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P11

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P11

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Continental News

New wave of African pride rises in the Caribbean

Augustine Ogbu works as a doctor, treating patients in clinics across the striking Caribbean island of St Lucia. When he

takeaway, named Africana Chops, in 2022, after being incessantly asked by his St Lucian friends for Nigerian fare.

population's African heritage appears to have strengthened over the past few years.

People across the Caribbean have been expressing African pride through cultural means, such as food, clothing and travel, while governments and institutions from both sides of the Atlantic have been meeting to forge economic ties. Africa has had a long presence in the Caribbean.

A significant part of the islands' population descended from enslaved West and Central Africans, who were forcibly transported to the Caribbean by European merchants in the 17th and 18th Centuries.

Slavery was abolished in much of the Caribbean during the 1800s, while independence from European powers came the following century.

The descendants of enslaved people retained some African customs, but largely developed their own standalone cultures, which differ from island to island.

In the past, there have been major campaigns to encourage African pride, as Dorbrene O'Marde, who runs the Antigua and Barbuda Reparations Support Commission, says. BBC



Trinidad and Tobago pays tribute to the nation's Afro-descendant community on Emancipation Day

returns to his home in the coastal town of Rodney Bay, he clocks in for his second job - as the owner and solo chef of a Nigerian takeaway. "Egusi soup and fufu, that's more popular... they love jollof rice too," Dr Ogbu says, reeling off a list of his customers' favourite dishes. The 29-year-old hails from Nigeria - population 230 million - but crossed the Atlantic for St Lucia - population 180,000 - to train as a doctor in 2016.

He set up his home-based

The takeaway is now thriving, Dr Ogbu tells the BBC, and not just because his island customers think the food is tasty.

"They know that we all have the same ancestral origin. So most of the time, they want to get in touch with that," Dr Ogbu explains, adding that interest in African culture has grown "tremendously" since he arrived almost a decade ago.

St Lucia is not alone in this phenomenon. Across the Caribbean, the desire to reconnect with the

Suspected French spy arrested in alleged Mali coup plot

Mali's military rulers say they have arrested a French national on suspicion of spying for his country in an attempt to destabilise the African nation. In a statement read on national television late on Thursday, the junta alleged that Yann Vezilier was working "on behalf of the French intelligence service". Mr Vezilier is yet to comment on the accusation. His picture was also broadcast, alongside those of a number of army generals arrested recently for allegedly planning to overthrow the military government.

"The conspiracy has been foiled with the arrests of those involved," Mali's Security Minister Gen Daoud Aly Mohammedine said in the televised address. France, Mali's former colonial ruler, is also yet to comment on the man's arrest and allegations of destabilisation. The West African nation has been gripped by a security crisis fuelled by an Islamist insurgency since 2012 - one of the reasons given for the

military takeover but attacks by jihadist groups have continued and even increased. Following days of speculation about the alleged coup plot, Gen Mohammedine confirmed that "fringe elements of the Malian armed security forces" had been detained for seeking to "destabilise the institutions of the republic". "These soldiers and civilians" were said to have obtained "the help of foreign states", the minister said. The French national acted "on behalf of the French intelligence service, which mobilised

political leaders, civil society actors and military personnel" in Mali, the minister added. He also confirmed the arrest of two army generals, including Gen Abass Dembele, the former governor of the Mopti region, who was recently dismissed from his position.

At least 55 soldiers have been arrested so far in connection with the alleged attempted coup, security sources told AFP. Gen Mohammedine said a full investigation was under way to identify "possible accomplices" and that "the situation is completely under control".



Security Minister Gen Daoud Aly Mohammedine accused foreign states of trying to destabilise Mali

Burkina Faso's junta expels top UN official over child rights

Burkina Faso's junta has expelled the UN's top official to the West African nation over a report about children caught up in the jihadist conflict.

Carol Flore-Smrecznia was declared "persona non grata" because of her role in drafting the report that came out in March.

Covering a two-year period, the study detailed more than 2,000 cases of reported child recruitment, killings, sexual violence and abuse - blaming Islamist insurgents, government soldiers and civilian defence forces.

The military government, which came to power in September 2022 and is led by Capt Ibrahim Traoré, said it had not been consulted by the UN, saying the report contained unfounded allegations. It did not cite any documentation "or court rulings to support the alleged cases of violations against

worked in areas experiencing or recovering from conflict for more than two decades, holding posts in Ivory Coast, Chad and Malawi, according to the UN.

The UN representative before her, Italian Barbara Manzi, was declared "persona non grata" by the junta in December 2022 not long after publishing a blog post describing how the crisis was affecting education and health services, forcing many to close down.

The UN has not yet officially commented on the latest expulsion, but the UN chief had expressed his regret over the decision to expel Ms Manzi whilst reiterating the UN's desire to engage with the junta to support Burkinabés. There have been concerns over the effectiveness of Capt Traoré's operation to quash the militants - with the junta rejecting the assistance of former colonial power



Khartoum was a burnt-out shell of its former self after the army recaptured it in March

children attributed to the valiant Burkinabé fighters", the government's statement said.

Since 2015, jihadist rebels affiliated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group have waged an insurgency that has killed thousands of people and forced millions to flee their homes.

It has prompted political instability, with two military coups in 2022. Capt Traoré took power promising to deal with the dire security situation within "two to three months". Ms Flore-Smrecznia was appointed in July 2024 - more than 18 months after her predecessor was expelled. From Mauritius, she has

France in favour of Russia.

In the first half of 2025, jihadist group JNIM said it had carried out over 280 attacks in Burkina Faso - double the number for the same period in 2024, according to data verified by the BBC.

Rights groups have also accused the army of targeting civilians as well as suppressing political activity and the freedom of expression.

Last year, the military government announced it was extending junta rule for another five years.

It also said that Capt Traoré, who has built up the persona of a pan-Africanist leader, would be allowed to run for president in 2029.

EDITORIAL

Lack of responsible leadership in Liberia is dangerous!

Posture exhibited by the just ended leadership of the Liberian Judiciary under former Chief Justice Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh and the Executive, headed by President Joseph in boycotting each other does not demonstrate responsible leadership. This is not the kind of leadership Liberia deserve.

Former Chief Justice Yuoh had boycotted President Boakai's 2nd Annual Message delivered before the 55th Legislature in January this year under the gavel of then disputed Speaker Richard Nagbe Koon, without any official explanation. Justice Yuoh and the entire Supreme Court bench were conspicuously absent during the President's address with their seats visibly empty.

Now, in what is clearly seen as a payback, President Boakai and his entire Cabinet along with the leadership of the 55th Legislature, including Speaker Richard Koon and Senate Pro-Tempore Nyonblee Kangar-Lawrence boycotted Justice Youh's retirement program. What a play!

This is very irresponsible and does not send a positive image of our national leadership style. In other words, this is not sending any right example for our youthful population. It is disappointing that the Boakai Administration or the Executive and the Legislature would embark on the crab mentality by pulling one another down.

Although Justice Yuoh has exited government, but we pray that there would not be a repeat of such posture in our national leadership that will see one branch of government pulling down or disrespecting another branch, particularly in public glare.

The Supreme Court of Liberia under the Ex-chief Justice had termed actions taken by the then majority bloc led Speaker Koon during the leadership crisis in the House of Representatives over the speakership as “ultra vires”, instructing both sides to return to status qou ante, meaning preexisting state of affairs in law.

We believe it was under such condition that the Supreme Court bench, under Justice Yuoh, boycotted the Legislature, sitting in joint session during the President's Annual Message, presided over by Speaker Koon from majority bloc whose leadership it had deemed illegal. Granted that the former Chief Justice was not in the country, but that should have been communicated, both to the Executive and the Legislature, rather than the manner in which the situation played out.

More regrettably, we saw the two affected branches of government repeating the same attitude at the exit ceremony of retired Justice Youh over the weekend, when they conspicuously stayed away. This does not indicate maturity of our national leadership and should stop.

Politics aside, we believe the onus on President Joseph Boakai, as father and grandfather of the nation, to work with or relate with all three branches of government irrespective of who heads a branch at a particular time. This does not mean there wouldn't disagreements from time to time, but such divergence of views should not play out negatively, as it happened at the departure of Justice Youh last week.

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COMMENTARY

By Mahmoud Mohieldin,
Martín Guzmán, Vera Songwe

An Agenda for Tackling the Debt and Development Crises

NEW YORK - Following the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in June, we reached a breakthrough moment. Governments, international financial institutions, and civil-society organizations, recognizing the need to tackle today’s debt and development crises, are ready for action ahead of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September.

Recent reports that we each co-authored - Healthy Debt on a Healthy Planet, the Jubilee Report, and the Report of the UN Secretary-General’s Expert Group on Debt - along with many other experts’ work, have definitively established the severity and urgency of these intertwined crises and their devastating consequences. In 2024, developing countries paid \$25 billion more to external creditors than they received in new disbursements. That means 3.4 billion people - or more than 40% of the world’s population - live in countries that spend more on interest payments than on health or education. As aid flows decline, climate change and nature loss accelerate, and global growth slows, developing countries’ debt vulnerabilities will only increase, as will the threats to people’s well-being, the planet, and global stability.

Not only do many recognize the severity and urgency of the problem, they also agree on how we got here. The global financial system is not designed to meet the needs of people and the planet. Given historical inequities and low bargaining power, developing countries consistently face high borrowing costs and uneven incidence of prudential regulation. Without measures to ensure transparency, accountability, and strategic investment planning, borrowing and lending policies have failed to mobilize the productive investments that drive sustainable growth. Moreover, capital flows are highly volatile, with money flooding into developing countries during booms and flooding out in the wake of shocks. Meanwhile, the laws and policies governing debt restructurings have long encouraged delay, not resolution.

The situation has only worsened in recent years. In response to COVID-19, the countries that could afford to spend huge amounts to support their citizens did so, but the lack of a global safety net meant that developing countries could do nothing of the kind. While new allocations of the International Monetary Fund’s Special Drawing Rights (the IMF’s reserve asset) helped somewhat, they were insufficient.

Moreover, recent efforts to address debt distress, such as the G20 Common Framework, have fallen drastically short. Restructurings continue to move slowly and remain opaque, with outcomes largely determined by differentials in bargaining power between countries and their creditors. And restructuring now requires coordination among a wider array of players - including the Paris Club of sovereign creditors, newer bilateral lenders like China, and ever more private creditors. This makes restructuring processes even more complicated. Even when relief comes, it often arrives too late and achieves too little.

Given the complexity of the crisis, there is no silver bullet. But nor are we at any loss for effective, practical solutions. To attack root causes, we should accelerate efforts to reform how the World Bank and IMF conduct debt-sustainability analyses. The current approach is not inclusive, does not account fully for climate- and nature-related risks, and does not consider the use of funds. Addressing these and other issues might seem technical, but the impact would be significant. For too long, flawed frameworks have held back the kind of productive borrowing that is needed to improve human capital, increase infrastructure investment, and strengthen climate resilience.

At the same time, there is a strong case for creating new structures and institutions, starting with a Borrowers’ Club. Since lenders have been coordinating for decades, borrowers can hope to compete only if they do the same. Such coordination would enhance their collective bargaining power and ensure that their interests are considered. It could also provide a platform for everything from South-South learning to technical assistance and enhanced debt management.

Past attempts at coordination among borrowers have featured a lack of resolve. But there is new momentum. We now need to move forward by establishing shared strategic goals, a governance structure, and adequate funding.

To improve the restructuring process, we also need to change the incentives for both creditors and debtors. One option is to incorporate into the Common Framework automatic debt-service standstills for countries that face unsustainable debt burdens. The IMF could also use its policy of lending into arrears to guarantee that multilateral financing serves its purpose, rather than being used for repayment of distressed bonds that need to be restructured. It makes no economic sense - nor is it just - that after a devastating hurricane, scarce funds flow to remote creditors instead of to those who urgently need food and shelter.

Reforming the legislation that governs restructurings to deter holdouts must be high on the common agenda. That includes changing the “compensatory” pre-judgment interest rate in New York State for debts in arrears, which has been fixed at 9% since 1981 (when inflation was 8.9%), and introducing caps on recovery. It is no mystery why creditors do not currently rush to the negotiating table.

Across these key solutions - reforming debt-sustainability analyses, establishing a Borrowers’ Club, and improving the time and depth of restructuring - what matters as much as the idea is the strength of the commitment to it. In 2000, efforts by a powerful global coalition helped to deliver significant relief for low-income countries. But today’s reality demands that we adopt much broader and deeper reforms to solve the immediate crisis affecting low-income countries, and many middle-income countries as well, prevent future crises, and promote growth, job creation, and prosperity. As we look toward the UNGA in September, we should be focused on driving progress on these practical solutions.

OP-ED

By Jim O'Neill

Is Trump a BRICS Secret Agent?

LONDON - Much about life under US President Donald Trump’s second administration is mystifying and strange, not least his treatment of the BRICS+ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, plus five newer entrants) and the risk the group poses to American power and influence. Judging by his words, Trump seems to want to stop the bloc of major emerging economies from challenging the US-led global-governance system. But judging by his actions, one could be forgiven for thinking that he wants to help it pursue its global ambitions.

Consider Trump’s bilateral treatment of the various BRICS countries. Compared to many others who have been targeted in his global trade war, he has been rather gentle with China and Russia - two non-democratic regimes whose “strongman” leaders he genuinely admires. True, his light touch may reflect a reluctance to trigger economically ruinous responses from markets or other governments.

Following his “Liberation Day” tariffs, which China responded to in kind while also suspending exports of rare earths, US markets and the dollar swooned, and yields on US government debt spiked.

But Trump has been far less sparing of others, and this has produced some rather odd outcomes. Why is he being so aggressive toward traditionally friendly countries like Switzerland? Smaller economies hardly matter for the overall US trade balance that he claims to care about, and the arbitrary abuse that they are suffering will encourage others to reduce their dependence on the US market over the long term.

Then there is Russia. While Trump occasionally threatens and chastises President Vladimir Putin, he more often seems eager to relax Western sanctions, normalize US-Russian relations, and pursue business deals with the Kremlin. By contrast, he has lashed out at Brazil in response to its prosecution of former President Jair Bolsonaro. But while Latin America’s largest country now faces a 50% tariff on its exports to the United States, it is less exposed to trade overall. Moreover, the trade that it does rely on is mostly with China, its fellow BRICS member.

India, too, has come in for especially harsh treatment, including a 50% tariff on its exports to the US. Soon after Trump’s inauguration, many suggested that India would be near the top of the list for a new trade deal, given Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s past friendliness with Trump. But India has always been rather independent diplomatically, and its purchases of Russian crude oil apparently frustrated Trump, given his efforts to orchestrate a quick end to the war in Ukraine.

Alienating the world’s most populous country is risky, though. If the US is hoping to contain China, it would help to maintain a close partnership with India. Following Trump’s friendly visit with a top Pakistani military official, India may now be more tempted to respond positively to Chinese overtures. This month, Modi is paying his first visit to China in seven years.

As I have argued before, if only China and India could find a way to look past their differences and develop stronger ties, that would be a game-changer for the BRICS+, not to mention for Asian and even global trade. America’s relevance would wane, and more countries would grow dependent on Asia’s two giants.

It is worth remembering the recent G7 summit in Canada, where Trump mused that it had been a mistake to remove Russia from the group following its initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014, and that such gatherings should also probably include China. As I noted at the time, his comments made a good deal of sense. I made a similar point in my original 2001 BRIC paper, where I suggested that the G8, which then included Russia, should include China, Brazil, and India, and that its European wing should be consolidated to just the European Union (rather than having separate memberships for France, Germany, and Italy).

I would still welcome such changes today. Unfortunately, Trump is doing the opposite: going easy on China and Russia while he pushes away Brazil, India, South Africa, and America’s fellow G7 members. In doing so, he is giving the BRICS+ and others an even stronger reason to develop alternatives to the Western-led international order.

What today’s world needs is an improved G20, with seats at the table for the most important economies and emerging powers. As it happens, the US is due to host the G20 in 2026. It is a perfect opportunity for Trump to demonstrate global leadership. Whether he is capable of doing so is another matter.

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OPINION

By Mahmoud Mohieldin, Pepukaye Bardouille

Resilience Is a Strategic Investment

BRIDGETOWN/CAIRO - For emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs), investing in resilience is not a luxury; it is an imperative. Climate disasters and ecological degradation are impeding their economic prospects and straining their finances. Perhaps more importantly, these shocks are exacerbating unsustainable debt burdens at a time when donor countries are slashing development aid, making it harder for EMDEs to finance investments in climate adaptation.

Over the past two decades, the 74 economies comprising the Climate Vulnerable Forum and the Vulnerable Group of Twenty have suffered more than \$525 billion in losses - equivalent to roughly 20% of their collective GDP - due to climate shocks. This includes acute disasters like floods, hurricanes, and droughts, as well as slower-moving events such as desertification and coastal erosion.

Meanwhile, the degradation of natural ecosystems through deforestation and biodiversity loss has aggravated food and water insecurity and increased climate risks by eliminating natural carbon sinks. These dynamics create formidable obstacles - namely, limited fiscal space and high capital costs - that trap countries in a vicious cycle of vulnerability. Breaking free requires a significant scaling-up in financing for climate-adaptation efforts.

To that end, the Sharm El-Sheikh Adaptation Agenda, launched in 2022, proposes 30 adaptation targets in key sectors such as agriculture, public health, and infrastructure with the goal of spurring inclusive, effective, and equitable action by 2030. The proposed outcomes are not merely defensive; they create jobs, boost productivity, and improve creditworthiness. Unfortunately, these benefits are not reflected in current macroeconomic frameworks.

The problem is structural. Existing macro-fiscal tools - such as the debt-sustainability frameworks used by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and, by extension, sovereign credit ratings - account for climate- and nature-related risks but do not sufficiently recognize the economic benefits of reducing those risks. Natural disasters - climate-related or otherwise - are (rightly) treated as threats to fiscal stability. But the investments required to mitigate their effects are seen only as adding to the debt burden, rather than as critical for reducing losses or as driving the development of growth-enhancing strategic assets. For example, investments in flood-resilient infrastructure in Vietnam have not only reduced damage costs but also boosted land values, improved public health, and increased worker productivity. And investments in nature-based solutions such as restoring mangroves or wetlands can simultaneously address climate, food, and water challenges, and boost infrastructure performance.

As a result, high-impact interventions such as coastal defenses, underground power lines, and mangrove restoration are sidelined in favor of more conventional infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, and ports.

These perverse incentives are reflected in EMDEs’ planning and budgeting processes. The environment ministries that oversee Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) under the Paris climate agreement tend not to engage systematically with finance ministries, meaning that these resilience strategies are not fully integrated into medium- and long-term national financial planning. That leaves NDCs and NAPs at risk of being aspirational, rather than actionable.

With critical adaptation investments overlooked in budgets, and with insufficient volumes of grant or concessional finance to plug ensuing gaps, many are calling for changes in how debt is treated, including reforms of fiscal frameworks so that investments in climate and nature resilience are treated as productive. A recent paper by the Bridgetown Initiative outlines four steps that governments can take to achieve this goal.

First, EMDEs must quantify acute and chronic climate and nature risks. A better understanding of the potential macroeconomic effects can help guide assessments of the financing required to reduce those risks. The paper offers a new typology to help categorize investments by risk type and sector, which would streamline the process.

Once policymakers have identified which investments are needed, they must assess their impact on the economy’s growth trajectory. Spending on resilience measures can reduce future losses from climate disasters, boost productivity, and raise incomes. These benefits must be incorporated into forecasting models, as is already done for traditional infrastructure investments.

The long-term growth benefits of resilience-focused capital projects could then be factored into debt-sustainability analyses. This would show that such investments are, in fact, fiscally prudent with the right financing conditions, thus strengthening the case for more concessional and longer-term borrowing.

Lastly, with a more comprehensive understanding of the macroeconomic effects of resilience-based interventions, EMDEs can devise credible investment plans and financing strategies that align with fiscal and budgetary policy.

Factoring climate resilience into macroeconomic planning should strengthen, not diminish, a country’s growth narrative. When done well, this empowers finance ministries to engage more effectively with donors, credit-rating agencies, markets, and international financial institutions, all of which play a critical direct or indirect role in supporting resilience and adaptation efforts.

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FEATUREARTICLE

The Flying President: Concerns Regarding Boakai's Large Delegation for Japan's TICAD-9

By Seltue Robert Karweaye Sr.

Liberia and Japan have a strong partnership built on Japan's significant development assistance. During George Weah's presidency (2018-2024), Japan focused on infrastructure, food security, and economic growth. Key projects included the Japan Freeway and a road corridor linking Freeport to the Gabriel Truck Bridge, with investments totaling about US\$93 million. Japan also allocated \$20 million for road connectivity improvements. In addition to infrastructure, Japan provided crucial food assistance through the KR Food Aid Program, with a \$2.7 million grant in November 2018 and a donation of 5,019 metric tons of rice in December 2019. The government and people of Japan provided a grant of \$217,780 for the initiation of phase one of the Modern Duala Market Project. In 2023, the Government of Japan also committed to providing \$20 million to extend the road from Freeport to the Gabriel Tucker Bridge.

This spirit of cooperation continued fervently during the Joseph Boakai administration. A grant agreement was signed on March 12, 2024, between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Liberia for the Japan Freeway Extension Project. Japan also donated \$3 million worth of rice in September 2024, following a delivery of 3,294 metric tons valued at \$1.5 million in June 2024. This ongoing support highlights the strong partnership and shared development goals between the two nations.

As a developing nation, Liberians are keenly aware of the importance of the strong bilateral relationship between Liberia and Japan, nonetheless, President Boakai's upcoming trip to participate in the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-9), scheduled for August 20 to 22, 2025, in Yokohama, Japan, as well as his attendance at Expo 2025 in Osaka, has elicited a range of reactions from citizens and stakeholders across the nation. Concerns have been raised regarding the frequency of international trips taken by the administration since taking office.

In approximately 19 months of service, President Boakai has undertaken a series of international trips, including visits to the United States (four times), China, Italy, South Korea, Indonesia, Canada, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Togo, and Guinea-Bissau. This pattern of travel has sparked discussions among the population regarding the implications of these trips on domestic priorities and whether they address the pressing needs of the Liberian people.

According to a press release from the Executive Mansion dated August 15, 2025, President Boakai is set to participate in the TICAD-9. He will be accompanied by a delegation comprising 23 members. In addition to the delegation, the President will also bring along his communication, protocol, security, and attendant teams, bringing the total estimated count of accompanying personnel to around 40.

Analysts have expressed significant concerns over the President's compliance with the Government of Liberia's Revised Travel Ordinance Law of 2025, which came into effect on January 2, 2025. Specifically, critics argue that the President's delegation infringes on Rule #3, which stipulates that "Total Government of Liberia-funded representation at any program or event held outside Liberia shall not exceed five (5) persons in total, regardless of how many entities are involved." Additionally, Rule #4 states that for specific high-level meetings, such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Africa-China Summit, Korea-Africa Summit, and the Commission on the Status of Women Conference, the maximum allowable number of delegates is capped at seven (7). Given that TICAD-9 falls under the category of such high-level events, it raises questions regarding the appropriateness of the President's extensive delegation.

As per the GOL Revised Travel Ordinance Law, the Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) for officials traveling abroad is established at US\$344 daily. This allowance is further broken down into US\$110 for meals and US\$234 for hotel accommodations. Excluding costs associated with communication, protocol, security, attendant teams, and air travel, it is projected that Liberian taxpayers will incur approximately US\$4,816 for each delegate accompanying the President to TICAD-9. Consequently, the overall expenditure for the entire delegation—which amounts to US\$110,768—excludes airfare, which could significantly

increase the total financial commitment to this trip. This situation has prompted calls for greater accountability and adherence to established travel regulations within the government.

The ongoing controversy surrounding the size of the President's delegation to the TICAD-9 is steeped in multiple critical issues that deserve thorough scrutiny: First, the financial implications of the delegation's size are considerable and warrant serious concern. Beyond the base expenses of chartering international flights—which can reach staggering amounts depending on distance and aircraft specifications—there are also significant costs associated with accommodations in Tokyo, where hotel rates for suitable lodging can soar. Furthermore, each delegate receives per diem allowances, intended to cover daily meals and incidental expenses, adding to an already ballooning budget. Given the government's distressing financial position, characterized by a rampant borrowing strategy to satisfy even fundamental public obligations, a chorus of voices is questioning the prudence of such high-profile expenditures. Is it defensible to allocate such resources when the nation is grappling with budget deficits that threaten essential services?

In addition to the financial implications, these extravagant expenditures raise pressing questions about the government's genuine understanding of—and empathy for—the severe challenges facing ordinary Liberians. While the administration persistently urges the populace to display patience with the ARREST Agenda—an initiative ambitiously designed to address critical sectors such as Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation, and Tourism—evidence of sincere leadership in this regard appears scant.

A particularly striking illustration can be found in the 2025 national budget of \$880.6 million, signed into law by the President in early January, showing a troubling lack of funding for social protection programs, leaving many vulnerable citizens without support. Public outrage has surged over the startling expenditure of more than \$300,000 on two lavish bulletproof Lexus SUVs, a move that starkly underscores a significant disconnect between government actions and the everyday realities experienced by many citizens. This expenditure raises critical questions about the underlying priorities of the government and its accountability to the public.

In light of the ongoing economic hardships afflicting the nation—whether due to rising prices, widespread unemployment, or inadequate public services—many Liberians are increasingly questioning whether the government is deliberately ignoring their struggles or simply lacks the empathy needed to understand their plight. While the Boakai administration may assert that it prioritizes the well-being of its citizens, the public's interpretation of its actions is what truly matters.

This situation emphasizes the importance of optics in governance. Regrettably, the Boakai government has displayed insufficient awareness and sensitivity regarding how its lavish spending might be perceived, especially during such arduous times for many families. The choice to invest heavily in luxury vehicles instead of addressing pressing social and economic issues raises significant concerns about the administration's credibility and its genuine commitment to serving the needs of the people. As public trust erodes, the government must reconsider its approach to spending and strive for a more compassionate connection with the citizens it represents.

Furthermore, in light of the country's current debt profile, which paints a worrisome picture for its financial future, the government's current pattern of excessive spending will likely hinder its ability to secure any meaningful support for debt forgiveness or relief from its Western creditors. Despite widespread apprehension regarding the loan accumulation under the Weah administration, the Boakai government has continued down a similar path, prioritizing borrowing over responsible fiscal management.

In June 2025, a coalition of civil society organizations, including prominent advocacy groups and community leaders, released a powerful joint communiqué urging the

Liberian government to reject any austerity measures that could exacerbate the already critical economic situation. They emphasized the need for a fair and inclusive approach to debt restructuring and called for comprehensive reforms in the tax policies, which they argue disproportionately favor large corporations while imposing a heavier burden on ordinary citizens.

As it stands, Liberia's public debt has surged beyond \$2.5 billion, translating to an astonishing 67% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This alarmingly high debt level severely limits the government's capacity to invest in vital sectors such as healthcare, education, and climate resilience—areas deemed essential for achieving the country's long-term developmental objectives. In the national budget approved for 2025, a considerable allocation of \$153 million, accounting for 17.4% of the budget, is dedicated exclusively to servicing this debt. This highlights the urgent necessity for a fundamental shift in fiscal policy that prioritizes public investment and seeks to alleviate the crippling debt burden on the Liberian population.

Despite repeated warnings from civil society groups and concerned citizens regarding the unsustainable nature of our borrowing practices, the government's propensity to continue accumulating debt shows no sign of abating. Many observers are left questioning whether the administration possesses the fiscal discipline required to curtail extravagant and unnecessary expenditures. Without such discipline, the government will likely find it increasingly difficult to convince international creditors to agree to debt relief or forgiveness, potentially jeopardizing the country's economic stability and growth prospects.

The size of the TICAD-9 delegation and certain expenses highlight the need for greater accountability, especially as the government's economic policies strive to deliver the promised benefits. Addressing these concerns could enhance the potential for meaningful political change in Liberia. President Boakai's delegation to TICAD-9 brings to mind the controversy surrounding the inclusion of two 2025 Lexus LX 700HR Super Ultra Luxury bulletproof SUVs in his extensive presidential convoy. This penchant for grandeur is emblematic of Boakai's political style, which has consistently revolved around cultivating and sustaining a network of political patronage and loyal clients.

Also, concerns regarding the size of Boakai's TICAD-9 delegation are likely to heighten the growing dissatisfaction among the Liberian populace, who are increasingly disillusioned with the current state of democracy and the pervasive presence of messianic politics in the country. Consider the possibility that he might travel with a significantly reduced entourage, foregoing the usual extravagant display associated with high-ranking officials. Instead of a large delegation, he could opt for a small group of essential advisors or even attend international conferences virtually, demonstrating a commitment to efficiency and a pragmatic use of public resources. By streamlining his motorcade to a more modest size—perhaps even utilizing a staff bus for local meetings—Boakai could convey a message of humility and accessibility that resonates with ordinary citizens. Such a dramatic transformation would not only mark a significant departure from the traditional expectations of political leadership in Liberia, characterized by a prebendal mentality prioritizing personal gain over public service, but it would also actively challenge the prevailing norms within the political landscape.

If President Boakai were to embrace this radical change, it would likely capture the attention of the Liberian public and spark discussions across communities about the nature of political leadership. This strategic shift could redefine his public image, prioritizing authenticity and connection with the citizenry, thereby rekindling a sense of trust in political institutions. Moreover, his ministers and aides, witnessing their leader exemplifying a more humble approach to governance, would likely feel compelled to align with this new philosophy. This adjustment could foster a culture of accountability, transparency, and genuine service, moving away from a history of entitlement and excess. I rest my pen.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Dean Adansi lays out GHIB's plan

-To tackle Africa's value-addition gap

6 7 Cheapside, City of London; August 20, 2025 - The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ghana International Bank (GHIB), Dean Adansi, has set out a financing blueprint to shift Africa's commodity trade



Dean Adansi, CEO of Ghana International Bank (GHIB)

from raw exports to value-added products, arguing that the current export model is leaving billions of dollars in potential earnings on the table. According to him, Africa's share of global trade remains under three percent, in part because of a persistent trade finance gap that leaves exporters unable to invest in

local processing. "Interest rates are significantly higher than in the West in many African countries, making it very difficult for smaller entities with short-track records to obtain the financing they need to export commodities, or even to

every US\$1 of trade, there is a US\$1.70 impact on GDP, meaning that closing an US\$80 billion trade finance gap in sub-Saharan Africa could generate an additional US\$133 billion annually. "The consequences are significant; in jobs, in revenues, and in building the local savings needed to strengthen domestic capital markets," he said.

According to a dispatch, Mr. Adansi added that GHIB, operating from London for the past 65 years, is working with local financial institutions in West Africa to build capacity and make them more attractive to larger international lenders. This, he argued, creates a sustainable cycle in which local banks can then support SMEs and smaller exporters.

GHIB's data and operational record back the bank's proposed role in tackling the value-addition gap. Over the past five years, the Ghana-owned bank has facilitated more than US\$14 billion in total trade flows, including US\$10.6 billion in documentary trade

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Calls to expand S/Court

By Lincoln G. Peters

The Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation for Justice and Humanity has called on President Joseph Nyumah Boakai to ensure the expansion of the Supreme Court bench due to the increasing number of litigations across the Country.

Mr. Juma P Karnley, a Liberian and a legal practitioner based in Laval, Quebec, Canada, in an open communication address to Mr. Boakai explained that "In furtherance of judicial reform and enhancement of access to justice across Liberia, I respectfully submit for your consideration two critical proposals: The expansion of the Supreme Court Bench from five (5) to seven (7) Justices; and the establishment of Intermediary Regional Appellate Courts to hear appeals from Circuit Courts within designated regions."

Mr. Karnley who is also the Chief Executive Officer the local "JPK Foundation for Justice and Humanity" said the proposal to kincrease the Number of Supreme Court Justices from Five to Seven is due to the growing volume of litigation and

increasing complexity of cultural perspectives, and constitutional, civil, and professional experiences to criminal matters, adding that enrich deliberations, build there is a compelling need to public confidence in the increase the number of Justices independence, impartiality, to seven (7). "This expansion and responsiveness of the would not only strengthen judiciary." He further judicial capacity but also explained that the legal basis promote broader legal for the change would representation and regional necessitate constitutional inclusivity on the Bench," amendment, specifically to Karnley said adding, "A larger Article 67 of the 1986 Bench would enhance the Constitution of the Republic of Court's ability to address the Liberia, which currently rising caseload and reduce provides for the composition of delays in the delivery of the Supreme Court.

judgments, encourage a more Karnley, however, emphasized diverse pool of legal expertise,

▶ & 217. ' 2 \$ *3



KAICT & partners sound alarm over growing hunger and food insecurity

-At ACPA 22nd Anniversary

The 22nd anniversary of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (ACPA) was marked on August 19, 2025, at the University of Liberia in Monrovia.

Monrovia, August 20, 2025: The event, championed by the Kofi Annan Institute for Conflict Transformation (KAICT) in collaboration with international development partners and stakeholders from across Liberia's political, civil, and social spectrum, served as both a commemoration and a call to action—placing urgent emphasis on the growing threats of hunger and food insecurity, which were highlighted as central triggers of Liberia's fourteen-year conflict. The gathering brought together diplomats, including the German Ambassador to Liberia, Dr. Jakob Haselhuber, Liberian government officials, civil society representatives, youth, women, and student groups. Together, they reflected on the enduring impact of the ACPA, signed in Accra, Ghana, 22 years ago, which brought an end to one of Africa's longest and most

not just surviving but thriving," he declared. This vision requires investment in processing plants so Liberian staples like cassava, rice, and palm oil are exported as finished goods; vocational training in agricultural technology for youth; and access to credit, modern equipment, and storage facilities for farmers. "No nation has achieved lasting peace without securing food. And no nation has developed without turning farming into agribusiness," Dr. Joekai emphasized, urging that self-sufficiency in food is foundational to national stability. The anniversary celebration was not only a moment to remember the past but also to recommit to national unity, reconciliation, justice, and the rewriting of Liberia's history with honesty. Dr. Joekai called for ongoing reforms in governance, the building of schools, hospitals, roads, farms,



devastating civil wars.

The ACPA was described not merely as a peace treaty, but as a rebirth for Liberia—a collective choice for reconciliation over vengeance, and dialogue over destruction. It was a solemn moment honoring the memory of more than 250,000 Liberians who lost their lives. A central focus of the anniversary was the recognition that hunger and food insecurity remain potent triggers of violence and instability—threats that must be addressed if Liberia is to preserve its peace.

The event's keynote speaker, Dr. Josiah F. Joekai, Jr., Director General of the Civil Service Agency, underscored the inseparable link between agriculture, dignity, and peace. He reminded attendees that the civil war devastated Liberia's farms and drove farmers from their land, making the nation heavily dependent on food imports and vulnerable to insecurity. Dr. Joekai called for a transformation of agriculture from subsistence to agribusiness. "Agribusiness means farmers are

and the creation of jobs for Liberians. He expressed appreciation for President Boakai's pursuit of justice and human capital development and concluded with a resounding appeal: "Let us remain united in our conviction that Liberia will never again return to war."

In a welcoming remark by Prof. Dr. T. Debey Sayndee, Director of KAICT, he expressed gratitude for the support of participants and partners, while underscoring the work still required to maintain Liberia's stability.

He affirmed KAICT's ongoing commitment to engage policymakers and stakeholders and urged the government to focus on addressing the underlying triggers of conflict—especially political and agricultural growth, job creation, and opportunity.

German Ambassador Dr. Jakob Haselhuber praised Liberia's progress in sustaining peace and reiterated the German government's ongoing support for Liberian development and democratic consolidation.

- Editing by Othello B. Garblah,

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MFDP launches strategy to enhance AAID implementation

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has launched a five-year strategic design to enhance the AAID implementation.

By Lewis S. Teh
Monrovia, Liberia; August 20, 2025 - In a bold step to support full implementation of the government's Arrest Agenda for Inclusive Development or AAID, and what needs to be scaled up the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has explained.



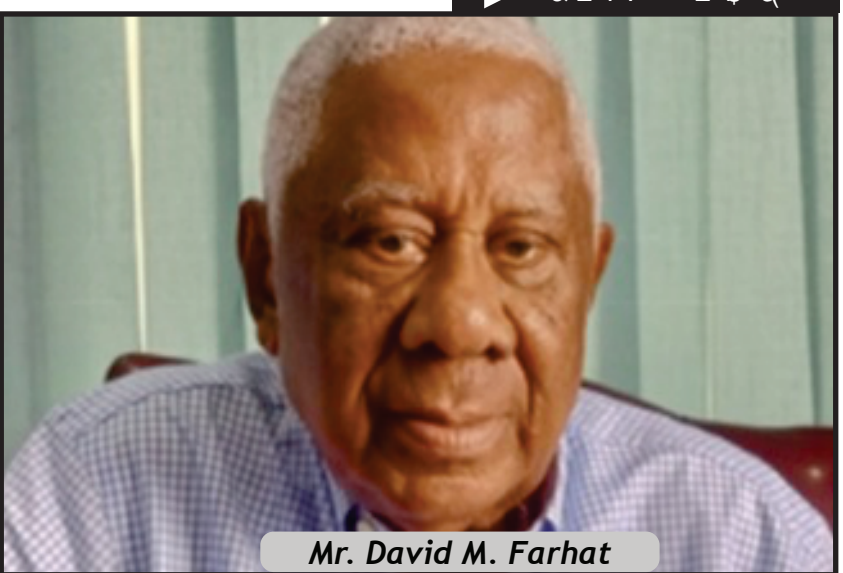
Acting Minister Anthony Meyers

Development Planning has explained. "The overall goal of the MFDP for the next five years", he continued, "is to strengthen the capacity of our workforce so that we can effectively deliver on our core mandate." He emphasized that a refreshed approach is necessary due to the many changes in the Ministry's functions and mandate since its merger with the Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs in 2013. "A lot has changed administratively, legally, and regulatorily. We now need a strategic perspective that allows us to coordinate better, facilitate, and implement the ARREST Agenda over the next five years," Minister Myers noted. Earlier, Deputy Finance Minister for Administration, Bill McGill Jones, outlined the planning process and urged full participation from departmental heads and unit leaders. "Sit with the core planning team and consultants; share your priorities, and ensure your voice is part of this process," he said. "As a team, our focus must remain on improving the lives of all Liberians, addressing challenges such as poverty, unemployment, weak infrastructure, and limited access to quality education and healthcare." The new strategic plan will not only align with national priorities under the ARREST Agenda but also reinforce the MFDP's central role in shaping inclusive growth and sustainable development across Liberia. The launch, which took place at the Ministry on Broad Street in Monrovia, brought together Deputy Ministers, Assistant Ministers, Directors, and Assistant Directors from across the Ministry, symbolizing a unified step toward a stronger and more responsive institutional performance. Editing by Jonathan Browne

Farhat criticizes Weah's Free Tuition Policy

Former President George M. Weah's free tuition policy comes under increasing criticism here, with the latest coming from former Minister of Finance, David M. Farhat.

By: Naneka Hoffman
Monrovia, Liberia; August 20, 2025 - Former Finance Minister, David M. Farhat, criticizes former President George M. Weah's free tuition policy launched during his sex years in office, noting that it was the result of poor advice from individuals within his circle. In 2018, at the start of his presidency, former President Weah declared free tuition for all students at the state-run University of Liberia (UL) and other public universities across the country. "...I therefore, declare free tuition for all university students at the University of Liberia as well as all other public universities in Liberia," Mr. Weah announced on October 24, 2018, at the UL's Capitol Hill campus, a declaration that was met with loud cheers from students. But speaking in an exclusive interview in Monrovia on Tuesday, August 19, Mr. Farhat, who also served as head of the UL Graduate School, argued that the policy has created more challenges than solutions. "The free tuition policy by former President Weah is creating more problems at the University of Liberia," Farhat said. He recalls that during the administration of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, he had proposed closing the University of Liberia for one or two years so the government could address the longstanding issues facing the institution. According to Farhat, UL continues to suffer from numerous challenges, including unqualified instructors, salary disparities, and unsanitary campus facilities. He stresses that these issues should have been prioritized, instead of implementing a free



Mr. David M. Farhat

"I am tired of living this life."

-Female drug addict cries for help

By Stephen G. Fellajuah
Monrovia, Liberia; August 20, 2025 - A young Liberian woman, Carnalia Scott, is making a desperate appeal for help as she battles a life-threatening drug addiction that has left her homeless and estranged from her family. In a tearful plea, Miss Scott, also a graduate of AME University, shared the tragic depths of her struggle, revealing that she now sleeps in graveyards after losing everything to substance abuse. "I am tired of living this life, and I need rehabilitation," she said. "I want to reunite with my family, but they don't believe I can change." Once a bright student with dreams, Scott says her downfall began when she tried to prove herself to street-savvy peers, claiming she wanted to show she could survive the harsh realities of street life. But that choice led her into the dark world of drugs and alcohol. "Dem life can really hit some people differently ooooo," a bystander commented. "It's painful to see a graduate in this condition." The heartbreaking story of Carnalia Scott, which surfaced on social media, has sparked a wave of public emotion. Senator Darius Dillon has since taken swift action, calling for her immediate transfer to the Center for Rehabilitation and Reintegration (CFRR) for professional care, according to report. Liberian journalist Charles B. Yates took to Facebook to express his outrage and heartbreak. "If this doesn't break your heart, it means you are heartless," he wrote. "Between 2023 and 2025, this beautiful and charming young lady became a victim... 'Say No To Drugs' should be everyone's business right now." Scott's story adds a human face to Liberia's escalating drug crisis. During the recent National Anti-Drug March in Monrovia, Minister of Education, Dr. Jarso Maley Jallah, rallied citizens to unite in the fight against drugs. "This is not just a march. It is a national awakening," she declared. "We move with purpose, not protest, with faith, not fear. Together, we will keep our schools safe, our



children strong, and our nation drug-free, peacefully, legally, and powerfully, with God as our helper and defender." In a show of renewed determination, the Liberian government has endorsed community-led efforts to dismantle ghettos and drive out individuals linked to drug abuse. However, it emphasized the need for lawful coordination with the Joint Security of Liberia to avoid human rights violations. This came after residents of Saye Town and 12th Street in Sinkor, respectively, launched a dramatic crackdown, destroying ghettos and chasing away alleged drug users with sticks and other objects. The wave of action follows the "Say No to Drugs" campaign march on August 7, 2025, when hundreds

Boycotts lors de la cérémonie d'adieu de la juge en chef Yuoh

Le 15 août 2025, la cérémonie officielle de départ à la retraite de l'ancienne juge en chef de la Cour suprême du Liberia, Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, s'est tenue dans la salle

Boakai et de la haute direction du pouvoir législatif.

Ni le président Boakai, qui devait prononcer une allocution spéciale, ni les principaux responsables du Parlement - le président de la Chambre des représentants,

n'a non plus été dépêché par l'Exécutif. Le ministre de la Justice, Cllr. N. Oswald Tweah, initialement prévu pour rendre hommage, a également brillé par son absence, laissant in extremis le solliciteur général, Cllr. Augustine Fayiah, représenter le ministère.

Pour de nombreux observateurs, ce boycott constitue une revanche politique. En janvier dernier, lors du discours sur l'état de la Nation prononcé par le président Boakai, aucun membre du pouvoir judiciaire - y compris les juges de la Cour suprême - n'avait pris part à la séance, alimentant alors de vives spéculations. Si l'absence de la juge en chef Yuoh fut ensuite attribuée à sa participation à un symposium international au Caire, l'abs

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d'audience suprême, mais elle a été marquée par une absence remarquée : celle du président Joseph N.

Richard Koon, et la présidente intérimaire du Sénat, Nyonblee Kangar-Lawrence - n'ont assisté à la cérémonie. Aucun représentant officiel

Les communautés libériennes se mobilisent contre la drogue

Au Liberia, la lutte contre la drogue prend un tournant inédit : soutenues par le gouvernement, les communautés locales organisent désormais elles-mêmes des opérations visant à démanteler les ghettos et détruire les abris de fortune de présumés trafiquants.

Face à la lenteur de la réponse officielle à la crise des stupéfiants, des leaders communautaires, exaspérés, passent à l'action. Raids, destructions de repaires et confrontations directes avec des suspects se multiplient, illustrant une nouvelle dynamique de « justice populaire » appuyée par les forces de l'ordre.

Cette vague d'initiatives citoyennes fait suite à une vaste marche anti-drogue organisée le 11 août 2025 à Monrovia, où les habitants du comté de Montserrado avaient convergé vers le Capitole pour exiger une réaction immédiate des autorités.

Quelques jours avant cette mobilisation, le président Joseph Nyuma Boakai avait

exhorté les Libériens à dénoncer les distributeurs de drogue dans leurs quartiers. Depuis, plusieurs communautés se sont organisées pour cibler les ghettos et les suspects.

Le 15 août, une descente conjointe de résidents et de policiers a eu lieu dans le comté de Nimba. Des vidéos diffusées en ligne montrent des habitants affrontant des présumés trafiquants et démolissant des structures identifiées comme repaires de drogue. Dans l'une d'elles, une femme interpelle un consommateur présumé tentant d'échapper aux agents, criant : « La one there ! »

Ce type d'action n'est pas nouveau : dès avril, à Saye Town

et dans le quartier Sinkor, des résidents avaient rasé des ghettos, détruit des habitations précaires et remis certains suspects à la police.

Le 16 août, l'Agence libérienne de lutte contre la drogue (LDEA) a rejoint des habitants de Barnersville, dans le quartier de Chicken Soup Factory, pour mener des perquisitions maison par maison. Des matériaux saisis ont été incendiés sur place. Des opérations similaires ont également eu lieu sur Peace Island et dans d'autres localités.

Certaines voix

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Éditorial

L'absence de leadership responsable au Liberia est dangereuse !

La posture adoptée par la direction sortante du pouvoir judiciaire, sous l'ancienne juge en chef Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh, et par l'Exécutif dirigé par le président Joseph Boakai, en se boycottant mutuellement, illustre un manque flagrant de leadership responsable. Ce n'est assurément pas le type de gouvernance que mérite le Liberia.

En janvier dernier, l'ancienne juge en chef Yuoh avait brillé par son absence lors du deuxième discours annuel du président Boakai devant la 55e législature, alors présidée par le très contesté président de la Chambre des représentants, Richard Nagbe Koon. Sans explication officielle, l'ensemble de la Cour suprême avait également déserté la cérémonie, laissant leurs sièges ostensiblement vides.

En guise de revanche, le président Boakai, son cabinet ainsi que les dirigeants de la 55e législature - dont le président Koon et la présidente du Sénat, Nyonblee Kangar-Lawrence - ont à leur tour boycotté la cérémonie de départ à la retraite de la juge Yuoh. Un spectacle regrettable, indigne de l'image que doit projeter une classe dirigeante.

Ce comportement traduit non seulement une absence de maturité politique, mais envoie aussi un signal dangereux à la jeunesse libérienne. L'attitude du gouvernement et du Parlement, qui s'adonnent à un jeu de destruction mutuelle rappelant la « mentalité du crabe », ne contribue en rien au progrès national.

Certes, la Cour suprême, dirigée alors par la juge Yuoh, avait qualifié d'« ultra vires » les décisions du bloc majoritaire de la Chambre lors de la crise sur la présidence de l'institution, ordonnant un retour au statu quo ante. Ce contexte juridique avait probablement motivé le boycott du discours présidentiel par la Cour suprême, dirigée par une instance qu'elle considérait comme illégitime. Mais même dans ce cas, une communication officielle aurait dû être faite à l'Exécutif et au Législatif, afin d'éviter un tel affront public.

Le plus préoccupant est que, loin d'apprendre des erreurs du passé, les branches de l'État ont répété la même posture au départ de la juge Yuoh, en s'abstenant de participer à sa cérémonie d'adieu. Ce manque de respect institutionnel fragilise la crédibilité de nos dirigeants.

En tant que chef de l'État et figure morale, le président Joseph Boakai a la responsabilité de maintenir un dialogue constructif avec les trois branches du gouvernement, quels qu'en soient les dirigeants. Les divergences d'opinions sont inévitables en démocratie, mais elles doivent être gérées avec maturité et non par des affronts publics qui ternissent l'image de nos institutions.

Le Liberia a besoin d'un leadership digne, rassembleur et exemplaire - non d'un spectacle de divisions qui met en péril l'unité nationale.

Voulez-vous que je renforce encore plus le ton critique pour que l'éditorial paraisse plus incisif (style presse d'opinion), ou préférez-vous le garder équilibré et modéré comme dans cette version ?

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Boycotts lors de la cérémonie

ence inexpliquée des quatre juges associés - Jamesetta H. Wolokolie, Yussif D. Kaba, Yamie Q. Gbeisay Sr. et Ceaineh D. Clinton Johnson - avait suscité un tollé public. La justice avait finalement justifié ce retrait par le différend entourant l’élection du président de la Chambre des représentants, opposant Cllr. Jonathan Fonati Koffa à Richard Koon du parti Unity. Un notable présent à la cérémonie a exprimé sa déception face au refus manifeste du président Boakai d’assister ou de déléguer un représentant à cet événement solennel. Plus surprenant encore, quelques minutes après la clôture de la cérémonie et l’ajournement de la session judiciaire de mars 2025, le nouveau juge en chef, Yamie QuiQui Gbeisay Sr., et le juge associé Boakai Kanneh ont discrètement quitté les lieux pour se rendre au Palais présidentiel. Ils y ont aussitôt été investis, aux côtés d’autres hauts responsables, par le président Boakai lui-même. La cérémonie d’investiture, qui a rassemblé des responsables gouvernementaux, des diplomates et des proches, a vu le président nommer officiellement Yamie Gbeisay au poste de juge en chef, Boakai N. Kanneh comme juge associé, et Victoria W. Duncan comme juge résidente du comté de Margibi. Le président a également commissionné plusieurs ambassadeurs : John Ballout (Nigeria), George S.W. Patten (Afrique du Sud), Mohammed M. Dukuly (Émirats arabes unis), Henry B. Fahnbulleh (Égypte), ainsi que Clarence K. Massaquoi, Ben A. Fofana, Emmanuel J. Payegar, Patrick R. Honnah et Angela Cassell Bush à la tête de la Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA). Dans son allocution, le président Boakai a exhorté les nouveaux responsables à servir « avec intégrité, responsabilité et résultats

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Les communautés libériennes

communautaires saluent ouvertement ces actions. À Fiamah, la responsable du marché, Byss Wallace, a déclaré : « Nous allons lancer notre propre opération ici pour chasser tous ceux qui sont impliqués. Si nous voyons quelqu’un mal habillé, nous le remettrons à la police. Au moins, cela les obligera à se laver. » Elle a désigné un centre de loisirs voisin, qu’elle estime devoir être le premier visé. Selon elle, depuis l’appel du gouvernement, plusieurs jeunes consommateurs tentent de changer de comportement : certains se coupent les cheveux et portent des vêtements propres pour ne pas être pris pour cibles. La question de la drogue figure depuis longtemps dans le discours présidentiel. Le 29 janvier 2024, lors de son premier message sur l’état de la Nation, Joseph Boakai avait déclaré la toxicomanie « urgence nationale de santé publique », qualifiant notamment la drogue synthétique « KUSH » de menace existentielle pour la jeunesse et la sécurité nationale. Il avait alors mis en place un comité multisectoriel associant les ministères de la

», rappelant que « le service public est une mission, pas un privilège ». Fidèle à son appel récurrent, il a lancé : « Pensons Liberia, Aïmons Liberia, Bâtissons Liberia ». Il a affirmé que l’ère du « business as usual » est révolue, avertissant que les performances des responsables seront désormais mesurées à l’aune de leurs résultats. « Ce moment est le vôtre. Votre pays vous appelle. Servez avec courage, intégrité et humilité », a-t-il insisté, ajoutant que la transparence et la déclaration de patrimoine ne sont pas négociables, mais des obligations légales et morales. S’adressant au pouvoir judiciaire, il a martelé que la réforme est « urgente et non négociable », appelant à une justice transparente, rapide et équitable, socle d’une démocratie prospère. Aux nouveaux ambassadeurs, le président a rappelé leur rôle stratégique, alors que le Liberia entame son mandat historique de deux ans au Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies : « Vous êtes appelés Excellence pour une raison. Représentez-nous avec dignité et efficacité : attirez les investissements, stimulez le tourisme, construisez des partenariats et faites entendre la voix du Liberia. » Enfin, il a mis au défi la direction de la LTA d’exploiter pleinement les opportunités de l’ère numérique afin de favoriser l’innovation, la croissance économique et l’inclusion des jeunes dans une économie du savoir. Martelant sa politique de tolérance zéro envers la corruption, le président Boakai a prévenu : « Tout détournement de ressources publiques entraînera des poursuites. Ceux qui violeront nos lois anti-corruption seront pleinement tenus responsables. » Santé, de la Justice, de la Jeunesse et des Sports, de la Protection de l’enfance et du genre, des Finances, ainsi que la LDEA, et promis de se soumettre à un test antidrogue, en appelant ses collaborateurs à en faire autant. Mais malgré les promesses, des critiques persistent. Plusieurs experts et acteurs de terrain dénoncent l’insuffisance des moyens concrets. Sur les 3 millions de dollars promis pour les initiatives anti-drogue, peu de fonds auraient été effectivement alloués, et de nombreux centres de réhabilitation privés, non réglementés, ont émergé faute de structures publiques adaptées. Le 7 août dernier, à la réception du rapport du comité multisectoriel, le président Boakai a renouvelé son engagement contre ce fléau. Depuis, son appel semble galvaniser les citoyens, qui multiplient les initiatives locales pour reprendre le contrôle de leurs quartiers. Si elles se poursuivent, ces actions communautaires, conjuguées à un accompagnement institutionnel renforcé, pourraient constituer un tournant décisif dans la lutte contre la drogue au Liberia.

Liberia : la juge en chef Sie-A-Nyene Yuoh se retire, saluée pour son rôle dans la stabilité politique

La juge en chef à la retraite Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh a revendiqué, comme principal héritage de son passage à la Cour suprême du Liberia, la consolidation de la stabilité politique du pays. Lors de sa cérémonie de départ, vendredi 15 août, elle a également rendu hommage à l’ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, dont le programme d’autonomisation des femmes a permis à de nombreuses Libériennes d’accéder à des postes de premier plan dans la vie publique. Nommée juge associée en 2013, puis promue juge en chef en 2022 sous l’administration de George Weah, Mme Yuoh est la deuxième femme de l’histoire à occuper cette fonction et la troisième à siéger à la Cour suprême. Elle se retire après près de douze années de service, à l’âge constitutionnel de 70 ans. « La loi reste la loi » Dans un discours empreint de gravité, Mme Yuoh a rappelé que la justice libérienne « n’est pas un instrument politique, mais le gardien impartial de la loi ». Elle est revenue sur la période houleuse des élections générales de 2023, marquées par le transfert de pouvoir entre le Congrès pour le changement démocratique (CDC) et le Parti de l’unité (UP), affirmant que la Cour avait alors assuré la stabilité institutionnelle. « Les élections ne sont jamais des événements ordinaires. Durant ces moments, les tensions s’exacerbent, mais à travers tout cela, la loi est demeurée constante. La loi reste la loi, quels que soient les changements au gouvernement », a-t-elle insisté. Elle a exhorté ses successeurs et collègues à rester fidèles à la Constitution, soulignant que « la Cour suprême est et doit rester la gardienne de la loi, à tout moment et en toutes circonstances ». Hommage à une carrière et à un engagement Saluée pour sa rigueur et sa capacité à diriger la magistrature dans des



contextes politiques tendus, Mme Yuoh a décrit son ascension au poste de juge en chef comme « un moment décisif » de sa carrière. Citant le Psaume 18:29, elle a confié que sa foi l’avait guidée tout au long de ses années sur le banc, exprimant désormais son souhait de se consacrer à une vie plus calme auprès de ses petits-enfants. « Aujourd’hui ne marque pas une fin, mais la continuation des idéaux qui nous unissent en tant que nation régie par les lois », a-t-elle déclaré. Un passage de témoin Son successeur, le juge Francis Korkpor Gbeisay, ancien juge associé reconnu pour sa solide expérience juridique et son tempérament mesuré, a promis de préserver l’indépendance de la justice et de poursuivre les réformes visant à renforcer l’accès équitable au droit. Dans un témoignage personnel, il a raconté sa première rencontre avec Mme Yuoh dans les années 1990, alors qu’il était étudiant en droit : « Je l’ai vue plaider avec une maîtrise impressionnante et je me suis dit : voilà le modèle d’avocat que je veux devenir. Cette impression m’est restée, et aujourd’hui, en prenant sa succession, j’ai le sentiment que c’était hier. » Il a salué en elle une personnalité « vibrante et sociale », qui a marqué chacune de ses fonctions. Avec humour, il l’a encouragée à profiter de la retraite sans renoncer aux plaisirs de la vie : « Laissez un peu de temps aux chemins de fer et aux danses que vous aimez tant. » Une empreinte durable Les juges Jamesetta Howard Wolokolie, Yussif D. Kaba et Ceaineh D. Clinton-Johnson ont, dans des hommages séparés, salué sa précision dans les arrêts rendus et son engagement pour l’efficacité judiciaire et l’autonomie financière de l’institution. « Merci, juge en chef. Par votre courage et votre détermination, vous avez laissé une feuille de route pour l’avenir du système judiciaire. Votre plan stratégique de cinq ans constitue un chef-d’œuvre qui, s’il est suivi, consolidera une magistrature forte, fière et respectée », ont-ils conclu.

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Dean Adansi lays out GHIB's plan

collections and US\$2.7 billion in primary trade finance transactions across Sub-Saharan Africa. Downstream payments to West Africa in 2024 alone exceeded US\$8.5 billion.

Mr. Adansi stressed that financing remains the main bottleneck to processing. Processing plants need substantial upfront capital, longer repayment periods, and different risk assessments than standard commodity trade deals. “Traditional banking products are rarely designed to support multi-year investment cycles in processing,” he said.

The GHIB CONVERGE 2025 conference, organised by GHIB, heard examples of missed opportunities. In one case, a contract worth more than US\$10 million for onions destined for Senegal was fulfilled by European suppliers, despite West African countries having sufficient raw output. The reason: African producers could not secure financing for processing capacity. GHIB’s plan calls for specialized commodity finance instruments such as pre-export financing tied to off-take agreements, inventory financing against stored commodities, and equipment leasing to reduce capital outlays.

According to research presented at the conference, raising Africa’s share of value-added exports from 14 to 25 percent could generate over US\$50 billion in extra annual revenue and millions of industrial jobs. Ghana’s own recent gains in cocoa processing – with local capacity rising from negligible levels to roughly 15 percent of

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Death toll from drugs rises

number of deaths among Zogos has raised concerns about the government's fight against drugs, illicit substances, amid proliferation of narcotics here.

Further reports state the death toll is increasing daily in communities, which raises a need for government to intensify efforts to address issue of illicit drugs across the country.

Augustine Joemah, preferably known as Kapagee, Chairman of Parker Paint Community in Paynesville, said rising and fearsome deaths from drugs addiction in his community is of serious concern that demand urgent attention. “Every day these people are dying, and I can tell you for the last month, more than 30 have died. Even this week, we have over seven,” Kapagee said.

He indicated that there have been at least 19 deaths in the community since August 7, 2025, the day of the Anti-Drugs Campaign with bodies being retrieved and buried after 72 hours.

He expressed fear about huge presence of At-risk youths in the Parker Paint Community, while calling on government to come to their aid.

“We are living in fear in this community, because every day the Zogos are increasing, and we fear for our children.” Chairman Joemah, who deeply frowned on the proliferation of illicit drugs, also launched a passionate plea to the Liberia National Police (LNP) to establish a sub-police station in the community to curtail spread of drugs and hijacking of peaceful citizens by criminals.

Meanwhile, Parker Paint Community stands as the largest hub of Zogos in Paynesville. According to reports, Zogo centers or barracks are divided into three regions, namely; Galway, Mozambique, and Boca-teah, with a population of over 500 disadvantaged youths.

Residents laments that hardcore drugs are affecting dozens of young people across their community and elsewhere in Montserrado County.

Frustrated by the slow response to the rising drug menace, community leaders are now taking matters

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Farhat criticizes Weah's Free Tuition Policy

tuition policy.

He noted that the policy has emboldened students to stage repeated protests.

“Students don’t care whether classes go on or not, because they are not paying tuition,” he noted.

Reflecting on his past role in government, Farhat recalled that he had advised slain President William R. Tolbert, Jr., to build the Unity Conference Center at UL’s Fendell campus for use by the university. The center, constructed in 1979 to host the then Organization of African Unity (now African Union) summit along with Hotel Africa, has since fallen into ruin due to years of neglect and coastal erosion, something he describes as a “waste of resources and public facilities.”

Mr. Farhat also criticizes the proliferation of new universities across Liberia, stressing that higher education is not about constructing buildings, but about training and employing qualified instructors to prepare the nation’s future leaders.

He urges the ruling Unity Party-led government of President Joseph N. Boakai, to focus on addressing the deep-rooted problems facing UL’s students and faculty, warning that building more universities without fixing the existing issues could worsen Liberia’s education sector.

Mr. Farhat, also a former presidential candidate, served as finance minister in the 80s during the regime of slain President Samuel Kanyon Doe. Editing by Jonathan Browne

EPA to Host National Dialogue on Draft Carbon Trading Policy

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under the auspices of the National Climate Change Steering Committee (NCCSC), headed by President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, will convene a two-day National Dialogue on the Draft Carbon Trading Policy in Ganta, Nimba County, from August 21 to 22, 2025.

By: Kruah Thompson

Monrovia, Liberia, August 20, 2025: The high-level event will bring together county superintendents, development superintendents, ministers and heads of government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), development partners, women and youth leaders, religious leaders, community representatives, the media, and student leaders, among others.

According to EPA Executive Director Dr. Emmanuel Yahkpawolo, who spoke during the Ministry of Information’s regular press briefing on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, the dialogue is intended to provide a platform for developing a pathway toward a national Climate Change Law. The forum will also create space for diverse voices to be heard in shaping Liberia’s climate governance framework.

Dr. Yahkpawolo explained that



that Liberia’s natural wealth becomes a source of resilience and prosperity for generations to come,” Dr. Yahkpawolo said.

The NCCSC, chaired by President Boakai, is the highest decision-making body for climate change activities in Liberia, including carbon market policies. At its 24th sitting in July 2024, the NCCSC mandated the EPA to lead the development of Liberia’s Carbon Trading Policy, with the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) providing support on forest-related carbon issues.

Since then, the EPA, FDA, and partners have been working on both the policy framework and the climate change legislation. To strengthen the process, the Government of Liberia signed a Letter of Agreement with the Coalition for Rainforest Nations (CfRN) to provide technical assistance in drafting the policy and conducting a comprehensive forest inventory to determine

feedback and recommendations from the Ganta dialogue will be incorporated into the Draft Carbon Trading Policy before moving to the validation stage.

However, he says, following the validation, Liberia will draft a comprehensive Climate Change Law, which will not only enshrine the carbon trading framework but also establish a legal basis for climate governance in the country. “This law will provide the rules, institutions, and enforcement mechanisms needed to guide climate action, regulate emissions, and ensure that carbon market benefits are shared fairly, especially with forest-dependent and vulnerable communities,” he emphasized.

The EPA boss further noted that Liberia is committed to building a transparent, accountable, and inclusive carbon market system that safeguards forests, uplifts communities, and positions the country as a credible player in global climate finance.

“The EPA, FDA, NCCSC, and all partners call on citizens, civil society, and stakeholders to actively participate in this process. Together, we can ensure

Liberia’s carbon stock. Bit speaking on the occasion Dr. Yapka wollao says, “This stocktaking is essential, as it will establish the baseline of the country’s natural capital in terms of carbon storage and set the stage for future participation in international carbon markets,” Dr. Yahkpawolo noted.

The EPA has also conducted capacity building programs with support from CfRN, training members of the carbon technical working group, which includes representatives from line ministries, agencies, and civil society organizations. These trainings are designed to equip national stakeholders with the skills to manage and analyze carbon data effectively.” He said, adding that in late August 2025, CfRN will conduct on-the-ground training in Liberia using modern technologies such as high-resolution aerial photography and advanced modeling tools to estimate the carbon stock of Liberia’s forests, and that A similar study is also underway to assess the carbon storage potential of Liberia’s mangroves.

29 AML drivers receive first international certificates

Buchanan, Liberia - Driving Training program with ArcelorMittal Liberia has certificated 29 professional drivers in Buchanan following the



completion of a two-day Defensive Driving Program, underscoring the company's strong commitment to safety on and off the road. The certification ceremony followed both theory and practical training sessions, during which the first group of AML drivers demonstrated their competence in applying international safety practices. Representatives from AML Management, the Liberia National Police, professional trainers, and the newly certified drivers attended the event. According to Ruth Negash, AML's Training, Development and Compliance Manager, the program was designed to meet the company's high standards for safe driving while equipping drivers with skills that align with internationally accepted safety practices. "We decided to align the AML

all our passengers safely and protect the people on our roads from harm," Negash explained. She emphasized that the training instills defensive driving behavior, enabling drivers to anticipate hazards and prevent accidents. "We look forward to doing refreshers for anyone violating the rules, because in AML we are highly committed to road safety, and we have zero tolerance for unsafe behaviors," she added. Negash further stressed that certified participants are now expected to coach others, act promptly when things are not going right, and help cultivate a culture of safety at AML. Fleet Manager Kolisa Freeman praised the drivers who underwent the training, describing safety as a responsibility shared by all. "Therefore, this program is more than receiving just a

certificate, it is a reflection of our shared values – safety, accountability, and excellence on the road," Freeman said. "What you have learned through defensive driving techniques, vehicle checks, and compliance protocols is not just about passing a test. It is about protecting lives, improving efficiency, and representing our company with the highest standards." On behalf of the graduates, certified driver Randy Reeves thanked AML for the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge. He assured management that the lessons learned would be applied in their daily work to ensure safe driving practices across the company's operations. The Defensive Driving Program emphasized proactive driving techniques such as hazard anticipation, maintaining safe following distances, adapting to weather and road conditions, respecting road rules, managing fatigue, and staying alert behind the wheel. Road and driver safety remain core pillars of ArcelorMittal Liberia's operations. By investing in initiatives like the Defensive Driving Program, the company aims to reduce the risks of accidents while creating a culture of safety awareness that benefits both its workforce and the surrounding communities.

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Calls to expand S/Court

that such an amendment would require a bill initiated by the National Legislature and passed by two-thirds of both Houses' members and ratified through a national referendum in accordance with Articles 91 and 92 of the Constitution. "In terms of comparative jurisprudence, several jurisdictions, including Ghana and Nigeria, have expanded their Supreme Court benches to enhance judicial efficiency and accommodate growing legal demand. Liberia would be well-positioned to adopt a similar model to meet its evolving judicial needs. Proposal for the Establishment of Intermediary Regional Appellate Courts. Currently, all appeals from Circuit Courts are directed solely to the Supreme Court, creating significant backlog and judicial congestion. This situation impedes timely access to justice and undermines the constitutional right of citizens to a fair and expeditious hearing," Karnley argued. Karnley also proposes the creation of Intermediary Regional Appellate Courts, each comprising three (3) counties per region adding that these appellate courts would be vested with the jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals from the Circuit Courts within their respective regions; thereby, reducing the burden on the Supreme Court and allowing it to

focus on constitutional, public interest, and precedent-setting cases. "Potential benefits of this reform include Decongestion of the Supreme Court docket expedited resolution of appeals, increased physical and procedural access to appellate justice across the country, and promotion of judicial efficiency and uniformity in regional jurisprudence," he indicated. The diaspora Liberian legal practitioner further listed legislative steps to realize this proposal which include the enactment of enabling legislation by the National Legislature under its authority to establish courts subordinate to the Supreme Court as provided for under Article 65 of the Constitution and the allocation of budgetary resources to support the infrastructure and staffing of these appellate courts.. According to him, the recruitment and appointment of qualified appellate judges should be ensured by merit-based selection with consideration for regional balance and professional integrity. He named Kenya, South Africa, and the United States as having such jurisprudence, saying they have successfully implemented intermediate appellate courts to streamline the administration of justice and ensure timely adjudication of appeals.

Court orders seizure and sale of NEC assets

The Commercial Court at the Temple of Justice has taken decisive action against the National Election Commission (NEC) for failing to satisfy a longstanding judgment debt.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, August 20, 2025: At noon, the court closed the NEC Headquarters in Sinkor and ordered the immediate seizure of NEC's assets, executing a writ to recover US\$171,105.00 owed to M-TOSH Prints Media Inc. The case involves an unpaid financial obligation that the NEC accrued with M-TOSH Prints Media Inc., a vendor represented in court by Mr. Varney A. Fahnbulleh. Despite a clear judgment rendered by the Commercial Court on June 3, 2025, in favor of M-TOSH Prints Media, NEC did not fulfill its debt obligation. As a result, M-TOSH Prints Media sought court enforcement to collect the outstanding funds. Thus, leaving Commercial Court Associate Judge Chan-Chan A. Paegar to issue the Writ of Execution that empowered

from movable assets fall short of the required amount, the court further authorized the seizure and sale of NEC's real property. The writ's enforcement led to the closure of the NEC Headquarters on Tuesday, August 19, signaling the seriousness of the Court's directive and emphasizing the importance of compliance with lawful judgments. The court's writ also carried a stern warning for NEC's leadership. It specifically ordered the physical appearance of NEC Executive Chairperson, Mrs. Davidetta Brown Lansanah, along with other authorized commissioners, before the Associate Judge, should the payment or a mutually acceptable settlement not be made promptly. The order stipulates that any money recovered through the sale of NEC's assets is to be paid



Acting Sheriff Emmanuel Morris to seize, expose, and sell NEC's land, goods, and chattels. According to the writ of execution, should the proceeds

directly to M-TOSH Prints Media Inc., with a portion allocated to cover court costs. -Edited by Othello B. Garblah.

Starts from page 7 "I am tired of living this life"

gathered at the Capitol Building to demand action against the growing drug threat. On the same day, President Joseph Boakai unveiled new policy measures, urging citizens to report drug activity to the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA). While critics say the president's move might be politically-driven, a tragedy in New Keymah Town, Soul Clinic, where four young men reportedly died after taking a deadly street drug known as "Android" or "Spark", underscored the urgency of the situation. Following the

tragedy, residents in various communities began effecting citizen arrests and handing over suspects to the police. Responding to these developments, Deputy Information Minister Daniel Sanoe warned against mob justice. As Liberia grapples with a national drug epidemic, Carnalia Scott's voice is a raw reminder of the human cost. Her plea echoes beyond the graveyards she now calls home, crying not just for herself, but for a generation at risk. "I still have hope," she said quietly. "But I can't do this alone." Editing by Jonathan Browne

Death toll from drugs rises

-As community residents mourn

Rise in drug-related deaths in Liberia is raising concern among citizens, as two or three persons reportedly died from dangerous substances, leaving many to wonder which community will be the next to mourn the loss of a member.

By: Emmanuel Wise Jipoh

In less than a month, Liberia has witnessed a rapid increase in drug-related deaths among disadvantaged youths across

kill instantly or leaves consumers insane or crazy. Since President Joseph Nyuma Boakai declared drug abuse a "national health emergency" at the inception of

every community, including Kemah Town, Soul Clinic, and Parker Paint communities in Paynesville, which have seen a combined total of over 34 deaths so far.

Other communities include Boulevard-Police Academy gap (3), Red Light (5), and (2) from ELWA and LBS-Lover Street Community.

Apart from these highly affected communities in Montserrado and its environs, investigators have highlighted at least one death in each and every community, including Johnsonville Graveyard, Gardnerville Supermarket, Caldwell, Old Road, 12th & 5th Streets Sinkor, Congo Town, Logan Town, King Gray Grave Site, Du-port Road Grave Site, Duala Market, Chicken Soup Factory, and Soniwein, among others. The recent deaths include Crenshaw (not his real name), Cradle (his street name), Jerah Doe, Archie Korpue, Alex, and Philemon Tarpeh, among others.

Dozen others' names withheld, were discovered dead and immediately buried, while some bodies were retrieved home by family members and others buried undercover.

Reports suggest the rising



Montserrado County. The rising number of deaths of disadvantaged youths, or Zogos, is a result of a new phenomenal drug called "Sparking Android", this paper has gathered.

According to reports, when consumed, these drugs either

his government, very little has been done except a recent nationwide anti-drug campaign to draw attention authorities. At least fifty (50) Zogos or disadvantaged youths, have died from drugs in the past week or so. The rising death toll has spread across

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