice President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, who both received the highest number of votes but did not obtain the legally required 50 percent plus one extra vote, to win the Presidency.

OFFICIAL RESULTS announced by the National Elections Commission as of Thursday, October 19, 2023, put President Weah ahead with 43.84 percent of the votes against his main rival Ambassador Boakai, with 43.43 percent, thus a need for runoff to determine a winner.

THIS IS NOT strange, both parties participated in runoff in 2017, when the UP narrowly lost to the CDC, earning Mr. Weah his first term in the Presidency. There will be a winner in the pending runoff now that the Presidential race has been cleared of the crowded candidates that characterized the first round.

BUT LIBERIANS need to reflect on the peaceful atmosphere under which the October 10 elections were generally held across the country, as they prepare for the second round in order to maintain the admiration this country just won for itself in the just-ended historic elections.

WE'RE TALKING about the peace and stability of the Motherland. Election should not put us at one another's throats in self-destruction just for the sake of a particular candidate or political party. We behaved so well at the ballot in the first round, leaving international observers raining praises, absolutely there should be no reason to abandon or to depart from such spirit in the runoff.

WE URGE BOTH President Weah and Ambassador Boakia to talk to their partisans and supporters as they ready for a second showdown. The runoff is not meant to bring Liberia to end or on its knees but to elect a leader that governs the country for not six years.

IT IS YOU the Liberian voters who have the power to make such decision through your votes. Exercise this power void of coercion and violence because you owe it to yourselves, your children and posterity.

Parties and presidents will come and go but Liberia remains the only common patrimony that we all belong to. We should not trade this nation for any politician or selfish interest.

We would have kept our admiration in the region by demonstrating in the runoff that Liberia is bigger than any party or candidate to be traded anyhow. Let's prioritize peace.

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COMMENTARY

By Mariana Mazzucato

Unlocking Health Technology's Potential for All

LONDON - COVID-19 cases are on the rise again, offering a stark reminder of the lessons we ought to have learned from previous waves. Far from being confined to COVID, most of these lessons apply to infectious-disease threats generally.

The pandemic demonstrated that we have the scientific and manufacturing capabilities to develop and mass-produce safe and effective vaccines quickly in the face of novel threats. But the success of the COVID-19 vaccines also reflected two decades of tireless efforts by scientists in academia and the private sector; and when the moment of truth arrived, a timely injection of public funds carried that work across the finish line.

If there was one technology that played an especially pivotal role, it was mRNA - or messenger RNA - which offers a level of adaptability and scalability that makes it highly suitable for pandemic preparedness and response (PPR). Already, mRNA vaccines and treatments are being tested for a wide variety of diseases, and efforts are ongoing to expand the technology's usability (such as by improving its temperature stability). When the next viral epidemic hits, mRNA vaccines will most likely be the first solution out of the gates.

But though this scientific breakthrough saved countless lives during the last pandemic, the benefits were not equitably shared. One year after the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines, approximately 73% of administered doses were concentrated in high- and upper-middle-income countries, whereas only 0.9% had reached low-income countries.

This disparity was even more pronounced for mRNA vaccines, which were primarily used in wealthy countries that initially hoarded supplies. Meanwhile, pharmaceutical companies maintained tight control over licensing and production, allowing them to reap eye-watering profits.

Another lesson of the pandemic, then, is that the mRNA platform will not realize its full potential unless we adopt a new approach that emphasizes equitable access and the common good. That means pursuing symbiotic public-private alliances that are better designed to share both risks and rewards.

When companies benefit from public funds - be it subsidies, guarantees, loans, purchase commitments, or procurement contracts - they should be required to maximize the public value of such investments. The conditions tied to public funding for mRNA-related research and development, production, and distribution, for example, could ensure affordability, equitable access, and reinvestment of profits into health innovation. The mRNA technologies that result from a collective effort should not be under the exclusive control of a few private companies; rather, they should be considered part of a global health commons, and made available and accessible to everyone in need.

A comparison of the Oxford-AstraZeneca and Pfizer-BioNTech (mRNA) vaccines shows why such governance matters. Both partnerships received considerable public funding - \$445 million to BioNTech and \$1.3 billion to Oxford-AstraZeneca - and both benefited from large advance-purchase commitments. But while public funding for production of Oxford-AstraZeneca's vaccine was conditioned on the company setting lower prices in the interest of accessibility, Pfizer-BioNTech was permitted to set higher prices, and then rebuffed calls for it to offer licensing agreements and technology transfers. Next time, governments must ensure that contract provisions reflect the common good and regulate excess profit-taking.

Likewise, intellectual-property governance should seek to facilitate knowledge transfers between countries, in the interest of more decentralized innovation and manufacturing. We urgently need to redesign IP rules and practices to ensure that critical health technologies - especially those heavily reliant on taxpayer funds and human capital (from researchers to participants in clinical trials) - are governed for the common good. That is why the World Health Organization's Council on the Economics of Health for All, which I chaired, has called for patents on mRNA technologies to be governed on the basis of a public-good perspective, rather than a proprietary one.

In practice, this means that the criteria for granting patents - including secondary patents - should be made more stringent, including by requiring additional disclosures of information that can help governments evaluate the scale of the market power they are granting. Patents should cover only fundamentally new innovations, and they should be confined more to downstream technologies, in order to prevent the privatization of basic research tools, processes, and platforms. The purpose of medical innovation should be to improve "Health for All" - the WHO's central mission - which requires timely and equitable access.

Providing access to essential IP and capital is critical to establishing the local and regional infrastructure needed to produce mRNA-based products. The WHO has explicitly recognized this need by launching an mRNA technology-transfer program, with a hub in South Africa and new technology-sharing partnerships between companies in at least 15 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Strong financial and political backing, however, will be needed to ensure this initiative's success. For example, LMIC governments could go further by establishing regional R&D hubs to foster collaboration between public and private actors on joint R&D portfolios.

More broadly, as governments take a renewed interest in industrial policy, they should recognize the opportunity to mobilize more investment, innovation, and growth around the goal of Health for All. Brazil, to its credit, has already aligned PPR with industrial policy through its Health Economic-Industrial Complex, which will use public procurement to create a domestic market for locally developed mRNA vaccines, yielding important health and economic benefits.

As international negotiations on a Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Accord make headway, the issue of ensuring timely, equitable access to medical countermeasures - including mRNA technologies - must take center stage. The mRNA platform has immense potential to deliver groundbreaking treatments and vaccines for diseases that primarily afflict LMICs and could be produced locally and affordably under the right IP regime.

To build this form of resilience, we must empower those countries' researchers, manufacturers, and governments to shape regional R&D and manufacturing ecosystems in the interest of the common good. Only then will mRNA technology reach its full potential.

Mariana Mazzucato, Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, is Chair of the World Health Organization's Council on the Economics of Health for All. A tenth anniversary edition of her book *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs. Private Sector Myths* (Anthem Press, 2013) was published by Penguin in September.

OP-ED

By Adekeye Adebajo

The Crisis of African Peacekeeping

PRETORIA - Last month, Democratic Republic of the Congo President Félix Tshisekedi demanded that the United Nations begin withdrawing its 17,000 peacekeepers from his country by December. In June, Colonel Assimi Goïta's military regime in Mali made the same demand; the UN will complete the withdrawal of its 12,000 peacekeepers from that country by January. Meanwhile, the African Union is removing its peacekeepers - numbering more than 15,000 - from Somalia, owing to Western governments' reluctance to continue funding the mission.

These untimely departures will exacerbate instability in Africa's most volatile regions: the Sahel, the Great Lakes, and the Horn of Africa. For that reason, they highlight the escalating crisis of peacekeeping in Africa.

At the root of this crisis is a paradox. UN peacekeepers - 84% of whom are deployed in Africa - tend to be well-resourced, but they often refuse to undertake dangerous enforcement missions to protect at-risk populations. African peacekeepers, by contrast, are more willing to do what is needed to enforce peace, but rarely receive the logistical and financial resources they need.

UN peacekeepers have a longstanding credibility problem in Africa. In 1961, the popular Congolese prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, was executed under the noses of a Western-dominated UN peacekeeping mission. After that, many African governments opposed the deployment of UN peacekeepers on their territory, and Burundi, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, and Sudan expelled UN troops.

In doing so, these countries may have thrown the baby out with the bath water: the UN played an integral role in restoring peace and democratic rule to Namibia, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone. But African governments doubt not only the effectiveness of external peacekeeping forces, but also their intentions.

Their suspicion is hardly unfounded. The deployment of troops by external actors like France and the United States to African countries such as Chad, Djibouti, Niger, and Senegal have often amounted more to self-interested meddling than genuine efforts to strengthen Africa's security.

France, in particular, is viewed by many Africans as using UN peacekeeping troops largely to advance its own interests. During its 27 years leading the UN Department of Peace Operations, it has been accused of deploying self-interested missions to its former colonies, including the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali. It does not help that France's decade-long counterterrorism operation in the Sahel utterly failed to stop the Islamic State and al-Qaeda from establishing a strong presence. French troops have now been expelled from bases in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

More broadly, UN peacekeepers are often viewed by local populations - such as in South Sudan and the CAR - as observers of slaughter and displacement rather than as bulwarks against them. Like Western countries, major non-Western contributors to UN peacekeeping forces - such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan - tend to refuse to deploy their troops for dangerous enforcement missions in Africa.

African populations also resent that so much of the \$1 billion budgeted annually for large UN missions typically goes toward meeting the sometimes-lavish needs of the peacekeepers themselves, rather than rebuilding war-torn countries. As if that were not bad enough, there have been numerous allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by UN peacekeepers. And this is to say nothing of external forces like Russia's Wagner Group mercenaries. Wagner is a particularly malign actor, yet it now exerts considerable influence in Mali and largely calls the shots in the CAR.

But the African peacekeeping crisis also has local roots - beginning with institutional weaknesses on the continent. Africa has many weak states, beset by poor governance, stalled socioeconomic development, and external actors' failure to strengthen state institutions in sustainable ways - a prerequisite to long-term peace. As a result, countries have often relapsed into conflict.

Even regional powers like Nigeria and South Africa - which have led missions in Burundi, Darfur, Liberia, and Sierra Leone - grapple with internal fragilities. Likewise, fledgling African regional organizations like the AU, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community, and the East African Community have significant weaknesses.

It is worth noting, however, that these organizations have made enormous sacrifices for the cause of peace: ECOWAS lost over 2,000 peacekeepers in ultimately successful efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, while a mostly East African peacekeeping force has lost over 3,500 troops in Somalia since its arrival in 2007.

To overcome the crisis, African governments must address the root causes of conflicts, with the international donor community generously supporting genuine democratic reformers in such efforts. Moreover, the UN must provide assessed contributions to support African regional organizations that continue to show a willingness to enforce peace on the continent. Care should be taken, however, to prevent the emergence of a kind of global security apartheid, with Africans sacrificing their lives in what should remain UN-led peace operations.

Countries deploying troops for UN missions must ensure that the goal of peacekeeping in Africa and elsewhere is to achieve peace, not profit, and they must be willing to allow their peacekeepers to participate in risky operations in pursuit of that goal. This will require leaders to shape domestic public opinion, rather than kowtow to it.

Finally, change within the UN is vital. The UN Security Council must broaden its permanent membership, particularly to Africa and Latin America. And, as UN Secretary-General António Guterres recently proposed, regional peace enforcers need UN-assessed support and a better-resourced UN Peacebuilding Commission that can work closely with the Security Council.

Guterres's proposals build on former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 Agenda for Peace, which set out a framework for post-Cold War peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding. More than three decades later, implementing these solutions is still the best way to advance peace effectively on the world's most conflict-ridden continent.

OPINION

Nature-Positive Innovation

MANCHESTER - What if we could build wooden houses without felling a tree? What if we could fish in such a way that left egg-producing females in the sea? And what if we could fill our forests with a wide array of edible plants, making commercially farmed forests look comparatively barren? Though they may seem impossible, these practices have existed for centuries, suggesting that the future we need is to be found in our past.

Climate change has become a time bomb, and the need to develop new ways of living that are far gentler on the planet has never been greater. But we stubbornly adhere to the same old mantra of innovation, technology, and unrestrained growth - offering lip service to sustainability while encouraging nature-destroying activities that are rapidly making the planet unlivable.

Even so-called "green" technologies accelerate production and promote consumption. Consider electric vehicles, bicycles, and scooters: manufacturing these goods requires ever more energy and resources and inevitably results in more emissions and waste.

While living in Canada, I had the opportunity to learn from its indigenous peoples. In the town of Port Hardy, on the northern tip of Vancouver Island, I met an indigenous fisherman at the municipal wharf, which was crowded with small fishing boats. He told me that he used to fish for halibut until industrialized fishing decimated the stocks. Now he fishes only for salmon; but those stocks are dwindling, too.

Before the Europeans arrived, indigenous peoples around the world had lived on their tribal lands for thousands of years; even after centuries of dispossession, many continue to be close to the Earth. They have learned, over generations, how to coexist with, rather than exploit, nature and developed highly sophisticated tools, mostly made of local materials. The design and utility of these tools reflect a deep knowledge of and respect for the natural world. By comparison, our modern innovations often seem frivolous and irresponsible.

Take, for example, the humble halibut fishing hook. Mass-produced hooks, which can be bought for pennies, are not made to last and can be easily replaced - like so many of today's products. The traditional halibut hook of the Pacific Northwest, however, is something else entirely.

This artifact seamlessly integrates many of the objectives that we are struggling to achieve in design today: functionality, sustainability, and conservation. It also embodies the creativity, artistic expression, ecological knowledge, spiritual beliefs, and cultural heritage of its indigenous makers.

Perhaps most importantly, the hook is sized to catch only the male halibut, which is smaller than the female, thus preserving fish stocks for the future. This approach to fishing, like traditional indigenous methods of boat building, house construction, and forest management, ensures the continuation of community-based practices, while simultaneously conserving the natural environment.

The good news is that UNESCO, through its Intangible Cultural Heritage lists, supports the safeguarding of this type of local knowledge and know-how, which should play a foundational role in sustainable development. Indigenous practices can help us rebalance our values and recognize the importance of interdependence, the common good, localization, a more distributed economy, and biodiversity.

These are all key aspects of economist Kate Raworth's groundbreaking book *Doughnut Economics*, in which she critiques the dominant economic system and proposes an economics suited to the twenty-first century. In the same vein, Wales, as a member of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, is attempting to transform its economy to ensure a good quality of life for all and to achieve harmony with the natural world. Transformation is progressing via a host of bottom-up (rather than centralized, top-down) initiatives, including local food production, swap shops, co-working spaces, "women's sheds," peppercorn rents for small businesses, local wealth-building projects, leadership training courses in nature-based well-being, and regular public-engagement panels.

As global warming accelerates, innovation must move beyond technological novelties whose main purpose is to generate profits for shareholders. Tools like the halibut hook of the Pacific Northwest and the localization initiatives in Wales demonstrate the need for a different set of values. Embracing resilient and restorative design that respects and supports the environment, social equity, and cultural traditions, while also building a vibrant economy that benefits everyone, is the only way to create a future that lasts.

ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

On 2nd Thoughts: Liberia's emerging warring factions

Last August, Liberia celebrated two decades of peace since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement 20 years ago in the Ghanaian capital, Accra.

From the surface, the guns have been long silenced, and the people are focused on consolidating their democracy which has witnessed successive elections, changes of power from one regime to another through the ballot boxes and a prospect for economic growth and development semblance of stability from a volatile history.

However, despite decades of peace and transition of power from one regime to another, Liberia remains fragile. The country is currently sitting on a time boom that could soon explore beyond everyone's imagination.

Yes, the country faces a clear and present danger from two emerging warring factions: Pen-Pen Riders and At-Risk Youth, commonly referred to as Zogoes.

These two groups, one primarily dominated by ex-child soldiers and street dwellers most of whom are drug addicts (Zogoes), and the other because of weak systems have placed this once troubled West African country on a time boom that both politicians and policymakers have continued to ignore.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, there are well over 75,000 disadvantaged youth or zogos in Liberia and can be found mainly in the urban areas. This figure could be higher as new members join daily. There are no exact figures for the Pen-Pen Riders who provide transportation services in both urban and rural communities. However, this group is made up of mostly school dropouts, former combatants, and young family heads.

While this last group of Pen-Pen riders are part of the informal sector and making little contributions to society, their outlaw behaviors outweighed their meager contributions.

For example, they drive recklessly and obey no traffic rules. They are quick to set vehicles on fire whenever there is an accident involving one of their members with impunity too. They have even gone further to set Police Depots ablaze because of accident cases, again with impunity. They are terror on the road because of their recklessness. The Liberian Government has yet to come up with any law that would put this group of people in check. And if there are any, they are soon relaxed to the detriment of commuters and vehicle owners.

Recently, one Pen-Pen rider between Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County and Kaweaken, River Gee County, threatened that they would set President George Weah's remaining convoy ablaze if one of their members was harmed.

What was the issue: two vehicles had gotten stuck in the mud and all other vehicles including motorbikes were asked to wait till one of the vehicles was pulled out of the mud. While the process was ongoing; another motorbike rider came running through. When he was told to stop like all others he refused. While drivers and passengers tried talking to him, one of their colleagues remarked: "If anybody touch (sic) any motorbike rider here, we will burn all the cars in this convoy."

This is how far, these Pen-Pen riders have gone because they believe they have the numbers to hold citizens at ransom. There are times they even set up roadblocks in communities to proffer their demands.

But if you thought the Pen-Pen Riders had become law and gospel unto themselves, then think again, the Zogoes are the most dangerous of the two.

Often armed with broken scissors, machetes, clubs, and other dangerous weapons, they parade the streets and inflate pains, while rubbing their victims.

Just last week between 1:30 and 2 AM, over 100 of these Zogoes armed with all kinds of weapons to inflate pains invaded this Newspaper offices, while staff were printing the Wednesday, October 18 edition of the paper wounding two staff and making away with a motorbike and cellphones. The motorbike was later retrieved by officers of the Anti-Robbery Unity of the Liberian National Police. No arrest was made.

Last year, the same group armed with similar weapons invaded this newspaper office after one of their men was caught stealing. That night one of the paper's staff was wounded. The newspaper was advised by Police Investigators who came on the scene that morning around 3 AM to armed staff members in case of repeated similar attacks.

On December 24, last year, these same Zogoes invaded the city's main shopping center during the eve of the festive season forcing sellers and buyers to run helter-skelter. Businesses and shopping centers closed as early as 2 PM on that day. The members of the Liberian National Police are ill-equipped to face these Zogoes thereby leaving citizens to repel their attacks.

This situation is becoming rampant, leaving the Zogoes and Pen-Pen Riders to feel like they are in charge of the situation.

Sadly, it is alleged that most of these police officers are in cohort with these criminals particularly the Zogoes. This allegation is based on the premise that these Zogoes soon appear back on the streets two days after their arrest.

Meanwhile, in the case of the New Dawn newspaper, the Police Inspector General Patrick Sudue has yet to respond to an official complaint filed before it by the management of the New Dawn.

With this growing level of impunity, it's time that the government takes a decision to address the situation from the beginning before it develops into a bigger crisis that could plunge the country into chaos.

Weah and Boakai meet in run-off

By Lincoln G. Peters

Liberia's National Elections Commission (NEC) has declared a presidential run-off between incumbent President George Manneh Weah and his political archrival Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai.

20 presidential candidates contested for the nation's highest seat, and none of the two leading candidates could secure a first-round victory.

A presidential candidate is required to obtain 50 percent plus one of the total votes cast on the first ballot to be declared a winner. The NEC has declared the second 14 November 2023 as the date for the runoff presidential election across the country between incumbent President Weah and Amb. Boakai.

Mr. Weah obtained a slight lead over Boakai in the first round of the polls after a full nationwide tally.

During a regular press briefing Tuesday in Monrovia, NEC Chairperson

(43.44%).

Madam Brown-Lansanah put the average valid votes at 1,834,516, while the invalid votes amount to 114,639.

"Results of the 10 October



[elections] show that the ticket of the Coalition for Democratic Change headed by candidate George M. Weah obtained the highest number of votes followed by the ticket of the opposition Unity Party," said Madam Brown-Lansanah.

However, she said Article 83 (b) of the Constitution of Liberia says elections of public officers shall be determined by an absolute majority of the votes cast.

She noted that if no candidate obtains an absolute majority in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be conducted on the second Tuesday following the two candidates who received the greatest numbers of votes on the first ballot shall be designated to participate in the run-off election.

With no presidential ticket obtaining 50% of the votes, she declared a run-off to be held on Tuesday, 14 November between the two tickets that obtained the highest votes of the CDC and UP.

According to the NEC chairperson, the political campaign for the runoff election officially started Tuesday, 24 October 2023, and will climax on 12 November at 11:59pm.



Madam Davidetta Brown-Lansanah read the Nationwide Progressive Tally Reports consolidated.

She said that the runoff is declared in keeping with Article 83 (b) of the Constitution since no political parties reached the 50% benchmark. She reported that the Commissioners have completed the nationwide tally 100%.

Based on the final presidential tally report consolidated, She said candidate Weah and the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) obtained 804,87 (43.83%), while opposition Unity Party (UP) candidate Amb. Boakai obtained 796,961

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Kwaipai Africa promotes urban agriculture

By Lincoln G. Peters

Kwaipai Africa, a grassroots community agriculture organization, has increased its

people to engage in agriculture production as means of tackling food insecurity. The training and technical support are meant to build the

of animals in urban communities. This form of agriculture was introduced in Liberia immediately after the civil crisis to create jobs for the poor residents and to help sustain their food security. However, speaking in an interview with this paper, Ebenezer Kukai, Founder of the Kwaipai Africa, believes that by bringing these urban farmers together will give them some fundamental understanding of how to produce or grow what they eat. "We want them to get some technical support and trainings because we can't give you materials without technical knowledge and skills about the materials."

He said that training the farmers and providing technical assistance such as seedlings and other garden materials will help them do better in their production when they go back to their various communities.

At the end of the one-day training program, participants were provided vegetables, seedlings and seeds to enable them establish a backyard to grow more food for their communities.

Kukai said residents will grow the crops and sell some to earn incomes to support



technical support and training programs to 30 urban farmers on GSA Road Community in Paynesville, Montserrado county.

Kwaipai Africa was established on September 10, 2019, to build capacity of local community-based farmers within peri-urban areas. The organization focuses on youth engagement in peri-urban gardening, valuable women and girls, people living with disabilities, high school students, and less-fortunate

capacities of urban farmers by providing knowledge, skills and vegetables seeds to enable the farmers to grow food for their households and the local market.

The training brought together urban farmers, mostly women from within the GSA Road Community and its environs, who are being recruited and supported by the organization for livelihood incomes.

Urban agriculture is the cultivation of crops and raising

Moye rallies Bong for Boakai

By Lincoln G. Peters

Bong County Senator Prince K. Moye says he is mobilizing supporters to move into the trenches in his county for opposition Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai to win incumbent President George Manneh Weah in a possible run-off.

The National Elections Commission (NEC) is expected to announce the final nationwide presidential and legislative election results today, Tuesday, 24 October 2023.

20 presidential candidates contested the 10 October 2023 polls, and it appears unlikely that percentages obtained by Mr. Weah and Amb. Boakai from the previous tally would prevent a possible run-off.

The final election results were delayed allowing a re-run in Nimba County Electoral District #4 where ballot boxes were stolen in the first round. With the majority of the votes announced already, the two archrivals - Mr. Weah and Amb. Boakai were both below 50 percent plus one of the total votes cast to be declared the winner.

Ahead of the NEC releasing the full tally report, the former Liberian vice president addressed his supporters at a press conference on Thursday,

19 October 2023, having seen the 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 last Friday in Nimba County does not show prospects of preventing a run-off.

Meanwhile, Moye reassured UP supporters of delivering the county in the hands of Boakai and making him president.

In an interview with this paper, Senator Moye said they have received the mandate from UP standard bearer Amb. Boakai and they are prepared to finally win the election. Moye reassured UP supporters of

delivering the county in the hands of Boakai and making him president. Responding to the former vice president's call, Senator Moye said he would ensure that Bong is delivered. "The standard bearer has spoken; the next president has spoken already, and we are gearing up to move into the trenches to ensure that we win this thing finally. I will deliver Bong County to Unity Party," he noted.

Delivering his post-election address at the UP-Rescue Center in Monrovia last week, Amb. Boakai said there is no doubt that a majority of the Liberian



Rep. Prince K. Moye

Election controversy erupts in Grand Bassa District#5

By: Kruah Thompson

Unity Party's candidate for Grand Bassa County District#5, Chris Juaah Setro alleges there were malpractices at some polling places within the district. Addressing a news conference recently after the election, Ms. Setro cited instances of malpractices that she claims to have observed during the voting process. Specifically, she says there were issues at polling places in Old Camp Precinct (Code 09007), Zono Precinct (Code 09013), and Gbowee Precinct (Code 09034), among others. According to her, polling staff at these mentioned precincts denied entry to voters, citing overcrowding concerns.

"They further called on the police, who were assigned at these places to escort voters

transferred to Monrovia. "It is currently before the National Elections Commission, awaiting a hearing."

At the same time the UP candidate further claims there are threats against her life and lives of her supporters, since the case was moved to Monrovia. According to her, she keeps receiving threatening phone calls, and her followers have also been targeted. "I have the recordings of the threats made against me and my followers."

She demands a recount in Old Camp and a rerun in Zono, where she alleges that voters were obstructed, and a rerun in Gbowee, where she claims no one was allowed to vote.

Setro appeals to the international community, civil society organizations, UN Women, and election observers to join her



outside the polling area, effectively preventing them from casting their ballots", she adds.

In the case of Zono Precinct, Setro narrates that voters were denied their right to vote, and that NEC supervisor at the precinct closed after 6 p.m., even though many voters were still waiting in queue.

"In the Gbowee area, the ballot boxes arrived late in the night, and many voters had already left, leaving only election workers to cast their votes."

Setro reveals that a complaint was initially filed at the local magistrate in Buchanan, Grand Bassa, but due to concerns of impartiality, the case was

cause and ensure that justice prevails.

When questioned about the potential political ramifications of her actions, she remained steadfast, asserting that this controversy might even result in her gaining more votes, as she is confident that she won the election by a landslide.

Setro emphasized challenges faced by female candidates during elections, highlighting that she is the sole woman who has achieved victory in Bassa, which is why she believes she is facing opposition, despite having already won.

The elections commission is yet to reach a verdict on the contested results in District 5 of Grand Bassa County.

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NEC postpones Bhofal Chambers election case

By Bridgett Milton
The Board of Commissioners of the National Elections Commission (NEC) has postponed the hearing of the

from the district, Mr. Chambers filed a complaint before the NEC Board of Commissioners demanding a rerun of the election in some parts of his district. According to Speaker

centers.

They further claimed to have evidence that there were more votes cast in that polling center instead of the regular 550 votes to be cast at a polling center. Speaking to journalists at the NEC office in Sinkor, Speaker Chambers' Political Officer Mr. George Watkins said Tuesday, October 24 was the date set aside to hear their complaint.

Watkins noted that they are going to follow all the legal processes.

According to him, they could not go with the case on Tuesday because the Board of Commissioners said Mr. Williams didn't have lawyers. He said Williams requested the NEC to give him up to Thursday to appear with his lawyers.

Meanwhile, Watkins said they believe in the legal process and they believe that the right thing will be done.

At the same time, he called on supporters to remain calm and trust the legal process. This paper recently reported a looming legal battle over the Pleebo election results amidst allegations of ballot stuffing in a leaked audio recording.

The district made headlines on election night when traditional chiefs allegedly brought out a country devil to take siege of ballot boxes at the precinct.



Speaker Bhofal Chambers

election case between House Speaker Bhofal Chambers and his rival Anthony Williams.

On Tuesday, the NEC Board of Commissioners began hearing the case from Maryland County Electoral District #2 involving Mr. Chambers and Williams. So far, results from the district have put Mr. Williams in the lead over Mr. Chambers.

Chambers has represented Maryland District #2 since 2006, but his quest for a fourth six-year term has been brutally resisted by Mr. Williams, a young former student leader. Following the NEC's announcement of poll results

Chambers' legal team, they have evidence that there was alleged ballot stuffing on Election Day.

Chambers' lawyers claimed that their observers were chased out by the presence of a country devil, a traditional mask dancer used in most of Liberia's rural areas by local leaders to exercise power.

The complaining legal counsels alleged that traditional chiefs brought out a country devil and took siege of ballot boxes at polling precinct #27020 in Old Sodoken, Maryland County. According to them, the precinct in question is comprised of two polling

I lost a golden opportunity

-Rep. Kiazolu concedes defeat in Grand Cape Mount

By Ethel A Tweh
Montserrado County Representative Hanson Kiazolu has termed the Grand Cape Mount County senatorial seat as a desperately needed golden opportunity that he lost in the October 10, 2023 presidential and legislative elections.

Mr. Kiazolu, who is the incumbent representative of Montserrado County Electoral District #17, recently contested for the senate in Grand Cape Mount County, but was defeated by Madam Dabba Varpilah, on the ticket of the Unity Party.

Addressing some residents who had gone to wish him a happy birthday on Tuesday, the defeated senatorial candidate recounted that he usually celebrates his birthday every year in a well notable fashion in the county.

But Kiazolu indicated that with the golden opportunity lost, it is now impossible to

have any big celebration this year. "Normally, every year, what I go about doing, I celebrate my birthday when I achieve. This year, we could not achieve and desperately we missed that opportunity, so I don't see the need for us to celebrate," he said.

The Montserrado County lawmaker instead said he is now focused on reflecting and

recalibrating to get prepared for another celebration in 2024. At the same time, as the National Elections Commission on Tuesday, October 24, 2023 declared the runoff presidential election between President George Weah and Ambassador Joseph Boakai, the lawmaker said his biggest focus is the election of former Vice President Boakai.



Ballout rallies opposition leaders

By Lewis S Teh

Minutes after the National Elections Commission announced a runoff presidential election for November 14, former Maryland County senator John A. Ballout is calling for a united opposition support in the runoff.

Former Sen. Ballout specifically calls on opposition leaders including CPP standard bearer Alexander B Cummings, LPP leader Cllr Tiawan S. Gongloe, and ALL leader Rev. Sarah Beysolow Nyanti, among others not to disappoint Liberia by pledging support for the reelection bid of President Weah. The NEC Tuesday, October 24, 2023 announced final results of the 10 October 2023 Presidential and General Elections in which none of the 20 candidates who vied for the presidency, including President George Manneh Weah obtained 50 percent of the total votes cast plus one, to emerge as winner.

decision you make, as opposition leaders; we are watching you carefully, the fact that they are reaching out to you and everyone means, they have absolutely nothing to show.

But Ballout says he trusts the wisdom of Cummings, Cllr. Gongloe, Madam Nyanti, and Monibah, among others, who according to him, would never stand low to support the Weah administration in its quest for second term.

He accuses the governing CDC of recruiting thieves, who are in communities, buying voters' cards just to destroy the future of Liberia. He claims that almost all NEC staff are partisans of the ruling Coalition, adding that the CDC is on record of doing this allegedly by infiltrating the system. He continues that these will be brought to book in the soonest time after UP wins the runoff, adding "We can't subject this country for another six years to a catastrophic leadership."



However, the Commission announces President Weah and opposition Unity Party Standard Bearer Joseph Nyumah Boakai as candidates with the highest percentages from the polls, which constitutionally qualifies them for the runoff.

"The fact that today drugs all over the place, the fact that they're selling our passports, among the many others, we trust in your wisdom that you will never disappoint Liberia at this crucial stage", Ballout says to the opposition.

He made the call Tuesday, October 24, on Joy FM in central Monrovia. "Be careful with the

The former senator also frowns on the government's decision to have harmonized civil servants' salary, saying you come from the southeast; you fail to improve civil servants' salary, we in the Unity Party brought a lot to this country.

He reminds that the Iberian people voted the CDC to make things better, instead of worsening their living conditions.

"Besides myuan myuan, what has he done, to dash money all over the country, which is causing this country into debts, and it will take strong and courageous men to rescue this country." Editing by Jonathan Browne

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Français

Les femmes réclament des sanctions contre les auteurs de l'excision

La Représentante de l'UN Women au Libéria, Comfort

nombreuses jeunes filles continuent d'être soumises à cette pratique illégale et nuisible

de la santé sur la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF), la pratique persiste en raison d'une combinaison de normes culturelles et d'un manque d'application efficace.

Le rapport a également indiqué que le traitement des complications de la MGF coûte chaque année aux systèmes de santé 1,4 milliard de dollars américains, un chiffre appelé à augmenter à moins qu'une action urgente ne soit entreprise en vue de son abandon. Cependant, des violations continuent de se produire, tandis que des efforts sont déployés pour sensibiliser aux effets nuisibles de cette pratique avec l'aide du Conseil National des Chefs et Anciens du Libéria (NACCEL), du Ministère de l'Intérieur, du Ministère du Genre et de la Protection Sociale, d'organisations de la société civile et de partenaires internationaux.

Cette question est étroitement liée aux normes culturelles et aux traditions pratiquées dans 11 régions du pays, à savoir : les comtés de Bong, Lofa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Maryland, River Gee, River Cess, Grand Kru, Sinoe, Margibi et Gbarpolu, tandis que des progrès vers son élimination sont toujours en cours.

S'exprimant à ce sujet, la

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Lamprey, a souligné la nécessité d'imposer des sanctions sévères à l'encontre de ceux qui violent l'interdiction de la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF) au Libéria.

Il s'est écoulé près de neuf mois depuis que le Chef Zanzan Karwor, Président du Conseil National des Chefs et Anciens du Libéria (NACCEL), a annoncé une interdiction nationale de la MGF à Sonkay Town, dans le comté de Montserrado.

Malgré l'interdiction en février 2023, des rapports indiquent que de

sans avoir leur mot à dire, ce qui est décrit comme une violation de leur droit de donner un consentement éclairé à toute procédure pratiquée sur leur corps.

Au Libéria, comme dans de nombreux autres pays, cette pratique ne présente aucun avantage pour la santé des filles et des femmes, provoquant des saignements graves, des problèmes urinaires, puis des kystes, des infections, ainsi que des complications lors de l'accouchement et un risque accru de décès des nouveau-nés.

Selon le rapport de janvier 2023 de l'Organisation mondiale

Sénatoriales 2023 : 11 sénateurs mis à la porte

D'après les résultats des élections présidentielles et législatives du 10 octobre 2023, il semble qu'au moins 11 sénateurs sortants aient été évincés du Sénat. Cela signifie que seuls quatre des 15 sénateurs sortants qui se représentaient ont réussi à conserver leur siège. Les 11 sénateurs concernés sont les suivants : le sénateur Cllr. Varney G. Sherman, du comté de Grand Capemount, a été remplacé par Dabah M. Varvpilah. Cllr. Sherman,

ancien président du parti d'opposition Unity Party, avait choisi de se présenter en tant que candidat indépendant, mais il a été finalement battu par un candidat de son ancien parti, Dabah M. Varvpilah, de l'UP. Ensuite, le sénateur Morris G. Saytumah, du comté de Bomi, un autre membre influent de l'ancien parti au pouvoir, l'Unity Party, a changé de camp à la dernière minute pour soutenir la réélection du président en exercice, George Weah. Il a été hué par les citoyens au début de la campagne du 10

octobre 2023 et a finalement été battu par l'ancien président de la Chambre des représentants, Alex Taylo, un ancien membre de la Coalition pour le Changement Démocratique (CDC) au pouvoir, qui a retiré son soutien et s'est présenté en tant que candidat indépendant. Dans le comté de Bong, le sénateur le Dr. Henrique Tokpah a vu sa carrière législative de 18 ans prendre fin lorsqu'il a été battu



Sen. Sherman

Sen. Saytumah

Sen. Tokpah

Sen. Kaipay

Sen. Teahjay

Sen. Zargo

Éditorial

Le second tour de la présidentielle n'est pas la guerre

Les électeurs libériens se préparent à un second tour opposant le président George Weah à l'ancien vice-président Joseph Nyumah Boakai, les deux ayant recueilli le plus grand nombre de votes, sans toutefois atteindre le seuil légalement requis de 50 pour cent plus une voix supplémentaire pour remporter la présidence.

Les résultats officiels annoncés par la Commission électorale nationale, le jeudi 19 octobre 2023, placent le président Weah en tête avec 43,84 pour cent des votes, contre 43,43 pour cent pour son principal rival, l'ambassadeur Boakai, d'où la nécessité d'un second tour pour déterminer le vainqueur.

Cette situation n'est pas étrange, car les deux partis ont déjà participé à un second tour en 2017, lorsque l'UP a perdu de justesse face au CDC, ce qui a permis à M. Weah d'obtenir son premier mandat à la présidence. Il y aura assurément un vainqueur lors de ce second tour, maintenant que la course présidentielle a été épurée des nombreux candidats qui caractérisaient le premier tour.

Cependant, les Libériens doivent se rappeler l'atmosphère pacifique dans laquelle se sont déroulées les élections du 10 octobre dans l'ensemble du pays, alors qu'ils se préparent au second tour. Cela leur permettra de préserver l'admiration que ce pays vient de gagner grâce aux élections historiques récemment achevées.

Nous évoquons ici la paix et la stabilité de la Mère-Patrie. Les élections ne doivent pas nous diviser et nous pousser à l'auto-destruction pour le bien d'un candidat ou d'un parti politique en particulier.

Nous nous sommes comportés de manière exemplaire lors du premier tour des élections, suscitant les éloges des observateurs internationaux. Il n'y a donc absolument aucune raison d'abandonner ou de dévier de cet état d'esprit lors du second tour.

Nous encourageons à la fois le président Weah et l'ambassadeur Boakai à dialoguer avec leurs partisans et partisans pendant qu'ils se préparent pour ce second affrontement. Le second tour n'a pas pour but de mettre fin au Libéria ni de le mettre à genoux, mais bien de choisir un dirigeant pour gouverner le pays pendant les prochaines années.

C'est vous, électeurs libériens, qui avez le pouvoir de prendre cette décision grâce à vos votes. Exercez ce pouvoir de manière libre, sans contrainte ni violence, car vous le devez à vous-mêmes, à vos enfants et à la postérité.

Les partis et les présidents passeront, mais le Libéria demeure le seul patrimoine commun auquel nous appartenons tous. Nous ne devrions pas sacrifier cette nation pour un politicien ou des intérêts égoïstes.

En démontrant, lors du second tour, que le Libéria est plus grand que n'importe quel parti ou candidat à échanger de quelque manière que ce soit, nous pourrions préserver notre admiration dans la région. Priorisons pour la paix.

Français

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Les femmes réclament

Représentante de l'UN Women au Libéria a déclaré que l'appel à des sanctions strictes à l'encontre des contrevenants est une réponse à la persistance de la pratique de la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF) et qu'il s'agit d'une étape nécessaire pour dissuader les individus et les communautés de s'engager dans cette tradition nuisible.

Elle a fait ces remarques lors de la cérémonie de remise rituelle qui s'est déroulée le vendredi 20 octobre 2023 à Gbaota, dans le comté de Bong, où le Conseil National des Chefs et Anciens, représenté par son adjoint, Jemmie Jpokia, a organisé une cérémonie traditionnelle marquant officiellement la remise des outils traditionnels utilisés pour pratiquer la MGF et la fermeture du bush dans la région. Au Libéria, il existe deux grandes sociétés ou groupes ethniques historiquement associés à la pratique de la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF).

Il s'agit de la Société Krahn : les Krahn, qui résident principalement dans la région du sud-est du Libéria, ont une longue tradition de pratique de la MGF. Cette pratique est profondément ancrée dans leurs croyances culturelles et traditionnelles. Deuxièmement, la Société Bassa : les Bassa, également situés dans la région du sud-est du Libéria, sont connus pour pratiquer la MGF, en particulier sous la forme de la Société Sande, qui est une société secrète féminine associée à l'initiation des jeunes filles. La Représentante de l'UN Women, qui joue un rôle clé dans la promotion de l'égalité des sexes et des droits des femmes, a réitéré leur engagement à soutenir les

organisations qui éduquent les communautés sur le respect de l'interdiction dans les 11 régions. Elle a souligné : "Même lorsque vous avez une interdiction, la mise en œuvre n'est pas à cent pour cent, et c'est pourquoi il y aura des sanctions pour ceux qui enfreignent la loi si vous l'avez."

En même temps, elle a appelé à une sensibilisation accrue et à l'éducation sur les conséquences de la MGF. Elle a affirmé que de tels efforts, s'ils réussissent, pourraient jouer un rôle significatif dans le changement des normes culturelles profondément enracinées et garantir que les filles et les femmes ne soient plus soumises à cette pratique nuisible.

"C'est essentiel, non seulement pour protéger les droits et le bien-être des femmes et des filles, mais aussi pour changer les attitudes de la société et mettre fin à cette tradition nuisible une fois pour toutes."

L'appel à des sanctions strictes de la part de la Représentante de l'UN Women s'inscrit dans le cadre des efforts mondiaux plus larges visant à éliminer la MGF et à promouvoir l'égalité des sexes dans le monde.

On s'attend à ce que cela encourage les gouvernements et les communautés à prendre des mesures plus décisives contre la pratique en adoptant une législation qui permettra finalement de créer un monde plus sûr et plus équitable pour les femmes et les filles. Le gouvernement suédois a salué le Libéria pour l'interdiction de la mutilation génitale féminine, le qualifiant de réussite révolutionnaire pour le pays d'Afrique de l'Ouest.

L'Ambassadeur a salué l'engagement, leadership et la décision de s'unir sur la base de la tradition et de la culture pour prendre une décision bénéfique tant pour les femmes que pour les hommes au Libéria.

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Sénatoriales 2023 : 11

par Johnny Kpehe, un candidat indépendant dont la popularité a explosé dans le comté de Bong lors des élections de 2023.

Dans le comté de Grand Bassa, le sénateur Jonathan Kaipay a été le quatrième sénateur à quitter son siège au profit de l'ancien président pro tempore du Sénat, Gbehzonhngar M. Findley, qui effectue un retour. Ancien membre de l'Unity Party de l'opposition et sympathisant de la CDC au pouvoir, Findley a finalement choisi de se présenter en tant que candidat indépendant après s'être rallié au Parti Politique Collaboratif (CPP). Findley est considéré comme le parrain montant de la

politique de Bassa.

Findley avait également été ministre des Affaires étrangères dans le gouvernement de Weah avant de démissionner pour se présenter aux élections sénatoriales partielles de décembre 2020, où il avait été battu par le sénateur en exercice Nyonblee Karnga-Lawrence.

Le sénateur Milton Teahjay, ancien sympathisant de la CDC lors du second tour des élections présidentielles de 2005, avait ensuite rejoint l'Unity Party après sa nomination par l'ex-présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf en tant que surintendant de Sinoe. Il avait quitté ce poste pour se présenter au Sénat en 2017, qu'il avait remporté.

Au cours des mois précédant

Les leaders traditionnels du comté de Bong disent non à la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF).

Les leaders traditionnels du comté de Bong ont volontairement remis leurs outils traditionnels utilisés pour la mutilation génitale féminine (MGF).

Ils se sont également engagés publiquement à fermer officiellement les écoles de brousse, communément appelées la Société Sande, et à renoncer à leurs propriétés traditionnelles pour mettre fin à la pratique séculaire de la MGF au Libéria.

La cérémonie de remise a eu lieu le vendredi 20 octobre 2023, lorsque le Conseil national des chefs et des anciens, représenté par son adjoint, Jemmie Jpokia, a organisé une cérémonie traditionnelle marquant officiellement la fermeture de l'école de brousse à Gbaota, dans le comté de Bong.

Pour renforcer leur engagement à mettre fin à la MGF dans le comté, les Zoes ont entrepris une marche symbolique, portant leurs outils traditionnellement utilisés pour la pratique de la MGF sur leur tête, alors qu'ils voyageaient de la brousse jusqu'au lieu de la cérémonie.

Lors de l'événement, ils ont remis ces instruments à Judee Andee, surnommée reine traditionnelle, en geste symbolique marquant leur détermination à mettre fin à la pratique de la MGF dans cette partie du comté. Lors de cet événement, les leaders traditionnels étaient visiblement émus alors qu'ils étaient assis par terre pour écouter leur reine et le chef du conseil traditionnel du Libéria déclarer leur intention de poursuivre le rite de passage important des jeunes femmes vers l'âge adulte tout en excluant la MGF de leur tradition culturelle.

S'exprimant lors de l'occasion, la représentante de l'UN Women au Libéria, Comfort Lamptey, a salué les leaders traditionnels pour leurs efforts inlassables visant à éradiquer la MGF au Libéria. Elle a souligné que le changement culturel est difficile, mais impératif pour un meilleur Libéria où les jeunes filles peuvent réaliser leur plein potentiel dans la société.

Elle a en même temps offert des paroles d'encouragement aux émotifs leaders traditionnels, mettant en avant l'impact considérable de leurs actions, qui, selon elle, s'étendra bien au-delà des frontières du Libéria. Elle a exhorté les Zoes des autres comtés du Libéria ayant des centres patrimoniaux à poursuivre des initiatives similaires, en témoignage de leur engagement à mettre fin à la MGF.

De plus, la représentante de l'UN Women au Libéria a promis son soutien aux anciennes Zoes des onze comtés pratiquant la MGF pour les aider à trouver des sources de revenus alternatives après avoir abandonné leurs outils. Ce soutien comprend la fourniture d'outils agricoles, et ils aspirent à obtenir le soutien d'autres partenaires dans la lutte contre la MGF.

Cependant, lors de la cérémonie rituelle à Gbaota Town, dans le comté de Bong, les leaders des Zoes ont été interrogés trois fois par Jemmie Jpokia, adjoint du chef du Conseil national des chefs et des anciens du Libéria, s'ils étaient d'accord avec la décision de renoncer à leurs outils.

Au nom de tous, Judee Andee a accepté, et avec des larmes dans les yeux, ils ont tous répondu de manière emphatique, "Oui, nous sommes

d'accord." La cérémonie a été marquée par des moments émotionnels, marquant un tournant significatif dans la lutte contre la MGF.

Pour souligner leur position lors de l'occasion, le gouvernement suédois a félicité le Libéria pour sa réalisation révolutionnaire en renonçant à ses outils traditionnels et a souligné l'importance de leur engagement et de leur leadership dans la priorisation du bien-être des femmes et des hommes.

L'ambassadeur de Suède au Libéria, Urban Sjöström, a déclaré que la Suède est un partenaire de longue date du Libéria, et c'était un honneur d'assister à la remise symbolique et à l'engagement conjoint de tous les partenaires pour interdire et éradiquer la MGF.

Il a ajouté que cela est également une preuve du rôle essentiel et du partenariat solide dirigé par le chef traditionnel, le conseil traditionnel des anciens et les chefs de la communauté locale, ainsi que de l'engagement ferme du gouvernement dans cette entreprise.

"Vous avez la société civile et des partenaires internationaux tels que l'UN Women et la Suède, capables de renforcer ce processus localement détenu, et nous discutons de la durabilité de cette initiative", a-t-il noté.

Selon lui, il pourrait s'agir d'un effort collaboratif impliquant le conseil traditionnel du gouvernement, la société civile et les communautés locales pour promouvoir cette cause car leurs partenaires d'investissement le voient d'un très bon œil. L'objectif est de garantir que les filles et les garçons, les femmes et les hommes aient des opportunités et des droits égaux au Libéria.

"De la Suède, nous percevons que c'est ce qui favorise véritablement la prospérité, le développement et la contribution collective de chacun à la société. Par conséquent, cela doit être soutenu, dirigé par les leaders traditionnels, le gouvernement, la société civile et les communautés."

La reine traditionnelle du Libéria, Judee Andee, a également pris la parole lors de la cérémonie de remise des outils, soulignant la nécessité d'efforts soutenus pour faire respecter l'interdiction de la MGF, même si elle a été officiellement interdite.

Elle a souligné que les efforts pour éradiquer la MGF au Libéria sont financés par l'UN Women, le gouvernement suédois et les Nations Unies. De plus, elle a expliqué que des plans sont en cours pour établir des centres patrimoniaux professionnels dans les onze comtés où la MGF est pratiquée, dans le but de doter les femmes de compétences alternatives.

"En ce qui concerne le comté de Bong, l'établissement d'un tel centre est en cours d'approbation, et l'on encourage les partenaires internationaux à

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Liberians, please vote wisely

By William Kollie

21 October 2023: Our country is currently in a political season and the country is littered with political activities. In every corner of the country and now on our newly found platform, the Facebook, the talk of the day is inundated with politics and elections.

For some people, this has even become a daily job, because their lives are overwhelmed by the politics of the day. I take no offense for our people - the old, young, small, literate, illiterate - who are participating in these public debates and actions.

It is a healthy thing to do because the outcome of our electoral process will define our country for the next 6 years and beyond because whatever the Government in power does could have social, economic, emotional, psychological impact on the country for several years beyond the 6 years in power. Think about this as you participate in these public debates and actions. As you participate, you need to keep asking yourself: What does all this mean to me, my family, my children, and the country at large.

Liberia got its independent in 1847 and is considered as the oldest independent country in Africa. So, if age was a determinant of prosperity and growth, Liberia should rank very high in several human and social index. Unfortunately, this is not the case, irrespective of being the first so-called independent country in Africa. We are still ranking as one of the least in many of the global indexes which measure progress. Does this matter to us as a people? How are we factoring these concerns in these elections? Today, I thought that probably it is good to remind Liberians as to why we should think soberly as we move to making these very crucial decisions. What are the crucial things that matter and should continue to remind us in the process? Here are a few pointers:

In the Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perception Index, Liberia is ranked 142nd among the 180 countries. The index measures a country on its public sector performance, i.e., a demonstration of the honesty of the public sector. This implies that Liberia is better than only 38 countries in the world when it comes to the honesty of our public sector irrespective of our age as a country.

Between 2020 to 2021, Liberia spent nearly \$280M to import rich from other countries, including a small west African country, Togo. Given the fact that our country is endowed with all the ingredients that facilitate production, we should be exporting agricultural products including rice, but instead, we rely on other countries. These issues should concern us in these elections.

It is believed that of the estimated 10,000 km plus public roads in Liberia, only 7% (734 km) are paved.

Do we understand what this means? Of the total 2,471,617 million people who registered for the 2023 elections, at least 36% are in the Montserrado County, one of the smallest counties in the country. What does this tell us? If our road network was robust, people would prefer to live in their counties because they would be assured of moving freely to seek medical attention, move goods and services around etc, but because our road network is deplorable and impassable, it is encouraging urbanization thus putting heavy burden on Montserrado and surrounding counties.

The US State Department Human Rights report 2023 on Liberia pointed out significant human rights issues including: a) arbitrary killings by police, b) Cases of cruelty, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment by police, c) harsh and life threatening prison conditions, d) arbitrary detention by government officials, e) serious problems with the independence of the judiciary, f) serious restrictions on the freedom of the press, including violence and threats against journalists, g) official corruption and the list goes on. Are these issues featuring in our decision-making process during these elections? We need to think.

The health system of Liberia is one of the worse in Africa with hospitals lacking very basic medical supplies and diagnostic equipment while the public hospitals in many places have totally collapsed. Thousands of Liberians are dying annually from non-life-threatening diseases due to the poor health system. For example, hospital records in Liberia suggest that at least 33% of in-patient death, and 41% of infant mortality are attributable to Malaria, a disease that has been eradicated by many countries in the world,

including Africa.

Liberia's Education system is one of the worse in Africa. According to the UNICEF report on the situation for children in Liberia, the country's Education system lags behind most countries, in both access and quality. For example, the literacy rate in Liberia stands at 48% irrespective of the long years that we have existed as a country.

Liberia is one of the fewer countries in Africa that is blessed - tropical rain forest, gold, diamond, abundant water supply, enough rainfall for agriculture etc - yet still we depend on other countries for nearly everything we eat and use. What has gone wrong with us since 1847 to date? Are we going to continue this path? If not, what are our plans? Those plans must be interpreted in the way we vote during this election.

around in the streets in the name of campaign etc. I however think that instead of us spending our time antagonizing one another, let's spend our time discussing the issues. Let's hold these two leaders accountable to a public debate to tell the Liberian people how they intend to address these issues. Let's make the campaign an issue-based and let them tell us their plans through a public debate. This is part of a healthy democratic practice and Liberia is a democracy, so let's go for it. Make no mistake, no matter what side you cast your vote, you will live with the outcomes of your decision, 60 seconds of every minute, 60 minutes of every hour, 24 hours of each day, 30/31 days of each month and 365 days of every year and this will haunt you for the next 6 years - please do not say I did not warn you.

Another issue which has claimed my attention is the level of polarization in our country because of these elections and our inability to be objective. Fortunately for the world, including Liberia, Facebook has created a platform for us to share our views on any issue, including our current politics. However, we need to understand that Facebook is a global platform.



According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) report 2023, Liberia's progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is one of the lowest in the world with only 20% of the SDGs currently reported to be on track, and Liberia is ranked 157th out of 166 countries, i.e., of the 167 countries in the index, Liberia is making progress more than only 9 countries in the world. Don't forget, we are the so-called oldest country in Africa, yet still that is our ranking.

I think these are some of the issues that should inform our decisions in this coming run-off election. Let's get sentiments out of this.

For a long time, we continue to allow sentiments to supersede our objectivity. We need to be objective in our decision-making process. It doesn't matter whether you love or hate George Weah or whether you love or hate Joseph Boakai, what matters are the issues which matter to this country. We need to make a sober choice and we need to choose the person who is better positioned to address them or start to move them in the right direction.

I see that a lot of us spend a huge amount of time debating empty issues, attacking one another, insulting Joseph Boakai or George Weah and running

So, it feels very sad when a Liberian refers to one another as dogs, inept, "sanamaswine", useless, cats, goats, pigs, and other abusive languages. When we post these statements on a global platform like Facebook, do we understand how the world looks at us? If you don't know, people look at us like a people who need to grow up. We are more than 170 years old as a country, much older than many countries in the world and we should be setting positive examples.

As the saying goes, "a hint to a wise is sufficient". That is my little hint, and the choice is yours as you go to the polls on 07 November to decide. Again, just remember that the decision you make on that day is going to live with you for 6 years and beyond.

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Cummings undecided

Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) Political Leader Mr. Alexander B. Cummings is said to be County Senator Prince Johnson finds himself on the other side with Amb. Boakai. In a brief social media post following his meeting with Unity Party as we determine our position for the runoff, inspite of our concerns raised with the NEC. We will be speaking to the nation



undecided following meetings with both incumbent President George Weah and former Vice President Joseph Boakai ahead of the November 14, 2023, Presidential runoff. The pending presidential runoff is a repeat of the 2017 Presidential runoff which saw incumbent President Weah sweep his way to power. The difference ahead of this one is his former allied Nimba

both incumbent President Weah and former VP Boakai, Mr. Cummings said his CPP will continue to engage both CDC and Unity Party to determine their position. "Today, I was pleased to separately host both Pres. George Weah and former Vice President Joseph Boakai at my residence, at their respective request. The CPP will continue to engage both the CDC and the

tomorrow in details as to what will inform our decision as the CPP. I want to thank both leaders of their parties for visiting and for the fruitful discussions we had today. May God bless Liberia. Thank you and good night." Cummings wrote on his social media page. -Othello B. Garblah

Opposition demand forensic audit

Three Liberian opposition political parties in the just ended October 10, elections have called for a forensic examination of the Presidential ballots which put the Ruling Coalition for Democratic Change of President George Weah and Unity Party of ex-Vice President Joseph Boakai in the run-off. The Collaborating Political Parties (CPP) of Mr. Alexander Cummings, the African Liberation League of Sara Beysolow Nyanti and Dr. Clarence Moniba of the Liberia National Union have written the National Elections Commission (NEC) expressing serious misbelief over the outcome of the 2023 elections including partisans, supporters and well-wishers are concerned about the results of the Presidential poll for which they want the NEC not to destroy the used and unused ballots after the announcement of the final results for forensic examination. While thanking the NEC for conducting the 2023 elections, the three parties noted, however, that if there is disbelief or doubt over the outcome of the elections, especially the Presidential results, it is necessary for such disbelief and doubt to be cleared by the conduct of a forensic examination of the October poll ballots. The Parties said they believe that the forensic examination of the ballots, which will be at no cost to the NEC, will give the



Mr. Cummings Rev. Nyanti Dr. Moniba

needed assurance to the Liberian people about the fairness and transparency of the October 10 poll. In their letter to the NEC and signed by the three Political Leaders, it said many Liberians, results. In their letter to the NEC and signed by the three Political Leaders, it said many Liberians, needed assurance to the Liberian people about the fairness and transparency of the October 10 poll.

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Kwaipai Africa promotes

their children in school as well pay house rent. The organization further provides a monitoring team that will see how the beneficiaries' garden will grow vigorously so that they will have food on their table and sell some for economic and social benefits as well. This initiative, according to the founder of Kwaipa Africa, is under its garden program called "FEED HOME, GROW NATURAL and EAT HEALTHIER." The organization is being supported by the community dwellers including other humanitarians. Kukai said "It is about time now to step up our game, to help our community dwellers. It is not just about the people that lives in the GSA road community but the entire Liberia." However, Kukai who is passionate about agriculture is now a proud graduate from the University of Liberia (UL). He wants to increase the organization's visibility to ensure that it gets the

necessary support but, says it has been difficult. Kukai said urban farming is a treat to the environment because most of the vegetables that are grown in the rural places as a result when epidemic and other health crisis break out urban gardeners threaten. "It is a treat because the majority of our foods are grown in the rural areas which points to 90% and 10% are produced in the urban area and so urban farming will help buttress the government efforts and help community dwellers to self-sufficient in their garden life." "You know that the beginning of everything is difficult, most of our staff are volunteers at this institution." Currently, the organization has eight (8) volunteers, these volunteers, according to him, know the importance of urban farming. Kukai said at times these staff's volunteers pump in their own monies to sustain the organization, however majority of the staff are all youth most of whom are

agriculturalist from various universities like Stella Marris, AMEU and UL who came together to see how best to form this organization. "As we speak now, we have the program at the Covenant School of Grace, Kenoweh Stone Preparatory School, on the GSA road. This is about enhancing the skills of students on school garden practices," he added. Meanwhile, beneficiaries of the program, Amos Diggs and Richel Thomas said that they were excited about the program and would like to call on the Ministry of Agriculture to empower the organization so that they can access more support for their respective garden projects. "We are very happy today to be a part of this training. We see urban farming as the key to sustaining our families. Today we learned a lot from this training, and we are going to go back to our various communities to replicate this for improved production," the beneficiaries said. Editing by Jonathan Browne

Wrong date for presidential runoff!

date of announcement of the final result will be Tuesday, November 7, 2023, and not Tuesday, November 14, 2023. There is no exception in the constitution that would allow the NEC to use its discretion to change the second Tuesday to a

Moye rallies Bong

people who stood in lines on Election Day 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 off against me and our broad-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-round face-off against me and our broad-based Team," Amb. Boakai stated.

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Wrong date for presidential runoff!

-As Cllr. Gongloe alarms

Liberia People's Party the results of the October, 10 (LPP) Political Leader polls showing that no Cllr. Tiawan Saye presidential ticket obtain 50 Gongloe has descended upon percent plus one vote, a run-



Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe

by the Chairperson of the National Elections Commission setting November 14, 2023, as the date for the run-off is a blatant violation of Article 83(b) of the Constitution of Liberia. Article 83 (b) provides, "...If no candidate obtains an absolute majority in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be conducted on the second Tuesday following..." Cllr. Gongloe wrote in his piece titled: "No, no, NEC, wrong date for the 2023 Presidential Runoff Election!!!".

In his short article written to the New Dawn Cllr. Gongloe said NEC has no authority to change the date for holding a presidential run-off from November 7, to 14.

"The National Elections Commission has no authority to change the date for holding a run-off election where no presidential candidate obtains an absolute majority, as it did today,"

"The NEC having announced the final result on today, October 24, 2023, the second Tuesday from the

Commissioners at the National Elections Commission (NEC) Tuesday, 14 November 2023 hours after the Board of Commissioners announced November 14, as the date for the Presidential runoff between incumbent President George Weah and former Vice President Joseph Boakai, saying the date is wrong and unconstitutional.

off election is to be held on Tuesday, 14 November 2023 between incumbent President Weah and Amb. Boakai.

But Cllr. Gongloe has criticized the change of the Constitutional Presidential runoff date by NEC, saying the electoral body has no authority to alter the Liberian Constitution.

The Chair of NEC on Tuesday, October 24, declared that with

"The announcement made

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