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LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023	L\$187.4072/US\$1.00	L\$189.1328/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.

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Continental News

Chad Holds Divisive Post-Coup Constitutional Referendum

Chad holds a referendum on a new constitution on Sunday that looks unlikely to mend deep divisions between the junta and opposing groups

But some of the political opposition and rebel groups have called for a "No" vote or said they will boycott the poll. They question the independence of the election commission and reject

Haroun Kabadi, coordinator of groups voting "Yes", said the new constitution does offer more independence as it would allow Chadians to choose their local representatives and collect local taxes for the first time.

"These people talking about a federation simply want to divide Chadians into micro-states and fuel hatred between communities," he said by phone.

Meanwhile others are calling for a boycott, including former Prime Minister Albert Pahimi Padacke, who told Reuters the junta had too much control over the referendum process.

"This is not fair, and it is not democratic. That's why we have called on Chadians not to participate in this farce."

The Africa-focused Institute for Security Studies has warned that tensions around the vote could lead to a repeat of unrest that saw scores killed by security forces amid pro-democracy protests in October 2022. A central concern is that the referendum could help cement the power of junta leader, Deby's son Mahamat Idriss Deby, who has already extended a proposed 18-month transition to democracy.

"The pattern of delay and obfuscation echoes the long-honed tactics of Idriss Deby who came to power by force in 1990 and then held on to it for three decades," analysts at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies said. VOA

South African hostage Gerco van Deventer freed by al-Qaeda militants

Militant Islamists linked to al-Qaeda have freed a South African paramedic taken hostage in Libya more than six years ago, a charity has said.

Gift of the Givers said it had facilitated the "unconditional" release of Gerco van Deventer.

The charity described Van Deventer as the longest-held South African hostage.

He was seized by an unnamed group in Libya in 2017, sold to militant Islamists in Mali a year later, and released "into" Algeria, it added.

A Malian security source confirmed to AFP news agency that Van Deventer, 48, had been freed.

It quoted a humanitarian source as saying that the paramedic was freed on the border between Mali and Algeria.

Large parts of Libya have been lawless since Nato-backed forces overthrew and killed long-serving ruler Muammar Gaddafi in 2011,

was working for a security company when he was seized on 3 November 2017, while on his way to a power plant construction site around 1,000km (600 miles) south of Libya's capital Tripoli.

Three Turkish engineers who were abducted with him were freed about seven months later, but he remained in captivity.

In March his family made a fresh plea for his release.

Gift of the Givers has been involved in previous efforts to free Van Deventer and other hostages held in the Sahel region.

The charity said the al-Qaeda affiliate, Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin, had asked for a ransom of \$3m (£2.4m) in 2018, and the charity negotiated the amount down to \$500,000.

However, Van Deventer's family and employer could not afford the amount, and the militants finally released him "unconditionally" on Saturday, it added.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and other extremist groups in North and West Africa have long used



Women queue to cast their votes during the constitutional referendum at a polling station in N'Djamena

that have fueled a political and security crisis in one of the world's poorest countries.

The military authorities have called the vote as a vital stepping-stone to elections next year – a long-promised return to democratic rule after they seized power in 2021 when President Idriss Deby was killed on the battlefield during a conflict with insurgents.

The proposed constitution would establish autonomous communities with local assemblies and councils of traditional chiefdoms among other changes.

the new constitution for not engaging with their wishes including for federalization.

Decades of instability and economic mismanagement have hampered development in the oil-producing central African country, where nearly 40% of its 16 million people depend on humanitarian aid. Brice Nguedmbaye Mbaimon, who coordinates a coalition voting "No", said Chad had experienced a unitary state for over 50 years without tangible progress.

"It is time to let the population organise into federated states and steer their own development," he told Reuters.

More Than 60 Drown When Migrant Vessel Capsizes Near Libya, UN Says

A boat carrying dozens of migrants trying to reach Europe capsized off the coast of Libya, leaving more than 60 people dead, including women and children, the U.N. migration agency said.

Saturday's shipwreck was the latest tragedy in this part of the Mediterranean Sea, a key but dangerous route for migrants seeking a better life in Europe. Thousands have died, according to officials.

The U.N.'s International Organization for Migration said in a statement the boat was carrying 86 migrants when strong waves swamped it off the town of Zuwara on Libya's western coast and that 61 migrants drowned, according to survivors.

"The central Mediterranean continues to be one of the world's most dangerous migration routes," the agency wrote on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East, even though the North African nation has plunged into chaos following a NATO-backed uprising that toppled and killed longtime autocrat Moammar Gadhafi in 2011.

More than 2,250 people died on the central European route this year, according to Flavio Di Giacomo, an IOM spokesperson.

It's "a dramatic figure which demonstrates that unfortunately

not enough is being done to save lives at sea," Di Giacomo wrote on X.

According to the IOM's missing migrants project, at least 940 migrants were reported dead and 1,248 missing off Libya between January 1 and November 18.

The project, which tracks migration movements, said about 14,900 migrants, including over 1,000 women and more than 530 children, were intercepted and returned to Libya this year.

VOA



Gerco van Deventer has been taken to hospital in Algeria for a check-up

while Mali is battling an Islamist insurgency and a rebellion by separatist forces in the north.

Gift of the Givers, a South Africa-based charity, said that Algeria's security agencies had taken Van Deventer to hospital for a check-up following his release.

"We await the next step on his health and arrangements to bring him home to be reunited with wife Shereen and son Asher. It has been six agonising years of prayer, patience, and hope," the charity said in a Facebook post.

Van Deventer was an emergency paramedic who

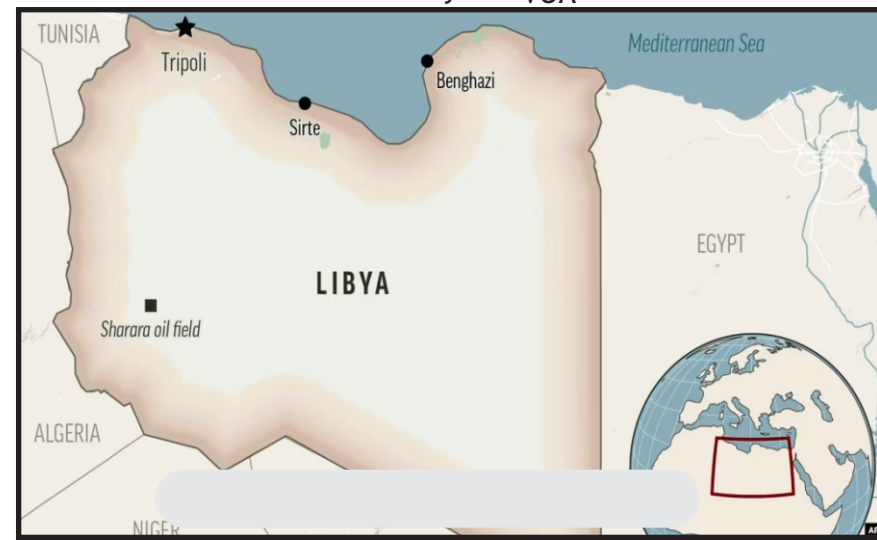
kidnapping for ransom as a way of raising money.

The group, which has its roots in Algeria's bitter civil war in the 1990s, operates across the Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert and within Mali and Burkina Faso.

In 2013, former colonial power France sent 5,000 troops to Mali to fight the group and its allies, and in 2020 killed AQIM leader Abdelmalek Droukdel.

But France pulled out last year following a coup in the West African state, and growing unpopularity over its military operation.

Now Russia's notorious mercenary Wagner group has been hired by Mali's military junta to fight the militants. BBC



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EDITORIAL

Cleanliness should be our way of life

VOLUNTEERS CLEANING OUR streets, including young men, women, and older women is not only heart-touching but highly nationalistic. This exercise is going on in preparation for the festive seasons and mainly for the pending inauguration of President-elect, Joseph Nyumah Boakai and Vice President-elect, Jeremiah Kpan Koung in January 2024.

THESE MASS VOLUNTEERS signing up to clean the capital and its suburbs are revolutionizing the way we ought to take care of our capital, looking and waiting on government to do for us clearly what we can do ourselves.

But cleaning up the city should not be only for Christmas or inaugural purposes. Instead, it should be a way of life for us, as Liberians. We do not need a special time to clean up our city or our environment. It should be a daily, weekly, and monthly practice to set go example for the next generation of Liberians that cleanliness is not just hygienic, but Godly.

We dirty the city and our communities all of the time without any remorse. It is correspondingly important that we clean it regularly instead of waiting for a specific period or a national event.

Unfortunately, Monrovia is littered with garbage and feces everywhere. Shamelessly even public buildings such as the Capitol and other places are not spared of garbage. Grass has swallowed the Capitol. It lacks running water and functioning toilets.

Yet this is where our elected leaders sit to represent us! No wonder why President-elect Boakai has chosen to take his inaugural program there, to ensure it is given a proper facelift.

This was not the case in the past especially, during the Tubman, Tolbert, Doe, and most recently, Sirleaf eras, because relevant state institutions responsible to keep the city and its environs tidy were fully functional such as the Monrovia City Corporation and the Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation.

The MCC is the enforcer of city ordinances, while the LWSC is responsible for the sewage system and running water in the capital. But these institutions have broken down completely because of bad administration and corruption. The LWSC cannot provide the city running water and sewer services so feces littered the streets due to clogged sewage lines, while the MCC has collapsed under recently sanctioned Mayor Jefferson Tamba Koijee.

The incoming administration of President-elect Boakai should maintain the current group of volunteers to help keep the city and parts adjacent cleaned from time to time to demonstrate Liberian pride.

Garbage and feces are breeding grounds for roaches, rats, flies, mosquitoes, and other rodents that come directly into homes and contaminate food and drinking water with sicknesses such as cholera and diarrhea. A clean environment is a healthy environment that promotes healthy people.

Such delicate responsibility is not a child's play and should not be assigned to someone with divided or mixed priorities. It should be reserved for people with enough innovation and resilience to execute the job of maintaining a healthy environment that will drive the health of the nation.

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COMMENTARY

By Jim O'Neill

The Inflation Challenge in 2024

LONDON - As 2023 draws to a close, there are many known unknowns - especially on the geopolitical front - and presumably as many unknown unknowns lurking on the horizon.

Producing any forecast for the global economy is thus more difficult than usual. For their part, investment houses seem to be expecting a further slowdown in 2024, with many flummoxed by the fact that we haven't had a major slump already.

The inflation outlook poses an even bigger challenge. The past few years have shown that inflation can be heavily affected - at least on a headline basis - by uncertainty and unknown unknowns that make themselves known.

A heated debate about the inflation outlook is ongoing, with some highly respected and very experienced businesspeople expressing doubts that central banks have got the problem under control.

The latest consumer price data for the eurozone, the United States, and the United Kingdom offer some encouraging news about headline inflation trends; but core inflation (excluding volatile energy and food prices) remains uncomfortably above central banks' target rates.

Of course, the world's second largest economy, China, does not seem to have this problem.

On the contrary, its most recent consumer-price data show that it is experiencing deflation, with its core consumer price index falling by 0.5% (on an annual basis) in November.

There once was a time when many analysts suspected that China was transmitting deflationary pressures to the rest of the world, primarily through its low-cost manufacturing export and their increased market share in foreign markets.

If we were still in that era, some of the current inflationary fears might be lessened. But those days are gone, it seems.

The scale of China's domestic economic challenges - deflation included - is a massive question deserving of its own commentary. Given the issues facing its property market, judging by similar experiences in other countries, one can assume that its difficulties will be prolonged.

But a less pessimistic view is that Chinese policymakers are fully aware of those issues, owing precisely to those previous cases, as well as the warnings that various commentators have been issuing for quite some time.

In addition to Chinese domestic factors, one also must consider the trends for global commodity prices, over which Chinese demand will remain a big influence.

Here, the news toward the end of 2024 has

been more encouraging than many would have expected, and suggests that headline inflation in many countries could fall further in the coming months.

Despite the chaos in the Middle East and the war in Ukraine, crude oil prices remain soft, surprising many analysts - including some who should know that this market is nothing if not unpredictable.

Beyond these factors, three others stand out for me. First, monetary growth has weakened sharply in many economies, which is quite reassuring when combined with current commodity-price trends.

While it has been a long time since anyone other than the most ardent monetarists claimed that money supply always bears directly on inflation, the past few years have shown that if monetary growth accelerates radically (as it did in late 2020 and early 2021 in the US), inflation can rise.

Second, and perhaps in line with the commodity and monetary trends, recent measures of inflation expectations in key countries have been reassuring.

In particular, the latest University of Michigan survey of consumers' five-year outlook showed a sharp drop, to 2.8%, from 3.2% the previous month, indicating, at a minimum, that no sustained increase or "un-anchoring" of long-term inflation expectations is taking place.

The final, and perhaps trickiest, question is how central banks will respond. In its latest forward guidance to markets, the US Federal Reserve Board suggested that interest rates would be cut by 75 basis points in 2024.

Other central banks however, especially in Europe, are pushing back on financial markets' bet that interest rates will be cut next year, but markets do not seem to have gotten the memo.

With core inflation still above target, real (inflation-adjusted) wages growing, and strong evidence of productivity growth nowhere to be seen, central bankers will be loath to cut rates soon.

But as they continue to try to influence markets with their guidance and public statements, they will have to accept that markets - in their collective wisdom - may see something that they themselves do not. If the data take a sharp favorable turn, they will probably change their tune.

Wage growth remains a crucial variable. In some countries, especially the UK, it is finally outpacing consumer-price growth.

Policymakers instinctively will worry that this trend will trigger a textbook wage-price spiral.

But wouldn't it be nice if recent real wage growth turned out to be justified by a rebalancing of financial returns and the long-awaited return of positive productivity growth? With a new year comes a new hope.

OP-ED

By Navika Mehta

How a Man's World Systematically Neglects Women

DEHRADUN - The existence of "women's issues" reflects the simple fact that we live in a man's world. Over the course of centuries, research and policies focused on men became the default, whereas initiatives that account for women are "women-centered." But if men are treated as the default, virtually no aspect of women's lives ends up being built or optimized for them. Research that excludes women is not simply "gender-neutral" - it is "incomplete."

The consequences can be deadly. For example, women are 73% more likely to be injured, and 17% more likely to die, in vehicle crashes than men. One reason for this is that the crash-test dummies used in vehicle-safety trials are designed to mimic the body of an average man. "Female" dummies were not even developed until last year, and regulators still do not require that they be included in vehicle-safety research.

Personal protective equipment, like that used by health-care workers, is also optimized for male bodies, with dimensions staying the same even as items are scaled down for women users. In a 2020 survey of British health-care workers, 44.7% of women found PPE overalls ill-fitting, compared to just 15.3% of men. In a recent survey in Canada, more than 80% of women respondents reported issues with PPE.

Similarly, the "unisex" body armor used by police officers is designed for men, leaving women both uncomfortable and potentially more vulnerable to attack, especially around the armpit and neck. In the United Kingdom, where 50,000 women now serve as police officers, women-specific body armor was not introduced until this year.

While women are no longer excluded from clinical-drug trials, they continue to be underrepresented, particularly in the trials' early phases. As a result, women still face a higher risk of adverse side effects from medication, not least because recommended doses are not optimized for women. An analysis of studies in which women were given the same drug dosage as men showed that, in more than 90% of cases, women experienced stronger side effects and more adverse reactions.

That analysis arose from the observation that women taking Ambien, a sleep medication, were experiencing severe side effects, including a higher rate of traffic accidents the morning after. As it turned out, researchers found, the recommended dose produced much higher blood concentrations and drug-elimination times in women than in men. The US Food and Drug Administration now recommends that women receive half the "standard" dose.

Making matters worse, when it comes to health issues that primarily affect women, research tends not to be funded at all. In nearly 75% of cases where a disease primarily affects one sex, the pattern favors men: "men's diseases" are overfunded, and "women's diseases" are underfunded.

Women's needs also take a backseat to men's when it comes to tackling sexual violence. Because women are overwhelmingly the victims of such crimes, preventing sexual violence is treated entirely as a "women's issue" - one that has no consequences for men, even though they comprise the majority of perpetrators. Policies are so focused on the victims - for example, improving outdoor lighting, establishing helplines, and creating "safe spaces" - that the source of the violence is never addressed.

Likewise, health-related data have been collected primarily from men, which poses serious risks as artificial intelligence trained on such data is applied in health care. For example, if a man reports pain in his left arm and back, a medical app - trained on data establishing cardiovascular disease as a predominantly male issue - will recommend that he seek help for a potential heart attack. That same app might suggest that a woman is experiencing depression and thus does not need urgent care, even though women are hardly immune to heart attacks.

AI has the potential to harm women in other ways, too. In 2015, Amazon scrapped its AI recruiting tool for exhibiting bias against women. Having "learned" to assess applications by observing patterns in resumes submitted over the previous decade - resumes that had come overwhelmingly from men - the computer model rated male candidates more highly. This should not be surprising, given women account for only 12% of AI researchers and 6% of software developers. Several other companies that continue to use AI software for recruitment do not monitor it for bias.

Despite considerable evidence showing that advances toward gender equality play an important role in driving economic progress, analysis focusing solely on macro aspects of growth disregards gender. Ignoring the fact that government spending, taxation, and monetary policy have different consequences for men and women can lead to flawed economic assessments, undermining the effectiveness of policies and the accuracy of forecasts.

For example, women's unpaid labor as primary caregivers is unaccounted for in macroeconomic policy. Tasks like cooking, cleaning, fetching water, and caring for children and the elderly have substantial economic value, accounting for between 10-60% of GDP. As a result of gender-blind analysis, women are overworked and underpaid. Increasing the share of women in the workforce needs to be accompanied by policies that reduce and redistribute this unpaid labor.

Consider the debate over India's economic prospects. With India having recently overtaken China in population, some analysts predict that it will also surpass China in economic growth. But, as Ashwini Deshpande and Akshi Chawla explain, this works only if the population increase is reflected the workforce, and in India, low female labor-force participation limits the effect.

Gender plays a crucial role in countless other policy areas, including the single biggest challenge of our time: climate change. Like most of the other issues addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals, the effects of global warming, including climate-related disasters, disproportionately affect women.

When half the global population is treated as an afterthought, research is less accurate, policy is less effective, and human welfare is diminished. That will not change until accounting explicitly for women becomes the norm in every sphere of research, product design, tech, and policy.

This commentary is published in collaboration with the International Economic Association's Women in Leadership in Economics Initiative, which aims to enhance the role of women in economics through research, building partnerships, and amplifying voices.

OPINION

By Daron Acemoglu
and Simon Johnson

Kissinger's Opening to China Will Haunt American Politics in 2024

BOSTON - Even harsh critics of Henry Kissinger concede that US President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972 changed geopolitics forever. Before Kissinger orchestrated that diplomatic opening, American leaders framed the world as "capitalism vs. communism," and anyone with communist friends was liable to be labeled a dangerous "Red." After Kissinger, undiluted Communist Party of China control was allowed to thrive within the global market system.

Yet lost amid the celebration of China's economic "success" were the costs of Kissinger's China strategy both in the United States and around the world. If Donald Trump becomes president again in early 2025, that strategy will likely prevail, but in a more dangerous form.

For decades, Kissinger was an outspoken advocate for doing business with China, and he made good money by opening doors there. Among other things, this meant lending Deng Xiaoping his support after the massacre of peaceful protesters in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. Less than two months later, Kissinger famously wrote:

"No government in the world would have tolerated having the main square of its capital occupied for eight weeks by tens of thousands of demonstrators who blocked the area in front of the main government building. In China a demonstration of impotence in the capital would unleash the lurking regionalism and warlordism in the provinces. A crackdown was therefore inevitable. But its brutality was shocking - even more so were the trials and Stalin-style propaganda that followed."

That observation was then followed by a paragraph containing the clearest possible definition of Kissingerian realpolitik:

"Still, China remains too important to US national security to risk the relationship on emotions of the moment. The United States needs China as a possible counterweight to Soviet aspirations in Asia, and needs China to remain relevant in Japanese eyes as a key shaper of Asian events. China needs the United States as a counterweight to perceived ambitions from the Soviets and Japan. In return, China will exercise a moderating influence in Asia and not challenge America in other areas of the world. These realities have not been altered by events."

This became the standard refrain among US foreign-policy gurus and business leaders pursuing investments in China. The Chinese economy took off in the 1990s largely because companies based in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Europe, and the US fell over each other building factories to employ cheap Chinese labor. But once an economy starts to grow, workers will naturally (and reasonably) want more compensation, which can come either from labor market competition or from organizing collectively and demanding better pay.

That is what eventually happened in the British, European, and American industrial revolutions. While factory owners initially were comfortable using violence to repress workers (as in the 1819 Peterloo Massacre and the 1892 Homestead Strike), political pressure mounted and reforms were enacted. Those changes marked the beginning of shared industrial-age prosperity. Productivity gains started to be shared with workers who were better organized and operating in a more democratic political environment, and technology started being deployed in ways that created more well-paying new jobs.

For decades, China's domestic market was small and its main appeal to investors was its essentially unlimited supply of cheap labor - an asset supported by government-funded infrastructure and policies designed to please business owners. With encouragement from the White House, China became the World Bank's biggest borrower in the 1990s, and then was admitted to the World Trade Organization in 2001, at the behest of foreign investors and G7 officials.

China's boom post-WTO accession was made possible by a deliberate undervaluation of the renminbi (contrary to International Monetary Fund rules and norms) and continued labor repression. This combination soon led to a surge of cheap Chinese imports into the US, accelerating the decline of manufacturing across the Midwest and other parts of the country, with more than two million jobs lost between 1999 and 2011.

Of course, China's integration into the global economy allowed it to achieve rapid GDP growth, creating the largest middle class in the world. But inequality has skyrocketed, and economic growth has primarily benefited educated and well-connected urban professionals, rather than ordinary farmers and workers, whose earnings remain suppressed. An alternative development path that was less reliant on cheap labor and subsidized exports (as in other parts of East Asia) could have been much better for the Chinese working class.

Whoever wins the US presidency next November, the White House will face an increasingly aggressive China, even as Chinese exports remain essential components for most of what Americans produce and consume. Though Trump talks a big game about standing up to China, his unprincipled, transactional approach represents an intensification of Kissinger's cynical realpolitik. Like Kissinger, he dismisses the need to defend values such as human rights and democracy.

But making matters worse, Kissinger's theory of Chinese history turned out to be entirely wrong. "Chinese leaders must realize, or their successors will learn," he warned in 1989, "that economic reform is impossible without support from educated groups that supplied some of the upheaval's fervor and from workers who furnished much of the muscle." Yet, in the event, the Communist Party of China used reform merely as an instrument to attract foreign capital and technology. Now that the party leadership is more focused on its global power and status, liberalizing reforms have been abandoned - and even reversed.

Such is Kissinger's legacy. Rather than building on it, the US and its allies should embrace a more principled approach to China and to trade more generally. That was the original vision of the Bretton Woods agreement in 1944, when it was understood that unfettered access to the US market should be available only to countries with a strong commitment to human rights and political freedom. As the US reshapes its global economic engagement, it must ensure that domestic innovation, investment, and employment policies serve the goal of shared prosperity for all American workers.

Kissinger's China policy, based on his rather narrow conception of American power, failed to deliver on any of that. Trump, too, is interested only in power - his own. A second Trump presidency would take the Kissingerian mindset to its logical conclusion, benefiting the few at the expense of the many.

ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

Liberia: 176 years on, nothing has changed

Liberia is sui generis (a Latin phrase meaning one of a kind). Despite its unique history as the first independent African nation on the continent, its political leaders have often appeared less intent in terms of development and modernization compared to leaders elsewhere on the continent.

Leaders since independence, have not been able to develop the country's rich natural resources to maximize same for the development of the country, rather they have used it wastefully to their advantage, while the bulk of the population watches on as spectators.

Liberia's political system remains repletely ingrained with sycophants being the architects of the imperial presidency 176 years on-nothing has changed.

All officials have done over time and continue to do today is to maintain their relevance in the existing political system and their place within it- nothing more. It's the proximity to power.

There is absolutely nothing new, it has been the same trend years in and years out. No one leader has been able to crack the code for Liberia's development and modernization, simply because his or her immediate lieutenants have always come with their own agendas while blindfolding him or her into thinking that all is well with the citizens.

A dramatic story is told of President William V.S. Tubman, who for fear of flights often chose to travel by sea. Just as is being done today every cabinet official and their deputies want to be where the president is, so it was back then, nothing has changed.

But here is the story. So, on this day, Tubman and his officials were sailing on one of his Yachts, from Monrovia to Maryland. They had picked up officials from Marshall, now annexed by Margibi County thru to Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, and were headed to Harper.

While they were sailing Tubman came on the deck to view the sea and in the process, the breeze took his hat off his head and threw it in the sea. When his officials saw it, they all began to tip their hats one by one for the breeze to throw it into the sea, and one by one all their hats were thrown into the sea.

When President Tubman turned around and saw what had happened, he had a new sense of his authority.

Tubman, before ascending to the Presidency had been living in his native Maryland County from where he had usually set sail in boats to Monrovia as an Associate Justice at the time before his preferment by President Barclay. Before Barclay's arrangement, Tubman was not a regular Monrovia politician.

However, the systemic sycophantic behaviors of appointed officials in government only emboldened Tubman. As the story goes, when Tubman noticed that his officials intentionally threw away their hats to be in sync with him, he began to sense how powerful he had become as a president.

Tubman, for example, would take a nap and wake up in his under T-shirt, his cabinet members around would all remove their coats, shirts, and ties to be in sync with him.

This behavior that everything the president does is a trend within his official circle is not new. President William R. Tolbert came on the scene with higher height suit, and his appointed officials followed, Samuel K. Doe, Charles G. Taylor, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and now President Weah with a pro-poor which became very popular during the early days of his six-year reign.

Sure, nothing has changed from officials wanting to be eye servants rather than doing the job for which they were appointed.

Rather, they fight to be in line with the president's trend, that they can siphon state resources with impunity, while the country lags in development and modernization.

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COMMENTARY

By: Togba-Nah Tipoteh

How To Manage Expectations

During the recent partisan political campaigning, the only talk was about what to expect when the candidates got re-elected or elected, respectively.

So far, the records show that whatever expectations that they raised were never fulfilled. This means that whatever promises that they made never got delivered.

It is most important to bring this problem out because it is a source of frustration that leads to violence.

Upon re-election or election, the campaigners run around doing their respective selfish things rather than pursuing the selfless things that the people are interested in.

The re-elected and elected remain in the everybody for self, God for all mode, meaning that they do not carry out their promises made to the voters.

Upon realizing that the re-elected and elected are not serious, the voters become frustrated and they become violent, as they did in the Liberian experience of the coup d'etat and the civil war that took the lives of at least 300,000 people and injured many more.

With this record of violence, many people locally and globally became surprised that the October 10, 2023 General and Presidential Electoral displayed no violence to speak about.

Well, this non-violent posture in the first and second rounds of the Election did not happen because of the awareness raising that took place.

The awareness raising informed the voters about the fact that violence does not solve any problem.

Therefore, with this information, the voters were motivated to vote non-violently. The voters of Liberia are receiving praises locally and globally for their non-violent posture

during and after the voting.

Seeing this posture, the President of Liberia of Liberia declared acceptance of the election results and congratulated the Unity Party (UP) for being elected. This declaration is receiving praises locally and globally.

As awareness raising continues, some violence has taken place after the Election of October 10th, but it is at once minimal and unacceptable.

Witness the violence that took place less than a week ago, a few yards from the Police Station and the Market Place in the Red Light area of the Paynesville Community.

The victim is a woman who was mistaken to be a motorbike rogue. Fortunately, the badly beaten woman was rushed to Ghana for appropriate medical treatment, given the poor medical facilities here.

We await the investigation, the results and the punishment. The post electoral violence would be significant were it not for the continuous awareness raising that leads to the correct management of expectations and the minimization of violence.

On account of awareness raising, people are taking non-violent action through the Rule of Law to minimize the unfair and unconstitutional practices of the National Election Commission (NEC), to minimize the violence of the October 10th Election and the second round Election and to maximize the voting for candidates with good records.

It is only through this awareness raising that the prevailing unfair electoral system is being transformed into the enduring fair electoral system.

It is only through this transformation that that persons with good records can get elected to bring in the system of Justice, the ingredient for Peace and Progress in Liberia and in any other Country.

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UL faculty joins cleanup campaign

By Naneka A. Hoffman

The University of Liberia Faculty in Support of Boakai (ULFIBO) has launched a massive cleanup campaign on the university campus ahead of President-elect Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai's inauguration due 22 January

of Liberia is clean. He explained that they know that the University of Liberia campus will be used for the inauguration of President-elect Boakai and there will be a lot of people coming in to park their cars on the campus. He said they want to keep the campus clean and give it a

facelift during the inauguration of the incoming president. He said they are the ones that prepare citizens for the business market, adding that carrying on this initiative will attract Boakai's attention to ensure that UL has what is needed to prepare Liberians for tomorrow. Mason noted that exercise will be a continuous process until they can see that the University of Liberia comes to where they want it to be.

According to him, the University of Liberia is a large society, noting that more Ministers hailed from the University of Liberia. He said they are the ones that prepare citizens for the business market, adding that carrying on this initiative will attract Boakai's attention to ensure that UL has what is needed to prepare Liberians for tomorrow. Mason noted that exercise will be a continuous process until they can see that the University of Liberia comes to where they want it to be.

“Indeed the University of Liberia ... is where I am from, do you expect me to go and take care of other people's homes while my home is dirty?” said Mason. “I will say no. I must first look at where I am coming from. I work here, I graduated from here, and this is my home. So I must give my home a beautiful look before looking out there,” he argued. According to him, they have plans to extend the exercise outside, but they want to make sure that the University of Liberia is given a facelift.

Mr. Mason said the initiative is purely voluntary work. Mr. Mason stated that the Faculty in Support of President-



2024. The group launched the initiative on the UL Capitol Hill campus on Saturday, 16 December 2023.

Speaking during the cleanup exercise, ULFIBO Vice Chair for Operations Othello Opa Mason said its cleanup campaign by UL faculty was intended to support newly elected President Boakai.

He explained that it is an initiative that was undertaken by professors in support of President-elect Boakai to make sure that the University

facelift during the inauguration of the incoming president.

According to Mr. Mason, they wish to do the cleanup campaign every day, and they also want to extend the initiative on the four campuses of the University of Liberia - Capitol Hill, Fendall, the Medical College, and the David A. Stratz-Sinje campus in Grand Cape Mount County.

Mr. Mason said the initiative is purely voluntary work.

Mr. Mason stated that the Faculty in Support of President-

US tightens screws on corruption

-As Congress approves FEPA

The United States Congress has approved the Foreign Extortion Prevention Act (or FEPA) as part of that country's annual Defense spending bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA.

The FEPA would make it a crime for a foreign official—including any employee of a foreign government or any current or former senior official of a foreign government's executive, legislative, judicial, or military branches or any immediate family member or close associate thereof—to demand or accept a bribe from an American or American company, or from any person while in the territory of the United States, in connection with obtaining or retaining business. Transparency International U.S. (TI US)

corruption problems, according to Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index. Many are governed by kleptocracies where corrupt officials routinely steal resources from their citizens with impunity.

FEPA has the potential to disrupt these dynamics by empowering the U.S. Government to criminally prosecute any foreign official who demands or accepts a bribe from any American or American company, anywhere in the world.” TI US is part of the world's largest coalition against corruption. In collaboration with national chapters in more than 100 countries, through research, policy development, and advocacy, we are leading the fight to turn our vision of a world free from corruption into reality.

Current U.S. law makes it a crime for an American or



Joe Biden

Koijee confirms relationship with Varlee Telleh

By Lincoln G. Peters

U.S.-sanctioned Monrovia Mayor Jefferson Koijee has told a trial court that he has a working relationship with Mr. Varlee Telleh, in a testimony provided during the ongoing trial over Charloe Musu's brutal murder.

Liberia's former Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) boss Cllr. Jerome Verdier has accused Koijee of allegedly ordering Monrovia City Police official Varlee Telleh to carry out the attack that led to Charloe's murder.

Both Koijee and Telleh have denied the allegation that they were responsible for the attack on Liberia's former Chief Justice Cllr. Gloria Musu Scott's Brewerville residence where Charloe was murdered. However, Cllr. Scott and three of her family members were instead indicted by Liberian prosecutors and they are being prosecuted for Charloe's murder.

Cllr. Scott and Gertrude Newton, Alice Johnson, and Rebecca Youdeh Wisner have pleaded not guilty to the indictment.

Last week, defense lawyers' Pathologist Dr.

Matthias I. Okoye said he found a male DNA in the middle left-hand fingernail of deceased Charloe Musu. On the witness stand Tuesday, 12 December 2023, Dr. Okoye said the late Charloe Musu died of blunt force trauma as a result of multiple stabbing wounds.

The witness testified that the stabbings were caused/done by a muscular male. At the request of the defense team, the court subpoenaed Koijee to testify in the case. Regarding phone numbers of interest, Mayor Koijee said he doesn't have a specific number for a particular employee within the employ of the Monrovia City Corporation (MCC).

But he said he has two numbers which are 0779-229-900 and 0776-407-969.

Mr. Koijee said his most regular number is 0779-229-900, adding that he presented his communication and that if the defense council was still in doubt, his numbers are available.

He added that the court can communicate with him anytime or can even subpoena his numbers through the GSM company anytime to prove his innocence. “Two numbers were being submitted and those numbers are my numbers, it was predicated upon that the police investigated, and they gave me a police clearance,” he said.

“So, I will pray this court that I have been vindicated from the police with a clearance. If the defense has further interest, my other number [is] still available.

He said he wants them to subpoena it as well and they can verify it.

“But as it is now, the police have vindicated me with clearance,” Mayor Koijee said.



Mayor Jefferson Koijee

helped craft the law and led the bipartisan civil society campaign in support of it. Along with TI US, FEPA is supported by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) Action, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), and a broad coalition of civil society organizations that work to promote transparency and accountability in government. FEPA also reflects a commitment made by the Biden Administration to work with Congress to criminalize the “demand side” of foreign bribery. Scott Greytak, Director of Advocacy for TI US, said the following on the passage of FEPA: “Today the United States Government comes one critical step closer to helping provide real justice for victims of corruption around the world. FEPA is a landmark, bipartisan law that holds the potential to help root out foreign corruption at its source. It is arguably the most sweeping and consequential foreign bribery law in nearly half a century.

People living in more than 120 countries face serious

American company to offer a bribe to a foreign official yet does nothing to punish a foreign official who demands or accepts such a bribe. And research shows that the vast majority of bribe-demanding foreign officials are never criminally prosecuted by their home governments. When these corrupt officials face little threat of prosecution by either their home governments or the U.S. Government—while U.S. companies face serious criminal liability for their involvement in such schemes—we're left with incomplete justice. It's time for the United States to impose a cost on those who would threaten Americans' safety and livelihood with bribe demands. FEPA would create a powerful new tool for fighting foreign corruption at its source and for protecting Americans and American businesses working abroad. We strongly encourage President Biden to sign FEPA into law as soon as possible, and we commend Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, Rep. Joe Wilson, Sen. Thom Tillis, the Helsinki Commission, and their respective staff, for their leadership and dedication to this transformative law.

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US sanctions can't hold water

-Chief Cyril Allen says

By Lewis S. Teh

National Patriotic Party (NPP) Chairman emeritus Chief Cyril Allen has described the U.S. government's sanctions against top Liberian officials as a basket that can't

Taylor's estranged wife and Liberian Vice President Jewel Howard Tyalor. Biney and his NPP loyalists supported President-elect Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai's bid for the presidency, while the Taylor faction backed incumbent

regime for corruption.

The latest on the sanction list are Finance Minister Samuel Tweah, and Senators Albert T. Chie and Emmanuel Nuquay.

Earlier on 8 December 2023, the U.S. Treasury Department designated Monrovia Mayor and ruling CDC secretary general Jefferson Kojjee. The U.S. had earlier sanctioned Margibi County Senator-elect Nathaniel McGill, River Cess County Senator-elect Bill Twehway, and former Solicitor General Cllr. Saymah Syrenius Cephus.

Other sanctioned officials are Nimba Senator Prince Y. Johnson and Grand Cape Mount Senator Varney G. Sherman.

In a conversation with a team of journalists via mobile phone in Monrovia recently, Chief Allen lamented that the U.S. chooses who to put sanctions on or who not to put sanctions on.

"Well, that is up to them to be fair or not be fair; but nothing is fair. They choose who to put sanctions on or who not to put sanctions," the CDC Governing Council Chair said.

"They choose which government to stigmatize, they choose which individual they want whether they went through the process or not," he stressed. He believes that the

▶ **CONT'D page 11**

NEC certificates 300 employees

The Board of Commissioners (BOC) of the National Elections Commission (NEC), on Friday, 15 December 2023, certificated and honoured all 300 employees of the Commission for their role played in the successful conduct of the 10 October 2023 General Elections and the 14 November 2023 Run-off Election.

During the program, a number of other NEC employees were also certificated and honoured for performing beyond their calls of duty during the electoral process, which

Honouring Program for the successful conduct of the 2023 General Elections, was held at the Headquarters of the NEC on 9th Street, in Sinkor. The NEC Personnel Honoring Program was witnessed by several international partners including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swedish Embassy, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Carter Center.

Speaking at the occasion, NEC Chairperson, Madam Davidetta Browne Lansanah said the honouring will also be extended to lawyers who were hired as



Chief Cyril Allen

hold water. The NPP which is a constituent member of the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) had earlier ruled Liberia under jailed former president Charles Ghankay Taylor.

During the just-ended 2023 presidential election, the NPP was factionalized between loyalists of Maryland County Senator James Biney and Mr.

President George Manneh Weah's re-election.

"Let me say this, the sanction imposed by the United States is a toothless bulldog, it's a basket that cannot hold water," Chief Allen said.

His comments were in reaction to crippling sanctions imposed by the U.S. government against nine senior officials under the Weah-led

Boakai can't reverse CDC's reforms

--Tweah challenges incoming government

U.S.-sanctioned outgoing Liberian Finance Minister Samuel Tweah has been talking a lot about economic gains under the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC)-led administration.

At a press conference over the weekend, Minister Tweah expressed a belief that the incoming administration of President-Elect Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai cannot reverse these gains.

Tweah said he challenges Boakai to reverse the many economic reforms he had instituted and trash his reforms.

He challenged the incoming Boakai-led administration bring back "waste and large pay gaps" between government workers of the same qualification and experience.

Minister Tweah explained that under difficult circumstances, the CDC-led regime raised the biggest slice of domestic revenue to date, increasing domestic revenue by three percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

He added that they also

brought inflation down from 30 percent to single digit in about a year, something he said arguably, is the fastest inflation collapses in history.

Under his watch as Finance Minister, Tweah said the CDC-led government regularized the backlog of government audits they inherited from the Unity Party.

More importantly, he said his government ended disclaimers due to the lack of financial reporting that was allegedly the norm of the Unity Party.

He lamented that they stood up a new Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) where commissioners are beyond removal by any sitting president, setting the gold standard for independence.

Minister Tweah noted that they braved the storm and reformed a broken and dysfunctional wage system without which their government would have collapsed.

"I double dare and challenge the incoming Unity Party administration to reverse that reform and bring back waste and large pay gaps between government workers

of the same qualification and experience," Minister Tweah asserted.

Giving reference to his reforms, Minister Tweah disclosed that all these achievements have been confirmed separately in various reports by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and several other international organizations.

"Over the last two years of MCC scorecards, the CDC administration has produced the best performance on the scorecard since 2007 when it started," he boasted.



Amb. Boakai



NEC Chairperson, Madam Browne Lansanah praises employees for 2023 General Elections success

contributed immensely to the peaceful, credible, transparent, and inclusive conduct of the 2023 General Elections.

The NEC Board of Commissioners also presented cash prizes to several

temporary hearing officers by the Commission and performed exceptionally well during the 2023 General Elections. The NEC Boss said the Commission was very happy with the work of the entire NEC staff, adding that their work enhanced both the



A general view of NEC Employees during the 2023 honouring and certification program

employees who performed beyond the calls of duties in a number of departmental and sectional areas including Operations, Administration, Legal, Gender, and Field Coordination.

The colourful program duped, NEC Personnel

internal and external images on the Commission. She said the honouring and certification as well as cash prizes presented were to encourage and recognize the work of the employees for their efforts that led to the successful conduct of the general elections. -Press release

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Français

Les sanctions américaines contre Tweah seraient-elles liées au différend entre ArcelorMittal et HPX ?

Dans une révélation surprenante, le ministre des Finances du Libéria, Samuel D. Tweah, Jr., a indiqué qu'il

élargi ses sanctions contre les responsables libériens, et le ministre Tweah fait partie des neuf hauts responsables du régime du président George

participation à des pratiques corrompues liées au secteur minier.

La dernière série de sanctions a également ciblé le maire de Monrovia, Jefferson Kojee, une figure clé du parti au pouvoir, la Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC). Selon le département du Trésor américain, les sanctions contre Kojee découlent de son implication dans des violations graves des droits de l'homme et de la corruption, notamment la corruption et le détournement d'actifs de l'État.

Cette évolution fait suite à des sanctions antérieures imposées à des personnalités libériennes éminentes, notamment les sénateurs élus Nathaniel McGill et Bill Twehway, l'ancien procureur général Cllr. Saymah Syrenius Cephus, ainsi que les sénateurs Prince Y. Johnson et Varney G. Sherman.

Lors de la conférence de presse, le ministre Tweah a cherché à donner un contexte à son présumé favoritisme envers ArcelorMittal par rapport à HPX. Il a révélé qu'il avait reçu des informations selon lesquelles des individus associés à HPX envisageaient des sanctions contre lui en raison du paiement de 37 millions de dollars américains par la société au gouvernement libérien par le biais du budget national en 2019.

Tweah a vivement nié toute malversation, soulignant que les fonds légitimes reçus par le

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Le ministre Tweah qualifie les sanctions américaines d'injustes et s'en prend à ses détracteurs

Le ministre des Finances du Libéria, Samuel D. Tweah, Jr., a exprimé son désarroi face à ce qu'il considère comme le point culminant d'une campagne implacable menée par ses détracteurs, aboutissant à l'imposition récente de sanctions à son

contre et celle de sa famille par les États-Unis. Le ministre Tweah s'est adressé à la presse le jeudi 14 décembre 2023, à la salle de conférence du ministère du Genre à Monrovia, éclairant les circonstances entourant les restrictions de visa imposées à lui et à deux autres responsables libériens.

Le ministre Tweah a raconté qu'à la date du 11 novembre 2023, sa femme a reçu un message de Sister Oretha Pannoh aux États-Unis, prévoyant les restrictions de visa imminentes imposées par le département d'État américain. Il a caractérisé

les sanctions comme le résultat réussi d'une campagne prolongée menée contre lui depuis sa nomination en tant que ministre des Finances en 2018, marquée par des mensonges, des désinformations, de la propagande et des informations erronées.

"Cela marque le triomphe des propagandistes et des détracteurs malveillants qui, depuis ma nomination en tant que ministre des Finances, ont orchestré sans

relâche une campagne contre moi", a déclaré le ministre Tweah, exprimant sa réaction initiale comme étant empreinte de tristesse pour sa femme et ses enfants.

S'adressant aux médias présents, il a expliqué que le gouvernement américain, citant l'article 7031(c) de la loi sur les crédits du département d'État, des opérations extérieures et des programmes connexes pour l'année 2023, les avait publiquement

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Éditorial

La corruption est élevée au Libéria, selon CENTAL

Un rapport publié mercredi par le Centre pour la transparence et la responsabilité au Libéria (CENTAL) a révélé que près de 90 % des Libériens estiment que la corruption demeure un défi redoutable dans le pays.

L'enquête, menée dans neuf des 15 comtés du Libéria en début d'année, a révélé que 88 % des personnes interrogées estiment que la corruption est toujours élevée au Libéria.

"Pour des raisons telles que le manque de poursuites et la culture de la transparence et de la responsabilité au Libéria, environ 90 % des citoyens interrogés estiment que la corruption est élevée, tandis que seulement un pour cent pense le contraire", a déclaré le CENTAL dans un communiqué. Le rapport a également révélé que près de 67 % des personnes interrogées estiment que l'engagement du gouvernement dans la lutte contre la corruption est faible.

"Bien que des acteurs locaux et internationaux continuent à intensifier leurs efforts contre la corruption, le rapport constate l'absence de poursuites contre plusieurs individus accusés de corruption et d'autres crimes comme la principale raison du niveau élevé de corruption", a indiqué le CENTAL.

Le rapport a recommandé que le gouvernement renforce les institutions et les politiques destinées à lutter contre la corruption, notamment en promouvant l'indépendance des institutions d'intégrité. Les réactions au rapport ont été mitigées.

L'officier de programme pour la démocratie et les droits de l'homme à l'ambassade suédoise à Monrovia, Nikolina Stalhand, a félicité le CENTAL pour sa contribution à la lutte contre la corruption au Libéria.

"Nous aimerions savoir exactement ce qui s'est passé au fil des ans et où nous allons", a déclaré Mme Stalhand.

Elle a indiqué que la Suède reste un partenaire engagé en faveur d'un Libéria sans corruption et que beaucoup de choses doivent être faites pour éliminer la corruption, y compris la sensibilisation et d'autres efforts pour freiner l'acte.

Le chef du secrétariat de l'Initiative pour la transparence dans l'industrie extractive du Libéria, et président du comité directeur du Forum national de l'intégrité, M. Jeffery Yates, a également félicité le CENTAL pour le rapport.

"À en juger par le rapport, nous nous en sortons un peu mieux dans le secteur public, et je remarque un déclin léger du côté de la société civile dans la lutte contre la corruption", a déclaré M. Yates.

Il a affirmé que la société civile devrait fixer des normes particulières car les gens comptent sur elle, encourageant les organisations de la société civile à contacter les institutions d'intégrité avant de les attaquer.

Le vice-président exécutif de la Commission anti-corruption du Libéria, Ernest Hughes, a remercié le CENTAL pour son travail.

"Je suis fier du CENTAL pour ce lancement et de l'engagement qu'ils apportent à la lutte contre la corruption, mais j'espère que cela sera un appel à l'action", a déclaré M. Hughes. Il a souligné qu'il est important de s'assurer que le Libéria est perçu comme un pays sérieux dans la lutte contre la corruption.

M. Hughes a affirmé que bien que la LACC ait des pouvoirs de poursuite, il est nécessaire d'être plus prudent dans son utilisation.

"Je demande simplement au public de gérer ses attentes concernant la LACC poursuivant des gens ; nous devons examiner toutes les preuves, l'altération du jury, entre autres, sont des choses qui doivent être examinées avec soin avant de poursuivre des gens", a-t-il mis en garde.

Le lancement du troisième rapport sur l'état de la corruption du CENTAL a réuni de nombreux responsables gouvernementaux de ministères et d'organismes, des partenaires de développement et des organisations de la société civile, entre autres.



Fin. Samuel D. Tweah, Jr.



Fin. Samuel D. Tweah, Jr.

Français

Starts from page 8

Les sanctions américaines contre

gouvernement à des fins de développement ne devraient pas être interprétés comme des pots-de-vin. Il a exprimé sa frustration face à la complexité des négociations et des accords, en particulier dans le secteur minier, et a précisé que son rôle en tant que ministre ne consistait pas à influencer les processus législatifs. Le ministre des Finances a raconté qu'il avait été informé, il y a environ un an à Washington D.C., que des individus liés à HPX cherchaient à le soumettre à des sanctions du Trésor en raison du favoritisme présumé envers ArcelorMittal. Il a allégué qu'on l'accusait d'entraver les efforts d'HPX pour accéder au chemin de fer afin de mener à bien son investissement en Guinée via le Libéria.

En réponse à ces allégations, Tweah a souligné son engagement envers l'équité, en particulier dans le développement d'un système ferroviaire multi-utilisateur par le biais du troisième amendement de la concession d'ArcelorMittal. Il a expliqué que des efforts ont été déployés pour encourager Mittal à céder l'exploitation du chemin de fer à un opérateur indépendant tiers, mais les négociations ont atteint une impasse.

Le ministre a affirmé que le gouvernement américain lui avait conseillé de retirer son soutien au troisième

amendement d'ArcelorMittal pour éviter des sanctions. En conséquence, il a recommandé au président Weah de transférer les négociations ferroviaires au gouvernement américain. Cependant, les tentatives de trouver un terrain d'entente entre HPX et ArcelorMittal à Londres et à Washington se sont avérées infructueuses.

Tweah a détaillé l'accord existant entre le gouvernement libérien et ArcelorMittal, accordant à cette dernière le droit d'utiliser le chemin de fer de Nimba et d'en assurer l'exploitation. Il a révélé la vision du gouvernement pour un système ferroviaire multi-utilisateur, tentant de persuader Mittal de céder l'exploitation pour des raisons d'équité. Malgré ces efforts, les négociations sont restées dans l'impasse pendant plus de trois ans.

Confronté à l'impossibilité pour Mittal de renoncer à l'exploitation du chemin de fer et à la réticence du gouvernement à recourir à l'arbitrage international, Tweah a déclaré que le gouvernement avait proposé un compromis : Mittal deviendrait l'opérateur-utilisateur, renonçant à certains droits en vertu de sa concession actuelle pour faciliter un accès équitable pour des tiers comme HPX.

Regrettant que HPX n'ait pas accepté ce compromis et insiste pour que Mittal abandonne complètement l'exploitation du chemin de fer, Tweah a décrit la situation comme une victime involontaire pris au milieu d'un

Les sanctions américaines, un "meilleur cadeau de Noël" pour le Libéria, selon Gongloe



Tiawan Saye Gongloe

L'ancien candidat à la présidence du Libéria, Me Tiawan Saye Gongloe, s'est félicité des récentes sanctions imposées par le Département du Trésor des États-Unis à l'encontre des responsables libériens, les qualifiant du "meilleur cadeau de Noël" pour le pays. Gongloe a salué le gouvernement américain pour avoir pris des mesures décisives contre la corruption au Libéria, soulignant l'importance de cette démarche lors d'une conférence de presse à Monrovia jeudi. "Je considère la sanction des responsables gouvernementaux comme un cadeau de Noël louable et opportun, car les administrations passées et présentes ont manifesté un manque d'intérêt et d'engagement dans la lutte contre la corruption", a déclaré Cllr. Gongloe. S'adressant à un groupe de journalistes, l'ancien candidat à la présidence du Parti du Peuple Libérien (PPL) a qualifié les sanctions américaines de forme substantielle d'assistance internationale au peuple libérien. Le gouvernement américain a récemment sanctionné neuf responsables de l'administration du

président George Manneh Weah pour corruption, dont le ministre des Finances Samuel Tweah, les sénateurs Albert T. Chue et Emmanuel Nuquay.

Jefferson Kojjee, maire de Monrovia et secrétaire général de la Coalition pour le Changement Démocratique (CDC), avait déjà été désigné par le Département du Trésor américain le 8 décembre 2023. La liste des personnes sanctionnées comprend également les sénateurs élus Nathaniel McGill et Bill Twehway, ainsi que l'ancien Procureur Général Cllr. Saymah Syrenius Cephus. Les sénateurs Prince Y. Johnson et Varney G. Sherman ont également été sanctionnés.

Gongloe a souligné que la corruption porte atteinte aux droits du peuple, contribuant au déclin de la production alimentaire, à la détérioration des réseaux routiers et à l'insuffisance des

installations sanitaires. Ces problèmes, a-t-il noté, sont liés à la survie et au bien-être de la population. Exprimant sa gratitude, Gongloe a remercié le gouvernement américain d'avoir adopté une position ferme contre la corruption, affirmant que cela envoie un message clair aux futures administrations selon lequel le détournement de fonds publics ne sera pas toléré. "Cette décision du gouvernement américain, par le biais de son Département du Trésor, d'imposer des sanctions aux responsables libériens constitue une forme significative d'assistance pour le peuple du Libéria", a déclaré Gongloe. Il a souligné les ressources abondantes du Libéria et le potentiel de générer des revenus au bénéfice de chaque citoyen.

"Le gouvernement est censé servir et honorer, et non voler. Les sanctions rappellent que s'engager dans la corruption ne restera pas impuni", a conclu Gongloe.

Côte d'Ivoire : la justice suspend «in extremis» le congrès du parti d'opposition PDCI



En Côte d'Ivoire, alors que le congrès du PDCI devait se dérouler samedi 16 décembre, sa tenue a été suspendue in extremis par une ordonnance en référé du tribunal de Grande instance d'Abidjan (TGI). Le parti espérait désigner le successeur de l'ex-président Henri Konan Bédié décédé le 1er août, et qui a dirigé le parti pendant près de 30 ans. Selon cette décision que RFI a pu consulter, deux militants du PDCI ont déposé un recours en justice contre la tenue de ce congrès extraordinaire du parti d'opposition. Ces militants font état de plusieurs griefs contre l'organisation du congrès. Il devait permettre de choisir un nouveau président au Parti pour succéder à Henri Konan Bédié. Plus de 6 000 congressistes convoqués Le TGI d'Abidjan a jugé le recours recevable, estimant que « les irrégularités dénoncées » risquent de « compromettre

l'élection du nouveau président du PDCI » voire « d'engendrer des troubles à l'ordre public », cette requête et prononce la suspension du congrès et son report.

Du côté des congressistes du PDCI, la confusion totale régnait le matin même du congrès, car ils n'ont pas été prévenus à temps : l'accès à l'hôtel Ivoire leur était interdit, rapporte notre correspondante à Abidjan, Bineta Diagne. Il y avait des bus stationnés le long des routes, des militants, qui affluaient, pour venir récupérer leur badge d'accès au congrès, mais ils se sont heurtés à un cordon de forces de sécurité qui a encerclé la Maison du parti, très tôt le matin. Impossible pour les militants, d'entrer dans le siège de leur parti. « On n'a plus le droit de choisir notre propre président, c'est incompréhensible » peste Ramata Gnamien. « On ne peut pas élire notre propre président du parti », s'indigne cette dame d'âge mûr. « On bâillonne le parti », s'emporte un autre cadre. En tout, près de 6 200 congressistes étaient convoqués. Les militants venaient de tous les coins du pays : de Bouna dans le Nord, de Tabou dans le Sud-Ouest et même de France, pour les militants de la diaspora. « On arrête tout pour deux personnes qui ont porté plainte... et avec tous ces millions dépensés pour organiser ce Congrès », s'indigne Alexandre, un autre militant.

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Le ministre Tweah qualifie les

désignés, lui-même, le sénateur pro tempore Albert Tugbe Chie et le sénateur Emmanuel Nuquay, pour leur prétendue implication dans une corruption significative.

Selon le ministre Tweah, les États-Unis les accusent d'abus de leurs fonctions publiques en sollicitant, acceptant et offrant des pots-de-vin pour manipuler les processus législatifs et le financement public, notamment dans le domaine de la législation et des activités du secteur minier. Notamment, les sanctions s'étendent à leurs membres de famille immédiate, y compris les conjoints et les enfants mineurs.

En réponse aux actions du gouvernement américain, le ministre Tweah a exprimé son mécontentement à l'égard du bref paragraphe de 75 mots utilisé pour les accuser sommairement et les déclarer coupables sans procédure régulière. Il a déploré les dommages irréparables infligés à leur réputation à vie sur la base de ce qu'il a

qualifié de désinformation et de fausses allégations présentées à une nation puissante.

Qualifiant le verdict à leur encontre d'injuste et de violation fondamentale de leurs droits, le ministre Tweah a catégoriquement nié tout abus de sa fonction de ministre des Finances et de la Planification du développement. Il a déclaré : "Je n'ai jamais abusé de ma position en sollicitant, acceptant et offrant des pots-de-vin pour manipuler les processus législatifs et le financement public, y compris la législation et les activités du secteur minier."

Le ministre des Finances a souligné que ces transgressions présumées n'avaient jamais eu lieu lors de ses relations avec la Législature nationale, les autres branches ou institutions du gouvernement libérien, ou avec des acteurs du secteur privé. Alors que le ministre Tweah fait face directement à ces sanctions, les événements en cours soulignent les défis auxquels sont confrontées les personnalités publiques lorsqu'elles sont confrontées à des accusations potentiellement préjudiciables à leur carrière et à leur réputation.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

COP28 landmark deal to transition from fossils fuels is a unique opportunity for Africa

The world finally agreed on a centrepiece climate deal to transition to renewable energy. For Africa - endowed with huge green resources - this represents a unique opportunity.

Seth Onyango, bird story agency

In what is being hailed as an unprecedented agreement, delegates to COP28 in Dubai made the first official commitment to ditch fossil fuels, in a move set to spur green investment globally.

Dubbed as the 'beginning of the end' of the fossil fuel era, the agreement aims for a rapid and equitable shift, marked by substantial emissions reductions and enhanced financial support.

Negotiators from nearly 200 countries also agreed on the first-ever 'global stocktake' to boost climate action before the end of the decade, aiming to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5°C.

Although the agreement doesn't completely 'phase out' fossil fuels as some had anticipated, it specifically targets a reduction in oil and gas dependency, challenging the long-standing reliance on these fuels in the global economy.

"Whilst we didn't turn the page on the fossil fuel era in Dubai, this outcome is the beginning of the end," said UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell in his closing speech.

"Now all governments and businesses need to turn these pledges into real-economy outcomes, without delay." The move will likely prompt many African economies to explore sustainable opportunities, with wind, solar and green hydrogen being the most likely recipients.

Africa, with its vast renewable energy resources, is uniquely positioned to lead the transition to sustainable power. This shift, however, requires significant financial and technological support - an issue which COP28 aims to address.

Two mechanisms - the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund - could mark a significant change in the way climate finance flows to Africa.

These funds are expected to inject much-needed capital into climate-resilient infrastructure projects, clean energy developments and adaptation initiatives.

While investments of this nature would stimulate job creation in emerging sectors and foster a new wave of green entrepreneurship and innovation, an emphasis on climate adaptation and resilience is set to help fortify African economies against climate-induced disruptions.

Climate finance took centre stage at COP28, with Stiell calling it the "great enabler of climate action."

At the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow in 2021, climate experts demonstrated how Africa can contribute to global emission reduction owing to its massive green energy potential. Rich nations then pledged US\$8.5

billion over the following five years to support South Africa's decarbonisation efforts.

While the southern African country's coal-dominated economy would require at least US\$250 billion over three decades to move away from coal, the offer was seen as killing two birds with one stone - helping Africa abandon dirty fuels while ensuring it remains energy secure.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) received a boost to its second replenishment, with six countries pledging new funding and total pledges now standing at a record USD 12.8 billion, with further contributions expected.

Eight donor governments announced new commitments to the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund totalling more than \$174 million to date, while new pledges of some USD 188 million, were made to the Adaptation Fund.

However as highlighted in the global stocktake, these financial pledges are far short of the trillions of dollars eventually needed to support developing countries with clean energy transitions, implementing their national climate plans and adaptation efforts.

For Africa, massive, home-grown investment will also be needed.

South Africa has already pioneered plans to transition to renewable energy, but there has been resistance to the plan both from some sectors of government and from coal, oil and gas lobbies.

However, South Africa's experience in piloting a new type of climate finance vehicle can help inform debates about how to fund a just transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. With Africa standing to

benefit from the mining of minerals that are key to the transition, there are plenty of opportunities to build new sectors - like green hydrogen initiatives in Namibia and at South Africa's Boegoebaai as well as in Mauritania - and to adapt traditional sectors like mining to both benefit from and help to fund, the transition. One example in mining is cobalt, a key component in the production of batteries for electric vehicles and renewable energy storage systems.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the world's largest producer of cobalt, and Africa as a whole accounts for more than 70% of global cobalt production. Other critical minerals found in Africa include lithium, graphite, and rare earth elements.

Meanwhile, the call for enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) at COP28 by 2025 further compels African nations to adopt more rigorous climate policies. This policy shift is anticipated to spur a wave of regulatory and market reforms, potentially attracting more foreign direct investment, especially in sustainable industries.

During COP28, dialogues progressed on establishing a 'renewed, specific target for climate funding' to be determined in 2024, with a focus on the requirements and key concerns of developing nations.

This fresh objective, commencing at a foundational figure of USD 100 billion annually, is set to serve as a crucial foundation for formulating and executing national climate strategies, slated for completion by 2025.- bird story agency.



COP28 landmark deal to transition from fossils fuels is a unique opportunity for Africa Photo : bird story agency

Implement ECOWAS decision on Ja'neh

Sources on Capitol Hill have hinted this paper that a number of Senators have prepared a petition requesting the Liberian Senate to honour the Judgment of the ECOWAS Community Court to re-instate

judicial discretion, fraud, misuse of power, and corruption. But in its Judgment, the ECOWAS Court ordered the Liberian Government to pay Cllr. Ja'neh US\$200,000 for "the moral wrong" done to him

Founding Member of the ECOWAS.

Being a very proud and well-respected member of this comity of nations, they said Liberia is under a duty to uphold all Agreements, Protocols, Decisions, and Mandates of all organs, Institutions and Bodies of ECOWAS including the Community Court of Justice.

"Liberia must always be reminded that our country was the first member state on whose soil and for whose people, the blood of citizens of fellow ECOWAS member countries was shed so that Liberians could live," the petition said.

"We the undersigned Senators, humbly petition the Honourable Liberian Senate sitting in its 6th Session of the 54th Legislature to reconsider its decision taken against Associate Justice Kabineh Muhammad Ja'neh removing him from the Supreme Court of Liberia for a reason and through a manner that has since been challenged in Liberia and internationally."

The Liberian Senate in Session on 29 March 2019, concluded an impeachment trial, although deemed questionable, and voted by two-thirds majority, removing Justice Ja'neh as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia.

Immediately after that decision, Justice Ja'neh filed a formal application before the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice challenging the constitutional propriety of his removal.

Following the hearing of the Application, the ECOWAS Court concluded on 10 November 2020 that the conduct of the Liberian Senate constituted a violation of Justice Ja'neh's basic due process rights.

The Court also held that Justice Ja'neh's rights to fair hearing guaranteed under both the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were violated.



Cllr. Ja'neh

or honourably retire Associate Justice Kabineh M. Ja'neh.

and "re-instate him as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia."

Our sources say several Senators are signatories to the instrument, considering that this Senate Session ends the 54th Legislature, and marking the great transition from the outgoing Administration of President George Manneh Weah to the 55th Legislature and the incoming Administration of President-elect Joseph Nyumah Boakai.

Cllr. Ja'neh was also granted the option to "retire" and be accorded full benefits of retirement as if he had retired at the constitutional age of 70 years.

Through the petition, the concerned signatories are said to call on the Liberian Senate to formally declare to the world that they shall honour the Judgment of the ECOWAS Community Court.

Following rendition of the Judgment, providing a period of six months for compliance, the Government of Liberia, on 1 February 2021, filed two applications before the ECOWAS Community Court.

The signatories said the Senate shall mandate all appropriate organs of the Republic of Liberia to implement the ECOWAS Court's decisions notwithstanding any adjustment done with Cllr. Ja'neh through negotiations and amicable resolution prior to the inauguration of Amb. Boakai.

One of the applications requested the ECOWAS Court to review the 10 November 2020 Judgment for what it termed as "violating the legislative sovereignty of the Republic of Liberia.

Ja'neh was impeached in 2019 following a trial at the Liberian Senate for alleged proved misconduct, abuse of the public office, wanton abuse of

The other application called for the Chief Justice of the ECOWAS Court to recuse himself from sitting in any matter in which the Republic of Liberia is a party.

Ja'neh was impeached in 2019 following a trial at the Liberian Senate for alleged proved misconduct, abuse of the public office, wanton abuse of

The ECOWAS Court, in its Final Judgment of 4 June 2021 dismissed the two applications in their entirety for "lacking legal merits."

Mr. McGill who was certificated barley two weeks ago among dozens of other

Given the records of the case, the Liberian Senators said it is an established fact that the Republic of Liberia is a

themselves Nathaniel McGill. "We want to thank the police for arresting some of the individuals in the past, but the practice has not stopped. So let the public be warned!" He concluded.

US sanctions can't hold water

United States Government's move lacks fundamental guidelines, but stressed that the CDC does not see any form of witch-hunt. Chief Allen claimed that the U.S. government has no further argument but only wants

to exercise that it is the world's superpower. He argued that the Legislature cannot pass a budget for a particular government ministry or agency and goes back to solicit money from the very

entity. The NPP stalwart noted that some of the officials who have been on the United States sanction list have not been in the United States for over 30 years, but they are living life much better than some of those in the U.S.

Weah revokes vote against ceasefire in Gaza

By Lincoln G. Peters
President George Weah with immediate effect ordered Foreign Minister Dee-Maxwell Saah Kemayah to revoke Liberia's vote against the humanitarian ceasefire in war-torn Gaza.

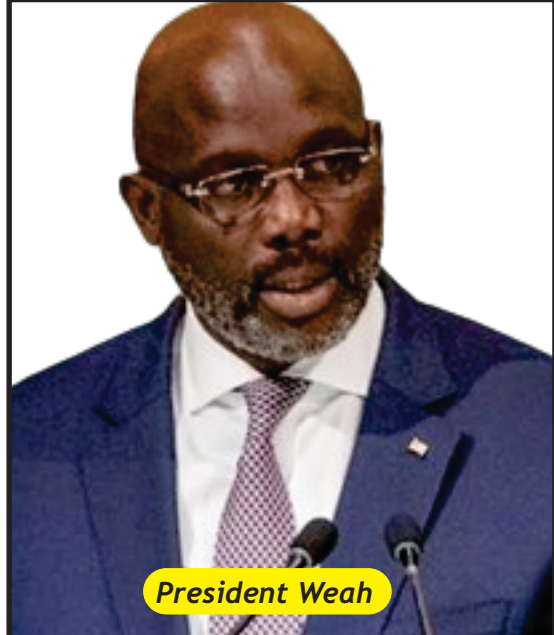
and some of her allies. Liberia voted against Tuesday's resolution along with the U.S., Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Austria, the Czech Republic, Guatemala, Micronesia and Nauru.

Making a brief statement here on Sunday, 17 December at his church's regular service, President Weah said that being a man of peace, he will not promote, vote and support war and political instability in another country.

While a General Assembly vote is politically significant and seen as wielding moral weight, it is nonbinding, unlike a Security Council resolution. The US last week vetoed a ceasefire resolution in the smaller Security Council, which had been approved by a majority of the powerful 15-member body.

"That Liberian that voted for war is wicked and he voted himself; not us, and God will not spear that person's life. They voted wrongly and we will fix it. Our vote will be with the other countries that voted for diplomacy and not war.

Tuesday's brief resolution calls for a ceasefire, for all parties to comply with international law, and for humanitarian access to hostages and their "immediate and unconditional" release. It notably contains stronger language than an October vote in the Assembly that had called for a "sustained humanitarian truce."



President Weah

President Weah discloses that he has informed and mandated the Minister of Foreign Affairs to resent the decision because there is no way he will vote war over peace.

Maybe, he was doing it to tarnish my character and government because we are leaving power. But I want to tell him or her that they are wasting time", President Weah reacted.

President Weah says that he is innocent of the decision and knows nothing about it because his government decided in consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs to vote peace over war, noting that the person who voted in favor of continuous conflict, acted unilaterally based on personal interests.

Liberia voted against a humanitarian ceasefire in war-torn Gaza on Wednesday, December 13, being the only African country that did so when calls are reverberating across the globe for an end to the hostilities between Israel and Hamas.

It is not clear who actually voted in favor of continuous fighting in Gaza amid daily death of civilians, mainly women and children.

Liberia was among 10 countries, including the United States of America, which took that position during a United Nations General Assembly's emergency special session on Tuesday, December 12.

Mr. Weah explains that when the war started initially, he wrote a letter on November 4, 2023, to the Israeli Embassy, appealing to President Benjamin Netanyahu to consider diplomatic approach in restoring peace because, he argues, peaceful lives are being lost, especially children.

Despite the U.S. and Liberia's effort to block ceasefire calls in the UN Security Council, a majority of 153 nations voted for the ceasefire resolution during the UN General Assembly's emergency meeting session Tuesday, while 23 countries abstained from the process.

President Weah continues that he urged the Israeli President to exercise restraint for the sake of humanity and peace. At the same time, he clarifies that his resentment is not against the United States, but he stands with the United Nations and the rest of the world for global peace and stability.

The decision of the majority members, who have repeatedly called for a ceasefire in Gaza, comes as a rebuke to the United States

"How can a George Weah, President Weah that you know, vote against peace? Before voting, I met with the Foreign Minister as to how we will vote and we agreed to vote for peace and diplomacy to end the war in Gaza. I told him that if the entire world is voting diplomacy and peace, I can't be left out as former Peace Ambassador. There is no way I can't call for peace in another country", he maintains.

President Weah notes that he has never voted against the interest of the United States but, this time, he has to vote for peace when necessary, adding that peace and democracy should be the hallmarks for negotiations. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

Mcgill issues disclaimer

-Amidst link to several fake WhatsApp and Facebook accounts

Margibi County Senator elect Nathaniel F. McGill has issued a disclaimer here detaching himself from several WhatsApp and Facebook accounts bearing his

This is to inform the general public, especially the online community that I have not authorized anyone to set up, operate, or make any post on my behalf with such accounts. I have only one Facebook

accounts with my picture, speaking like me, and defrauding people; the practice still continues. We are again warning the public to be mindful of these criminals individuals.



name describing them as fake. In a statement issued Sunday, December 17, the former Minister of State for Presidential Affairs sounded the alarm saying "My attention has been drawn to fake, and slanderous Facebook and WhatsApp accounts created in my name, with my picture, speaking like me, and defrauding people of their hard-earned money.

account and phone number to contact family and friends. This is my only approved Official Facebook page, "Hon. Nathaniel F. McGill". Besides, we have continued to report these activities to the police about the criminal individuals who are still using WhatsApp and Facebook

Anytime, someone calls you as Nathaniel McGill, please verify by asking the person to do a video call so that you can see the person." Mr. McGill caution that he is not in the business of negotiating business deals with people and warned the

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