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TRULY INDEPENDENT  
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# The New Dawn

French Version Inside

TRULY INDEPENDENT

**Public Service Announcement**

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND ALL OUR CLIENTS & READERS THAT THE BUSINESS AND NEWSPAPER OFFICES OF THE NEW DAWN NEWSPAPER HAVE BEEN RELOCATED ON UN DRIVE OPPOSITE THE NATIONAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION (NIC), BEHIND PUBLIC WORKS MINISTRY.

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**P11**

## No salary for Christmas

**-Pro-Temp Albert Chie**

## Pandemonium at police headquarters

**-After teargas exposure**

**P11**



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# Continental News

## Amnesty outraged at Tanzania rights court decision

The human rights organisation Amnesty International has said a decision by Tanzania to withdraw from part of the treaty that established the remit of the African Court on Human and People's Rights which allows its citizens and NGOs to sue the government at the court.

Amnesty said the withdrawal denies individuals and organisations access to justice.

This "is clearly a cynical attempt to evade accountability", Japhet Biegon, Amnesty International's Africa Advocacy Coordinator said.

Tanzania, which hosts the court in the northern city of Arusha, will become the second country after Rwanda to withdraw from this clause.

The move is likely to raise concerns over the country

whose human rights record has been under scrutiny in the last few years.

In a letter to the African Union, whose member states established the court,

Tanzania explained that it was taking the action because the court had failed to uphold reservations that the country made about allowing individuals and

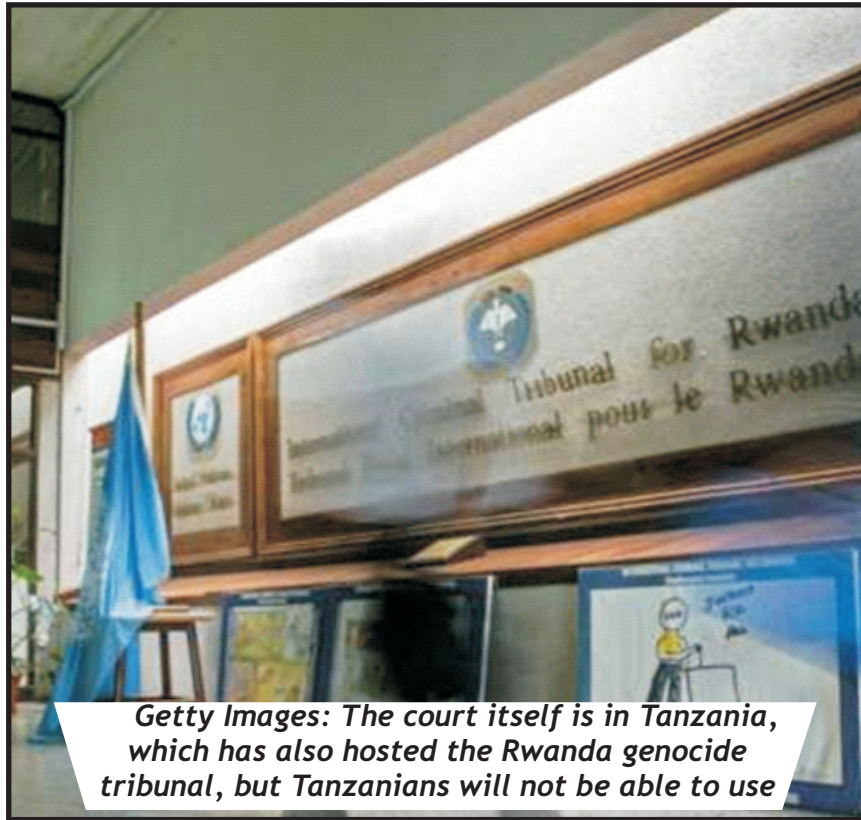
NGOs to sue it.

Almost 40% of the cases to have been filed at the court are against Tanzania, despite 51 other African countries being signatory.

In 2010, Tanzania said that individuals and NGOs should only refer to it once all domestic legal remedies have

been exhausted.

Amnesty International believes Tanzania's move is the latest sign of growing hostility towards human rights and rights defenders. The organisation has challenged the country to reconsider its decision. -BBC



Getty Images: The court itself is in Tanzania, which has also hosted the Rwanda genocide tribunal, but Tanzanians will not be able to use

## Mugabe left behind '\$10m in cash'

Zimbabwe's late President Robert Mugabe left behind \$10m (£7.7m) in the bank and several properties in the capital, Harare, the state-owned Herald newspaper has reported.

Mugabe, who died in September at the age of 95,

father's estate as including \$10m in a local bank, four houses in Harare in addition to his rural home, an orchard and a farm, the Herald reported.

He also owned 10 cars, the newspaper reported.

Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe since independence in 1980 as



Photo Copyrights Reuters: Robert Mugabe married Grace, 41 years his junior, in 1996

had failed to leave a will, prompting legal authorities to call a meeting this week to appoint an executor, it added.

The ex-president's daughter, Bona Chikowore, wrote to the Master of High Court in October, listing her

prime minister and president, before being forced out of power in 2017.

He is survived by his second wife, Grace Mugabe, and four children. Under Zimbabwean law, they will inherit his wealth. -BBC

## Kenya importers 'forced to use costly rail line'

Kenyan importers have told Reuters news agency they have been forced by the Kenya Port Authority (KPA) to use a new rail line between the coastal city of Mombasa and the capital Nairobi.

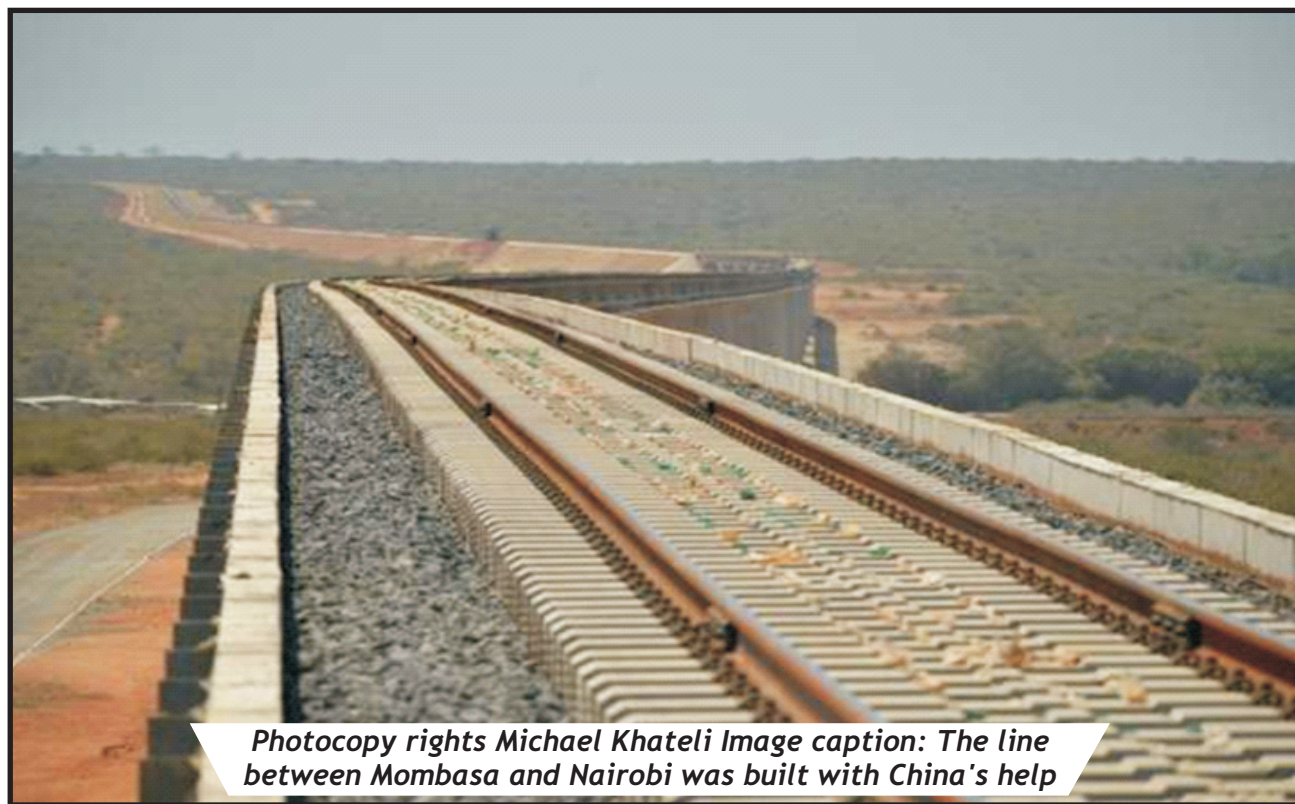
The port confirmed the policy in August, but rescinded the order in October after protests, Reuters reports.

Businesses told the news agency that little has changed and they are still required to use the more expensive railway.

They say their costs have shot up nearly 50% thanks to extra fees, the longer time it takes to clear goods at the congested Nairobi train depot and because they have to send lorries to collect the goods from there.

Importers must pay at least 25,000 Kenyan shillings (\$243; £188) for a truck to collect the goods from the Nairobi depot and 15,000 shillings in depot fees, three businessmen, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

The higher charges are necessary to meet loan repayments, Daniel Manduku, head of the state-run KPA and a board member



Photocopy rights Michael Khateli Image caption: The line between Mombasa and Nairobi was built with China's help



of Kenya Railways, said, the news agency reports.

The contract between China's Exim Bank, KPA and Kenya Railways requires KPA to provide one million tonnes of cargo to the railway per year, according to Reuters.

Kenya owes Exim Bank 660 billion shillings for the railway

# EDITORIAL

## The consequences of Liberia losing the IMO seat

**LIBERIA WILL NOT** sit on the 40-member Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the next two years after the country was defeated and relegated to floor membership in London.

**THE CHAIRMAN OF** the Liberia Maritime Authority, Dr. James F. Kollie, confirms the lost in a recent post conceding, “We fought a great fight today at the IMO but we lost. Liberia will not be on Council this biennial (2020 to 2021). However, we will put the pieces together and return for another fight. Hats off to the London team and all those who supported us.”

**ACCORDING TO REPORT**, the Council election was held on Friday, November 29, 2019, with Liberia coming 24th out of 24 member states that contested for the Council's Category C, receiving 100 votes. The defeat means Liberia will not have a voice on the Council in the next two years, and would have to rely on other nations to speak on its behalf despite being the world's second largest shipping registry.

**BUT ALL THIS** did not come as a surprise. Liberia's Permanent Mission to the IMO, Attorney Isaac Jackson and the Weah administration have been at loggerheads after President George Manneh Weah nominated a confidant, Moses Owen Brown to the post thought it is a tenured position.

**ATTORNEY JACKSON RAN** to the Supreme Court and won, but since then, the government has withheld support, including salaries. We're hearing that Jackson has not been paid for the last 10 months, including rental, and the authorities in Monrovia have reneged in renewing his official passport.

**A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST** itself cannot stand. Liberia went to the IMO election divided. How can the country's Permanent Mission that supposed to lobby other nations for support, be on his own? The Weah administration appears to have abandoned the Mission at the IMO, purely for political reasons. This is sad!

**AS LIBERIANS, WE** should not always place our personal interest above the national interest. How can we have the second largest ship registry in the world and yet kicked out of the Council that exercises high influence on global maritime issues?

**OUR PRESENCE AND** participation on international bodies should not be beclouded by selfish motives that rub us of the general good. No matter who is appointed a Permanent Mission abroad by which administration, government is continuity especially, when it involves a tenured position. Doing so would demonstrate respect for the Constitution and statutes.

**IT IS OUR** hope that with this defeat, Liberians should come together in rallying support for future international engagement and the government should take the lead by lending support to the person sent out there to represent the country irrespective of ethnic, political, and social diversity.

**WE BELIEVE STRONGLY** with a collaborative effort, Liberia would come out of this defeat strong and be far more prepared for the next IMO Council election in 2021 to regain our seat on this vital international platform.

**The New Dawn**  
TRULY INDEPENDENT

# COMMENTARY

By Patrick Gaspard

## Why African Cultural Restitution Matters

*The repatriation of an item with deep historical, spiritual, and cultural significance might seem like a mere gesture of colonial redress. But this ceremony was different, and it was about much more than a single physical object. In fact, it was a watershed moment in the West's recognition of the cultural damage inflicted by colonialism.*

**N**EW YORK - French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe recently presented an antique saber to Senegalese President MackySall at the presidential palace in Dakar. But it was not a gift. The saber was coming home, more than a century after it had been stolen.

The repatriation of an item with deep historical, spiritual, and cultural significance might seem like a mere gesture of colonial redress. But this ceremony was different, and it was about much more than a single physical object. In fact, it was a watershed moment in the West's recognition of the cultural damage inflicted by colonialism.

The saber in question belonged to El Hajj Omar Tall, founder of the Toucouleur Empire, which once extended from present-day Senegal into Mali and Guinea. Tall was a respected religious leader and anti-colonial resistance fighter. His weapon, along with tens of thousands of other pieces of looted African heritage, had been in French hands since the 1890s. Exhibited in French museums, the saber ceased to symbolize the military prowess of a once-powerful dynasty, and instead told the tale of an African empire's decimation, thereby legitimizing the racism and prejudice that underpinned the colonial period.

Tall's family had been campaigning for the saber's return since 1944, and they finally won their fight last month. Descendants traveled to Dakar from towns in Guinea, Mali, and Senegal to witness its homecoming. The saber will remain in Senegal for five years while the French parliament determines whether it - and other objects - will be permanently restituted.

This moment would have been unimaginable just a few years ago. European governments, ministries of culture, museums, and universities have long refused to recognize the immorality of the circumstances in which Africa's cultural patrimony was removed from the continent. The handover of the saber was thus highly symbolic, auguring a shift in power dynamics and a renewed respect for Africa's vibrant history. It also attests to the persistence of Africans - young and old, both on the continent and in the diaspora - in mobilizing to demand that leaders of former colonial powers right historical wrongs.

Colonialism rested on the disavowal of African art, music, and architecture. Brutal leaders such as Ian Smith, the prime minister of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the 1960s and 1970s, legitimized horrific abuse and injustices by undermining the culture of African people, thereby erasing their humanity.

For decades, the Open Society Foundations have supported those at the front lines of societal transformation. We recognize the power of art and culture to call into question structural inequalities, challenge prejudice, and foster the imagination of a new generation of leaders. Our cultural heritage forms the bedrock of the stories that we share to make sense of our place in history - and in the world. And at its core, the creation of cultural artifacts is fundamentally a manifestation of human hope.

Recognizing this, the Open Society Foundations are launching a new \$15 million initiative to strengthen efforts to ensure the restitution and

re-appropriation of artifacts looted from the African continent. Over the next four years, we will be supporting citizens, artists, educators, indigenous communities, civil-society organizations, museums, universities, and other institutions working to return Africa's heritage to its rightful home, and to nurture in future generations of Africans a sense of ownership of their history, culture, and identity.

Africa's young people, in particular, have been demanding control over their own destinies, recently ushering in sweeping change in Ethiopia and Sudan. They recognize the importance of their cultural heritage, and have been campaigning for the return of African artifacts. Having realized that young people are a critical force on a continent where the population is expected to grow by more than one billion, to 2.5 billion, by 2050, many former colonial powers have begun to listen.

In a 2017 speech delivered to a full auditorium at a university in Burkina Faso, French President Emmanuel Macron pledged to make the return of African artifacts a priority. "African cultural heritage," he argued, "can no longer be held captive in European museums." And since then, the groundbreaking Sarr-Savoy Report, commissioned by the French government, has launched a global conversation about the return of items looted from Africa. The report's authors, French art historian Bénédicte Savoy and Senegalese writer Felwine Sarr, recommended the immediate, unconditional return of any cultural objects gained through theft, plunder, pillage, despoiling, or unequal exchange during colonial times.

Since the report was released in November 2018, the global movement for art restitution has strengthened considerably. Official claims have been filed for the restitution of historical artifacts and human remains to Ethiopia, Senegal, Benin, and Nigeria. But a lot of work needs to be done to turn hopes of cultural restitution into reality.

The number of artifacts missing from Africa is staggering. The Royal Museum for Central Africa in Belgium currently holds 180,000 pieces of Sub-Saharan African heritage. The British Museum in London and the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris each hold about 70,000 African historical artifacts. This is in stark contrast to the size of the holdings of museums in Africa. Alain Godonou, a historian and curator from Benin, estimates that the inventories of most national museums in Africa do not surpass 3,000 objects. The Open Society Foundations, working with our African partners and others around the world, are working to change that.

Restitution is about more than confronting the violent legacy of colonialism - a legacy that continues to affect power dynamics in Africa and around the world. It is about supporting the work that young Africans are doing to transform the dated, racist narratives about their diverse cultural heritage and rich history. It is about giving current generations the means to shape a better future for themselves. It is, at its core, about restituting agency to a continent defining its path forward.

Patrick Gaspard, former United States Ambassador to South Africa, is President of the Open Society Foundations.

## O-PED

By Greta Thunberg, Luisa Neubauer, and Angela Valenzuela

# Why We Strike Again

**M**ADRID - For more than a year, children and young people from around the world have been striking for the climate. We launched a movement that defied all expectations, with millions of people lending their voices - and their bodies - to the cause. We did this not because it was our dream, but because we didn't see anyone else taking action to secure our future. And despite the vocal support we have received from many adults - including some of the world's most powerful leaders - we still don't.

Striking is not a choice we relish; we do it because we see no other options. We have watched a string of United Nations climate conferences unfold. Countless negotiations have produced much-hyped but ultimately empty commitments from the world's governments - the same governments that allow fossil-fuel companies to drill for ever-more oil and gas, and burn away our futures for their profit.

Politicians and fossil-fuel companies have known about climate change for decades. And yet the politicians let the profiteers continue to exploit our planet's resources and destroy its ecosystems in a quest for quick cash that threatens our very existence.

Don't take our word for it: scientists are sounding the alarm. They warn that we have never been less likely to limit the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels - the threshold beyond which the most destructive effects of climate change would be triggered.

Worse, recent research shows that we are on track to produce 120% more fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with the 1.5°C limit. The concentration of climate-heating greenhouse gases in our atmosphere has reached a record high, with no sign of a slowdown. Even if countries fulfill their current emissions-reduction pledges, we are headed for a 3.2°C increase.

Young people like us bear the brunt of our leaders' failures. Research shows that pollution from burning fossil fuels is the world's most significant threat to children's health. Just this month, five million masks were handed out at schools in New Delhi, India's capital, owing to toxic smog. Fossil fuels are literally choking the life from us.

The science is crying out for urgent action, and still our leaders dare to ignore it. So we continue to fight.

After a year of strikes, our voices are being heard. We are being invited to speak in the corridors of power. At the UN, we addressed a room filled with world leaders. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, we met with prime ministers, presidents, and even the pope. We have spent hundreds of hours participating in panels and speaking with journalists and filmmakers. We have been offered awards for our activism.

Our efforts have helped to shift the wider conversation on climate change. People now increasingly discuss the crisis we face, not in whispers or as an afterthought, but publicly and with a sense of urgency. Polls confirm changing perceptions. One recent survey showed that, in seven of the eight countries included, climate breakdown is considered to be the most important issue facing the world. Another confirmed that schoolchildren have led the way in raising awareness.

With public opinion shifting, world leaders, too, say that they have heard us. They say that they agree with our demand for urgent action to tackle the climate crisis. But they do nothing. As they head to Madrid for the 25th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP25) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, we call out this hypocrisy.

On the next two Fridays, we will again take to the streets: worldwide on November 29, and in Madrid, Santiago, and many other places on December 6 during the UN climate conference. Schoolchildren, young people, and adults all over the world will stand together, demanding that our leaders take action - not because we want them to, but because the science demands it.

That action must be powerful and wide-ranging. After all, the climate crisis is not just about the environment. It is a crisis of human rights, of justice, and of political will. Colonial, racist, and patriarchal systems of oppression have created and fueled it. We need to dismantle them all. Our political leaders can no longer shirk their responsibilities.

Some say that the Madrid conference is not very important; the big decisions will be made at COP26 in Glasgow next year. We disagree. As the science makes clear, we don't have a single day to lose.

We have learned that, if we do not step up, nobody will. So we will keep up a steady drumbeat of strikes, protests, and other actions. We will become louder and louder. We will do whatever it takes to persuade our leaders to unite behind science so clear that even children understand it.

Collective action works; we have proved that. But to change everything, we need everyone. Each and every one of us must participate in the climate resistance movement. We cannot just say we care; we must show it.

Join us. Participate in our upcoming climate strikes in Madrid or in your hometown. Show your community, the fossil-fuel industry, and your political leaders that you will not tolerate inaction on climate change anymore. With numbers on our side, we have a chance.

And to the leaders who are headed to Madrid, our message is simple: the eyes of all future generations are upon you. Act accordingly.

This commentary was also signed by Evan Meneses (Australia) and Hilda Flavia Nakabuye (Fridays for Future Uganda).

Greta Thunberg is a Swedish climate activist. Luisa Neubauer is a German climate activist. Angela Valenzuela is a coordinator of Fridays for Future in Santiago.

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## OPINION

By Djavad Salehi-Isfahani

# Africa is Dragging itself into Tyranny with Internet Censorship

**R**ecently, public outrage trailed a bill on the floor of the Nigerian senate proposing state action towards social media censorship and a death sentence for hate speech. Lately, the undemocratic acts of internet censorship, which is an infringement on freedom of expression, seems to be an African phenomenon. In 2018, 21 African countries either shut down the internet or restricted access to certain websites in the purported attempt to prevent the spread of fake news and hate speech. But with the exponential increase in the number of internet users in Africa since 2000, this action has only succeeded in hurting telecom and internet-reliant businesses. It also leaves citizens with expensive, and sometimes, illegitimate alternatives to accessing the internet.

The 2019 internet restriction by the Zimbabwean government, for instance, coerced citizens to switch to Virtual Private Networks that helps in securing connections to network over the internet, in order to access state-restricted websites. Thus, allowing citizens to have access to the internet in the wake of internet shutdowns in the country.

Also, internet censorship has sparked a handful of public agitations such as the #TogoDebout, #IamTheSudanRevolution, and #BringBackOurInternet campaigns in Togo, Sudan, and Cameroon respectively. These agitations, meanwhile, are only portraying African countries as despotic.

The increase subscription to social media among Africans across the continent avails citizens and civil groups a relatively easier medium for expressing their discontent with the government. It also establishes their



rights to peaceful assembly, and protest. Thus, to bar citizens from accessing the internet is to disregard the tenets of democracy, which if sustained, could bring Africa back to the era of dictatorship.

More so, internet shutdown will badly hurt perpetrating countries rather than help. This is because many businesses heavily relying on the internet to keep afloat. A 2016 report by the Brookings Institute revealed that the global economy lost \$2.4 billion as a result of disruptions in internet connections. This, unfortunately, attests to how influential the internet has become to the survival of an economy. African leaders would be wrong to censor it blindly.

Civil societies, meanwhile, should set out to remind governments of their obligation to respect individual rights and freedoms, especially the freedom of speech. They should push for laws to protect citizens' rights, not take them away in the spirit of curbing fake news and hate speech. They should, also rather organize sensitization programs to educate citizens on their consequences.

Access to the internet is a fundamental right. Africans, like every other human community in a rapidly globalizing world, deserve to express their opinion regardless of how critical they might sound.

*Haleed is a Public Speaker and a Writing Fellow at African Liberty. He can be reached on Twitter via @Haleed\_Nemo.*

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Rural renewable energy program moves to Lofa

By Emmanuel Mondaye

The Deputy Executive Director of the Rural and Renewable Energy Agency, Stephen B. Potter, Sr., discloses here that a US\$ 27 million dollars rural electrification project in Lofa County, northern Liberia will witness the construction of a 2.5 megawatt hydro power plant to be complimented by a 1.8 megawatt dissel power plant for the supply of electricity to targetted areas in the county.

Making the disclosure during an International Minning Energy and Petroleum Conference held recently at the Mellennium Guest House in Oldest Congo Town outside Monrovia, he notes that the rural renewable energy project is on course in several counties across Liberia.

The Liberia Renewable Energy Access Project, valued at US\$27m is supported by development partners in collaboration with the Government of Liberia. It is intended to provide electricity through a 2.5

megawatt hydro power plant that will be complimented by a 1.8 megawatt dessel hydro power plant to provide power supply from Voijaman to Foya, connecting major towns and villages along the way.

Direcetor Potter explains his entity also has another project supported by the African Development Bank in the tune of US\$33. 7m to

construct a hydro power plant with a capacity of 9.34 megawatt energy to feed most parts of Nimba and Bong counties and ZorZor, Lofa County, respectively.

According to him, the European Union has committed a grant funding for the electrification of Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County, adding that by 2020

the agency conduct the process of procurement to construct distribution facility in Buchanan, while portion of said funding will be used to construct 2 megawatt hydro power plant outside Greenville City, Sinoe County in the southeast of the country.

Director Potter says all of the projects will be operated through a public-private partnership to ensure full complaianance with terms of the agreement entered into with the agency.

He is optimistic that when the transmission lines are completed, Pleebo City in Maryland County, and other adjacent counties such as River Cess and River Gee would

be electrified with a target to connect all 15 counties by 2030.

He lauds the government of he United States and the Sweden Embassy here for supporting a solar home system in rural Liberia.

He says the rurual energy program will be affordable to Liberians to ensure everyone has access to electricity supply, indicating that through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the United States government, the entire Suakoko and Phebe community in Bog County will benefit electricity. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**



Mr. Stephen Potter Deputy Executive Director of Rural & Renewable Energy Agency

## CJL honors Bar President, Cllr. Gongloe

The Coalition for Justice in Liberia (CJL) honors the President of the Liberian Bar Association Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe for his persistence in defending human rights and the quest for justice for Liberia civil war victims.

A news release from the CJL Tuesday, December 3rd, says the honor is an annual program, where the organization selects individuals and organizations that have rendered civil duties to society - be it service or monetary for recognition.

The release says the award would have been presented in America, since the honoree was in the United States to serve as Keynote Speaker at the Association of Liberian Journalists in the Americas' (ALJA) 2019 Annual Benefit Banquet in Mounds View, Minnesota.

Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe is the current President of the Liberian National Bar Association, who has played and continues to play a meaningful role in the general effort to attain, maintain and sustain peace and democracy in Liberia.

According to the CJL, under Cllr. Gongloe leadership, the Liberian National Bar Association is committed to protect freedom of expression, freedom of the press, human rights, law and order, democracy, and drafted a bill for the establishment of a special court to try individuals accused of committing war and economic crimes during the country's prolonged civil crisis.

Cllr. Gongloe has been a lawyer for over three and a half decades; and has practiced for almost the same time, making valuable contributions to the legal profession, especially civil society as it relates to the Constitution, human rights and justice for Liberia's civil war victims.

It is based on his exemplary qualities, the Coalition for Justice in Liberia presented to him the award, the release notes.

It quotes Cllr. Gongloe as saying about establishing the court in Liberia, "Democracy cannot be sustained in chaos. Such swift action by government will strengthen respect for the rule of law and human rights throughout Liberia consistent with the general desire of the Liberian people to build a better Liberia in which peace, progress and prosperity will be perpetual." **- Press Release**



Cllr. Tiawan Saye Gongloe

## Mental Health training ends in Gbarnga

By Joseph Titus Yekeryan in Bong

A three - day Mental Health capacity building training workshop for pharmacists and mental health clinicians has ended in Gbarnga, Bong County.

Participants of the three days event are drawn from nine of Liberia's fifteen counties.

Organized by Carter Center in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the training seeks to disabuse the minds of pharmacists from stigmatizing

discriminating against those living with mental disorders further worsen their conditions. He then challenges those in the constant habit of stigmatizing people living with mental illnesses to desist and help them find remedy to their conditions.

For his part, Bong County Mental Health Supervisor Darkermue Kollie stresses the need for more support to the sector, if the health sector must tackle the growing wave



people living with mental illnesses.

Speaking to a team of Journalists in Gbarnga recently, Carter Center's Deputy Program Lead for Mental Health, Wilfred Gwaikolo said the training is also part of efforts by Carter Center to build a resilient mental health sector in the country.

Gwaikolo narrates that stigmatizing and

of mental disorder in the country.

Kollie wants family members to urgently take their relatives to the nearby health center upon observing any form of behavioral change from their relatives. He then admonishes the participants to take the training serious and apply the knowledge acquired wisely upon returning to their various localities. **-Edited by Winston W. Parley**

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# House hears Weah's bills

By Bridgett Milton

At the time the House of Senate was busy discussing the printing of new banknote and confirmation of newly appointed officials, the lower House was busy reading about a dozen of bills sent by President George M. Weah for passage.

They later descended into an Executive Session which

lasted for hours.

President Weah wrote the House of Representatives informing it that there is pressing issue of national concern which requires deliberations of the Legislature on actions.

Issues cited by the president include passage of financial and other instruments pending before the Legislature, confirmation

hearing for the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Executive Governor designate, and the finalization of deliberation on authorization to the CBL to print a new set of Liberian dollars banknotes.

Further, the president sent 17 bills to the House for its passage which include an Act to establish the Liberia Standards Authority, an Act to establish the Civil Service Commission, agreement between the government of the United Arab Emirates and the government of Liberia for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income, agreement, upgrading of the Konia - Voinjama road project between the Republic of Liberia and Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, among others.

After the reading of the bills, Montserrado County District #16 Representative Dixon Seboe made a motion that all the bills be sent to the relevant committees to report to the body this Thursday. —*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



# SEGAL boss on crimes-free society

The Security Expert Guard Agency of Liberia (SEGAL) has been presented the "Outstanding Security Guard of the Decade" award in Liberia.

The General Manager and CEO of the Security Expert Guard Agency of Liberia or SEGAL, Momo Cyrus says, the prime vision of his firm is to help make Liberia crimes-free by collaborating with the National Police.

"We are helping the GOL fight crimes and restore confidence in the investment sector in Liberia. We are also helping to put bread on the table [for] thousands of Liberians who are within our employed."

He says SEGAL as an institution believes in unification with training and rebranding as parts of its DNA.

"As a result of our investment in the young

helping to reduce poverty in this county by employing over 3,000 of our citizens", he notes.

Despite the progress made, Mr. Cyrus outlined a number of challenges, including but not limited to, high taxes and difficulties being experienced by the Liberian economy, something, he notes, has slowed enthusiasm on the job and placed huge pressure on the investment and business sector.

"The issue of taxes has slowed our reinvestment and, expanding in other areas has been a difficult thing at the moment. The economy, too, is not a secret. Contract fees are being sought under difficult circumstances, especially with the situation faced by local commercial banks on the issue of liquidity," he points out.

However, Mr. Cyrus expresses delight and



# SOS collaboration is key to development

SOS Children's Villages International Director for West and Central Africa Region has emphasized the need for SOS Liberia to collaborate with like-minded organizations to support children and families as government struggles to address numerous challenges.

At a meeting with the SOS Children's Villages Liberia National Office staff, Mr. Benoit Piot said collaboration was the key to sustainability and empowerment. Working together is key to development and it should be a priorities for all. "You cannot achieve more when you are working in isolation. Work as a team to impact the lives of many more children," says Mr. Piot.

Commenting on empowerment, Mr. Piot noted that SOS Liberia should focus on the specific need of an individual and develop their capacity. "Let build the self-esteem of young people, we should not focus only on academic," he added. He urged SOS Liberia to build the capacity of programme participants and coworkers.

He noted that sustainability and empowerment are priorities for SOS Children's Villages, therefore all those who are involved in SOS Children's

Villages programmes should be empower. He maintained that for SOS to achieve the 2030 goals the necessary actions and steps should be taken. He added "join forces as well as partner with UNICEF and others."

SOS Children's Villages Liberia National Director, Mr. Augustine Allieu assured Mr. Piot and Dr. Bada of SOS Liberia's increased commitment to youth, families and staff empowerment. SOS Liberia is supporting children, youth as well as family. "I have reached out to PLAN and Save the Children as members of the joining forces together: child rights now! We will collaborate to advocate for children."

Mr. Allieu pledged to extend partnership to other organizations, including UNICEF and European Union delegation to Liberia. He thanked the SOS International guests for the visit and assured them that SOS Liberia will exert all efforts to achieve the organization 2030 goals. He said although there are challenges, yet there are opportunities.

Mr. Piot and Dr. AmaviBada, SOS Children's Villages International Representative for Banjul Cluster were on three-day working visit to Liberia. The visitation came as a result of a courtesy call



SOS Children's Villages visiting guest arrived at SOS Children's Village Juah Town in Grand Bassa County

people of this country, we want to announce that we have two of our employees here who are supposed to be graduating from the University of Liberia (UL), and this is just part of our work we do here."

Speaking during an honoring and certification program, CEO Cyrus announces his induction into the African Leadership Hall of Fame Class of 2020, the ALMAFRICA Dialogue 2020, and Imperial College, based in London, United Kingdom

He unveils rebranded SEGAL accessories tagged, 'Professionalism is part of our DNA.' The materials include reflexive vests, garret detectors which enhances control of areas under its security guards to deter unauthorized weapons; expendable batons, pepper spray to restrain suspects, safety headgears, handcuffs, badges, stun guns, post equipment belts, hand gloves, torch-lights, and T-shirts, amongst others.

"We hope this will help to reduce poverty in this country. The cost of this is put at US\$300,000. We think we are

confidence over the growing public-private partnership taking root in the country, saying, "We are collaborating well with the government."

A local group, Patriotic Consciousness Association of Liberia or PACAL, honored the SEGAL CEO and Management recently at the agency's headquarters in Sinkor, Monrovia for its services to the public.

"We wonder why SEGAL is receiving all these awards. But we are reminded by the Biblical story that says that many are called, but few are chosen. Being selected did not come as a surprised, and this has come through the work we do; the way we do it, and the way we treat our customers," notes Administrative Manager, Marcus N.D. Kumeh.

SEGAL is a Liberian-owned private security firm with 13 years of professional experience security services and proud recipient of several local and international accolades for its high rating performances. —*Editing by Jonathan Browne*

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Tax collectors, bankers indicted over financial scandal

By Winston W. Parley

Six defendants including government tax collectors and commercial bankers have been indicted here in relations to a US\$1.2m plus financial scandal following investigators' probe into an alleged syndicate.

The indictment alleges criminal conspiracy, economic sabotage, theft of property and forgery among former Access Bank Liberia employees including Emmanuel Z. Holder, James D. Davis, and Tamia C. Sherman, and former Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) employee Lee N.V. Taylor along with William Joe Smith and Adama E. Monroe.

The indictment says a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed among the Liberia Telecommunication Authority (LTA), Finance Ministry and the Global Voice Group for distribution of funds among the entities from revenue generation from International Traffic Monitoring Services.

The MOU designated the United Bank of Africa (UBA) for the deposit of revenues intended for Finance Ministry and LTA for distribution between the two entities.

Under the MOU, the indictment says any amount due the Finance Ministry was to be paid to government through a manager's check

that was to be delivered to the sector ministry division of LRA.

LRA's employee Lee N.V. Taylor who was assigned at the sector ministry section was designated to collect and receive all manager's check leafs from the UBA, Guaranty Trust Bank and Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI).

He allegedly received several pieces manager's check leafs but turned them over to co-defendant William Joe Smith and others to carry out the alteration of the face of the manager's check leafs and gradually processed them for encashment.

The defendants allegedly

opened a bogus account at Access Bank and deposited US\$419,280.79 into the alleged account.

Further, Smith is said to have orchestrated alteration of 12 pieces of manager's check leafs before depositing US\$403,404.30 into the bogus account dubbed "Geneial Revege Accouna at Access Bank.

The indictment indicates that the checks were deposited and subsequently withdrawn from the check book given to the account owner and payments were allegedly made to the fraudsters.

The indictment claims that

a clear conspiracy was shown among defendants Holder, Davis, Sherman of Access bank; LRA's Taylor and one William Joe Smith.

Through an alleged text message on the bank's system in December 2018, defendant Emmanuel Holder is claimed to have directed Adama Moree that "Every transaction on this account should be authorized by risk and compliance" at a time verification process was on.

Based on the instruction, investigators say defendant Monroe was given US\$11,000 by co-defendant Tamia Sherman

for finally allowing the transaction to be processed.

In March 2019, an argument ensued between Tamia Sherman, Adama Monroe and Emmanuel Holder regarding unequal distribution of US\$10,000; US\$25,000 and US\$20,000, respectively.

In May 2018, former LRA employee Lee N.V. Taylor allegedly received six checks valued US\$600,000, turned them over to his accomplices defendants Bill and Pee for onward deposit, encashment, withdrawal and subsequent distribution of the proceeds.



## Pres. Weah errs

Starts from back page

authority of the Legislature. An annual statement and account of the expenditure of all public monies shall be submitted by the office of the President to the Legislature and published once a year.

Dillon demands that the governing Coalition for Democratic Change-led government should logically conclude the 'LRD16 Billion saga' and provide comprehensive report on a US\$25 million mop-up exercise conducted by Finance and Development Planning Minister, Samuel Tweah before the printing of new currency.

"President [Weah] wants us to allow him to print money; I'm still not inclined to understand how missing billion saga was resolved and the mop-up exercise of excess Liberian dollars from the market was handled that have led to shortage of the local currency on the Liberian market. Our currency now cannot be seen on the market. They have to tell me in clear terms how

these matters were resolved before calling for the printing

## Independent Lawmakers want Deputy Defense Minister designate rejected

By Bridgett Milton

The Independent Legislative Caucus (ILC) here is calling on Senate Pro-Tempore Albert T. Chie not to confirm

Deputy Defense Minister for Operations designate Tarplah Davies, alias Zoely Zoe.

According to the ILC, Mr. Davies sometimes in May and June 2019 vowed to kill fellow

Liberian protesters if they damaged or caused damage to his property during their peaceful protest.

The ILC believes with such a statement from Mr. Davis when he was not in the position, he would be a dangerous statesman should he be confirmed and have full authority to execute his plan against peaceful citizens.

The Independent Legislative Caucus prays the indulgence of Senate Pro-Tempore Albert T. Chie not to confirm Mr. Davis at the detriment of the Liberian people.

"you will agree with us that modern democracy or democratic practices call for security personnel who should have respect for the citizenry, moreover we as legislators and inclined people should not condone such threat," the lawmakers conclude.—*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



**The New Dawn**  
TRULY INDEPENDENT

### Public Service Announcement

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND ALL OUR CLIENTS & READERS THAT THE BUSINESS AND NEWSPAPER OFFICES OF THE NEW DAWN NEWSPAPER HAVE BEEN RELOCATED ON UN DRIVE OPPOSITE THE NATIONAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION (NIC), BEHIND PUBLIC WORKS MINISTRY.

# Français

## Soupçonné de complot, l'ANC dément et dénonce un absurdité de la part du pouvoir

Le Congrès national alternatif, l'un des principaux partis politiques de l'opposition, accuse le pouvoir de propager délibérément une information vicieuse et mensongère dans le but d'accuser son leader politique, M. Alexander B. Cummings, de complot d'État.

" Ces campagnes médiatiques font suite aux informations qui circulaient dans les communautés et sur les médias sociaux concernant l'intention du gouvernement d'arrêter les principaux leaders d'opposition, y compris M. Cummings, pour les accuser de trahison, avant ou pendant la marche intitulée (Weah Must Step Down) ", a déclaré l'ANC dans un communiqué de presse publié lundi 2 décembre.

Le parti a rappelé qu'il y a quelques semaines, Freedom FM, une station de radio pro-gouvernementale qui appartient au directeur adjoint de l'Agence de sécurité nationale (NSA), Sam Siryon, avait diffusé des informations selon lesquelles

M. Alexander Cummings prévoyait de renverser l'administration Weah lors de la marche prévue pour le 30 décembre. En outre, un quotidien local a annoncé que M. Cummings préparait et soutiendrait une tentative de renversement du régime en place le 30 décembre 2019.

« Notre leader politique souhaite faire comprendre clairement qu'il n'a pas peur d'être arrêté. Cependant, il

aimerait préciser que, bien qu'il soutienne le droit des Libériens de protester, il n'a jamais soutenu et ne soutiendra jamais un coup d'État ou toute destitution inconstitutionnelle d'un président. Il veut que le peuple libérien sache que ces allégations sont des absurdités totales et estime que ceux qui préparent leurs accusations de fausse trahison sont des dirigeants irresponsables », a

écrit le parti.

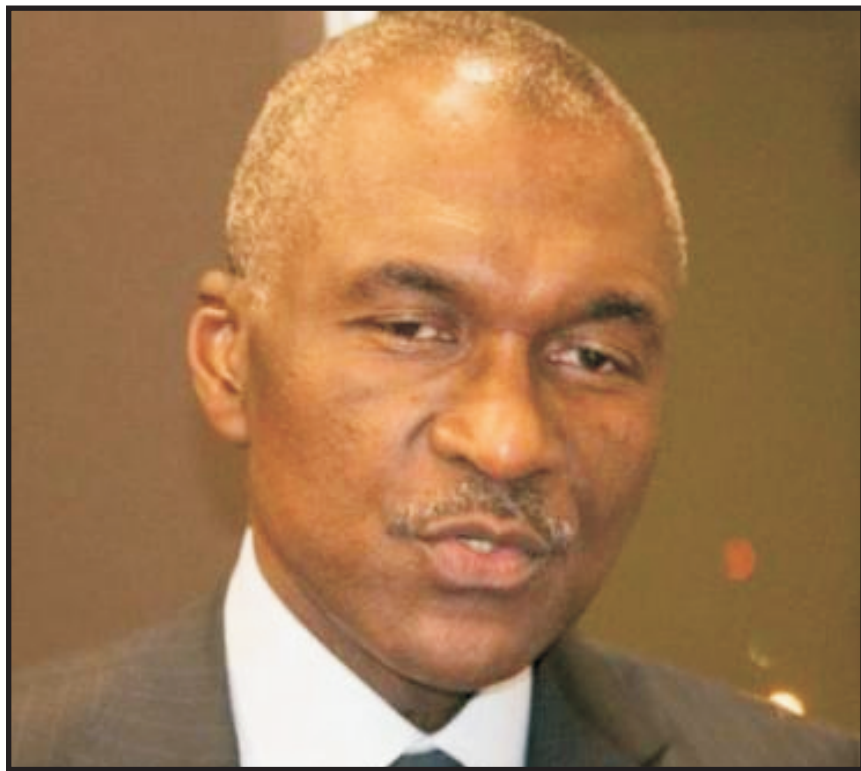
Le parti appelle le pouvoir à se concentrer plutôt sur sa responsabilité, celle de trouver l'argent nécessaire pour payer les salaires des fonctionnaires en ces temps de crise économique et d'accorder la priorité au bien-être des citoyens, au lieu de se livrer à la propagation de fausses informations et à la distraction du peuple.

L'ANC trouve inadmissible que pendant que son leader politique s'emploie à aider les citoyens à investir dans les entreprises pour maintenir l'économie à flot, « le pouvoir s'emploie à parrainer des informations stupides sur un complot de coup d'État imaginaire, juste pour détourner l'attention des populations qui croulent sous le joug de la pauvreté et de la mauvaise gouvernance ».

« Nous nous attendions à ce

que ces mensonges et ces magouilles continuent, étant donné que M. Cummings est vu comme une alternative, c'est pourquoi nous ne voulons plus y répondre. Néanmoins, nous voudrions rappeler à notre peuple que l'histoire de notre pays est truffée de fausses tentatives de coup d'État manigancées par les régimes en place pour se débarrasser des formidables leaders de l'opposition », a-t-il dit le parti avant d'accuser le régime Weah de tenter de suivre l'exemple de Doe. « C'est un geste désagréable, inacceptable et nous appelons tous les Libériens à le condamner », a indiqué le communiqué.

Le gouvernement du Libérien est resté coi sur ces rumeurs, liant les dirigeants de l'opposition à un complot de coup d'État.



## Le pouvoir législatif interrompt son congé annuel mais ...

Les membres de la Chambre des représentants et du Sénat libérien ont repris hier mardi 03 décembre une session extraordinaire qui durera une semaine, à la demande du président de la république. Les législateurs, qui sont normalement en congé, ont indiqué qu'ils travailleraient en fonction

de la nature de la proclamation publiée par le président George Weah.

Selon des informations, le président veut que les législateurs se penchent rapidement sur la question de la stabilisation de l'économie avant que la situation ne s'aggrave.

Certains Libériens menacent de descendre dans

la rue à compter du 30 décembre sous la houlette du Conseil des Patriotes pour réclamer le départ du président vu les difficultés économiques actuelles, alors que le gouvernement envisage d'imprimer de nouveaux billets pour payer les salaires. Le ministère des Finances et de la Planification du développement et la Banque centrale du Libéria continuent de faire croire aux libériens que le gouvernement n'a pas le contrôle des billets qui sont actuellement en circulation. Ils estiment que la monnaie locale est en dehors du secteur bancaire et qu'elle serait contrôlée par des individus.

Lundi dernier, les membres de la Chambre des représentants et du Sénat libérien ont débattu pendant environ quatre heures à huis clos. Rien n'a filtré des discussions, les présidents des deux chambres s'étant refusés à tout commentaire.

Cependant, à en croire les

informations recueillies ici et là dans les couloirs de la maison du parlement, la plupart des législateurs exigent le paiement de quatre mois d'arriérés de salaire que leur doit l'État avant de siéger. Mais à en juger par les dits du pouvoir Exécutif, cette demande a peu de chance d'aboutir car le gouvernement dirigé par George Weah lutte comme un beau diable pour régler deux mois d'arriérés de salaires des fonctionnaires.

Les médias ignorent donc le contenu exact et la conclusion des deux réunions distinctes, les législateurs ayant quitté les lieux un à un, sans dire un mot aux médias, apparemment mécontents. Toutefois, le président temporaire du Sénat, Albert Chie, a promis de parler aux médias après la première séance de la session extraordinaire.

Les législateurs qui se sont

confiés à ce quotidien ont emphatiquement déclaré que si le président George Weah les a rappelés pour une question d'impression de nouveaux billets de banque, ils ne siègeraient pas.

Certains estiment que le gouvernement veut le feu vert des législateurs pour imprimer une nouvelle monnaie afin de payer les arriérés de salaires des travailleurs et ses dettes intérieures. Le conseiller juridique du président Weah, Archie Bernard, a été vu en train de sillonner entre les bureaux du président temporaire du sénat et du président de la Chambre des Représentants, tentant de trouver une solution de sortie de crise.

C'est la deuxième fois que les législateurs sont obligés d'interrompre leur congé annuel constitutionnel. Ils avaient été rappelés pour une première fois pour adopter une loi sur la concession.



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# Français

## Le ministère de la justice refuse d'autoriser un rassemblement de l'opposition

Le ministre libérien de la Justice, Me Frank Musa Dean, s'est dit dépourvu du pouvoir d'autoriser un rassemblement dont l'objectif premier est de renverser un régime constitutionnellement élu.

« Le ministère n'est pas habilité à accorder un permis, une protection ou une autorisation au Conseil des patriotes (COP) pour organiser sa campagne «Weah Step Down» qui viole la Constitution et les lois en vigueur au Libéria », a dit le ministre.

Dans sa réponse à la demande des organisateurs de la marche intitulée « Weah Step Down » et prévue pour le 30 décembre, le ministre a qualifié la marche d'anticonstitutionnelle et averti qu'elle constitue une trahison, une atteinte à la sûreté de l'État.

« Compte tenu donc des faits et circonstances décrits ci-dessus, nous ne sommes pas légalement habilités à vous accorder l'autorisation d'entreprendre une action qui constitue incontestablement en soi une violation flagrante de la Constitution et des lois en vigueur au Libéria », a écrit Me Dean, indiquant que le ministère a dûment pris connaissance des différentes déclarations publiques faites par la hiérarchie du Conseil des Patriotes, et estime que la marche fait partie de la campagne «Weah Step Down».

Le ministre de la Justice, a aussi fait savoir que le ministère a eu connaissance du fait que, en vue de la réalisation des objectifs prévus, le COP a sollicité et reçu des fonds de la part des particuliers, tant à l'intérieur et qu'à l'extérieur du Libéria, certains des contributeurs n'étant peut-être pas des citoyens libériens.

Il a prévenu les membres de la direction du COP qu'ils seraient jugés personnellement, individuellement et collectivement coupables et responsables, en vertu de la loi, des conséquences qui

découleraient de leurs actes.

Dans un entretien téléphonique avec ce quotidien en réaction à la communication du ministre, le président par intérim du COP, M. Mo Ali, a déclaré lundi que nulle part dans la communication de la demande d'autorisation du rassemblement, il n'a été question de la démission du Président Weah.

Il a affirmé que le COP ne peut pas empêcher les gens de dire ce qu'ils veulent à la radio, mais sa communication officielle qui a été adressée au ministère indique que, dans le prolongement de la manifestation du 7 juin, « ils veulent se réunir le 30 décembre et demandent que le gouvernement les protéger ».

D'après lui, les dits selon lesquels le président Weah doit démissionner ne relèvent pas du plan officiel du COP, qui n'est donc pas porteur de cette campagne.

A noter que le COP, dans une lettre qui date du 11 novembre 2019, signée par M. Ali, avait informé le ministère de la Justice d'un autre rassemblement pacifique dans la continuation du rassemblement pacifique du 7 juin 2019 au même endroit.

Selon le COP, le rassemblement pacifique est en cours d'organisation et devrait commencer le lundi 30 décembre. Il pourrait durer plusieurs jours à Monrovia.

Le groupe avait écrit: «Au cours de ce rassemblement pacifique, nous avons l'intention d'accueillir jusqu'à 100 000 personnes. Nous nous réunirons au siège du gouvernement, à Capitol Hill. Ceux qui y participeront commenceront à arriver à partir de 6 h 00 GMT et viendront de diverses régions du pays. »

Le COP a dit attendre avec impatience la coopération habituelle du ministère pour assurer la sécurité du rassemblement pacifique.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Patrick Gaspard

## L'importance de la restitution de biens culturels à l'Afrique

NEW YORK - Le Premier ministre français Édouard Philippe a présenté récemment un sabre antique devant le président sénégalais MackySall dans son palais présidentiel de Dakar. Mais il ne s'agissait pas d'un cadeau. Le sabre était de retour dans son pays d'origine, plus d'un siècle après avoir été volé.

Le rapatriement d'un objet ayant une importance historique, spirituelle et culturelle aussi profonde pourrait ressembler à un simple geste de réparation coloniale. Mais cette cérémonie était différente en ce qu'elle impliquait bien plus qu'un simple objet physique. En fait, c'est un tournant dans la reconnaissance de l'Occident des dommages culturels causés par le colonialisme.

Le sabre en question appartenait à El Hadj Omar Tall, fondateur de l'Empire Toucouleur, qui s'étendait autrefois de l'actuel Sénégal au Mali et à la Guinée. Tall était un chef religieux respecté et un combattant de la résistance anticoloniale. Son arme, ainsi que des dizaines de milliers d'autres pièces de patrimoine africain ayant été pillées, étaient aux mains des Français depuis les années 1890. Exposé dans les musées français, le sabre avait cessé de symboliser les prouesses militaires d'une puissante dynastie et relatait à la place l'histoire de la décimation d'un empire africain, en légitimant ainsi le racisme et les préjugés qui sous-tendent la période coloniale.

La famille de Tall faisait campagne pour le retour du sabre depuis 1944 et a finalement eu gain de cause le mois dernier. Les descendants se sont rendus à Dakar depuis des villages de Guinée, du Mali et du Sénégal pour assister à son retour. Le sabre restera au Sénégal pendant cinq ans pendant que le Parlement français détermine si cet objet - ainsi que d'autres - seront définitivement restitués.

Il y a seulement quelques années, ce moment aurait été unimaginable. Les gouvernements européens, les ministères de la culture, les musées et les universités ont longtemps refusé de reconnaître l'immoralité de la situation dans laquelle le patrimoine culturel de l'Afrique a été retiré de ce continent. La remise du sabre a donc été un moment très symbolique, ce qui augure un changement dans la dynamique du pouvoir et un respect renouvelé pour l'histoire trépidante de l'Afrique. Ce moment témoigne également de la persistance chez les Africains - jeunes et vieux, sur le continent et dans la diaspora - d'une mobilisation pour exiger que les dirigeants des anciennes puissances coloniales redressent des torts historiques.

Le colonialisme reposait sur le désaveu de l'art, de la musique et de l'architecture en provenance d'Afrique. Des dirigeants cruels comme Ian Smith, le Premier ministre de la Rhodésie (actuel Zimbabwe) dans les années 1960 et 1970, ont légitimé des mauvais traitements et des injustices horribles pour saper la culture du peuple africain, en supprimant ainsi son humanité.

Durant des décennies, Open Society Foundationsa soutenu ceux qui se trouvent en première ligne de la transformation sociétale. Nous reconnaissons le pouvoir de l'art et de la culture pour remettre en question les inégalités structurelles, pour contester les préjugés et promouvoir l'imagination d'une nouvelle génération de dirigeants. Notre patrimoine culturel constitue le fondement de l'histoire que nous partageons pour donner un sens à notre place dans l'histoire - et dans le monde. En son essence, la création d'objets culturels est fondamentalement une manifestation d'espoir humain.

En reconnaissant cela, Open Society Foundations lance une nouvelle initiative de 15 millions de dollars

pour renforcer les efforts visant à assurer la restitution et la réappropriation d'objets volés sur le continent africain. Au cours des quatre prochaines années, nous allons soutenir des citoyens, des artistes, des éducateurs, des communautés autochtones, des organisations de la société civile, des musées, des universités et d'autres institutions qui s'emploient au retour du patrimoine de l'Afrique vers son lieu d'origine et à entretenir chez les générations futures d'Africains un sentiment d'appropriation de leur histoire, de leur culture et de leur identité.

Les jeunes d'Afrique, en particulier, n'ont cessé de réclamer le contrôle de leur propre destinée, ce qui a conduit dernièrement à des changements radicaux en Éthiopie et au Soudan. Ils reconnaissent l'importance de leur patrimoine culturel et ont fait campagne pour le retour des artefacts africains. Après avoir constaté que les jeunes sont une force essentielle sur un continent où la population devrait croître de plus d'un milliard d'individus, à 2,5 milliards en 2050, de nombreuses anciennes puissances coloniales ont commencé à tendre l'oreille.

Dans un discours prononcé en 2017 devant un auditorium plein d'une Université du Burkina Faso, le Président français Emmanuel Macron s'est engagé à faire du retour des artefacts africains une priorité. « Le patrimoine culturel africain, a-t-il expliqué, ne peut plus être retenu en captivité dans les musées européens. » Depuis lors, le rapport révolutionnaire Sarr-Savoycommandité par le gouvernement français, a déclenché une conversation mondiale sur le retour d'objets volés vers l'Afrique. Les auteurs du rapport, l'historienne de l'art française Bénédicte Savoy et l'écrivain sénégalais FelwineSarr, ont recommandé le retour immédiat et sans condition de tous les objets culturels acquis par vol, spoliation, pillage, accaparement forcé ou acquisition inéquitable au cours de l'époque coloniale.

Depuis la publication du rapport en novembre 2018, le mouvement mondial pour la restitution de l'art s'est considérablement renforcé. Deux demandes officielles ont été déposées pour la restitution d'objets historiques et de restes humains à l'Éthiopie, au Sénégal, au Bénin et au Nigeria. Mais il y a fort à faire pour transformer les espoirs de restitution en réalité.

Le nombre d'artefacts perdus par l'Afrique est impressionnant. Le Musée Royal de l'Afrique centrale en Belgique détient actuellement 180 000 pièces de patrimoine de l'Afrique subsaharienne. Le British Museum de Londres et le Musée du Quai Branly à Paris détiennent près de 70 000 artefacts historiques africains. Cela contraste fortement avec la taille des collections des musées en Afrique. Alain Godonou, historien et conservateur du Bénin, estime que les inventaires de la plupart des musées en Afrique ne dépassent pas les 3 000 objets. Open Society Foundations, en collaboration avec nos partenaires africains et d'autres à travers le monde, s'emploient à changer cet état de choses.

Avec cette restitution, il s'agit de bien davantage que de la simple confrontation avec l'héritage violent du colonialisme - un héritage qui continue d'affecter la dynamique du pouvoir en Afrique et dans le monde. Il s'agit du soutien en faveur du travail des jeunes Africains pour transformer les récits racistes et datés sur la variété de leur héritage culturel et sur la richesse de leur histoire. Il s'agit de donner aux générations actuelles les moyens de façonner un avenir meilleur pour elles-mêmes. Il s'agit, à la base, de la restitution de sa représentation à un continent qui définit sa voie à suivre.

Patrick Gaspard, ancien ambassadeur des États-Unis en Afrique du Sud, Président d'Open Society Foundations.

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# ARTICLE

# ARTICLE

## Election Jitters and Uncertainties in Cote D'Ivoire

Ivorians are preparing for next year's electoral deadline. The same actors from 2010 could again be competing. What can be expected? Will the country face another upheaval such as 2010 when post-electoral violence caused the deaths of over 3000 people?

Four years ago, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara cruised through an easy re-election without much opposition. He was in partnership with former President Konan Bédié, the leader of the PDCI (Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire) the former ruling party under Houphouët-Boigny, the founding father. Ouattara also enjoyed the full support of Soro Guillaume, the President of the national assembly and former head of the Nouvelles Forces, the rebel army that tried to overthrow Laurent Gbagbo in 2002 before settling for a share in a national unity government. Laurent Gbagbo who had lost against him in 2010 was awaiting trial in a jail cell at The Hague for crimes committed against humanity during the post-electoral violence. However, 11 months to the next presidential elections, everything has changed, and for Ouattara, the exit from power might prove as challenging as his ascend to it.

The second term of Ouattara began with Soro still as President of the national assembly. Soro began his political career as a student leader and a disciple of Laurent Gbagbo. After they broke up, Soro went to school in Europe before reappearing as head of the Nouvelles Forces who, with the help of the French forces, forced Gbagbo out of power and sent him to the Hague.

Soro however lost the comfort of his position, both as President of the National Assembly and constitutional heir. A new constitution passed by Ouattara changed the succession clause in favor of a Vice President, a new position currently held by a former strong ally and the only Prime Minister of Bédié for 6 years, Daniel Kablan Duncan. Soro also lost his "moral" authority over the military, whose leadership sprung mainly from his Nouvelles Forces, when his nemesis Ahmed Bakayoko, one Ouattara's closest lieutenant was appointed Minister of Defense. Soro has joined Gbagbo and Bédié in the opposition and intends to run for president in 2020.

The alliance with Bédié broke down because of a dispute about who should field the "houphouetist" candidate come 2020. Bédié argued that there was an agreement that his fringe of the loose coalition he and Ouattara had formed, self-styled Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix, (RHDP), the PDCI, would nominate a candidate. Ouattara countered that there was never such a deal and proposed a primary system. In 1993, at the death of Houphouët-Boigny, and suspecting that then Prime Minister Ouattara wanted to usurp power, Bédié walked into the studios of the national television station and interrupted a newscast to declare himself President. From then on, the two men fell into enmity. In 1995, he managed to exclude Ouattara from the elections by enacting citizenship laws based on an ethnicity called "Ivoirité" which tended to separate "real Ivorians" from "strangers." This policy targeted mostly people from the Muslim North where Mr. Ouattara hails from. Bédié has started to dust-off his "ivoirité" discourse albeit very subtly, dog-

whistling about "strangers" and Muslims. Ouattara kept the name RHDP for his new coalition.

Gbagbo was released from prison by the ICC and has been in transit for months in Brussels, awaiting appeals from the prosecution. He could go back home a free man or back to jail. For now, he has been holding talks with both Bédié and Soro, while trying to regain control of his once powerful Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) more fragmented than ever. His ex-wife Simone Gbagbo -freed by Ouattara last year- and his former VP Affi N'Guessan are competing for leadership. His youth leader and jail mate Blé Goudé - also freed by the ICC - has now embarked on a path of his own and could carry with him the radical and youth wing of the party. In the mid-1990s, after Ouattara was sidelined by Bédié, he and Gbagbo formed an alliance. In 2001, the military leader who had overthrown Bédié called elections under the "ivoirité" constitution, which again excluded Ouattara. General Robert Guei claimed to have won the elections, but Gbagbo mobilized his supporters and pushed him out. Once in power, Gbagbo went on to enforce land tenure policies based on Bédié's "ivoirité", causing many northerners to lose farmlands they exploited for generations.

Ouattara has linked his decision to run again to the fate of his former opponents. The FPI recently accused him of wrongfully trying to insert itself in the Gbagbo's appeal case, trying to keep him from returning home, not until after elections.

The new constitution - revised during his second term - gives him the right to do so. He faces the same dilemma Abdoulaye Wade faced a few years ago in Senegal. Having the legal right to contest elections does not mean the electorate is ready.

The contest next year, will indicate whether the country's democracy has matured and signal the end of the deadly rivalries and divisive policies of the past two decades.

If he decides to seek another term, Ouattara will face not only a three-headed opposition but also Ivorians who may have no appetite for a repeat of 2010.

Bédié, Gbagbo and Ouattara spent the 1990s fighting over Houphouët's legacy. Each of them served as President. But both Bédié and Gbagbo argue that they were not allowed to govern fully because of the 1999 military coup (Bédié) and the 2002 rebellion (Gbagbo). Now in their twilight, they want to make up for their loss or extend a legacy. At what price for Côte d'Ivoire and the region?

In the current ethnic configuration of the electorate, no single party could win the election outright in the first round, however a second round will favor Ouattara.

Like everywhere on the continent, ethnicity plays an important role in politics. In Ivory Coast, the electoral map follows well-defined lines. The north is easily be considered Ouattara's bastion. With 42 percent of the population, the Muslims strongly identify with Ouattara and provide a solid electoral base. His party has co-opted members of other groups that were victimized by the policies of "ivoirité" of Bédié and enforced by Gbagbo. The center of the country - the



Abdoulaye W Dukulé

Akan/Baoulé area- is Bédié's stronghold, with 15 to 20 percent of the population. The Southwest - the Kru/ Bété - follows "their son" Gbagbo. The district of Abidjan is the elephant meat, with more than 4 million people, where everyone has a piece. Ethnic rivalries and alliances run deep and were further exacerbated by the conflicts.

Founding father Felix Houphouët-Boigny was Baoulé, like Bédié. He cultivated strong bonds with the Muslims northerners as well as with other ethnic groups. Long before independence, Boigny had problems with the Kru-Bété. Gbagbo came from that line of ethnic opposition that runs deep between Akan and Kru. Bédié may go into an alliance with Gbagbo but can he bring along the rest of the Akan? Same problem with Soro. He may take some votes from Ouattara in the first round, but in a second-round northerners may not follow him to vote Gbagbo or Bédié.

With the advantages of incumbency, a strong regional and ethnic support, with Gbagbo battling legal issues and trying to regain control of his party, Bédié straddled with age and a shaky divisive past, and Soro who will have challenges to shake away his warlord moniker, Ouattara could easily see the finish line.

However, is the Ivorian electorate ready for an "Old Folks Warfare" that could ignite old rivalries and risk plunging the country and the entire region into uncertainty? Each of these leaders groomed very capable and battle-ready lieutenants who can take the nation forward, into a new era.

The wounds of 2010 are still fresh. Notwithstanding its economic success, the Ouattara administration has faced challenges in the area of national reconciliation, full demobilization and reintegration of war combatants as well as the restructuring of state security apparatus.

In 2020, Ouattara will be the first Ivorian democratically elected president to turn the country over to another democratically elected president and retire gracefully. If he so desires.

This human billboard standing in the street with the national television in the background epitomizes the anxieties of the population. It says: If we are sheep, in 2020 we will take up guns and kill each other." On social media, another message says: "Why are we killing ourselves for people we only see on television?" (courtesyFraternitéMatin.)

# No salary for Christmas

By Ethel A. Tweh

Salary payments for thousands of Public Servants across the country will be delayed up to the Christmas season, Senate Pro-tempore Albert T. Chie announced Tuesday at the opening of a special session called by President George Weah.

President Weah on Monday recalled members of the Liberian Legislature to convene a special session in the wake of cash shortages at banks and delay in payments of civil servants' salaries here.

"...we appeal to our people for understanding this matter, Chie said, adding, "The next few months will be difficult with delayed salary payments continuing up to the Christmas season."

The Pro-tempore was however, quick to add that the situation is expected to be resolved by the end of February 2020, when it is anticipated that Government would have stabilized salary payments.

His statement comes days after the Minister of State Nathaniel McGill told the Voice of America radio that Government would make available payments for October and November in this month.

Chie appears to blame the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) for the present economic mess, while at the same time trying to justify that because the previous regime borrow from the CBL reserve or donor money to pay civil servants it was okay for the Weah administration to follow same.

He also noted that the current problem has been compounded by the printing of the controversial 10 billion Liberian bank notes during the past regime. Chie continued his picking of problem factors by adding that the waves of protests here have increased political risk index leading to a downward trend in foreign investment.

He also linked the present economic woes to the Ebola epidemic that weighed on the country's domestic debt burden, caused a greater imbalance in balance payments and reduced Liberia's productive capacity when major concessions closed during the Ebola crisis most of whom are yet to reopen.

On the request to print new money, Chie acknowledged request from the CBL seeking authorization from the Legislature to print a total of 35 billion Liberian dollar bank notes to replace the present legacy notes in circulation. Though there are



still controversies surrounding the actual amount of Liberian dollar bank notes in circulation, with many political commentators raising eyebrows over the amount being sought for authorization.

To this, Chie argues that when the request to print the new bank notes was made in August 2019, the CBL reported that the Liberian Dollars supply in the economy stood at LD 21.28 billion, with 86% in circulation outside the banks while cash in the CBL accounted for 8% and in the commercial banks 6% of the stock.

"From all indications in recent times, these proportions have changed over the weeks as our citizens are unable to get Liberian dollars from the commercial banks and the central banks," Chie adds.

The Pro-tempore alarms that the Liberia Revenue Authority has fallen short of its projected revenue collection from July to November 15, 2019 by approximately USD 60million. He further argued that the shortfall in the collection of revenue has also contributed to the delay in payments of public sector workers salaries.

Chie said these negative factors which have affected the Liberian economy has pushed the government in accepting an IMF prescription which terms and conditions are "hard to swallow". The prescription includes wage harmonization, keeping an affordable wage bill level and prudence in overall public sector spending.

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## Pandemonium at police headquarters

By Emmanuel Mondaye

A situation involving exposure of pepper spray canisters at the National Police Headquarters on Capitol Hill, Monrovia left police officers running helter-skelter with burning eyes Tuesday, 03 December. Some of the officers fled the building into the streets to escape the burning sensation that nearly led to suffocation.

This reporter, who was at the LNP headquarters when the incident occurred, observed the spray spread from the basement of the building to various offices upstairs, constraining staff to take to their heels in self-preservation.

The New Dawn could not establish up to press time, who unsealed or exposed the teargas during morning hours when staff had just reported for work and were seated in their various offices.

Police spokesman, Inspector Moses Carter, was indisposed for comment despite waiting several hours in his office to ascertain root cause of the unfortunate incident.

However, some officers, who spoke to this paper on condition of anonymity, expressed complete astonishment over the incident that created serious embarrassment for both employees and ordinary members of the public who had

gone at the headquarters for various purposes.

They lament that it was difficult to know which one of the officers especially, from the riot unit under the basement of the LNP headquarters that did the act.

Outside of the headquarters, passers-by and peddlers, upon seeing police officers running from out of their own headquarters, themselves began to hide their various markets, including cooked food and other commodities for fear of unsuspecting criminals.

Meanwhile, calm was eventually restored at the National Police Headquarters after specialized riot police officers moved in and removed the exposed pepper spray under the basement.

In a related development, the Liberia National police on Monday dispatched riot officers to the Slipway/Crown Hill community where electoral violence led to one death on Sunday, 1st December.

Reports from the community say the police deployment came after some disgruntled residents took the street, demanding justice for the victim only identified as Edward, who allegedly got drowned, while escaping police arrest. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



## Pres. Weah errs



### -Sen. Dillon

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Opposition Senator Abraham Darius Dillon launches a stinking attack against the Weah administration, saying, the President and his team of officials are in "total error" in requesting printing and replacement of the Liberian banknotes.

President Weah had summoned members of the Liberian Legislature from annual break for a week-long stay at the Capitol to approve the printing of new banknotes, among other businesses. The request comes amid severe shortage of local banknotes that has rendered the government unable to pay salary for months.

But addressing a news conference in Monrovia

Tuesday, December 03, at the Capitol, Sen. Dillon argued the decision to print new currency does not fall within the purview of the President; instead, the board of governors of the Central Bank of Liberia.

The opposition Liberty Party vice chairman for political affairs says there are vital issues that need to be resolved before the thought to print money.

Article 34 (d) of the Constitution of Liberia states the Legislature shall levy taxes, duties, imports, exercise and other revenues, borrow money, issue currency, mint coins, and make appropriations for the fiscal governance of the Republic, subject to the following qualifications: (ii) no monies shall be drawn from the treasure except in consequence of appropriations made by legislative enactment and upon warrant of the President; and no coin shall be minted or national currency issued except by the expressed



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## Messi claims record sixth Ballon d'Or, Rapinoe wins women's award

Lionel Messi claimed a record sixth Ballon d'Or award on Monday, beating Liverpool's leading nominees and Cristiano Ronaldo to lift soccer's most prestigious individual trophy.

The Argentine, who won the Liga title with Barcelona but only managed third place in the Copa America with his country, added to

his 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2015 trophies.

He finished above Dutchman Virgil van Dijk and Portugal's third-placed Ronaldo, who has won the award five times.

"I am very lucky, I am blessed. I hope I will continue for a long time," Messi told reporters. "I realize that I'm lucky even if one day it will be time to retire," added the 32-year-old.



"It will be tough but I still have some years ahead of me. Time flies so I will enjoy football and my family."

Senegal's Sadio Mane, who along with runner-up Van Dijk and fellow Liverpool nominees Alisson Becker of Brazil and Egypt's Mohamed Salah, helped the Merseyside club win the Champions League, came fourth in the poll of international journalists.

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