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Continental News

Nigeria to free all anti-police protesters

Nigeria's police chief has ordered the unconditional release of all demonstrators arrested during protests against police brutality.

This was a key demand of protesters who have rallied against the hated Special Anti-Robbery Squad (Sars) in major cities for seven days.

Amnesty International said that 10 people were killed in the protests.

Rallies have continued despite President Muhammadu Buhari announcing on Sunday the disbandment of Sars. Protesters responded to that announcement with scepticism, saying they believed that Sars officers were still deployed. Some of Nigeria's biggest music stars, including Davido and Falz, threw their weight behind the demonstrators, who have been galvanising support on Twitter under the #EndSARS hashtag.

On Tuesday, they marched in the oil hub of Port Harcourt in defiance of a ban on demonstrations imposed by the state governor. Protests were also held in the commercial capital, Lagos, the federal capital, Abuja, and four other cities. Mohammed Adamu announced the release of all protesters at a meeting with

the National Human Rights Commission.

He did not say how many of them are in detention.

Mr Adamu added Nigerians had the right to protest peacefully and ordered officers to stop using force against them. He acknowledged that the protesters' concerns were genuine and said they would be addressed by the government. The meeting also agreed that an independent panel would be set up to investigate allegations of abuse against Sars, and other police units. On Monday, Mr Buhari promised that the disbandment of Sars was only the first step

towards "extensive" reforms within the police force. The latest round of protests were prompted by footage of officers pulling two men out of a hotel in Lagos into the street and shooting one of them.

The footage, leaked to the media, provoked outrage and led many to share stories of brutality attributed to the unit, which has developed notoriety for unduly profiling young people, the BBC's Nduka Orjinmo in Abuja says.

Those considered "flashy" often attract the Sars officers' attention and very few walk away without having to hand

over money, while others are arrested or jailed on trumped-up charges and some have been killed, our correspondent adds. Earlier this year rights group Amnesty said it had documented at least 82 cases of torture, ill treatment and extra-judicial execution between January 2017 and May this year. The victims were mainly men aged between 18 and 35 from poor backgrounds and vulnerable groups. Many of those tortured were beaten with sticks and machetes and denied medical attention, the group said.

The "systemic use of torture... points to an absolute disregard for international human rights laws and standards", Amnesty said. The #EndSARS hashtag was first thought to have been used in 2018, but it emerged once again a fortnight ago.

There have been earlier

attempts to reform the notorious squad. In 2018 Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo ordered that its management and activities be overhauled.

Then last year, a specially formed Presidential Panel on the Reform of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad recommended reforms along with the dismissal and prosecution of named officers accused of abusing Nigerians.

At the time, President Buhari gave the head of police three months to work out how to implement the recommendations, but critics say little changed.

Previously police chiefs ordered a reform of Sars in 2017, in the aftermath of a viral video of a man allegedly killed by police, and also in 2010 when instructions were given to disband satellite offices.

BBC



Protesters have used social media to rally crowds

UN rights experts call for Kamto's release

A group of UN human rights experts has called on the Cameroon government to release detained opposition leader, Maurice Kamto, as

well as hundreds of his supporters who were arrested following nationwide protests on 22 September.

Mr Kamto has been held under house arrest for three

weeks now.

The military surrounded his home after he called for nationwide protests to force President Paul Biya, in power now for 38 years, to resign.

About 500 of Mr Kamto's supporters were also arrested, and more than 200 of them are still in custody.

The 14 independent UN experts have also called for an impartial investigation into alleged human rights violations by the Cameroon government.

The police declined the BBC's request for comment.

The government's spokesman, Emmanuel Sadi, and his colleague of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji, had earlier threatened to ban Mr Kamto's party, Cameroon Renaissance Movement, as well as take up legal action against the opposition leader. BBC



Fire breaks out on Africa's tallest mountain

Efforts are continuing in Tanzania to extinguish a fire that has broken out on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa.

Members of the Tanzania National Parks Authority (Tanapa) and local people have been struggling to put out the blaze, which began on Sunday.

Their efforts have been hampered by the altitude as well as strong winds and dry weather which have caused the

rest centre for climbers using two of the several routes up the mountain.

Tanapa tweeted pictures which give a sense of the extent of the fire and its aftermath. "The fire is still going on and firefighters from Tanapa, other government institutions and locals are continuing with the efforts to contain it," Mr Shelutete said.

The College of African Wildlife Management, located near the mountain, has sent



Hundreds of people have been working to put the fire out

fire to spread fast. The cause of the fire is not clear.

But there is speculation that the flames could have spread from a fire used to prepare food for tourists.

Tanapa spokesman Pascal Shelutete told the Tanzanian newspaper Mwananchi: "It seems the fire that was lit to prepare food... torched the dry vegetation in the area and spread quickly."

Mr Shelutete said the fire started at the Whona area, a

264 students to help fight the fire and distribute supplies to firefighters.

The parks authority said in a statement that it had taken "every step to make sure that the fire will not affect the lives of tourists, their equipment, porters and tour guides".

Mount Kilimanjaro, which is 5,895m (19,341ft) high is a popular tourist destination and tens of thousands of people climb it every year. BBC

EDITORIAL

No place for electoral violence

THE GOVERNMENT OF the United States thru Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, last week sounded a caveat to African countries preparing for elections, including Liberia to respect the rule of law by allowing citizens to engage in political dialogue and support their choice of candidates, parties, and platforms.

MR. POMPEO SAID in a statement issued over the weekend thru the United States Embassy in Monrovia that the conduct of elections is important not only for Africans, but also for defenders of democracy around the world.

SPECIFICALLY, THE UNITED States has vowed to closely watch actions of individuals who interfere in democratic process on the Continent and will not hesitate to consider consequences, including visa restrictions for people that would be responsible for election-related violence anywhere in Africa.

THIS CAVEAT FROM Liberia's traditional partner America, comes just at a time Liberians are gearing up for midterm senatorial elections on December 8, 2020. The December poll is to elect 15 senators to join 15 incumbent at the Capitol to complete the 30-member Liberian Senate before the next presidential election in 2023.

BUT AHEAD OF the poll, political rallies, mainly by the opposition have been disrupted repeatedly by violence, with fingers-pointing and threats of violent reaction.

ALTHOUGH SECRETARY POMPEO'S warning was not specifically directed at Liberia, but this country being a historical friend of America should listen and act accordingly. Liberia cannot afford to dwindle in violent or fraudulent elections because we should be torchbearer for young democracies on the Continent.

AS SECRETARY POMPEO emphasized, it is important that all sides have equal opportunity to participate peacefully in the democratic process void of repression and intimidation. This has not been the case at recent rallies held across the country, particularly in Monrovia and parts adjacent by opposition candidates, including Senator Abraham Darius Dillon of the Collaborating Political Parties.

WE RECALL THE incident of CPP leader Alexander Cummings' visit to Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County along with opposition Lawmaker Yekeh Kolubah months ago, where they were violently chased out of the county by machete-brandishing thugs expressing loyalty to President George Manneh Weah.

OUTCOME OF A government investigating into the violence is still pending despite a joint statement issued by Foreign Missions in Monrovia, calling for speedy probe.

EVERY LIBERIAN SHOULD endeavor to keep our elections and democracy peaceful and participatory. Whether a candidate comes from the opposition CPP, the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change or is an Independent, he or she has right to campaign and seek votes in counties, communities, towns and villages without fear of being chased away with machetes and stones.



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COMMENTARY

By Anatole Manzi

Overcoming the COVID-19 Disruption to Essential Health Services

It is clear that COVID-19 will persist much longer than anticipated. If countries do not take action soon to ensure the continuity of essential health services during the pandemic, the future death toll from communicable and noncommunicable diseases will be unacceptably high.

KIGALI - Health-care delivery in nearly every country has been disrupted by policymakers' mistaken initial assumption that health systems would quickly win the fight against COVID-19. As the pandemic's caseload and death toll are increasing daily, it is often stalling or reversing hard-won progress on minimizing the impact of other diseases, from diabetes to malaria.

At the start of the pandemic, many policymakers and health leaders considered a relatively short disruption of essential health services acceptable, but it is now clear that COVID-19 will persist much longer than anticipated. Countries can no longer postpone the delivery of crucial health services. Without immediate action to ensure their continuity, the future death toll from communicable and non-communicable diseases will be unacceptably high.

In a grim recent assessment of the global costs of the COVID-19 crisis, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation reported that in 25 weeks, the pandemic had set the world back about 25 years in terms of vaccine coverage - a good proxy for how health systems are functioning overall. Clearly, now is the time to make sure that essential health services are not left behind.

This will require dedicated funding, innovative approaches, and decentralized services to reach the world's sickest and poorest communities. Policymakers should reallocate funds in national budgets and form partnerships with private investors to marshal the necessary resources. It is also crucial to establish domestic and global solidarity funds, similar to The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Creating such dedicated funds could help countries and multilateral institutions maintain the continuity of essential health services, thereby strengthening health-care systems and national economies in the long term.

Even before the pandemic, it was estimated that at least half of the world's 7.8 billion people lacked access to essential health services. Globally, six million children and adolescents, and 2.8 million pregnant women and newborns, die from preventable or treatable diseases annually. COVID-19 has increased these numbers and eroded access to health care.

Global health experts have long been aware of the disruptions a protracted emergency would cause for health services. In 2018, the World Health Organization defined an essential package of services that should be available without user fees during an extended crisis. These include maternal and neonatal health care as well as treatment for communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental health, and neglected tropical diseases.

Several challenges to delivering this package stand out. First, services for non-communicable diseases have decreased significantly. Of the 155 countries surveyed by the WHO, 53%

reported a partial or total disruption of treatment services for hypertension, 49% for diabetes, 42% for cancer, and 31% for cardiovascular emergencies.

HIV and tuberculosis (TB) testing and treatment is also being affected. South Africa is among the countries most affected by these diseases. During the country's lockdown, declines in TB testing led to a 33% decline in diagnoses. The number of TB and HIV patients collecting their medications on schedule has also fallen. Weaker adherence will ultimately lead to an increase in drug resistance, therapeutic failure, and higher treatment costs.

And yet other countries, including Rwanda, New Zealand, and Taiwan, have demonstrated remarkable success in ensuring the continuity of essential health services. In Taiwan, for example, low-cost universal health-care coverage has continued throughout the pandemic, and Rwanda has continued operating a new radiotherapy center for cancer treatment.

In Sierra Leone, where one in 17 mothers has a lifetime risk of death associated with childbirth, the Koidu Government Hospital in the Kono District is working with Partners In Health, a global nonprofit organization, on a mass communications campaign that reminds pregnant women to use maternity services. After a steep fall-off in prenatal visits, women are once more using these services.

Clinics in Sub-Saharan Africa are also innovating to continue the monitoring and treatment of the region's 19 million diabetes patients during the pandemic. The Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism of Cameroon, for example, developed ten "golden rules" for COVID-19 and diabetes management, including information on exercise during confinement. Diabetes clinics have also introduced teleconsulting to limit the need for outpatient visits.

Furthermore, some countries are seeking innovative ways of ensuring care delivery. For example, Rwanda is using drones to distribute medication to cancer patients and robots to monitor COVID-19 patients' vital signs and prevent hospital-acquired infections. Technological solutions may not always be cheap, but the gains can outweigh the financial outlay.

To achieve similar outcomes, many countries urgently need to overhaul their health-care allocation and delivery systems. Where possible, COVID-19 testing and treatment centers should integrate the provision of essential health services, including screening for conditions such as high-risk pregnancies and chronic diseases.

Moreover, decentralizing health services could strengthen systemic readiness and limit disruption. This will require training an expanded corps of community health workers, including heads of households, teachers, faith leaders, and traditional healers. In Liberia, for example, trained community health assistants play a central role in the COVID-19 response, while still delivering essential services.

O-PED

By Djoomart Otorbaev

Kyrgyzstan's Latest Revolution

A popular uprising has overthrown a Kyrgyz government for the third time in less than two decades, confirming the country as a political outlier in Central Asia. But this month's events put Kyrgyzstan in real danger of sinking into an abyss of confusion and chaos.

BISHKEK - Much of Kyrgyzstan's capital has been unnaturally calm for several days now. Municipal workers clean and wash the streets, but there are few passersby. There are also few signs of the recent clashes in which police used tear gas and stun grenades to disperse young protesters. But the covered windows of the city's shopping centers attest to the simmering tension in this Central Asian country, which now faces its third major political crisis in 15 years.

The most recent protests erupted following the country's October 4 parliamentary election, in which three pro-government parties - with, by Kyrgyz standards, huge official and unofficial financial resources at their disposal - won an implausible 107 of 120 seats. Only one opposition party got into parliament, barely exceeding the 7% threshold. That party, and 12 others that failed to win seats, refused to recognize the results.

The subsequent revolution was swift and thorough, dismantling most of the country's political system in little more than 24 hours. On the night of October 5-6, several thousand opposition supporters protested in Bishkek's central square, and some stormed parliament and other government buildings. The cabinet resigned, and the country's central election commission annulled the election results, promising to schedule a new vote. Even NEXTA Live, the Telegram messaging app channel widely used by protesters in Belarus, focused almost exclusively on news from Kyrgyzstan, posting information, photos, and videos from the capital.

On October 9, President Sooronbai Jeenbekov said that he would step down once a new cabinet was appointed. But he also declared a state of emergency in the capital and ordered military units to end the unrest - including fighting between rival opposition groups.

The fact that Kyrgyzstan has been here before, with previous revolutions overthrowing governments in 2005 and 2010, makes it an outlier in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan is so far the only country in the region where popular protests have ousted unpopular leaders, and where elections have been recognized as free and fair by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

But this third revolution in less than two decades puts Kyrgyzstan in real danger of sinking into an abyss of confusion and chaos. Kyrgyz citizens and neighboring states are concerned about the country's instability. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who doesn't want Kyrgyzstan to slip into China's orbit, hopes that "a normal democratic political process will be restored." The presidents of the other Central Asian states - Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan - issued a joint statement on October 9 expressing concern about the crisis. And the Chinese foreign ministry said that, "China sincerely hopes that all parties in Kyrgyzstan can resolve the issue [...] as soon as possible."

Kyrgyzstan's use of modern electronic ballot boxes meant that the opposition had no complaints about the vote-counting process. The main reason for the mass discontent was instead electoral bribery, with voters reportedly being paid 2,000 Kyrgyz soms (\$25) - a significant sum for a poor citizen here - to vote for one of the pro-government parties. OSCE observers reported that the October 4 election was tainted by "credible allegations of vote buying."

The protesters also objected to the presence of representatives of criminal groups and a "corrupted elite" on the pro-government parties' electoral lists, and to widespread administrative pressure placed on voters by local authorities. For example, the Matraimov family, who were behind the Mekenim Kyrgyzstan party - which won a quarter of the vote - became the main target of investigations by RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, Kloop, and Bellingcat. This revealed the scope of members' corruption and illegal business practices. Few of them still hold public posts.

As an ancient nomadic people, the Kyrgyz have always had a special craving for freedom and justice, and today they feel thwarted in their desire to live in a socially just and democratic country. Power here was never inherited, and rulers had to have popular support. Unlike in a sedentary culture, in which political power is derived from control of the land on which subjects lived, if a ruler could not ensure his tribe's security and economic prosperity, families simply migrated to another place with a different ruler.

Today, exit is not an option for most people, and Kyrgyzstan's increasingly precarious economic situation is also fueling discontent. Lacking the vast hydrocarbon reserves of most of its Central Asian neighbors, the country instead relies mainly on the development of several gold deposits, the biggest of which is the Canadian-run Kumtor project, as well as a growing tourism sector.

Until recently, Kyrgyzstan's chronically high unemployment rate was partly mitigated by the fact that almost one million Kyrgyz migrants could leave and work abroad, mainly in Russia. As a result, Kyrgyzstan received remittances in 2019 totaling about 30% of GDP, one of the highest levels in the world.

But the COVID-19 pandemic has stranded many of these migrant workers, exacerbating the economy's plight. The International Monetary Fund forecasts that Kyrgyzstan's GDP will fall by 4% this year, making it the worst-performing Central Asian economy.

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OPINION

By Barry Eichengreen

Scotland after Sterling

Scottish advocates of leaving the United Kingdom need a plan for a new currency and an independent central bank, as well as a blueprint for the country's subsequent transition to the euro. These would go a long way toward reassuring Scots who yearn for independence but worry about what follows sterling.

BERKELEY - The odds of Scotland becoming independent are rising by the day. In Scotland's 2014 referendum, some 45% of voters favored independence. Brexit, which some 60% of Scotland's voters opposed, is now forcing the Scottish electorate to choose between staying in the United Kingdom and remaining in the European Union, shifting public opinion further toward independence.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's shambolic EU trade negotiations heighten that dilemma. Reflecting such pressures, pro-independence sentiment has exceeded 50% in six polls conducted this year.

But if you think the UK's negotiations with the EU are fraught, just wait for its negotiations with Scotland. Should income from North Sea oil be apportioned on a per capita basis or geographically, akin to fishing rights? Should responsibility for servicing the UK's national debt be assigned as a function of relative national incomes or populations?

Then there are currency arrangements. One might think that this is not an issue for international negotiation. Many will assume that an independent Scotland should have its own currency, managed by its own central bank.

But another recent poll found 40% of Scots describing themselves as "less likely" to vote for independence if this meant replacing the pound. Admittedly, the poll was commissioned by a pro-UK lobby, Scotland in Union. Still, the result is indicative of the discomfort many Scots feel about forsaking sterling for an uncertain successor.

A decade ago, pro-independence Scots sought a monetary union with a rump UK. Scotland would then continue to receive the lender-of-last-resort services and reputational benefits of association with the Bank of England. But the UK government quickly put the kibosh on that idea. Anyway, this possibility has been rendered moot by Brexit, because an independent Scotland that was already in a monetary union with an extra-EU country would be unable to rejoin the EU.

Some have suggested that Scotland should create a new currency and peg it firmly to the pound in the manner of a currency board. This arrangement, the advocates argue, would ensure currency stability vis-à-vis the UK, but also enable Scotland to rejoin the EU. After a suitable period, it would replace its currency with the euro.

In the meantime, however, Scotland would have zero say over the level of interest rates prevailing in the country. It would possess no lender of last resort. And whether it could qualify for eurozone membership is unclear. One of the convergence criteria governing admission is holding one's currency stable against the euro for two years. Holding the exchange rate stable against the euro while also pegging it to the pound would be a neat trick.

This leaves only the option of a new national currency managed by an independent central bank that sets policy in accordance with a mandate to ensure price stability. But, as recent years have shown, inflation targeting is at best a work in progress. With central banks repeatedly missing their targets, policymakers have been unable to convince the public and investors that their aim is true. Moreover, central bank independence will be hard to establish in a politically charged environment where there already are calls to put all manner of special interests on the new entity's board.

Still, the combination of central bank independence and inflation targeting is the least bad alternative. Sweden's experience shows that it can provide monetary stability for a small EU member that has not adopted the euro. Of course, this assumes a high level of fiscal discipline, something that Sweden, but not yet Scotland, has effectively demonstrated.

In any case, what is a permanent state for Sweden will presumably be a temporary phase for Scotland, which is unlikely to be able to negotiate an opt-out from the euro. But this should not be a deal breaker. Membership in the eurozone looks like a safe option, given the banking union, the European Central Bank's acknowledgment of its lender-of-last-resort responsibilities, and the EU's progress in creating a common fiscal capacity.

The first step, establishing a new Scottish currency, won't be easy. It will be necessary not just to print banknotes but also to reprogram the banks' computers and convert corporate and government accounts. Automatic tellers and parking garage pay stations will have to be retrofitted. It's worth recalling that it took two full years to complete the changeover from Europe's legacy currencies to the euro. A credible plan for Scotland would require policymakers to start preparing now.

None of this means that independence won't happen. I know from having lived there (a while ago, admittedly) that Scottish identity is strong. Independence referenda turn on more than just economics, as the UK's Brexit vote itself amply demonstrates.

But Scotland needs a plan for a new currency and an independent central bank, as well as a blueprint for its subsequent transition to the euro. These would go a long way toward reassuring Scots who yearn for independence but worry about what follows sterling.

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SPECIAL NOTICES

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) VERTICAL CONSTRUCTION OVERSIGHT SERVICES

This Request for Information (RFI) is published to enable USAID to assess the market for Liberian companies which are capable and interested in providing Architect & Engineering (A&E) services to provide construction oversight, professional engineering and other technical services to USAID/Liberia. These services will encompass feasibility studies, engineering designs and construction supervision and related support, ranging from quick response to short and long-term services in Vertical Construction Oversight (VCO) across the Mission's portfolios.

DISCLAIMER

This is a Request for Information only. It is not a Request for Proposal, Request for Quotation, an Invitation for Bids, a Solicitation or an indication that USAID/Liberia will contract for the services. The RFI is an attempt to reach out to the market to determine the scope of industry capabilities and interest and will be treated as information only. In accordance with FAR 15.201 (e), responses to this notice are not offers and cannot be accepted by the Government of the United States to form a binding contract. Responses are strictly voluntary, and USAID will not pay respondents for information provided. Responses will not be returned, and respondents will not be notified of the result of the review. If a solicitation is issued, it will be sent to a selective set of companies at a later date, and all interested parties contacted must respond to that solicitation separately from any response to this notice. The RFI does not restrict the Government's acquisition approach on a future solicitation.

INSTRUCTIONS

The complete RFI can be downloaded from BetaSam using the following link <https://beta.sam.gov/> searching by the RFI No. 72066920R00011 or "USAID/Liberia Vertical Construction Oversight".

To respond to this RFI, interested sources must provide no more than ten (10) pages in Microsoft Word or PDF format, a capability statement expressing interest and documenting ability to meet the requirements as specified in the Description of Services. Interested sources must provide their full business name, address, name and title of contact person by Thursday October 15, 17h00 (5:00 PM), Liberian time, to Luisa Alvarado at lalvarado@usaid.gov with copy to Edward S. Lamin at elamin@usaid.gov.

Sincerely

JUDY J WEBB

(affiliate)

Judy J. Webb

Supervisory Contracting Officer

Digitally signed by JUDY J
WEBB (affiliate)

Date: 2020.10.05 16:32:03 Z

INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF TWENTY-FOUR ON INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNIQUÉ

Chaired by Kenneth Ofori-Atta, Minister of Finance of Ghana
October 13, 2020

1. COVID-19 has spread rapidly around the world and in many emerging markets and developing countries (EMDCs) over the past six months. While countries are in different stages in containing the spread of the virus, several are still experiencing high levels of infection and deaths. While the global economy remains in recession, the global outlook has improved slightly as the economic decline in some major economies has been less severe than projected earlier. The economic impact of the global contraction and national measures taken to contain the pandemic, while varying across countries, has been severe for EMDCs overall. For the first time in decades, GDP growth in EMDCs, as a group, is expected to be negative this year. The pandemic is also exacerbating inequality, with millions of people losing their livelihood and falling into poverty.

2. We continue to face a highly uncertain economic outlook. Securing economic recovery is expected to be protracted with likely scarring damage to productive capacity. Recovery could be set back by recurring surges of infections as social distancing measures are eased. In addition, risks to financial stability remain, which present potential headwinds for recovery. Increased downside risks imperil hard-won development gains and make the achievement of sustainable development goals even harder. Nevertheless, we remain optimistic about the potential for effective and accessible vaccines and treatments that could overcome the pandemic and therefore hasten the resumption of economic activity.

3. At this critical juncture, we are encouraged by the efforts of the G20, World Health Organization, World Trade Organization, and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to deepen global cooperation to support all countries - in solidarity - confronting the inter-related health, social and economic crises brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. We take note of the G20's collective support for the development, manufacture and equitable distribution of affordable vaccines and treatments, which are critical global public goods, to contain the pandemic. All countries, without exception, should have timely and affordable access to these public goods on the basis of need, and also for humanitarian reasons. We also welcome the WBG's proposed \$12 billion initiative that would help developing countries procure COVID-19 vaccines to treat up to 1 billion people as soon as effective drugs become available. We also welcome the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Initiative and urge major economies to provide the necessary financial support to ensure timely and affordable access for all countries, without exception.

4. We call on the major economies to work together and use all policy tools available to foster a supporting environment to help countries striving to contain the pandemic and restore an inclusive economic growth. They should continue to facilitate international trade and investment and build the resilience of supply chains to support growth and development. We continue to respond with exceptional policy measures, as national circumstances permit, to manage the pandemic's impact. The sharp decline in our major sources of revenues along with capital outflows have depleted fiscal resources and reserve buffers at a time when they are most needed. IFIs have responded with emergency support, but external financial assistance still falls short of what is needed in these extraordinary times. We call on the international community and IFIs to step up, to the fullest extent possible, their liquidity and fiscal support to assist EMDCs in limiting the loss of lives, provide social protection and support economic recovery.

5. We reiterate the importance of a strong Global Financial Safety Net, with a quota-based and adequately resourced IMF at its center. Completion of the 16th General Review of Quotas within the agreed timeframe is, therefore, essential to reduce the IMF's reliance on temporary resources and to implement long-awaited governance reforms. We support continued global discussions on a meaningful new SDR allocation alongside mechanisms to channel unused SDRs to vulnerable countries. These will substantially boost the liquidity of many EMDCs at little cost to the international community. We seek further expansion of major central banks' swaps and repo lines to more EMDCs and support for initiatives to scale up affordable market financing.

6. Increasing concessional financing should be given a higher priority in the global community's response to the economic and social impact of the pandemic to avoid substantial and prolonged damage to the development prospects of low-income developing countries. To complement EMDCs' efforts at mobilizing domestic resources, multilateral cooperation is essential to contain illicit financial flows and reform international tax rules and practices that erode our tax bases, such as by designing a multilateral solution to tax digital activities that takes into account the concerns of EMDCs. The role of MDBs, which can leverage their shareholders' capital multiple times, is particularly important. They can and should find effective means to stretch their balance sheets to boost their lending capacity. Moving forward, potential constraints to the MDBs' medium-term lending capacity need to be monitored and appropriately addressed.

7. It is crucial to support developing countries manage their worsening debt vulnerabilities to avoid a debt crisis that seriously sets back development progress. We welcome the

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Weah breaks ground for US\$3.8m market project

By Bridgett Milton

President George M. Weah has broken ground for a modern Duala Market in Montserrado County Electoral District#16, following formal dedication of the 14 Market in VOA community, Paynesville over the weekend.

Paynesville City in fulfillment of promise he made to hard working members of the Liberia Marketing Association to build them more markets to shelter them from the sun and rain, as they sell their goods to the public.

President Weah described the Duala Market as one of the

longer be ignored," he said.

According to the President, work at the site will began immediately and by the grace of God, the project will be completed very soon.

He clarified the Duala market project is void of politics, saying if politics were order of the day, Liberia will never developed, adding that his dream is to leave a good legacy for young people to emulate.

Also speaking, the Executive Director of the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) PepciYeke said the market will be up to modern and international standards upon completion.

Mr. Yeke said due to the size of the land, the market building will have first and second floors on a 580 square meter with project lifespan of 11 months.

Mr. Yeke detailed the market building will have 1007 tables, office space, 20 bath rooms, shower facilities, two ware houses, a water tower and generator room including a 20kva generator.

For his part the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dee Maxwell Kemayah thank the people of Japan for the transformation of the people of Duala. - *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Speaking at the ground breaking ceremony Tuesday, 13 October in Duala, President Weah thanked the Government of Japan for the new project.

Mr. Weah recalled that few days ago he delegated a newly constructed market in

largest and most important centers in Liberia, and for very long time he said Liberians have all observed the poor condition in which it has operated.

"For the past time the unfortunate situation of poor sanitation and shelter, health hazard and many others can no

CEMViP-SR cautions against elections violence

By Ethel A. Tweh

The COVID-19 Election Monitoring and Violence Prevention Situation Room (CEMViP-SR) is calling on all political parties to adhere to the guidelines and rules as developed by the National Elections Commission (NEC) and be proactive through dialogue to avoid escalation in tensioned violence throughout the country.

CEMViP-SR is supported by ZOA Liberia and funded by the Swedish International and Development Agency.

Speaking at a press conference Tuesday, 13 October at ECOWAS headquarters in Monrovia, Liberia's Peace Ambassador Rev. William R. Tolbert, III, said there are reports of intermittent violence coming from Montserrado, Grand Cape

National Police (LNP) to conduct speedy and objective investigations with subsequent circulation of reports to the families and the public to impact peace and security throughout the counties.

"We express condolences to the families of the deceased and appeal to the public to remain calm and wait for the LNP to present information related to the incidents," Rev. Tolbert continues.

He adds that elections are opportunities to vote into office your choice, saying everyone should remain family and friends.

The Peace Ambassador cautions further that no one should resort to violence during the elections, rather they should all use these opportunities to remain peaceful and strengthen



"To whom much is given, much is expected"

...Cllr. Warner challenges CENTAL staff

The Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL) has challenged staff of the organization to serve by examples as they endeavor for a society that is free of corruption, transparent and accountable.

CENTAL is the National Chapter of Transparency International (TI) which has more than 120 chapters and networks around the world.

Cllr. T. Negbalee Warner said individuals serving as staff of the organization must live above the ordinary and have personal integrity as well as develop a sense of commitment and dedication to match their deeds with work as they serve in their different communities, places of assignments and homes.

"We have to make efforts to match our deeds with our works. To whom much is given, much is expected," Cllr. Warner said at the opening of a one-day pre-project implementation workshop for staff on CENTAL's National Integrity Building and

Anti-Corruption (NIBA) program held at the Corina Hotel in Sinkor.

The Dean of the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law at the University of Liberia (UL) said the NIBA project represents the largest funding

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Mount, Bomi and Margibi Counties.

"We appeal to persons from these counties to remain peaceful and law abiding without violence," he says.

According to him, with the increase in reports of new confirmed COVID-19 cases, they call on the National Public Health Institute of Liberia (NPHIL) and the local and international public health officials to resume regular reporting of all cases in the fifteen counties.

Rev. Tolbert also calls on the public to adhere to policies and procedures to curb the spread of the pandemic.

The country's Peace Ambassador noted that with the recent reports of dead bodies being discovered throughout the counties, they are calling on the Liberia

democracy.

On 21 August 2020, the Situation Room was formally launched at the National Center for Coordination Response Mechanism in the ECOWAS compound by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Varney A. Sirleaf.

It is a collaborative initiative of the Liberia Peace Ambassador, the West Africa Network for Peace Building and the Civil Society Organizations.

However, this initiative is to be maintained before, during and after the scheduled elections in December 2020 with support from the Government of Liberia and the International Partners.

The Situation Room will collect nationwide data on the election and COVID-19 using

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Gov't to restore

formula that they applied on their payment "it has been determined that they are due back pay."

Tuesday's meeting with the Minister of Finance follows a sustained protest that was held outside during a formal program marking the opening of the Supreme Court on Monday, 12 October with judicial staffers demanding Liberian dollars component of their salaries.

The protest was marred by anti- Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor slogans and drumming with gallons and pot tops.

In the process the protesters were dragged by riot police later in the day, and some of them including protest leader Archie Ponpon

the protesters were under the illusion that the deductions made in their salaries are being deposited in the account of the Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

He urged them to refrain from further protest, saying their action is disrupting court processes and deprives party litigants of unhindered right of access to justice.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Tweah frowns on the judicial workers for being very disrespectful to the Chief Justice, Associate Justices and the leadership at the Judiciary, especially the insults against their leaders.

"The Chief Justice didn't owe anybody money, okay. We must make that clear. They didn't have to insult the Chief

because the government is willing to sit with everybody to solve problems.

He also praises the judicial staff for not being violent because they are people who understand the rule of law, saying they were pressed to do what they did.

Giving a background of the harmonization program, Mr. Tweah informs the judicial workers during the meeting that 15,000 real human beings, including Immigration officers, were lifted from as low as US\$40.00 per month for years, to US\$120.

To do that, he says about 9,000 Liberians who were making more had to make that sacrifice, meaning the government took money from those who were earning more



A judicial staff being dragged by police

were left unconscious.

It followed failed negotiations with authorities at the Judicial branch of government that led to the aggrieved judicial staffers' protest on Monday in extension of several weeks of protests for Liberian dollars component of their salaries allegedly cut, as they assembled outside the court, beating drums and chanting Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor's name.

It remains unclear why the judicial staffers targeted Chief Justice Francis S. Korkpor in their protests against cuts in their salaries, despite the Judiciary issuing a clarity in September informing the aggrieved employees that the cuts in salaries were not done by the Judiciary and that the cuts affected all employees in the government sector.

During the opening of the Supreme Court Monday, the Chief Justice indicated that

Justice and all of that. But they understand that, we are now on a solution path and I think that's where we want to carry the country," Minister Tweah says.

He explains that the government is working with the judicial employees to restore what is due them, noting that this month the judicial workers will each receive the first payment of US\$153 representing three months, in addition to their October pay, acknowledging that lack of information is all responsible for these things.

Regarding the medical concerns raised during the meeting about the judicial workers that became unconscious, Minister Tweah says he had ordered the ambulance for the judicial employees that were taken to hospital, noting that he will call Dr. Brown and it will be taken care of.

He indicates that there's no need for people to get into the streets when there are issues

and passed it on to those who were making less.

He reveals that the government team recently identified US\$2.2m on account of some government employees who were getting two or three salaries in the same government.

According to a presentation by the Technical Team from the Ministry Of Finance, the Judiciary's wage bill was reduced from US\$15.4m to US\$12.8m, leaving a difference of US\$2.6m.

The team indicates that ideally anybody who is working under the Judiciary is affected by 16 percent reduction which is done when the basic salary and allowance are combined.

The team notes that allowances were not taxed prior to the harmonization program, revealing also that the total payroll for the judiciary is around 2,000 or 1,800.

ECOWAS, Regional Child Protection Working Group meet on Violent Crimes against Children

The ECOWAS Commission and the Regional Child Protection Working Group (RCPWG) on 20th April, 2020 issued a joint Advisory to ALL ECOWAS member states as call for action and guidance to mainstream Child Protection in Government responses to COVID-19 Pandemic and Recovery Plans.

Following the Advisory, a virtual meeting of Working Group's membership was drawn from the ranks of UN Agencies, other Development Partners, INGOs, CSOs and other Non-State Actors including the Private Sector and the Media with the participation of relevant ECOWAS Directorates and Institutions held on the 12th of October, 2020, aimed at galvanizing action across the ECOWAS Region towards curbing the menacing challenge of Gender Based Violence with a special focus on Child Sexual Abuse and Violence Against Children.

In her opening speech, Dr. Siga Fatima Jagne, the ECOWAS Commissioner for Social Affairs and Gender,

acknowledged that despite many legal, policy frameworks and documents adopted at the international, continental, regional and national levels and the advances that have been made in reporting and documentation, GBV/VAC continues to be widespread and present in all Member States, in familiar and new forms.

Commissioner Jagne also reiterated the fact that it is evident in any emergency situation that the vulnerabilities of women and girls have increased with the outbreak and management of the COVID-19 pandemic; from inability to access services due to movement and access restrictions and diversion of resources to COVID-19 interventions.

The ECOWAS Commission in line with the joint Advisory, recommends that the Member States take immediate action to ensure the continued functioning of child-friendly reporting mechanisms such as Child Helpline and Hotlines to enable child friendly reporting, counselling, and response.

CEMViP-SR cautions

Cont'd from page 6

information generated by 215 persons stationed throughout the fifteen counties in Liberia Early Warning and Response Network (LERN) platform.

The platform conducts analysis and provides real time information to the public and policy makers for actions.

Therefore, information collected on the LERN platform is collared with what is being generated by the personnel of the County Peace Committees, the County Security Structures and the three Regional Hubs.-- Edited by Winston W. Parley

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Based on the technical team's presentation, some of the judicial workers who for instance, are earning a basic salary of US\$125 plus an allowance which prior to the harmonization program was in the tune of US\$150, would get a combined total of US\$275 by then.

The team notes that it is the US\$275 that is supposed to be reduced by the 16 percent because the Judiciary's budget is reduced from US\$15.4m to US\$12.8m.

When the 16 percent is

applied to the US\$275, the employee in this category like a bailiff for instance, would be left with US\$231.

While a representative of the judicial worker was responding to the Finance Ministry officials on behalf of the aggrieved workers, Associate Justice Yusif D. Kaba abruptly asked the judicial worker to leave the stage, saying the essence of the gathering is concluded and he is grateful for the information provided by the Minister.

Français

Violences électorales : La Cour Suprême libériennemise en garde

L'Association nationale du barreau du Libéria (LNBA) a rappelé à la Cour suprême les graves troubles que le Libéria a eu à subir par le passé ont été causés pour la plupart par des élections frauduleuses. Le barreau libérien a exhorté la Haute Cour de justice à faire preuve d'équité dans le cadre des décisions relatives à tous les contentieux électoraux.

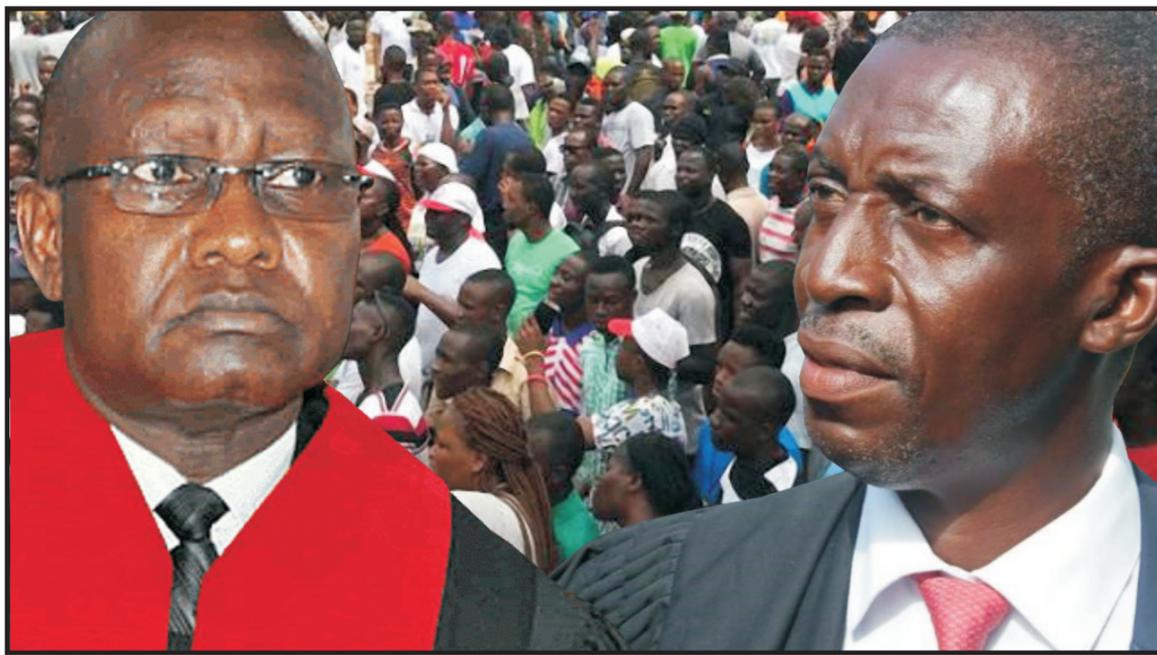
S'exprimant lors d'une cérémonie marquant la rentrée judiciaire de la cour suprême le lundi 12 octobre, le président de l'Association nationale du barreau libérien, Me TiawonGongloe, a dit à la cour suprême qu'il suffit de jeter un regard rétrospectif sur l'histoire récente du Libéria pour se rendre compte que « sa gouvernance constitutionnelle a été négativement affectéesurtout par des

contentieux électoraux ».

L'avertissement de Me Gongloefait suite au rejet par la Cour suprême d'un recours des partis politiques de l'opposition visant à interrompre le processus électoral jusqu'à ce que la liste électorale finale soit nettoyée « techniquement et professionnellement ».

L'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,

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Assassinat des employés de la LRA : La banque UBA dit ne pas avoir d'images

La United Bank for Africa (UBA) Liberia a réfuté les rumeurs selon lesquelles elle serait en possession de images de vidéosurveillance de la mort de deux employés de la Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA).

Dans un communiqué publié à Monrovia le lundi 12 octobre sous la signature du responsable du marketing et de la communication d'entreprise de la banque, Melody Mezay-Ketter, la

banque a expliqué que bien qu'elle ait une caméra de vidéosurveillance dans ses locaux, l'endroit où les employés de la LRA ont été retrouvés morts ne fait pas partie de la zone de couverture de la caméra de surveillance de la banque.

« En tant qu'institution qui se conforme à la loi, l'UBA aurait soutenu l'effort d'enquête du gouvernement du Libéria en fournissant de telles images, s'il y en avait eu en sa possession ».

Au communiqué d'ajouter : «

La banque veut clairement indiquer qu'à aucun moment aucun de ses membres n'a été harcelé ou intimidé par des agents de la sécurité de l'État pour produire des images des caméras de surveillance de la banque, car les rumeurs font aussi état de cela ».

A rappeler que dans son édition du 10 octobre, le journal Public Trust Media Group a publié un article intitulé « Suite à la mort des auditeurs de la LRA, l'UBA est forcée de mettre à disposition les images des caméras de surveillance ».

Selon l'article, la direction locale de l'UBA à Broad Street faisait l'objet d'une pression intense de la part de certains éléments du gouvernement CDC pour leur remettre illégalement les images des caméras de surveillance.

Pendant ce temps, le président George Manneh Weah a demandé à l'ambassade des États-Unis près de Monrovia de l'aider dans l'enquête en cours sur la mort de deux membres du personnel de la Liberia Revenue Authority et du chef de l'Agence d'audit interne Emmanuel B. Nyeswa.



Mali : le chef jihadiste Iyad Ag Ghali et les militaires grands gagnants de la libération des otages

L'aura du groupe jihadiste GSIM et de son chef Iyad Ag Ghali sort renforcée de l'opération. Négocier avec les terroristes est désormais une option crédible qui va aussi servir le nouveau pouvoir de Bamako.

Février 2020, le président malien Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta met fin à la doctrine régulièrement répétée qu'il n'y a pas de négociations possibles avec les groupes armés. Il admet que des démarches sont en cours entre le gouvernement de Bamako et des jihadistes. Face aux attaques à répétition, aux morts dont le nombre devient « exponentiel » selon ses propres termes, il déclare : « Je crois qu'il est temps que certaines voies soient explorées. » Des émissaires sont envoyés auprès des deux hommes forts de la mouvance jihadiste : Iyad Ag Ghali, le chef du Groupe de soutien à l'islam et aux musulmans (GSIM), et Amadou Kouffa son bras droit et chef de la katiba Macina.

Voilà donc Iyad Ag Ghali, longtemps ennemi numéro un tant de Bamako que de Paris, devenu fréquentable. L'homme, dont la vie est un véritable roman, montre une fois encore qu'il est incontournable.

Dans le même temps, la stratégie du G5-Sahel évolue. L'ennemi à combattre en priorité est désormais l'Etat islamique au grand Sahara (EIGS), affilié au groupe Etat islamique. Négocier avec certains n'est désormais plus tabou, ce qu'indique clairement le message d'IBK. Maintendue

En retour de l'offre d'Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, des signaux ne tardent pas à parvenir de la part du GSIM. Début mars 2020 dans un communiqué, le groupe se dit prêt à négocier avec Bamako. Il pose tout de même un préalable : le départ de Barkhane et des Casques bleus de la Minusma du territoire malien. « Il ne saurait être question de négociations à l'ombre de l'occupation avant le départ du Mali de toutes les forces françaises et de ceux qui les suivent », est-il expliqué dans le communiqué. Une exigence inacceptable qui semble rendre caduc tout début de négociation. Aussi les mois

passent et rien, officiellement, ne paraît é merger de ce rapprochement stratégique.

Dans ce contexte, la libération des otages marque le signal de la bonne volonté du chef jihadiste. Si personne n'avait revendiqué leur détention, pour les observateurs, Ag Ghali en était probablement le geôlier. Comme le font remarquer de nombreux spécialistes, cette libération s'est sûrement accompagnée d'espèces sonnantes et trébuchantes.

Libérer Soumaïla Cissé Le bénéfice est à la fois financier et politique pour Iyad Ag Ghali. Les négociations relatives aux otages ne concernaient initialement que Soumaïla Cissé, l'homme politique malien enlevé le 25 mars 2020 près de Tombouctou, croit savoir le journal Le Point. Les jihadistes « acceptent que l'otage française vienne se greffer à la libération du chef de l'opposition malienne », écrit le journal. Coup double pour Ag Ghali.

Voilà qui va aider Iyad Ag Ghali et le GSIM à se présenter comme étant du côté du peuple. « Il pourra plus tranquillement tenter de réaliser son projet politique qui est d'instaurer la charia », écrit Le Point.

L'armée malienne gagnante En parallèle, l'armée malienne semble aussi être l'autre gagnante de cette libération.

Au pouvoir depuis le coup d'Etat, l'équipe dirigeante actuelle du Mali, issue du putsch qui a renversé IBK, n'est pas à l'origine des tractations pour obtenir la libération des otages. Mais elle n'a pas bloqué le processus, long et compliqué. Aujourd'hui, cette armée recueille la gloire de négociations bien menées, mais diligentées par l'ancien pouvoir malien.

Elle peut donc désormais « surfer » sur la liesse populaire provoquée par la libération de Soumaïla Cissé, le chef de file du principal parti d'opposition. La rue et l'opposition, qui ont salué l'arrivée au pouvoir des militaires, vont trouver dans cette libération des otages de quoi soutenir le nouveau régime.

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Français

Violences électorales : La Cour

réagissant à la décision du tribunal dans un tweet le samedi 10 octobre, a écrit que « La récente décision de la Cour suprême du Libéria de rejeter l'appel de l'opposition pour un nettoyage de la liste électorale est une atteinte à notre démocratie durement gagnée ».

Donnant une perspective historique des conflits électoraux au Libéria, Gongloea indiqué : « Au-delà des divergences d'opinions sur le résultat d'un référendum pour la prolongation du mandat du président et sur le moment de la tenue de la prochaine élection présidentielle, feu le président Charles D.B. King a été violemment renversé et le premier gouvernement intérimaire du Libéria a été établi.

À partir de 1927, l'élection qui a amené le président Charles D.B. King au pouvoir pour un autre mandat a été considéré comme l'élection la plus truquée au monde et reste toujours inégalée, selon le World Guinness Book of Records.

L'histoire montre que bien qu'il y ait moins de 15 000 électeurs inscrits, M. King du parti True Whig a été déclaré avoir remporté l'élection présidentielle avec 243 000 voix, contre 9 000 voix pour son opposant T.J.R. Faulkner du Parti populaire ».

« À la suite de la crise électorale créée à la suite des élections frauduleuses de 1927, M. King et son vice-président ont été contraints de démissionner de leurs fonctions.

Au début des années 50, la crise s'est développée suite à l'incapacité de la Cour mensuelle et des successions du comté de Montserrado à homologuer l'article d'association du Parti populaire uni, dirigé par D. Tweh. La crise a finalement conduit à l'arrestation et à l'emprisonnement de nombreux dirigeants politiques de l'opposition sous l'accusation de sédition et à l'évasion de D. Tweh, le candidat présomptif à la présidence de l'UPP.

En 1985, le dépouillement des bulletins de vote par un comité de 50 personnes créé sur la base d'aucune disposition de la Constitution libérienne, de la loi électorale en vigueur ou de quelque statue que ce soit, a sapé la confiance dans la commission électorale spéciale et le rejet public du

résultat des élections par la plupart des Libériens », a-t-il rappelé.

Selon Gongloea, le désenchantement de masse créé par le rejet de ce résultat électoral a conduit à de multiples actions rebelles et réactions du gouvernement qui ont abouti à un conflit armé à grande échelle.

La LNBA a dit avoir pris note de la promesse faite par le tribunal de grande instance. « Le Barreau prend également note des assurances de la Cour selon lesquelles, "pour décider des élections ou d'autres affaires, il n'a ni ami ni ennemi". Elle a dit qu'elle procéderait sans crainte ni favoritisme, quels que soient les participants ou les personnes concernées », a-t-il dit.

« Alors que les membres de l'Association nationale du barreau du Libéria espèrent que ces assurances seront concrétisées par les ordonnances et les jugements de cette cour dans les deux prochains mois, il va sans dire que cette cour n'a d'autre choix que d'être juste et impartiale en tout. Et de traiter avec le plus grand soin les questions relatives au processus électoral au Libéria », a ajouté Me Gongloea.

Selon lui, parmi les fonctionnaires élus et nommés des trois pouvoirs de l'Etat, ce n'est que pour les membres du pouvoir judiciaire que la Constitution du Libéria a fait état de probité moralité comme l'une des conditions requises.

« Pour être juge à la Cour suprême du Libéria, l'article 68 stipule que la personne nommée doit être un citoyen libérien et de bonne moralité », a rappelé Me Gongloea.

Plus tôt dans son discours, le juge en chef Francis S. Korkpora rassuré Libériens, partis politiques et associations ou organisations que pendant les élections sénatoriales prochaines et toutes les autres élections ici, la Cour suprême continuerait à être juste dans ses actions et ses décisions.

« Pour décider des élections ou d'autres affaires, la Cour n'a ni ami ni ennemi et procède sans crainte ni faveur, quels que soient les éléments ou les personnes impliqués », a déclaré le juge en chef Korkpor.

D'après lui, la Cour n'a besoin de l'approbation de qui que ce soit pour rendre ses décisions et ne se laisse pas influencer par les sentiments publics quand il rend son verdict.

« Nos actions et nos décisions sont les nôtres et les nôtres uniquement. Elles sont basées

COMMENTAIRE

By Anatole Manzi

Surmonter la perturbation des services de santé essentiels causée par la COVID-19

KIGALI - La prestation des soins de santé dans pratiquement l'ensemble des pays a été perturbée, car les décideurs politiques avaient présumé que les réseaux de santé jugeraient rapidement la COVID-19. Alors que le nombre de cas et de décès augmente chaque jour, la pandémie tend à freiner ou à anéantir les progrès durement acquis pour réduire au minimum les répercussions d'autres maladies, du diabète au paludisme.

Au début de la pandémie, de nombreux décideurs politiques et responsables de la santé considéraient qu'une perturbation relativement courte des services de santé essentiels était acceptable, mais il paraît maintenant clair que la COVID-19 persistera beaucoup plus longtemps que prévu. Les pays ne peuvent plus reporter les prestations de soins de santé indispensables. Si aucune mesure n'est prise pour assurer leur viabilité, le nombre de décès dû à des maladies transmissibles et non transmissibles atteindra un niveau inacceptable.

Dans une sombre évaluation récente des coûts totaux de la crise mondiale du COVID-19, la Fondation Bill & Melinda Gates a signalé qu'en 25 semaines, la pandémie avait fait reculer le monde d'environ 25 ans en matière de couverture vaccinale - un bon indice de l'état général des réseaux de santé à l'heure actuelle. Manifestement, il est temps de veiller à ce que les services de santé essentiels ne soient pas laissés pour compte.

Il faudra un financement adapté, des approches innovantes et des services décentralisés afin d'atteindre les communautés les plus malades et les plus démunies du monde. Les décideurs politiques doivent aussi réaffecter les fonds des budgets nationaux et former des partenariats avec des investisseurs privés pour rassembler les ressources nécessaires. Il est également primordial d'établir des fonds de solidarité nationaux et mondiaux, à l'instar du Fonds mondial de lutte contre le sida, la tuberculose et le paludisme. La création de tels fonds spécialisés pourrait aider les pays et les institutions multilatérales à maintenir la continuité des services de santé essentiels, renforçant ainsi les réseaux de soins de santé et les économies nationales à long terme.

Avant le début de la pandémie, on estimait déjà qu'au moins la moitié des 7,8 milliards d'habitants de la planète n'avaient pas accès aux services de santé essentiels. Dans le monde, six millions d'enfants et d'adolescents, et 2,8 millions de femmes enceintes et de nouveau-nés, meurent par année de maladies qui auraient pu être évitées ou traitées. La COVID-19 a augmenté ces chiffres et a érodé l'accès aux soins de santé.

Les experts de la santé mondiale sont depuis longtemps conscients des perturbations qu'une situation d'urgence prolongée entraînerait pour les services de santé. En 2018, l'Organisation mondiale de la santé a défini un ensemble de services essentiels qui devraient être offerts sans frais d'utilisation durant une crise prolongée. Ces services comprennent les soins de santé maternelle et néonatale ainsi que le traitement des maladies transmissibles et non transmissibles, la santé mentale et les maladies tropicales négligées.

Plusieurs défis à relever pour fournir cet ensemble de services se démarquent. En premier lieu, les services pour les maladies non transmissibles ont diminué de manière considérable. Sur les 155 pays examinés par l'OMS, 53 % ont signalé une interruption partielle ou totale des services pour le traitement de l'hypertension, 49 % pour le diabète, 42 % pour le cancer et 31 % pour les urgences cardiovasculaires.

Le dépistage et le traitement du VIH et de la tuberculose (TB) sont également touchés, l'Afrique

du Sud étant l'un des pays où ces maladies sévissent le plus. Pendant le confinement du pays, la diminution des tests de dépistage de la tuberculose a entraîné une baisse de 33 % des diagnostics. Le nombre de patients atteints de tuberculose et du VIH qui récupèrent leurs médicaments dans les délais prévus a également chuté. Une plus faible observance des traitements entraînera ultimement une augmentation de la résistance aux médicaments, des échecs thérapeutiques et des coûts de traitements plus élevés.

Et pourtant, d'autres pays, dont le Rwanda, la Nouvelle-Zélande et Taïwan ont fait preuve d'un succès notoire pour maintenir la continuité des services de santé essentiels. Ainsi à Taïwan, la couverture universelle de soins de santé à faibles coûts a été maintenue tout au long de la pandémie, et le centre de radiothérapie pour le traitement du cancer au Rwanda a pu poursuivre ses activités.

En Sierra Leone, où une mère sur 17 court un risque de décès lié à l'accouchement, l'hôpital gouvernemental de Koidu, dans le district de Kono, collabore avec Partners In Health, une organisation mondiale à but non lucratif sur une campagne de communication de masse qui rappelle aux femmes enceintes d'utiliser les services de maternité. Après une chute importante des visites prénatales, les femmes utilisent à nouveau ces services.

Les cliniques d'Afrique subsaharienne font également preuve d'innovation afin de continuer la supervision et le traitement des 19 millions de diabétiques de la région pendant la pandémie. La Société camerounaise d'endocrinologie et métabolisme, par exemple, a mis sur pied dix « ? règles d'or ? » pour la gestion de la COVID-19 et du diabète, incluant des informations sur l'activité physique durant le confinement. Les cliniques spécialisées dans le traitement du diabète ont également introduit un système de téléconsultation afin de diminuer le besoin de visites ambulatoires.

En outre, certains pays cherchent des moyens novateurs pour assurer la prestation des soins. Par exemple, le Rwanda utilise des drones pour distribuer des médicaments aux patients atteints du cancer, de même que des robots pour surveiller les signes vitaux des patients atteints de la COVID-19 et ainsi prévenir les infections nosocomiales. Ces mesures techniques ne sont peut-être pas toujours économiques, mais les avantages peuvent l'emporter sur les coûts.

Pour atteindre de tels résultats, plusieurs pays doivent de toute urgence réviser leurs structures d'attribution et de prestation des soins de santé. Dans la mesure du possible, les centres de dépistage et de traitement de la COVID-19 devraient intégrer la prestation des services de santé essentiels, y compris la détection de conditions telles que les grossesses à haut risque et les maladies chroniques.

En outre, décentraliser les services de santé pourrait renforcer l'accessibilité au réseau et limiter ses bouleversements. Il faudra pour cela former un corps de métier élargi de travailleurs de santé communautaires, notamment des chefs de famille, des enseignants, des guides spirituels et des guérisseurs traditionnels. Au Libéria, par exemple, les assistants de santé communautaire formés jouent un rôle central dans la gestion de la COVID-19, tout en assurant les services essentiels.

Il semble évident que les perturbations causées par la COVID-19 sur les réseaux de soins de santé peuvent être surmontées. Il est néanmoins primordial que les pays réévaluent leurs stratégies de prestation et investissent de manière ciblée dans les services de santé essentiels. Ce faisant, ils renforceront leur résilience contre des crises sanitaires semblables à l'avenir.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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"To whom much

received by CENTAL since its establishment in 2004 to fight against corruption and bad governance in Liberia.

The National Integrity Building and Anti-Corruption (NIBA) program is a US\$1.7 million project covering 3.5 years (42 months) to be implemented in seven counties- Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Nimba, Bong, and Rivercess, with funding from the Government and people of Sweden.

The project's overall objective is to endeavour for 'a corruption-free Liberia where citizens act with transparency and integrity in all their dealings.'

Also speaking, the First Secretary at the Embassy of Sweden, Artolmmonen said the Embassy seeks to support civil society and other organizations working in Liberia to promote accountability and good governance in Liberia.

Mr. Immonen said as part of

the Embassy's internal appraisal process on proposals, the team takes into consideration different perspectives, including human rights, gender, the poor and marginalized, and other dimensions that promote inclusion and accountability at all levels.

He thanked the team at CENTAL for the milestone in landing the NIBA program that seeks to work for a corruption-free Liberia and expressed optimism that CENTAL will work to achieve its objectives.

The one-day gathering was held under the theme: "Building Staff Capacity to Enhance Productivity and Tackle Corruption." It seeks to facilitate interaction, learning, and information sharing among the Board, leadership, and staff of CENTAL as well as increase staff's awareness and understanding of key policies, programs, and activities.

CENTAL's Executive Director Anderson D. Miamen also stressed the need for staff of

the organization to serve with high level of integrity at all times. Mr. Miamen said if CENTAL must fairly checkmate the system and tackle corruption in Liberia, people working with the organization must be people of high integrity.

During overview of the workshop, the Program Manager of CENTAL, Gerald D. Yeakula further highlighted the importance of the training to the attendees. He also challenged the staff, especially incoming members, to consider working with the institution as an opportunity to improve their capacity and skills to enable them excel in the institution, nationally, and otherwise.

The one-day training brought together members of the Board, partners, office and project staff from across the seven targeted counties- Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Nimba, Bong, and Rivercess. **-Press release**

Weah intervenes

Starts from back page

punishable by law.

The CDC calls on the LTA and GSM companies to resolve all disagreements in the soonest possible time to provide relief to Liberians.

Morlu laments that the party decries the breakdown of dispute resolution mechanism between the LTA and the GSM companies, adding that the breakdown led to litigation, which culminated in the recent Supreme Court ruling, favoring the government.

"We believe despite this ruling, both sides should return to the dispute resolution mechanism enshrined in the Act establishing the LTA or to

political machinations which the party believes is a crime of economic sabotage", Morlu argues.

GSM companies here and the LTA have been in serious disagreement over surcharge levied by the latter, with the regulatory authority demanding a return to status quo, an instruction the companies are renegeing on.

"Orange Liberia informs all its customers that it will place an "additional cost" (surcharge) in the amount of \$0.008 for each minute of on-net voice and US\$0.00065 of data in compliance with the LTA Order: 0016-02-25 issued by the Liberia

INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP

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G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) and encourage advanced economies as well as emerging markets with fiscal space to extend DSSI support beyond 2020. We encourage MDBs to find effective ways, including the net transfer of resources, to support developing countries that need a debt standstill. Private creditors should assume their global social responsibility of sharing the burden of alleviating debt distress. Furthermore, the risks of downgrades by Credit Rating Agencies that affect market access impinge on sovereign decisions to seek the necessary debt relief, which is an area that requires more work to implement effective debt standstills. We support greater debt transparency and the assistance of the IMF and the WBG in strengthening debt management and fiscal management capacities.

8. We welcome the G20's ongoing discussions on a structured framework for debt treatments, beyond the DSSI, to support countries achieve debt sustainability. Such a framework should include mechanisms for debt restructuring and reduction when they are necessary to restore debt sustainability. We call on the IMF, WBG and other development partners to consider ways to support countries undergoing debt restructuring with the needed exceptional financing, and work urgently on mechanisms to foster fair, meaningful and timely sovereign debt resolution. The recent experiences of the Governments of Argentina and Ecuador demonstrate the challenges of private creditor coordination to reach agreement expeditiously with private creditors on the restructuring of sovereign debt.

9. We appreciate the efforts of the IMF and WBG to support EMDCs over the past six months.

• For the IMF, we commend the timely emergency lending to more than 80 countries

and urge the IMF to facilitate support to all member countries seeking urgent financial assistance. We welcome the temporary increase in annual limits on overall access to the Fund's resources by member countries. We welcome the six-month extension of the higher access limits under the Fund's emergency facilities. We appreciate ongoing efforts to boost the resources of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) and call for additional contributions to the PRGT and the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust. We urge the IMF to continue working expeditiously to explore options to reform its lending toolkit and advisory support and adapt them to the evolving needs of countries through this crisis and economic recovery.

• For the WBG, we welcome its lending program of US\$160 billion over a period of 15 months and commend the Bank Group's efforts to frontload part of this lending and deliver a substantial increase in its lending in the fourth quarter of FY20. We encourage the WBG to continue to respond flexibly to requests for support for new financing. The need for exceptional financing by EMDCs will persist beyond FY21 given the adverse impact of COVID-19 on productivity growth, poverty reduction and inequality, and the WBG needs to be prepared to respond with continued exceptional support beyond FY21.

10. We are confronting a long road to achieving sustained economic recovery. A decade of progress in reducing poverty could be lost, and scars from this recession weigh on our development prospects. We need to build economies that are more resilient, harness digitalization, and address longstanding challenges of job-creation, reducing high levels of inequality, climate change and other environmental concerns while providing adequate access to affordable and reliable



other suitable framework that places the Supreme Court ruling in proper context", the ruling party chairman underscores.

He reminds the GSM companies that it is always in the interest of the Government of Liberia to protect businesses and their investment, noting that such must be done in a way that enhance the interest of the Liberian people.

Hence, the CDC urges both companies to return to their first agreement that led to the ruling of the Supreme Court.

"The CDC warns the two GSM companies to refrain from

Telecommunications Authority on February 25, 2019. As from Monday 5th October 2020 offers shall be amended gradually going forward", the Management of Orange Liberia Incorporated texted its subscribers across the country recently.

However, immediately the surcharge took effect, citizens began to feel the economic pinch in recharging their mobiles, making communication further expensive and unbearable, particularly for the average citizen. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

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energy and infrastructure services, particularly in the health sector whose fragility after COVID-19 was evident. Sufficient, timely and effective external assistance will be needed to complement our diminished domestic resources. International cooperation is more important than ever to boost development

Is VP Taylor forgotten?

By Othello B. Garblah

Concerns are mounting high about Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor's continued absence from the country exactly two months after she was hurriedly flown out to seek medical help in Ghana.

Not much is being told the public by the Liberian Government concerning the health condition and return home date of the country's first female vice president, who authority said was diagnosed with COVID-19 in August 2020.

Even the form and manner in which the Government released the information about the Vice President's health at the time revealed the deep seated strain in relations between the office of President George Weah and Mrs. Howard-Taylor.

A leaked communication under the signature of Health Minister Dr. Wilhemina S. Jallah explained that Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor has been tested positive of COVID-19 on 10 August, and she had requested to travel out of the country for treatment.

"I am pleased to present my compliments and inform you that H.E. Madam Jewel Howard-Taylor, has been tested positive of COVID-19 on August 10, 2020, and she has requested to travel out of the country for treatment," the communication which circulated on social media from Health Minister Jallah read.

The communication made its way onto the social media as the Liberia News Agency (LINA) came under intense criticisms for quoting unconfirmed source in its publication that Vice President Taylor had tested Covid-19 positive, disregarding a press release from her office which had informed the public about what it said was her health status. That was then.

Since then, status of the Vice President's health and how she's being treated in Ghana remain a mystery to the general population-not much is heard of her on the national stage these days.

Newly appointed Information Minister Ledgerhood Julius Rennie could not even speak to the issue and referred this paper to the office of the Vice President, when asked about her health status.

The Vice President's office declined to speak on her health and return home date, saying any comment about her health should come through the Ministry of Information.

Though sources in the Ghanaian capital, Accra say

Mrs. Taylor has been responding to treatment and that she might even return home at the end of the month, most Liberians are not even aware that she is still not back from Accra yet.

A lawyer friend, asked this writer on Tuesday in a surprising tune, "oh where is she? Is she not back yet?" This alone, signifies how fast the Vice President is being forgotten.

The Ascension of Jewel Howard-Taylor as Weah's Vice President

Vice President Howard-Taylor, is the Standard Bearer of the National Patriotic Party (NPP), a member party of the ruling coalition.

bad blood between Mr. Weah and his Vice President has even led to the intervention of the religious council of Liberia and yet both have remained on the extreme end of each other.

In November 2018, barely a year after the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) took office, amidst news of strain between the two, the office of the Vice President released a statement reassuring the country of a good working relationship between the two.

"The Office of the Vice President of the Republic of Liberia reassures the nation of the Vice President's

weeks later after the opening of the Legislature, at the delivery of President Weah's annual address, this year. She had driven there in her private vehicle.

President Weah on the other hand in that address appeared to have recognized his wife, First lady Clare Weah more than he did mentioned the vice president.

What is the role of the Vice President?

Under the Liberian Constitution, the vice president is the second-highest executive official, and one of only two elected executive offices along with

incapacitated before his or her inauguration, the vice president-elect is sworn in as president in their place, though a term of this nature does constitute a term for the purposes of determining term limits.

The vice president also serves as the president of the Senate and may cast a vote in the event of a tie

To date, five vice presidents have ascended to the presidency, either due to the president's death, resignation, or removal from office: James Skivring Smith, Alfred Francis Russell, William D. Coleman, William Tolbert, and Moses Blah.

Historically, there have been twelve vacancies in the office, the first of which occurred between October 26, 1871 and January 1, 1872; after the ascension of James Skivring Smith to the office of president. The most recent vacancy was between August 11, 2003 and January 16, 2006, the ascension of Moses Blah.

But not many Liberians pity, Vice President Howard-Taylor for the manner in which she's continue to be sideline by her own government.

Could this be the Boakai curse?

In 2017, Vice President Howard Taylor then Senator noted that she would not be like Vice President Joseph N Boakai, who has been parked like an old car. She opined that she would have been a functional and more robust Vice President.

While appearing on the Capitol Breakfast show on Capitol FM 2017, as the country prepared for a run-off, Vice President Taylor said former VP Boakai did not have the pedigree to lead Liberia as compare to her current boss, because according to her, VP Boakai is on records for being absent many times from sessions and he hardly show up for other functions.

"Look at the records of and you will see many times the Vice President showed up to preside over the Senate and you will be shocked. Most of the time he is in his office and would say the topic is too controversial but failed to realize that politics is contentious.

"Everyone wants different things and we will all argue and he did not have the tenacity to see us through. I think when you see what is happening in his political party and how they are pulling our nation apart," VP Taylor said of former Vice President at the time.



Pres. Weah with VP Jewel Howard-Taylor

She still remains the head of that party, which is an upshot of the former rebel movement National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) founded by her estranged husband, Charles Taylor who is currently serving his 50 years jail sentence in the UK for war crimes committed in Sierra Leone.

It is her ability to keep partisans glued together after her estranged husband was exiled in 2003, that has made her a key figure in the party and hence her ascension as its standard bearer. And being the second biggest member of the coalition as well as her popularity among citizens of the third vote rich county in the country, Mr. Weah saw her as the most likely running mate to deliver Bong County and parts of Lofa.

Relations between President Weah and VP Taylor after the elections

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, relations between Mr. Weah and his Vice had been strained. It had been speculated that both were not even on speaking terms.

This reported unexplained

commitment and loyalty to the advancement and implementation of the Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development as enunciated by H.E. Dr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, an excerpt of the statement released by the office of Mrs. Taylor said.

In that statement, the Vice President was quoted to have said that she is fully cognizant of her role as Vice President in which she serves as a critical support arm to the President.

But relations soon slipped into the mud. At its peak in January, 2020, Vice President Howard-Taylor refused to attend the opening of the National Legislature after complaining of lack of budgetary support by the government in the last two years, a claim that was later debunked by Finance Minister Samuel Tweah.

Tweah explained at the time that the office of the Vice President had received more than US\$3 million in budgetary support since 2018.

Those feelings of dissatisfaction were glaring

the president. The vice president is elected on the same ticket with the president to a six-year term. In the event of the death, resignation or removal of the president, the vice president ascends to the presidency, which he or she holds for the remainder of their predecessor's term. This is supported under Article 63 (b).

Under Article 63(b), the vice president ascends to the presidency in the event of president's death, resignation, impeachment, or when the president is declared incapable of carrying out the duties of the office. In the event of ascension, the vice president serves as president for the remainder of his or her predecessor's term, though this period is not considered a term for the purposes of term limits to the presidency. According to Article 63(a), should the president-elect die or become otherwise

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Weah intervenes in LTA-GSM companies' saga



President George M. Weah

By Lewis S. Teh

President George Manneh Weah has taken siege of surcharge disagreement between the Liberia Telecommunication Authority and GSM companies operating the country, the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change discloses here.

The CDC provides scanty

detail, but further reveals that frantic discussions surrounding the legal and financial ramifications of the surcharge by Orange Liberia and Lonestar Cell MTN are ongoing and assures the public of a return to status quo in the pricing of data.

CDC Chairman Mulbah Morlu calls on citizens to remain calm as President Weah takes seizure of

the matter that significantly limited thousands, if not millions of subscribers' capacity to make adequate daily calls and utilize the social media due to increase in minutes and data prices.

Addressing a news conference Tuesday, at the CDC headquarters in Congo Town outside Monrovia, Morlu at the same time warned the LTA to exercise care and prudence in pronouncing policies that have implications for the people, and could put reputation of the government at risk concerning its Pro-Poor Agenda, which he describes as a core value of the ruling establishment.

He says while the CDC is not dwelling on the facts and details of the recent pronouncement by GSM companies, the recent price changes announced by both companies have elements of collusion, noting it is

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Gov't to restore judicial staffers' money

By Winston W. Parley

Liberia's Finance Minister Samuel Tweah has told protesting judicial staffers that the government will restore cuts in their salaries that have necessitated their protests over the past weeks, saying this month each of them will receive US\$153 representing the first three months, in addition to their October pay.

Following a mass meeting

at the Temple of Justice Tuesday, 13 October, Mr. Tweah told journalists that over time the government will find a way to address some of the judicial workers' other remaining issues.

"But we did recognize that there were some gaps; there's something owed them. So that's why, so they are happy that going forward they've set the formula as I said yesterday, what they are going to get, what the Executive Branch, the



A judicial staff being dragged by police

Legislative Branches are getting is what they are getting," he says.

"We're giving three months in October, and I didn't make any firm commitment in terms of timing, but I did say that we will continue to search and overtime continue to meet them," he adds.

He admits that the government owes the judicial workers 12 months, saying the

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