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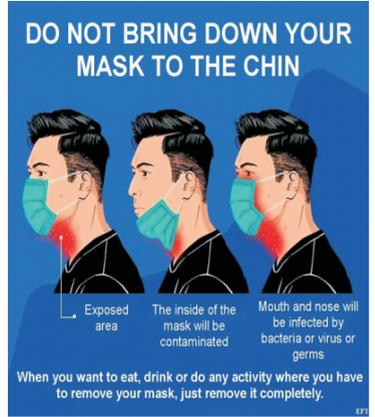
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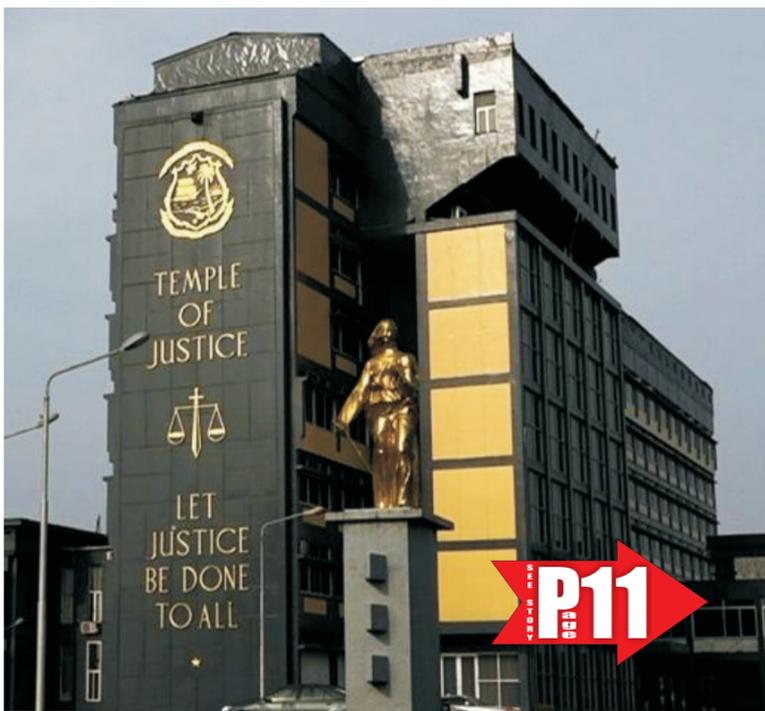
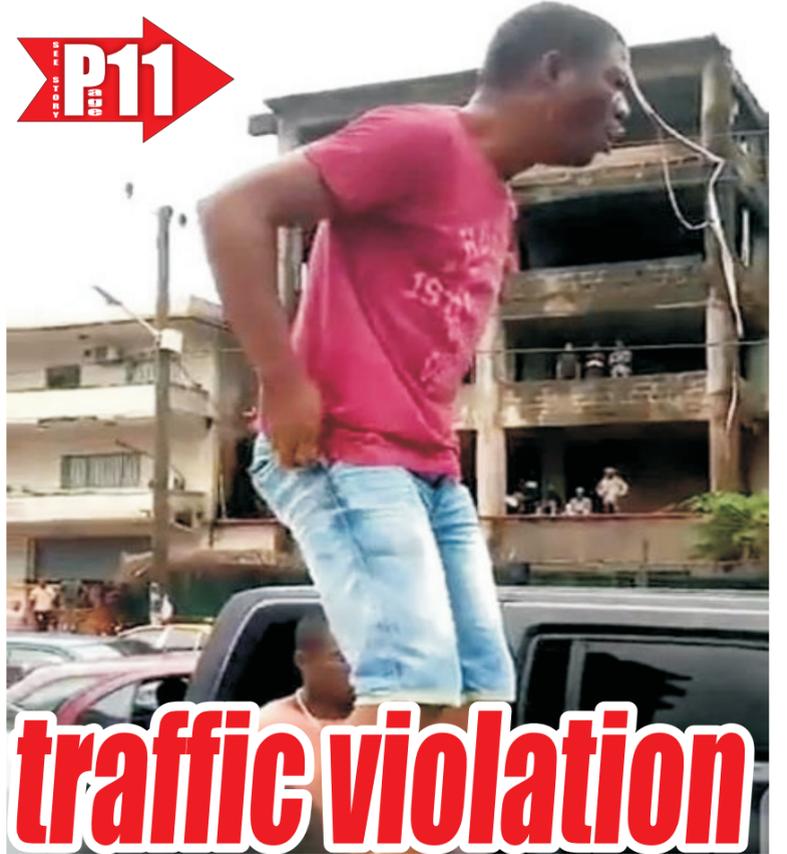
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# Rep. Kolubah defies arrest

## -clashes with police over traffic violation



# Court rejects key evidence in CBL case

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# Continental News

## Malawi Court Sentences Wildlife Criminals to 56 Years in Jail

Malawi wildlife officials have declared victory after a court sentenced nine members of a Chinese wildlife trafficking gang to a total of 56 years in prison. Members of the Lin-Zhang group were found guilty of trafficking protected animal species and parts, including pangolins, rhino horn, and ivory. The alleged kingpin of the syndicate is due to appear in court Wednesday.

The nine are part of a 14-member wildlife trafficking gang, who Malawian police arrested in May of last year.

It includes two Malawians and 12 Chinese nationals.

Some of the Chinese are already serving six-year prison terms in the capital, Lilongwe.

Passing more sentences Monday, magistrate Florence Msekandiana also ordered the Chinese traffickers to be deported immediately after serving their sentences.

Defense lawyer Gilbert Khanyogwa told VOA Tuesday he could not say anything because he has yet to see the printed copy of the sentence.

"With my clients we need



Transported from Malawi to Thailand, is displayed during a press conference at Customs Suvarnabhumi

to go through it and appreciate the basis why the court has given such sentences before we make a decision as whether we live it like that or appeal," said Khanyogwa.

Brighton Kumchedwa is director of Malawi's National Parks & Wildlife agency.

He told VOA via messaging app that the sentencing is a victory towards the country's efforts in combating wildlife crimes.

"We are looking at a foreign

syndicate terrorizing southern Africa and Malawi included," said Khanyogwa. "And now those culprits that have been given 11 years, they are already serving another six years which means they will be behind bars for 17 years. I am sure the cartel now is being dismantled of these criminals."

Kumchedwa says the foreign syndicate has been recruiting locals to take part

in wildlife trafficking for the past 10 years.

The Britain-based Environmental Investigation Agency, which campaigns against environmental crimes and abuse, welcomed the sentencing.

Its executive director, Mary Rice, told VOA via a messaging app that the ruling shows Malawi has demonstrated that it's possible to get rid of such syndicates within one's own borders.

"In this particular case, it has been a very hard road," said Rice. The syndicate was

very well connected and did try every which way to get away from the rule of law, but there was tenacity and clear leadership which demonstrate that you can actually identify and prosecute these individuals."

The alleged kingpin of the syndicate, Yunhua Lin, was arrested in August of last year following a three-month manhunt.

He is expected to appear in court Wednesday to answer charges of possession of rhino horn, conspiracy and money laundering. VOA

## Zambia asks China for debt relief



Zambian President Edgar Lungu has asked Chinese President Xi Jinping for debt relief in a telephone call between the two leaders on Monday.

President Lungu cited the country's reduced revenues due to the coronavirus pandemic, according to a statement from his office.

"President Lungu called for debt relief and cancellation in

light of reduced revenue due to the negative impact of the pandemic, as well as competing needs for the country, to secure adequate resources to fight the pandemic and to stimulate the economy," said the statement.

The leaders agreed to enhance co-operation between the two countries. BBC

## Sudan's ex-President Bashir on trial for 1989 coup

Sudan's ousted long-serving leader Omar al-Bashir has gone on trial in the capital, Khartoum, in connection with the military coup that brought him to power more than three decades ago.

The 76-year-old, who has already been convicted for corruption, could face the

death penalty if found guilty over his role in the 1989 coup.

More than 20 former officials are on trial alongside him.

Bashir was forced from power in 2019 following popular protests.

The civilian uprising started in late 2018 as anti-austerity demonstrations but quickly morphed into a call to end

President Bashir's rule. On 11 April 2019, the military announced that he had been ousted and arrested.

A joint transitional government made up of the top army officials and civilians was later formed in August.

Bashir is also wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes and genocide in the western Darfur region.

The authorities in Sudan said in February they were ready to hand the former leader over to the ICC. The defendants including former vice presidents Ali Osman Taha and Bakri Hassan Saleh were in a caged off area in the courtroom, the AFP news agency reports.

"This court will listen to each of them and we will give each of the 28 accused the opportunity to defend themselves," it quotes court president Issam al-Din Mohammad Ibrahim, as saying.

It adds that one of Bashir's 150 defence lawyers, Hashem



The courthouse in Khartoum was crowded for the start of the trial

# EDITORIAL

## Reviving the Liberian economy

A GROUP OF experienced economists led by former minister of planning and economic affairs and economic professor, Dr. Togba Nah Tipoteh under the banner, Liberian Economy Group or LEG, advanced series of recommendations to the government of President George Manneh Weah recently, aimed at strengthening the Liberian dollar and resuscitating the entire economy.

**THE LEG FIRSTLY** identified endemic corruption in the public sector that had been described by former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as a vampire, sucking national resources and leaving the citizenry in abject poverty, illiteracy and disease. It notes that widespread poverty has become a societal problem with two-thirds of Liberian children out of school.

**IT ALSO BLAMES** the tailoring of national decisions on the basis of American cultural values rather than Liberian values, which has led the population to prefer western products over 'Made in Liberia' goods, and is even exacerbated by export of raw products (rubber, timber, ore, among others) abroad where values are added than manufacturing our raw materials here before export, which could add greater value and earn the country more foreign currency.

**BUT PERHAPS THE** fundamental issue confronting Liberians since independence is the Dollarization of the economy, where taxes are levied and paid in United States Dollars and officials here receive salaries in U.S. currency rather than the Liberian Dollar. This practice has not just weakened the local currency, but sent prices skyrocketing, making life very unbearable for the common man in the street.

**AFTER IDENTIFYING THE** problems, LEG recommends several austerity measures, which we strongly believe, if this administration took into consideration, would stabilize the economy and strengthen the Liberian Dollar.

**THEY INCLUDE, AMONG** others, encouraging both government and ordinary citizens to purchasing more locally-made products rather than importing everything we eat and use; engaging in more savings generation both publicly and privately - down at family, community and Civil Society levels which could generate about US\$100,000,000 (one hundred million United States Dollar) annually and be reinvested. Additionally, it suggests that salaries for top officials, including the President, Vice President, Speaker and Deputy Speaker, President Pro-Tempore, Chief Justice, Associate Justices and the Legislature should be paid in Liberian Dollars, and that official travels of the President or a designate, such as the Vice President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs should include an entourage of seven and two, respectively, while the Minister of Finance and Development Planning and the Executive Governor for the Central Bank of Liberia should make official travels with two entourages each, among others.

**LEG ALSO RECOMMENDS** that the national budget should be drafted in Liberian Dollars, as the Constitution of Liberia requires, and that allowances, vehicles credit cards for officials except those offices named above, be abolished, while donations from Public Corporations and Autonomous Agencies of government should be directed to the national coffer. Finally, it estimates that if faithfully adhere to, these austerity measures could enable government to save about US\$345 million that could be used in various sectors of the economy to bring about development and growth.

**WE WELCOME THESE** ideas and seriously encourage the Weah administration to put aside pride, politics and personal interest and immediately begin to put in action, some of these austerity measures that would not only revive the economy, but emancipate the vast majority of the population from grinding poverty.

**INDEED, IT IS** time for radical changes and to swallow some bitter pills, if the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change and President Weah himself would leave behind a legacy that posterity will benefit from.

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+231-775407211 Managing Editor: Othello B. Garblah; Editor-In-Chief: Jonathan

# COMMENTARY

By Abdourahmane Diallo Lucica  
Ditiu & Winnie Byanyima

## Africa Can't Afford COVID-19 Tradeoffs

*Saving lives from COVID-19 in Africa will mean little if it also means allowing the number of lives lost to HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria to rise. Even as policymakers and civil-society leaders work to stop a new killer disease, they must resolve to sustain progress toward eliminating those we already know.*

**G**ENEVA - As the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Africa surpasses 500,000, the new coronavirus is at the forefront of the public consciousness. But the continent was beset by infectious disease long before the current pandemic began. And, as long as governments and donors remain preoccupied with curbing COVID-19, killers like HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis (TB) will only grow stronger.

Of 38 million people worldwide living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, 25.6 million reside in Sub-Saharan Africa. Africa accounted for 380,000 malaria deaths - 94% of the global total - in 2018. And, 2.6 million people in Africa develop TB every year, resulting in 630,000 deaths.

Over the last two decades, considerable progress has been made in fighting these diseases. AIDS-related deaths have been reduced by more than half since 2004, thanks largely to the availability of antiretroviral therapy. The TB mortality rate fell by 42% between 2000 and 2017. And malaria deaths decreased by 60% between 2000 and 2015; a child who contracts malaria today has a better chance of survival than ever before.

But the COVID-19 crisis threatens to stall or even reverse this progress, not least by inundating already-fragile health systems. Italy has one doctor for every 243 residents and yet, in some regions, its health system buckled under the weight of COVID-19 cases. Imagine what a similar outbreak would do in African countries, which have an average of one doctor for every 5,000 residents.

To be sure, the coronavirus has spread more slowly in Africa than in Europe and North America. But the World Health Organization warns that the outbreak could be stretched out over a few years. If so, the continent's under-resourced health systems will be under severe strain for a long time to come. And what resources governments do have are likely to be channeled toward COVID-19 - even if it means redirecting them from other deadly diseases.

Supply-chain disruptions caused by containment measures elsewhere compound the risks, by threatening access to the preventive-health resources, diagnostics, and treatments needed to combat HIV, TB, and malaria. Already, some African countries have paused programs providing TB and HIV treatments and diagnostics, and suspended distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs) - essential to protect against malaria - right before the high-transmission rainy season.

The WHO forecasts that under the worst-case scenario (suspension of all ITN campaigns and a 75% reduction in access to effective antimalarial drugs), the COVID-19 crisis could lead to a doubling of malaria deaths this year in Sub-Saharan Africa. Such high malaria mortality levels were last recorded 20 years ago.

Moreover, a six-month disruption of antiretroviral therapy could lead to more than 500,000 additional deaths from AIDS-related illnesses (including TB) in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020-21. In 2019, an estimated 440,000 people died of AIDS-related illnesses in the region.

Likewise, a study led by the Stop TB Partnership shows that a three-month lockdown and ten-month recovery period could lead to an additional 1.4 million TB deaths globally between 2020 and 2025. In this scenario, the global fight against TB would be set back by 5-8 years.

Such outcomes are not inevitable. What is needed is a global collective response focused on delivering life-saving services, reducing the burden on already overstretched health systems, and protecting Africa's most vulnerable. Success will depend on innovative solutions, a holistic perspective (rather than disjointed single-disease programs), and an equity-first approach.

For starters, diagnostic tests - for COVID-19 and many other common diseases - must be accessible to all - and especially to high-risk populations. Africa has well-established testing services for several common diseases, including multi-disease testing for HIV and TB. But these programs are now at risk, and Africa is also falling behind other regions in testing for COVID-19.

But there is promising news: some countries have introduced joint testing for TB and COVID-19 and for malaria and COVID-19 (and immediate malaria treatment if required). Joint testing makes all the more sense, because HIV, TB, and malaria may all cause symptoms consistent with COVID-19, such as high fevers. Such programs must be scaled up, so that diagnostics and treatments - which are often expensive and difficult to access - are available to all.

This is entirely achievable. African countries, which have plenty of experience with health emergencies, have responded quickly and effectively to the threat of COVID-19. The African Union, through the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is providing strong regional leadership to coordinate the response.

Such efforts must be advanced and deepened, both to contain COVID-19 and to sustain progress in the fight against HIV, TB, and malaria. Past experience shows that engaging affected communities and empowering civil society will be vital to success.

The rest of the world must also contribute. Above all, this means agreeing that any COVID-19 vaccine or treatment will be made available to all countries free of charge. During the HIV epidemic, millions died unnecessarily, because they could not access lifesaving drugs. Even today, some nine million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are awaiting life-saving treatment. Everyone has a right to health, regardless of where they live or how much money they have. For COVID-19, we need a People's Vaccine.

## O-PED

By Javier Solana

# A Better Globalization

**G**lobalization has given rise to legitimate frustrations and concerns, which can't be assuaged simply by recalling the enormous benefits it has brought. But, rather than trying to roll back globalization, we have no choice but to try to make it work better.

**M**ADRID - The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted much reflection on the state of globalization, its drawbacks at a time of worldwide disruption, and the supposed benefits of retreating to the national sphere. In this sense, as in many others, the current crisis has accelerated pre-existing tendencies. The global trade-to-GDP ratio - one of the main indicators of globalization - has followed a downward trend since 2012, and anti-globalist political movements have been gaining in popularity for some time.

These movements have good reasons to mistrust globalization, and even more so now. The scarcity of vital materials - from face masks to yeast - highlighted the low resilience of the global supply chains that produce so much of what we use, owing to their excessive concentration in a few countries and the lack of essential stockpiles. Moreover, globalization has created many losers within individual countries, especially in the developed world.

This phenomenon has been particularly marked in the United States, where the average income of the poorest 50% actually fell between 1980 and 2010. The delocalization of production is certainly not the only reason (the effects of automation on inequality are often overlooked), but it is a significant one.

But we must resist the temptation to amend globalized production in its entirety. Adam Smith's axioms about specialization, and David Ricardo's regarding comparative advantage, are as true today as they were 200 years ago. Overall, globalization has clearly been beneficial, lifting billions of people out of poverty, so our focus should be to reform rather than destroy it.

For starters, organizations promoting regional economic integration must strengthen the development of regional value chains for strategically important goods - not only electronic chips, but also basic necessities such as food. Avoiding future shortages of essential goods will require firms to shift from just-in-time production to a "just-in-case" model that prioritizes security of supply over optimal cost efficiency. This will not necessarily lead to autarky, but it will require more diversified global distribution networks.

Likewise, we must continue to fight the enormous inequalities that have emerged within countries. National and local governments must establish adequate protection mechanisms to safeguard workers' fundamental rights and offer them the prospect of a dignified future. These measures include minimum-income systems (which many countries have already implemented), investment in education in the economic sectors of the future, and public employment programs linked to the coming green economic transition.

Policymakers must also urgently tackle weaknesses in the global trade system. The upcoming choice of a new director-general of the World Trade Organization will be crucial. Whoever is chosen will have the difficult task of resuscitating an organization weighed down by the failure of the Doha Round, its member states' current power to declare themselves as developed or developing countries without reference to objective criteria, and the paralysis of its appellate body. This body is the cornerstone of the WTO's dispute-settlement system; without it, the risk of trade wars increases dramatically.

When people speak of globalization today, they are essentially referring to the growth of international trade and the free movement of financial capital. But as the economist Dani Rodrik has pointed out, there is no reason to limit globalization to these processes. In particular, we must look deeper into shared governance of so-called global public goods, so that this can become one of the main vectors of international cooperation.

Serious and overarching threats such as COVID-19 and climate change can be confronted effectively only at the global level. Unilateral measures taken by economic actors and national governments will not be enough: the sum of such initiatives can never substitute for effective multilateralism.

Preventing pandemics and other major public-health risks requires empowering the World Health Organization both politically and economically. Obviously, US President Donald Trump's irresponsible decision to withdraw the United States from the WHO represents a step in the opposite direction, and can be understood only as short-sighted electioneering.

Policymakers must urgently explore reasonable reforms of the WHO, such as strengthening the organization's financing by increasing member states' obligatory contributions. As matters stand, the largest single contributor to the WHO in 2020-21 will be not a state but the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, a philanthropic donor. This unacceptable situation must change, and the WHO should also have sufficient staff and capacity to inspect and impose binding sanctions on member states, thereby ensuring that science prevails over national interests.

As for the environment, we must recognize that stopping climate change is the fight of the century. We need to encourage public-private partnerships to help the transition to sustainable production models, in the knowledge that building a green economy can be profitable now as well as beneficial to future generations. The current context offers us the opportunity to entrench green conditionality in all economic recovery instruments - as proven by the historic recovery fund that European Union leaders just unveiled. Finally, cities and other actors should play a more important role in the public debate on this issue. The C40 initiative, which brings together 96 major cities in the fight against climate change, serves as an inspiring example in this respect.

Investing in an economic recovery that ignores the need to advance toward decarbonization is counterproductive. Trying to monopolize supplies of future COVID-19 vaccines by preventing their equitable distribution cannot end the health and economic threat posed by the pandemic. And choosing protectionism and national retrenchment would mean applying yesterday's formulas to today's problems.

Globalization has given rise to legitimate frustrations and concerns, which can't be assuaged simply by recalling the enormous benefits it has brought. But, rather than trying to roll back globalization, we will be better served by engaging in a level-headed attempt to build a better globalization.

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## OPINION

By David Stasavage

# Trump's Ancient Ballot Lie

*Claims by US President Donald Trump and others that mail-in ballots increase the risk of electoral fraud are not new. Since the 1400s, those seeking to limit the franchise have sought to achieve their goals by citing the need to maintain the "integrity" of the electoral system.*

**N**EW YORK - As the United States heads toward its most significant and contentious presidential election in a very long time, there is much talk about voting by mail. Some see this option as necessary to ensure ballot access for all amid the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly blue-collar workers and minority groups, who have disproportionately high infection rates. But others, including President Donald Trump, vociferously oppose mail-in ballots, pointing to a purported risk of fraud.

Their argument is bogus - and not exactly new. For the last six centuries, those seeking to limit the franchise have sought to achieve their goals by citing the need to maintain the "integrity" of the electoral system.

Consider England in the early fifteenth century. At that time, each English county sent two "knights of the shire" as representatives to Parliament. And because there was no formal law governing how these knights (a largely honorific term) would be selected, it fell to each county's sheriff to organize an election.

By custom, all free male inhabitants of a county had the right to participate, while women were excluded. Some of these elections were no doubt rowdy and undisciplined - as democracy often is - but they allowed for much greater (male) participation than would soon be the case.

In 1429, members of the House of Commons petitioned King Henry VI to agree to a new law ostensibly intended to ensure that county elections to Parliament proceeded peacefully. The petition stated that without this new law, "homicides, riots, assaults, and divisions will most probably arise and occur." In other words, the law's backers claimed, the integrity of the electoral process was in danger.

But the parliamentarians' proposed method of addressing the perceived problem betrayed their true motivation. They called for the county election franchise to be restricted to those who owned land with an annual return of at least 40 shillings, a significant sum at the time.

The root cause of the problem, as the law's supporters saw it, was "the too great and excessive numbers of people" who had been participating in elections. The 40-shilling rule became law in England in 1430, and would not be repealed until Parliament passed the Great Reform Act of 1832.

With that act, Parliament had finally come around to the idea that the 40-shilling rule was an anachronism. But then a new twist to the story brought about a feature of voting that we view as sacred today. Some members of Parliament advocated not only expanding the franchise, but also making the ballot for elections to the House of Commons secret. Since time immemorial, voting in county elections had taken place in public, enabling people with means to intimidate or bribe others to vote as instructed.

But it would be another 40 years before Parliament finally adopted the 1872 Ballot Act. One of the main reasons for the delay in introducing secret balloting was that opponents argued - once again - that it would jeopardize the integrity of the electoral process. Some MPs had proposed a secret ballot as early as 1830, but others argued then that such a measure would result in "eternal suspicion and hypocrisy." In 1862, another opponent of secret ballots said much the same thing, claiming that, "instead of being a check on bribery, it would facilitate it by preventing detection in many cases."

Sadly, such arguments are being echoed today in the US, which has entered a new era of voting restrictions that recalls its past disenfranchisement of African-Americans. In recent years, 25 US states have passed laws that make it more difficult to vote, such as by requiring a photo ID or even proof of citizenship. States have also limited turnout by reducing the number of polling stations.

The clear effect of these measures is to tilt the playing field against low-income and minority groups. Much like in England 600 years ago, the stated objective - preserving the integrity of the electoral process - is just a convenient smokescreen.

In the US debate over voting by mail - a measure supported by a large majority of American adults - opponents of broad electoral participation are once again raising the specter of fraud and corruption to pursue narrow partisan goals. Without citing any evidence, they claim that this new voting system is somehow subject to greater irregularities than traditional in-person voting.

But the real fear of Trump and others is that mail-in voting will boost turnout and aid Democratic candidates, even though it is not even certain that such an effect exists in states that already allow it. We can only hope that the advocates of expanded suffrage will eventually resume their winning streak.

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# PERSPECTIVES PERSPECTIVES

Public Policy. Economics. Democratic Politics. Political/Economic Decentralization. Public Dishonesty. Dual Citizenship

## THE LIBERIA PUBLIC RADIO AND THE AFRICAN STAR, AN ONLINE NEWS REPORTING MAGAZINE

The healthcare delivery system in Liberia challenges the sanity of anyone who expects that a visit to a medical facility should be routine and meet acceptable standards.

The *African Star and Liberia Public Radio* are appalled at Government's wanton and continuing neglect of Liberia's national health care delivery



system; more so because the situation borders on conspiracy and accessory to the omission of providing life-saving drugs and professional medical services to citizens.

### JFK Medical Center In Liberia

The Ebola Pandemic of 2014 - 2016 needlessly killed over 4,000 citizens and laid bare the national health care delivery system which, itself, was on "life-support". But for international intervention and assistance, the disease would have felled more citizens.

Fast forward to 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic is another global challenge which has literally trapped Liberians in a "hell-hole of inadequate national healthcare". The Government has been caught flat-footed and is unable to offer a coherent national plan to deal with a pandemic which is in the same league as Ebola. Regular updates from the National Public Health Institute (NPHIL) on confirmed cases of COVID-19 offer a gradual increase and spread of the disease.

In the last two weeks, a prominent lawmaker Representative J. NagbeSloh sought treatment for a medical condition at the main referral and Teaching Hospital known as John F. Kennedy in Monrovia. Sadly and due to lack of adequate services, we lost Representative Sloh.

The demise of another lawmaker, Representative Mouna Youngblood has just been announced, although she was seeking treatment abroad because of inadequate health facility in Liberia. Scores of ordinary citizens who visit Government run



facilities in the country can expect no acceptable treatment and even officials of Government and well-to-do individuals have second thoughts about going for treatment at these Government owned facilities.

### Liberian Government Hospital In Buchanan, Grand Bassa County-Liberia

Indeed, it is important to emphasize that the Coronavirus pandemic has further exposed the weaknesses of the Liberian public health sector that continues to suffer from years of neglect and disdain stretching from the country's independence as a country of freed slaves. The crippling health care system in the oldest West African nation continues to witness inadequate budgetary support to this time.

For example, \$297 million USD or 56.5 percent of the country \$526.9 million USD reflected in the 2019/2020 annual budget was committed to paying salaries to public sector (government) officials and employees, most of whom pack the various ministries and agencies and who have no real job descriptions, performance evaluation or outcome. The country's Healthcare system received \$80 million USD or 15 percent of the budget. The bottom-line is that citizens have no confidence in Liberia's healthcare system. Even the President of Liberia and most of the country's public officials would not subject themselves for treatment at Government run hospitals in Monrovia or elsewhere in the country.

### Jackson F. Doe Memorial Hospital Government Hospital InTarpeta, Nimba County

For instance, this week the House of Representatives grilled the Chief Administrator of



the John F. Kennedy Medical Center during an emergency hearing where the lawmakers vented their anger against the authorities of the hospital for the inhumane manner in which the pictures of the last hours of the late Representative Jay NagbeSloh were circulated on social media.

However, what the Legislators failed to discuss is their own role in exposing Liberians and residents of the country to a health care system that is neglected at the comfort of their huge salaries and benefits that they shamelessly parade without consideration for the healthcare needs of the country.

More importantly, the coronavirus pandemic closed the doors to Liberian government officials, functionaries, apologists, and families who benefit from advanced healthcare outside the borders of Liberia and this must awaken our resolve as a country



to place urgent attention on the country's healthcare system.

### Redemption Clinic In New Kru Town Monrovia-Liberia

#### Recommendations:

*African Star and Liberia Public Radio* offer the following recommendations:

- Review and adjust national health care laws to fast track and attract private sector investment in a symbiotic partnership with the Government. Prioritize and fund mobile clinics to provide basic care at the local levels at affordable fees.
- The Government must develop an initial 10-year robust plan to improve care, prevent diseases and their complications. This will require massive capital and human resource investments with the involvement of the private sector.
- Develop a blueprint to attract international investment in the sector, and speed up training of healthcare professionals by offering tuition-free scholarships in the sector and appoint a council of eminent, resourceful, and respectable persons to lead the national dialogue, and promotion of a national healthcare agenda with timelines, deliverables and built-in evaluation for the next 10 years.
- We are convinced that the Liberian health care sector is in crisis. We are also certain that overhauling the healthcare delivery system in Liberia will require a deliberate and sustained effort, partnership, investment, and leadership and this is possible only when we have a vision and motivated citizenry.

We challenge the Weah leadership, including the National Legislature, to move beyond criticizing what is not currently obtaining at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center and to muster the courage to fix the deplorable conditions that swarm the West African nation's healthcare system. The *African Star and Liberia Public Radio* stand ready to support this effort to overhaul Liberia's healthcare delivery system so that there is not another preventable suffering or death.

*This News Commentary is a collaboration between African Star and Liberia Public Radio.*

**MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

**MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

# Nimba lawmaker wants ArcelorMittal mineral development agreement reviewed

By Bridgett Milton

Nimba County Electoral District #5 Representative Samuel G. Kogar has written the House of Representatives,

According to him, the agreement is subject to periodic review once every five years for the purpose of good faith, discussions to effect such modifications to the agreement

five years.

He says this review allows a deeper and mutual appreciation for Mineral Development Agreement in the context of the economic, infrastructural, and other broad spectrum of realities in the hope to equally protect the interest of both parties.

The Nimba County lawmaker discloses that since 2005 ArcelorMittal expressed desire to explore iron ore from Liberia, lamenting that the company has increased the level of exploration on a daily basis.

He adds that if the Mineral Development Agreement of ArcelorMittal is not reviewed, Liberia will be left with nothing.

Also speaking, River Gee County District #3 Representative Francis S. Dopoh says the issue regarding a review of ArcelorMittal agreement is very important, saying there is always a kind of interference when it comes to these concessions in Liberia.--  
*Edited by Winston W. Parley*



Representative Samuel G. Kogar

craving plenary's indulgence to review the Mineral Development Agreement between ArcelorMittal and Liberia.

as may be necessary or desirable in the light of any substantial changes in circumstances which may have occurred during the previous

# Zogoe man receives transformation --Bid farewell to street life

By Emmanuel Mondaye

A Liberian man known as Momo Kamara who had been part of a group of less fortunate folks known here as zogoes, says he is happy that God has transformed his life from being a zogoe to an owner of a commercial motorbike.

As zogoes do, Momo says he was one of those loading commercial vehicles on Broad Street in Monrovia, saying he is happy that he has now graduated from that.

Mr. Momo made the revelation to reporters during a recent interaction with reporters on Center Street where he had gone to receive his share of free hot meal being distributed by Mr. Shri Upjit Singh Sachdeva (Jetty), the Indian Counsel General to Liberia to less fortunate folks.

Kamara says he saved money he generated from loading of cars to purchase a motorbike for himself.

The 23 - year - old man explains that he has been loading cars for the past ten years to sustain himself because, but he has now

decided to quit his bad social habit that dragged him into a street life.

According to him, he is now using the motorbike for

Many of his colleagues who were on Center Street to receive food jubilated when Kamara officially presented the motorbike to Liberia Mr. Jeety who he considers as his father because of what the Indian businessman is doing



commercial purposes to generate money to settle down and go into worthy ventures that will better improve his living standard.

for less fortunate Liberians.

Mr. Jeety who himself is encouraged by the determination of Kamara,

# LIBTELCO to move in 3 counties

By E.J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The Liberia Telecommunication Corporation or LIBTELCO, provider of internet services here, discloses plan to extend services to counties closer to the nation's capital, Monrovia.

Deputy Managing Director for Operations, Anderson SloberChea said, the new services which are already in full swing in Monrovia, will first be taken to Grand Bassa, Margibi and Bomi Counties, respectively to be followed by other counties with high economic activities.

Liberians, foreign missions and concessions.

He noted that the dream of the current management is to ensure every home within the capital is given the opportunity of service, adding that with the fastest internet, LIBTELCO provides telephone, internet, fax, and radio services to Monrovia, as the sole company licensed by the Liberia Telecommunications Authority to provide fixed line telephone services to the public.

Mr. Chea further disclosed the Corporation has deployed



Speaking to Prime Morning Drive Tuesday, July 21, a live talk show hosted by Prime FM in Monrovia, Mr. Chea said these services, which are coming to full implementation, were slowed down as a result of the Corona Virus outbreak in the country.

He said under the watchful eyes of President George Manneh Weah and in the full implementation of the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, the corporation is returning to its pre-war status, providing services to

and make operational a high speed IP Backhaul Data Ring network that connects all existing tower sites thus, implementing an "above ground high speed data ring" surrounding Monrovia and outlying areas, which is intended to give Liberians access to global internet services, including research works by students.

He added that entrainment centers will have internet services with chips sold at low price in Liberian dollar.

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urges the transformed young man to remain focused and desist from habits that once made him to be wayward.

The Indian Envoy also appeals to other less fortunate Liberians (Zogoes) to emulate

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**MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

**MORE HEADLINE NEWS**

# Wayward youths disappointed in Police Chief

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Police Inspector-General Col. Patrick Sudue has come under pressure from hundreds of less-fortunate Liberians, who have been benefiting from his COVID-19 free cooked meal distribution, for abruptly terminating the exercise.

A spokesman for the group

to them. Thomas expressed frustration and demanded explanation from IG Sudue, noting that prior to the distribution, the LNP boss notified them that he would provide cooked meals to assist them sustain themselves amid the COVID-19 pandemic and State of Emergency declared by the government.

Thomas, who claimed to be a

cooked meals daily to wayward youths in the streets, but abruptly ended the gesture at the disappointment of the beneficiaries.

Thomas acknowledged that the humanitarian relief from the police director helped most of them, who are underprivileged in society, to have something to eat each day but to their surprise, they stopped receiving the food.

The Inspector General's cooked food distribution covered several parts of Monrovia and its environs, providing plates of hot cooked meals daily.

Spokesman Thomas lamented that most of his colleagues are getting sick due to hunger, since Col. Sudue abruptly ended the free food distribution.

A less-fortunate woman, who is a beneficiary of Col. Sudue's gesture in the Old Road community, is appealing to the Police Chief to do everything humanly possible in resuming the exercise to ease the food need of less-fortunate Liberians.

However, Police Spokesman, H. Moses Carter to the New Dawn Tuesday that the gesture was his boss' own way of identifying with the less-fortunate in society.

Carter added that Col. Sudue had no specifications or timeline set for the distribution of emergency cooked food to wayward Liberians, confirming that the exercise has ended. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**



Hungry youths waiting for cooked food

Junior Thomas, alias "Sky Face" said, they are surprised by the sudden halt of the food distribution especially, at the time they needed it most.

He said while the Police Chief should be lauded for his humanitarian gesture, he is equally obliged to explain why food is no longer coming

car loader on Broad Street, Monrovia argued that Col. Sudue should have informed them about plan to discontinue the program, which would have given them an idea not to depend on the food.

Inspector General Patrick Sudue for less than a month intervened by providing hot

# Armed robbers terrorize Jamaica Road residents

By Emmanuel Mondaye

A gang of 10 armed robbers have terrorized residents, including shop owners and customers in Jamaica road community, robbing them of valuables.

Eyewitnesses narrate that the robbers, dressed in green reflective jackets with faces covered with masks, fired bullets in the air, sending panic among residents.

The owner of a local business, M. S. B. Provision Shop, explained that while he was attending to some customers, the armed gang rushed in his shop where other customers sat, drinking coffee and others waiting to be served, and discharged rounds of single-barrel, terrifying the entire place.

He lamented that thereafter, the robbers held everyone at gun-point, threatening to shoot anyone, who will alarm, while they forced him to disclosed where he kept his money, which they took away.

According to Bah, the armed robbers also entered another shop owned by one Musa Lamin, and stole cell-

phones, money, and personal effects of the shop owner and customers.

He said the situation led neighbors in their community to quickly go indoors, for fear of being targeted by the criminal gang.

It was further revealed that the situation also caused several entertainment centers in the area to ask their customers to leave immediately to enable them shutdown.

Victim Lamin said no one sustained jury, but the armed gang traumatized customers who came to transact business, leaving them to tremble.

He added that community dwellers tried calling the Liberia National Police (LNP) but the Police arrived at the scene 30 minutes after the robbers had escaped the scene.

Last week, two men armed with single-barrel gun fired and robbed a foreign business center of two bags containing thousands of dollars, escaping through Vai Town community, Bushrod Island. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

# Zogoe man receives

Cont'd from page 6

the wonderful example of Karama who has decided not only to be a changed person, but be a productive individual.

In a related development, the Indian Counsel General has fulfilled his promise to recondition the roof of the Pennoh Building on Center Street that is hosting hundreds of wayward Liberians.

The condition of the

building is deplorable and the building leaks profusely, making most of those sleeping in there to get sick.

Apart from males, the Pennoh Building also hosts at least 40 females, some of whom are pregnant and are being catered to by the Indian Counsel General to Liberia, Mr. Jeety. **--Edited by Winston W. Parley**

# QNET denies involvement in trafficking

QNET Limited, an international e-company involves in multi-level marketing with operations here, denies report of its alleged involvement in trafficking of some foreign nationalsto Liberia, for job offers. "We outrightly deny this allegation and aver that we are in no manner connected to this."

In a press release, QNET vigorously condemns any activity by its Independent Representatives (IRs) in Liberia that is not in compliance with local laws and regulations, saying, "We also do not condone unprofessional marketing acts and if any IR is found culpable, they are liable to be terminated from selling the company's products."

The release, issued by Regional General Manager for Sub-Saharan Africa, Biram Fall,

discloses that QNET recently terminated over 400 IRs across the world for policy violations and professional misconducts.

It vows to take every action



# Advertise with us!

to work with Liberian authorities to bring to justice perpetrators of human-trafficking, if the crime has been committed under its brand name.

"We also invite the authorities to directly liaise with us to ensure that at all times, full and appropriate actions and measures can be taken together. QNET strongly believes in joint cooperation as it will critically assist in bringing the wrong doers to justice in Liberia."

The release further clarifies that as a Direct Selling company, with a 22-year history, QNET is not an employment agency neither does it offer job promises.

A daily in Monrovia reported Tuesday, July 21, that Qnet International has been bringing children and other young adults to Liberia from Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Mali for employment scholarship, and travel opportunities. **-Press Release**

# Français

## Côte d'Ivoire : Alassane Ouattara sera-t-il candidat à la présidentielle ?

Qui sera le candidat du pouvoir à l'élection présidentielle en Côte d'Ivoire? Le décès d'Amadou Gon Coulibay, Premier ministre et dauphin d'Alassane Ouattara bouleverse la stratégie de l'actuel chef de l'État. La candidature du président

ivoirien à sa propre succession est évoquée par nombre d'observateurs et au sein de son propre camp, le parti RHDP. Il avait pourtant déclaré qu'il ne serait pas candidat à sa propre succession.

C'était le 5 mars dernier. Alassane Ouattara s'exprimait devant les parlementaires réunis en Congrès. « Je

voudrais vous annoncer solennellement que j'ai décidé de ne pas être candidat à l'élection présidentielle du 31 octobre 2020 [...] et de transférer le pouvoir à une jeune génération. » Un discours unanimement salué.

Mais pour le sociologue Francis Akindès, après la mort d'Amadou Gon Coulibay, successeur fidèle qui aurait pu assurer au président une retraite paisible, l'annonce de la candidature d'Alassane Ouattara à un troisième mandat ne fait plus de doute : « Le changement de contexte sert de justification au fait qu'il veuille revenir sur sa décision et se représenter. » Le président, rappelle aussi Francis Akindès, avait également déclaré « que si son challenger principal, l'ancien président Henri Konan Bédié, se présentait, alors il se présenterait aussi ».

Éviter une guerre de

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## Fuite dans le réservoir de stockage de la LPRC : une manne pour les habitants

Une grande quantité de carburant s'est déversée lundi dans le fleuve Mesurado, à Bushrod Island, dans la banlieue de Monrovia. Le produit pétrolier provient d'une grande fuite dans le réservoir de stockage de la Compagnie de Raffinerie du Liberia (LPRC).

Des centaines de personnes venues de West Point, Freeport, Clara Town, Front Street et aux alentours, se sont ruées sur la voie navigable avec d'énormes bidons pour puiser le carburant flottant sur la rivière et l'océan.

Selon nos informations, les premiers qui ont appris la nouvelle n'ont pas perdu un instant, ils se sont précipités sur les lieux munis des dizaines de bidons qui furent remplis de gasoil et transportés sur le marché libérien avant qu'il ne fit jour.

Avant l'arrivée des forces de l'ordre sur les lieux, beaucoup ont fait plusieurs voyages. Ils ont récupéré suffisamment de gasoil dans des bidons de vingt litres.

Les tentatives de ce quotidien de contacter les

autorités de la LPRC pour déterminer les circonstances qui ont provoqué le déversement du carburant stocké dans des réservoirs situés dans l'enceinte de la clôture de LPRC n'ont pas porté fruit. Arrivées sur les lieux, les forces de l'ordre ont tenté de disperser les gens qui puisaient la manne. Une source de la société a confié à ce quotidien qu'après midi dernier, notamment le 18 juillet, pendant qu'ils

travaillaient, ils se sont rendus compte qu'il y avait un problème au niveau de l'un de leurs réservoirs de stockage de carburant qui nécessitait une attention rapide.

Le carburant a commencé à se déverser dans l'océan Atlantique et des individus sans scrupules, dont des garçons du marché noir, se sont rués sur le produit, munis de bidons, pour recueillir le carburant.



## Le Président Tolberta été tué pour rien, regrette l'opposant Jeremiah Z. Whapoe

Le leader politique du parti de la transformation de la vision pour le Libéria (VOLT), Dr Jeremiah Z. Whapoe, n'y est pas allé par le dos de la cuillère, accusant les dirigeants et le peuple libériens d'être entièrement responsables du malaise économique dont souffre actuellement le pays.

A entendre M. Whapoe, le peuple est responsable pour sa naïveté et les dirigeants pour leur cupidité. Selon lui, le président William R. Tolberta été tué pour rien car les raisons qui ont motivé son assassinat subsistent encore aujourd'hui.

« Quatre décennies après, le Libéria n'est toujours pas en mesure de résoudre le problème de riz », regrette-t-il.

Le riz est l'aliment de base des libériens et cause immédiate du coup d'Etat horriblement sanglant contre le régime du président Tolbert le 12 avril 1980.

Dr Whapoe a fait valoir que ceux qui ont tué Tolberta cause du riz n'ont jusque-là mis sur le marché aucun sac de riz avec la mention : « Produit au Libéria ». « Ils vont toujours chez les chinois, chez les américains ou encore chez les indiens pour importer du riz qui, pourtant, pousse bien sur notre sol. Est-ce que le fait d'importer du riz a résolu une fois pour toute le problème de riz ? Mais, n'est-ce pas là la raison pour laquelle nous avons tué Tolbert ? Eh bien, nous avons tué Tolbert pour rien », a-t-il dit.

Il prévient que le Libéria ne s'en sortira que par le retour de son peuple à la terre, à l'agriculture, ajoutant que si l'on investit par an au moins 24 millions de dollars américains dans la production du riz, dans deux ans, le pays sera en mesure d'exporter du riz.

Dr Whapoe n'est pas du tout en faveur de l'importation du riz pour répondre aux besoins alimentaires du peuple, car cela, selon lui, ne résout aucun problème.

« Tolberta fait de même. Il s'est mis à importer le riz, et quand le riz est fini, les Libériens se sont mis en colère. Ils l'ont tué car pour eux c'est la solution », a expliqué Dr Whapoe.

« Mais la question qui se pose est de savoir après avoir tué Tolbert le 12 avril 1980, est-ce que ces gens ont produit un sac de riz pour le mettre sur le marché ? », a-t-il ajouté.

Dr Whapoe croit en outre que Dieu est en colère contre le peuple libérien « parce que les citoyens d'ici dansent pour de mauvaises choses, au lieu des bonnes choses ». « Par exemple, lorsque Tolberta été tué à cause



Slain President Tolbert

du riz, les femmes ont étalé leurs pagnes pour célébrer le meurtre de leur chef. Ces mêmes Libériens ont ensuite permis à l'ancien chef de guerre Charles Ghankay Taylor d'être leur président après avoir tué leurs parents. Ils se sont mis à chanter : « Quoique tu aies tué ma mère et mon père, je vais voter pour toi ». Dans notre propre folie, nous pensons agir avec sagesse, c'est pourquoi Dieu nous a tourné le dos », a-t-il dit, rappelant que les Libériens ont connu trois guerres après avoir voté M. Taylor comme président parce qu'ils n'ont pas appris à réfléchir.

« Et comme si cela ne suffisait pas, ces mêmes ont confié le pouvoir d'Etat à quelqu'un qui a dit que l'éducation ne peut pas développer le pays. Ils lui ont apporté leur soutien et se sont mis à chanter en disant : « Que tu sois instruit ou pas, nous allons voter pour toi » ».

« Et nous avons voté pour lui. Vous voyez à quoi ressemble le Libéria aujourd'hui ? Êtes-vous fiers du Libéria que nous avons aujourd'hui ? Je veux que vous vous asseyiez et regardiez dans le rétroviseur et voyez d'où nous sommes venus et où nous allons », a-t-il dit à un groupe de paysans de Kitoma, à qui il a remis un champ de riz de quatre-vingts hectares.

Dr Whapoe, qui a des ambitions présidentielles, a promis de « conduire les Libériens dans un endroit où l'argent ne sera pas leur problème et la nourriture que leurs enfants mangeront quotidiennement ne sera pas un problème ».

Il est le promoteur du Projets Agricole Optimum qui est présent dans plusieurs comtés du pays, dont Nimba et Bong. Dr Whapoe veut ainsi montrer comment il a l'intention de transformer le Libéria par l'agriculture en faisant de lui un pays auto-suffisant en matière de nourriture.

Il a cultivé un peu plus de 80 hectares de terre dans le cadre du projet dans le seul village de Kitoma, à Sanniquellie dans le comté de Nimba. Il a dit avoir dépensé quelques millions de dollars libériens pour le champ, ce qui a aussi créé des emplois pour les habitants.

# Français

## Côte d'Ivoire : Alassane Ouattara

succession en interne

Le chef de l'État et son entourage, note le sociologue, répètent désormais que « la donne » ou « le contexte » a changé. « Il faut construire l'argumentaire qui justifie vraiment le fait de se dédire, explique Francis Akindès. Quelles raisons objectives se donne-t-il pour revenir sur sa parole sans donner l'impression de faillir face à ses propres engagements ? Je pense que c'est ce à quoi il réfléchit en ce moment. »

Surtout, au sein du parti présidentiel, le choix d'Amadou Gon Coulibaly avait déjà fait des déçus qui ont pris leurs distances ou qui ont quitté le RHDP. Aujourd'hui, à trois mois de la présidentielle, il s'agit d'éviter une guerre de succession en interne. « Il sait que dans ses rangs il y a beaucoup de velléitaires. Mais s'il doit laisser ces velléités, ça va encore plus compliquer les choses. Donc cela s'impose à lui de faire taire dans ses rangs les tensions qu'il peut y avoir », estime Francis Akindès.

D'un autre côté, dans un paysage politique où les figures des années 1990 sont encore au devant de la scène dans les principaux partis - Laurent Gbagbo au FPI, Henri Konan Bédié au PDCI et Alassane Ouattara au RHDP - l'horizon politique est bouché pour les générations suivantes qui souhaiteraient peut-être enfin avoir leur chance.

Risque de tensions

Si Alassane Ouattara, au pouvoir depuis neuf ans, se déclare, s'ouvrirait aussi le débat de la constitutionnalité de sa candidature. Le nombre de mandats présidentiels est toujours limité à deux, mais pour les soutiens du président, la nouvelle Constitution de 2016 remettrait les compteurs à zéro. Or selon certains juristes, l'article 183 de la Constitution, qui stipule que la législation en vigueur avant 2016 reste applicable aujourd'hui, signifierait qu'Alassane Ouattara ne peut pas briguer un troisième mandat.

« En Côte d'Ivoire, près de la moitié des membres du Conseil constitutionnel sont nommés par le président de la République. On pourrait légitimement se demander s'ils auront la capacité à

prendre du recul pour traiter pareil dossier », souligne Sylvain N'Guessan, analyste politique, qui dirige l'Institut de stratégie d'Abidjan. Des tensions au sein de la société ne sont ainsi pas à écarter, estime-t-il : « Les risques de violences ne sont pas toujours loin des urnes en Côte d'Ivoire, et une telle candidature pourrait susciter des risques. » Toutefois, il est « difficile de d'évaluer l'ampleur de ces risques actuellement », tempère Sylvain N'Guessan.

Quelle réaction de la communauté internationale ?

Les deux analystes sont d'accord pour dire que si ces possibles tensions, son âge (78 ans), ou les accusations de ne pas tenir sa promesse de ne pas se représenter peuvent le faire hésiter, cela reste insuffisant pour faire renoncer Alassane Ouattara. « Les pressions internationales ne jouent plus autant qu'elles jouaient il y a une dizaine ou une vingtaine d'années », note aussi le sociologue Francis Akindès.

La communauté internationale, la France en particulier, pourrait d'ailleurs s'accommoder d'un troisième mandat d'Alassane Ouattara, selon Sylvain N'Guessan. « Entre quelqu'un qui arrive tant bien que mal à maintenir la stabilité, même si c'est par la peur, et un nouveau candidat qui pourrait peut-être ne pas réussir à conduire le navire avec la menace terroriste, le piratage en mer, les violences en interne, etc, on peut se demander où se trouvent les intérêts des acteurs extérieurs », analyse-t-il.

« La véritable question, c'est de savoir qui pourrait gérer l'héritage du RHDP. Avec tout ce qui a été fait aux cadres du FPI de Laurent Gbagbo, par exemple - gel des avoirs, exils, prison... - ils ont des raisons légitimes d'avoir peur du retour du bâton. En vue de préserver sa personne, son héritage et son clan, Alassane Ouattara pourrait se présenter », avance le politologue.

Selon Francis Akindès, l'annonce officielle de la candidature d'Alassane Ouattara n'est donc qu'une question de temps. La date limite du dépôt des candidatures est fixée au 31 août prochain mais le recueil des parrainages citoyens, nécessaires à la validation de ces candidatures, a déjà débuté.

## COMMENTAIRE

Par Abdourahmane Diallo Lucica  
Ditiu & Winnie Byanyima

### L'Afrique ne peut pas faire de compromis face au Covid-19

**G**ENÈVE - Maintenant que l'Afrique a enregistré plus de 500.000 cas confirmés de Covid-19, le nouveau coronavirus est à l'avant-plan des préoccupations du public. Mais le continent était affligé par des maladies infectieuses bien avant le début de la pandémie actuelle. Et pendant que les gouvernements et les bailleurs de fonds s'évertuent à aplanir la courbe du Covid-19, des maladies meurtrières comme le VIH/sida, le paludisme et la tuberculose continueront à gagner du terrain.

Sur les 38 millions de personnes contaminées par le VIH, le virus causant le sida, 25,6 millions vivent en Afrique subsaharienne. En 2018, le continent a enregistré 380.000 décès dus au paludisme, soit 94 pour cent du total mondial. Et 2,6 millions de personnes contractent la tuberculose en Afrique chaque année, avec un bilan de 630.000 décès.

La lutte contre ces maladies a considérablement progressé au cours des deux dernières décennies. Le nombre de décès liés au sida a été réduit de plus de moitié depuis 2004, en grande partie grâce à un plus grand accès à la thérapie antirétrovirale. Le taux de mortalité lié à la tuberculose a décliné de 42 pour cent entre 2000 et 2017. Et les décès imputables au paludisme ont également chuté de 60 pour cent entre 2000 et 2015 ; un enfant qui contracte le paludisme aujourd'hui a plus de chances de survie que jamais.

Mais la crise du Covid-19 menace de freiner ces progrès, voire de les réduire à néant, en particulier en submergeant des systèmes de santé déjà fragiles. L'Italie compte un médecin pour 243 habitants et pourtant, son système de santé a atteint un point de rupture dans certaines régions face à la multiplication des cas de Covid-19. Il est difficile d'imaginer les conséquences d'une telle épidémie dans les pays africains, où il y a en moyenne un médecin pour 5000 habitants.

Certes, le coronavirus s'est propagé plus lentement en Afrique qu'en Europe et en Amérique du Nord. Mais l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) avertit aujourd'hui que la pandémie pourrait se prolonger sur quelques années dans la région. Dans ce cas de figure, les systèmes de santé du continent, insuffisamment financés, seront mis à rude épreuve pendant longtemps. Et les ressources dont disposent les gouvernements seront probablement redirigées vers la gestion du Covid-19, même si cela doit se faire au détriment d'autres maladies mortelles.

Les perturbations de la chaîne d'approvisionnement provoquées par les mesures de confinement ailleurs dans le monde majorent les risques en menaçant de couper l'accès aux ressources, diagnostics et traitements préventifs et de lutte contre le VIH, la tuberculose et le paludisme. Certains pays africains ont déjà suspendu des programmes de diagnostics et de traitement du VIH et de la tuberculose, ainsi que la distribution de moustiquaires imprégnées d'insecticide (MII) - une intervention essentielle dans la lutte contre le paludisme - juste avant la saison des pluies, une période à haut risque de transmission.

L'OMS prévoit que dans le pire des scénarios (soit la suspension de toutes les campagnes de distribution de moustiquaires imprégnées d'insecticide et un recul de 75 % de l'accès aux antipaludéens efficaces), la crise du Covid-19 pourrait entraîner un doublement du nombre de décès imputables au paludisme en Afrique subsaharienne cette année, et précise que « cela reviendrait à retrouver des taux de mortalité due au paludisme jamais vus depuis 20 ans ».

De plus, une interruption de six mois des traitements antirétroviraux pourrait se traduire par plus de 500.000 décès supplémentaires dus à des maladies associées au sida (dont la tuberculose) en Afrique

subsaharienne en 2020-2021. On estime que les maladies liées au sida ont tué environ 440.000 personnes dans cette région en 2019.

De même, une étude menée par le Partenariat Halte à la tuberculose montre qu'une période de confinement de trois mois suivie d'une phase de reprise de 10 mois pourraient entraîner 1,4 million de décès supplémentaires dus à la tuberculose dans le monde entre 2020 et 2025. Selon ce scénario, la lutte mondiale contre la tuberculose serait retardée de 5 à 8 ans.

Ces conséquences ne sont pas inéluctables. Ce qu'il faut, c'est une réponse collective mondiale axée sur l'offre de services vitaux, l'allègement de la charge qui pèse sur des systèmes de santé déjà surchargés et sur la protection des Africains les plus vulnérables. Le succès dépendra de solutions innovantes, d'une perspective holistique (plutôt que de programmes disparates qui luttent contre une seule maladie) et d'une approche qui donne la priorité à l'équité.

Il faut tout d'abord que les tests de diagnostic - pour le Covid-19 et les nombreuses autres maladies courantes - soient accessibles à tous et en particulier aux populations à haut risque. L'Afrique dispose de services de dépistage bien établis de plusieurs maladies courantes, dont des tests de dépistage mixtes du VIH et de la tuberculose. Mais ces services sont aujourd'hui menacés et l'Afrique accuse par ailleurs un retard en matière de dépistage du Covid-19 par rapport à d'autres régions.

Il y a toutefois des nouvelles encourageantes : certains pays africains ont commencé à effectuer des tests conjoints Covid-19/tuberculose et Covid-19/paludisme (avec un traitement immédiat du paludisme le cas échéant). Les tests mixtes sont d'autant plus judicieux que le VIH, la tuberculose et le paludisme présentent tous des symptômes correspondant au Covid-19, dont une fièvre élevée. Ces programmes doivent être renforcés de façon à ce que les moyens diagnostiques et thérapeutiques, souvent chers et difficilement accessibles, soient mis à la disposition de tous.

Cet objectif est tout à fait réalisable. Les pays africains, qui ont une grande expérience des situations d'urgence sanitaire, ont réagi rapidement et efficacement à l'émergence du Covid-19. L'Union africaine, par le biais du Centre africain de contrôle et de prévention des maladies (CDC Afrique), a pris des mesures vigoureuses pour coordonner la réponse à la pandémie.

Ces efforts doivent être poursuivis et approfondis, à la fois pour contenir le Covid-19 et pour préserver les progrès enregistrés dans la lutte contre le VIH, la tuberculose et le paludisme. L'expérience passée montre que la participation des communautés touchées et la responsabilisation de la société civile seront les clés du succès.

Le reste du monde doit également apporter sa contribution. Cela signifie surtout qu'il faut s'accorder sur le fait que tout vaccin ou traitement du Covid-19 soit mis gratuitement à la disposition de tous les pays. Lors de l'épidémie du VIH, des millions de personnes sont mortes inutilement, parce qu'elles ne pouvaient pas avoir accès à des médicaments vitaux. Aujourd'hui encore, quelques neuf millions de personnes en Afrique subsaharienne attendent un traitement qui pourrait leur sauver la vie. Tout le monde a droit à la santé, quel que soit son lieu de résidence ou ses moyens financiers. Dans le cas du Covid-19, nous avons besoin d'un vaccin universel.

Mais sauver des vies face au Covid-19 n'aura guère de sens si l'on permet que le nombre de vies emportées par le VIH, la tuberculose et le paludisme augmente. Tout en œuvrant de concert pour endiguer une nouvelle maladie mortelle, nous devons résolument nous engager à poursuivre les progrès vers l'élimination de celles que nous connaissons déjà.

## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

# GHEI Supports Children's Healthcare and Basic Education in Ghana

By KesterKennKlomegah

## ● Lack of infrastructure in health care facilities

- Lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities in households leading to infections and diseases such as malaria, diarrhea etc.

- Inadequate knowledge and awareness of proper nutrition amongst pregnant women.

- Lack of skilled healthcare workers including absence of emotional support from birth attendants. There is also a lack of faith in birth attendants resulting in mothers accessing health facilities as a last resort.

- Poor transportation system.

Sanitation and hygiene standards in rural households is a key challenge. Only 18% of households in Ghana use improved toilet facilities. Urban households are more likely than rural households to use improved toilet facilities (22% versus 13%). Eight in ten households use unimproved toilet facilities—52% use a shared facility, 15% use an unimproved facility, and 15% have no facility.

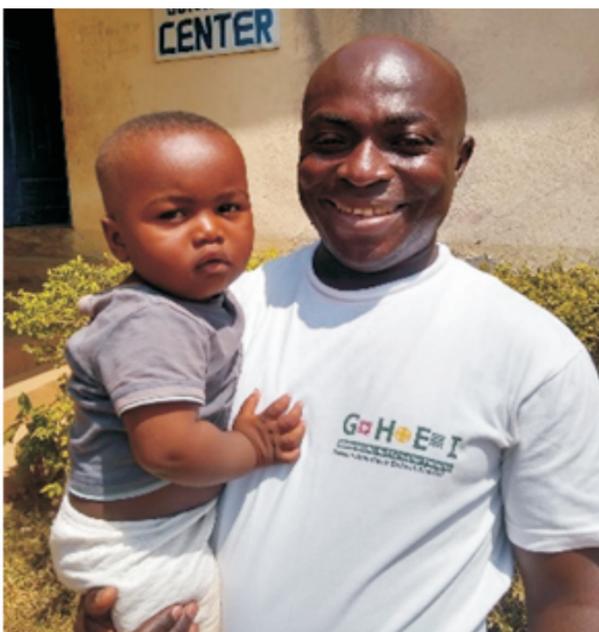
## Development of infants and young children

Between 1990-2018, the under-five mortality rate reduced from 127 to 48 per 1000 live births, with the annual rate of reduction being 3.5%. In the same period, the infant mortality rate dropped from 80 to 30 per 1000 live births. While this is a considerable progress, it is still not enough to meet the SDG target of ending all preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age.

Health and Nutrition in young children and infants is a key challenge. One child in every five in Ghana experiences stunted growth during the first thousand days of life caused by inadequate nourishment, frequent illness and an unhealthy environment. These affect the physical, social and cognitive development in children. Their brain development is negatively impacted which further affects learning at an early age, school performance and ultimately their socio-economic development.

Limited knowledge of key infant and young child feeding practices among caregivers remains a challenge in Ghana. This coupled with the lack of skills to prepare nutritious foods and the cost of certain foods, leading to poor diversity in the diets of infants and young children. Only 13 percent of children between 6-23 months receive the appropriate minimum diet diversity. Moreover, only 52% women in the country breastfeed exclusively.

With regard to early childhood stimulation, mere 6% children under age 5 have 3 or more children's



books. Only 41% children under age 5 have 2 or more types of playthings. The challenge is majorly poverty as it limits the parents' ability to spend time and money to play with, feed, and educate their children, resulting in a less stimulating home environment.

How the local system, that is the structures and cultural norms influence the operations of the NGO?

We believe that progress in health and education is best achieved by the community itself. Therefore, we value empowering local individuals and cultivating local leadership to develop and manage all our programs. To this aim, all GHEI programs are led and executed by community members who are trusted agents of change in their communities, and whose role in mobilizing community members to respond to their health and education issues is well established. Consequently, local systems, structures and cultural norms are embedded in our everyday activities.

As a grassroots NGO, we are sensitive and have high regard for local systems, structures and cultural norms. For nearly 20 years now, we have delivered high quality health and education programs to women and children in rural communities in Ghana. We have ensured that our work is culturally appropriate and reflects the local realities. For instance, our education programs are based on the curriculum followed in Ghanaian public schools and the guidance for a successful career to children is provided by local role models. All health-related learning materials is available in the local language and provides local solutions for improving nutrition, sanitation & hygiene and cognitive stimulation.

In this way, we have won trust and cooperation from not only our direct beneficiaries (women and children) but also key members of the community such as community chiefs, elders, local health/education officials and religious leaders. Our initiative has added value to local systems, structures and cultural norms. They in turn have influenced our operations positively and keep inspiring us to fight poverty through innovative means.

Over the years, local knowledge and perspectives have evolved in the rural communities we work in. Community members are better aware about how NGO's can meet their needs and what role they can play in this collective fight against poverty.

From an operational viewpoint, local systems, structures and cultural norms sometimes pose a challenge as well. For instance, promoting sexual health education and generating knowledge on similar topics amongst teenagers is seen as infringing local values and culture. While we recognize sensitivities involved in such issues and respect other views, undeniably there is a

need to educate teenagers because teenage pregnancies lead to school dropouts especially in rural areas. In addition, local bureaucratic hurdles/redtape hinder opportunities to partner with local government institutions. Since the inception, we have considered partnership as highly important, and continue to find ways to collaborate with like-minded institutions to fight poverty in Ghana.

How would you argue that health and education have received low priority from the government in the country?

Between 2012 and 2018, there has been a 50% reduction in government expenditure on education. In 2012, the government had spent 37.5% on education and by 2018 it dropped to 18.6% (% of total government expenditure). On the health side, we have seen a drop in government's expenditure as well. Between 2013 and 2017, the government's health expenditure reduced by 34%. While the trend may look different for if you change the time period, however my point is that these are recent trends and, hence worrying.

Moreover, in rural areas, health and education have received low priority because infrastructural and other social amenities are limited so trained staff refuse to accept transfer to rural areas rather prefer to be in the cities. Moreover, staff refuse to stay in rural settings because it has low incentive to further one's education. I have come not across any strategy by the government to overcome this challenge in so many years.

What would you consider as achievements since you began this Health and Education NGO?

We believe that every individual - regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic status - should have access to a learning environment where they can expand their knowledge and increase their literacy level. In our communities, there is a lack of literary resources available, which is exacerbated by the lack of textbooks in schools. Moreover, students do not have access to quiet spaces that are conducive to learning.

To give our community, and in particular students, the opportunity to learn and improve their literacy in preparation for obtaining a higher education, GHEI constructed a library in Humjibre in 2007. It has a collection of over 6000 books on wide ranging topics, however there is a special emphasis on children's books, school textbooks and books authored by African authors.

TO BE CONT'D

# Rep. Kolubah defies arrest

**M**ontserrado District #10 Representative Yekeh Kolubah was at it again on Tuesday morning July 21, this time defying the arrest and impounding of his official vehicle for allegedly violating traffic regulations.

The lawmaker official vehicle veered off on the opposite lane during the early Tuesday morning rush hour in Sinkor on the Tubman Boulevard as a way of beating the traffic. The behavior is very uncommon among officials of the three branches of the Liberian Government here when it comes to traffic violations.

They drive with excessive speeds towards the incoming vehicles on the opposite lane during rush hours without considering the danger these violations poses to vehicles on the opposite lane.

But like many whose vehicles are more often at times use by family members who also take undue advantage of this unruly behavior-Rep. Kolubah's vehicle was no exception on Tuesday.

So the Rep. Yekeh Kolubah's Tuesday morning



drama began when police attempted impounding his vehicle for driving on the opposite lane. When the police stopped the vehicle and noticed that the lawmaker was not the driver, the Deputy Inspector General of Police for Operations Col. Melvin Sackor decided to impound the vehicle.

In the middle of the controversy, Yekeh dressed in a maroon T-shirt and short blue jeans trouser, came on the

scene and insisted that the police could not impound his vehicle and proceeded with his normal rants against President George Weah. He went a little further roping in the Deputy Police Inspector with insults.

Yekeh insisted that he was in the car and on his way to work (dressed in short trouser and T-shirt) and could not be arrested.

The deputy police boss,

overwhelmed by his desire to show strength decided to effect the arrest of Rep. Kolubah, something the lawmaker resisted while jumping all over his car and pounding it.

"My car can never go to Central" he said repeatedly while jumping up and down like a little kid.

Article 42 of the Liberian Constitution says in part that members of the Legislature shall be privileged from arrest while attending, going to or returning from sessions of the Legislature, except for treason, felony or breach of the peace.

But the unhealthy scene created by Kolubah yesterday raised many questions as to whether he was a beneficiary of this Article yesterday since he was not allegedly in the vehicle as at the time of its arrest as argued by the police.

The police claimed Yekeh was not the driver and occupant of the vehicle as at the time of its arrest and therefore was not being obstructed. The situation caused a huge traffic in Sinkor keeping many in traffic for hours.

The drama moved a little further down before the Foreign Ministry where the president currently resides after some members of the House of Representatives including Bong County Representative J. Marvin Cole and Grand Kru County

Representative J. Fonati Koffa came to calm down the heated verbal clashes between the two public officials down on 12th Street, where it all began.

The two lawmakers had convinced the deputy police chief to drive at the compound of the Legislature, but approaching the Capitol, Col. Sackor insists that the vehicle be driven at the police headquarters instead.

Col. Sackor's sudden change of mind to have the car carried to the Police Headquarters was greeted with anger and harsh words from both lawmakers who had come on the scene to calm the situation.

He ordered that Yekeh Kolubah be arrested and bundled into the vehicle but no office pay heed to his order.

He was later subdued and agreed to drive on the grounds on the capitol building where the matter was handled amicably with the intervention of House Speaker Bhofal Chambers to resolve the conflict.

Mr. Kolubah and the police continue to have harsh encounters that date back to when he took part as a major player and organizing member in the two biggest protests organized against the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) government.

Besides, he is restless in his criticisms against President Weah and the administration which at times result in very bitter exchanges between him and other officials of government here. **-By Othello B. Garblah**

## Court rejects key evidence in CBL case

By Winston W. Parley

**P**rosecutors seem to suffer a major blow while closing their production of State's evidence in the trial of Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) officials, as Criminal Court "C" Judge Yamie Quiqui Gbeisay refuses to admit into evidence essential instruments regarding movement of cash from reserved vault to operational vault.

Following the judge's decision Tuesday, 21 July at the Temple of Justice, the prosecution announced that it will take advantage of the statute with respect to the court's denial of the two

instruments.

Judge Gbeisay had agreed with defense lawyers on their request not to admit these two instruments into evidence having realized that there was no prosecution's witness testimony "with respect to the movement of cash from reserved vault to the operational vault or from the operational vault to the reserved vault."

The government here indicted several CBL officials including the bank's Board of Governors, accusing them of printing and shipping to Liberia L\$13,004,750,000.00 without authorization, and allegedly understating the printed amount as

L\$10,359,750,000.00, giving a variance of L\$2,645,000,000.00.

All the defendants on trial including former CBL Executive Governor Milton A. Weeks, David Fahart, Elsie Dossen Bardio and Kollie Tamba 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.

Judge Gbeisay says the prosecution's witnesses failed to establish the fact in any manner and form, adding that admitting such documents will be contrary to the spirit [of] justice.

"With such a charge [levied] against the defendants, the movement of cash from one vault to another while the defendants were in charge of the CBL, [it's] very germane and essential fact that this court will need to determine ... the guilt or [innocence] of the defendants," he says.

According to the Judge, the essence of the court is to find the truth, and in finding the truth there ought to be no surprise on the other side.

"The [intent] of the Prosecution testimonies is to give notice to the defense so that the defendant will be

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able to put out adequate defense to adequately [defend] themselves," he notes.

After prosecution rests with production of evidence, the court has assigned the next hearing date of this case to 28 July at 9:00AM during which time the defense team is expected to take the stage to present its side of the case.

The CBL officials 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.

Last week former House Speaker Mr. Emmanuel Nuquaye, now Director General at the Liberia Aviation Authority (LAA), testified that no authorization was given the CBL to print additional LD\$10 billion.

"As we have clearly established and can be seen by the letter written to the CBL, no authorization was given in

the form of a letter to even create a ground for an argument as to the mode of authorization whether through letter or resolution," he said as State - subpoenaed witness Thursday, 16 July.

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.

This third indictment in the case did not include former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's son Charles E. Sirleaf who served as Deputy CBL Governor for Operations when the financial scandal emerged at the bank, because he was nolleprosequi with prejudice in May this year.

Besides Mr. Sirleaf, the prosecution here also entered a nolleprosequi (dropped charges) in favor of defendants Richard H. Walker, Dorbor M. Hagba and Joseph Dennis.



## C. Ronaldo sets two impressive scoring records



**C**ristiano Ronaldo is at it again. Another night, two more goal-scoring records for the Portuguese superstar.

But his latest two - having achieved both in the win over Lazio on Monday - are certainly no mean feat.

The 35-year-old bagged a

brace in the clash with Juve's title rivals, who have fallen off the pace since the restart.

Indeed at one stage in the match Ronaldo even jumped ahead of Lazio's **Ciro Immobile** in the Serie A top scoring charts, only until the Italian's late penalty drew them level for the season.

Yet Ronaldo had already

made history by then, having become the first player to rack up 50 or more goals in not just Serie A, but in La Liga and the Premier League, too.

What's more, Ronaldo is the fastest player to hit half a century in the whole of Serie A history - taking just 61 matches to reach the impressive tally.

He beat AC Milan legend **Andriy Shevchenko** to the total by a clear seven games, while namesake Brazilian icon Ronaldo took 70 fixtures during his time with Inter Milan.

The Juventus talisman reached the milestone with a penalty of his own, placing the ball into the bottom right corner to open the scoring after 51 minutes.

It didn't take him long to double his side's advantage, as he and **Paulo Dybala** raced clear beyond Lazio's defence, before the Argentinian slid in his teammate for an easy finish.



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## Arsenal fans protest against owner with flying message

**A**rsenal owner Stan Kroenke found himself the subject of protests at Villa Park on Tuesday as a group of fans flew a message over the stadium calling for his head.

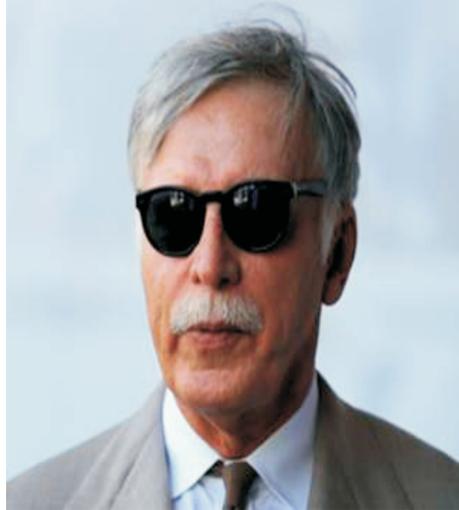
The initiative came from an anonymous Gunners supporter who, under the username **KroenkeOut**, raised £1,750 on the crowdfunding site **JustGiving** in order to hire an airplane bearing the message "Back Arteta Kroenke Out".

"Mikel Arteta has expressed his concerns over our transfer budget for the upcoming transfer window," the organiser stated on the website.

"Now it's time for us to express ours. Help fund this banner and the whole of Arsenal will undoubtedly see the discontent within the fanbase.

"It's time to put some real pressure on Kroenke and the board!"

More than 150 fellow Arsenal fans supported the proposal, meaning **KroenkeOut** passed the



stated target of £1,700 in just a handful of days.

And as promised an airplane was spotted over Villa Park as Arsenal prepared to kick off against **Aston Villa**, bearing the criticism of the club chief while backing rookie manager **Arteta** in his debut season with the north Londoners.

Kroenke has found himself in the firing line despite this week's victories over **Liverpool** and **Manchester City** due to a perceived unwillingness to spend heavily in order to

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