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The New Dawn

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VOL.10 NO. 121

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2020

PRICE LD\$40.00



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Continental News

UN Investigators Skeptical of Reform Promises by New Burundi President

The U.N. Commission of Inquiry on Burundi is doubting that promises of reform made by Burundi's newly-elected president will result in hoped-for improvements in the country's human rights situation. The commission has submitted its report on prevailing conditions in the country to the U.N. Human Rights Council. The three-member panel welcomes promises of political reconciliation, judicial reform and protection of the population made by President Ndayishimiye, in his inaugural address. But, the chair of the U.N. commission, Doudou Diene, says the president's comments were full of ambiguities and contradictions.

For example, he notes the president's remarks seemed to justify the imposition of restrictions on some public liberties such as freedom of expression, information and assembly under the guise of preserving Burundian culture.

Speaking on a video link from Paris, he said, "Such remarks are concerning, especially given that the new

president's policies will be implemented by a government composed primarily of the old guard of the late President Nkurunziza's regime – some of whom are under sanctions for their involvement in grave human rights violations." President Pierre Nkurunziza died of cardiac arrest on June 8, after a brief hospitalization, while his wife was in Kenya undergoing

medical treatment. A number of news outlets report he died of the coronavirus. Commission chair Diene says gross, widespread human rights violations continue in Burundi and that it would be premature to make any pronouncements on the possible evolution of the situation under the new government.

He said, "We solemnly urge

the new president of the republic to demonstrate his willingness for change by fully cooperating with the international human rights mechanisms. The immediate release of the four journalists of Iwacu, of human rights defenders ... would be a significant gesture of this."

Iwacu is one of the few remaining private media organizations in Burundi. In January, the journalists were sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison after being convicted on charges of trying to undermine state security. Last October, the Committee to Protect Journalists said the four were arrested while

covering unrest triggered by a clash between Burundian security forces and gunmen who had entered the country from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Burundi's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Renovat Gabu, rejects the commission's report. He accuses the commission of interfering in the domestic affairs of his country and of slandering and insulting public authorities with the blessing of the U.N. council.

He calls that a flagrant violation of the U.N. charter and reaffirms his country's refusal to cooperate with the commission. VOA



Burundi's President Evariste Ndayishimiye gestures to the crowd after his inauguration in Gitega, Burundi, June 18, 2020.

Twelve-year-old girl married to two men in a month

A 12-year-old girl has been rescued by authorities in Kenya after she was married off to two men in the span of one month.

The girl's father, in Narok county west of the capital Nairobi, forced her to marry a 51-year-old man. She escaped and then got married to a 35-year-old before being rescued

by a children's rights campaigner and government officials.

In Kenya, marrying someone who is under 18 years of age is a crime. A children's rights campaigner said he was tipped off about the girl when he was in the process of rescuing another girl.

"The father gave her off to the elderly man to be married.

She had no option than to get married to the younger man," Joshua Kaputah from the Narok County Peace Association told the BBC. Mr Kaputah added that poverty and the closure of schools due to the coronavirus pandemic have played a role in increasing cases of child marriages.

"Some families are hungry and the prospect of receiving two or three cows as dowry is quite tempting," he said. Kenya's Standard newspaper reports that after the first groom offered four cows as a dowry, the girl protested against getting married but was then beaten up by her male cousins. "I escaped and since I could not go back to my father's home for fear of being reprimanded, I eloped with a 35-year-old man, who was married," she is quoted as saying in the Standard.

Mr Kaputah said that the girl's father had then found her and taken her back to the 51-year-old. When Mr Kaputah arrived with government officials, the man

Militia Fires on Darfurians Demanding Better Security

A group of armed men killed 10 people and injured 17 others in the Fataborno village of Sudan's Northern Darfur state on Monday, according to local residents.

Witnesses told VOA's South Sudan in Focus program that a group of militia loyal to ousted President Omar al Bashir opened fire on hundreds of people who had gathered at a sit-in to call for increased security.

Resident Suwar Adam Ali, 27, said he saw gunmen attack three locations, including a camp for internally displaced persons.

"At around 12 p.m., a group of militia tried to access the sit-in site in the camp. They also entered the Fataborno market and burned shops and people's property. They also escaped with dozens of livestock. They fired live bullets on the people," Ali said.

For the past five days, traditional chiefs, religious leaders, local youth and women have staged a sit-in in front of the headquarters of Fataborno's administrative unit, demanding the government provide additional security.

Villagers cannot farm their land or graze their cattle because they fear they will be



targeted by armed militia in the area, according to Ali.

"We are requesting the transitional government to disarm these militia groups, secure the agricultural season, stop forceful displacement, and they should immediately intervene to stop the open sale of illegal drugs in the market," Ali told VOA.

Last week, a high-level government delegation headed by Mohammed Hassan Al Taishi, a member of Sudan's ruling Sovereign Council, met with Nertiti town residents and agreed to provide additional security in the area, establish local courts and try criminal suspects.

The government applauded the citizens of Nertiti for staging peaceful protests to express their demands.

Information Minister Faisal Mohammed Saleh told protesters at last week's rally that government leaders are eager to meet with them and discuss their demands. VOA



It is illegal to get married under the age of 18 in Kenya

had already disappeared.

Police are searching for the father and the two men who had married the girl, who have all gone into hiding, local media report.

If convicted, they could be sent to prison for up to five years and/or be fined of up to 1 million Kenyan shillings (£8,000; \$10,000). BBC

EDITORIAL

The leakages at the Ministry of Finance

THE LIBERIAN PEOPLE may never get to know clearly how much of their taxes paid into government coffers are leaking into pockets of unscrupulous individuals or officials thru illegal withdrawals from dormant GoL accounts with commercial banks here.

BUT IF ONGOING probe by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning into circumstances leading to the alleged withdrawals of L\$6 million and US\$68,000 respectively from various official accounts with one of the commercial banks in the country, GN Bank Liberia Limited, is anything to gauge by then the depth of the bleeding of the state coffers is deeper than image.

FINANCE MINISTRY AUTHORITIES are claiming innocence, and have called in the National Security Agency (NSA) to probe the syndicate, which they say occurred from "Unapplied Accounts" with GN Bank Liberia Limited.

FINANCE MINISTRY SOURCES are revealing that two checkbooks went missing recently from the Ministry specifically which department, we hope the NSA investigation will unravel the details. But it is said that those missing checkbooks were allegedly used to forge signatures of relevant authorities in withdrawing said amounts.

THE LEAKAGES ARE happening at a time the economy is in a serious nose-dive with businesses shrinking and laying off employees, while critical sectors such as health and education are in a quagmire amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

LIBERIA'S COMPTROLLER General Janga Augustus Kowo, whose office manages government checks, says it observed suspicious transactions of late, which prompted calling in the NSA to investigate. However, we may never know how many of such transactions may have slipped his watch and trickled into unscrupulous pockets, robbing the citizenry of their taxes.

SECONDLY, THE ISSUE of a government functionary such as the NSA probing another state institution, in this case, the Ministry of Finance that makes budgetary allocations for all other ministries and agencies, including the NSA itself, leaves a very thin line for honesty and transparency.

OUR APPREHENSION IS founded on the case involving the government General Auditing Commission auditing the US\$25 million mop up of excess liquidity, which was administered by the Technical Economic Management Team headed by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning Samuel D. Tweah, and the Central Bank of Liberia, shrouded in lack of transparency and accountability.

A SO-CALLED "smart account" subsequently commissioned by President George Manneh Weah into the US\$25 Million following public pressure is yet to produce findings despite clear and empirical evidence that the entire exercise was marred by serious discrepancies from start to end.

WE THEREFORE, WONDER how far and transparent would the NSA probe at the Finance Ministry go in unraveling the syndicate and bringing out all perpetrators (whether small or big fish) to face the law rather than probing on the surface and covering up.

The New Dawn
FULLY INDEPENDENT

Published by the Searchlight Communications Inc.,
UN Drive, P.O. Box 1266 Opposite National Investment Commission,
Monrovia-Liberia. Tel: +231-06484201, +231-77007529, +231-886978282 /
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COMMENTARY

By Josep Borrell

Saving the Iran Nuclear Deal

Five years after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was concluded, it is on life support, following the US's reinstatement of sanctions and Iran's return to enrichment activities. Before two decades of diplomacy are squandered, all parties involved must step back from the precipice.

BRUSSELS - Five years ago this week in Vienna, the E3/EU+3 (China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, along with the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) and Iran agreed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). To mark the fifth anniversary of that occasion, we should acknowledge a simple reality: without this deal, Iran could have developed nuclear weapons by now, adding yet another source of instability to a volatile region.

Today, the JCPOA is under great pressure on multiple fronts. I am convinced that action to preserve it is not just necessary but urgent, for at least two reasons. First, it took more than 12 years for the international community and Iran to bridge their differences and conclude a deal. If the JCPOA is lost, no other comprehensive or effective alternative will be waiting around the corner.

The international community's concerns about Iran's nuclear program go way back. Discussions to lay the groundwork for a negotiated solution began in 2003 at the initiative of the French, German, and British foreign ministers, and were soon joined by then-EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Javier Solana. He and his successors, Catherine Ashton and Federica Mogherini - all of whom were supported by the European External Action Service - always kept the door open for a diplomatic solution. And, after many ups and downs, the JCPOA eventually became a reality.

The deal would have not been possible without diplomatic persistence. It required the full buy-in not just of the United States, but also of Russia, China, and of course Iran. The final agreement was solid. At more than 100 pages, and with several annexes, it set out all of the details for a clear quid pro quo: Iran would abide by strict limitations on its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of nuclear-related economic and financial sanctions.

The JCPOA is enshrined in international law through UNSC Resolution 2231 (which needs to be fully implemented). It stands as a prime example of what European diplomacy and effective multilateralism can achieve within the rules-based international order. But the process leading up to it was lengthy and difficult, all but ruling out another chance at a deal.

Second, the JCPOA is not merely a symbolic success. It delivered on its promises, and proved effective. Owing to the unprecedented level of access that it provided for the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA was able to confirm in 15 consecutive monitoring reports between January 2016 and June 2019 that Iran had met all its obligations under the deal.

As such, Europe and other partners lifted

sanctions, as specified in the agreement. Iran's international isolation was coming to an end, setting the stage for a restoration of normal economic and trade relations with the rest of the world. In May 2018, however, the US decided to withdraw from the JCPOA and reinstate sanctions in pursuit of a new strategy of "maximum pressure."

Although the restoration of US sanctions clearly had negative effects on Iran's economy and people, Iran continued to adhere to the deal for another 14 months. But now, Iran is once again accumulating worrying levels of enriched uranium and acquiring new nuclear know-how. The JCPOA is being further eroded, and fears from the past are resurfacing.

In January, France, Germany, and the UK formally expressed their concerns about Iran's renewed enrichment activities, and urged it to return to full compliance. Iran, similarly, has voiced its own concerns, arguing that it has not received the expected economic benefits from the lifting of sanctions.

As the current coordinator of the JCPOA, I will continue to work with all remaining parties to the deal, as well as with the entire international community. We will do everything possible to preserve what we achieved five years ago, and to ensure that the deal remains effective.

It is important to remember that the Iranian nuclear program remains under tight scrutiny, with its peaceful nature being constantly verified. Thanks to the IAEA inspections regime, we continue to know a great deal about the Iranian nuclear program, even under the current circumstances. If the agreement were to be lost, however, we would lose these insights and be set back by two decades.

I firmly believe that the JCPOA has become a key component of the global non-proliferation architecture, which is why I continue to call for all parties to remain committed to its full implementation. Iran, for its part, must return to full compliance with its nuclear obligations; but it also needs to be able to reap the economic benefits envisioned in the agreement. Having already established measures to protect our companies against extraterritorial US sanctions, we in Europe can do more to satisfy Iranian expectations for legitimate trade.

The EU will intensify its efforts to build bridges and narrow the gaps among all concerned parties. I am convinced that if we do manage to preserve the JCPOA and ensure its full implementation, it can become a stepping-stone toward addressing other shared concerns, including those related to regional security.

We need to return to a more positive dynamic. When the moment is ripe, we must be ready to build on the deal. The EU is willing to do so. But the first step is to protect the Iran nuclear deal as it is, in its entirety, and for all parties to comply fully with their obligations.

O-PED

By Sławomir Sierakowski

Poland Slouches on

After a noxious and underhanded campaign, Poland's incumbent president, representing the country's illiberal ruling party, has clinched a narrow re-election victory. That gives the government three more years to dismantle the country's democracy.

WARSAW - In the second round of Poland's presidential election, incumbent Andrzej Duda narrowly defeated Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski. Though he carried just six provinces in eastern Poland, compared to Trzaskowski's ten, and lost in medium and large cities, Duda's support in villages and small towns was just enough to push him over the finish line.

As this outcome suggests, Poland's political divisions increasingly reflect class divisions. The part of the country that went for Duda is decidedly poorer, with a per capita GDP of just 67% of the national average; the average unemployment rate in the provinces Duda won is 7-9%, compared to a nationwide rate of 5.4%.

Clearly, the social transfers launched by the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party and signed by Duda have proved effective electorally. The main opposition party, Civic Platform (PO), cannot shake its reputation as having "done nothing for ordinary people." Voters still remember that it was PO that raised the retirement age in 2012, and that Trzaskowski served in the PO government of former Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

Duda benefited openly from the massive machinery of the state, which PiS wielded in a style more characteristic of Eastern despotisms than Western democracies. The government directly controls two of the four largest television channels, which attacked the opposition daily. Among the smears hurled at Trzaskowski was that he would "sexualize children" (owing to his affiliations with Poland's LGBT movement) and slash social benefits in order to pay Jews reparations for World War II.

According to Thomas Boserup, an independent election observer of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, public television's election coverage was not impartial: "We were worried by instances of intolerant rhetoric of a homophobic, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic nature, particularly among the president's campaign and the public television."

Just before the election, the main public broadcaster, TVP, once again overseen by Jacek "Bull Terrier" Kurski, a PiS politician who is notorious for his norm-breaking cynicism, received a special cash infusion of two billion zloty (\$500 million). According to Press-Service Monitoring Mediów, between June 3 and June 16, 97% of the TVP flagship news program's coverage of Duda was positive, whereas 87% of its coverage of Trzaskowski was negative.

Given how polarized the Polish electorate is, it was clear early on that voter mobilization would prove decisive in the election. That is why PiS adopted aggressive "red meat" rhetoric. The point was not to win over opposition voters (considered impossible), but to mobilize the base. Poland's Council of Ministers has not met since June 12, because ministers, under the leadership of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, have been touring the country handing out checks in PiS strongholds. Overall turnout reached a record high of 68.2%.

PiS was determined to win this election, in particular, because a loss would have put an end to party leader Jarosław Kaczyński's illiberal counter-revolution. The office of president does not have significant power in Poland's parliamentary system; but it does have the legitimacy that comes with being a nationally elected position. More to the point, the president wields a legislative veto and appoints judges, ambassadors, and other important officials. Had Trzaskowski prevailed, he could have stopped PiS's legislative agenda in its tracks, and posed a new threat to Kaczyński's political camp, which includes many who, in the event of defeat, would likely face criminal liability for their behavior in office.

Poland now faces three more years of a PiS monopoly on power. The next parliamentary election will not be held until 2023. In the meantime, PiS will attempt to co-opt or marginalize all of the country's remaining independent institutions. Kaczyński and his cronies will do everything they can to ensure that future elections are mere formalities, turning Poland into a Potemkin democracy.

Time is on PiS's side, particularly with respect to the Supreme Court, where even more judges will reach retirement age and be replaced by PiS loyalists. Though there could be some resistance from judges in the lower courts, the vast majority of whom have behaved honorably and independently so far, most will likely be restrained by the threat of removal.

PiS also will try to strangle local governments that are under opposition control, by shifting costs from the central budget, cutting off funds, revoking various competencies, and so forth. And then there is what remains of independent, private media. Kaczyński claimed during the presidential election campaign that, "There was a very brutal and very far-reaching intervention on the part of the press, let's not hide that it's German, but in the future we must prevent such situations." He is now declaring that, "Polish authorities cannot allow part of the national nervous system to be in foreign hands (...) we must make sure that this nervous system in Poland is Polish."

The European Union may decide to make payment of EU "cohesion funds" conditional on the PiS government's respect for the rule of law. Germany and the Netherlands, in particular, seem to have lost patience with Poland, and may finally stop implicitly financing authoritarianism there and in Hungary. But they have accepted the status quo in Poland for four years, so it is hard to believe that things will suddenly change, especially when one considers all of the larger problems the EU is dealing with.

In any case, the 10,018,263 liberal Poles who lost to 10,440,648 million PiS supporters will continue to organize and fight. Trzaskowski remains the mayor of Warsaw and just announced plans to transform the PO into a broader social movement that will capitalize on the unprecedented enthusiasm his supporters demonstrated in this campaign.

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OPINION

By Nina L. Khrushcheva

Trump and Putin by the Book

Although life is complicated under the authoritarian misrule of US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, the same cannot be said of either man's character. Both figures were long prefigured in classic works of political satire in both countries.

MOSCOW - We are increasingly ruled not by people but by characters. Donald Trump's reality-show presidency or Vladimir Putin's cartoon authoritarianism recalls Charlie Chaplin's 1940 film, *The Great Dictator*. Yet in both Russia and the United States - polar opposites that have become near-mirror images - the Chaplinesque dictators' divisive, populist messages could be considered anything but comical.

Grappling with these absurd and disturbing characters requires that we consult more than just classic cinema. We need literature, the kind that reminds us why we are what we are. Great stories offer moral roadmaps, and when common sense is in short supply, they can keep one grounded amid chaos and uncertainty.

In the case of the US, for example, there is Sinclair Lewis's 1935 novel, *It Can't Happen Here*, or Philip Roth's 2004 novel, *The Plot Against America*. In Roth's alternative history of the 1940 US presidential election, Charles Lindbergh, representing the America First Committee, plays the role of the vulgar populist. But, unlike Lindbergh, who defeats US President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the novel, Trump's recent performance has merely made him weaker: he is now trailing Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic candidate, by ten points.

After long insisting that COVID-19 will just "fade away," Trump has been desperate to start campaigning for re-election. But his recent rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma (his first since the start of the pandemic), was a sparsely attended flop. So, he held another rally, marking Independence Day at Mount Rushmore, where he suggested that Black Lives Matter protesters are "bad, evil people."

Since then, Trump has taken to defending the indefensible: the racist legacy of the Confederacy, which even his own Republican Party has renounced. So much for America first.

Meanwhile, in Russia, where authoritarianism is a way of life, Putin, marking his 20th anniversary on the Kremlin throne, is becoming a composite of characters created by Nikolai Gogol in the nineteenth century, and by Vladimir Nabokov and Evgeny Schwartz in the twentieth.

After marshaling its own uneven and inconsistent response to the pandemic, the Russian government, in late June, suddenly suspended its quarantine measures in order to hold a parade for the 75th anniversary of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in World War II. Never mind that Victory Day was actually on May 9, the parade was merely an opening act for Putin's coup de grâce: a sham nationwide referendum to reset his constitutional term limits and ensure his hold on power indefinitely.

Like Trump, Putin was unwilling to wait for safer circumstances, and made his public appearances without a mask, undermining public-health messaging for the sake of appearing macho. But Putin's impatience is understandable. His popularity has been fading fast, owing to declining living standards and his regime's failure to pass meaningful reforms. "When you are Putin, your Russia is flourishing," quip irreverent Russians, for whom street satire has long been a coping mechanism under dictatorial regimes.

In fact, such whispers have often given rise to irreverent literature, such as Gogol's satirical masterpiece, *The Inspector-General*, in which a low-level clerk dupes a bunch of bumbling, incompetent city officials. The book has always offered obvious parallels to Putin's own rise to power. But following Putin's more recent actions, Nabokov's 1947 novel, *Bend Sinister*, is even more relevant. Nabokov offers a terrifying glimpse into the mind of a dictator, who just so happens to be short in stature, insecure, and vindictive.

This month, Ivan Safronov, a former investigative journalist who previously helped to expose secret arms sales and Kremlin shakeups, was arrested on charges of high treason. Safronov, now a media adviser to the government agency Roscosmos, stands accused of disclosing military secrets to NATO, even though he was a journalist at the time of the alleged offense. As a former clandestine operative, Putin is committed to keeping the affairs of his state from public view at any cost.

Likewise, Schwartz, a Soviet playwright who wrote lampoons of Hitler and Stalin disguised as children's fairy tales, could just as well have been ridiculing Putin. In his rendition of *The Emperor's New Clothes* (1934), he offers a familiar account of a petty and vain tyrant. In *The Shadow* (1940), a man's shadow, seeking to inflate its own importance, surreptitiously grabs power from him. And in *The Dragon* (1944), a clownish, terrifying, yet cowardly reptile shares a deep-seated desire to eat his enemies.

After 20 years in power, it was perhaps inevitable that Putin would become a literary caricature. Since Russian letters have a long tradition of mocking and satirizing political figures, Putin's adherence to form is no surprise. Less expected has been the extent to which America's president resembles Russian parodies, though Americans, accustomed to formal political cartoons or skits on *Saturday Night Live*, have yet to master the art of spontaneous street jokes. Perhaps the US is not doing badly enough yet.

Still, Trump is an impostor on par with Gogol's inspector general; and his top lickspittle, Attorney General William Barr, would be a fitting addition to any Gogolian tale of moral corruption. Trump is as small-minded and ignorant as Nabokov's dictator, and as cruel and petty as any of Schwartz's villains.

Trump even outdoes Putin, who at least is more strategic in his populist exhibitionism. Trump's Twitter-tantrums - "Sad!" "Presidential Harassment!" - are like something out of the work of nineteenth-century satirist Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin. In his 1870 parody, *The History of a Town*, Saltykov-Shchedrin describes a city official nicknamed "The Little Organ," who is capable of mustering only two responses to his subordinates: "I'll destroy" and "I won't tolerate."

Rude and unempathetic, *The Little Organ* issues endless decrees and brooks no opposition. In the end, the reader learns that his brain was actually a musical instrument with only two keys.

These and other classic works offer some consolation, reminding us that there are limits to despotism. Populism and self-aggrandizement cannot last forever, especially when the message is so at odds with reality.

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FEATURE

ARTICLE

A Mother of Eight Narrates Ordeal in Covid-19

Bettie Kemah Johnson-Mbayo,
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Monrovia - Before the Coronavirus pandemic outbreak, Bone Kortie, 43 years, was a petty business trader in Paynesville city, Parker Paint community. Paynesville City is one of the cities surrounding Liberia's densely populated capital city of Monrovia. Bone is a mother of eight children between the ages of three and 16 years. Like so many other women across Liberia, she takes care of extended family too. Bone is the biological parent of five children, while the others are those of her late sister who died tragically in a car crash in 2017.

She is famously called by regular clients as 'cold milk' - a name she earned from the tasty cold milk she sold prior to the pandemic in Liberia. Bone's life has been marked by economic hardship, which she has mostly had to overcome on her own. She recounted that the father of her three-year-old son disappeared with a promise to turn their little savings into profit "up country". Until now he has not returned.

"My son's father asked for the money we were saving

filling of the foundation, is what that is keeping us alive right now. "Sometimes when I think about my suffering I can just want commit suicide, my life now is not easy, the condition I find myself in, I can't explain," she said. Prior to Covid-19, Bone and her children ate two meals a day, but now, it is either one meal a day or none.

With tears running down her cheeks, she said, "As long I don't wash people clothes or carry dirt for the foundation, I can't feed my children. This gone Saturday we didn't eat but we ate Sunday, it was from a neighbour hand-out. I kept small of the food for Monday...I told the children if they eat early Monday morning there will be no food in the evening. So, you see, I can starve the children because I don't have it and sometimes they don't understand. Even on Monday they ate at 4pm but the food wasn't enough, I made them to drink enough water. I have no thought [I don't know] if they were okay, but they slept till Tuesday."

On Tuesday and Wednesday Bone went to work and returned home with five cups of rice, which she steamed, and the children ate without any soup nor

Luckily, Bone is now one of the 300 project participants for the social protection project funded by Oxfam GB through its Catastrophe (CAT) Fund and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (Danida).

She was selected by Community Health Initiatives, a partner to Oxfam in Liberia.

The project aims to minimize the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on women and girls, and it was pre-designed to address their basic food and non-food needs by providing a digital cash transfer via mobile phone. Mohammed Massalay, Covid-19 focal point said the cash assistance is unconditional; participants have the freedom to use the funds to address their most unmet needs during this crisis and in times of lock down.

"Since we are digitalizing the transfer of cash to achieve on these results, we were compelled to ensure that participants were rightly selected and have active mobile money accounts. Selection criteria was developed with our partners and was used during the process targeting the most in-need households," He continues, "after the selection process we noticed that 50% (150 households) of the project participants did not have mobile phones and no mobile money account due to age and some level of vulnerability. We procured phones and sims for these 50% participants and registered a mobile money account of their own."

The project is locally led by two women partners: Community Healthcare Initiative (CHI) and West Point Women for Health and Development Organization, both largely focused on women rights. Six urban poor or slum communities were chosen West Point, PHP, Newport Street, King Gray, Pipeline and Chicken Soup Factory.

Both partners appreciated Oxfam for the support adding that the cash transfer is the first to empower women through cash transfer during the pandemic. Shah Liton, Country Director, Oxfam in Liberia said the effect of the pandemic has also largely affected Liberia with an already poor economy.

He explains that Oxfam in Liberia and partners have committed to supporting the Government efforts in line with our overall programming to address inequalities and enhance social protection during this pandemic.

The project will allow these women and their families to have access to basic food needs and non-food items to overcome the impact of Covid-19 crisis, thereby protecting them from exposure to Covid-19. Each project participant received \$109.50 United States dollars to their mobile money accounts. Currently, Bone with a smile beaming across her face, displays the text showing receipt of payment on her phone via mobile money.

"I am going to buy food for the house and start selling charcoal, I do not know when this sickness will go, and I can't use all the money to buy food," she said. The transfer is a dream come through, my children and I can't say much but to say thank you for coming to our rescue, now we can eat daily." She said. Oxfam would like to do more to alleviate the pressure brought support Bone's business idea during the Covid-19 pandemic and is working to raise the funds to do just that.



Bone Kortie

for the family to go do business but since he left, I was pregnant, now he (our son) is three years, I have no idea if he is alive or dead." Since the start of Covid-19, Bone's business has faltered, and she has exhausted all her earnings from the sale of cold milk, which is the only source of income to feed her entire family.

"Since the start of the sickness, the people are afraid to buy the milk, nobody wants to buy, and I was losing so, I resolved to not sell it anymore," she said. Life for Bone and her children is unbearable according to her. She is now doing casual labour, collecting and piling dirt for a house foundation. Three of the children are selling plastic bags in the streets while the oldest son is doing yard work to help the family survive.

"I am currently helping someone to fill their house foundation. I am pay at L\$150.00 [about 75 cents] and at least 10 loads must be taken to the site in a day. The money we raise from the sales of plastic and the

oil. Thursday was a "no food day" for Bone and her children because of the heavy rain that resulted in no work for her and her sons selling the plastics. Now that Liberia has entered the rainy season, there will likely be more no food days to come.

"Today [Thursday] till now no food, the plan I have is, when it is late evenings I will go to the lady that I can wash for to give me the clothes to wash, I know she will pay but going for the clothes is an assurance that we will eat Friday because tonight, I am hoping that someone can help me for the children not to sleep hungry again."

Despite the struggle for food, Bone is also faced with an increase in the rent of her one-bedroom apartment where she and the eight children live. "See me, for the children I can't find it and the landlord said the rent has increase, where am I going to take the money from?" she asks rhetorically.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Senate to meet aggrieved staffers

By Ethel A Tweh

Maryland County Senator Gble-bo Brown says the Senate will invite the Legislative Finance office to explain if the money that was allotted for staffers of the Legislature was actually given to them, a day after staffers threatened to lock the gates

Budget to meet with the aggrieved workers on 16 July.

He orders that the Senate officials explain to the aggrieved staffers the harmonization process and how their allowance should be increased, noting that findings from the meeting with the staffers will determine if they will summon the Finance Office

dollars component of every government entity was cut off completely.

The two senators revealed that employees got 80% of allowances paid in USD, while 20% of it is in Liberian dollars.

The Senate officials indicate that it was agreed by the Senators that LD\$557,000 should be cut from their money and given to their staffers, but it should be translated into United States Dollars.

Senator Brown suggests that the Senate should invite the Legislative Finance office to explain if the money that was allotted for their staffers was actually given to them.

According to the chair on Ways, Means and Finance and Bomi County Senator Morris Saytumah, the staffers got increment on their allowance instead, saying after the harmonization process, Directors' allowance increased to US\$915, up from US\$850.

Senator Saytumah notes that after they agreed, there was a copy of it given to every Senator to go and explain to their respective staffers as to how the harmonization went and also the money that was added to their salaries by the Senators.

"If the senators had

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10



Spokesperson Charles Brown

of the Legislature if their Liberian dollars salaries are not restituted.

Senate President Pro - tempore Albert Chie of Grand Kru County on Wednesday, 15 July instructed the heads of the Ways, Means, Finance and

for investigation.

On Wednesday, the head of the Budget Senator Gble-bo Brown and the chair on Ways, Means and Finance, Bomi County Senator Morris Saytumah indicated that during the country's harmonization process in 2019, the Liberian

Disbanded soldiers sue Ex-chairman for L\$732, 000

By Lewis S. Teh

Officials of the disbanded soldiers of the Armed Forces of Liberia have dragged their former chairman to court for alleged misapplication of rental totally 732,000 Liberian Dollars, but ex-chairman Alexander Geor dismissed the claim as baseless.

President George M. Weah appointed Mr. Alexander Geor recently as deputy director for the Bureau of Veterans' Affairs.

Former spokesman for the disbanded soldiers, Retired Capt. Jerry Kollie said, the body was established since 2005, and have had several leaderships, including his own ascendancy as spokesperson.

He disclosed that they

chairman of the disbanded armed forces of Liberia."

Kollie said they do not oppose Chairman Geor reentering government, but noted that there are some people, who believe Liberia is a country of men, rather than law, something he described as a complete contradiction, saying, "If we say we are schooled than we should understand what the rule of law is."

However, former chairman Alexander Geor countered that the claim made against him by Capt. Kollie and others is false and misleading.

He said at no time did he misapplied US\$ 3,660.00 as alleged by Geor.

"I think Capt. Kollie just



River Gee citizens reject new boundary

By Winston W. Parley

Some concerned citizens of River Gee County have alarmed of potential land and tribal conflict allegedly being nurtured between two towns in River Gee as a result of very chaotic decisions taken by Internal Affairs Minister Varney A. Sirleaf and River Gee County Superintendent Philip Q. Nyenuoh in a boundary dispute.

Addressing a press conference in Clara Town Wednesday, 15 July, the Chedepo Geeken Development Association of River Gee County alleged that Minister Varney Sirleaf disregard the original boundary called Klenegbae that was established in 1965 between ChedepoGeeken and Potupo Gbaquiah by strangely establishing his own boundary on July 1, 2020 between the two towns.

On behalf of the group, its Acting president Mr. Gabriel Gbacy Teh Nyantorh alleges

that Minister Sirleaf strangely established between the two towns to protect the interest of some key government officials, saying the decision is

about this unreasonable and unprecedented decision made by the Internal Affairs Minister Hon. Sirleaf concerning the land dispute,"



"disastrous, chaotic and it lays the basis for tribal conflict and unrest.

"We are totally dissatisfied

Mr. Nyantorh says.

"We realize that some key government officials who are instigating this conflict are

raised some money recently and gave it to Ex-chairman Geor to pay rental for their office, but to their surprise, he [Geor] allegedly misapplied the fund.

"We the officials asked him to officially turn our office over, demanding proper accountability since he has been appointed by the President, something he fails to do; against this backdrop the institution thought it expedient to issue a lawsuit against him", Kollie explained.

According to him, the amount in question is 732, 000 Liberian Dollars or an equivalent of US\$ 3,660.00, adding, "We didn't take him to court as deputy director for veteran's affairs; we took him to court as the former

want to get some recognition from elsewhere; we pay our rent according to collection; I'm no longer a member of the disbanded armed forces since I got appointed. Before leaving, I asked all commanders to pay the sum of 2,500 Liberian Dollars that will go toward payment of their rent since I was no more within the group", Geor explained.

He recalled that old army was disbanded and a new force recruited and trained with the help of the United Nations, ensuring geographical balance, a minimum requirement of high school education, non-factional alliance and a patriotic commitment to the State instead of the status quo.

-Editing by Jonathan Browne

doing so because a certain portion of the land called Piteatogbea that falls on the side of Chedepo Geeken contains natural resources that they want to extract," he

alleges.

To authenticate these claims, this paper has contacted the Ministry of

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Senate confirms NEC chair-designate -Ignores Cllr. Johnson's petition

By Ethel A Tweh

The Liberian Senate's Committee on Autonomous Agencies and Ministries chaired by Bong County Senator Henrique Togba has confirmed National Election Commission (NEC) chair-designate Mrs. Davidetta Brown - Lansannah, ignoring a petition filed before the Supreme Court of Liberia by former special prosecutor Cllr. Arthur T. Johnson to declare the appointment and confirmation hearing unconstitutional.

The committee's report to plenary on 15 July says Mrs.

In the petition before the Supreme Court, Cllr. Johnson wants the high court to determine the constitutionality of the appointments and confirmation hearings of Mrs. Reeves and Mrs. Browne-Lansannah, saying if it fails to determine the constitutionality of these appointments and their confirmation hearings, the actions of the Executive Branch and the Liberian Senate will undermine the independence of the NEC.

Cllr. Johnson notes that the National Elections Law of Liberia gives the president the power to nominate and, with the consent of the Senate,

George Manneh Weah and confirmation by the Senate, Cllr. Johnson laments that the president again re-appointed the two officials in July 2020.

Cllr. Johnson believes that the action of the Liberian Senate to conduct confirmation hearings for the two presidential appointees is unconstitutional and undermines the Act establishing the NEC.

According to him, no appointment/removal can be made while the effective seven-year term of the commissioner (s) without the end of the seven-year term and/or proved misconduct.

"Therefore, the fact that Mrs. Browne-Lansannah and Mrs. Reeves were recently commissioned, they cannot be removed or there can be no interference with the seven years tenures of the two NEC officials, by re-appointment to another position Co-Chairperson or Chairperson or removal without proved misconduct," Cllr. Johnson says.

He adds that this will also render the sacred Senate confirmation proceedings defined by the Constitution of Liberia as symbolic and cosmetic with no actual and functional effect as was determined by the framers of the Constitution of Liberia.

He asks the court to declare the appointment of the two officials and the Senate confirmation hearings being conducted as unconstitutional and prohibit, refrain and restrain such acts of the respondents.

Filing the petition, Cllr. Johnson says as Liberian citizen, he is affected by every decision growing out of the appointment (s) of the commissioners to head the NEC and under the public interest doctrine, he has the legal right and capacity to petition the Supreme Court about the determination of the constitutionality of appointment of the Commissioners of NEC.-- Edited by Winston W. Parley



Mrs. Davidetta Brown - Lansannah

Brown - Lasannah is best suited for the job and therefore she should be confirmed. The Senate unanimously agreed that the decision of confirmation be taken in executive session.

The Senate committee's decision came Wednesday following Cllr. Johnson's petition to the Supreme Court in which he notes that Mrs. Brown - Lasannah and Mrs. Tarplah Reeves were serving tenure positions at the NEC that had not expired when they got re-appointed recently by President George Manneh Weah.

appoint and commission the Chairman, Co-Chairman and other members of the Elections Commission who shall hold their office during good behavior for a period of seven years, effective as of the date of their commissioning.

The law says these officials may however be removed upon proof of misconduct.

While the two females Mrs. Tarplah Reeves, Commissioner, and Mrs. Davidetta Browne - Lansannah, Co-chairperson were serving their seven year tenures respectively at NEC following their previous appointment by President

Starts from page 10

Liberian fishermen oppose

catch and women to process. However, he noted that the Chinese supertrawlers would unfairly compete for the same fish as local fishermen and reverse all of that progress. "We are calling on the government to safeguard Liberian coastal communities by refusing fishing licenses for these vessels."

According to the President of the Montserrado County

and Bomi County Community Management Associations, small-scale fishing is an important source of jobs for people here in Monrovia and across the country.

"In earlier decades, local fishermen could not earn a livelihood because of rampant overfishing, but in recent years things have improved. These supertrawlers would be a big step backwards, harming jobs

and future food security", Mr. P. NyanteeSleh laments.

The Liberian groups were joined by the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF), an international non-governmental organisation that works in Liberia and other West African countries to combat illegal fishing and promote the sustainable management of marine resources.

Maryland County enforces masks wearing

By Patrick Mensah, Maryland County

Amidst the increase of COVID-19 cases in Maryland County, southeast Liberia, Joint Security forces there have launched compulsory wearing of nose masks in public to contain spread of the virus.

The Joint Security and local authorities launched the campaign on Monday, July 13, after confirmed COVID-19 cases in the coastal county hit 14 recently.

The Commander of Maryland County COVID-19 Task Force, Lincoln Wesseh, said the daily nose masks wearing restriction followed rapid increase in new infections in Maryland, Grand Kru and River Gee counties, respectively.

Commander Wesseh noted that in the absence of restricting citizens' movement in the southeast, the best remedy is to making sure citizens traveling from one county to another abided by

for us to act because the numbers of cases are increasing on a daily basis", he said.

Wesseh stressed that the daily nose masks wearing is not restricted to bike riders and drivers, but will be extended to market places, entertainment centers, communities, worship centers and video clubs, among others.

Meanwhile, the Liberia National Police Commander in Pleebo, Maryland County, Lavisious Toe, has commended the COVID-19 Task Force for collaborating with the police in enforcing the health protocols.

Toe said though the restriction comes as a direct mandate from the local authorities, but there are some hard-headed individuals in the county, who still doubt existence of the virus and are refusing wear nose masks.

The Police Commander disclosed that on day one of the enforcement on Monday,



preventive measures prescribed by the Ministry of Health.

He said those measures can be effectively enforced if the Task Force worked closely with the Liberia National Police.

Commander Wesseh also disclosed that several check points have been erected in county to regulate movement of citizens, particularly motorcyclists and drivers who don't usually wear nose masks while in the traffic.

He said the COVID-19 Taskforce has been collaborating with Joint Security, and they are fully prepared to enforce all health protocols, including regular hands washing, social distancing and compulsory nose masks wearing.

"We can't sit here as COVID-19 Task Force, seeing the cases increasing without buttressing effort of the Liberia National Police. I think this is the time

July 13, the Police faced assault from motorcyclists and drivers.

He called on residents, including commercial drivers, motorcyclists and passengers to always wear nose masks in the public.

District Statutory Superintendent, Alysious Williams, lauded the Task Force and the Police for enforcing the compulsory nose masks wearing.

He said as local leaders, one of their functions is to make sure instructions and polices from national government are implemented or enforced.

He assured that the Police have the support of local authorities to regulate and arrest violators doing the exercise, emphasizing that the measures are for the safety of everyone, so all citizens should abide.

Français

Scandale financier : 14 suspects mis en examen par la NSA

La directrice du Trésor, Madame LorpuSworh, six (6) autres employés du ministère et sept (7) membres du personnel de GN Bank Liberia Limited ont été mis en examen dans le cadre du récent scandale financier relatif au retrait frauduleux présumé de 6 millions de

dollars libériens et 68 000 \$ US de plusieurs comptes officiels de l'Etat auprès de la banque commerciale, A en croire les autorités du ministère des finances.

Selon des informations, les 14 suspects sont quotidiennement interrogés au sujet de leur rôle dans le scandale financier.

Le ministère des Finances et de la Planification du développement (MFDP), est actuellement secoué par une affaire de chèques qui auraient facilité le retrait frauduleux de 6 millions de dollars libériens et 68 000 dollars américains de son compte à GN Bank.

A en croire les autorités du ministère des Finances, le scandale financier implique les « comptes non appliqués » du ministère auprès de GN Bank Liberia Limited et d'autres banques commerciales opérant ici.

Récemment, nous avons appris qu'un groupe mafieux qui sévit au ministère des Finances et de la Planification du Développement et dans d'autres institutions financières avait extorqué plusieurs milliers de dollars au gouvernement du Libéria.

La dernière opération criminelle du groupe mafieux aurait eu lieu à GN Bank Liberia Limited avec un retrait frauduleux de 6 millions de dollars libériens et

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Un avocat qualifie d'illégale la nomination de la nouvelle présidente de la NEC et introduit un recours

L'ancien procureur spécial du Libéria, Me Arthur T. Johnson, a introduit un recours auprès de la Cour suprême pour exiger l'invalidité de la nomination et de la confirmation de Mme Tarplah Reeves et de Mme Davidetta Browne-Lansannah, respectivement comme vice-présidente et présidente de la Commission électorale nationale (NEC).

Avant leur nomination par le président George Manneh Weah et leur confirmation par le Sénat, les deux femmes occupaient des postes dont le mandat est de 7 ans et qui n'avait pas expiré. Me Johnson a indiqué que même si la loi sur la constitution du Libéria donne au président le pouvoir de nommer, avec le consentement du Sénat, le président et les membres de la Commission électorale pour une période de sept ans, cela ne lui donne pas le droit de les licencier ou de prolonger leur mandat. La loi dit cependant que ces fonctionnaires ne peuvent être limogés qu'en cas d'une faute prouvée. A noter que les deux femmes, c'est-à-dire Mme Teplah Reeves et Mme

Davidetta Browne-Lansannah, étaient respectivement commissaire et co-présidente de la commission électorale et leur mandat était de 7 ans. Cependant elles ont été nommées par le président George Manneh Weah et confirmées par le Sénat avant la fin de ce mandat. C'est bien cela que le juriste Johnson qualifie d'inconstitutionnel, d'où le recours à la cour suprême.

Il croit qu'il est illégal qu'un fonctionnaire nommé à un

poste pour un mandat déterminé soit limogé ou nommé à un autre poste avant la fin de son mandat.

«Par conséquent, étant donné que les mandats de Mme Browne-Lansannah et Mme Reeves sont encore en cours, elles ne peuvent pas être licenciées ni nommées à d'autres postes. Elles ne peuvent être limogées qu'en cas de faute grave », a dit Me Johnson.

Il craint que le pouvoir

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



En Guinée, l'opposition veut sonner la mobilisation

Après une pause en raison de la Covid-19, l'opposition sera dans les rues lundi pour protester contre une éventuelle candidature du président Alpha Condé.

Après les manifestations des jeunes de la ville de Kankan contre le manque d'eau et d'électricité, des émeutes ont également éclaté, mardi (14.07.20), dans la ville voisine de Siguiri. Là-bas aussi, des jeunes sont descendus dans la rue pour exiger une meilleure desserte en électricité de la Haute Guinée - fief traditionnel du parti au pouvoir, le RPG arc-en-ciel.

De son côté, l'opposition politique se prépare à occuper la rue, lundi (20.07.20), pour exiger le départ du président Alpha Condé, accusé de parjure et soupçonné de vouloir briguer un nouveau mandat à l'issue de son second et dernier quinquennat.

une délégation de la Cédéao qui devait venir à un moment donné. Donc, on n'a plus de recours, le seul moyen qui nous reste c'est la rue."

Le parti au pouvoir pas ébranlé

Alors que le gouvernement a lancé un appel pour un dialogue inclusif, le parti au pouvoir estime que les menaces de l'opposition sont loin de l'ébranler. Selon Sidiki Touré, qui dirige la cellule de communication du RPG arc-en-ciel, les partis de l'opposition ont tout essayé pour empêcher le président Alpha Condé de travailler afin de changer les conditions de vie des populations.

"Nous connaissons notre pays. Nous connaissons la sociologie de notre pays. La moindre agitation dans ce pays profite aux politiques qui se font inviter pour mobiliser leurs jeunes et leurs militants, parce qu'ils ont tout fait pour



Mettre la pression sur le président de la République Après avoir marqué une pause en raison de la pandémie du nouveau coronavirus, les partis d'opposition, membres du Front national pour la défense de la Constitution (FNDC), ont décidé, en effet, de mettre à nouveau la pression sur le pouvoir d'Alpha Condé.

Pour Maimouna Bah, de l'Union des forces démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG), en dehors de la rue, l'opposition guinéenne n'a plus aucun moyen pour faire partir le président Alpha Condé :

"On a commencé par la sensibilisation. On a rencontré toutes les personnalités morales, des institutions nationales et internationales, ça n'a pas marché. Alpha Condé a même refusé les religieux de notre pays. Il a fermé la porte à tout le monde. Il a fermé la porte à

saboter le régime du président Alpha Condé, ils n'ont pas pu. Ils ont tout fait pour manifester contre le changement de la Constitution, ils n'ont pas pu. Parce que le peuple de Guinée, dans sa majorité écrasante, a décidé d'accompagner le Pr. Alpha Condé."

A quelques semaines de la convention du parti au pouvoir prévue le 5 août et qui devrait désigner son candidat à la présidentielle, les jeunes de la mouvance présidentielle veulent aussi se faire entendre.

A N'zérékoré, dans le sud du pays, des mouvements de jeunes exigent du pouvoir leur part du gâteau. Ils réclament, entre autres, leur intégration dans la fonction publique.

Français

Scandale financier :

68 000 \$ US. De multiples retraits auraient été effectués dans les différentes branches de la banque. La branche de Clara Town aurait été le principal point de retrait, en raison de la présence d'une forte liquidité là-bas.

La présence d'un présumé groupe mafieux au ministère des finances aurait été découverte à la suite d'une série d'enquêtes menées par des responsables du ministère auprès de GN Bank Liberia Limited, selon des sources du ministère des Finances.

La nature de l'enquête n'a pas été révélée, mais la mafia, selon des sources de la National Security Agency, opère depuis un certain temps maintenant à partir des « comptes non appliqués » dans diverses banques commerciales du pays.

Le Bureau du contrôleur général, a déclaré avoir observé des transactions suspectes, c'est pourquoi le contrôleur général a invité l'Agence de sécurité nationale à mener des enquêtes.

« C'est grâce à la politique de surveillance rigide que nous avons mise en place que nous avons pu découvrir cet acte. Cela aurait pu être plus grave si nous n'avions pas mis en place ces mesures. Cela dure peut-être depuis des années. Nous avons trouvé certaines de ces personnes au ministère lorsque nous sommes arrivés aux affaires et nous ne les avons pas enlevés », a déclaré M. Kowo à ce journal samedi soir.

« La NSA a commencé à mener ses enquêtes. Un certain nombre d'employés du ministère et de GN Bank ont déjà été arrêtés », a-t-il expliqué. Un « compte non appliqué » est un compte spécial du gouvernement du Libéria créé pour payer les fonctionnaires.

Ces comptes sont détenus par le ministère et les salaires qui ne sont pas versés sur les comptes des employés y sont versés. Cela arrive quand des paiements sont rejetés par le système bancaire lors d'un traitement automatisé à

cause d'une ou plusieurs erreur(s) soit dans le nom ou le numéro de compte, ou d'une doublure sur le fichier salarial.

Selon le contrôleur général Kowo, le montant en question (qui est porté disparu du compte de l'Etat) est d'environ de 6 millions de dollars libériens et 68 000 \$ US.

« Le ministère attendra conclusion de l'enquête de la NSA pour décider de la prochaine ligne de conduite. Mais pour l'instant, nous ne voulons rien dire. Ce que nous avons fait ici, c'est de mettre en place ici des procédures plus strictes », a-t-il dit.

Une source proche de l'enquête a déclaré que la conclusion devrait être publiée sous peu. « Mon informateur m'a dit qu'ils sont allés très loin dans les enquêtes et devraient rendre leur rapport bientôt », a dit la source qui a voulu bien s'exprimer sous le couvert d'anonymat.

A en croire une autre source, deux chéquiers ont disparu au ministère. Elle soupçonne que ces chéquiers ont été utilisés pour falsifier les signatures des fonctionnaires du ministère afin de retirer l'argent de ce montant.

Le ministère des finances et de la planification du développement a gelé toutes les transactions jusqu'à nouvel ordre.

M. Kowo, qui a vanté sa probité morale pour avoir travaillé avec la Commission générale d'audit en tant qu'auditeur principal, s'est dit totalement attaché à la sécurisation des fonds publics. « En ce qui concerne les deniers publics, nous devons être très prudents. Chaque centime doit être comptabilisé dans ce ministère. Nous ferons tout pour aller au fond de cette affaire. Peut-être que cela dure depuis un certain temps », a-t-il dit.

Pour sa part, M. Samora Wolokollie, ministre des Finances adjoint chargé des dépenses, s'est dit préoccupé par les transactions, accusant le trésor de n'avoir pas fait preuve de vigilance. Il n'a cependant pas pu infirmer ni confirmer la disparition des chéquiers.

Un avocat qualifié d'illégale la nomination de la

sacré et constitutionnel du Senat de confirmer les fonctionnaires nommés par le président de la république soit devenu un simple acte symbolique et cosmétique qui

n'a aucun effet réel et fonctionnel. Il demande ainsi au tribunal d'invalider la nomination et la confirmation des deux dames.

COMMENTAIRE

By Josep Borrell

Sauver l'accord nucléaire iranien

BRUXELLES - Il y a cinq ans à Vienne, les E3/UE+3 (la Chine, la France, l'Allemagne, la Fédération de Russie, le Royaume-Uni et les États-Unis, ainsi que le Haut représentant de l'Union européenne pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité) et l'Iran ont convenu d'un Plan d'action global conjoint (PAGC). Pour marquer le cinquième anniversaire de cet accord, nous devrions commencer par reconnaître la simple réalité : sans cet accord, l'Iran aurait pu, dès maintenant, disposer d'armes nucléaires, ajoutant encore une source d'instabilité supplémentaire dans une région qui n'en manque déjà pas.

Aujourd'hui, le PAGC est soumis à une forte pression sur de multiples fronts. Je suis convaincu qu'agir pour le préserver est non seulement nécessaire mais urgent, et ce pour au moins deux raisons. Premièrement, il a fallu plus de 12 ans à la communauté internationale et à l'Iran pour surmonter leurs divergences et conclure un accord. Si le PAGC est remis en cause, aucune alternative globale ou efficace n'est disponible au coin de la rue.

Les inquiétudes de la communauté internationale concernant le programme nucléaire iranien remontent à loin. Les discussions visant à jeter les bases d'une solution négociée ont débuté en 2003 à l'initiative des ministres français, allemand et britannique des Affaires étrangères, auxquelles s'était rapidement joint Javier Solana, alors Haut représentant de l'UE pour les affaires étrangères. Lui et ses successeurs, Catherine Ashton et Federica Mogherini - soutenus par le Service européen pour l'action extérieure - ont toujours veillé à garder la porte ouverte à une solution diplomatique. Et, après des hauts et des bas nombreux, le PAGC a fini par devenir réalité.

L'accord n'aurait pas été possible sans persévérance diplomatique. Il a nécessité l'adhésion totale non seulement des États-Unis, mais aussi de la Russie, de la Chine et, bien sûr, de l'Iran. L'accord final était solide. Avec plus de 100 pages et plusieurs annexes, il décrivait de façon détaillée les termes d'un donnant-donnant très clair : en échange de la levée des sanctions économiques et financières, l'Iran acceptait de limiter de façon stricte l'ampleur de son programme nucléaire.

Le PAGC a été inscrit dans le droit international avec la résolution 2231 du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies (lien externe) (qui doit être pleinement mise en œuvre). Il constitue un parfait exemple de ce que la diplomatie européenne et un multilatéralisme efficace peuvent réaliser dans le cadre d'un ordre international fondé sur des règles. Mais le processus qui l'a précédé a été long et difficile, ce qui exclue en pratique toute perspective de parvenir à un autre accord.

Deuxièmement, le PAGC n'a pas simplement été un succès symbolique. Il a tenu ses promesses et prouvé son efficacité. Grâce à l'accès sans précédent qu'il a permis pour l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique, celle-ci a pu confirmer, entre janvier 2016 et juin 2019, au travers de 15 rapports consécutifs que l'Iran avait respecté toutes les obligations prévues dans le cadre de l'accord.

En conséquence, conformément à l'accord, l'Europe et d'autres partenaires ont levé les sanctions. L'isolement international de l'Iran

touchait à sa fin, ouvrant la voie au rétablissement de relations économiques et commerciales normales avec le reste du monde. En mai 2018, les États-Unis ont cependant décidé de se retirer du PAGC et de réinstaurer des sanctions en poursuivant une nouvelle stratégie de "pression maximale".

Bien que le rétablissement des sanctions américaines ait clairement eu des effets négatifs sur l'économie et la population iraniennes, l'Iran a continué à respecter l'accord encore pendant 14 mois. Mais maintenant, l'Iran s'est remis à accumuler à nouveau des quantités inquiétantes d'uranium enrichi et a acquis des technologies nucléaires plus avancées. Le PAGC est encore davantage menacé et les craintes du passé refont surface.

En janvier, la France, l'Allemagne et le Royaume-Uni ont officiellement exprimé (lien externe) leurs préoccupations concernant la reprise des activités d'enrichissement de l'Iran et l'ont exhorté à revenir au respect intégral de l'accord. De son côté, l'Iran a exprimé ses propres inquiétudes, arguant qu'il n'a pas reçu les avantages économiques attendus de la levée des sanctions.

En tant que coordinateur du PAGC, je continuerai à travailler avec toutes les parties qui continuent d'adhérer à l'accord, ainsi qu'avec l'ensemble de la communauté internationale. Nous ferons tout ce qui est possible pour préserver ce que nous avons réussi à faire il y a cinq ans et garantir que l'accord demeure effectif.

Il est important de se rappeler que le programme nucléaire iranien reste sous étroite surveillance, sa nature pacifique étant constamment vérifiée. Grâce au régime d'inspections de l'AIEA, nous continuons, même dans les circonstances actuelles, à recueillir beaucoup d'informations au sujet du programme nucléaire iranien. Si l'accord devait être remis en cause, nous perdriions l'accès à ces connaissances et reculons de deux décennies.

Je suis fermement convaincu que le PAGC est devenu un élément clé de l'architecture mondiale de non-prolifération, raison pour laquelle je continue d'appeler toutes les parties à demander sa mise en œuvre intégrale. L'Iran, pour sa part, doit revenir à un respect total de ses obligations nucléaires ; mais le pays doit aussi être en mesure de récolter les avantages économiques prévus dans l'accord. En Europe, nous avons commencé à mettre en place des mesures pour protéger nos entreprises contre les sanctions extraterritoriales des États-Unis, mais nous pouvons encore faire davantage pour satisfaire les attentes iraniennes en matière de commerce légitime.

L'UE intensifiera ses efforts pour jeter des ponts et réduire les divergences entre toutes les parties concernées. Je suis convaincu que si nous parvenons à préserver le PAGC et à assurer sa mise en œuvre complète, il peut devenir un tremplin pour répondre à d'autres préoccupations communes, notamment celles liées à la sécurité régionale.

Nous devons revenir à une dynamique plus positive. Lorsque les temps seront mûrs, nous devons être prêts à faire évoluer l'accord. L'UE a la volonté d'aller dans ce sens. Mais la première étape consiste à protéger l'accord nucléaire iranien tel qu'il est, dans son intégralité, et à faire en sorte que toutes les parties respectent pleinement leurs obligations.

Liberian fishermen oppose licensing of Chinese supertrawlers

Liberian fishermen have opposed the arrival in Liberia of six Chinese supertrawlers with the potential to catch over 12,000 tonnes of fish a year - nearly twice the nation's sustainable catch of key fish populations.

Small-scale canoe fishers

According to the release, six Chinese supertrawlers arrived in Monrovia on 15 June. They include Hao Yuan Yu 860, 861, 862, 863, 865 and 866 - all recently constructed in China.

It says after attempting to undertake fishing operations in Mozambique, the Chinese headed for Liberia, and each

do not "threaten the sustainability of a fishery resource" are licensed by National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority.

It notes that the arrival of these trawlers is a part of a major influx of foreign industrial vessels across West Africa, detailing that in Senegal, 52 vessels applied for licenses, which would have put an enormous strain on local marine resources, but were rejected, while in Ghana, three new trawlers from China still await a decision from the government, amid serious concern from local canoe fishers.

The President of the Liberia Artisanal Fishermen Association, Jerry N. Blamo, hopes that the government will respect Liberian law and protect the interests of local coastal communities and their shared marine environment.

"Our waters support local jobs and provide good quality food, but granting these massive supertrawlers fishing licenses would destroy that", he warns.

Charles Simpson, President of the Grand Cape Mount County Community Management Association, said, over the last decade, the Association has worked extremely hard to stop illegal fishing and overfishing, saying, "We slowly see more fish for local fishermen to

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10



here, including the Liberia Artisanal Fishermen Association, the Grand Cape Mount County and Montserrado County Community Management Associations released a joint statement, calling on the Government of Liberia to consider the livelihoods and food security of coastal communities and reject the Chinese request for fishing licenses.

supertrawler may be capable of catching at least 2,000 tonnes of fish per year of key bottom-dwelling species that are important to local fishermen, which represents 4,000 times the catch of a local Kru canoe that employs about four Liberians and catch an average of 500 kg yearly.

According to the release, Liberian fisheries legislation requires that only vessels that

COVID-19 figures

Starts from back page

workers. 99% of confirmed cases are locally transmitted and 1% remains imported, the country's National Public Health Institute (NPHIL) reported.

According to the NPHIL during the reporting period, cumulatively 9,939 samples have been tested at the national reference laboratory.

President George Weah has since extended the State of emergency for additional 30 days in an effort to mitigate and contain the spread of the virus across the country.

Dr. Jallah said the government is trying to balance the economy and public health, therefore there is a need for the public to sacrifice for a little while, which is the compulsory wearing of mask at all

shopping centers and markets. "Without the wearing of masks, the COVID-19 will take a long time to go and continue to spread in our neighborhoods," she said.

Dr. Jallah noted that the benefit of wearing mask is to protect the local community. She was quick to add that the rising of the COVID-19 in the various localities is not as a result of testing but rather community spread. She opined that the wearing of mask would help protect the community and limited the spread of the virus.

She also caution that anyone can be a victim of the virus and so everyone must work towards reducing its spread by taking the necessary health precautions.

Senate to meet

Starts from back page

explained to their staffers, there wouldn't have been a problem by now," he says.

Senators Gble-bo Brown, Darius Dillon and Jonathan Kaipay, among others, were called for the Finance Office to come before the plenary of the Liberian Senate to explain if the money was distributed among the staffers.

But Senator Varney Sherman of Grand Cape Mount County argued that there's no need for the Finance Office to appear before them, rather suggesting that the heads of the Ways, Means, Finance and Budget meet with the staffers to talk about how the harmonization process went

on. Grand Bassa County Senator Jonathan Kaipay who brought the concerns of the staffers on the Senate floor, says the staffers are working for the Legislature and therefore they should get their pay.

Montserrado County Senator Darius Dillon says the staffers deserve to know what went wrong with their salaries, adding that the President Pro tempore and the Speaker of the House of Representatives should meet and find a way to make the staffers understand how the harmonization process of their salary went on.--
Edited by Winston W. Parley

Cont'd from page 6

River Gee citizens

Internal Affairs through its Focal Person to the Office of the Minister Mr. Emmanuel Wheinyue. Mr. Wheinyue informed this paper that everything the group has alleged is a total falsehood.

Mr. Wheinyue also denies the group's claim that Executive Mansion Protocol Madam Finda Bundoo or some key government officials allegedly influenced the decision regarding the boundary, adding that the decision to divide the land reserved over the years as buffer zone came from the locals themselves.

"So they all agreed that it [disputed piece of land] be split into two equal halves; so it was split. The next thing is to go put the cornerstone," Mr. Wheinyue says.

In the resolution allegedly signed by the two towns, Mr. Wheinyue says it was indicated there that if your

cash crop is on the other side of the new boundary, you still own the crop. As for rice farm, he says it is also stated in the resolution that you will only harvest the rice and the farm after which you the farm would be no longer yours.

According to Mr. Wheinyue, "the resolution was plain, clear and everybody celebrated it" and they have been hearing good information since they left, adding that he is surprising to hear that somebody from Monrovia says "they are Geeken people."

However, the Chedepo Geeken Development Association strongly warns that anyone who attempts to take the Chedepo Geeken' people's land will surely have the citizens to contend with, emphasizing that they will use the last drop of their blood to maintain their land.

"Members of the Fourth Estate, we insist that in order to

maintain the peace and harmony that have existed between the Geeken Gbaquiah citizens, let us live by the original boundary established in 1965," he continues.

As concerned citizens of Chedepo Geeken, Mr. Nyantorh says they are peaceful people and they subscribe to peaceful resolution of their problems in the spirit of preserving the hard-won peace of their dear county and the country at large.

Mr. Nyantorh indicates that the group is cognizant of the fact that land conflict and tribal war which Minister Sirleaf, County Superintendent Nyenuoh and other government officials seem to overlook, have very dire consequences on not just a segment of the society, but the whole.

He recalls that the land

conflict occurred between the two towns in 1957 and 1964, respectively, but it was thankfully resolved in 1965 when Chedepo Chiefdom Paramount Chief Isaac K. Doe and Potupo Chiefdom Paramount Chief Joe Noring, together with elders from both towns, met and resolved the conflict in 1965.

That year, he recalls, the Klenegbae boundary was established and has since been existing over the years.

He details that the citizens of both towns have been living in peace and harmony since the boundary was established in 1965 until in 2019 when some citizens of Potupo Gbaquiah went beyond the Klenegbae and started making farms on Geeken's land.

On 30 May this year, he says they complained against Mr. Nyenuoh to Minister Sirleaf for

his failure to settle this land dispute, but Minister Sirleaf trashed the complaint for reasons best known to him.

On the day of the boundary harmonization on June 30, 2020, Mr. Nyantorh notes that Minister Sirleaf again refused to visit the conflict site, and that Superintendent Nyenuoh also stayed away, claiming to be tested positive for coronavirus.

"To our greatest surprise, the Minister of Internal Affairs wrote a resolution in favor of Potupo Gbaquiah in which he disregarded the original boundary that was established in 1965," he says.

He says Minister Sirleaf's resolution divided the portion of land that falls between the two creeks in two, failing to take into consideration that portion of land contained cash crops planted by Geeken citizens.--
Edited by Othello B.

CPP goes as planned

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Ahead of midterm senatorial election in December, four Collaborating Political Parties from the opposition or CPP has divided the 15 political sub-divisions among its member parties in accordance with rules and

in Monrovia Wednesday by the CPP says the four parties are engaged in the processes of candidate selection as enshrined in their Framework Document of the CPP.

“The four constituent parties, having gone through an initial consensus building process, agreed on the

County and Lofa County,” the statement details.

It explains that consensus building for the remaining seven counties, including; Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Margibi, Nimba, River Gee, Rivercess, and Sinoe counties are still ongoing among the parties.

The statement indicates that in the case of county (ies) that will not be allotted through the consensus building process, the CPP in keeping with its Framework Document will conduct Voter Perception Survey and eventually hold primaries, where necessary, among aspirants from the four constituent parties to determine the candidates for those counties.

The constituent political parties would then select candidates for allotted counties in line with their respective constitutions and selection process (es).

Meanwhile, the National Executive Committee of the CPP, in keeping with its mandate has approved the work plan of the VPS and Primary Committee.

The plan includes timetable for the submission of aspirants, conduct of VPS in counties that will not be allotted through consensus building and conduct of primaries. **-Statement**



guides governing the Collaboration.

The four opposition parties include the former governing Unity Party, the Liberty Party, the Alternative National Congress and the All Liberian Party.

A press statement released

allocation of EIGHT COUNTIES as follow: All Liberian Party - Bomi County and Gbarpolu County, the Alternative National Congress, Grand Cape Mount County and Maryland County, Liberty Party; Grand Bassa County and Montserrado County and Unity Party - Bong

House Clerk defies

Starts from back page

With reference to former Speaker Emmanuel Nuquaye who also did not appear to testify as subpoena witness on Wednesday, Judge Quiqui explains that Mr. Nuquaye had called him via phone to ask for a day or two to prepare himself.

“He is a human [being] who has to engage in daily activities but he personally received said subpoena, this court sees his action not [to] be [defiant],” Judge Quiqui states.

According to Judge Quiqui, former Speaker Nuquaye received the subpoena on the eve of the date he was subpoenaed to appear, adding that in the wisdom of the court, “Mr. Nuquaye action is in no way to disrespect the court.”

Earlier expressing his frustration, Judge Gbeisay indicated that it is not strange in this society that a member or official of the government can’t even respect the law in general, including the order of the court of competent jurisdiction.

Referencing the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Judge Gbeisay notes that the sheriff’s return shows that she received and acknowledged the subpoena.

However, the judge says early Wednesday morning, 15 July, Cllr. FonatiKoffa, Chairman of the Judicial Committee of the House of Representatives said that there was a confusion as to which document the House Clerk was subpoenaed to testify to.

Besides, Judge Gbeisay says Cllr. Koffa indicated that the House was in full session and it was difficult to have the clerk search for the document requested in the matter.

According to him Cllr. Koffa requested for 10 days to enable the clerk to search for and identify the document requested.

“This judge informed him that he was not a party to the case and as such he is not authorized to make such request...,” he says.

Judge Gbeisay notes that he

told Cllr. Koffa that since the clerk is a witness of the State, whatever problem she had should be discussed with the prosecution.

“From the content of the Prosecution’s submission, it appear that there is no understanding between the Prosecution and the witness in question who happens to be the Clerk of the House of Representatives,” he adds.

The Judge stresses that the manner in which the prosecution is presenting its witnesses is being poorly coordinated, saying it is the prosecution that indicted the defendants and submitted the list of witnesses. Therefore, it should not be the one requesting for time every now and then for continuance.

The subpoenaed officials are due to testify in the trial of former CBL Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks and David Fahart, Elsie Dossen Bardio and Kollie Tamba who are standing trial for multiple charges including theft and economic sabotage of billions of Liberian dollars.

All the defendants on trial have pleaded not guilty for charges of theft of property; economic sabotage; fraud on the internal revenue of Liberia; misuse of public money, property or record; theft or illegal disbursement of public money; criminal conspiracy and criminal facilitation.

They were indicted for the alleged theft of billions of local currency printed and shipped to Liberia following a series of mass protests that prompted local and international investigation into claims that the money went missing.

The fifth defendant Melisa A. Emeh is said to be out of the bailiwick of Liberia and has not been brought to court, therefore the court has granted prosecution’s request to grant her a separate trial so as to enable the four other defendants that are available to get speedy trial. **-Edited by Othello B. Garblah**

Executive submits US\$535m draft budget

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Following protracted delay in the submission of the draft national budget, the executive, thru the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning finally submits the financial instrument for FY 2021 in the US\$535 million to the House of Representatives for scrutiny and subsequent passage.

Making the presentation on behalf of the government, Finance Minister Samuel Tweah said, the budget priorities infrastructures, including roads, health and education as well as general well being of Liberians.

On behalf of the executive, Tweah expresses regret for the delay in submission of the budget, but adds that his ministry is impressed with the level of understanding from the leadership and members of the House of Representatives.

Accordance the Public Finance Act of 2008, the fiscal year budget starts July 01 every year and ends June 30, which means the draft budget is expected to be presented by end of April for proper scrutiny thru public hearings.

However, Section 17 of the



Public Financial Management (PFM) Act of 2009 states that in the case where the Legislature is unable to approve the national budget before the start of the fiscal year, the Minister of Finance is authorized to collect revenues and approve expenditures in line with the proposed budget.

The law adds that the money should be up to one-twelfth (1/12) of the previous fiscal year budget and that its expenditure shall be included in the subsequent financial

outturn.

A recast budget by the executive ended since June, but the government has reneged on submission of the draft budget before the House of Representatives.

Meanwhile, Tweah expresses anticipation that the House committee on Ways, Means, Finance and Budget would fast track the budget hearing process to enable the government meets its financial obligations to partners, employees, and

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international groupings.

Speaker Bhofal Chambers receives the national draft budget and assures that the

House will work tirelessly to ensure the document is professionally scrutinized. **- Editing by Jonathan Browne**



COVID-19 figures will go up, but...

-Dr. Jallah

Liberia's Health Minister Dr. Wilhelmina Jallah says the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases here are expected to witness a sharp rise before taking a nose dive.

Dr. Jallah whose ministry is at the center of the COVID-19

fight along with other partners say the country could reduce the number of confirmed case if citizens adhere to the various health measures put in place by the government, which includes social distancing with emphasis on the wearing of mask in public.

She told the New Dawn Tuesday July 14 "we know that the figures will go up before

they come down. So we need to take all necessary precautions to ensure that it comes down," she said adding that part of that measure is the wearing of mask in public.

Liberia as at Sunday July 12, had reported a total of 1024 confirmed COVID-19 cases. Out of this number 51 persons have been reported dead, 439 recovered and 534 still active.

The country recorded 14 new confirmed cases including five health care workers in a single day during the reporting period of July 12.

Eight of the Liberia's 15 counties reported new confirmed cases on 12 July 2020. Since March 16 - July 12, 2020, a total of 6,430 suspected cases including 162 deaths have been reported across 14 counties. Of these, one thousand twenty four (1,024) have been confirmed including 118 (11.5%) health



▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10



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House Clerk defies court

-Judge says

By Winston W. Parley

Criminal Court "C" Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay says the failure of Madam Mildred Siryon, Clerk of the House of Representatives to appear as subpoenaed witness Wednesday, 15 July without any excuse is in defiance of the court, threatening to proceed with contempt hearing against her if she fails to appear on 20 July.

"With reference to the Clerk of the House of Representatives, this court accepts her action as a defiance but with the spirit [collaboration] and [cooperation] between and among the three [branches] of Government, she will be forgiven for the first time," Judge Quiqui says.

Madam Siryon and former House Speaker Mr. Emmanuel Nuquaye have been subpoenaed by the court on prosecution's request to appear and testify in the ongoing trial of former



Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) officials indicted for alleged theft and economic sabotage of billions of Liberian Dollars.

"The clerk is hereby ordered to issue again the writ of subpoena on the said clerk that failure for the clerk to appear, this court shall proceed against her in contempt proceeding as no one is above the law or the authority of this court or any court of competent jurisdiction," the judge orders.

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

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