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Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL.

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Things will



not fall apart

Prince Y. Johnson and Pres. Boakai

-PYJ remains hopeful about Boakai

Go slow at Ganta United Methodist Hospital



-patients' fate in limbo

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Continental News

Africa's 'flying presidents' under fire for foreign trips

Since Kenya's William Ruto and Nigeria's Bola Tinubu became presidents, they have faced similar criticism over their frequent trips abroad. The two men have been the subject of unflattering descriptions - the costs associated with their

insecurity". This in some ways can be seen as a cheap shot, easily levelled by any critic. Presidents need to attend heads-of-state meetings and nurture foreign relations. This is important not only for diplomatic reasons, but also economic ones, as lucrative investment deals can be

- but this is dwarfed by Mr Ruto, who has made about 50 journeys abroad since he became president in 2022 - averaging more than three a month. In comparison, Mr Ruto's predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta, averaged just over one foreign trip a month in his decade in charge, similar to the record of Nigeria's previous president, Muhammadu Buhari, although in terms of total days spent abroad, the difference is not that much. Other world leaders have also notched up the air miles, but Mr Ruto and Mr Tinubu face continued questions over whether every trip is necessary. The Nigerian and Kenyan leaders were both in Europe at the end of last month - Mr Ruto in Italy attending the Italy-Africa summit while Mr Tinubu was continuing his unexplained "private visit" to France, the third time he has been in the country since last May. Since then, Mr Ruto has been on other trips. In June 2023, just three weeks after assuming office, Mr Tinubu travelled to Paris for a two-day climate summit. He had already been there months earlier "to rest" and plan the transition shortly after being elected president.

From Paris he went on to the UK for private talks with his predecessor, who had also travelled to "rest" after the elections. A week later, Mr Tinubu went to Guinea-Bissau for a meeting of West African bloc Ecowas, followed by a trip to Nairobi. BBC



Critics have targeted both Kenyan President William Ruto (L) and Nigerian President Bola Tinubu

alleged penchant for air travel often contrasted with tough economic conditions at home.

A Kenyan newspaper, the Standard, nicknamed Mr Ruto the "Flying President". It said "so great is his love for flying that it appears that he cannot pass up any opportunity" despite pressing domestic demands, such as dealing with the high cost of living.

Last month, as Mr Tinubu made yet another trip to Europe, Nigeria's opposition leader Atiku Abubakar said on social media that Nigeria does not need a "tourist-in-chief". He criticised the president's private visit "while Nigeria is drowning in the ocean of

negotiated. But some have pointed out that late Tanzanian President John Magufuli never travelled outside Africa in his six years in office. Kenyan foreign policy analyst Prof Macharia Munene acknowledges that some trips are necessary but says others are undoubtedly "wasteful". "You have presidents who love to be in the air... Some of these trips are personal glorifications, not so much for the country," he told the BBC. Mr Ruto and Mr Tinubu and their spokespeople defend their trips as being vital to help address the very problems they are accused of ignoring. In the eight months since his inauguration, Mr Tinubu has made 14 trips - an average of just under two a month

African Union bans trade in donkey skin

Animal welfare charities have welcomed an Africa-wide ban on the controversial donkey skin trade.

It will make it illegal to slaughter donkeys for their skin across the continent.

Demand for the animals' skins is fuelled by the popularity of an ancient Chinese medicine called Ejiao, traditionally made from donkey hides. African state leaders approved the ban at the conclusion of the African Union summit in Ethiopia on Sunday.

The charity, the Donkey Sanctuary, called the trade "brutal and unsustainable" and said it had decimated donkey populations around the world, particularly in Africa and South America. Why millions of donkeys are killed each year to make medicine

course of human history Ejiao is believed by some to have anti-ageing and health benefits, although this is unproven. Chinese companies that make it used to use skins from donkeys sourced in China. But when the numbers of the animals in the country plummeted, they looked overseas.

"At first our governments saw this as an opportunity, and many legal slaughterhouses opened in Africa," explained Dr Solomon Onyango from the Donkey Sanctuary in Kenya. "But, [here in Kenya], between 2016 and 2019, about half of our donkeys were killed for the trade," he said.



Campaigners against the skin trade say it is inhumane and unsustainable

Senegalese man convicted over UK migrant deaths

A man who piloted a boat in the English Channel has been found guilty of the manslaughter of four migrants who drowned when it ran into difficulty. Ibrahima Bah, a Senegalese migrant, had offered to steer the dinghy in December 2022 in exchange for a free crossing.

He had claimed that he was forced by violent smugglers to make the journey with at least 43 other migrants.

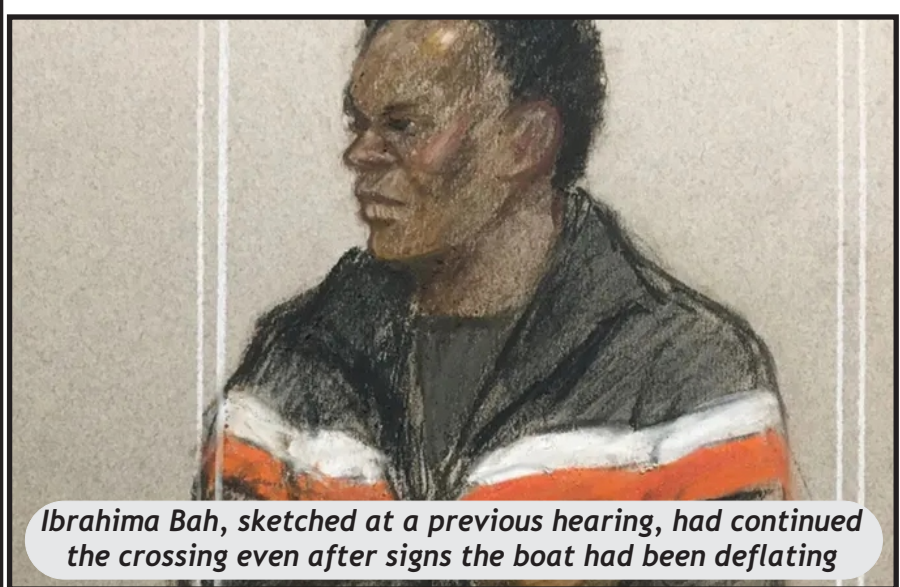
A jury at Canterbury Crown Court also found Bah guilty of facilitating a breach of immigration law.

The case is the first time a migrant who navigated an inflatable has been found responsible for harm caused to other occupants, the BBC's home and legal correspondent, Dominic Casciani, said. Bah previously told the court he had changed his mind about piloting the boat to the UK when he arrived at the beach on the French coast and saw it was too small for the number of passengers.

afternoon. He was found guilty by the jury by a majority of 10 to two of four counts of gross negligence manslaughter, which the CPS describes as where a death is a result of a grossly negligent act or omission on the part of the defendant.

Bah was also found guilty unanimously of facilitating illegal entry to the UK. The jury in a previous trial, held last summer, was dismissed after being unable to reach a verdict. The court heard that a crew on a British fishing boat came across the sinking boat and tried to rescue the passengers, with help from the RNLI, air ambulance and UK Border Force.

A total of 39 survivors were brought to shore in Dover. But the exact number of migrants who drowned is unknown, as it appears at least one person's body believed to have not been recovered. Many of the passengers, not all of whom had life jackets, paid thousands of euros to smugglers. Ms Clark said the crossing "on a sober and reasonable analysis was almost



Ibrahima Bah, sketched at a previous hearing, had continued the crossing even after signs the boat had been deflating

The home-built, low-quality inflatable should not have held more than 20 people.

But he claimed he was assaulted by smugglers and threatened with death if he did not go ahead with the crossing. Duncan Atkinson KC, prosecuting, said as the pilot, Bah owed them a "duty of care to ensure their safety and protect them from the overwhelming risk to their lives". Libby Clark, a specialist prosecutor for the Crown Prosecution Service, said: "He could've turned back. That's what some of the migrants wanted to do.

"But Ibrahima Bah carried on. Those aren't really the actions of somebody who's acted under duress."

Bah, whom a court determined was an adult but whose exact age is in dispute, will be sentenced on Friday

bound to fail". She said there was "no direct evidence of Bah being assaulted other than what Bah says", and that was not a "tenable defence".

"If we consider his actions as that boat went forward, he could have refused to have got in," said Ms Clark.

"He could've gone out in the boat for a small distance if he was in fear and then gone back because it was too dangerous in his opinion." "But he kept going even when after about half an hour into the voyage, that boat was taking on water and people were hearing sounds of puncturing and hissing as the boat deflated."

One of the four who lost their lives was named as Hajratullah Ahmadi. The other three were described as "unknown".

Mr Atkinson said Bah did not have training or experience, while the boat had no lights or safety equipment such as flares.

EDITORIAL

A messy PR

The Executive Mansion in Monrovia has struggled but failed to present pictorial or video evidence that during President Joseph Nyuma Boakai's recent visit to the Republic of Ghana, he met with Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo or Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia as it has claimed.

Last week, the Executive Mansion announced via a press release that President Boakai left the country Tuesday, February 13, 2024 for a two-day visit to meet and hold consultations with President Nana Akufo-Addo, on matters of mutual interest to both countries and issues obtaining in the sub-region.

But just as the Liberian President arrived in Accra, Ghana, President Akufo-Addo was leaving Ghana for an official trip abroad. Subsequently, it was gathered that President Boakai did not meet the Ghanaian Vice President either.

Who then did the President of Liberia meet with while in Ghana, is the US\$50 million question Liberians are seeking answer to, which the authority has been unable to clearly address.

In a fruitless endeavor to provide some explanations, as speculations grew in Monrovia, Presidential Press Secretary Kula Fofana told the NEW DAWN last week Thursday, 15 February that things may change in the presidential space.

The Executive Mansion in a release on Wednesday, 14 February had announced, "His Excellency Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., President of the Republic of Liberia returns home following a brief successful working visit to the Republic of Ghana. While away, he held talks with members of the Ghanaian Government. During his meeting with the Ghanaian team, the President extended appreciation for the support received prior to and during his inauguration as well as the visitation by the Ghanaian Leader, President Nana Akufo-Addo.

For his part, the Vice President of Ghana, Honorable Mahamudu Bawumia expressed excitement for the visit and assured the Liberian Leader of their continuous support and commitment to Liberia."

However, a NEW DAWN's independent investigation that has not been challenged established that President Boakai was flown from Monrovia to the University of Ghana Medical Center last week Tuesday morning for treatment, a place that he had frequently even proper to becoming President of Liberia.

In the first place, there was absolutely no need for the Executive Mansion to have misled the Liberian public about the real intent of the President's trip to Ghana that has created serious embarrassment for the country. Mr. Boakai is now President of the Republic of Liberia and Liberians deserve all rights to know or to be told clearly where he goes and who talks with other than feeding the public with something totally different from the actual happening, as was unfolded recently.

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COMMENTARY

By Carla Norrlöf

Settler Sanctions and the Liberal International Order

TORONTO - On February 1, US President Joe Biden signed an executive order imposing sanctions on four Israeli settlers in the West Bank, where extremist violence and property destruction have been rising. That comes after five new rounds of sanctions on Hamas since October 7, and after the sanctioning of financial networks funding the Houthis in December.

Biden's historic decision to sanction the private citizens of a close ally reflects both domestic and international political pressure. The administration seems to have recognized that Israeli extremist violence, and the settlements themselves, threaten US strategic interests and the broader liberal international order.

Critics of Biden's "democracy-defense credo" view the Israel-Gaza conflict as another example of him sidestepping the issue driving the conflict: territorial control and sovereignty. It is also worth highlighting that enforcing human rights and the rule of law should be integral to democracy promotion, and shared democratic values underpin US support for Israel, a key ally against Islamist extremism and terrorism. But given Israel's own democratic backsliding and the high civilian death toll in Gaza, Biden's unwavering support for Israel reflects a double standard that undermines America's credibility and global standing.

Of course, the settlements issue is not new. These government-sponsored communities have long been expanding in areas occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War, including the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. A majority of countries, and the United Nations, considers them illegal under international law.

Since 1967, UN Security Council resolutions (such as 237) have urged Israel to observe humanitarian principles in the occupied territories; condemned extremist violence by settlers (271); deemed territorial acquisitions in Jerusalem inadmissible (252, 267, 298); and declared Israel's settlements to be illegal under international law, and an obstruction to peace in the Middle East (446, 465, 2334). Moreover, the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an occupying power from transferring its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.

The new executive order targets individuals initiating riots, assaulting civilians and activists, setting fires, causing property damage, and contributing to the displacement or deaths of Palestinians. The sanctions allow for freezing assets, prohibiting transactions with individuals and entities, and restricting their entry into the US.

The US has a long history of enforcing international law, sanctioning terrorism, policing drug trafficking, and promoting democracy, human rights, and peace in support of the liberal international order it helped create. Sanctions are often swiftly implemented against US adversaries such as Cuba, Iran, North Korea, and Syria, as well as terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and Hamas. Belarus, China, Cuba, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Russia, South Sudan, and Syria have all been sanctioned specifically for human-rights abuses.

In other cases, the US has imposed sanctions on countries with which it previously had good relations. These are typically nearby countries whose policies affect the US directly, as in the case of sanctions against Colombian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan officials under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. In other cases, the US soured on faraway countries, such as Myanmar and Zimbabwe, that failed to make a democratic transition.

Only in rare cases has the US sanctioned countries where it had major economic or strategic interests. In 1986, a bipartisan vote in Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (overriding President Ronald Reagan's veto), which sanctioned South Africa and demanded Nelson Mandela's release and an end to minority rule. By contrast,

the 2018 murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi led to sanctions against several individuals under the Global Magnitsky Act, but spared the Saudi leadership, despite CIA evidence of the Kingdom's direct involvement.

As a diplomatic matter, deciding to sanction Israeli settlers may have been as difficult for Biden as it was for Reagan to sanction South Africa or for Donald Trump to sanction the Saudis. Fundamentally, though, sanctioning Israeli settlers for human-rights violations in the Occupied Territories is fully consistent with US support for the liberal international order. Settler violence is illegal under international humanitarian law, as defined by the Geneva Conventions and its Protocols, which offer civilians protection during military strikes, prohibit indiscriminate attacks, and require military operations to be proportionate to the expected military advantage.

By imposing sanctions on individuals for behavior that is considered illegal under international law, or merely seen as an obstacle to peace, the US is reaffirming its commitment to resolving conflicts through law enforcement. The Biden administration is demonstrating US leadership in promoting peace and adherence to globally accepted norms, and ultimately strengthening alliances with countries that share similar values and have a stake in the existing global order.

But the US can and should do more to end the conflict. Ian Lustick, the founder of the Association for Israel Studies, notes that "Israel has never ended a war without being ordered to do so," suggesting that Israel is using an expansion of the war as a negotiating tactic. It fully expects, even needs, the US to intervene. Clearly, stopping the war should be US policymakers' top priority.

Until then, they should require that participants respect the laws of war. The first step would be to amend America's own legislation accordingly. A bill offering aid to Israel, with no conditions attached, did not pass in the House. If a more comprehensive security package is put to a vote, it should offer only assistance that can be used to find, capture, and neutralize Hamas, and it should offer humanitarian and reconstruction aid to civilians in Gaza in excess of the aid withheld from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees.

Finally, since this is not the last time the US will face such a dilemma, it is worth considering a counterfactual. Had Biden refrained from sanctioning Israeli settler violence, he would have undermined the legitimacy of US sanctioning powers and the very international system such sanctions are meant to uphold.

Given all the precedents, it would be outrageous not to sanction settler terrorism. As Mohamed ElBaradei, the former director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, warned last month, America's failure to respond to Israel's gross violations of international humanitarian law in Gaza exposes its selective commitment to liberal norms and poses a direct threat to the international order.

Punishing transgressions according to its stated principles is vital for shoring up US hegemony within a liberal global framework. At a time when rising powers are challenging that hegemony, the US has a fundamental interest in broadening the coalition in favor of maintaining such an order. It will need that support if the Israel-Gaza war, Russia's war on Ukraine, and the brewing conflict with China spiral into a global war - a risk that is too great to discount.

Biden's evolving Middle East policy has become strategically imperative for the US as it navigates the challenges accompanying today's growing geopolitical turmoil. The more America's stance on the Israel-Gaza war isolates the US internationally (reflected in votes at the UN), the greater the risks for us all.

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OP-ED

By Nabil Ahmed

Cracks in the New Gilded Age

WASHINGTON, DC - The past 12 years have been extremely good for the ultra-rich. The fortunes of billionaires - a group comprising the 2,640 wealthiest people on the planet, most of whom are men - has more than doubled. The wealth gap between the top 0.01% and the bottom half of the world's population has increased by 50% since the 2008 global financial crisis.

The aftermath of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine have been particularly lucrative for the ultra-wealthy as they reaped an enormous windfall from pandemic-era stimulus packages and corporate welfare, raked in record profits by raising prices and blaming inflation, and benefited from decades of favorable policies. A recent report by Oxfam found that the combined wealth of the world's five richest people - Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Bernard Arnault, Larry Ellison, and Warren Buffett - has more than doubled since 2020, to \$869 billion.

At the same time, nearly five billion people, representing 60% of the world's population, have become poorer. While global income inequality declined gradually over time, primarily due to rising incomes in China, inequality between countries has increased for the first time in decades, and inequality within most countries has increased, too. Worryingly, a recent World Bank analysis has found that "the fight against poverty has stalled." Given the current trajectory of wealth distribution, the world could have its first trillionaire within a decade, while eradicating global poverty would take 230 years.

While such statistics may no longer be surprising, they should be alarming, for the trend they capture poses a grave threat to democratic governance. While rising inequality is rightly linked to tax policies and debt, we can no longer overlook the crucial role of corporate monopolies in transferring wealth from the working and middle classes to the top 0.1%. In the 12 months up to June 2023, 148 of the world's largest firms earned nearly \$1.8 trillion in profits, a 52% increase from their average annual profits between 2018 and 2021.

Corporate gains have come at the expense of workers, as merely 0.4% of the world's 1,600 most influential companies have publicly committed to paying and supporting a living wage. Meanwhile, rich shareholders are receiving \$82 of every \$100 in profits through dividends and buybacks.

Dominant firms draw workers, consumers, and smaller businesses into their orbit, with multinationals' share of global profits quadrupling over the past 40 years of neoliberal orthodoxy. According to a recent study by the International Monetary Fund, the increase in monopoly power accounts for 76% of the decline in labor's share of income in the US manufacturing sector over the second half of the twentieth century.

In today's highly concentrated world economy, the "Big Three" index funds - BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street - control more than \$20 trillion in assets. Even the late John Bogle, Vanguard's founder, sounded the alarm about the Big Three's dominance in 2018, warning of a future in which "a handful of giant institutional investors will one day hold voting control of virtually every large US corporation."

During the original Gilded Age, monopolists like John D. Rockefeller were synonymous with economic power. In the contemporary iteration, seven of the world's ten largest firms either have a billionaire CEO or a billionaire as a principal shareholder, giving Rockefeller's modern-day counterparts even greater influence over our political economies.

This extreme concentration of wealth and power is reminiscent of what the late US Supreme Court Justice William Douglas called an "industrial oligarchy," whereby people's fortunes are "dependent on the whim or caprice, the political prejudices, the emotional stability of a few self-appointed men." But while this state of affairs may seem bleak, recent developments offer a glimmer of hope.

Consider the United States. Since 2020, the top 0.1% of Americans, who own 13.9% of the country's wealth, have become more than \$2 trillion richer than the poorest half of the population, which holds just 2.6% of the country's wealth. The racial wealth gap is nearly as large as it was in 1950, with the typical white household owning six times as much as its Black counterpart. Meanwhile, as tens of millions of Americans struggle to make ends meet, hunger has increased to its highest level in nearly a decade.

The good news, however, is that low-wage workers have experienced real-wage growth over the past three years, and the wealth of the bottom 50% has slightly increased. Crucially, there has been a resurgence in labor action, with more than 460,000 workers going on strike in 2023 - the second-highest number since 1986. Striking autoworkers, UPS drivers, and Hollywood screenwriters have scored major victories over the past year, showing that progress is possible.

An economic paradigm shift appears to be underway within the US government, exemplified by a reinvigorated anti-monopoly movement. Federal Trade Commission Chair Lina Khan and Jonathan Kanter, the head of the Justice Department's antitrust division, have advanced a series of ambitious reforms, rewriting the lax merger guidelines that enabled corporations to amass unprecedented power, proposing a ban on non-compete clauses, and securing landmark victories for patients and consumers. The FTC's antitrust lawsuit against Amazon, in particular, represents a powerful rebuke to industrial oligarchy.

To be sure, the decades-long dominance of neoliberalism - the handmaiden to America's soaring inequality - will not be dismantled overnight. To get there, Congress must rein in outsize private power and pass legislation capping excess profits, guaranteeing living wages, and safeguarding collective bargaining rights. And the US should not act in isolation. Brazil's G20 presidency offers a unique opportunity to establish international cooperation to combat inequality.

Reimagining public action is vital to advancing this paradigm shift. As US President Joe Biden revives industrial policy, we must ensure that tax dollars are not used to subsidize corporate dominance. Guarantees and public solutions that uphold people's interests, such as universal family care and affordable housing, offer promising pathways from oligarchy.

Escaping the new Gilded Age may be a more daunting challenge than escaping the original one was. But, as workers, regulators, and organizers are showing, the fight against inequality can be won.

OPINION

By Camila Villard Duran

The EU Must Not Give Up on a Mercosur Trade Deal

ANGERS - Trade negotiations between the European Union and Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) began in 1999 and, illustrating the challenges inherent in forging trade pacts among blocs with diverging national interests, resulted in a provisional agreement only in 2019. Since then, efforts to finalize the agreement have floundered. European leaders must recommit to reaching a deal, which will require deft diplomacy.

An EU-Mercosur trade agreement would undoubtedly yield economic gains for both sides. But it also has strategic significance, especially for the EU. At a time when the bloc is wary of depending on China, a trade deal with the world's fifth-largest economy would allow EU member countries to forge new economic ties, secure the critical resources needed for the green-energy transition, and counter Chinese influence in the region. Moreover, as climate change exacerbates food insecurity, a deal would enable the bloc to diversify its suppliers.

But too many policymakers fail to grasp the benefits of strengthening EU-Mercosur ties. Despite the opportunity presented by Brazil's Mercosur presidency and Spain's EU presidency in 2023, an agreement was not reached. But with Brazil's G20 presidency in 2024, and with Mercosur countries playing an active role in that group, this year could be a watershed for the EU-Mercosur relationship.

To be sure, the negotiations over the past 25 years have faced significant hurdles. For starters, Mercosur countries have balked at a provision that would allow EU firms to bid on public procurement contracts, which Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in particular, has been using to promote the growth of domestic businesses.

The EU, for its part, has insisted on stringent environmental and social standards, as revealed in the leaked draft of an additional joint instrument. Mercosur countries see these requirements as superfluous, because they are already working to achieve their existing international climate commitments, including the targets set by the 2015 Paris climate agreement. True, they may struggle with implementation, but so do their European counterparts. Consequently, from Mercosur's perspective, the EU's demands appear to reflect a protectionist mindset, especially in France, where the trade deal has drawn the ire of local farmers.

If the EU continues to drag its feet, Mercosur could abandon the agreement in favor of new trade deals with Asian countries; Uruguay, in particular, has recently sought closer ties with China. During Lula's Mercosur presidency, the bloc signed a trade agreement with Singapore - its first in Southeast Asia - with the hope that the country will serve as a gateway to the region for Latin American businesses. The bloc is also actively pursuing agreements with South Korea and Japan, propelled by the Brazil's ambitions to boost its food sales in Asia.

A trade deal with Mercosur, could help the EU accelerate the green transition and improve food security. Mercosur members, and Latin American countries more generally, have abundant deposits of the critical minerals that are essential for many clean-energy technologies - and are thus emerging as key players in the effort to achieve net-zero greenhouse-gas emissions. The region, led by Chile and Argentina, already produces large quantities of lithium and has vast reserves of graphite, nickel, manganese, and rare-earth elements, with Brazil holding around one-fifth of global reserves in each of these resources.

Moreover, as supply-chain disruptions and climate change undermine global efforts to ensure sustainable food production, and as hunger and malnutrition increase dramatically, Mercosur could play a crucial role in feeding the world, thanks to the bloc's highly productive agriculture sector. The region accounts for around one-quarter of global exports in agricultural and fisheries products, underscoring the importance of trade openness.

Despite its potential, Latin America needs more investment. That is where Europe could come in. While business investments and operations should comply with EU environmental and social standards, international instruments such as the Paris climate agreement and the European Commission's proposed directive on corporate sustainability due diligence could achieve this goal by serving as a broader regulatory framework beyond the EU-Mercosur trade agreement.

Aside from the economic implications of delaying a formal trade deal with Mercosur, further hold-ups could exacerbate geopolitical tensions and erode the trust that is integral to effective partnerships. Of course, the EU is free to take a tough stance in negotiations. But the bloc's leaders should recognize that faltering negotiations with the EU could steer Mercosur countries toward alternative partnerships, particularly with China. While this scenario could offer economic advantages to Mercosur countries, it would likely undermine environmental and social norms, which are not a requirement for Chinese investments.

Nowadays, the EU's primary diplomatic responsibility toward Latin America is to foster a collaborative environment that emphasizes mutual respect and envisages a broader legal framework for economic cooperation. The EU-Mercosur trade deal is a necessary step in that direction.

Tribute to JNG: In Leadership and Service

By Conmany B. Wesseh

The sad passing this day of Hon. Dr. Johnson N. Gwaikolo is yet another irreparable and irreplaceable loss to the United Methodist Church and to the nation; and even more so to his dear wife, his lovely children and the entire family; as well as the uncountable friends he made in the church and during his admirable and selfless public service.

JNG, the ease, and I had been on the phone, texting and voicing until 10:51 on the night of February 18. We were comparing notes on the financial contribution of the United Methodist Church Legislative Caucus to the rally at the 191st Annual Conference that ended same day in Buchanan City.

He reported US\$3500 as he was one of two fundraisers. We also consulted about his possible successor as Coordinator of the Caucus. We considered Sen. Bartekwa, Rep. Moima Briggs and Rep. Romeo Quioh; and after consultation, we thought to leave it to the Caucus with Sen. Bartekwa, as senior, being preferred.

It was a deadly shock for me to hear of his passing 12 hours later.

I have known JNG since 1991, during the early days of the civil war when Dr. Amos Claudius Sawyer led the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU).

In that Government he was the Deputy Speaker and later Speaker of the Interim Legislative Assembly (ILA) which had other fairly young fighters for social justice such as Dusty Wolokolie,

John Kanweaye, etc. Since the main mandate of IGNU was to end the war and restore peace, I had to work relentlessly with him and the ILA in my position as Special Advisor to President Sawyer on the Peace Process.

JNG, a gentlemen par excellence, a consummate negotiator, a dedicated peacemaker, an astute educator, and a great political leader and I found ourselves along useful and memorable paths for peace in the country.

No wonder why fate had us spending his last night talking about leadership and service to humanity in Liberia.

May His Soul Rest in Perfect Peace.

Freedom Not Slavery

By Togba-Nah Tipoteh

With many people from here and abroad looking for jobs and business opportunities in Liberia, it is most important to focus on their respective positions about system change. Are these people bent or not on changing the prevailing system of poverty generation in Liberia? Their displays of rampant populism, opportunism and sycophancy indicate support for the prevailing system of poverty generation.

Witness how we observe the actions of former slave masters and former colonialists when a former French Development Minister insists that what Europe needs from Africa are its raw materials and the purchases of Europe's manufactured goods by Africans. The manufactured goods from Europe are produced from Africans raw materials. The slave masters did a big job on the African slave sellers and slaves because after over five centuries of slavery and colonialism, the local powers that be are still promoting the poverty generation system. Such is not surprising, looking at the white racism in the United States of America (USA), under the leadership of former USA President Donald Trump, as seen in the attempted coup d'etat of January 6, 2021, at the Capitol Building in Washington D.C., USA. In Liberia, there were the coup d'etat and the civil war that took the lives of over 300,000 people and injured many more people. The coup makers of several African countries have opted their countries out of the African Union (AU). President Macky Sall of Senegal has postponed the presidential election in Senegal, scheduled for this year, indefinitely. In Liberia again, the wives of the men of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) went on protests for three days to express dissatisfaction with benefits and appointments. The wives blocked highways including the highway to the Roberts International Airport, Liberia's only international airport.

The government of Liberia (GOL) held discussions with the AFL wives and made several commitments to calm down the mutiny in the AFL. This approach is the business-as-usual approach, as has been the practice for decades. The wrong approach is being used because it is based on the prevailing rule of outlaw rather than the enduring Rule of Law. No wonder, the people of Liberia conclude that Liberia is moving in the wrong direction (Afrobarometer, 2022).

Most fortunately, the awareness raising by the people who love Liberia continues and this helps in minimizing violence, It is only this awareness raising to motivate people to take actions within the Rule of Law that leads to the transformation of the unfair electoral system into the fair electoral system to have persons with good records elected to bring in the system of Justice, the indispensable ingredient for Peace and Progress ins Liberia and in any other Country.

AGRICULTURE ARTICLE

By Judoemue M. Kollie

WoFAL supports 500 Smallholder Farmers for Cooperative Farming

Before the civil war Liberia had stronger agricultural cooperatives to boost production and marketing, but currently many vibrant cooperatives ceased to exist, causing difficulties for farmers to access resources.

For instance, approximately 500 smallholder farmers, majority of whom are women in Zaway and Gohn farming communities located in Garwula District, Grand Cape Mount County, are facing food security challenge.

The farmers have attributed the food insecurity situation facing them partly to their inability to work as cooperatives. They grow rice and other food crops, but are unable to produce enough to send their children to school and feed their families.

Many Muslims reside in Zaway and Gohn, and most of them are married to more than one wives. The polygamous and cultural lives of the people is giving rise to the birth of more children and many of the children are not in school. Poverty is becoming a serious problem within those communities.

Varney S. Kiazolu, age 51, who is a town chief of Zaway said that making a farm is a very struggling experience but they are now motivated due to the incoming rice project at hand.

"We embrace the idea of farming as a cooperative. This is something we have not been able to do. Most times we work as individuals and realise very little yield. But by coming together this year, we expect to grow more food for the communities," he said.

According to him, with the help of WoFAL, they have cultivated more than 100 acres of land and are expected to grow rice on it this year. Varney explained that the organization supported them with food and tools to brush the farm.

Kiazolu said that educating his children remains a serious challenge.

"I have so many children who can't be in school due to the lack of finance. We want the Ministry of Agriculture to work with WoFAL to assist us. We want the government to do more for us," he said.

Hawa Kawai, a woman farmer, said that women's food security and nutrition can be strengthened through cooperative farming.

She said that they as women were working with their husbands to make sure the families were fed.

"Our husbands are working and we support them to feed the families. We are grateful to WoFAL for coming to our rescue as life is extremely difficult," she said.

To address the food security and social problems of the communities, the Working Farmers Agribusiness of Liberia (WoFAL) has partnered with the people of the communities.



WoFAL's CEO Engages communities on cooperatives farming.

WoFAL is a local farming organization that's registered and operates in Liberia. The organization has mobilized farmers to engage into meaningful farming ventures with the aim to work with them to strengthen their food security situation through the provision of inputs and training.

The CEO of the organization, Mr. Samuka Ricker-Kiazolu said that his organization's overall goals are to support the communities for food security, nutrition and income of local farmers for poverty reduction. He said as a business entity, they are working to engage smallholder farmers into cooperative projects for sustainable production.

According to him, the project intends to reduce the labour burden on women and youth by supporting the communities with mechanization opportunities to increase productivity.

"We intend to serve as a market outlet for smallholder rice farmers in the vicinity so as to improve income generation of the people of the communities," he added.

The CEO said his project has identified more than 150 acres that is currently being cultivated for improved rice seed varieties and an additional 50 acres is also being earmarked for cultivation.

"Our first target is to support the farmers to produce more rice. We will buy the rice they grow and process it for the market. This is going to give the farmers income to send their children to schools and feed their families," he explained.

He also mentioned that the project is working with the communities to improve on health care, education and the deplorable road conditions.

"We are not only helping the farmers to produce food, but also intend to help improve on the bad road conditions in the areas. We have made some intervention in the areas of education and health," he said.

Meanwhile, he revealed that they have applied for a grant under the World Bank project at the Ministry of Agriculture and awaiting approval.

He said the grant, when approved, will address a number of challenges facing the farmers and the communities.

Samuka Ricker-Kiazolu is the founder and CEO of WoFAL. He was born in Liberia but later migrated to the USA as refugee for his college education. After many years, he has made his way back home to work with his people's group to engage into agriculture and rural development. He is a member of both Minnesota and North Dakota Farmer Unions in the USA.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Tubman University form partnership with Spanish university

By Patrick N. Mensah, Maryland County

The President of William V.S. Tubman University (TU), Dr. Olu Q. Menjay, has announced a groundbreaking partnership with a sister university in Spain

He says the donation will significantly transform the university's educational agenda and propel it into a new era of innovation and excellence.

He notes that collaboration does not only enhance

prestigious University of Malinga in Spain, students from TU will have an opportunity to study abroad and further develop their language skills in an authentic Spanish-speaking environment.

He continues that Tubman University and the Pedro Ignacio Altamirado Macarrón Foundation have agreed to collaborate on joint scientific research, local and international conferences and other scientific events.

Dr. Menjay stated that Tubman University stands out as a purple cow in the education sector, pushing boundaries and making a significant impact. "With this breaking news, TU invites the general public to join in celebrating this momentous event and looks forward to the positive impact it will have on students and the wider community."

About William V.S. Tubman University:

The Tubman University is located in Harper City, Maryland County, Liberia, and was established as a full-fledged University on September 14, 2009. It's a public institution of higher learning dedicated to providing students with a transformative learning experience. With a commitment to innovation and excellence, TU strives to empower students to reach their full potential in order to make positive impacts in the world. Editing by Jonathan Browne



Dr. Olu Q. Menjay

that will revolutionize the educational experience of students at the institution. Under a partnership with Pedro Ignacio Altamirado Macarrón Foundation of Spain, TU has secured 150 laptops, 5 image projectors, and funding to establish two state-of-the-art computer labs on campus.

Dr. Menjay expresses deep gratitude to the President and founder of the Pedro Ignacio Altamirado Macarrón Foundation for the partnership and educational collaboration between the two institutions.

academic opportunities for the learning community in Liberia but also fosters cultural exchange between Liberia and Spain. "The cultural education initiatives resulting from this partnership will enrich the lives of students and promote the Spanish language in West Africa, strengthening ties between the regions", he adds.

Dr. Menjay also expresses appreciation for the foundation's commitment to advancing education, revealing that with the collaboration with the

Baptists want US\$50m for William R. Tolbert University

-as Boakai inducts new leadership

By Naneka A. Hoffma

The President of the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Reverend Doctor Samuel Reeves, says over 50 million United States Dollars are needed to fully construct the William R. Tolbert University and get it running with all basic infrastructures to meet international standard.

Speaking in an interview over the weekend after he was inducted in office for a second term during program marking the close of the 109th Convention of the church held at Ricks Institute in the Township of Virginia, outside Monrovia on Sunday, 16 February, Reverend Dr. Samuel Reeves said the institution is currently open with about 250 students.

He explains that those elected at the 109th

Convention are Reverend Alphanso Duncan, Senior Pastor of the Bridgeway Baptist Church in St. Paul Bridge, Vice President; Moriah Wesseh, Director of the Women Missionary; Martin Allen, Director of the Men and Gyers Windberry, Director,

Sunday School, respectively.

Performing the induction, President Joseph Boakai, a Baptist and Chairman of the Elder Council, said the Baptist Church has gone a long way in contributing to the nation's building and still has more to do.

President Boakai challenged



▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

Prosecutor accused of abusing power

By Lincoln G. Peters

A young Liberian Mr. Theo Joseph, Jr., has threatened a lawsuit against Montserrado County Attorney Cllr. Alhaji Swahilo Sesay for alleged harassment, unethical conduct, detestation, intimidation, and gross abuse of power.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, 19 February 2024 in Monrovia, Mr. Joseph alleged that Cllr. Sesay instructed the state security assigned to him to subject him to an agreement that has no legal standing.

Joseph explained that he was cited for a conference based on a writ on summons from Cllr. Sesay.

According to Joseph, the writ was due to a complaint filed by his landlady of the Morris Kaliva Estate in Paynesville.

During the conference,

action, adding that he is doing so to mitigate future occurrences.

"I could make a call with few friends, and they talk to him and we go home, but the issue is I want this to stop," said Joseph.

When contacted, Cllr. Sesay decided not to speak on the record. However, he denied the allegation and described Mr. Theo Joseph as a very rude individual who thinks he can misbehave because he is from the United States.

"It's true that he came to my office. I told him to sign a document committing to us as to when he will leave the lady's premises. He did so and said on February 28," Cllr. Sesay explained.

"But before he could do that, it was not an easy fight. I at no point in time instructed the security assigned [to] me to detain, arrest, and abuse him. I have the power to detain, arrest, and prosecute but in this case, I did not do so," he noted.

On 11 August 2023, the Supreme



Attorney Cllr. Alhaji Swahilo

Joseph alleged that he was told to sign a document indicating that he had agreed to his landlady's property. But he said he had a qualm signing that document because it did not have a letterhead. He also argued that it did not capture anything about her restoring his electricity and water supply that was cut off.

"However, I refused to sign and because of that, I was unlawfully detained, and placed under arrest in the County Swahilo Sesay's office under his instruction," Joseph alleged.

Under the alleged instruction of Cllr. Sesay, Joseph claimed that he was prevented from leaving if he did not sign a document that would commit him to leave the property.

He termed the alleged action as an abuse of power, intimidation, harassment, assault gross misconduct, and abuse of his fundamental rights.

Joseph vowed to take legal action against the County Attorney to account for his

Court of Liberia suspended Cllr. Sesay from the practice of law directly and indirectly within the bailiwick of Liberia for the period of one month with immediate effect.

The high court cited his complacency exhibited in the face of the lawless conduct of his clients, which led to the interference and obstruction of the enforcement of the Supreme Court's mandate. The court noted that such action would not have gone unpunished.

Associate Justice Yarmie Quiqui Gbeisay said coupled with prior warning to him for unethical behavior, "Cllr. Sesay is hereby suspended from the practice of law for the period of one month with immediate effect."

The decision of the high court was based on a property case in 2019 in which Sesay represented Iman Isamal Sesay and a lady to be identified and other persons occupying a property in the City of Paynesville.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Mo Ali complains of huge staff list at LWSC

By Ethel A. Tweh

Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation (LWSC) Director General-designate Mr. Mohammed Ali has

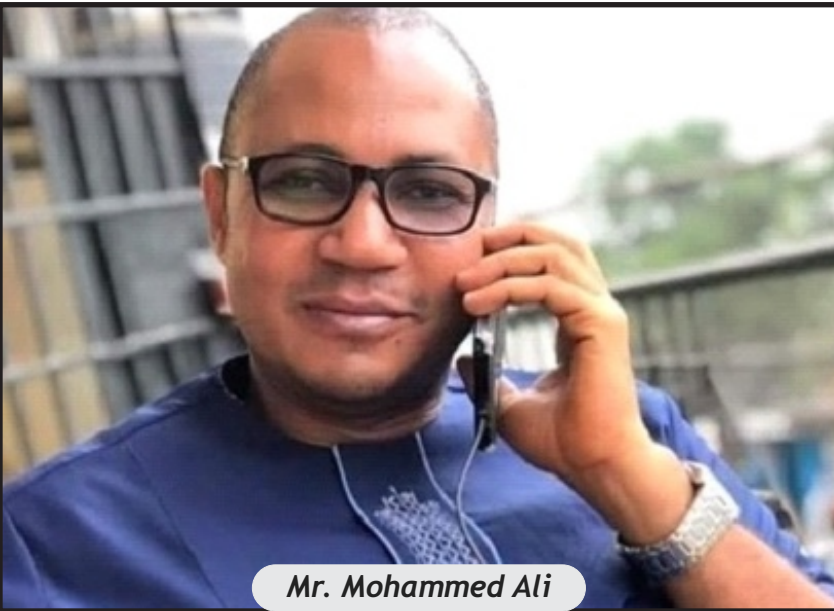
According to him, in December of 2023, the employees increased to 669 and increased the payroll to US\$384,160.18. He lamented that this makes the entity dependent on the Ministry of

Finance to service its payroll, something he promised to change with the support of the Senate if confirmed.

He also indicated that on 1 April 2023, 154 persons were employed while between July and November 2023, 20 janitors and 85 security officers gained employment at the public institution. He disclosed that such employment was done in the absence of vetting to establish whether they met the requisite criteria. He said this continues to create a burden on the entity.

Ali said his administration will regularize water supply across the country. But he told the Senators that there is a major problem with the accessibility of water in Central Monrovia. He narrated that most of the pipes are built on by residents, thus making the task difficult. The LWSC boss-designate has planned to outsource the metering on a prepaid basis as being done by the Liberia Electricity Corporation. He said he wants to ensure that citizens pay for the water. He believes that if private entities handle the metering, they will collect the money and increase the efficiency of the supply.

Ali said they intend to work with the Ministry of Public Works to ensure that they recover their pipes, noting that this can be done by first identifying where they have clots in the sewage system through the engineers.



Mr. Mohammed Ali

complained about an increase of employees from just 189 in 2017 to 669 in 2023.

Appearing before the Liberian Senate for his confirmation hearing, Mr. Ali said he did not intend to sack people at the entity, but he was concerned about the heavy load of staffers there.

Ali appeared before the Senate Committee on Public Corporations chaired by Margibi County Senator James Emmanuel Nuquay on Monday, 19 February 2024 on Capitol Hill. Mr. Ali recounted that the general staff of the entity was 189 with a payroll of US\$155,521.66 in 2017.

Finance and Development Planning. "One of our problems at the LWSC is staffing. In December of 2017, the LWSC had 189 employees with a payroll of US\$155,521.66 a month," he explained. "By the time we got into December 2023, the employees' number had grown to 669, increasing the payroll to US\$384,160.18, [and made] the entity dependent on the Ministry of Finance," he added.

The LWSC boss-designate noted that the institution is supposed to be contributing to the national budget.

Unfortunately, he said it rests squarely on the Ministry of

Starts from page 6 Baptists want US\$50m for

the elected leadership of the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention to go extra miles in solving some of the many problems that have engulfed the country.

During day of the annual conference on Wednesday, last week, members of the Providence Baptist Association disrupted the opening session the was presided over by Reverend Dr. Reeves on grounds that he lacks the authority after his license and certificate were revoked.

According to the PBA, the license of Reverend Reeves was revoked on January 10, 2024, as a result, disagreements erupted between him and moderator of the Providence Baptist Association.

Information gathered indicates that the confusion erupted in the Baptist Convention because of power, money and attempt by Reverend Dr. Reeves to amend the constitution of the church and introduce

some financial discipline.

It was rumored that Reverend Reeves had intended to amend some portions of the Baptist Constitution to synchronize the accreditation, licensing and certification of pastors, deacons and licentiates and introduce some financial discipline, but this attempt was resisted by the PBA, which is the institution clothed with the authority to accredit, license and ordain pastors of the Baptist confab. Editing by Jonathan Browne

178 At-Risk Youth prepare for graduation

By Kruah Thompson

At least 178 at-risk youth have successfully completed the Government of Liberia's rehabilitation program and are gearing up for graduation in the next two weeks.

These young individuals, once facing various challenges and risks, have now completed a rigorous rehabilitation program aimed at providing them with essential life skills, education, and support to reintegrate into society positively. Speaking during turnover ceremony at the Ministry of Health in Congo Town, former Health Minister Dr. Wilhemina S. Jallah, revealed that in two weeks, the at-risk youth group will be reintegrated back into society to reunite with their families. On June 30, 2022, the Government of Liberia in collaboration with the One UN System in Liberia launched the At-Risk Youth program intended to take youthful Liberians who are addicted to drugs off the streets.

About a year ago, after former President Weah launched a US\$13 million rehabilitation program in 2022 for drug-addicted youth, a committee was established with the goal of assisting 500

Monrovia, explained that several mapping exercises were conducted across the country, including an assessment in 2022 on 13,244 At-risk youth identified in 396 different taskforces from all 15 counties.

He disclosed at the time that subsequent training phases were scheduled for August, September, and November, respectively, for the group. According to a release issued under the signature of Deputy Information Minister Jarlawah A. Tonpo, the Government of Liberia through the National Steering Committee for the At-Risk Youth program started the recruitment on August 21, witnessing 105 at-risk youths being documented.

"Out of the 105 registered at-risk youth, 88 are males while 17 are females," Tonpo said.

However, the impending graduation ceremony serves as a significant milestone for the graduates, marking not only their successful completion of the rehabilitation program but also their readiness to embrace a brighter future.

While Dr. Jallah did not give full details of the graduation ceremony, she indicated that the first batch of graduates will be coming out in two weeks' time.

As these one hundred seventy-eight at-risk youth prepare to receive their certificates of



individuals per year through counseling sessions, vocational training, educational workshops, and recreational activities tailored to meet specific needs of each participant.

The rehabilitation program, spearheaded by local authorities in collaboration with community organizations and NGOs, focused on addressing the root causes of delinquency and providing comprehensive support to participants.

Over the course of several months, the Assistant Minister for Curative Services at the Ministry of Health and Head of the Technical Working Group for the At-Risk Youth Program, Dr. Gborbee G. Logan, disclosed that Liberia was grappling with 47,917 at-risk youth.

Dr. Logan, on Thursday, July 13, 2023, at one of the Ministry of Information's weekly briefings in

completion, they serve as shining examples of resilience, determination, and the potential for positive change within every individual.

The pending graduation does not only signify personal growth and achievement but also underscores the importance of investing in rehabilitation programs to support vulnerable youth and foster safer, more inclusive communities.

The graduation ceremony stands as a beacon of hope, symbolizing the transformative power of rehabilitation and the promise of a brighter future for all.

On the other hand, Dr. Jallah revealed that they have trained a total of 105 persons in prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation services to help with the drug situation and at-risk youth across the country. Editing by Jonathan Browne

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Français

Grand Bassa District #5: Christine Juah Settro dénonce une injustice dans le processus électoral

Contestant les élections législatives du district #5 de Grand Bassa, Christine Juah Settro dénonce ce qu'elle considère

favoritisme envers ses adversaires et de négligence à l'égard des preuves soutenant son éligibilité. Les élections du 10 octobre 2023 dans le district se sont

recomptage automatique, la NEC a refusé cette possibilité. Mme Settro et son équipe ont alors demandé réparation devant la Cour suprême, et le 17 janvier 2024, la Cour suprême a ordonné à la NEC de procéder à un recomptage des résultats dans les 78 centres de vote du district contesté. Cependant, la NEC n'a procédé au recomptage que dans 70 centres, en laissant 10 de côté.

Dans une déclaration aux médias locaux, Mme Settro a exprimé sa profonde déception face à la gestion du processus par la NEC, soulignant que de nombreuses irrégularités ont été découvertes lors du recomptage, notamment des urnes cassées et des divergences dans les numéros scellés. Elle a également noté que dans le bureau de vote n°1, 300 personnes ont voté, mais qu'après le recomptage, le nombre est tombé à 259, indiquant un manque de 41 voix dans l'urne.

En outre, elle a révélé qu'à Paystown, elle avait cinq voix supplémentaires, tandis que dans la ville de Koko David, trois personnes supplémentaires avaient voté, mais qu'après le recomptage, les bulletins de vote avaient augmenté de 351 voix. Elle a déploré : "Le nombre



comme une injustice dans le processus électoral.

Lors d'une conférence de presse à l'hôtel Mamba Point de Monrovia, Mme Settro a exprimé sa frustration face à ce qu'elle décrit comme des "obstacles systémiques" empêchant sa certification en tant que gagnante du scrutin du 10 octobre 2023. Elle accuse les responsables de la Commission électorale nationale (NEC) de

conclues sur fond de signalements de malversations et d'irrégularités de la part de la NEC, ce qui a poussé Mme Settro à déposer une plainte auprès du bureau de la Commission à Grand Bassa. Toutefois, la NEC a rejeté la plainte, ce qui l'a amenée à interjeter appel devant le Conseil des commissaires à Monrovia.

Une audience a été accordée, mais malgré des preuves indiquant la nécessité d'un

Nomination du policier Freeman : enquête disculpe l'accusé

Une enquête spéciale sur les violences électorales de 2011 a disculpé Atty. J. Nelson Freeman, principal candidat au poste de chef adjoint de la police, de tout crime commis lors du tir de son arme.

L'ancienne coalition au pouvoir, le Congrès pour le changement démocratique (CDC), s'oppose à la nomination de M. Freeman par le président Boakai au poste d'inspecteur général adjoint de la police pour les opérations.

Suite à la nomination de Freeman, M. Moses Acarus Gray, qui a récemment perdu son siège de district à Montserrado, a allégué que le président Boakai avait délibérément nommé Freeman, qui aurait tiré et tué des membres du CDC au siège de leur parti.

"Le président Boakai a intentionnellement nommé un tueur d'escadrons de la mort. Le 7 novembre 2011, Nelson Freeman a tiré et tué trois membres du CDC et en a blessé plusieurs. Cette nomination est une répétition du 7 novembre 2011, lorsque Boakai était

vice-président", a écrit M. Gray sur Facebook.

Contrairement à l'affirmation de M. Gray, un groupe d'examen indépendant des violences électorales de 2011 n'a pas qualifié les actions de M. Freeman de criminelles.

Le groupe d'experts a conclu que le tir de l'arme à feu par M. Freeman constituait une violation de la politique relative aux armes à feu de la police nationale libérienne (LNP).

Toutefois, le groupe d'experts a souligné que l'arme de M. Freeman n'était pas dirigée vers

des civils ou du personnel de maintien de la paix des Nations unies. Il a déclaré qu'elle était dirigée vers le sol et qu'aucun blessé n'avait été signalé à cause du coup de feu.

Le rapport d'enquête a montré que M. Freeman n'a tiré sur personne pendant cette émeute, contrairement aux informations selon lesquelles il serait responsable des meurtres qui ont eu lieu.

L'examen des rapports de la Commission d'enquête indépendante spéciale par le

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Mr. Francis S. Nyumalin

Gloria Musu Scott

Nelson Freeman

Éditorial

Un sale coup de relations publiques

La présidence à Monrovia a peine à fournir des preuves photographiques ou vidéo de la rencontre du président Joseph Nyuma Boakai avec son homologue ghanéen Nana Akufo-Addo ou son vice-président Mahamudu Bawumia lors de sa récente visite en République du Ghana, comme elle l'a affirmé.

La semaine dernière, la présidence a annoncé dans un communiqué de presse que le président Boakai quittait le pays le mardi 13 février 2024 pour une visite de deux jours afin de rencontrer et de consulter le président Nana Akufo-Addo sur des questions d'intérêt mutuel pour les deux pays et la sous-région.

Or, au moment même où le président libérien arrivait à Accra, au Ghana, le président Akufo-Addo quittait le pays pour un voyage officiel à l'étranger. Il s'est avéré ensuite que le président Boakai n'avait pas non plus rencontré le vice-président ghanéen.

La question à 50 millions de dollars que se posent les Libériens et à laquelle les autorités n'ont pas pu répondre clairement est donc celle-ci : qui le président libérien a-t-il rencontré au Ghana ?

Dans une tentative infructueuse de fournir des explications, alors que les spéculations s'amplifiaient à Monrovia, le porte-parole de la présidence, Kula Fofana, a déclaré au NEW DAWN le jeudi 15 février que les choses pouvaient changer dans l'espace présidentiel.

La présidence avait annoncé dans un communiqué publié le mercredi 14 février : "Son Excellence Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., président de la République du Libéria, est rentré chez lui après une brève visite de travail fructueuse en République du Ghana. Au cours de son séjour, il s'est entretenu avec des membres du gouvernement ghanéen.

Lors de sa rencontre avec l'équipe ghanéenne, le président a exprimé sa gratitude pour le soutien reçu avant et pendant son investiture, ainsi que pour la visite du dirigeant ghanéen, le président Nana Akufo-Addo.

Pour sa part, le vice-président du Ghana, l'Honorable Mahamudu Bawumia, s'est réjoui de la visite et a assuré le dirigeant libérien de leur soutien continu et de leur engagement envers le Libéria".

Cependant, une enquête indépendante du NEW DAWN, qui n'a pas été contestée, a révélé que le président Boakai avait été transporté de Monrovia au centre médical de l'université du Ghana le mardi matin de la semaine dernière pour y être soigné, un endroit qu'il fréquentait régulièrement même avant de devenir président du Libéria.

En premier lieu, il n'était absolument pas nécessaire que la présidence induise le public libérien en erreur sur le véritable but du voyage du président au Ghana, ce qui a créé un sérieux embarras pour le pays. M. Boakai est désormais président de la République du Libéria et les Libériens ont le droit de savoir ou d'être clairement informés de ses déplacements et de ses contacts, au lieu de nourrir le public avec des informations totalement différentes de la réalité, comme cela s'est récemment produit.

Français

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Grand Bassa District #5: Le Parti de l'unité conteste la certification de Thomas Goshua et saisit la Cour suprême

dans les différents bureaux de vote semblait donc fluctuer après le recomptage".

Lors de la conférence, la candidate lésée a souligné que ces préoccupations ont été soulevées pendant le processus, mais que les responsables de la NEC les ont attribuées à de mauvaises conditions routières et ont procédé au recomptage, malgré les objections de son équipe.

"Ils ont même ouvert des zones de comptage supplémentaires sans personnel adéquat, compliquant davantage la situation pour nous", a-t-elle déclaré, indiquant que la NEC les avait initialement informés de cinq zones de comptage, mais qu'il y avait eu une augmentation soudaine à dix, laissant son équipe non préparée.

"Pendant le recomptage, la NEC a transféré certains de ces urnes vers des zones de comptage supplémentaires

sans nous en informer. Cela a conduit à des tensions et à des objections lorsque des urnes provenant de bureaux de vote précédents où des problèmes avaient été constatés ont été ramenées dans le recomptage malgré notre accord initial de les mettre en quarantaine", a-t-elle expliqué.

Selon elle, le nombre total de personnes ayant voté aux élections d'octobre 2023 était de 20 931, mais elle affirme qu'après le recomptage, le nombre est passé à 20 951, ce qui, selon elle, est préoccupant. Elle indique que malgré ces défis, le recomptage s'est poursuivi sans relâche, laissant un sentiment de malaise parmi les personnes présentes.

Immédiatement après le recomptage du 26 janvier, la candidate Dennis a déposé un mémoire d'information auprès du Conseil de la NEC, puis l'a modifié le 1er février. Toutefois, le Conseil des commissaires a refusé d'examiner le mémoire d'information au motif qu'il n'était pas compétent.



Mr. Goshua

Il précise que le 26 janvier 2024, il a initialement déposé un "Bill of Information" auprès du Conseil des commissaires de la Commission nationale des élections (NEC) et l'a ensuite amendé en février 2024.

Cependant, l'UP affirme que le "Bill of Information" a été rejeté au motif que le Conseil des commissaires n'était pas compétent.

Mécontent de la décision du Conseil des commissaires, l'UP a déclaré avoir déposé un "Bill of Information" auprès de la Cour suprême le 2 février 2024.

Le requérant a ensuite déposé une plainte auprès du Conseil des

Le Parti de l'unité (UP), le parti au pouvoir au Liberia, a déposé une requête devant la Cour suprême du pays contestant la certification de M. Thomas Goshua II en tant que représentant du district électoral n° 5 du comté de Grand Bassa.

Par le biais d'un "Writ of Prohibition" déposé devant la Cour, l'UP dénonce la certification de M. Goshua alors qu'un litige électoral est toujours en cours, ce qui constitue une violation de la procédure régulière.

"Le requérant déclare être le challenger et premier finaliste face au gagnant déclaré par la NEC, 2e défendeur, l'honorable Thomas Goshua", a déclaré le parti au pouvoir.

commissaires et une requête en "Writ of Mandamus" auprès du juge en chambre en février 2024.

Alors que ces plaintes et requêtes sont toujours en cours d'examen, l'UP dénonce la certification de M. Goshua par la NEC sans conclusion logique des affaires en cours.

"Le requérant affirme que l'acte du co-défendeur/NEC de certifier l'honorable Thomas Goshua est contraire à la doctrine de la procédure régulière, justifiant la présente requête en "Writ of Prohibition", conclut l'UP.

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Nomination du policier Freeman :

groupe d'examen indépendant était composé de M. Victor E. Helb, président, de M. Atty. Edwin Barquoi, CFE, membre, et de M. Cecil B. Griffiths, membre.

Le rapport a révélé que M. Freeman, alors commissaire adjoint de police, est entré dans l'enceinte du Congrès pour le changement démocratique (CDC) au milieu d'une émeute et s'est retrouvé mêlé à une altercation avec des agents de la Mission des Nations unies au Libéria (MINUSMA) qui ont tenté de le désarmer.

En réponse, le rapport indique que M. Freeman a déchargé son arme de service, vraisemblablement pour résister au désarmement.

Interrogé sur ses actions, M. Freeman a évoqué la crainte pour sa sécurité, déclarant qu'il pensait que son désarmement l'aurait exposé à un plus grand danger dans l'enceinte du siège du CDC.

Après un examen approfondi des circonstances entourant l'incident et de tous les éléments de preuve et témoignages disponibles, le groupe d'experts a conclu que l'arme de M. Freeman n'était pas dirigée vers des civils ou du personnel de la MINUSMA.

Il a noté qu'elle était dirigée vers le sol et qu'aucun blessé n'a été signalé en conséquence.

Rappelons que le 7 novembre 2011, un grand rassemblement de partisans du Congrès pour le changement démocratique s'est tenu à

divers endroits de Monrovia et aux alentours, y compris leur siège principal, en réponse à un appel de la direction du parti.

Ils se rassemblaient en solidarité avec un boycott prévu du second tour de l'élection présidentielle du 8 novembre 2011 entre le Parti de l'unité et le Congrès pour le changement démocratique.

Les partisans du CDC ont occupé des sections du boulevard Tubman, érigeant des barrages routiers pour entraver la circulation, notamment vers le carrefour de l'hôpital catholique.

Les négociations visant à persuader les manifestants de se disperser ont échoué, entraînant des affrontements avec l'unité de soutien à la police qui a alors recouru aux gaz lacrymogènes lorsque certains manifestants ont tenté de franchir les barricades.

La situation a dégénéré en violence lorsque les manifestants ont lancé des projectiles sur la police, endommageant des véhicules du gouvernement, des biens de la MINUSMA, des biens privés et blessant plusieurs personnes, dont des policiers et des manifestants.

Pour rétablir l'ordre, l'unité d'intervention d'urgence de la police a été déployée et la police nationale libérienne a tiré à balles réelles. Tragiquement, une personne a été tuée et de nombreuses autres ont été blessées

Des partisans du Parti de l'unité réclament un audit des fonds d'investissement



Des partisans du Parti de l'unité (UP) dans le comté de Margibi réclament une enquête pour dissiper leurs doutes sur l'utilisation de 5 000 dollars américains fournis à chaque district pour célébrer l'investiture du président Joseph Nyumah Boakai. Ce groupe de militants de l'UP, composé de motocyclistes et d'auxiliaires pour la transparence et la responsabilité (MUPPCMATA), porte des accusations de corruption présumée. Ils accusent la présidente de l'UP dans le comté de Margibi, Mme Cecelia K. Doe, et d'autres piliers du parti dans le comté de détournement présumé de fonds. Dans un document transmis à notre correspondant, le groupe affirme que Mme Doe a déduit 200 dollars américains des 5 000 dollars américains fournis à chacun des cinq districts électoraux du comté de Margibi. Le groupe allègue que Mme Doe a soustrait cet argent en s'engageant à organiser des activités pour l'investiture au siège du parti à Kakata, ce qu'elle n'aurait pas fait. Les partisans de l'UP affirment également que Mme Doe est apparue sur une radio locale du comté et aurait expliqué qu'elle avait utilisé l'argent déduit pour de l'essence et des cartes téléphoniques prépayées. Ils accusent cette responsable du parti dans le comté d'avoir

nommé unilatéralement Mme Harrisona Grimes comme responsable des moyens et des finances au sein du comité d'investissement du comté.

Le groupe déplore également avoir découvert que le samedi 20 janvier 2024, une réunion orchestrée par Mme Doe a été convoquée par le coordinateur du district n°2 de l'UP Margibi, M. Reuben Cooper.

Ils affirment que la réunion a été manipulée et que Mme Grimes et certains membres de sa famille faisaient partie du comité d'investissement. Le MUPPCMATA affirme que 100 dollars américains ont été retirés des 5 000 dollars déjà réduits pour le transport du maire de la ville et de la présidente.

En outre, les partisans de l'UP affirment que Mme Doe a reçu 3 500 dollars américains et a organisé un programme visant à présenter l'ambassadeur Boakai et les candidats de l'UP pendant la campagne, sans la participation du leadership du comté et des autres districts. Selon eux, Mme Doe et Alphanso Belleh de l'UP auraient reçu 3 100 dollars pour former les superviseurs de circonscriptions à Margibi. Cependant, ils affirment qu'elle a déclaré à la direction du parti dans le comté qu'elle n'avait reçu que 650 dollars et qu'elle n'en aurait pas rendu compte. Les partisans désabusés du Parti de l'unité affirment également que Mme Doe a reçu 1 200 dollars américains supplémentaires, somme faisant partie d'un montant présumé de 6 000 dollars envoyé à Margibi pour préparer la visite de M. Boakai et de M. Jeremiah Koung.

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LIBERIANS

DEBATE

Topic: President Boakai's visit to Ghana

By Naneka Hoffman

The recent visit of President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., to Ghana is raising eyebrows in many quarters characterized by doubts whether President Boakai did really meet the President of Ghana as the Executive Mansion announced in Monrovia. Read below comments by some Liberians about the President's recent trip to Ghana, as compiled.



Prosperous Varney Fahnbulleh

"President Boakai is the President for this country. I think his visit to Ghana is important because it will bring some fruits to the country on a serious note, because for the President to just leave a country with the type of crisis that we are facing - tough time, the economy is broke and people are crying from poverty and are starving. Rice bag is more than US\$17 dollars and 19 cents, and other situations. So, the President for a country to take upon himself to go out of the country, I think he went there to lobby and to see how best to find means for the uplifting of

Liberia. But on the other side, if he went there without the permission of the Ghanaian President, it rises an eyebrow, that is the reason why the Ghanaian President went to complain to ECOWAS that if President Boakai is entering his country, Baokai should inform him because he is the President for that country, because Boakai is having some problems; Boakai is ill and God forbid, anything happens to Boakai, the Ghanaian President will take responsibility, on that bases, before you enter in a country, the government of that country should be aware that a President is entering and Boakai never did that. So, for me, I see that to be against the President of Liberia because when you are entering into any country, it behooves you to inform the President, that you are entering in his country, then he will provide you presidential escort for you to be safe in that country."

"I think that is the best thing the President of Liberia did to make a trip to Ghana, and all of us are aware that President Boakai did not just go to Ghana; he wrote the Legislature and they granted him the opportunity to go. So, he went there on a working visit. I think that is the best thing to me; he wrote our direct representatives - the people that represent us. His visit was good; there is no complaint about it."



Jusu Bafalie

reported that President Boakai went to Ghana without any government official and he had many of his family members on the trip. The discouraging part of the trip is that no government official went alone, and also no pictures were taken to show to the Liberian people. And my you, this visit was his first visit after being elected as President, so to extend decision to us as Liberians, because it was our taxpayers' money that was spent and nothing fruitful was discussed in Ghana. And I was even told that he didn't meet the Ghanaian President, but he said he met the Vice President."



Alieu Vasco Kamara

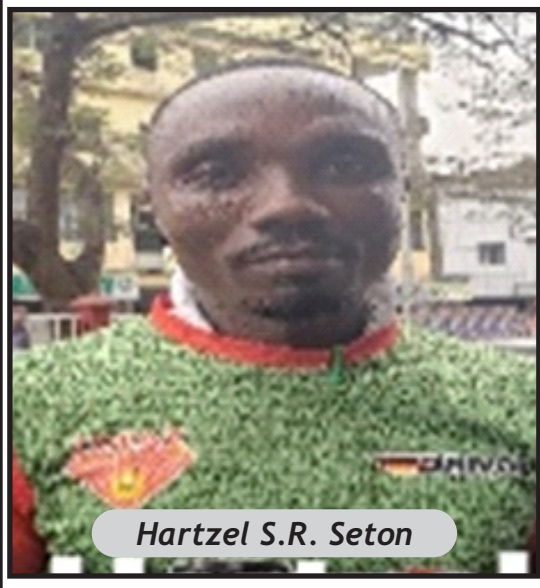
"The President's visit to Ghana, I think in my mind, it was flooded by lies to the Liberian people. I listened to one local radio station and it

"According to information, our President went to see the Ghanaian President, but unfortunately for us, we got to understand from report that the Ghanaian President wasn't in the know, because going to the next person's country as a President, the person should be aware so that they can host you with honor. But unfortunately, from our own side, we never saw anything like that happening for our President, only to come back and say he met with that other President and there were no pictures to show or information on that. Only information we're getting is that he just went to Ghana; on what bases we don't know, so for me, it never went down well with me, because if you look at our country, the



Abraham W. Bedell

President just took over, and you going to meet people to share your platform with them, so that in anyway so that they will be able to help but, unfortunately, for us nothing like that was done, so it never went down well with us."



Hartzel S.R. Seton

"As for me, in my mind, it wasn't bad because the reason is simple; the President has the right to go on a tour at any time he wishes to, though the Constitution gives him the power to acknowledge the legislature and the Liberian people through the right channel. But administratively, I believe the President did the right thing, maybe people just looking at it from the surface. They really didn't follow the detail of it. I believe the right thing was done."

"First of all, I know that President Boakai is a diplomat. And there are lot of things diplomats are doing they might not disclose immediately, but have long-term benefits, and that is how they work. So, I believe President Boakai went to Ghana for something that is very important for our country. So, he doesn't need to take pictures or show of. What Liberia needs currently is somebody who will be able to help solve the problems of the people. I think the President's recent visit to Ghana was



Gulley Saylee

in the right direction and it will help Liberia."

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Go slow at Ganta United Methodist Hospital

Things will not fall apart

By Thomas Domah, Nimba County
Workers at the Ganta United Methodist Hospital in Ganta City, Nimba County are on a go-slow in demand of three months' salary arrears and other benefits.
The go-slow has brought normal activities at the

staff of more than 200, including doctors, nurses and others.
No death has been reported since the go-slow started last week in demand of salaries, better working condition, salary increase, and Social Security benefit, among

been protesting from time to time since 2021, and the administration headed by Mr. Allen Zormonway has been appealing to them but this time around, they will not listen to anyone, including the Bishop of the United Methodist Church, Samuel J. Quire, Jr., until their demands are met.
"Nobody will stop us; we had been stopped several times but this time around, we will not listen to anyone today until our demands are met", they added

Nimba County Senator Prince Yormie Johnson (PYJ) has assured Liberians that things will not fall apart as [they have] been perceived, following a fruitful closed-door meeting with President Joseph Nyumah Boakai.
"My Nimba people, let's stand together in support of the JNB-JKK administration. With the president's commitment made to me yesterday, I believe my people will be happy very soon and things will not fall apart as it has been perceived," he posted on Facebook on Sunday, 18 February 2024.

Senator Johnson's post came Sunday following several weeks of growing disenchantment in how President Boakai's appointment of officials in cabinet positions appeared to have low inclusion of the Senator's kinsmen.
Since the 2005 elections that brought former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to power, Senator Johnson continues to wield influence over the

political appointments seemed not to be to his taste.
On some occasions, Senator Johnson used his Church pulpit to voice out his disenchantment in the initial release of Boakai's list of cabinet nominees in which Lofa had topped with five, followed by Bong with four, while Nimba had two. Beyond the issues with presidential appointments, Johnson remains unhappy whenever he hears about the establishment of a war and economic crimes court, a task Boakai wants to take on in his administration.
One of Johnson's kinsmen, retired Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Prince C. Johnson, III, resigned as Defense Minister due to active soldiers' spouses' widespread protests against his nomination and confirmation as Minister.
Additionally, President Boakai also dropped Senator Johnson's kinsman Cllr. Cooper Kruah as Justice Minister nominee and reappointed him as Labor Minister following a series of accusations by some individuals against the nominee. But Senator Johnson noted in his post



Meanwhile some of the In-patients at the facility are yet to receive treatment from nurses and doctors.

Chris Washington, a 58-year-old resident of Sanniquellie City, Richard Dokie and Aletha Kayee told our correspondent that they have come to the hospital with the intent of being treated, but to their surprise, they are not getting any response.

Speaking on behalf of the hospital, Mission Station Superintendent Rev. Priscilla Legay Gilayeah pleaded with the aggrieved workers to abandon the go-slow, as the administration is expected to meet with them today, Tuesday.

She called on them to return to work until outcome of today's meeting.

Rev. Gilayeah then called on President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr. and Vice President Jeremiah Koug to intervene, because they need help for the upkeep of the hospital.

The NEW DAWN has gathered that the Bishop of the United Methodist Church is expected to visit the hospital today, to meeting with the aggrieved staff. Editing by Jonathan Browne

hospital to a standstill, thereby turning away patients going there for medication.

The industrial action is being supported by various departments of the hospital, including surgery room, Laboratory department, Emergency Entrance, and Orthopedic Unit. Also behind the go-slow are the Eye Clinic, X-Ray, Pharmacy, Dental and Record Room, Maintenance department, Accounting and Business department and Medical Doctors assigned at the faith-based institution.

The aggrieved staff have abandoned the hospital, leaving patients' fate in limbo, as nurses and doctors abandon work.

The Ganta United Methodist Hospital has a total

others.

The aggrieved workers say they are underpaid as staff with Bachelor of Science degree earn a monthly salary of 15,000 Liberian Dollars and below, while security guards and janitors receive LRD 3000 and LRD 4000 as monthly pay.

Addressing workers at the hospital, the Head of the Workers Union, Gabriel K.W. Tounzea, said their demands are constant.

Mr. Tounzea maintained that they will continue to reject patients except those currently at the hospital and that they have agreed to meet with the hospital administration today, Tuesday, February 20, 2024.

According to the aggrieved health workers, they have



Prophet Key risks detention

Starts from back page
Madam Endee. When the case was called, the defense invoked Chapter 12 Section 12.1 of the Civil Procedure Law of Liberia praying the court for a pre-trial conference to amicably resolve the matter. In resistance, the prosecution prayed the court to deny and dismiss the application prayed for by the defense because it must be in good standing with the court.

The prosecution said the defendant's case file showed that he had not preferred a bond, and as such the request for pre-trial conference was an attempt to delay and baffle the proceeding.

Commenting on Section 12.1 of the Civil Procedure Law of Liberia, the prosecution noted that the provision provides for a pre-trial conference. However, the prosecution said such a conference must have a meeting of the minds of the parties. "Wherefore and in the view of the foregoing, prosecution prays this court to deny the request for a pre-trial conference, order the defendant committed to a jail for disrespecting this court," the prosecution said. The

court however granted a pre-trial conference which did not produce its anticipated result.

The court then ordered the defendant to plead to the crimes brought against him which Yeazeahn did by pleading not guilty. "At this stage, this court orders the clerk of the court to proceed with the qualification of prosecution's first witness, Madam Julie Endee to testify for and on behalf of the state," the court instructed.

Moments later, the prosecution prayed to the court for a continuance to prepare.

politics in Nimba County. None of the presidential candidates that Johnson endorsed in a run-off since 2005 has lost to their rival.

This is not only because Nimba is a vote-rich county, but a vast majority of the people of voting age regard him as their political godfather who must always direct their way.

Johnson's fame and political glory from Nimba are tied to his wartime stance in ruthlessly protecting Nimbaians against alleged enemies during which under his watch, then-sitting President Samuel Kanyon Doe was brutally murdered.

Ex-presidents Sirleaf and George Manneh Weah, and now incumbent President Boakai have all won in presidential elections with the backing of Senator Johnson.

But the latest developments after Boakai's 2023 presidential victory appeared a bit sour politically for Johnson because

that he met with the senior elder President Boakai behind closed doors and they discussed a wide range of issues.

He disclosed that some of the discussions focused on the development of the nation, peace and security, and job creation, including youth and women's empowerment programs.

"He said he hasn't forgotten about the people of Nimba when it comes to jobs and infrastructure development because the people of Nimba did well for him," Senator Johnson wrote.

"He promised to always consider the needs of our people. He said to me, "Senator, we are the senior elders in Liberia at the moment, so let's work together to make Liberia proud," the Nimba Senator continued.

"I agreed and reaffirmed my commitment to work with him to make his administration successful, among other things we discussed," he concluded.

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Prophet Key risks detention

-As Julie Endee to take the witness stand

By Lincoln G. Peters
 Monrovia City Court Magistrate L. Ben Barcon has ordered controversial Liberian social media talk show host Nayaborqua Oldpa

mandate after listening to a heated argument between the defense and prosecution in a case between Mr. Yeazeahn and Liberian Cultural Ambassador Julie Endee.

absolutely," the Magistrate said.

In an action of damages for slander and libel filed against Mr. Yeazeahn, Madam Endee is demanding US\$5m for allegedly defaming and humiliating her through his social media talk shows.

"In that respect, the defendant is giving up to 1:00 PM to submit a bond. Upon his failure, he shall be arrested at any location and detained at the Monrovia Central Prison pending the filing of the said bond," the magistrate stated. The court added that failure on the part of the defendant to file a valid criminal appearance bond, it will approve the request for the state for a ne exeat republica to restrain him from leaving the country.

Meanwhile, on Monday, 19 February 2024, Yeazeahn appeared before Magistrate Barcon to answer the writ of arrest issued against him for the crime of criminal coercion, menacing, and disorderly conduct.

The charges are levied based on the complaint filed by



Yeazeahn, alias Prophet Key, to file a valid criminal appearance bond or be detained.

The Magistrate ordered that Yeazeahn files the valid criminal appearance bond or he will be arrested and detained at the Monrovia Central Prison or South Beach.

"This court has exercised the highest degree by giving the defendant a discretionary bond and this cannot continue

Magistrate Barcon issued the mandate on Monday, 19 February 2024, giving the accused one day to file the bond. the court issued the

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