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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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# Boakai flexes muscle at NASSCORP

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**-As Deputy DG shown the door**



Cllr. Edwin Kla Martin

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**-As Boakai's Assets Recovery Team embarks on assets retrieval campaign**

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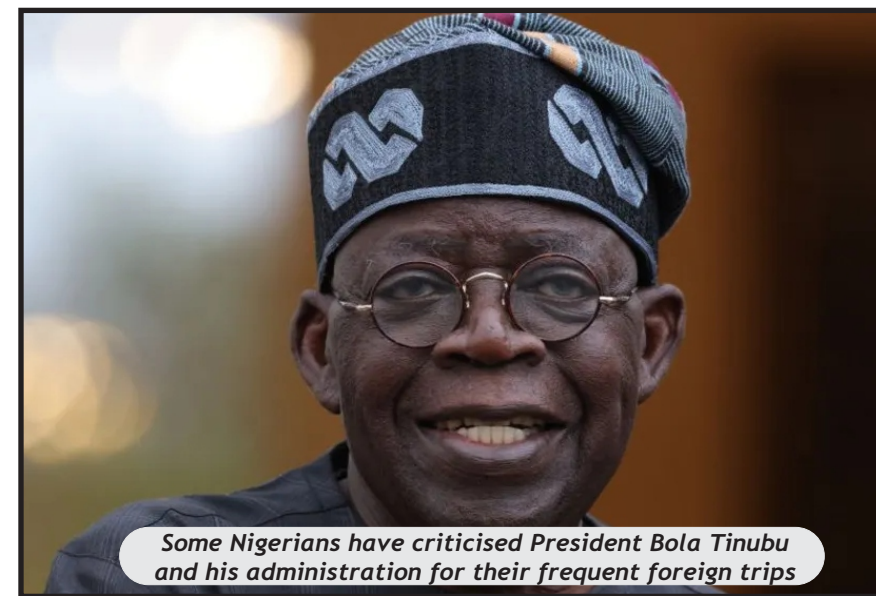
# Continental News

## Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu halts foreign trips by government officials

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu will introduce a three-month ban on ministers and other government officials conference in Dubai last November. Since his inauguration in May 2023, Mr Tinubu has made more than 15 foreign trips. The Nigerian

The West African country is grappling with one of its worst cost-of-living crises in decades, a situation that has led to widespread hardship and anger. The three-month block on official travel by government officials is Mr Tinubu's latest attempt at countering the public backlash. In January, the Nigerian president announced a reduction in the size of the official travel delegation by about 60%, including cuts to his own travel entourage.

When the ban takes effect in April, government officials will only go on foreign trips "deemed absolutely necessary". They will also require President Tinubu's approval at least two weeks before they travel. Mr Gbajabiamila added that the halt on travel will ensure that government officials "focus on their respective mandates for effective service delivery". Despite clamping down on travel by government officials, Mr Tinubu has not said whether he will reduce his own trips. The president and his representatives have in the past defended his trips as being vital in addressing the economic problems he is accused of ignoring. BBC



Some Nigerians have criticised President Bola Tinubu and his administration for their frequent foreign trips

from going on publicly funded foreign trips. Mr Tinubu's chief of staff said the move was prompted by the president's "concerns about the rising cost of travel expenses" by public officials. The ban will take effect on 1 April. President Tinubu and his administration have been criticised by some for their frequent visits abroad. He came under attack, especially on social media, after his government sponsored over 400 people to attend the COP28 climate

president is said to have spent at least 3.4bn naira (\$2.2m; £1.8m) on domestic and foreign travel in the first six months of his presidency - 36% more than the budgeted amount for 2023, the Nigerian newspaper Punch reported in January, citing GovSpend, a civic tech platform that tracks government spending. Mr Tinubu's chief of staff Femi Gbajabiamila said the travel ban will cut costs amid Nigeria's "current economic challenges and the need for responsible fiscal management".

## Tensions Grow Over Stalled Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation in Ghana

Ghana's speaker of parliament has said President Nana Akufo-Addo's refusal to act on an anti-LGBTQ bill for the time being was unconstitutional and that parliament would stop approving new ministerial appointments. One of Africa's harshest anti-LGBTQ laws, unanimously passed by Ghana's parliament last month, has been on hold since the president's office said it would wait for the outcome of two legal challenges before the law goes to Akufo-Addo for assent.

The decision to wait came after a finance ministry warning that the bill could jeopardise \$3.8 million in World Bank financing and derail a \$3-billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan package.

But it has sparked backlash from supporters of the bill, who have said Akufo-Addo has in the past signed into law bills with legal challenges against them.

Parliament speaker Alban Bagbin told MPs on Wednesday the president office's refusal to receive the bill was unconstitutional and caused an

impasse between the executive and the legislature. He said parliament would in turn be "unable to consider the nominations" regarding a government reshuffle in February that another opposition lawmaker has taken to court, until there is a ruling on the matter. The move will halt approval procedures for about 21 nominees to ministerial and deputy ministerial posts, including two for the finance ministry. The presidency did not immediately respond to a request for comment. If it takes effect, the anti-LGBTQ bill will intensify a crackdown on the rights of LGBTQ people and those accused of promoting lesbian, gay or other

minority sexual or gender identities in the West African country. While gay sex is already punishable with up to three years in jail, the new law sets a prison sentence of up to five years for the "wilful promotion, sponsorship, or support of LGBTQ+ activities."

The bill's passage in parliament has already complicated life for sexual minorities, the LGBTQ community has said. In May 2023, Uganda signed one of the world's toughest anti-LGBTQ laws, including the death penalty for "aggravated homosexuality." VOA



Wilhemina Nyarko attends a rally against a controversial bill being proposed in Ghana's parliament that would make identifying as LGBTQIA or an ally a criminal offense punishable by up to 10 years in prison, in the Harlem neighborhood of New York on October 11, 2021.

## Johannesburg Water System Faces Collapse

Thousands of South Africans are lining up for water as the country's largest city, Johannesburg, confronts an unprecedented collapse of its water system affecting millions of people.

For two weeks, Tsholofelo Moloi has been among thousands of South Africans lining up for water as the country's largest city, Johannesburg, confronts an unprecedented collapse of its water system affecting millions of people.

Residents rich and poor have never seen a shortage of this severity. While hot weather has shrunk reservoirs, crumbling infrastructure after decades of neglect is also largely to blame. The public's frustration is a danger sign for the ruling African National Congress, whose comfortable hold on power since the end of apartheid in the 1990s faces its most serious challenge in an

exercise for most people in a country where over 32% of the population is unemployed.

"We are really struggling," Moloi said. "We need to cook, and children must also attend school. We need water to wash their clothes. It's very stressful."

Residents of Johannesburg and surrounding areas are long used to seeing water shortages — just not across the whole region at once.

Over the weekend, water management authorities with Gauteng province, which includes Johannesburg and the capital, Pretoria, told officials from both cities that the failure to reduce water consumption could result in a total collapse of the water system. That means reservoirs would drop below 10% capacity and would need to be shut down for replenishment.

That could mean weeks without water from taps — at a time when the hot weather is keeping demand for water high. The arrival of chilly winter in the Southern Hemisphere is still weeks away.



FILE—Residents of the township of Soweto, South Africa, queue for water March 16, 2024.

election this year.

A country already famous for its hourslong electricity shortages is now adopting a term called "watershedding" — the practice of going without water, from the term loadshedding, or the practice of going without power.

Moloi, a resident of Soweto on the outskirts of Johannesburg, isn't sure she or her neighbors can take much more.

They and others across South Africa's economic hub of about 6 million people line up day after day for the arrival of municipal tanker trucks delivering water. Before the trucks finally arrived the day before, a desperate Moloi had to request water from a nearby restaurant.

There was no other alternative. A five-liter (1.3-gallon) bottle of water sells for 25 rand (\$1.30), an expensive

No drought has been officially declared, but officials are pleading with residents to conserve what water they can find. World Water Day on Friday is another reminder of the wider need to conserve.

Outraged activists and residents call this a crisis years in the making. They blame officials' poor management and the failure to maintain aging water infrastructure. Much of it dates to the years just after the end of apartheid, when basic services were expanded to the country's Black population in an era of optimism. The ANC long rode on that enthusiasm, but now many South Africans are asking what happened. In Johannesburg, run by a coalition of political parties, anger is against authorities in general as people wonder how maintenance of some of the country's most important economic engines went astray. VOA

# EDITORIAL

## We must bring our people from Ghana

The plight of Liberians being driven from the Budumburam refugee camp in Ghana with their homes demolished, leaving them with nowhere to stay, should claim the immediate attention of the Government of Liberia.

Regardless of whether they are no longer refugees or the other way around, no responsible government should sit and watch its citizens endure such humiliation in another country.

Since Tuesday, February 28, 2024, demolition of the Budumbura camp by people believed to be ordinary Ghanaians, the affected Liberians have been without food, water, or shelter, according to the report. This is an act of cruelty against humanity!

Officially, the Government of Ghana has not filed any complaints about the Liberians violating the laws of that country or engaging in acts that could undermine the peace and security of Ghana.

Whatever might have necessitated this action, we are even disappointed more that Ghanaian authorities appear to be silent on the matter that has left more than 11,000 Liberians stranded in that country, including women and children, crying of starvation, more than 20 days after unexpected demolition of their homes.

We have gathered that in 2022, the Government of Liberia, through the Liberia Refugees, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), held a multi-stakeholders meeting in Monrovia and subsequently dispatched a team to Ghana at the time to profile Liberians in the camp when it was established that there was one thousand, five hundred and thirty-nine (1,539) former Liberian refugees in Ghana, and of that number, at least 500 accepted to be repatriated.

They were brought home with an initial amount of US\$240,000 provided out of a total of US\$1.5 million budgeted to bring back Liberians.

We call on the Boakai administration to identify resources to address this matter urgently and save fellow Liberians' dignity in Ghana. We think the most expedient option is repatriating them to Liberia, where they can regain their dignity and respect as citizens.

This is the time to demonstrate leadership in such matters, and President Joseph Nyuma Boakai should rise to the occasion not only to redeem the country's image but also to restore the pride of fellow Liberians.

It is quite unfortunate that since the February incident, the Boakai administration has not publicly spoken to restore confidence and hope in our brothers and sisters in Ghana who have been affected.

Even if they no longer enjoy refugee status, where does the ECOWAS treaty speak of the free movement of people and goods among borderless member states?

The Liberian government should work with its counterpart in Ghana to resolve this matter amicably to maintain regional solidarity and brotherhood among member countries.

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# COMMENTARY

By Célestin Monga

## How to Finance Higher Education in Africa

**C**AMBRIDGE - On-campus activities at Senegal's Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD), one of Africa's largest institutions of higher education, have been suspended since last June, when students protested violently against the jailing of the country's main opposition leader.

The prolonged closure has made life difficult for UCAD students, many of whom normally reside on campus, and disrupted operations, because online classes are not widely available.

The learning gaps that have become visible are exacerbating inequities, fueling social tensions, and threatening the reputation of Senegal's higher-education system. Calls to reopen UCAD have grown louder, but worsening political conditions - led by the postponement of the presidential election - all but preclude it.

UCAD is far from the only African institution of higher learning in crisis. Recent strikes by students and teacher unions have affected public colleges and universities in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and other countries. These strikes reflect diverse agendas, from political activism to demands for better pay, higher cost-of-living allowances, improved working conditions, and more financial aid for students.

The irony is that most students at public colleges and universities in Africa receive free on-campus housing and monthly grants, making them a privileged group, and the changes they advocate seldom address the biggest problems facing Africa's colleges and universities. For starters, benefit-incidence analyses and public-expenditure reviews often show that students from the poorest families rarely enroll in tertiary education, implying a need to redesign admissions criteria.

African colleges and universities also tend to be poorly resourced, saddled with colonial-era curricula, ineffective at monitoring the quality of learning, and subject to bureaucratization and politicization. Government interference in their management and pedagogical choices also diminishes their effectiveness.

Perhaps the most important challenge facing African higher education, in the context of the continent's rapid demographic growth, weak public finances, and low private incomes, is financing. There are three possible revenue sources, the most obvious being tuition fees.

Moreover, governments can provide support in the form of land, capital grants for infrastructure, direct budget

allocations for recurrent expenditures, subsidies for scholarships, and low-interest-rate loans. Lastly, colleges and universities can generate their own funding through endowments, fundraising campaigns, and income earned from research, patents, and consultancy services.

The three main university-funding models correspond to these three revenue sources. A fees-based system like that in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, which depends on a mix of public and private student loans, could be justified in Africa on the basis of tertiary education's high returns. While well-trained, highly skilled African workers often move to developed countries, the benefits of migration - namely remittances - would likely compensate for the brain drain.

But, given high delinquency rates and the lack of reliable national credit-reporting systems, African financial institutions are reluctant to set up effective credit lines for students. Moreover, student groups (and parents of students) across the continent would likely balk at high individual and collective debt burdens and their attendant risks, exacerbating political instability and further weakening universities.

Many Asian and European countries have effectively established free or very low-cost higher-education systems financed by high tax-to-GDP ratios and tax collection. The rationale for this government-funded model is the high social returns of tertiary education, which contributes directly to economic growth and structural transformation by supplying workers who can implement scientific and technological advances and innovation. Well-educated people in the labor force also generate positive externalities by providing opportunities for others.

Africa has tried but failed to implement this model. As a result, such colleges and universities are often poorly equipped for teaching and learning - some even lack libraries - and many graduates cannot meet the increasingly technical requirements of the labor market. They end up underemployed or unemployed, which reduces the social value of higher learning and undermines Africa's ability to build human capital.

Looking to the future, the prospects of making the model work are low, despite its attractiveness. African taxpayers are already heavily burdened.

While governments could manage existing resources more efficiently, the savings would not be enough to cover the cost of quality higher education for the continent's growing youth population.

## OP-ED

By Mohammed Yassin

# AI Could Help Eliminate Tuberculosis

**G**ENEVA - Groundbreaking new technologies seem to be emerging with increasing frequency nowadays. Since its launch in November 2022, OpenAI's generative artificial intelligence chatbot, ChatGPT, has become a global sensation, attracting more than 100 million users and inspiring numerous imitators.

The technology's fast-evolving capabilities have also commanded the attention of world leaders, dominating discussions at both the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai (COP28) and the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

It is not difficult to understand why. By harnessing AI tools developed by private companies like OpenAI, governments and civil-society organizations could make significant strides toward tackling global challenges like climate change and economic inequality. Similarly, they could revolutionize how we fight infectious diseases, ensuring that life-saving care reaches those who need it most.

Tuberculosis is a prime example. TB, a preventable and curable disease, claims an average of more than 3,000 lives per day. Although the mechanisms of TB transmission are well understood, and highly effective treatment regimens - including new and improved medications - are available worldwide, TB still led to 1.3 million deaths globally in 2022.

AI tools could play a major role in the global effort to end TB. To this end, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria is pursuing public-private partnerships with the goal of developing and deploying innovative digital public-health tools.

During a recent trip to Bangladesh, for example, I encountered a team of health-care providers from the public and private sectors, along with local community partners, who are using digital X-rays, AI, and telemedicine to facilitate rapid TB screening. Patients whose X-ray results show signs of TB could immediately submit sputum samples for analysis and receive treatment at the community level, free of charge.

Similar initiatives are being launched around the world. In Pakistan's Punjab province, the humanitarian aid organization Mercy Corps uses AI tools to identify "hot spots" - remote or rural areas where TB cases might go undetected - and set up mobile health camps to deliver diagnostic and treatment services directly to local residents. In the Padre de la Vega prison in Paraguay, health-care workers use Fujifilm ultralight portable X-ray machines and AI technology to provide rapid and precise TB screening.

Likewise, physicians at Cambodia's National Center for Tuberculosis and Leprosy Control in Phnom Penh bring portable Delft X-ray machines to nearby provinces to screen individuals unable to travel to the capital. And in Indonesia, a new partnership between the Global Fund, Siemens Healthineers, and the country's national TB program aims to scale up early detection efforts by combining deep-learning AI technology and X-ray analysis to enable radiologists to read scans remotely.

Targeted, innovative projects such as these are crucial to overcoming persistent inequities that fuel the spread of infectious diseases: poverty, conflict- and weather-related displacement, overcrowding, and limited access to health facilities. Moreover, they are laying the groundwork for resilient health systems capable of meeting every person's needs.

For example, in addition to TB screenings, Pakistan's mobile health camps offer essential services focusing on women and young children.

These examples underscore the importance of fostering collaboration among companies, industry leaders, governments, and local health providers to devise innovative ways to address solvable problems like TB. That is why the Global Fund, which contributes 76% of all international financing to end TB, also allocates more than \$150 million annually to develop digital tools aimed at promoting equity and helping remote communities access critical health-care services.

But much more is needed. Devising targeted, effective, and sustainable solutions requires active engagement with local communities to mitigate a wide range of other public-health threats, such as pandemics and antimicrobial resistance. This is why it is crucial to have committed partners who can envision and develop cutting-edge digital tools.

By leveraging AI to augment local medical expertise, we have an opportunity to overcome TB once and for all. In a world brimming with innovative ideas and emerging technologies that until recently were beyond our imagination, ending this global scourge, and perhaps others, is finally within reach.

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## OPINION

By Aaron Glasserman,  
Monica Greco

# The US Needs Data Privacy, Not a TikTok Ban

**C**AMBRIDGE - Last week, the United States House of Representatives passed the Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act.

It is no secret that the bill takes aim at TikTok. The massively popular video-sharing platform is owned by Beijing-based ByteDance and thus subject to the laws of the People's Republic of China, and potentially to the control of the Communist Party of China (CPC), despite assurances to the contrary from company executives.

If the Senate approves the bill, and US President Joe Biden signs it into law (as he has said he would), ByteDance would be forced to sell TikTok to a non-Chinese company within six months or be banned from US app stores. The reasoning, according to the legislation's bipartisan sponsors, which include the chair and ranking member of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, is that TikTok undermines democracy and threatens national security by allowing China to "surveil and influence the American public."

To be sure, TikTok poses risks to American users. But the app is only one small part of a much larger problem: the lack of an affirmative model of data privacy that protects privacy and civil liberties. By targeting TikTok, US policymakers are merely boosting the company's competitors while sapping momentum from the push for effective data and algorithmic transparency regulations.

Supporters of the bill rely on two arguments. The first is that TikTok is a propaganda machine that enables the CPC to flood the app's enormous user base with pro-China or otherwise harmful disinformation, thereby endangering US national security. Of course, the CPC wants to control China's global image. As the State Department put it in 2023, "Beijing seeks to maximize the reach of biased or false pro-PRC content." That is why Chinese President Xi Jinping has repeatedly exhorted his country's propaganda apparatus and citizens to "tell China's story well."

But it is easy to exaggerate the effectiveness and danger of Chinese propaganda. So far, China's well-told story has fallen on deaf ears, at least in the US, where the need to counter the Chinese threat is one of the few points on which Republicans and Democrats agree.

The country also has a dearth of cultural exports, with no Chinese equivalent to Japanese anime or South Korean K-pop, while enrollment in Mandarin-language courses at American universities has been dropping for years, further eroding China's soft power.

Moreover, if China is attempting to use TikTok to enhance its image abroad, it is failing miserably. Attitudes toward China are largely and increasingly negative in many Western countries, which reflects the country's reputation as an authoritarian bully, its egregious human-rights violations, and its association with the COVID-19 pandemic.

A related concern is that China can manipulate content on TikTok, suppressing videos with anti-CPC narratives and perspectives that fail to "tell China's story well." In fact, this is a well-documented component of the country's media strategy: researchers at Rutgers University recently found that topics deemed politically sensitive in China were underrepresented on TikTok compared to Instagram.

Chinese propagandists could likewise spread inflammatory content to stoke grievances and sow divisions in American society, as Russia has been accused of doing in recent years.

Yet the Russian case - which involved Facebook and Twitter (now X) - demonstrates that this problem is hardly unique to TikTok. Nor is it confined to foreign adversaries: numerous studies have shown that social media can normalize harmful behaviors and fuel hate speech, especially among adolescents. The challenge of algorithmically accelerated alienation goes beyond TikTok, and singling out the app will do little to fix it.

That brings us to US policymakers' second claim: TikTok provides the CPC with access to Americans' data, even when stored in the US. Data security is undoubtedly a serious concern, not least because internet users may be vulnerable to surveillance and exploitation by authoritarian regimes.

But the world has no shortage of unregulated and underregulated data brokers, many of which operate openly in the US and other liberal democracies.

Banning TikTok will not change the fact that private companies and state agencies alike have tremendous power to collect and store data about almost every aspect of our lives. And forcing ByteDance to divest from TikTok will simply put data collected by the app in the hands of another actor. It would be naive to assume that these actors have good intentions merely because they have no direct ties to the Chinese state.

Treating disinformation and data insecurity as TikTok-specific problems serves the interests of rival tech companies like Meta and those who seek to weaponize national-security concerns to prevent sector-wide regulation.

Ironically, doing so also plays into the Chinese claim that American democracy is a sham, corrupted by corporate interests and lobbyists. What is more, it would be seen as hypocritical, since the US has condemned platform bans in other countries (such as the 2021 suspension of Twitter in Nigeria), citing freedom of expression and access to information as pillars of democracy.

The real threat that TikTok represents is much greater and more deeply entrenched than US policymakers want to admit: the unregulated collection and trafficking of personal data in the service of private profit and state control.

To solve this problem, lawmakers must work with civil society to do as many have suggested: develop an affirmative model of data privacy that guarantees civil liberties, requires algorithmic transparency, and empowers ordinary people to understand how corporate and government entities are using their data.

Without these structural reforms, a TikTok ban will be little more than an empty win for a gridlocked Congress.

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## Lord, so dis whole money bisnay wah happened na?

By Othello B. Garblah

Dear Father,

*Da whatin we hearing so? Is it true da de people say ley money weh Kountry Giant say him lee inside our village cash box da lie? Hmm, ley people mon look inside da cash box good, good oo.*

*What you mean my son, you wan tell we say de people lie?*

*Ah, Father da orlor one too big for my mouth oo. Me I only say de people who can be looking behind dis stealing bisnay and be telling people who do wah mon look inside good, good. Aaa my name oo.*

*Wait oo, you ay look leh you know something, bor you na wan talky. Bor Father you too ya. You na hear de thin de people talking here. They say on dis day de Kountry Giant say dis amount of money was in leh cash box. From da time to de time de Papy too came plenty can happen between there.*

*Um, ay look leh you making small sense there oo my son.*

*Look leh me put it dis way Father. Leh say leh man geh 100 dollar in him cashbox. Few days before him travel, him tell him manager meaning him wife da him geh 100 dollar in him cash box on da day him told him wifey. Two days later, him pekin go to the cashier and take five dollar there to pay for candy. The next day him daughter go and take ten dollar to buy shoes, so on and so on.*

*Imagine de day de manager go look inside de cashbox na, de money na correct. Him woman go to de cashier and asked say on dis day how much my husband lee in de cashbox?*

*De cashier too loka de record and say, on dis day da de money weh wor in de cashbox. She na ask him between de time my husband say dis money here wor in de cashbox and de time I com ask you, anybody come take money from inside? She na ask. Then ley people say her husband lie, him na lee da kina money inside him cashbox.*

*So, Father, da de whole story behind dis money bisnay here oo. So whatin make de Village elder them who wor judging de case between de man and him woman first, first na ask de cashier if somebody take money from de place after her husband told her about de balance in de cashbox?*

*You see whatin i talking here Father, becus dis thin da law bisnay na com inside na. The Kountry Giant say on dis day da de money we had inside. De Papay too com say few days later, da dis one me I see inside.*

*Then de chief them too instead of them asking de cashier people what happen from da time to dis time, dey just go ask say how much wor inside on dis day?*

*Hmm, my son, de thin you talking make plenty sense becus, it possible that after ley man fini talking somer him people could go behind him and do their own thin. Ehn you know they able to do da one there.*

*So, da leh thin there so, Kountry Giant talk him own, de Papay talked him own. Bor de chief them na ask de cashier them de righ question. Da de thin da bring dis long hauling here and there. I see...*

*Yes, Father. If de chief them wor coming to ask de people them dis question long time we fini catching de doer of dis act. My son, ley thin sef hard to talk.*

*Yes, ooh Father. Da de thing me I say, ley man talked him own, de Papay talked him own, so, we mon ask de cashier them what happened. They mon talk something, they na innocent.*

# Open Letter to the People of Liberia

**-From U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice Beth Van Schaack**

In early March, I concluded my second visit to Liberia—it was a visit filled with hope and inspiration. Like so many Liberians, I—along with the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia, my colleagues here in Washington, and others within the international community—was very pleased to see President Boakai's announcement in his inaugural address that he would begin the process of creating a War and Economic Crimes Court for Liberia.

Liberians have waited far too long to see justice for the horrific abuses they suffered in the country's two civil wars, despite recommendations from your Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

I applaud President Boakai for making justice such a priority in the early days of his administration.

It was also thrilling to see a resolution in support of the War and Economic Crimes Court pass with strong support in the House.

Congratulations to the Speaker of the House and other Representatives for taking steps to implement the very important and welcome recommendations of the 2009 Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Now, over to the Senate!

As the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice, I see on a daily basis around the world how entrenched impunity for atrocities harms not only the direct victims of those crimes, but all of society and the very fabric of a nation.

When there is no accountability for the worst crimes known to humankind, it undermines the rule of law and contributes to corruption and lawlessness. In so many ways, there can be no true and lasting peace without justice.

When I again spoke on Radio OK FM during my visit, I was asked if I would be disappointed if Liberia did not build a War and Economic Crimes Court before my next visit. Of course, I would like to see a war crimes court in Liberia, but it is not my opinion that matters. The imagined Court emerged from the recommendations of your TRC with a goal of bringing real justice for Liberians. This is your court and your history.

This is why I encourage everyone reading this to let your voices be heard on this issue. Speak up in your communities. Write, call, or reach out to your representatives and local leaders and tell them how you feel.

If you want to see justice, let your leadership know how impunity affects you, your family, and your community. The bright future of Liberia is in your hands—your voices must be heard. The United States stands with you and is ready to support you in this endeavor.

The United States will also be watching closely to make sure that those advocating for justice do not face threats to their safety and that all Liberians can step forward and speak about this effort without fear of intimidation or retribution. Victims and witnesses must play a central role in the work of the future Court, and they must be able to do so freely and safely.

I am so excited to be your partner in this journey. I had a wonderful visit to Liberia, and I cannot wait for my next one—when I hope I will be able to help you welcome the establishment of the War and Economic Crimes Court for all Liberians. Until next time!

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# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Sweden approves USD400k to finance Liberia's National Development Plan

The announcement of the Swedish Government's contribution to Liberia's National Development Plan and President Joseph Boakai's 100-day deliverables comes as a boost to a government struggling to kick start its campaign promises.

Monrovia, Thursday, March 21, 2024-The Government of Sweden has approved approximately US\$400,000 (Four Hundred Thousand United States Dollars) in financing to

when Mr. Urban Sjostrom, Ambassador of Sweden to Liberia, met with the Senior Management Team of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. Mr. Boima S. Kamara, Minister of Finance, led the team to the

development and implementation of the country's next five-year Development Plan. The National Development Plan represents the Liberian government's development agenda for the next five (5) years. The five-year plan will analyse the country's objectives and priorities in relation to all sectors and in response to identifying national needs.

A meeting held on March 14, 2024, by the Liberian Government with International Partners on updates from the Government of Liberia regarding support to the country's next National Development Plan initiated the financing by the Swedish Government. The Government of Sweden has been a partner to Liberia by providing financing that strengthens capacity in public administration, rule of law, accountability and respect for human rights, women's participation in political processes, and support in the health sector, among other things. -Press release



complete Liberia's National Development Plan and President Joseph Nyumah Boakai's 100-day deliverables. The disclosure was made

meeting in Monrovia. According to Amb. Sjostrom, the Four Hundred Thousand United States Dollars will be used to complete the

## Windstorms affect over thousand in Gbarpolu, Bong, and Nimba

Gbarpolu, Bong, and Nimba Counties were recently devastated by windstorms which severely damaged 298 homes and left over a thousand residents homeless.

By Kruah Thompson

Monrovia, March 22, 2024: Liberia's National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) says recent windstorm incidents across three counties in Liberia have left a trail of destruction, affected 1,863 individuals and causing serious injuries to two persons.

NDMA Executive Director Ansu Dulleh told a regular press briefing on Thursday, 21 March 2024 at the Ministry of Information in Monrovia that the windstorms occurred on Saturday, 16 March, and ravaged Gbarpolu, Bong, and Nimba Counties.

He said they resulted in widespread devastation, as reports indicated that 298 homes were severely damaged, leaving over a thousand people homeless.

After receiving such information, Mr. Dulleh revealed, that the Government of Liberia through the NDMA, swiftly dispatched a team of responders

"Similarly, in Bong County, 82 homes were evaluated, with 45 severely damaged and 37 partially damaged. Nimba County reported 268 affected individuals, with two structures completely destroyed and a teenager sustaining severe injuries," he noted.

Additionally, Director Dulleh emphasized the government's commitment to addressing the humanitarian needs of the affected population and ensuring their safety against future hazards.

He referenced the "World Bank Group Climate Risk Profile-2024 for Liberia," which predicts increased rainfall patterns, accompanied by windstorms and rising sea levels, posing imminent risks to lives and infrastructure.

With the rainy season yet to begin, Director Dulleh warned of the potential for further devastation if precautions are not taken.

He urged vulnerable coastal communities to remain vigilant against coastal erosion and advised

## 5 counties unite to end open defecation

Five of Liberia's 15 counties have penned a joint resolution to end open defecation in collaboration with USAID.

By Thomas Domah, Nimba County

Five counties in Liberia have jointly signed a resolution to end open defecation in their respective areas under a USAID-sponsored Countywide Sanitation Activity. The project is implemented by Population Services International (PSI), Concern Worldwide, ATHENA Infonomics, and GUSCEMAN Inc., Excellence for Growth and Prosperity Business Development and Support Services. The counties include Lofa, Grand Bassa, Bong, Montserrado, and Nimba, with the aim of enabling households to have access to the end of open defecation. The Countywide Sanitation Activity focuses on areas such as sanitation, governance, sanitation, and marketing.

defecation. Chairman Nyahn said the joint resolution also focuses on 2 to 5 percent of all annual funds and stressed that income generated from each county be allotted to support and promote sanitation projects and activities in collaboration with sanitation partners and stakeholders to develop policies and guidelines that will promote and sustain the enhancement of adequate sanitation in Grand Bassa, Lofa, Bong, Montserrado and Nimba counties to end open defecation permanently in Liberia by ensuring strict compliance with the tenets of inclusion, transparency and accountability in the execution of sanitation projects.

Addressing participation in Ganta during the three-day Final Resolution adoption and area-wide sanitation planning at Jackie Guest House in Ganta, USAID Chief of Party for Countywide Sanitation Activity Matthew Ndoté urged participants to be focused and get involved

in ending open defecation in their various homes and counties. He also encouraged them how to improve sanitation in the various counties. Mr. Ndoté told the participants from all five counties that 64 percent of Liberia's population still uses open defecation. They disclosed that 98 percent of the funding provided comes from non-governmental organizations, and the Government of Liberia has not expressed interest in the fight to end open defecation in the country.



to collaborate with local authorities in the affected counties to ascertain the gravity of the situation.

In his address, Director Dulleh outlined the severity of the situation, citing specific areas such as Weasua town in Gbarpolu, Janplee, Garmue, and Pantah in Bong County, and Zoeplaygbor in Nimba, where numerous homes were either partially or destroyed entirely.

"In Gbarpolu County, 769 individuals were affected, with 52 homes badly damaged and 49 partially damaged out of 101 homes assessed," Dulleh disclosed.

the public to prepare for the impending hazards by disseminating educational campaigns on disaster preparedness.

Director Dulleh appealed to local and international partners for support in addressing the pressing humanitarian needs arising from the disaster.

He called upon the Legislature to prioritize the allocation of resources to the NDMA in the 2024 proposed budget, enabling the agency to effectively respond to future crises.

The National Disaster Management Agency has a statutory responsibility for prevention of disaster, mitigation, and the recovery process.

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# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## VCWC mobilizes world footballers for Rwanda championship

## Liberia Chamber of Commerce and UN Women conclude dialogue

Liberia's former President and global football icon, George Manneh Weah is expected to join several world footballers to grace an international championship in Rwanda in September

As part of this year's International Women's Month activities, the Liberia Chamber of Commerce and UN Women held a dialogue as part of a collaborative effort to address gender disparities in Liberia's business landscape.

By Naneka A. Hoffman

By Kruah Thompson

Monrovia, Liberia, March 21, 2024—The Veteran Clubs World Championship is expected to kick off on September 1, 2024, in Kigali, Rwanda. Former world great footballers, including ex-President George

legends from around the world. Disclosing the news here on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at the United Nations One House on 1st Street Sinkor, the Chairman and Founder of the VCWC, Fred Siewe, expressed his delight and joy in being in Liberia because this country provided the only best footballers for Europe and the world who came from Africa, most specifically, Liberia.

goal and cooperative task that former footballers can undertake to ensure that the development of football across the world can be one of the key areas.

Mr. Siewe said that when the Veteran Clubs World Championship tournament continues, people around the world will see it as an objective to promote football through peace, education, tourism, business, and many other means.

He says his three-day visit to Liberia didn't come as a mistake. After meeting football stakeholders and former Liberian players, he noted that Liberia has great potential and abilities to do so many things.

However, he explains that VCWC believes in contributing to youth development, female football, and amputee football despite being organized for former footballers.

He explains that VCWC focuses on football globally, not only on males, but will introduce female legend in the 1st Edition because they will also have a female game.

Mr. Siewe notes that the new Liberian government is working hard to impart football to the youth for development and that the VCWC will contribute to developing Liberian youth in partnership with the United Nations.

According to him, his plans for the Veteran Clubs World Championship are a long-term

Monrovia, March 21, 2024: The Liberia Chamber of Commerce and UN Women have concluded a comprehensive dialogue on advancing gender equality through corporate responsibility for implementing the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

The dialogue was held as part of a collaborative effort to address gender disparities in Liberia's business landscape, as part of this year's International Women's Month activities.

The Women Empowerment Principles are a set of seven principles developed by the UN Global Compact and UN Women in 2023, offering guidance on promoting gender equality and

Participants exchanged valuable insights, shared success stories, and identified areas for further improvement.

During the panel discussions, the Chief Executive Officer for the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs in Liberia, Palmena W. Weah, the co-founder of Women in Renewable Energy (WIRE), Olive Saab, and the National Champion of the Association of Women in Cross-Border Trade stressed the importance of gender-sensitive policies and practices.

They spoke of the importance of the economic benefits of gender diversity in corporate leadership, and the role of women-owned businesses in driving sustainable development in Liberia.

In a remark, the President of the Liberia Chamber of Commerce Mr. O.



Manneh Weah, Rogers Miller, Ronaldinho, Michael Owen, Jay Jay Okocha, Robert Pires, and Miguel Pauleta, will be in attendance.

The Championship will run from September 1 to 10, 2024, and will feature 150 football



women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplaces, and communities.

The event, spanning an entire day on Wednesday, 20 March 2024, delved into the pivotal role of the private sector in advancing gender equality within the nation.

Hosted in Monrovia at the Ministry of Commerce on Capitol Hill, the dialogue brought together key stakeholders from the private sector, government, civil society, and academia.

The stakeholders engaged in insightful discussions, sharing strategies, and experiences aimed at fostering a more inclusive business environment.

Throughout the dialogue, various topics were explored, including why promoting gender equality and investing in women and girls is relevant for the private sector. It also covered the role of the Liberia Chamber of Commerce in promoting gender equality, the Women Empowerment Principles, good practice examples from the private sector in Liberia on promoting gender equality, and panel discussions on the private sector's role in addressing poverty, strengthening institutions, and financing for gender equality. The panel discussions focused on practical solutions and best practices for advancing gender equality.

Natty B. Davis, II, emphasized the significance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in addressing gender inequalities.

He underscored the chamber's commitment to supporting initiatives that promote gender equality and empower women in businesses across Liberia. Furthermore, the UN Women Resident Coordinator, Madame N. Christine Umutoni, highlighted the need for concerted efforts to eliminate barriers hindering women's economic participation.

Detailing examples from her friends' experiences from high school to their professional careers, she stressed the importance of creating an enabling environment where women have equal opportunities to thrive in the business sector.

In her remark, Gbene Horace-Kollie Sarah, Minister of Gender, Children, and Social Protection, commended the Chamber of Commerce and UN Women for organizing the dialogue. She reiterated the government's commitment to promoting gender equality and pledged to work closely with the private sector to achieve this goal. As the dialogue ended, participants reaffirmed their commitment to implementing concrete actions to advance gender equality within their respective organizations and across Liberia's business community.

## CECPAP extends reconciliation dialogue to Nimba

**-kicks off Bong session today**

A local group has embarked on peace dialogues to several counties following the 2023 elections to unite citizens

Two-day reconciliation dialogue session organized by the Center for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (CECPAP) has ended in Zuo-Zualay, Nimba County with participants resolved to work for peace and unity in their various places of work, worship centers, schools, and communities.

Zou-Zualay became a hotspot during the 2023 presidential and legislative elections when political conflict ensued between the then Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) campaigner Anthony Quiwonkpa on one hand and Unity Party Vice Standard Bearer, now Vice President of Liberia Jeremiah Kpan Koung and Nimba County Senator Prince Y. Johnson on the opposite side. According to reports, the political conflict between the two parties got tense to the extent that the former had to open a gunfire on the latter, wounding several supporters of the Unity Party. But supporters of Anthony Quiwonkpa denied the story,

saying that such a horrific act never occurred in their community during the electoral season, while supporters of the Unity Party affirmed the act.

Amidst the argument in the hall, CECPAP's Executive Director Charles Crawford informed the participants that the presence of his organization in Zuo-Zualay was not an investigative mission, but a mission to help them live in peace and harmony through reconciliation. The reconciliation dialogue session was held under the theme: A Reconciled Society for A Sustainable Growth. The dialogue session brought together 25 participants drawn from the religious and disable communities, women and

youth groups, etc. During the two-day session held in Zou-Zualay, participants deliberated on issues they see befitting to the growth of their community and its people. One of the issues, according to the participants that is mostly important to them, is for them (dwellers of Zou-Zualay) to reunite for the sole purpose of moving their town and county forward in all aspects of life. CECPAP's reconciliation dialogue session is expected to reach to areas identified by the Peace Building Office (PBO) as hotspots during the 2023 presidential and legislative elections. Already, CECPAP has reached Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County and Zuo-Zualay, Nimba County.



# Français

## Les Libériens font face à des conditions insoutenables au Ghana

Les informations en provenance du Ghana ne semblent pas être bonnes pour des milliers de Libériens qui ont cherché refuge dans ce pays pendant la guerre civile au Libéria dans les années 90. Ils ont maintenant été expulsés de force du camp, car il a été démoli le 28

démolition inattendue de leurs maisons par les autorités ghanéennes qui a laissé un peu plus de 11 000 Libériens bloqués dans ce pays, pleurant de faim car on leur demande de rentrer chez eux.

Cette situation insoutenable a conduit à des agressions physiques contre des femmes et des enfants par des autorités

ignorés, maltraités par les autorités et de perdre leurs maisons sans préavis, alors que les difficultés quotidiennes aggravent leur situation.

M. Gwion Dennis, porte-parole des Libériens, s'est plaint que les autorités libériennes, par l'intermédiaire du ministère des Affaires étrangères à Monrovia, continuent de faire la sourde oreille face à leur situation désespérée.

Il y a deux semaines environ, le conseil traditionnel de Gomoa Fetteh au Ghana, dirigé par le chef traditionnel du pays du tabouret fetteh, Nana Abor Attah, a dirigé la démolition du camp de Buduburan, laissant des milliers d'occupants sans abri, tant des Libériens que des Ghanéens.

M. Gwion a déclaré au NEW DAWN que la démolition a été faite de force et sans notification de la part des autorités ghanéennes, ce qui, a-t-il noté, les a frustrés.

Selon lui, la démolition a été exécutée par des individus non identifiés, accompagnés de chefs traditionnels du conseil fetteh, qui ont démoli leurs

ghanéennes non reconnues.

Ils sont également expulsés de la rue et des bâtiments scolaires qui servent désormais d'abri.

Les réfugiés libériens expriment leur frustration d'être



février 2024, laissant des centaines d'entre eux sans abri et sans nourriture.

La vie est devenue insoutenable pour les Libériens du camp de réfugiés de Budumburam au Ghana, 22 jours après la

▶ CONT'D page 9

## Le gouvernement s'attaque à la surpopulation carcérale au Liberia

Le nouveau ministre de la Justice et garde des sceaux, Cllr. Natu Oswald Tweh, a attiré l'attention sur le problème de la surpopulation carcérale dans tout le Liberia et a dévoilé des plans pour y remédier.

Le ministre Tweh a annoncé que le ministère de la Justice, en collaboration avec les tribunaux et les défenseurs publics, travaille activement à l'élaboration de stratégies visant à alléger la pression sur les établissements pénitentiaires du pays.

Lors d'une récente déclaration faite au ministère de l'Information, de la Culture et du Tourisme à Monrovia, il a souligné l'importance de s'occuper de la situation des détenus préventifs, dans le cadre des efforts visant à réduire la surpopulation carcérale.

Cependant, il a averti que chaque cas doit être soigneusement évalué au cas par cas, en tenant compte notamment de la gravité des crimes tels que le viol et le

meurtre impliquant certains détenus préventifs.

"Nous ne pouvons pas simplement libérer des individus en raison de la surpopulation carcérale, surtout s'ils sont accusés d'infractions graves", a affirmé le ministre Tweh.

"Nous examinerons minutieusement ces affaires, en prenant le temps nécessaire pour comprendre les complexités avant de déterminer la marche à suivre appropriée".

Reconnaissant les défis à venir, le nouveau ministre de la Justice a souligné que trouver

des solutions à des problèmes aussi anciens exige de la patience et de la diligence.

"La tâche de trouver des solutions est souvent plus difficile que d'identifier le problème lui-même, mais nous sommes déterminés à trouver des solutions viables". Il a mis en évidence le caractère historique du problème des détenus préventifs et a souligné son importance accrue face à la crise actuelle de surpopulation dans les prisons libériennes.



## Éditorial

### Les puissants redoutent le tribunal pour crimes de guerre et économiques

Le Liberia semble s'engager sur une voie où une poignée d'individus qui ont terrorisé la population entière avec des armes, semant le chaos et tuant des milliers de civils, y compris des femmes et des enfants, pensent toujours pouvoir prendre le pays en otage par la force des armes, face aux appels actuels à la création d'un tribunal pour crimes de guerre et économiques afin de les punir pour leurs actes.

Cette poignée de citoyens, principalement des chefs de guerre, dont certains siègent au parlement, pensent pouvoir échapper à la justice par le biais d'un tribunal et ont commencé à proférer des menaces de retour dans la brousse si un tel tribunal venait à être créé et s'ils étaient convoqués à comparaître.

Dans leur esprit, ils ne doivent aucune explication à la population pour le carnage qu'ils ont commis pendant la brutale guerre civile et devraient pouvoir continuer comme si de rien n'était, ou imposer leur volonté.

Mais il faut dire clairement aux généraux et chefs rebelles que le temps les a rattrapés, et que leurs jours sont comptés pour comparaître devant une cour pénale internationale afin de répondre des atrocités commises contre des citoyens innocents et pacifiques.

Ils semblent vivre dans une utopie, croyant qu'ils peuvent défier à la fois le peuple libérien et la communauté internationale pour échapper à la justice, alors que leurs victimes continuent de se lamenter dans la douleur et les larmes, la justice leur échappant. Non ! Il doit y avoir une limite, et nous pensons que le moment est venu.

Pour des raisons évidentes, les chefs des rebelles dissous de l'INPFL et du MODEL, les sénateurs Prince Yormie Johnson du comté de Nimba et Thomas Yaya Nimely du comté de Grand Gedeh, sont ceux qui battent le tambour de la guerre le plus fort, proférant des menaces et s'opposant à la création d'un tribunal pour crimes de guerre et économiques au Liberia parce qu'ils ont peur de leurs actes passés.

Les 98 personnes identifiées pour être poursuivies par le rapport final de la Commission Vérité et Réconciliation doivent savoir que le président Joseph Nyuma Boakai n'est pas l'auteur du rapport, mais qu'il fait preuve de leadership en mettant en œuvre ce que le rapport préconise : la nécessité de rendre des comptes, et non pas une chasse aux sorcières, comme le prétendent certains milieux.

La marque d'un bon dirigeant est de se lever et de parler au nom de la majorité. Le président Boakai s'est lancé dans cette entreprise sans crainte face aux menaces de ceux qui se voient dans le miroir, affirmant qu'ils ne pourraient pas survivre au tribunal pour crimes de guerre car leurs actes sont accablants.

Les âmes de concitoyens assassinés de sang-froid à Kpolokpaila dans le comté de Bong, à la rivière Mahed dans le comté de Grand Cape Mount, à Voinjama, dans le comté de Lofa, dans les comtés de Grand Bassa et de Sinoe, et dans d'autres régions du Liberia, continuent de pleurer justice. Non seulement le Liberia, mais le monde entier entend leurs cris chaque jour, tandis que ceux qui les ont tourmentés à mort par des exécutions sommaires et des massacres vivent confortablement dans l'impunité sans aucun remords pour leurs actes.

Une chose est sûre. Cependant, ils ne sont pas majoritaires, et leurs menaces vides ne peuvent effrayer la communauté internationale qui est résolue à rendre justice aux Libériens et à mettre fin à l'impunité.



# Français

## Starts from page 8 **Les Libériens font face à**

maisons, battu des enfants et déshabillé des femmes, les envoyant chercher refuge à l'école primaire Point Hope Basic School de Gomoa Buduburam, tandis que d'autres sont partis dormir dans la rue.

“Nous souffrons et sommes dans une extrême difficulté avec la torture et les tourments de ces méchants Ghanéens. Nos femmes ont été battues, certaines sont malades et d'autres blessées, mais le gouvernement libérien estime qu'il n'a pas de devoir de protection envers les Libériens ici”, raconte-t-il.

M. Gwoin a allégué qu'il avait lui-même été battu et emprisonné, alors qu'il essayait de trouver refuge pour son peuple, déplorant que les efforts pour contacter l'ambassade du Liberia au Ghana et la Commission libérienne du rapatriement et de la réinstallation des réfugiés (LRRRC) se soient révélés infructueux, sans aucune réponse.

“Mon frère, on nous a laissés sans espoir, car nous avons fait de notre mieux pour contacter toutes les autorités nécessaires afin de rentrer chez nous, mais notre gouvernement estime qu'il ne doit pas s'occuper de nous”, se lamente-t-il.

Pendant ce temps, une autorité non reconnue de la région du Gomoa Est au Ghana, Darko Quarm, a déclaré au NEW DAWN via Messenger le mercredi 20 mars 2024, que le gouvernement du Ghana n'avait joué aucun rôle dans la démolition partielle du camp de Buduburam qui abritait des milliers de réfugiés libériens.

Mais M. Gwion pense que le gouvernement du Ghana jette des pierres et se cache en parrainant la démolition du camp et les mauvais traitements qui leur sont infligés. Selon des informations, des milliers de Libériens ayant fui le pays pendant la guerre civile vivent

dans le camp de Buduburam au Ghana depuis 1990. Rappelons qu'en 2010, la Commission ghanéenne pour les réfugiés a conclu un accord avec le HCR pour fermer le camp de Buduburam, car les Libériens qui s'y trouvaient avaient la possibilité de retourner au Libéria ou de rester au Ghana.

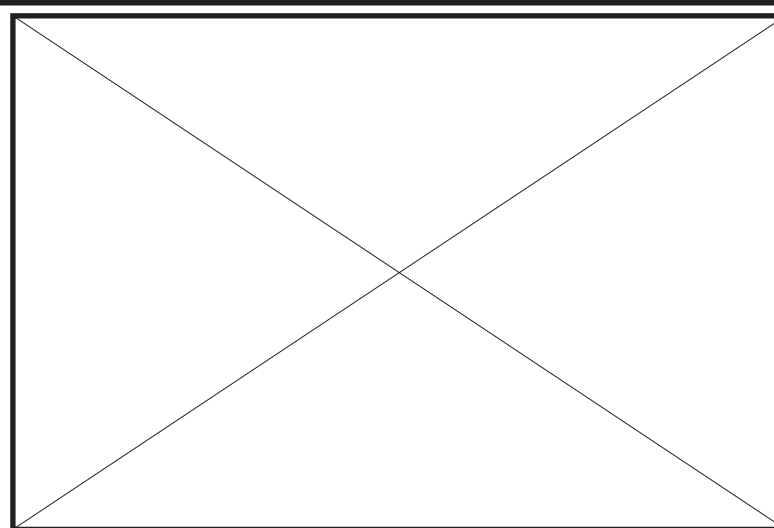
Cependant, le directeur de la communication de la Commission libérienne de rapatriement et de réinstallation des réfugiés (LRRRC) à Monrovia, Samuel Davis, déclare que ces Libériens au Ghana sont d'anciens réfugiés, car ils ne possèdent plus ce statut.

M. Davis a souligné qu'en 2022, le gouvernement du Liberia, par l'intermédiaire de la LRRRC, a organisé une réunion multipartite avec les autorités locales, y compris le ministère des Affaires étrangères. Une équipe a également été envoyée au Ghana à l'époque pour établir le profil des Libériens qui y vivaient. Il a été établi qu'il y avait mille cent trente-neuf (1539) anciens réfugiés libériens au Ghana, et sur ce nombre, au moins 500 ont accepté d'être rapatriés et ont été ramenés chez eux.

Cependant, il explique qu'au moment de leur rapatriement, le processus de transition a eu lieu et un nouveau gouvernement est arrivé au pouvoir, ce qui a stoppé l'opération.

Tout en réitérant que l'ancien gouvernement dirigé par la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC) avait fourni 240 000 dollars américains sur un montant total de 1,5 million de dollars pour préparer le rapatriement des anciens réfugiés libériens, le solde étant censé permettre de ramener tout le groupe de 500 personnes chez eux, la transition a eu lieu, suspendant ainsi toutes les activités. M. Davis indique que la LRRRC est vivement préoccupée par la situation au Ghana et qu'elle travaille d'arrache-pied pour envoyer une équipe sur place afin de trouver une solution amiable au problème.

## **Cinq comtés s'unissent pour mettre fin à la défécation en plein air**



Cinq des 15 comtés du Liberia ont signé une résolution commune pour mettre fin à la défécation en plein air, en collaboration avec l'USAID. Cinq comtés du Liberia ont signé conjointement une résolution visant à mettre fin à la défécation en plein air dans leurs zones respectives, dans le cadre d'une activité d'assainissement à l'échelle du comté parrainée par l'USAID. Le projet est mis en œuvre par Population Services International (PSI), Concern Worldwide, ATHENA Infonomics et GUSCEMAN Inc., Excellence for Growth and Prosperity Business Development and Support Services. Les comtés concernés sont Lofa, Grand Bassa, Bong, Montserrado et Nimba, l'objectif étant de permettre aux ménages d'avoir accès à la fin de la défécation en plein air. L'activité d'assainissement à l'échelle du comté se concentre sur des domaines tels que l'assainissement, la gouvernance, l'hygiène et le marketing. Le vice-président des organisations de la société civile nationale du Liberia, John Alexander Nyahn, Jr., qui a lu la résolution, a déclaré que les cinq comtés ont décidé d'inclure le financement de l'assainissement dans leurs plans et budgets de développement respectifs, ce qui leur permettra de mettre fin à la défécation en plein air.

M. Nyahn a déclaré que la résolution commune prévoit

également de consacrer 2 à 5 % de tous les fonds annuels et de souligner que les revenus générés par chaque comté seront alloués au soutien et à la promotion de projets et d'activités d'assainissement, en collaboration avec les partenaires et les parties prenantes du secteur de l'assainissement, afin d'éla'orer des politiques et des lignes directrices qui permettront de promouvoir et de soutenir l'amélioration de l'assainissement adéquat dans les comtés de Grand Bassa, Lofa, Bong, Montserrado et Nimba afin de mettre fin définitivement à la défécation en plein air au Liberia, en garantissant le strict respect des principes d'inclusion, de transparence et de responsabilité dans l'exécution des projets d'assainissement.

S'adressant aux participants à Ganta lors de l'adoption de la résolution finale de trois jours et de la planification de l'assainissement à l'échelle de la zone à la Jackie Guest House de Ganta, Matthew Ndote, chef de parti de l'USAID pour l'activité d'assainissement à l'échelle du comté, a exhorté les participants à se concentrer et à s'impliquer dans l'élimination de la défécation en plein air dans leurs foyers et leurs comtés respectifs.

Il les a également encouragés à améliorer l'assainissement dans les différents comtés.

## **Dialogue sur l'égalité des sexes au sein de la Chambre de Commerce du Liberia et d'ONU Femmes**

Dans le cadre des activités du Mois international de la femme de cette année, la Chambre de commerce du Liberia et ONU Femmes ont organisé un dialogue conjoint visant à réduire les disparités entre les sexes dans le paysage des affaires du Liberia.

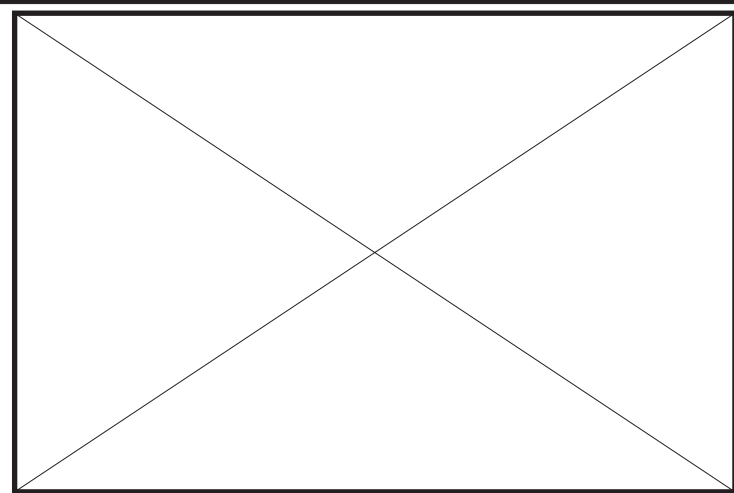
La Chambre de commerce du Liberia et ONU Femmes ont conclu un dialogue complet sur la promotion de l'égalité des sexes par la responsabilité des entreprises dans la mise en œuvre des Principes d'autonomisation des femmes (WEFs).

Ce dialogue s'inscrivait dans le cadre d'un effort de collaboration visant à réduire les disparités entre les sexes dans le paysage des affaires du Liberia, dans le cadre des activités du Mois international de la femme de cette année.

Les Principes d'autonomisation des femmes sont un ensemble de sept principes élaborés par le Pacte mondial des Nations Unies et ONU Femmes en 2023, offrant des conseils sur la promotion de l'égalité des sexes et de l'autonomisation des femmes sur le lieu de travail, sur les marchés et dans les communautés. L'événement, qui s'est déroulé sur une journée entière le mercredi 20 mars 2024, a porté sur le rôle crucial du secteur privé dans la promotion de l'égalité des sexes au sein du pays.

Accueilli à Monrovia au ministère du Commerce de Capitol Hill, le dialogue a réuni des acteurs clés du secteur privé, du gouvernement, de la société civile et du milieu universitaire. Les parties prenantes ont engagé des discussions perspicaces, partageant des stratégies et des expériences visant à favoriser un environnement commercial plus inclusif.

Tout au long du dialogue, divers sujets ont été



explorés, notamment les raisons pour lesquelles la promotion de l'égalité des sexes et l'investissement dans les femmes et les filles sont pertinents pour le secteur privé.

Il a également porté sur le rôle de la Chambre de commerce du Liberia dans la promotion de l'égalité des sexes, les Principes d'autonomisation des femmes, des exemples de bonnes pratiques du secteur privé au Liberia en matière de promotion de l'égalité des sexes, et des discussions en panel sur le rôle du secteur privé dans la lutte contre la pauvreté, le renforcement des institutions et le financement de l'égalité des sexes.

Les discussions en panel se sont concentrées sur des solutions pratiques et des bonnes pratiques pour faire progresser l'égalité des sexes. Les participants ont échangé des informations précieuses, partagé des réussites et identifié des domaines à améliorer.

Lors des discussions en panel, la directrice générale de l'Académie des femmes entrepreneurs au Liberia, Palmena W. Weah, la cofondatrice de Women in Renewable Energy (WIRE), Olive Saab, et la championne nationale de l'Association des femmes dans le commerce transfrontalier ont souligné l'importance des politiques et des pratiques sensibles au genre.

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## Liberian surgeons embark on medical mission here

Liberian Surgeons Dr. Edward Shaw and Gabriel Peal are in Liberia on a Medical Mission, offering absolutely free surgeries through the end of March.

Thursday, March 21, 2024—The initiative is with Harvest Intercontinental Ministries Unlimited, and screenings will take place at the Darlington

Leone. This is not the surgeons' first mission trip home. They have partnered with Harvest Ministries several times over the last few years, bringing

Medical Center and Redemption Hospital in New Kru Town.

Over a hundred surgeries alone were performed in 2022, most of them on males as young as 12 years old and many older adults suffering from hernias, some of them for several years.

"It's a gesture of love, and it's impossible not to respond to the needs of our own people when we can genuinely bring healing," says Dr. Shaw, who is based in Tennessee, United States. Drugs needed to facilitate the mission have been made through donations. In 2022, many in need of medical attention were turned away due to time constraints. This time around, the surgeons have extended their stay for longer and are accompanied by a dental team who will see patients throughout this week.

Screening has been intense throughout this week, with patients arriving very early to take advantage of this opportunity.



Johnson Medical Clinic in Chugbor, on the Old Road. The team just completed a two-week medical mission with Harvest in Freetown, Sierra

relief to hundreds of people who are coming from as far away as Nimba and Grand Gedeh Counties. The surgeries will take place at the JFK

## Stakeholders review extractive sector

A national integrity institution, Integrity Watch Liberia, thinks it is time for Liberia to benefit from its extractive resources that would improve citizens' lives.

By Lewis S Teh

Integrity Watch Liberia (IWL) has held a one-day validation session on findings of incentives offered to multinational corporations within Liberia's extractive sector.

The findings, which covered Montserrado and Margibi counties, were released here on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, at RLJ Keneja Resort in Paynesville, outside Monrovia.

With support from Tax Justice Network Africa, Integrity Watch Liberia commissioned three important studies last year, two of which the institution shared findings on during the validation session. It covered the potential of the sand mining and quarry sector for domestic resource mobilization and tax incentives offered to multinational companies operating in Liberia's extractive sector.

The extraction and mining of natural resources play a significant role in the country's economic development.

objective of the validation session, Integrity Watch Liberia Executive Director Harold Aidoo noted that the findings revealed tax incentives offered by multinational corporations within Liberia's extractive sector.

The report interrogated the period 2007 to 2023 to find the dollar value of the money given to multinational corporations, which, Integrity Watch notes, is interesting in optimizing domestic resource mobilization.

As an organization and with the circumstances surrounding domestic resource mobilization, Director Aidoo said their interest is how Integrity Watch, as a Civil Society group, can help the government to optimize domestic resources.

According to him, opportunities to focus on the potential of the sand mining and quarry sector for domestic resource mobilization were among them, including stakeholders' perspectives and experiences and strategy perspectives and experiences. "As many of you are aware, these are two critical areas

## Gender Ministry condemns violence against women

Several women have been the victims of mob violence in Liberia, with fatality being reported in some cases.

Monrovia, March 21, 2024: The Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP) says it is troubled by the reported wave of domestic violence against women and girls across the country.

Through a press release issued in Monrovia, the Ministry said it is taken aback at two trending situations in which an elderly woman was mercilessly beaten and later died at the ELWA Hospital as a result of the violence. In contrast, another woman was reportedly set ablaze in Gbarpolu County. "MoGCSP categorically condemns, in the strongest term, the humiliation and murder of an elderly woman identified as Ma Theresa Bloh Cumeh." "This level of hooliganism, which has resulted in the loss of lives, undermines Liberia's credential in curbing all forms of violence against women, children, the vulnerable, and people living with disabilities," the release said.

Residents of the Chocolate City Community reportedly beat the late Ma Theresa after it was alleged that she was a witch. She was subsequently rushed to the ELWA Hospital,

where she later died. The Ministry said it is deeply troubled and concerned and, therefore, called on every Liberian across the 15 counties to rekindle the pledge of ensuring a safer environment for women and children.

Liberia remains a signatory to international protocols, which, among other things, guarantee the rights of all citizens regardless of their sex or gender and social status.

While the fight against rape and other forms of violence against women and children remains a daunting challenge, the Ministry of Gender continues to remind the general public that ensuring the safety and rights of women and children cannot be overemphasized.

This level of mob justice and unwarranted discrimination and abuse of innocent women in no way reflect the hospitable reality of Liberia we all envisaged. This is unacceptable, and all Liberians must vehemently denounce such unwarranted behaviour.

Sadly, women are experiencing these harsh realities at a time when the

world is certainly celebrating their resilience and rallying action for them to be genuinely empowered. Amid these national and global efforts aimed at securing a safer space for women across the world, Liberia is still witnessing repeated and distasteful acts against women. The Ministry of Gender, at the same time, has expressed sadness over the separate incidents and extends deepest condolences to the bereaved families for the untimely loss of their relatives.

In that direction, the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection has called on the Justice Ministry to investigate the matters immediately and launch in-depth investigations, leaving no stone unturned in ensuring that justice is served in accordance with Liberia's laws.



Quarrying and sand mining have played crucial roles in Liberia's construction industry, supplying essential materials for various types of infrastructure projects, including residential and commercial development.

Despite the significant contributions of quarrying and sand mining to the construction sector and the broader economy, Liberia's full revenue potential remains largely untapped.

One of the primary reasons is the lack of comprehensive data and analysis on revenue generated by these industries.

Limited understanding of the scale of operations, production volumes, and financial performance hinders the assessment of their true revenue-generating capacity.

Besides, environmental concerns, such as habitat destruction, soil erosion, and water pollution, often arise due to inadequate environmental management practices.

Worse still, lack of effective regulation and enforcement mechanisms to mitigate these environmental impacts further exacerbates the challenges.

Providing a brief overview and

that the government and the country can leverage to optimize domestic resources. This research paper could inform policy advocacy going forward. We believe that in the absence of resources, the government will not be able to finance development," he said.

Making remarks, Liberia Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (LEITI) Head of Secretariat Jeffery N. Yates stressed the need to review the documentation of extractive corporations to determine their legitimate acquisition and contracts awarded to them, taking into consideration the communities in which they operate.

"We have to have a comprehensive contract review of concession companies operating in the sector, taking into account the benefits to the communities. We are happy that we have a civil society taking the extractive industry at the height of their work", he said and added that as a country, it's time to spotlight conversations around the sector.

Athelia Grasco Korvah, Assistant Commissioner, Natural Resources Tax Division at the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), thanked Integrity Watch for the report, which, she said will provide a significant help to the work of the LRA.

# Boakai flexes muscle at NASSCORP

Madam Carmerna Cephas Yeke's dismissal comes nearly three weeks after the NASSCORP senior management team denied President Joseph Nyumah Boakai's appointee Cllr. Molfie Kanneh from taking office.

Monrovia, 22 March 2024: President Joseph Nyumah Boakai has dismissed National Social Security and Welfare Corporation (NASSCORP) Deputy Director General

the best interest of the Corporation.

President Boakai further assured that he remains committed to upholding the principles of integrity and

Accompanied by ruling Unity Party officials and other top government officials, Cllr. Kanneh had gone to meet with the entity's senior management and presented his appointment letter from the Executive Mansion.

At the start of their meeting, Cllr. Kanneh greeted the NASSCORP senior management team, introduced himself, and then presented a letter from the President.

Upon receipt of his letter, the head of the NASSCORP senior management team informed the nominee that she had been informed by Mr. vonBalmoos that the (vonBalmoos) was still in charge as Director General of

NASSCORP.

According to her, Mr. vonBalmoos had told her that Cllr. Kanneh must make contact with the Executive Mansion.

She informed Cllr. Kanneh that Mr. vonBalmoos said the Executive Mansion had informed him that he (vonBalmoos) was still the head of NASSCORP.

Additionally, the head of the senior management team disclosed that vonBalmoos had told her that as head of NASSCORP, he has not received any official communication from the Executive Mansion, and there is nothing on the Mansion's website regarding this development.

She therefore asked Cllr. Kanneh to hear from the Executive Mansion so that they can move forward.

However, Cllr. Kanneh said he did not want to go back and forth on the matter as he took his letter and put it back in his envelope.

accountability in all aspects of governance and will continue to ensure that public servants adhere to the highest standards of conduct.

Earlier on 4 March 2024, a drama ensued at NASSCORP when the senior management team at the entity told presidential appointee Cllr. Molfie Kanneh that he could not take office because the entity still has an official serving a tenure.

The engagement between the NASSCORP senior management team and Cllr. Kanneh came after President Boakai appointed him to serve as Officer-in-Charge of NASSCORP.

Cllr. Kanneh was appointed while the current NASSCORP Director General Mr. Dewitt vonBalmoos still has about three years ahead of the expiry of his tenure.

Mr. Dewitt vonBalmoos is said to be out of Liberia on reported medical issues.



Madam Carmerna Cephas Yeke for gross insubordination to the Office of the President.

So far, Madam Yeke's dismissal on Thursday, 21 March 2024 could be the first for a senior official under the Boakai-led administration which assumed office on 22 January this year.

The Executive Mansion issued a press release Thursday explaining that Madam Yeke's failure to adhere to the high standards of conduct expected of a public servant has resulted in her immediate removal from the post.

"The Liberian Leader expressed appreciation for her service to the Corporation but noted that he cannot tolerate any behavior that goes against the best interests of the country," the release said.

It noted that President Boakai assured the public that the decision had been made with utmost confidence and in

# Officials risk travel ban

Suspicion of corruption among Liberian officials remains high as many of them who once lived in abject poverty suddenly present themselves as wealthy people under questionable circumstances upon assuming top public offices.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, March 22, 2024: President Joseph Nyumah Boakai's Assets Recovery and Properties Retrieval Taskforce has warned that it will place a travel ban and restrictions on former and current officials suspected of alleged financial crimes and corruption.

The chairperson of the Taskforce Cllr. Edwin Kla Martin disclosed the Team's plan on Thursday, 21 March 2024 at the Ministry of Information Culture Affairs and Tourism.

The Team is expected to release a shocking listing of former and current government officials who may face travel restrictions for alleged financial crimes and corruption.

Ahead of the release of the list, the task force has given a ten-day grace period commencing March 23-31, 2024,

officials and employees who were placed in positions of trust.

The decision aims to address the alarming trend of officials converting public assets to private use while in positions of power.

The Task Force is authorized to retrieve wrongfully acquired government assets, identify, and trace all stolen and suspicious assets within and outside Liberia, establish an investigative panel, and constitute an effective legal, research, and investigative team to procure tangible evidence.

It is also required to initiate criminal prosecution and civil litigation on behalf of the Government, return confiscated assets to Liberia upon adjudication, and place travel and other restrictions on all individuals identified as suspects while undergoing investigation for stolen and suspicious assets.

According to Cllr. Edwin Kla Martin, the Team will be issuing a NE Exeat Republica or traveling registration on some individuals.

Regarding assets recovery, he said this portion of their responsibilities go on financial crime and corruption investigation.

He said their financial crime investigation is currently reviewing reports and other information gathered through their intelligence



Cllr. Edwin Kla Martin

to past government officials to surrender all government properties or risk unspecified legal action.

To restore credibility, accountability, and transparency in the governance process of Liberia, President Joseph Nyumah Boakai issued Executive Order #126 early this month for the retrieval and recovery of national assets.

The order established an Assets Recovery Task Force and an Office under the Minister of State for Special Services.

It is mandated to put into place the necessary legal framework for the recovery of assets wrongfully acquired by current and former government officials.

President Boakai stated that the order was issued with the intent to retrieve, recover, restore, and reinstate fixed and liquid assets from within and outside Liberia that have been converted to private use by unscrupulous government

on theft and corruption of government assets.

"In line with our duties and responsibilities, the Taskforce will soon release names of persons of interest that will be placed on Ne Exeat Republica," said Cllr. Martin.

"These persons of interest had been captured as our major suspects [for] financial crimes and corruption investigation."

Ne Exeat Republica refers to a writ that can be issued by a court to stop someone from leaving the jurisdiction of the court or the state.

This writ is usually used to ensure that a person satisfies a claim against them.

He indicated that the Taskforce is also aware of the illegal movement of liquid assets and is currently working with its intelligence to trace the domestic and international locations of those assets. Considering the charge as a national responsibility, Cllr. Martin said it is anticipated of them to perform at the aspiration of the Liberian people and that of the government.

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# Boakai orders audit of MoS

The Ministry of State hosts the Presidency, and it has not been audited for a long time. Its audit is part of President Joseph Nyumah Boakai's Administration's commitment to fighting corruption and promoting transparency and accountability.

Monrovia, 22 March 2024: President Joseph Nyumah Boakai has asked the General Auditing Commission (GAC) to conduct a comprehensive audit of the Ministry of State for

to fighting corruption and promoting transparency and accountability. At a meeting held Monday, 20 March at the Executive Mansion, officials from the GAC and the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs

meeting, stated that the audit is aimed at ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the Ministry's affairs.

Responding to the President's mandate, Liberia's Auditor General P. Garswa Jackson said the Commission will begin with a System Audit since the Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs has not been audited for a long time.

He explained that the audit will focus on budget management, cash management, procurement procedures, and other areas.

Auditor General Jackson expressed the hope that this becomes an ongoing process since the Ministry has not been audited for such a long time.

The Commission plans to send out engagements communication by March 27, specifying the audit period, scope, and commencement date. The GAC's report on findings is expected within a month.



President Joseph Nyumah Boakai

Presidential Affairs. An Executive Mansion press release issued Thursday, 21 March 2024 said the audit is part of the Boakai Administration's commitment

discussed the audit. Deputy Minister for Administration at the Ministry of State, Atty. Cornelia Kruah Togba, who was also in the

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