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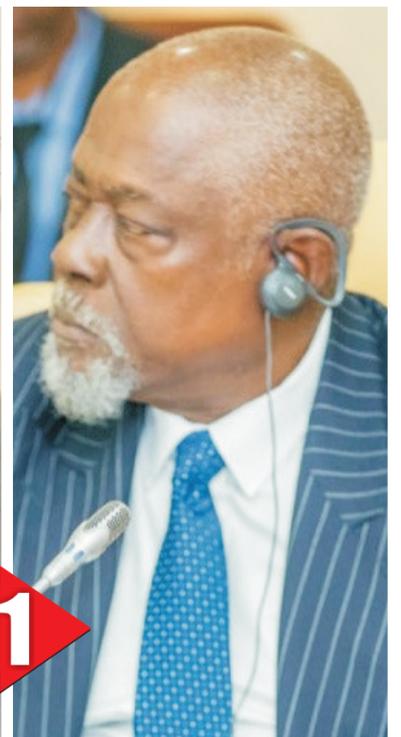
President George M. Weah

Boakai urges more pressure on Weah

Lawmaker wants more clarity on US\$25m



Minister Samuel D. Tweah



Governor Nathaniel Patray



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Continental News

Death toll from Malawi floods reaches 45

The death toll from the recent Malawi flooding disaster has reached 45, the Department of Disaster Affairs (DoDMA) said Tuesday in an update on their official website.

The statement, which was confirmed to Xinhua by DoDMA spokesperson Chipiliro Khamula, said the number of injured people has reach 577 and two people remain missing.

Nearly 148,000 households have been affected and the number of people affected by the floods has increased to approximately 739,000. "Most of the displaced families are living in camps while some are living with their relations," reads the statement, adding that so far a total of 187 camps have been established in the 14 affected districts.

Assessments on damage are still underway, according to the DoDMA. A statement

released Tuesday by the climate department warned that Malawians living in the southern region of the country would brace for more heavy and stormy rains due to the movement of the Tropical

Cyclone IDAI towards Malawi. The Malawi government said it needs 16.4 million U.S. dollars to deal with the damage caused by the floods. DoDMA Principal Secretary Wilson

Mollen appealed to local and international organizations to assist the Malawi government in any way they can for the displaced households to get shelters, food and all other needs.

Since Malawi President Arthur Peter Mutharika declared a state of disaster in 14 districts Friday, local and international organizations

have been providing support to help the country contain the situation. The government of South Africa was the first to respond by sending rescue teams and equipment. The displaced people are temporarily dwelling in schools and other evacuation camps.

Mutharika and government officials have visited the shelters to assess the situation and cheer the victims up. AFP



Children die in Lagos school collapse

At least 10 people have died and many more are feared trapped after a building containing a school collapsed in the Nigerian city of Lagos. The school, which was on the top floor of the four-storey building in Ita Faji on Lagos Island, had more than 100 pupils, a rescue official told the BBC.

About 40 pupils had been pulled out alive, the official said. The building had been identified as "distressed" and listed for demolition, Lagos building officials told the BBC. The collapse happened at about 10:00 local time (09:00 GMT). There were frantic scenes at the site as rescuers and local men searched for survivors, and family members crowded the area in the hope of finding their loved ones

alive. The collapsed building was a residential block containing a number of apartments as well as the school, residents and rescue officials at the scene told the BBC.

Emergency teams pulled several injured pupils from the rubble, but many worried parents at the scene were unable to find their children, while others went to a local hospital to look for theirs. Men from the local area were assisting rescuers but large crowds of people were hindering the rescue operation. Mohammed Muftau, a local resident who witnessed the collapse, told the BBC that the building had been cracking for long time and that complaints had been raised about it.

CBK boss Njoroge bows to MPs' pressure

Central Bank of Kenya Governor Patrick Njoroge finally bowed to pressure from the National Assembly after he agreed to publish banking regulations prescribing customer deposits and withdrawals after months of exchanges and threats to have him fired.

On Tuesday, Dr Njoroge was required to appear before the House committee on Implementation to explain why

he had failed to publish the regulations.

He however sent a written apology, saying he was consulting the committee on Delegated Legislation on the formulation of the regulations.

"We are in the process of implementing section 65 of the Finance Act, 2018 and we are currently consulting the committee on Delegated Legislation. In line with these consultations, we are unable to

appear before you and we are seeking two weeks," Dr Njoroge told the committee chaired by Narok North MP Moitalele Kenta.

TENUREN But even as the CBK boss showed commitment, Mr Kenta directed that he appears before the committee within 14 days or face sanctions.

"The governor is saying that they will be implementing the law and they will meet us in two weeks. Considering the new development, we will liaise with the Delegated Legislation committee and ensure that without fail, the governor implements the law," Mr Kenta told the committee.

Last week, the MPs said that his failure to publish the banking regulations as provided for in the Banking Act, which was amended in August last year through the Finance Act, was contemptuous of parliamentary proceedings and reason enough to send the governor home. The CBK governor was appointed in June 2015 for a renewable term of four years. Though the President has the powers to renew his second term without the input of the MPs, they vowed to make his reappointment

difficult unless he complied with the law. NON-COMPLIANCE

The Finance Act mandates the CBK boss to publish the regulations and submit them to the National Assembly within 30 days of its coming into force for consideration, in line with the Statutory Instruments Act.

What infuriated MPs, however, is that more than six months down the line, the CBK boss is yet to comply with the law.

Dr Njoroge instead chose to issue guidelines in form of memos and circulars to the banking industry, which MPs dismissed as illegal.

"What this man is doing is to undermine the authority of Parliament and the Executive. The President assented to this law. He should resign because he has no confidence in the authority of this House. This House does not act in vain and must be respected accordingly," Mr Kenta said last week. CORRUPTION

When he appeared before the committee last month, Dr Njoroge defended his actions,

saying, the law as it is could not be implemented as it would be akin to relaxing money laundering and terrorism laws.

He also warned that doing so would frustrate the war against corruption and cut off Kenya's banking sector from the best practices in the global banking system like Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

"The adverse effects of the amendment on the banking sector, would be immediate termination of relationships by foreign correspondent banks and closure of accounts of Kenyan banks (derisking)," Dr Njoroge had warned.

Now that he has climbed down from his hard stance, it is unclear how he intends to ensure he does not annoy MPs or eat his own words.

Last week, House committee on Finance and National Planning chairman Joseph Limo (Kipkelion East) – faulted the CBK boss' actions.

He has no authority to choose which sections of the laws passed by the House to implement, the MP said. AFP



Photo-Kenya Central Bank Governor Patrick Njoroge speaks during a news conference at the Central Bank in Nairobi, Kenya

EDITORIAL

Getting 800,000 Liberian youth in school

LIBERIA IS STILL walloping in illiteracy, poverty and disease despite a government free compulsory primary education program and tuition-free university education for undergraduates in public colleges and universities across the country.

RECENT STATISTICS QUOTED by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel Tweah that 800,000 children and youth are out of school speaks to the reality of the future of this country.

IN SPITE OF much publicized efforts by both government and the private sector to savage the education sector, there is still much work to do in preparing our children and youth for future responsibilities lie ahead.

OUR SCHOOLS, COLLEGES and universities are falling in standards primarily because of brain drain or lack of textbooks and competent faculty, poorly structured curriculum and non-conducive learning environment, among others.

THE WEAH ADMINISTRATION should be commended for efforts such as paying examination fees for 12th graders across the country and declaring undergraduate education at public universities tuition-free. But there is serious capacity challenge in the sector that needs to be addressed urgently.

FOR INSTANCE, MANY of our secondary schools in the country don't have science laboratories and libraries to prepare students for public exams yet the pupils are expected to perform miracles at examination centers.

PRESIDENT WEAH IS fully abreast of the problem so much so that immediately after taking office, he went to Nigeria and asked for 6,000 teachers. Although the open request may have sounded degrading, but that's the reality with the education sector that we should face squarely.

IF 800,000 LIBERIAN children are not in school, that's a huge future generation that is being wasted. We need a revolution in the education system. Even preparing our students for WASSCE is a problem.

MINISTER TWEAH TALKED about gender balance, but the truth is, the education system is faced with multiple and fundamental problems. We agree with the Minister when he said it depends on every one of us to turn the grim reality around.

THIS WOULD INCLUDE government, school administrators, parents, religious institutions and ordinary citizens in the street to take up the challenge to redeem our future generation from complete disintegration and collapse.

COMMENTARY

By Barry Eichengreen

How Europe Can Trade with Iran and Avoid US Sanctions

Since President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, European firms and banks have risked incurring US sanctions if they do business with the Islamic Republic. Fortunately for European leaders, who are eager to engage with Iran to keep the deal alive, a solution can be found in Europe's recent past.

BERKELEY - US President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal - formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - has put Europe in a bind. Its governments remain committed to economic engagement with Iran as a way to encourage compliance with the JCPOA, which means providing not just humanitarian assistance, but also other goods. Firms supplying these exports, however, risk incurring sanctions from the Trump administration.

For the same reason, European banks are reluctant to provide euros to finance trade with Iran. And US banks, for their part, are prohibited from providing dollars. Collectively, these obstacles constitute a formidable barrier to the sought-after engagement.

In response, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, the three European signatories to the nuclear deal, have established a mechanism for conducting trade with Iran independent of the United States. That mechanism, the Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges, or Instex, is registered in France and reports to a supervisory board of diplomats from the three countries.

But in the month since its establishment, Instex has financed zero trade. It has just a single staff member, the former Commerzbank manager Per Fischer. There is less information than confusion about how it will work.

Fortunately, there is a precedent for the initiative: the European Payments Union (EPU) that operated between 1950 and 1958.

In the wake of World War II, Europe's currencies couldn't be converted into dollars or exchanged for one another, owing to the continent's financial difficulties. As a result, they couldn't be used to finance or settle international transactions. Nor were there substitutes. In particular, European countries possessed little gold and few dollars with which to make international payments.

In order to trade, European countries therefore had to rely on bilateral agreements. They had to balance their trade country by country, essentially reducing their transactions to barter. This was not an efficient way to reconstruct the continent's trade and payments, to put it mildly.

By 1950, it had become clear that these difficulties were holding back the recovery of the European economy, prompting 18 European governments to create the EPU. The new organization pooled its members' trade deficits and surpluses, and, by offsetting the deficits a country incurred with one set of partners against the surpluses it ran with others, enabled Europe to settle

its trade multilaterally without having to make its currencies convertible.

The analogy with Instex is a direct one. Iran will be able to offset the deficits it runs with one set of European countries using the surpluses it runs with others. It will be able to do so without recourse to dollar credits and without having to make payments via SWIFT, the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications, through which conventional cross-border settlements are carried out, and which has similarly been threatened with US sanctions.

In addition, the EPU was endowed with \$600 million to lend to members running temporary trade deficits with the group as a whole. The EPU Board was understandably concerned that these credits be repaid. When West Germany showed signs in 1950 of exhausting its credits, the Board dispatched a small team of experts to diagnose the problem. It recommended an increase in the German central bank's interest rate, higher commercial-bank reserve requirements, and a ceiling on credit. With the adoption of these restrictive monetary measures, German trade swung back into balance. The EPU lived to fight another day.

Again, the implications for Instex are clear. There is no reason to expect trade between Iran and Europe to balance minute by minute. There will have to be credits to compensate firms exporting to Iran in periods when the country is buying more from Europe than it sells. There will have to be policy oversight and adjustment to insure prompt repayment of those credits.

Before 1950, the US government strongly opposed the creation of the EPU, just as it now strongly opposes Instex. The concern then was discrimination: European countries, it was feared, would find it easier to import from one another, but, lacking dollars, would still refuse to import from America. In addition, US officials worried that the EPU would duplicate and undermine the functions of the newly created International Monetary Fund.

At this point, however, the two narratives diverge. With the advent of the Cold War, President Harry S. Truman's administration and the US Congress recognized the urgency of European reconstruction. To this end, they authorized the EPU's use of \$350 million of Marshall Plan funds.

This time, the US is not about to help Europe with its trade-settlement project, new Cold War or not. But, in contrast to 1950, European governments today are capable of operating this type of mechanism on their own. They have the money. They can manage the clearing. History provides guidance on how to get it done.

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O-PED

By Anne O. Krueger

How to Lose Friends and Impoverish People

WASHINGTON, DC - US President Donald Trump's "trade war" with China has been slogging along for more than a year now, and could escalate further if current talks do not lead to a deal. But in the meantime, the Trump administration has also accused two longstanding US partners, Turkey and India, of benefiting unfairly from the US Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for developing countries. Having already erected trade barriers against Turkey last year, the US will now revoke the preferential treatment afforded to certain Turkish and Indian imports under the program.

According to the US Trade Representative, "India has implemented a wide array of trade barriers that create serious negative effects on United States commerce." In fact, it is an insult to suggest that US industry cannot compete with lower-productivity firms in a lower-income country.

India's per capita GDP, at around \$1,900 (in 2010 dollars), is one-quarter that of China and less than one-twentieth that of the US. And that is a vast improvement on previous decades, when India, like most developing countries, was abjectly poor, with an extremely low literacy rate, abysmal infrastructure, and a weak health system. In 1960, the country's per capita GDP was a mere \$304.

After India's independence in 1947, its first government, under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, made economic development a top priority, and based its policies on the belief that Indian producers could not possibly compete with those in advanced economies. Accordingly, India prohibited imports of goods that could be produced domestically, and imposed high tariffs and quantitative restrictions on many other imports. It wasn't alone. During the decades after World War II, most other developing countries - including China and Turkey - did the same, while also establishing or expanding significantly the role of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and limiting or prohibiting that of private companies.

Yet by the 1990s, China, India, Turkey, and many other developing countries had all experienced decades of disappointing growth. With trade protectionism having clearly impaired their competitiveness and overall economic performance, they removed almost all of their quantitative restrictions and began lowering tariffs substantially. At the same time, many countries moved to more realistic exchange rates, adopted policies to control inflation, and relaxed or eliminated controls on private enterprises, while reducing the role of SOEs in their economies.

The results ranged from good to spectacular. For example, in the three decades following South Korea's adoption of an "outward-oriented trade strategy" in the early 1960s, real (inflation-adjusted) wages there rose sevenfold. The South Koreans had moved to a realistic exchange rate, allowed exporters to import intermediate inputs duty- and license-free, lowered tariffs, and kept inflation under control.

Likewise, China's growth started accelerating soon after it introduced market-friendly economic reforms in the early 1980s, as did India's following its reforms in the early 1990s. Lastly, Turkey, despite being an oil importer, experienced the highest growth rate in the world in the late 1980s, following its removal of protectionist policies earlier that decade.

In all of these cases, the lesson was learned: open trade, accompanied by appropriate domestic policies, is good for growth. There are a number of reasons for this. Whereas competition and the opportunity to learn from others make domestic producers more efficient and innovative, high protectionist trade barriers can result in sclerotic monopolies. Moreover, world markets enable economies of scale in production, and provide exporters with the precise amount and type of inputs they need - and precisely when they need them - at the lowest price.

All told, countries that have pursued greater economic openness have enjoyed improved nutritional, health, and educational outcomes, as well as higher productivity and incomes. And those that have not - namely Russia, North Korea, and some countries in Africa - have fared poorly.

For an outward-oriented strategy to be successful, politicians must refrain from overregulating the economy, and private economic activities should take place on a level playing field. If a large country like China intervenes in ways that affect the world market - such as by subsidizing steel production - a multilateral response is the best policy. In an interconnected global economy, all countries must work together.

The Trump administration disagrees. But its complaints about "unfair" tariffs elsewhere are hard to take seriously, given that the US is raising its own trade barriers. If history is any guide, the current US approach to trade will result in deteriorating US economic performance, because it implies that yesterday's industries will be coddled while the industries of tomorrow will be starved of investment.

The great irony is that if China, India, and other developing countries continue to remove protectionist barriers and create a level playing field, they will grow stronger and more competitive vis-à-vis the US. As a democracy with a rapidly growing economy, India should be a natural friend for America, not least in its efforts to contain China. The Trump administration's decision to pick on the country thus makes no sense.

Indeed, behind all of Trump's trade moves is a perverse bargain. The US is essentially threatening to harm its own economy unless other countries abolish their protectionist policies and become more competitive. But if the goal is to protect US producers from foreign competition, the administration should be doing exactly the opposite: encouraging developing economies to increase their reliance on inefficient SOEs, protecting against foreign competition, and allowing political interference in the economy. That, together with higher investment in basic research, education, and infrastructure, would ensure America's global economic primacy for decades to come.

OPINION

By Ana Palacio

Democracy vs. Disinformation

MADRID - These are difficult days for liberal democracy. But of all the threats that have arisen in recent years - populism, nationalism, illiberalism - one stands out as a key enabler of the rest: the proliferation and weaponization of disinformation.

The threat is not a new one. Governments, lobby groups, and other interests have long relied on disinformation as a tool of manipulation and control.

What is new is the ease with which disinformation can be produced and disseminated. Advances in technology allow for the increasingly seamless manipulation or fabrication of video and audio, while the pervasiveness of social media enables false information to be rapidly amplified among receptive audiences.

Beyond introducing falsehoods into public discourse, the spread of disinformation can undermine the possibility of discourse itself, by calling into question actual facts. This "truth decay" - apparent in the widespread rejection of experts and expertise - undermines the functioning of democratic systems, which depend on the electorate's ability to make informed decisions about, say, climate policy or the prevention of communicable diseases.

The West has been slow to recognize the scale of this threat. It was only after the 2016 Brexit referendum and US presidential election that the power of disinformation to reshape politics began to attract attention. That recognition was reinforced in 2017, during the French presidential election and the illegal referendum on Catalan independence.

Now, systematic efforts to fight disinformation are underway. So far, the focus has been on tactical approaches, targeting the "supply side" of the problem: unmasking Russia-linked fake accounts, blocking disreputable sources, and adjusting algorithms to limit public exposure to false and misleading news. Europe has led the way in developing policy responses, such as soft guidelines for industry, national legislation, and strategic communications.

Such tactical actions - which can be implemented relatively easily and bring tangible results quickly - are a good start. But they are not nearly enough.

To some extent, Europe seems to recognize this. Early this month, the Atlantic Council organized #DisinfoWeek Europe, a series of strategic dialogues focused on the global challenge of disinformation. And more ambitious plans are already in the works, including French President Emmanuel Macron's recently proposed European Agency for the Protection of Democracies, which would counter hostile manipulation campaigns.

But, as is so often the case in Europe, the gap between word and deed is vast, and it remains to be seen how all of this will be implemented and scaled up. In any case, even if such initiatives do get off the ground, they will not succeed unless they are accompanied by efforts that tackle the demand side of the problem: the factors that make liberal democratic societies today so susceptible to manipulation.

The so-called War on Drugs failed spectacularly, partly because it focused exclusively on cutting off supply, without any regard for the factors driving demand. While it is an imperfect analogy, the lesson stands. If we are to avoid a similar failure in the fight against disinformation, we must look beyond tactics to develop a broad-based strategy addressing both supply and demand.

Part of the answer lies in public education - for example, by including media literacy in school curricula, as is being done in Italy. But there is also a need to strengthen citizens' sense of personal responsibility. This will not be easy, as it requires reconfiguring the relationship between government and governed.

As it stands, that relationship tends to resemble interaction between a service provider and its subscribers. A passive, transactional relationship weakens citizens' sense of agency and responsibility, and a disempowered and disengaged population becomes an easy mark for those peddling disinformation.

Seven decades ago, the American diplomat George F. Kennan (writing under the pseudonym "X") laid the intellectual foundations for the containment policy that defined the West's grand strategy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. In his famous article "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," Kennan warned that physical containment of the Soviet sphere of influence was only part of the response. The United States also - and more importantly - needed to demonstrate the resilience and vibrancy of its society.

As Kennan put it, the imperative was to "create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a World Power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own among the major ideological currents of the time." To that end, the US needed to "measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation."

Three decades after the Cold War's end, this remains the core challenge facing the West: to measure up to our "own best traditions," and to prove that our liberal democratic ideals are "worthy of preservation." If we do not strengthen societies from within, we cannot hope to withstand threats from without. To succeed, we will need both tactical competency and a strategic vision that leaves no doubt about what we are fighting for.

LIBERIANS DEBATE

With Sally H. Gaye Cell#: 0886726282 Email:sh0770291004@gmail.com



The Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel D. Tweah made a startling revelation recently in Monrovia that statistics available indicates about 800,000 Liberian children between ages 6 and 9, including young people across the country are not in school. Minister Tweah spoke at the formal launch of the Gender-Response Policy Budgeting Unit at the Ministry.



Saye Cole

“I think this problem is not this government alone, but an old-age problem in Liberia. Let government and others try to address this African problem of girls and boys’ education. The Government of Liberia should put in more time in improving the education sector. The education sector is the most impacted sector over the last year. I hate to see children, who are the future of our nation out of school. I

think this a big problem we all need to look [at]. This is where I can get problem with our so-called politicians in Liberia; they want power but waiting on government job before helping the people they say they love. We all need to put our hands together and help the future of our country.”



Abraham Varney

Recommending these sectors for Government's increase investment is a new thing/idea anyway. But what are the mechanisms to be put in place; and where should the government get money from for increments in these sectors. When you and your likes are craving for sanction to be imposed on the same Government that you are making recommendations? They choose to be most especially bike riders and kerker boys. Life is what you make it; you choose to be in

school that’s why you are learning and now you are a student leader of international repute. We all got similar backgrounds. Some of us were fully depending on ULSU scholarship or financial aid to stay in school back in the 2000s.”

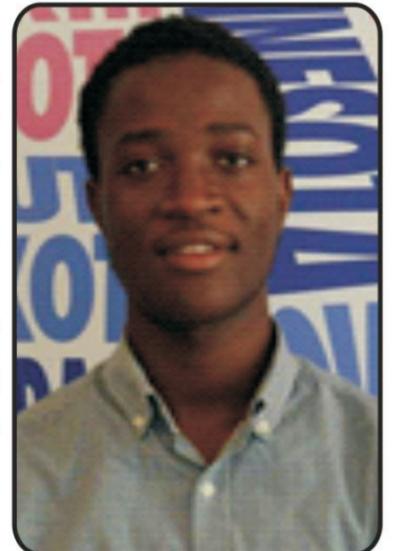
Nathan N. Gbelee

“The recent information about 800,000 youth out of school further instantiates my indignation and attenuates my firebrand advocacy for educational advancement and sustainability in Liberia. As a patriot and proponent of creating solutions, and making interventions after identifying a particular problem, I have launched a social media campaign and survey called #STAYINSCHOOL through my civil society organization, the Sustainable Educational Initiative of Liberia S.E.I.L Inc. The #STAYINSCHOOL campaign is intended to reach out to over 50 high schools in and out of Monrovia thus, creating awareness on the increase of High School drop-outs and encouraging students to stay in school and complete secondary education.”



Vernon Washington

“This is terribly sad. I can't fathom any nation that has prospered without using education as [a] major toolkit. This alarming crisis is not just a government's responsibility. Every Liberian needs to see this as urgency. We all know that young people make up more than 60% of the country's total population of approximately 4.5 million people. The statistics doesn't lie and even looking around, one might start to question the authenticity of the said improvements in our educational sector but again, we should believe that it's true. I mean that the stats are true. Now that we all know that more than 800K young people are out of school, what can we do now? We must advocate for the improvement in the educational sector especially, its budget. We must rally with partners and treat this as urgency. If we can't educate our future leaders, do we even have a future? I rarely think so.”



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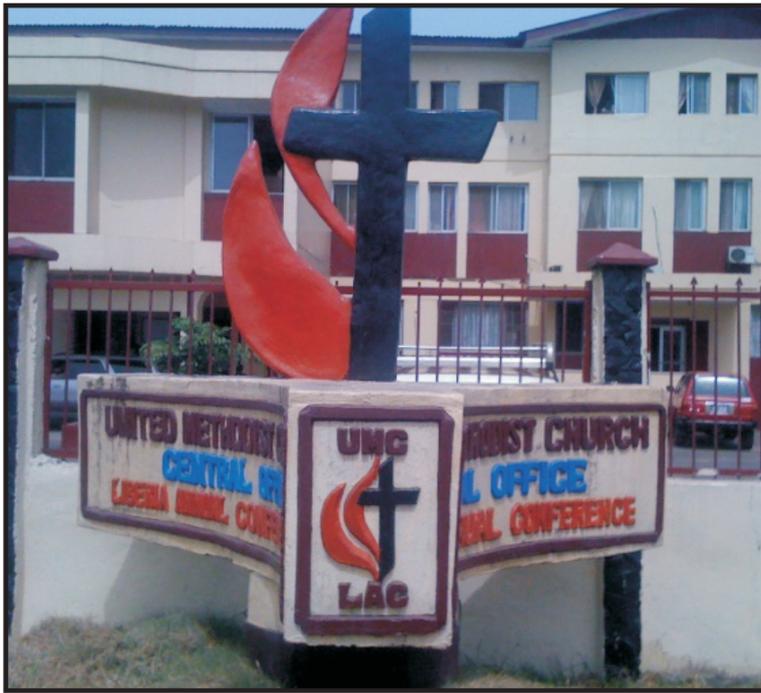
Methodist Church rejects same sex marriage

The leadership of the United Methodist Church (UMC) has rejected the so-called "One Church Plan" which would permit individual Churches to decide whether or not to permit same sex wedding.

According to a statement issued on 12 March, the UMC reached the decision recently at the general conference in St. Louis, Missouri

The statement notes that despite a concerted campaign by Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) activists and liberal clergies, delegates from around the world voted down the proposal to permit same sex wedding in Churches which would have also allowed local Churches to hire openly LGBT clergy. Instead, the UMC notes that delegates voted for the "Traditional Plan" which would maintain the current rules of the United Methodist Church.

The statement says the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church dispatched a strong delegation



to the St. Louis conference headed by its resident Bishop Dr. Samuel J. Quire to protect the Traditional Plan of the Church of God.

The UMC statement notes that the Traditional Plan upholds the values and teachings of the Holy Bible.

The statement furthers that the decision came as shock to many.

According to the UMC, the Council of Bishops had recommended that the general conference pass the One Plan in response to a growing number of vocal gay

clergy inside the Methodist Church as well as intense pressure from LGBT members.

"It should not be exceptional that a Church conference has rejected unbiblical sexual practices, but at a time when nearly all mainline liberal protestant Churches are abandoning the Bible for the rainbow flag, it actually does come as a

surprise," the UMC says.

The Church notes that interestingly, one of the key reasons that the traditionalists won at the United Methodist Conference has been ignored by nearly all of the news outlets reporting on vote.

It says the Africa Methodist Church stood up in defense of biblical principle.--*Press release*

Insurance industry underperforming

-Cllr. Gbalazeh says

The newly elected president of the Liberia Insurance Association Cllr. Saye Gbalazeh has disclosed here that the insurance industry in Liberia is underperforming.

Cllr. Gbalazeh made the remarks over the weekend after his election as president of the Liberia Insurance

Association states that the two weeks inspection on vehicles should be expanded or done regularly based on the strategy used by vehicle owners to avoid the inspection.

He also highlighted that there should be legislations enacted by the Legislature mandating all public and corporate buildings to be insured.

Cllr. Gbalazeh who is also

INCHR to dedicate Maher Memorial site

As Liberians observe National Decoration Day throughout the country on 13 March, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights of Liberia (INCHR) has disclosed its plan to dedicate the Maher Memorial constructed on the mass grave of victims in observance of the day.

According to a release signed by Mr. James D. Torh, Oversight Commissioner of the INCHR, the Maher Bridge Massacre occurred in Maher Town near Tubmanburg, Bomi County, during the Liberian civil conflict.

The release also notes that during the dedicatory ceremony, President George Manneh Weah is expected to perform the official ritual which includes the laying of the first wreath in honor of the victims.

The release furthered that top government officials, including Bomi County legislators, local traditional and religious leaders, survivors of the massacre, international dignitaries, partners of the INCHR, the media, civil society organizations and community residents are to grace the program.

It can be recalled that

government troops having taken over Tubmanburg, Bomi County in July 2003 during the last round of the Liberian civil conflict, allegedly massacred over 300 people including women, children and the elderly on the Maher River Bridge on the Monrovia-Tubmanburg Highway.

It was reported that some of the victims were buried in a mass grave where the memorial is now built.

The massacre occurred when rebels of the Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) withdrew from the city.

The press release says the construction of the Maher River Bridge victims Memorial grave is funded by the Government of Liberia (GOL) and is the second of many to be constructed across the country by the INCHR.

According to the INCHR, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report identifies 155 mass graves and recommends the memorialization of the victims through the construction of befitting monuments at these gravesites.

The release concludes that the INCHR has embarked on preparatory activities including networking and mobilizing communities in order to guarantee the success of the memorialization program throughout Liberia.--*Press release*



Association.

According to him, the level of development of the insurance sector of Liberia is one percent, attributing this low performance to the ignorance of the public to the insurance market.

Cllr. Gbalazeh further

the CEO of Ativa Insurance Company, has however referred to the insurance industry of Liberia as a virgin sector based on the many challenges of the industry. --*Press release*



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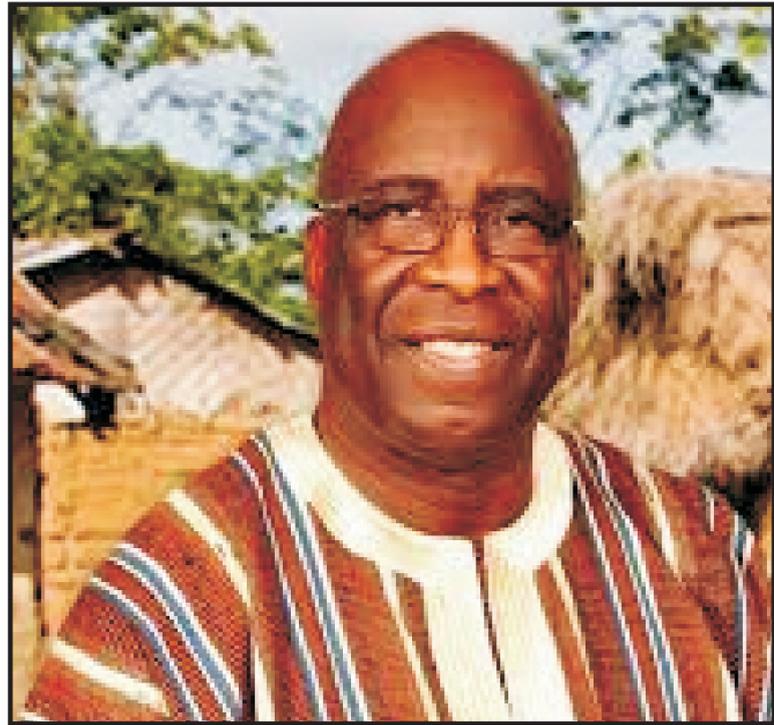
Dr. Tokpa donates medical supplies to 2 hospitals

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

Bong County Senator Dr. Henrique Flomo Tokpa has donated

Monrovia and Ganta, respectively.

The medical supplies include surgical materials, machine for stroke patients,



assorted medical supplies to the SDA Cooper and the Ganta United Methodist Hospitals in

and gloves, among others.

Turning over the donated medical equipment recently in

Gbarnga, Bong County, Mr. Cacious Kpoe, an Aide to Senator Tokpa says his Boss has observed that those hospitals lack the items being donated.

He maintains that it is fine to help fight some of the challenges that the hospitals face.

Mr. Kpoe says Dr. Tokpa is not a Senator to help Bong County only, but the entire Liberia.

According to him, Sen. Tokpa has observed that the challenge is across Liberia, and not in Bong County alone.

It can be recalled that Sen. Tokpa brought into the country US\$350,000 worth of medical supplies for onward distribution to hospitals and clinics in the County.

He reaffirms Dr. Tokpa's commitment to serving Liberians with objectivity.

Taking delivery of the items, David Wehyee, the Administrator of the Ganta United Methodist Hospital and the Chief Medical Doctor of the SDA Cooper hospital Dr. Walla B. Blojay extended commendations to the office of the Senator.

They describe the gesture as unprecedented.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Boy, 12, suffers kidney complications

Twelve years old Franklin Teah is said to have kidney problem and needs assistance to enable him seek

2011. According to her, little Franklin was diagnosed with this problem at the John F. Kennedy Memorial hospital in 2011 and she has since been



medication.

His Mom, Madam Serina Kpoo appeals to government and people of goodwill to help her son go to hospital. The lad lives with her in Buzzy Quarter Community, Central Monrovia.

Speaking to reporters in tears on Monday, 11 March at her resident Madam Kpoo disclosed her son contracted the sickness at age five in

running after the situation

Madam Kpoo appealed to all people of goodwill in the country to help in saving her son's life in any way possible, as the family is faced with serious financial challenges.

She said anyone wishing to assist with the situation may contact her thru cell numbers: 088622232813 / 0778480522.

Starts from back page

Key witness contradicts

ongoing impeachment trial.

Madam Constance blames the buyer of the property, Justice Ja'neh, rather than her son Nyema Constance, Jr., who sold it to the accused.

Her argument is that her son did not own the property, saying the documents to the property had her late husband's name on them. She says this means that the property is hers.

Following her testimony, Justice Ja'neh's lawyer Cllr. Arthur T. Johnson filed a motion before Chief Justice Korkpor for a judgment for acquittal in favor of his client.

Cllr. Johnson says the Impeachment Managers brought the woman and told her to cry to gain sentiments from the Liberian Senate.

He says the woman is not even in the know of why she appeared before the Senate, arguing that it was due to this reason that she kept begging that she should be given back her property.

But Chief Justice Korkpor denies the motion for judgment for acquittal.

He instead rules that Justice Ja'neh will take the

stand in his own defense on Monday, [18 March] at 10 AM in the Chambers of the Liberian Senate.

Earlier on Tuesday, Madam Constance noted her land was sold by her son Constance without her knowledge, arguing that she can't be alive and someone buys land from her son.

During the time of the transaction between her son and Justice Ja'neh, witness Constance says she was a refugee in different country, but she left her documents in Liberia.

Upon her return to Liberia, she adds that she didn't bother to check on her documents because her son was sick.

According to Madam Constance, the man who sold the land to Justice Ja'neh Mr. Constance, Jr. is her biological son.

She testifies that she and her late husband J. Nyema Constance, Sr. legitimized her son at the age of four in 1960.

Madam Constance testifies that in December 2018, armed police went to put her out of her house, allegedly on orders of Justice Ja'neh.

She explains that she has never been to court before, but she was always represented by her daughter-in-law.

The witness tells the hearing that whenever her daughter-in-law returned from court, there was no good news.

According to her, she decided to meet Justice Ja'neh at his office, but he allegedly acted like he didn't even see her.

Witness Constance narrates further that she decided to talk to her [district#8] Representative Acarus Gray to help her to get back her property.

The 94 years old witness broke in tears, appealing to the Liberian Senate and the people of Liberia to help her to get her property back.

She discloses that Representative Gray had expressed willingness to retribute Justice Ja'neh's money that was used to buy the land, but the accused allegedly refused.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Rotary Club, partners launch water and sanitation project in Bong

By: Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong County

The Rotary Club of Gbarnga in collaboration with its partners in the United State has launched a water and sanitation project in Gbarnga, Bong County.

According to the President of the Rotary Club of Gbarnga, Madam Anna Siakor Mbaku five communities around Gbarnga are expected to benefit from the project in the county.

Madam Mbaku named the Bong County Technical College, LPMC road, Lelekpayah community, People's street, the Immigration checkpoint as communities and areas that are expected to benefit from the humanitarian gestures.

The Rotary Club President

narrated that lack of safe drinking water is said to be posing serious health hazard to the lives of citizens in Bong County and other parts adjacent and as such the people of the county deserve the institution timely interventions.

Madam Mbaku further indicated, that after the erection of the five hand pumps in those selected communities in Gbarnga, citizens will greatly benefit from their initiatives adding that water is life.

She also stated that the Rotary Club is also involved with imparting the livelihoods of Liberian through community engagements amongst others.

Français

L'opposition accuse le chef de l'Etat de tentative de contourner la justice

Le président George Weah continue de recevoir davantage de coups de fouet après avoir ordonné un audit dans la manière dont 25 millions de dollars américains destinés à freiner la dépréciation du dollar Libérien ont été utilisés.

Quatre partis politiques de l'opposition réunis au sein d'une alliance politique accusent le chef de l'Etat George Manneh Weah de contourner la justice et de protéger son ministre des Finances et le Gouverneur de la banque centrale en demandant à la Commission générale des audits de mener un audit judiciaire sur la façon dont les 25 millions de dollars US ont été utilisés

« Nous pensons qu'il s'agit d'une tentative de contourner la justice et de protéger le ministre des Finances, Samuel Tweah, et le gouverneur de la Banque centrale, Nathaniel Patray, ainsi que d'autres membres de l'équipe de gestion technique et économique », a déclaré lundi l'opposition.

L'alliance des partis de l'opposition composée du Parti de l'Unité (ancien parti au pouvoir), du Parti de la

Liberté, de l'Alternative National Congress et du All Liberians Party, estiment que, si le gouvernement s'est appuyé sur les conclusions de l'équipe d'enquête présidentielle (PIT) et les rapports de Kroll pour arrêter d'autres responsables, ces mêmes rapports devraient alors servir de base pour procéder à l'arrestation du ministre Tweah et du gouverneur Patray.

Le ministre libérien des Finances, Samuel Tweah, a

présidé avec Nathaniel Patray, gouverneur exécutif de la Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL), l'équipe de gestion technique économique (TEMT) dont la mission était d'éponger l'excès de liquidité sur le marché des changes avec un montant de 25 millions de dollars américains mis à sa disposition par l'Etat du Libéria.

Mais depuis que cinq responsables de la banque centrale, dont Charles E.

Sirleaf, l'un des fils de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson, ont été arrêtés, inculpés et incarcérés à la prison centrale de Monrovia dans le cadre de l'enquête sur la disparition présumée de plusieurs milliards de dollars libériens,

le président Weah fait l'objet de pressions croissantes de la part de l'opposition qui réclame l'arrestation d'autres suspects, dont le ministre des finances et de la planification du développement et le gouverneur exécutif actuel de la banque centrale. Ces derniers, selon l'opposition, doivent rendre compte des 25 millions de dollars US dont le décaissement avait pour objet le freinage de la dépréciation rapide de la monnaie locale en raison de la circulation d'un excès de liquidité.

L'appel de l'opposition faisait suite au rapport d'enquête de l'équipe d'investigation présidentielle qui a fait état de ce que le ministère des finances et la banque centrale ont fait fi des meilleures pratiques conventionnelles, à savoir l'utilisation des institutions bancaires légitimes et des bureaux de change agréés.

La commission d'enquête indépendante reproche au ministère des finances et à la banque centrale le fait d'avoir injecté les fonds dans l'économie de façon directe en ne faisant appel qu'à des bureaux de change et des entreprises locales méconnues, sans associer les banques commerciales au

processus.

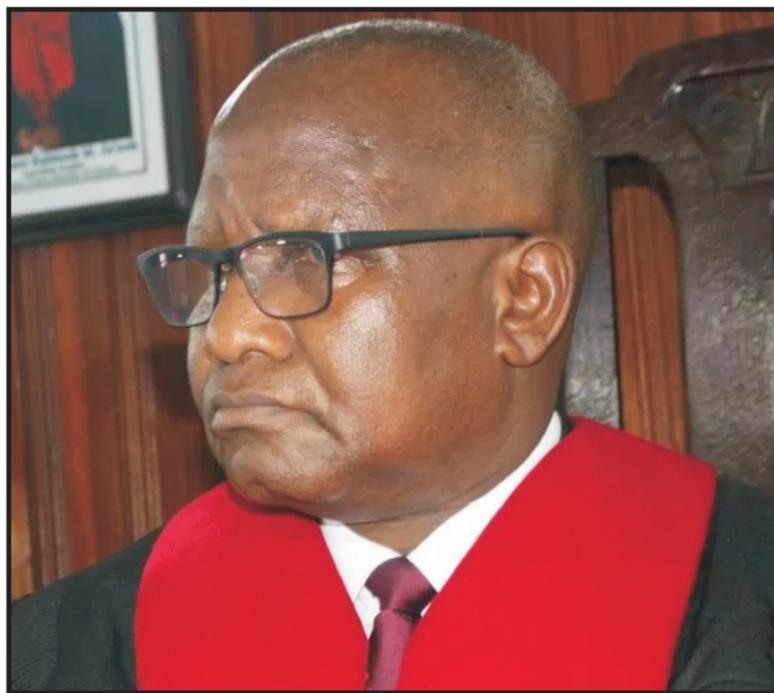
L'opposition se dit bouleversée par la décision du gouvernement d'arrêter certains Libériens sur la base de ces deux rapports et de faire un appel à un audit pour ce qui concerne Tweah et Patray, deux proches collaborateurs du président Weah.

« Nous ne sommes pas à l'aise avec cette décision et pensons qu'il s'agit d'une nouvelle tentative du président Weah de protéger ses confidents en dépit des crimes qu'ils auraient pu commettre de manière flagrante », indiquent les partis de l'opposition.

M. Benoni Urey, qui préside actuellement l'alliance des partis de l'opposition, a indiqué que généralement des rapports d'audit ne sont pas suivis de poursuites judiciaires, ils sont plutôt suivis d'une nouvelle enquête pénale qui est menée soit par la Commission anti-corruption du Libéria (LACC) ou par le ministère de la Justice (MOJ).

Pour lui, le gouvernement aurait dû utiliser le même rapport de la commission d'enquête présidentielle pour poursuivre en justice les responsables qui sont soupçonnés d'avoir détourné les 25 millions de dollars américains.

Ou alors si le gouvernement choisit de mener une enquête plus poussée, il faut qu'elle soit une continuation de l'enquête de la commission d'enquête présidentielle et y associer la GAC pour fournir un soutien technique.



Conakry : après Kaporo rails, les bulldozers entrent en action à Kipé 2

Après Kaporo Rails, Kipé 2 tombe. Ce mardi 12 mars 2019, les maisons s'écroulent les unes après les autres dans ce quartier de la commune de Ratoma, sous le regard impuissant de leurs occupants. Garages, gargotes, boutiques,

ont été rasés par les caterpillar du génie militaire.

Des lits, chaises, des fauteuils, des valises, des congélateurs, des habits attachés dans des pagnes sont posés çà et là. Pendant que le caterpillar démolit la maison,

des jeunes cherchent à arracher le portail de la cour, d'autres s'occupent à charger les affaires dans une camionnette.

Des curieux, des garagistes, ou même des propriétaires des maisons en démolition, observent la scène de destruction de leurs biens, des économies amassées des années durant s'écroulent en un rien de temps. Ils n'ont que leurs yeux pour pleurer.

« J'habite ici depuis plus de trente ans. C'est ma maison que j'ai construite après durs labeurs qu'on est en train de détruire comme ça sous mes yeux », dit un père de famille qui, heureusement, a où aller habiter, puisque détenant d'autres concessions dans d'autres endroits.

« Ils ne nous ont même pas permis de ramasser tout ce qu'on dans la maison », affirme-t-il, désespéré.

Les voisins ont eu plus de chance. Puisque pendant qu'on démolit nos maisons, ils ont pu ramasser leurs affaires dans la leur.



Articles traduits

Par Valéry G. Guhéna

E-mail: valeryghn10@yahoo.com

Tel: 076 589 44 0881483394

« On devrait donner au moins le temps aux gens de déguerpir d'une façon humaine, mais pas de cette manière. Parce que nous sommes des Guinéens. Nous ne sommes pas des étrangers ici », explique un autre qui s'affairait à enlever les portes et fenêtres de sa chambre, des fils électriques, etc.

Djenabou Diallo qui habite depuis 33 ans sa maison, confie avoir eu à mettre ses bagages,

mais pas où rester. Elle ne sait plus quoi faire.

Récemment, ces habitants de Kipé 2 avaient porté plainte au tribunal de Dixinn afin que la justice annule la décision de déguerpissement de la zone qu'ils jugent illégale. Malheureusement pour eux, ils ont perdu cette ultime bataille judiciaire et se sont vus condamner par la justice au paiement de 500 millions GNF à l'Etat.

Français

La réputation du juge Korkpor est-elle en jeu ?

Le procès en destitution du juge associé Kabineh M. Ja'neh en cours est un challenge, car la Cour suprême a refusé d'interpréter l'article 43 de la Constitution du Libéria concernant la procédure, c'est du moins ce que croit le président de l'Association du Barreau National du Libéria (LNBA), Me Tiawan Gongloe. Les propos de Me Gongloe font suite au discours prononcé devant le sénat libérien par le juge en chef Francis S. Korkpor, le lundi 11 mars, selon lequel « la Cour suprême traverse une période difficile » en raison du procès en destitution du juge Ja'neh, membre de la Cour Suprême. L'article 43 de la Constitution cité par Me Gongloe dit en partie "Le pouvoir législatif prescrira la procédure de destitution qui doit être conforme aux exigences de la régularité de la procédure." C'est cette disposition constitutionnelle qui a motivé l'argumentation des avocats représentant le juge Ja'neh et de quelques sénateurs qui avaient déposé un recours devant la plus haute cour de justice du pays pour réclamer d'elle une interprétation de la loi. Les deux parties ont fait valoir que le parlement n'avait prescrit aucune procédure en ce qui concerne la procédure d'impeachment. Le juge associé, Ja'neh, est accusé d'abus de pouvoir par le législateur. On lui reproche d'avoir fait usage de son influence en tant que juge associé pour obtenir gain de cause dans un conflit foncier qui l'opposait à une citoyenne ordinaire, une certaine Madame Annie Yancy Constance, devant la Cour suprême. Un des juges de la Cour suprême qui a signé la décision en faveur du juge Ja'neh dans l'affaire judiciaire, le juge en chef Korkpor, préside aujourd'hui le procès en destitution. Cependant, Me Gongloe croit que ce qui rend plus difficile la procédure de destitution du juge Ja'neh, c'est que la procédure en elle-même est un produit de défiance à l'égard de la cour suprême de la part de certains membres de la Chambre des représentants, d'autant plus qu'elle viole une ordonnance de suspension émise par un juge de la Cour suprême, sous l'auspice de laquelle le procès a lieu aujourd'hui. Il a ajouté que la procédure de destitution en cours est également un défi, car « l'ensemble des membres de la Cour suprême n'a pas estimé que le mépris de la décision du

juge président était un mépris de l'ensemble de la cour. Une minorité des juges avait donné une opinion dissidente, mais leurs collègues majoritaires, dont le juge en chef Korkpor, ont déterminé que, à la date du dépôt du bref d'interdiction, la Chambre des représentants n'avait rien fait qui soit en violation de la procédure régulière qui vise Ja'neh pour justifier l'octroi du bref d'interdiction. Mais à Me Gongloe d'affirmer que le refus d'un individu, d'un groupe... ou d'un pouvoir de l'Etat de respecter une ordonnance de la Cour suprême « porte atteinte à la légalité et menace la paix, la sécurité et le développement de ce pays ». Il croit que c'est là où il y a le véritable défi. « Nous devons toujours nous rappeler que cette Cour partage la responsabilité de la tuerie des plus de 250 000 personnes au Libéria pendant le conflit civil ». « Si cette cour avait bien joué son rôle, le Libéria ne serait pas tombé dans le conflit par le passé. Nous exhortons ceux qui siègent aujourd'hui à ne pas se laisser juger de la même façon à l'avenir », a déclaré Cllr. Gongloe. Selon Me Gongloe la destitution du juge Ja'neh repose sur des choses qui ne peuvent normalement être qualifiées d'infractions susceptibles de faire l'objet de destitution. En plus deux des charges ont des liens directs avec la Cour suprême. D'une part, le juge Ja'neh était une partie dans une affaire tranchée par la Cour suprême, et d'autre part, il s'acquittait d'une tâche judiciaire dans laquelle sa décision était susceptible de révision par l'ensemble de la magistrature. « Pourtant, le juge Ja'neh fait l'objet de procès pour des affaires pour lesquelles la cour et le juge sont protégés par la Constitution du Libéria », a-t-il regretté. En conclusion, Me Gongloe avertit que la procédure est difficile parce que l'histoire du Libéria indiquera que le juge en chef Korkpor, à qui certains membres de la Chambre des représentants ont manqué de respect, a choisi de présider une procédure de destitution fondée sur un mépris total de l'autorité de la Cour suprême. Auparavant, le juge en chef Korkpor avait déclaré qu'en tant que président du procès en destitution de Ja'neh, il considérait que son rôle était de veiller à ce que le procès se déroulât dans le respect de la légalité, conformément à la Constitution.

COMMENTAIRE

By Barry Eichengreen

Comment l'Europe peut faire du commerce avec l'Iran et éviter les sanctions des États-Unis

BERKELEY - Le retrait unilatéral du président américain Donald Trump de l'Accord nucléaire de l'Iran de 2015 - officiellement connu sous le nom de Plan d'action global commun - a mis l'Europe dans une impasse. Ses gouvernements restent attachés à un engagement économique avec l'Iran comme un moyen d'encourager le respect du Plan d'action global commun (PAGC), qui consiste à fournir non seulement une aide humanitaire, mais également d'autres produits. Les entreprises qui fournissent ces exportations risquent cependant de subir des sanctions de la part de l'administration Trump.

Pour la même raison, les banques européennes hésitent à fournir des euros pour financer le commerce avec l'Iran. Les banques américaines, quant à elles, n'ont pas le droit de fournir des dollars. Collectivement ces obstacles constituent une barrière formidable à l'engagement recherché.

En réponse, la France, l'Allemagne et le Royaume-Uni, les trois signataires européens de l'accord nucléaire, ont mis en place un mécanisme pour faire du commerce avec l'Iran, indépendant des États-Unis. Ce mécanisme, l'Instrument de soutien des échanges commerciaux, ou Instex, est enregistré en France et relève d'un conseil de surveillance de diplomates des trois pays.

Mais au cours du mois qui a suivi sa création, l'Instex n'a financé aucun échange. Cet organisme a un seul membre du personnel, l'ancien directeur de la Commerzbank Per Fischer. Il y a moins d'informations que de confusion sur la façon dont cet organisme fonctionne.

Heureusement, il existe un précédent à l'initiative : l'Union européenne des paiements (UEP) qui a fonctionné entre 1950 et 1958.

Dans le sillage de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, les monnaies européennes ne pouvaient pas être converties en dollars ni échangées entre elles, en raison des difficultés financières du continent. Par conséquent, elles ne pouvaient pas être utilisées pour financer ou régler les transactions internationales. Il n'existait pas de substituts. En particulier, les pays européens possédaient peu d'or et quelques dollars pour effectuer des paiements internationaux.

Pour le commerce, les pays européens devaient donc compter sur des accords bilatéraux. Ils devaient équilibrer leurs échanges pays par pays, ce qui réduisait essentiellement leurs opérations à du troc. Ce ne fut pas un moyen efficace de reconstruire le commerce et les paiements du continent, c'est le moins qu'on puisse dire.

En 1950, il était devenu évident que ces difficultés ralentissaient la reprise de l'économie européenne, ce qui a poussé 18 gouvernements européens à créer l'UEP. La nouvelle organisation a mis en commun les déficits et les excédents commerciaux de ses membres et en compensant les déficits d'un pays avec un groupe de partenaires par rapport aux excédents qu'elle affichait, ce qui a permis à l'Europe de régler ses échanges commerciaux

au niveau multilatéral sans devoir rendre ses monnaies convertibles.

L'analogie avec Instex est directe. L'Iran sera en mesure de compenser les déficits enregistrés vis-à-vis d'un ensemble de pays européens en utilisant les excédents enregistrés vis-à-vis d'autres pays. Ce pays sera en mesure de procéder de la sorte sans avoir recours à des crédits en dollars et sans avoir à effectuer des paiements via SWIFT, Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications, à travers laquelle les règlements transfrontaliers conventionnels sont effectués et qui a de même été menacée de sanctions américaines.

En outre, l'UEP a été dotée de 600 millions de dollars pour prêter aux membres ayant des déficits commerciaux temporaires avec le groupe dans son ensemble. Le Conseil d'administration de l'UEP s'est naturellement montré soucieux quant au remboursement de ces crédits. Quand l'Allemagne de l'Ouest a montré en 1950 des signes d'épuisement de ses crédits, la Commission a envoyé une petite équipe d'experts pour diagnostiquer le problème. Elle a recommandé une augmentation du taux d'intérêt de la banque centrale allemande, des réserves obligatoires des banques commerciales plus élevées et un plafond sur le crédit. Avec l'adoption de ces mesures monétaires restrictives, le commerce allemand a retrouvé son équilibre. L'UEP a pu continuer le combat.

Encore une fois, les implications pour Instex sont claires. Il n'y a aucune raison de s'attendre à ce que le commerce entre l'Iran et l'Europe soit équilibré à chaque minute. Il y aura des crédits pour compenser les entreprises qui exportent vers l'Iran dans les périodes où le pays achète plus à l'Europe qu'il ne vend. Il faudra une surveillance politique et un ajustage pour assurer le remboursement rapide de ces crédits.

Avant 1950, le gouvernement américain s'est fortement opposé à la création de l'UEP, tout comme il s'oppose à présent fermement à Instex. Le souci était alors celui de la discrimination : les pays européens, craignait-on, trouveraient plus facile d'importer les uns des autres, mais, en manque de dollars, refuseraient encore d'importer de l'Amérique. En outre, les responsables américains craignent que l'UEP ne fasse double emploi et ne sape les fonctions du nouveau Fonds Monétaire International.

À ce stade, cependant, les deux récits divergent. Avec l'avènement de la Guerre froide, l'administration du Président Harry S. Truman et le Congrès des États-Unis ont reconnu l'urgence de la reconstruction européenne. À cette fin, ils ont autorisé l'utilisation par l'UEP de 350 millions de dollars de fonds du Plan Marshall.

Cette fois-ci, les États-Unis ne sont pas sur le point d'aider l'Europe dans son projet de règlement commercial, nouvelle Guerre froide ou non. Mais contrairement à 1950, les gouvernements européens sont aujourd'hui capables de faire fonctionner ce type de mécanisme de leur propre chef. Ils ont l'argent pour le faire. Ils peuvent gérer la compensation. L'histoire nous instruit sur la façon de le faire.

FEATURE ARTICLE

The challenges Russian business face in Africa

By Kester Kenn Klomegah

Undoubtedly, a number of Russian companies have largely underperformed in Africa, experts described was primarily due to multiple reasons. Most often, Russian investors strike important investment niches that still require long-term strategies and adequate country study. Grappling with reality, there are many investment challenges including official bureaucracy in Africa.

In order to ensure business safety and consequently realize the target goals, it is necessary to attain some level of understanding the priorities of the country, investment legislations, comply with terms of agreement and a careful study of policy changes, particularly when there is a sudden change in government.

The Russian Foreign Ministry published on its official website the text speech of Deputy Foreign Minister, Mikhail Bogdanov, in which he highlighted the challenges and problems facing the development of effective Russia-African economic ties. It was at a special business session of the Urals-Africa economic forum in Yekaterinburg.

Admittedly, Bogdanov pointed to the practical span and nature of Russian companies' business operations in Africa. And of course, he underscored the fact that one key obstacle has been insufficient knowledge of the economic potential on the part of Russian entrepreneurs, needs and opportunities of the African region.

"Poor knowledge of the African market structure, the investment climate and the characteristics of African customers by the Russian business community remains an undeniable fact. Africans, in their turn, are insufficiently informed on the capabilities of potential Russian partners," Bogdanov said.

Over the past few years, many corporate Russian companies have shown interests in investing in the region but feared, in practical terms, to move into action. Russians observe lots of business theories. Those corporate Russian companies that managed, at least, to make inroads there, a few have already exited citing "technical" reasons. An investment review and a business survey recently by AfBusiness Dialogue & Consultancy show there is more beyond "the technical and operational" reasons.

In Dec 2018, Russia's Nornickel terminated its deal with Botswana's BCL Group. According to Itar-Tass News Agency, quoting the media release, Russia's Norilsk Nickel has terminated its agreement to sell African assets to Botswana's BCL Group, including a 50% stake in the Nkomati joint venture.

It said that the Russian company would continue to seek damages from the BCL Group for the losses it suffered due to BCL's failure to meet the terms of the agreement. The termination of the agreement would also enable Norilsk Nickel to pursue its own strategy for the African assets, Michael Marriott, Norilsk Nickel Africa's Chief Executive, said as quoted by the press service.

"We will continue to pursue our claims against the BCL Group and the Botswana Government to recover the significant loss we have suffered as a result of their unlawful breaches," Michael Marriott stressed.

In East Africa, Russia's RT-Global Resources and Rosneft quitted Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's oil refinery project and many major infrastructure deals. Russia had pledged US\$4 billion but later disagreements over terms and frustration over infighting, intrigue and lobbying forced them to pull out of the country. The Ugandan government team noted



that the Russian consortium exhibited inadequate assurance and availability of preferred alternative foreign contractors with comparatively high bidding terms.

Museveni, at first, favored the Russians because, apart from considering access to weapons, the Ugandan leadership was also counting on Russia's world superiority as a counterweight to both western powers; mainly America, and China. With Russians and the South Koreans out of the negotiations, Uganda appeared somewhat desperate, that was back in 2014.

Similar five years ago, Rosneft also abandoned its interest in the southern Africa oil pipeline construction, soon after its delegation in Angola had discussed the possible participation of the Kremlin-controlled company in exploration and development projects there. That project never appeared despite that fact that Russia has excellent relations with Angola, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. From both business and political perspectives, the region is considered as unipolar and a regional power all together with South Africa.

In addition, Lukoil, one of the Russia's biggest oil companies, like many Russian companies, has had a long history, going forth and back with declaration of business intentions or mere interests in tapping into oil and gas resources in Africa.

Besides technical and geographical hitches, Lukoil noted explicitly in an official report that "the African leadership and government policies always pose serious problems to operations in the region." It said that the company has been ready to observe strictly all of its obligations as a foreign investor in Africa.

In August 2015, Lukoil pulled out of the oil and gas exploration and drilling project that it began in Sierra Leone. According to Interfax, a local Russian News Agency, the company did not currently have any projects and has backed away due to poor exploration results in Sierra Leone.

It, however, was reported that drilling in West Africa, including in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, did not bring Lukoil the expected results, as preliminary technical results did not demonstrated commercial hydrocarbon reserves. According to official reports, Vice-President Leonid Fedun did not rule out that Lukoil could withdraw from almost all of the projects in West Africa.

Over the years, Russian trade experts and business consultants have been discussing ways to improve overall economic cooperation with Africa. For instance, Andrey Efimenko, an Expert at the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) said in an exclusive interview with me that the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Trade has closely monitored the activities and performance of Russian companies in Africa.

"Unfortunately," Efimenko regrettably pointed out, "some large Russian companies operating in Africa, has managed to establish itself negatively in a number of countries there. This is primarily due to ignorance of cultural peculiarities of the region, lack of social responsibility, failure to completely fulfill contractual obligations. These cases damage the image of Russia and Russian companies with further entering the African market."

All of these developments, more or less, have degraded Russia's image of Doing Business in Africa. On Dec 19, 2018, the Valdai Discussion Club hosted an expert discussion on Africa. Oleg Barabanov, Program Director of the Valdai Discussion Club, highlighted the investment prospects and their influence there by foreign players, and further analyzed the existing perspectives and challenges for potential Russian investors.

In her contribution, Nataliya Zaiser, Chairperson of the Board of the African Business Initiative (ABI) - a Moscow based business NGO, stressed that economic cooperation with African countries is not only a Russian initiative, but also a response to request from partners. Despite this mutual interest and potentially fruitful projects, Nataliya Zaiser said that there were still few really successful cases on the continent.

Andrei Maslov, Coordinator of the work/project on the Russia Africa Shared Vision 2030 report, Integration Expertise Analytical Center, said that in comparison with the situation a decade ago, today Africa is not only the main initiator of dialogue with Russia, but also it is much more ready for it. If earlier the economic landscape of the continent was determined by Western companies with their colonial approaches, now Africa is ready to become an equal partner, according to the Valdai report.

However, there are problems: Maslov echoed Nataliya Zaiser by saying that about 90% of the projects end in failure. In order to overcome this discord, the coordinating role of the state is needed, which, together with the private business, should prepare a roadmap and set targets for the development of various industries. The driver of economic cooperation, according to Maslov, can be private, rather than top-down initiatives.

"For us, Africa is not a terra incognita: the USSR actively worked there, having diplomatic relations with 35 countries. In general, there are no turns, reversals or zigzags in our policy. There is a consistent development of relations with African countries," according to Oleg Ozerov, Deputy Director of the Africa Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Here is an expert note of caution: Signing agreements is not absolutely the best ultimate guarantee to the success of investment, however it provides legal basis. As the situation develops and interest continues to rise, Russian investors have to make part of the financial budget also for private consultancy services, as many foreign players do, and prepare to learn more about investing in Africa.

Boakai urges more pressure on Weah

By Lewis S. The

Former Vice President Joseph N. Boakai urges Liberians not to rest until final outcome of the ongoing investigation into the 16 billion Liberian banknotes is made public for the future of the country.

“We believe this is fun for the country, and the people but the President had already registered his support for investigation, and I think the Liberian should not rest until they get to the final outcome of this missing money”, says Ambassador Boakai.

He made the call over the weekend at the God’s Glory Pentecostal Church in Paynesville outside Monrovia, while serving as chief launcher for the formal launch of the Borbor Taylor Education Foundation for underprivileged kids in Montserrado County. Currently leader of the former ruling Unity Party, Mr. Boakai is also member of the four collaborating opposition political parties that recently called for the arrest of the Executive Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia Nathaniel R. Patray and the Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel



D. Tweah to account for the US\$25 million reportedly infused in the economy to mop-up excess liquidity of Liberian dollars. The four collaborating opposition parties include the Unity Party, Liberty Party, Alternative National Congress and the All Liberian Party. Tye issued a joint statement recently, calling President Weah to arrest and prosecute the two officials for their respective

roles in the US\$ 25 million saga. Theodore Momo, Jr, National Chairman of the ALP, who read the statement, said if their call did not heed any tangible result, where some of those directly culpable are left off the hook, “We will organize a series of mass actions across Liberia to express our dissatisfaction, and to let President George Weah, and his administration know how Liberians are growing

impatient by the day.”

“We want the artificial hardships imposed by this administration’s bad governance to end. The waves of looting by senior members of this administration, while ordinary citizens are struggling to survive must stop. We have analyzed and concluded that both the past and the current governments are culpable in the brazen and shameless looting of public funds,” the statement noted.

President George Weah has subsequently called on the General Auditing Commission (GAC) to audit the two officials who head the Technical Economic Management Team or TEMT that spearheaded the mopping up exercise and report in two weeks.

However, speaking to reporters following the launch of the foundation, Mr. Boakai said the President does not think citizens should sit back and watch, saying “I think the Liberian people must not sit; they should not rest until the final conclusion is made public despite the investigation reports. The ex-vice president said he strongly believes the

country needs such undertaking like the education foundation, because the need for educated people to push development is very important. “When people travel abroad and return with vision, we lend them support in making their dreams become a reality.”

He said the idea of giving scholarship to underprivileged children does not help by making the education better, but is an opportunity giving to other people to learn, saying, “We all are aware that our education system was called a mess, but calling it a mess does not in any way help; it is what we can do as a government and people will change the situation.”

Cautioning recipients of the scholarship, he stressed that scholarships are mainly intended for scholars, and not for people who are appealing for financial aid, adding “whenever a scholarship is given, beneficiary needs to study to show some level of appreciation to those who provide the scholarship, and in the future, it is required of those beneficiaries to look back at other people that will be in need.”

Speaking also Dr. Taylor noted his decision to launch the foundation was in recognition of his late father, who didn’t have the opportunity to sit in class to acquire an education, but was passionate about his children getting education to sustain themselves.

According to him, he wants to make sure that his children, and every other child gets an education, and as a result of this vision, he get himself into providing educational materials to kids that are less fortunate, so it is against this backdrop the foundation is launched to continue what he started. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

Lawmaker wants more clarity on US\$25m

By Bridgett Milton

Montserrado County District #10 Rep. Yekeh Kolubah is requesting the House of Representatives through written communication to invite Finance Minister Samuel Tweah and Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Executive Governor Nathaniel Patray to state the source of authority for the withdrawal of US\$25 million from Liberia’s reserves.

In the communication dated 7 March, Rep. Kolubah requests the House to invite the two officials before plenary to say why they proceeded in ways that allegedly undermine the principles of checks and

balances provided for under Liberia’s Constitution.

According to Rep. Kolubah, his communication is intended to draw his colleagues’ attention to the ongoing debates surrounding the US\$25 million that was withdrawn from the country’s reserves to mop - up excess legacy notes from the money market to curtail the rising money exchange rate.

Finance Minister Tweah chaired a Technical Economic Management Team (TEMT) that spearheaded the controversial US\$25m mop - up exercise, with the CBL Executive Governor Patray as co-chair.

Afterwards the Presidential

Investigative Team (PIT) finds that the TEMT and CBL carried out direct mop - up process by engaging some foreign exchange bureaus and some local businesses other than the commercial banks. According to the PIT, the TEMT and CBL sold a total of US\$14m in exchange for a total of L\$2,151,363,898.00 between the periods July 17, 2018 to September 18, 2018.

Since the arrests, indictments and detentions of five CBL officials for their alleged roles in Liberia’s 16 billion scandal, President George Manneh Weah has been facing public pressure to ensure that other suspects, including Minister Tweah and Executive Governor Patray are questioned how the US\$25m was used in the mop-up exercise, which was conducted outside the banking system. The calls for their investigation result from report by the PIT which determines that the TEMT and CBL deviated from the conventional best practice in the mop - up exercise.

But President Weah’s mandate for the General Auditing Commission (GAC) to audit the US\$25m is further being rejected by four opposition parties, claiming that it is intended to circumvent and shield from prosecution, his confidants Tweah and Patray.

Meanwhile Rep. Kolubah says while the debates have generally focused on accountability for the amount, he would like to draw his

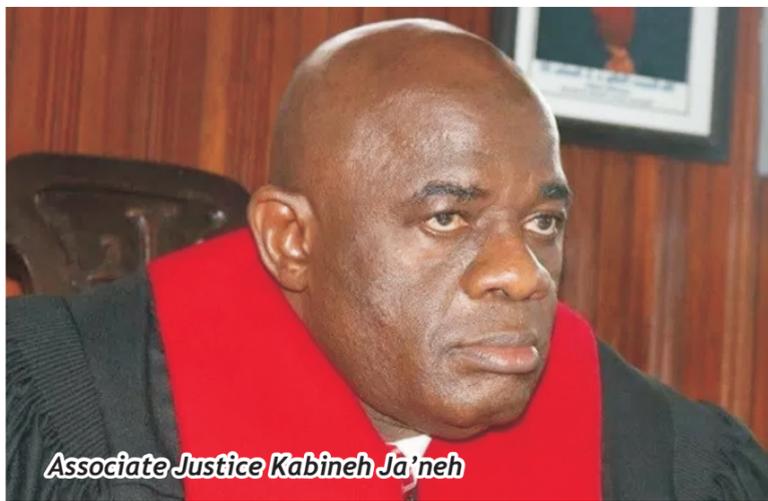
#It’s shame that only in Liberia foreigners are siphoning billions thru sand and rock mining.#

colleagues’ attention to what he sees as a missing link that borders on the source of authority for the borrow or withdrawal of the US\$25 million from the reserves. He argues that Article 34(d) of the Constitution gives authority to the Legislature to levy taxes, duties, imports, excise and

other revenues, borrow money, issue currency, mint coins and to make appropriations for the fiscal governance of the Republic. Meanwhile Rep. Kolubah’s communication was not put on the agenda for Tuesday, March 12 to be discussed. --*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



Key witness contradicts lawmakers



Associate Justice Kabineh Ja'neh

By Ethel A. Tweh

9 4-year-old Annie Constance, whose land case is one of the counts for the impeachment of Associate Justice Kabineh M. Ja'neh, sharply contradicts claims by lawmakers that they visited her home to make inquiry into the property case prior to initiating the impeachment trial against Justice Ja'neh.

Madam Constance explains before the impeachment hearing at the Liberian Senate

that nobody went to her [to make inquiry].

"Nobody from the House of Representatives or the Liberian Senate went to visit me; only my Representative Acarous Gray. I tell my representative thanks for bringing my case here," she says in tears.

Her testimony Tuesday, 12 March clearly contradicts the Impeachment Manager from the House of Representatives' second witness, Cllr. Kanie Wesso, who chaired the

House's committee that investigated the allegations levied against Justice Ja'neh.

Cllr. Wesso testified on Friday, 8 March that the committee reached Madam Annie Constance to get her side of the story.

According to him, after the House Committee's work, the Senate should have given Justice Ja'neh due process by summoning him for questioning.

Associate Justice Ja'neh has been accused by lawmakers of abuse of power, using his influence as Associate Justice to secure ruling in his favor in a property case involving a private citizen, Madam Annie Yancy Constance at the Supreme Court to take possession of her land.

One of the Justices on the Supreme Court Bench that signed the ruling which favored Justice Ja'neh in the land case, Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor, Sr. is the presiding officer in the



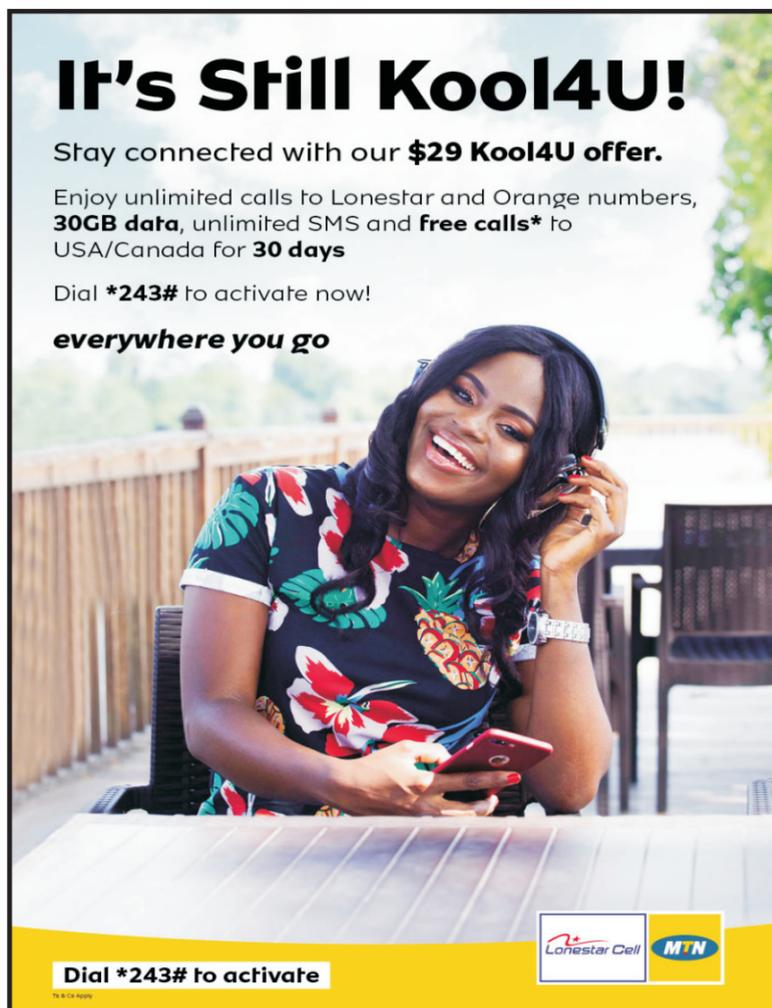
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Zidane refuses to rule out Ronaldo return

Zinedine Zidane has refused to completely rule out a return to Real Madrid for Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Spanish giants reappointed Zidane as head coach on Monday until June 2022 after bringing Santiago Solari's time at the helm to an

end.

Frenchman Zidane stepped down at the end of last season after guiding Real to three consecutive Champions League titles and was replaced by Julen Lopetegui.

Along with Zidane's departure, the sale of former Manchester United forward Ronaldo to Juventus for

£88million was seen to be a key reason for Real's disappointing campaign.

Reports suggest president Florentino Perez will provide Zidane full control over transfers this summer with the new boss cheekily asked whether he might consider bringing Ronaldo back to the Bernabeu.



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