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## We didn't give the presidents any figure

**-CBL tells lawmakers**

Speaker Fonati Koffa

CBL Boss Aloysious Tarlue

## Boakai picks military leaders

Pres. Boakai

Maj. Gen. Prince C. Johnson, III

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# Continental News

## China Circumspect After International Court Ruling on Israel

In a carefully worded response this week, China voiced its support of the U.N.'s International Court of Justice, or ICJ, ruling that orders Israel to desist from the killing of Palestinians in Gaza. Experts tell VOA that

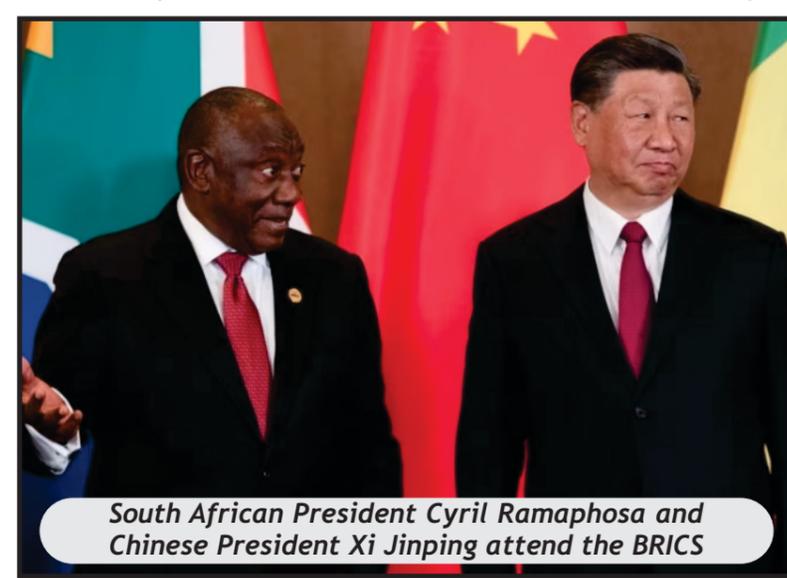
plausible case and that Israel must now take every measure to avoid causing deaths in Gaza. Israel has slammed allegations of genocide, and President Benjamin Netanyahu reacted to the court's order by vowing to continue the war. Israel's key ally, the United States, played down the ruling and noted it did not call for a cease-fire. But experts said the damning nature of the ruling was embarrassing for both democracies, which are proponents of international law. South Africa – which has a close relationship with China – hailed the ruling as a win for the so-called Global South, of which Beijing sees itself as a leader.

Israel and the U.S. are both members of the ICJ, whose rules are binding. However, there is no enforcement mechanism, so sometimes – as in the case of the court's 2022 ruling that Russia must exit Ukraine – its orders are ignored.

Usually, China is quick to point out anything it sees as U.S. hypocrisy, but on this issue Beijing has remained tight-lipped. Some experts think that is because Beijing is afraid of the precedent it could set. "I think China is using the ICJ decision to push for de-escalation. But it made no mentioning of genocide and called the decision a 'temporary measure,'" Yun Sun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center, told VOA.

to a question from state broadcaster CCTV. "We condemn all acts against civilians and oppose all moves that violate international law. China urges parties to the conflict to realize a comprehensive cease-fire at once, abide by the

international humanitarian law," he said. South Africa's case was the South African government – a longtime supporter of the Palestinian cause – that asked the ICJ to investigate whether Israel was committing genocide in the war in Gaza, which began in response to an attack by the Palestinian militant group Hamas. While a final ruling on whether genocide has indeed been committed is years down the road, the court announced provisional measures in the case last week. A majority of the judges – including a Chinese judge – ruled that South Africa had a



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend the BRICS

privately China has reservations about the use of such courts to deal with allegations of genocide, which could have awkward implications for Beijing. "We hope that the ICJ's provisional measures can be effectively implemented," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin when asked about the issue at a regular press conference on Monday. While the EU and U.S. reacted almost immediately to Friday's ruling in The Hague, Wang's comments were the first from a previously taciturn Beijing and came in response

## The man determined to wrestle Zimbabwe's 'crocodile'

Chants of "Wiwa, Wiwa, Wiwa" - a reference to Ken Saro-Wiwa, the renowned writer and environmentalist executed by Nigeria's military regime in 1995 - rang out through a Zimbabwean courtroom this week.

It is the nickname of opposition politician Job Sikhala, who was sentenced to a two-year suspended sentence after a record 595 days in pre-trial detention.

The 52-year-old former MP and lawyer chose the moniker "Wiwa" whilst at university - and it has defined his political career.

"He admired the bravery of Ken Saro-Wiwa," opposition MP Daniel Molokele told the BBC.

He went on to describe his close friend as "loud, outspoken, assertive, confident, and someone who always stood up to authority". Mr Sikhala, who says he is driven by his desire to end injustice and tyranny in Zimbabwe, joined the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999.

The MDC was the first party

Court, he was told he would spend one more night in jail before his release from Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison - a message which quickly circulated on social media.

Instead, the prison authorities ordered him to pack his stuff and leave immediately that evening.

"I was escorted to the gates and dumped by the roadside," Mr Sikhala told the BBC.

He had to call his lawyers to collect him. He believes the authorities did not want the scenes of jubilation in court repeated outside the prison gates on Wednesday morning. "The move was meant to wrongfoot those preparing to welcome me out of Chikurubi," he said.

Mr Sikhala's run-ins with authority predate the MDC, says Mr Molokele, who was a fellow student leader at the University of Zimbabwe in the 1990s.

He was not afraid to criticise how the Mugabe government was running the country and its efforts to control the university. "He endeared himself to other students and held various positions in the Student Representative Council from his first year until he graduated," Mr Molokele says.



to mount a real challenge to the ruling Zanu-PF party of Robert Mugabe, the leader who ruled the country from independence in 1980 until he was ousted by his deputy Emmerson Mnangagwa, nicknamed the "crocodile" because of his political cunning, with the backing of the military in 2017. Now president, Mr Mnangagwa was one of those in the ruling party who lost his seat when the MDC contested its first election. Mr Sikhala reckons that during his 25-years in the opposition he has been arrested more than 60 times - with his sentence on Tuesday his only conviction. The fiery politician was last arrested in June 2022 for allegedly inciting public violence. His long detention before trial meant he was denied the opportunity of participating in last year's election. After Tuesday's ruling at the Harare Magistrates

Another former student, who spoke to the BBC on condition of anonymity, remembers an incident when the university security took away Mr Sikhala's megaphone: "That did not deter him. He told them the students would hear him without a megaphone."

Younger students tended to look up to him and respect him as he had worked as a high school teacher before enrolling at the university to study economic history, Mr Molokele says.

This was not the end of his studies - years later when an opposition MP he returned to university and qualified as a lawyer.

"The persecution I suffered at the hands of the authorities pushed me to study law, I wanted to understand what they were arresting me for because the arrests seemed so spurious and arbitrary," he told the BBC.

## Ethiopian opposition politician arrested

An Ethiopian opposition lawmaker has been arrested by government security forces in the country's capital Addis Abbaba, his family members said.

Dessalegn Chanie's relatives told the BBC no official reason has yet been provided for his detention. Mr Dessalegn won a federal parliamentary seat representing opposition party National Movement of the Amhara (Nama) in 2021. Due to Mr Dessalegn's status as an MP he is entitled to immunity from prosecution.

Parliament is meant to convene and revoke this immunity before a lawmaker is arrested, but this has not happened. He is the second opposition legislator to be arrested, since fighting in the Amhara region began last year.

Last August, Christian Tadele, an MP from the Nama, was arrested and still remains in custody.

Both lawmakers were known

for voicing strong criticisms against Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's administration. These arrests come as the conflict between local militia and the army in Amhara continues to rage on. Prime Minister Abiy imposed a six-month state of emergency in early August to try to stop the clashes.

Fighting has continued to be reported in some areas in Amhara,

with media outlets affiliated with the militias accusing government forces of killing unarmed civilians in a small town called Merawi, 35 km south of the regional capital Bahirdar.

The authorities have not yet responded to the accusations and the BBC has not independently confirmed the allegations.



House of Peoples Representatives of FDRE

# EDITORIAL

## UP government should come with clean hands

Circumstances surrounding the expenditure of US\$650,000 for the poorly organized inaugural ceremony of President Joseph Nyumah Boakai have a very high likelihood to taint the image of the new administration that campaigned on integrity and accountability to ascend to power, if nothing is urgently done to set the record straight and erase suspicions both within and outside the ruling UP.

By every account so far, nothing seems to be clear on how funds allotted for various aspects of the inaugural ceremony at which people fainted because of severe heat and dehydration, were expended, with tales of diverse shades being told.

Hell broke loose when a total of US\$365,000 allotted by President Boakai for ordinary citizens to celebrate his inauguration in all 73 districts across the country with each district apportioned US\$5,000 is greeted with noise and discrepancy. As if this was not enough, the woman who headed the President's inaugural committee, Auntie Miatta Fahnbulleh, told a media briefing Thursday, January 25, 2024 in Monrovia that she was never in control of activities for which she reportedly received huge cash.

Rather, she blames the former administration, security officers, protocol personnel everyone else, but herself, as head, for everything that went wrong on Inauguration Day, January 22, 2024 that was characterized by severe heat, lack of seats and water for guests, which nearly turned fatal for President Boakai himself!

Auntie Miatta is yet to account clearly how funds received for the program she presided over was expended, with people she claimed to have given money for specific activities, such as media, US\$50,000, and several thousands to an entertainment group "Kukatono" (we are one) refuting that they received far less than the amounts announced. Addressing the Ministry of Information's regular press briefing on Thursday, January 25, on Capitol Hill, she pointed fingers at the former Director-General of the General Services Agency (GSA) Madam Broh, revealing that the former GSA boss allegedly received funding for the renovation and preparation of the Capitol Building where the inauguration was held, but due to the poor management, progress was only halfway.

According to her, every time she tried to inquire, the consistent response she received was that the responsibility fell on the GSA.

She narrates that prior to the ceremony, she decided to confront Madam Mary Broh, but the meeting ended in deadlock, alleging that Broh obstructed preparations for the inaugural ceremony.

But reacting on Spoon Talk last week Thursday, Madam Broh said she didn't receive a dime, contrary to allegation by Auntie Miatta that the former GSA boss received a larger chunk of the US\$650,000 inaugural budget for logistical purposes. She explains that she has in her possession vouchers for cars that were rented for the occasion.

Besides, the National Chairman for the now ruling Unity Party, Rev. Dr. Luther Tarpeh is vividly struggling to account for the US\$3650,000 allotted by the President for the 73 electoral districts to celebrate. Without consultation with other party executives in Monrovia, Chairman Tarpeh explains that UP county chairpersons from all 15 counties requested for some of the money to have their own celebrations, so he authorized disbursement of US\$1,000 from the amount to each county chair for said purpose.

It is hard to comprehend how a party that preached equity, accountability and moral leadership throughout the entire campaign could entangle itself and have its hands stained in the disbursement and expenditure of the first public money it handled right from the onset of its six-year rule.

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

# COMMENTARY

By Fawaz A. Gerjes

## Why "the Rest" Are Rejecting the West

**L**ONDON - As the war in Gaza enters its fourth month, many in the Middle East and across the Global South have been struck both by the ferocity of Israel's military campaign and by Western governments' unwavering support for it. To them, this is as much US President Joe Biden's war as it is Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's, and the continuing indifference to the scale of the devastation has reaffirmed how cheap Arab lives appear to be to Western leaders.

For those who lived through the Cold War and witnessed how Western powers dealt with post-colonial states and their peoples, recent events are all too familiar. As I argue in my new book, *What Really Went Wrong: The West and the Failure of Democracy in the Middle East*, the United States and other Western countries, mainly the United Kingdom, have for nearly a century pursued an interventionist, militaristic, and anti-democratic foreign policy that largely ignores Middle Eastern peoples' interests. If anything, Western decisions have been driven historically by the desire to roll back communism and secure the dominance of liberal capitalism.

In pursuit of these twin aims, the US offered Middle Eastern leaders a zero-sum choice: either join in Western-led regional defense alliances and open your economy to global capital, or be considered a foe. In the name of maintaining stability and securing an uninterrupted flow of cheap oil, Western powers struck devil's pacts with Middle Eastern autocrats and actively contributed to the demise of incipient democratic movements.

Notably, in the early 1950s, when the liberal democrat Mohammed Mossadegh became prime minister of Iran and nationalized the country's oil, the CIA and MI6 orchestrated a coup and replaced him with the Shah. That self-interested intervention arrested Iran's democratic development and set the stage for the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which ushered in the theocratic regime that rules to this day.

Similarly, in the 1950s, Gamal Abdel Nasser, a charismatic leader who was positively disposed toward the US, became president of Egypt and decided that it was not in his country's interest to join a Western-led defense pact. Seeking to humiliate him and force his ouster, America and Britain rescinded support for the massive Aswan High Dam project on the Nile River. What resulted was the Suez Crisis of 1956, which almost caused a world war. In the end, the most popular leader of the most populous Arab state became a bitter enemy of the West.

While the US-led West has certainly taken a heavy-handed approach in other regions as well, Western officials have long rationalized their neo-imperial mission in the Middle East by claiming that the combination of Islam and Arab culture is incompatible with democracy. The implication is that brutal strongmen are essential to the stability that the West so values.

The lesson for those strongmen has been unambiguous: repression and human-rights abuses will be ignored as long as America's orders are followed. For the people of the

region, the lesson has been no less plain: their lives and rights mean little in the West's calculus - notwithstanding all its lofty rhetoric about democracy and the rule of law. The invasion and decades-long occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq made that abundantly clear.

Barack Obama was the first US president to hint at a different approach. Speaking at the US Military Academy at West Point in 2014, he decried America's perpetual wartime footing and tendency to shoot first and ask questions later. America's costliest mistakes in the region had come not from restraint, he argued, but from the "willingness to rush into military adventures without thinking through the consequences - without building international support and legitimacy for ... action; without leveling with the American people about the sacrifices required."

Sadly, Obama's sober perspective appears to be lost on Biden, who belongs to the Cold War generation of American leadership. Until last October, Biden had devoted little time or attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He readily accepted the untenable status quo of perpetual Palestinian suffering, and focused instead on trying to expand the Abraham Accords. Those agreements, brokered by the Trump administration, sought to normalize Israel's relations with Arab autocrats in exchange for security assistance and protection, thereby ending the region's commitment to Palestinian statehood.

Since Hamas's brutal attack on October 7 - which exposed the folly of Biden and Netanyahu's approach - there has been neither restraint nor an effort to think through the consequences of the current war. Instead, Biden and his European allies have wholeheartedly endorsed Israel's all-out assault on Gaza. Even as the civilian death toll has risen at an unprecedented pace, the humanitarian crisis grows more acute by the day, and governments around the world have called for a ceasefire, Biden has shown no willingness to intervene to stop the bloodshed.

Meanwhile, skirmishes on the Israel-Lebanon border and US-led airstrikes on Houthi positions in Yemen and on Iranian-backed militias in Iraq suggest that the conflict may yet escalate further. America and Britain are gradually being sucked into the region yet again, though with eyes wide open this time. Biden claimed to represent a clean break from Trump, but there is no daylight between them when it comes to the Middle East. There and in much of the Global South, Biden will be remembered as just another American president who devalued Arab lives, preaching democracy while supporting repression and violence.

Biden may soon regret his wholehearted embrace of Netanyahu in recent months. Netanyahu, an expert at manipulating the American political process, recently rebuffed Biden's support for establishing a Palestinian state, insisting that Israel must have security control "over all the territory west of the Jordan [River.]" That pronouncement was timed to the start of the US presidential campaign, in which Trump is his preferred candidate.



## Lord, the banking pepo na talk this money palava now?

By Othello B. Garblah

Dear Father:

*So, de Banking Pepo na talk this one money palava na, becus somer us tiya waiting oo. We wan know how much wor really inside da account. Yes, oo. This thin here we mom know who talking de truth becus it too much na. My son da whatin too much na?*

*Oh Father, you na hear de one da happening in our village here? The Kountry Giant and him pepo say they left Uncle Sam Money 40 million in our village coffers, but de Papay say only 20 million wor inside. Da de Palava de Chiefs at de Traditional Council still talking inside there and we paa, we outside here waiting for them. You say whatin?*

*Father, da it we on here so, since last week, we sitting down here waiting. I na know da de new thin they na star in our village every time new Preeden come in the chair them will say no money in our village saving box. Today we mom know. Da Fire!*

*You mom say. They think, becus they say our village pepo can lee everythin with God, da this one-kpoo. The pepo from the Bank mom talk and if they try tio hide some-hayaka da fire will bliss for them. You joking my son!*

*Father, da na joking thin bisnay here we mom know de truth. Da their politic they mom go play it with their votes na our money. Bor I ehnn they say de pepo from de Bank fini talking?*

*Father, they na fini yet oo. They say, they na tell de Kountry Gaint and de Papay anything. They say da de pepo from de our Village Money House they can tell how much we geh in our box, eh hen. So, da they ley one na going around. Bor you na trust de pepo?*

*Ehn! I stupid, buggerboy eating my brain. De pepo them who can bye pass their respect and come bolor with their disgrace da de one them I mom trust-awa, old and new sef I na go trust them. Yu mean with these plenty small, small lay girl them passing around here, I mom come trust those pepo with money, de papay sef ya. Eh de pepo from de Bank say they will come back next week or so, we waiting.*

*Anyway, so yor Papay fini appointing him pepo them na? Where side, de way somer them skeleton coming outside leh da, it na fund. Da wah I can always say, when you know yor background na correct don't put yor hand in de pepo thin or else, they will disgrace you soon morning leh de breese da can come from behind de chicken. I hear de Old Man even thinking about changing him mind on plenty pepo, him want put different pepo there.*

*I hear they say him wan change de man he put in front of himroad bisnay and de one who suppose to be him goworment layer?*

*Father, da de thin I hear oo. They say da one orlor man who been fixing road in Uncle Sam village de Papay wan bring oo. They say de man wor inside de Papay "Black Book", bor some conned man them take him name from there. You joking, this really happened?*

*Father, this our village here plenty thing can happen oo. They say right na sef, somer de people them who been dancing around here after their name them wor put on Facebook are taking drips right na after they heard that the Old Man is having some mind change. Hmm, my son.*

*Father, it na easy oo, Goworment job bisnay inside this our village here it na yorleh oo. Anyway, we watching jus how we waiting to here de truth about our village money bisnay.*

## OPINION

By Dixon Chibanda

### The Global Mental-Health Crisis Demands New Thinking

**L**ONDON - The world is in the grips of a mental-health crisis. From rising climate anxiety in rich countries like the United States to intense trauma in conflict zones like Ukraine and Gaza (especially among children), psychological suffering has become widespread, and traditional health-care services cannot keep up. This leaves tens of millions of people at risk of serious pathologies and suicide.

As it stands, more than 25% of the world's population reports feelings of social isolation and loneliness, and more than 150,000 people aged 15-29 die by suicide each year. Climate change threatens to increase these bleak figures. As the American Psychiatric Association reports, climate change can "lead to job loss, force people to move, and harm social cohesion and community resources, all of which have mental-health consequences." Moreover, contemplating climate change and its consequences for both "national security and individual well-being" can cause "significant distress."

No groups are spared. Young people fear for their future; older people grieve the destruction of the world of their childhoods; and activists and climate scientists suffer from emotional burnout and despair. And this is to say nothing of the post-traumatic stress and depression experienced by those already affected by climate-related disasters, particularly in vulnerable developing economies.

Traditionally, a psychiatric patient would engage in one-on-one therapy with a trained doctor. But even rich-country health systems lack the capacity to offer such services as widely as is needed: in the US, more than 150 million people live in areas with too few mental-health professionals. Within a few years, the country could be short by as many as 31,100 psychiatrists.

The situation is even worse in poor and conflict-affected countries, where traditional psychiatric interventions are often very difficult to access, if they are available at all. Consider my home country, Zimbabwe: despite being a country of 16 million, it has just 13 psychiatrists and 20 clinical psychologists.

The consequences of this shortfall became starkly apparent in 2019, when Cyclone Idai tore through parts of Zimbabwe. The storm's powerful winds and heavy rains - and the massive flooding and landslides they triggered - led to hundreds of deaths, displaced about 60,000 people, and demolished 50,000 homes. It also decimated unharvested crops, destroyed seed stocks, and killed livestock, leaving people without food or livelihoods. All of this contributed to mental-health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Barely a year later, things got much worse: the COVID-19 pandemic forced nationwide lockdowns that further undermined people's socioeconomic well-being. The resulting mental-health problems were well beyond the health-care system's capacity to handle.

But that did not mean Zimbabwe had no options. The Friendship Bench project, which I founded, trains community volunteers without any prior medical or mental-health training to provide talk therapy from wooden park benches in all ten provinces of the country. We have so far trained more than 2,000 of these "grandmothers" to provide counseling to their local communities.

The program works. In 2016, a randomized clinical trial found that patients with common mental disorders and indicators of depression who received Friendship Bench counseling had a significant decrease in symptoms. Communities with access to Friendship Bench services also experienced improvements in other areas, from HIV outcomes to maternal and child health. Even the grandmothers delivering the therapy report that they have benefited from a stronger sense of belonging and resilience.

Others in lower-resource countries have also been pioneering new, scalable models for delivering high-quality, low-cost psychiatric care to communities where it was not previously available. One trailblazer is Sangath, an NGO headquartered in the Indian state of Goa that trains ordinary people to deliver psychosocial treatments, particularly in areas with little access to mental-health services. Clinical trials have consistently shown that these "lay counselors" are effective in addressing a wide range of mental-health conditions, from depression and anxiety to alcohol-use disorders.

Similarly, StrongMinds trains "mental-health facilitators" to provide free group therapy to low-income women and adolescents with depression in Uganda and Zambia. The organization reports a powerful impact, not least in supporting communities affected by climate-related environmental disasters. And this impact is set to grow: StrongMinds founder and CEO Sean Mayberry expects the program to reach 335,000 people this year.

Western models of psychiatric care are too resource-intensive to be rolled out across the world, particularly in Africa and South Asia, where fast-growing populations and accelerating climate risks pose huge challenges. But well-crafted community-based initiatives are both cost-effective and highly scalable. Beyond improving individual mental health and resilience, such programs strengthen community cohesion and encourage collective problem-solving, both of which will become increasingly important as the climate crisis intensifies.

Tackling the global mental-health crisis effectively will require greater engagement from the international community. The World Health Organization's Special Initiative for Mental Health, which sought to deliver greater access to mental-health services across its six regions in 2019-23, was a step in the right direction. But it must be sustained and expanded. Meanwhile, local and national governments and philanthropies should embrace new, locally-based approaches that have proved their ability to help communities cope with growing risks to their lives, livelihoods, and well-being.

# OP-ED

By Antara Haldar

## Populism's Great Replacement of Economics

**C**AMBRIDGE - In 1944, as World War II neared its end, the exiled Hungarian economic sociologist Karl Polanyi published *The Great Transformation*, a treatise that focused on the dangers of trying to separate economic systems from the societies they inhabit. Eighty years on, Polanyi's warnings about a market economy unleashed from human needs and relations may prove prescient. In fact, the future that he foretells bears a strong resemblance to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in which the doctor's creature runs amok and eventually turns on its creator.

That future may be upon us. In 2024, the biggest election year in history, people in dozens of countries, representing half of the world's population, will go to the polls. The list includes the world's two largest democracies (India and the United States) and three of its most populous countries (Indonesia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). And the European Union, comprising nearly half a billion people from 27 countries, will hold parliamentary elections.

Many commentators and experts view this global synchronicity as a kind of plebiscite on the postwar global order. So far, the popular reviews do not look favorable. Some argue that the world is experiencing a "democratic recession," citing evidence of declining levels of global freedom, authoritarian backsliding, and attacks on free and fair elections. Naturally, all of this raises the question of how we got from the blinding hope that accompanied the end of the Cold War - what Francis Fukuyama famously called the "end of history" - to today's profound disillusionment.

While democracy has undoubtedly fallen prey to bad actors in countries ranging from Russia to Bangladesh and Pakistan, the current malaise runs deeper and is more fundamental than alarming setbacks to electoral integrity and freedom of expression. Leaders such as former US President Donald Trump, who will likely secure the Republican nomination for another presidential run, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India, who informally launched his re-election campaign in January by unveiling a controversial Hindu temple in Ayodhya, seem to be genuinely popular. Their populism and polarizing agendas appear to be expressing something real in the global psyche. But what?

After WWII, the world was promised perpetual peace and prosperity - the first to be delivered by political liberalism (in particular, democracy and the rule of law), and the second by neoclassical economics (a highly sophisticated quantitative iteration of economics that any society could adopt). But in an effort to replace the human touch with the invisible hand, these models were almost purely procedural, devoid of politics, values, and emotions. They were marketed as plug-and-play systems that needed no community or leadership, only infinite individual rationality, requiring minimal engagement with context or cognition.

The problem with this approach is that it ignored Polanyi's key insight: the economy cannot be "disembedded," as he put it, from society. After the Industrial Revolution, Polanyi argued, we embarked on a dangerous experiment, attempting to elevate the economy above society and reduce people to commodities within it. The result is a creature that poses an existential threat to its creators.

Seen from this perspective, the likely rejection of the postwar world order this year should not come as a surprise: elements of the narrative have become increasingly prominent in recent decades. The groundswell of discontent with globalization in the 1990s was interpreted as a geographically confined phenomenon - the growth pangs of regions that had been left behind. By the early 2000s, problems that were once thought to be confined to the developing world - declining growth, rampant inequality, failing institutions, a fractured political consensus, corruption, mass protests, and poverty - began to emerge in developed countries. Many warnings went unheeded: the 2008 global financial crisis, the eurozone's sovereign-debt crisis starting in 2009, and the United Kingdom's Brexit referendum in 2016.

Scholarly efforts to understand populism have had only limited success because they are trying to apply a rational lens to what is essentially an emotional response: atavistic fears and instincts triggered by a long-standing disregard for identity, trust, and community. Populist leaders around the world are gaining ground by abandoning the economic arguments advanced by experts and invoking nativistic motifs - the mysticism and magic that, according to German sociologist Max Weber, capitalism had decisively quelled.

The tragedy is that the dominant populist narrative about the architects of the liberal postwar order, that they are mad scientists who have lost control of their creations, contains a kernel of truth. But our story could have had a different ending. As in *Frankenstein*, a little recognition of the finer feelings that the monster - in this case, the postwar economy - is capable of would have gone a long way toward changing its behavior. This year should be a wake-up call for policymakers to heed the message that Polanyi articulated 80 years ago: no economy exists outside the society that created and sustains it.

Antara Haldar, Associate Professor of Empirical Legal Studies at the University of Cambridge, is a visiting faculty member at Harvard University and the principal investigator on a European Research Council grant on law and cognition.

# ARTICLE

## Examining Trust and Corruption in Liberia: Unveiling the Nexus of Government Officials and Factors Shaping Their Integrity: By Austin S. Fallah, Graduating Senior Student of Law/Legal Studies, Hamline University, Minnesota, USA

**N**estled on the West African coast, Liberia grapples with a pervasive corruption dilemma ingrained in its governance structures.

The trust deficit extends particularly among government officials, prompting questions about their reliability in handling financial matters vital to the nation's well-being. This analysis delves into these quandaries through a comparative study of key figures within Liberia's leadership, spotlighting Joseph N. Boakai and the internationally acclaimed Auditor General, John Morlu Jr.

Liberia's corruption woes trace back to its foundation, entangled in injustices and power struggles, leaving poor governance as an enduring legacy. The normalization of corruption as a cultural norm exacerbates mistrust in government and its officials, with the historical backdrop playing a significant role in fostering a society seemingly woven with corrupt inclinations.

While Vice President and now President Joseph N. Boakai pledges substantial reforms to eliminate corruption, allegations occasionally mar his relatively clean political image. Despite efforts, skepticism lingers due to the depth of the issue and the lack of substantial improvement in the past.

In contrast, John Morlu Jr., with an impeccable track record as a respected auditor, emerges as a beacon of hope. His authority, transparency, and dedication position him as a formidable force to confront corruption and restore credibility in Liberia's government structures.

While Boakai's promises are met with skepticism, Morlu substantiates results, reinforcing faith in his ability to combat corruption.

If Boakai integrates Morlu into his government with unconditional authority, it could signify a critical turning point toward a corruption-free Liberia. The deep-seated corruption within Liberia stems from complex historical factors morphing into cultural norms ingrained in some Liberians' DNA.

Figures like Joseph N. Boakai signify progress, but true transformation necessitates integrating individuals like John Morlu, known for their effective fight against corruption. The path to a corruption-free Liberia is challenging, yet strategic partnerships and an unwavering commitment to integrity can pave the way for change.

During former presidents George M. Weah and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's tenure, Liberia was globally perceived as highly corrupt.

The prevalent distrust in Liberians, including government officials, regarding financial matters results from systemic factors and institutional lapses rather than inherent character defects.

Corruption's pitfall perpetuates poverty and disparities in Liberia, with public officials embezzling and mismanaging public funds, exacerbating the nation's challenges. President Boakai's promise to eradicate corruption requires a drastic transformation towards transparency, accountability, and ethics.

Engaging John Morlu Jr., the former Auditor General renowned for his fight against corruption, could be a significant step.

Comrade Morlu's tenure was marked by adherence to transparency and accountability, earning him local and international respect.

To be effective, Morlu must be given unconditional authority, void of interference or influence from any governmental official.

However, integrating Morlu alone won't solve Liberia's corruption problem.

Reforms discouraging corrupt practices, such as adopting digital payment methods, are essential for ensuring transparency and accountability.

Digital payment systems can minimize the chances of embezzlement by eliminating direct cash handling, a proven approach to reducing financial fraud and corruption globally.

Corruption in Liberia is a deeply rooted issue with implications for credibility and economic development. Achieving a corruption-free Liberia requires proactive measures, including transparency, accountability, reputable individuals like Morlu, and embracing digital financial technology. Restoring faith in Liberia and its officials demands consistent efforts toward anti-corruption practices. Though challenging, it remains a feasible goal.

Endemic corruption in Liberia is a political issue and a cultural problem ingrained in some Liberians. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report highlights how corruption negatively affects economic growth and poverty alleviation.

President Joseph N. Boakai's presidency presents a potential for change, with a critical move being the inclusion of John Morlu Jr., Highly regarded domestically and internationally.

Intellectualist Morlu's transparency and unblemished reputation make him the ideal candidate to oversee Liberia's fight against corruption. Comrade and intellectualist Morlu's proven track record and transparency position him as a catalyst for change. His relentless pursuit of corruption during his tenure as Auditor General, highlighted by Front Page Africa (FPA), underscores his effectiveness in bringing corruption cases to light. However, the mere inclusion of Morlu isn't enough.

He must be given full, unconditional authority to tackle corruption independently. President Boakai's genuine commitment to eradicating corruption and restoring faith in the Liberian government necessitates Morlu's incorporation into his government, setting the stage for a corruption-free Liberia.

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## ECOWAS, Red Cross provide direct cash assistance

By Naneka A. Hoffman

issues affecting the region. The Secretary General of the Liberia National Red Cross Society Gregory T. Blamoh, said the cash assistance will not

ongoing humanitarian needs on the ground.

He extends gratitude to ECOWAS for its unwavering support that enables the Red Cross to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by these disasters.

"Together, we are promoting recovery and building resilience and hope for a better tomorrow."

Meanwhile, Mr. Blamoh explains that beneficiaries are receiving their mobile money messages with great excitement and they appreciate ECOWAS, the Red Cross and National Disaster Management Agency for the direct cash assistance which some have described as 'a lifeline' for them that is helping them to rebuild and recover after the devastating floods.

In response, one of the beneficiaries, Teta Joko of the Baptist Seminary in Paynesville describes the intervention from ECOWAS as timely. Ms Joko says the Red Cross has provided her family with the means to meet immediate needs and restore a sense of normalcy in their lives.

Also speaking, beneficiary Janeba Diggs of Doe Community says the assistance from ECOWAS and the Red Cross has not only eased their financial burden, but given them hope for a better future, as they work towards rebuilding their lives.

A total of 1,841 families have received mobile money as recovery support in the aftermath of the 2022 devastating flooding that afflicted the country. The

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## Civil Society wants framework work on Climate Change

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh

The Chairperson of the National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCCL), Loretta Pope-Kai wants President Joseph Nyumah Boakai to develop a framework for tackling climate change because according to her, Liberia is not ready to have a national carbon market.

Madam Pope-Kai said the idea of pushing for a carbon market right now could be a threat in the absence of a legal framework to safeguard Liberia and protect its climate.

She said the government should identify its context as one of the least developed countries in the world that are mostly affected by Climate Change.

She said should government focus its attention on pushing for Climate-Just-funding that will

"So if you don't have the clear roadmap, the clear path, to ensure what you are calling for as a country it, wouldn't work, so as a country, our focus should be on establishing a framework that will enhance our understanding as to what we are opting for."

She notes that carbon trading is an important tool in global Climate Change mitigation, an effort that incentivizes reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

She pledges the National Civil Society Council of Liberia's full support towards Climate Change while noting that the (NCSCCL) will push more for coordination and information-sharing to address the devastating scourge.

At the same time, she wants women in Liberia to be given land title rights since they are primary users of land and are currently engaged in discussions on Land



enhance not just the financial aspect of Climate Change Adaptations and mitigations, but will ensure equitable distribution.

"As we get engaged into this discussion of Climate Change initiatives, involving the carbon market, push for just-transition, we must push for climate-just-funding, climate justice, which are processes to ensure we have fairness, equitable distributions around Climate Change.

Liberia is not ready for Carbon Market, and we are seeing a whole lot of discussions, on Carbon - setting-up, Carbon Market; how do we go into a market, when we don't have a legal framework", she wondered.

She said a framework is needed to clearly identify problems affecting issues of Climate Change here and how to mitigate those challenges while reiterating that the country needs to understand its contexts relative to solving Climate Change that is mostly affecting women, who are primary users of the forest and land by engaging in agriculture and farming.

Sales and Legitimacy in accordance with the 2018 Land Rights Act.

"As we go through the formalization processes, We must also ensure that test of powers given deeds to women, especially those rural women, as they're primary users of Land. We have to also ensure they've title rights to Land, land is life, land is power and land is a form of security, so we must ensure that these women are protected", Madam Kai underscored.

The NCSCCL spoke to reporters on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at the Ministerial Complex in Congo Town at the start of a two-day Land Rights for Sustainable Development and Inclusive Climate Action Conference organized by LANDESA, a KP Project.

The conference seeks to address the urgent need for climate action within the land rights framework, aiming to create a sustainable and inclusive approach to land formalization, as Liberia grapples with the impacts of climate change with focus on a more resilient way to address issues of climate-smart land tenure system. Editing by Jonathan Browne



their recovery with payment to 700 beneficiaries already completed, while mobile money transfers to 1,141 families are being processed. The assistance package was made possible with funding from the Economic Community of West African States or ECOWAS.

Speaking on Thursday February 1, 2024 the Resident Representative of the President of the ECOWAS Commission in Liberia, Amb. Josephine Nkrumah said, flooding has emerged as a pressing humanitarian issue within member states, stressing that ECOWAS is not solely focused on elections and political stability but is also committed to social interventions that address impact of natural disasters and other pressing social

only enable the affected families to address their real needs but also help the beneficiaries to speed up their recovery with dignity.

Mr. Blamoh notes that in the aftermath of these disasters, the Red Cross focus remains on the well-being of affected communities and families, serving the most vulnerable.

He explains that while their support cannot reach everyone, they are committed to prioritizing the most affected individuals, including pregnant women, single mothers, people with disabilities, and those with no income. He expresses gratitude to the regional bloc saying, "We are forever grateful to ECOWAS for its unwavering support." The Red Cross boss says they look forward to building more partnerships to address the

## Swedish Scholars Network hosts post-election dialogue

Partial view of SIANL members last year following an electoral symposium for young voters in the 2023 general and presidential elections

In an effort to address the aftermath of the 2023 general and presidential elections, the Swedish Institute Alumni Network Liberia (SIANL), with support of the Swedish Institute, is set to host a one-day post-election peace and reconciliation dialogue here today, Friday, February 2, in Paynesville City. A release says gathering at New Hope Community on Peace Island, over 100 participants, predominantly students and young individuals, will delve into the theme "Maintaining the Peace: A call to Young

People in Post-Elections Liberia." Reverend Augustine S. Akoi, Senior Peace Ambassador and founder of the Better Future Foundation, will facilitate the dialogue, fostering group discussions and presentations among

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# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Yuoh rejects Boakai's corruption claim

By Lincoln G. Peters

Liberia's Chief Justice Sie-A-Nyene G. Yuoh has sharply disagreed with President Joseph

marred by inefficiency, corruption, and lack of public trust," said President Boakai.

"I am counting on this honorable Body to pass effective legislation and

trustworthy in dispensing justice without fear or favor," Chief Justice Yuoh argued Thursday, 1 February 2024.

Her response to Boakai's comment about the judiciary came during a conference held by the National Association of Trial Judges of Liberia (NATJL) at the Supreme Court.

She called upon all judicial actors to take judicial notice of an aspect of the annual message of President Boakai, branding the judicial system as inefficient, corrupt, and lacking public trust.

On Thursday, 1 February 2024, the NATJL held its 10th National Conversation and Conference.

The conference was kicked off under the theme: "The Judiciary and Democracy in Liberia: Safeguarding Democratic Values in the Legal System, Especially During and After Elections."

The indoor ceremony brought together members of the legal profession as well as stakeholders.

Chief Justice Yuoh attributed the lack of public trust in the judiciary to the practicing style of some lawyers. However, she expressed disappointment in the forms and way some lawyers practice their lawyering. According to her, their practice is intended to frustrate and delay the enforcement of courts'

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## EPA, GEF to host four days workshop on Biodiversity & Environmental issues

By Ethel A. Tweh

Liberia's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Executive Director Prof. Wilson K. Tarpeh says the EPA in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) will commence a four-day Global Environment Facility Constituency Workshop in Liberia from 13 to 16 February 2023.

The Constituency Workshop will be followed by a two-day National Dialogue from 19 to 20 February 2023 at a local Hotel in Monrovia.

According to Prof. Tarpeh, the workshop will discuss current issues relating to climate change, biodiversity, desertification, international waters, chemicals, and other related environmental issues affecting Liberia. The EPA Boss disclosed that the workshop is expected to bring together GEF agencies and focal points, convention focal points, as well as other stakeholders to discuss and review policies and procedures. They will also share

the meeting has been finally scheduled for 13 -16 February 2023. Prof. Tarpeh said that the Global Environment Facility as the financial mechanism for the Paris Agreement, is the international organization that provides funding to support environmental projects worldwide. The GEF National Dialogue therefore is a platform for stakeholders in a country to come together and discuss environmental issues, including national objectives, policies, strategies, and the means to achieve them.

The dialogue will bring together 70 participants from 38 institutions from government line ministries, agencies, commissions, non-governmental institutions, civil society organizations, community members, academic and research institutions, the private sector as well as partners and donors. The GEF activities are normally a component of national dialogues insofar as the GEF partnership is one of the sources of financing and support available to the

country. Liberia's GEF Partners include the World Bank, African



lessons and experiences from the development and implantation of GEF projects and their integration within the national policy framework.

He noted that the ECW was competitive among the constituency member states in 2022 and March 2023, it was announced that Liberia and Ivory Coast were the two selected countries among which one should be chosen. "Fortunately, Liberia was selected to host the ECW. Several schedules were put up, but changed due to different national circumstances including the Country's National Elections," said Prof. Tarpeh. In October 2023, the GEF requested that the meeting be relocated to another country due to the electoral process in Liberia.

The EPA Executive Director also said that the meeting would be a very good beginning for the incoming government. He added that the appeal was accepted and

Development Bank, UNDP, FAO, and Conservation International. This year's national dialogue objective is to discuss the 8.63 million dollars allocation. The Dialogue agenda is designed to raise awareness of national stakeholders about the GEF to build capacity for effective implementation of Liberia's GEF portfolio, as well as strengthen the GEF national coordination mechanism through the exchange of ideas and best practices. He stated that it will also identify and elaborate national priorities under the GEF thematic areas for the remaining period and discuss preliminary areas of interest for GEF.

He added that at the end of the dialogue, participants will identify projects for possible funding under the GEF System of Transparent Allocation of Resources GEF which is 8.63 million. The distribution is as follows: Climate Change 2 million, Land Degradation 2 million, and Biodiversity 4.63 million.

Nyumah Boakai that the Judicial branch of government is inefficient and corrupt.

During his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) delivered on Monday, 29 January 2024, Amb. Boakai lamented that Liberia's justice system which is meant to protect the innocent and punish the guilty, has been marred by inefficiency, corruption, and lack of public trust.

"Mr. Vice President and President of the Senate, Mr. Speaker, and members of the Legislature, our justice system which is meant to protect the innocent and punish the guilty, has been

support financial appropriations that will help us win the fight against corruption," he added.

He suggested that anyone caught in the act of corruption will face the full weight of the law, with swift and non-discriminatory enforcement. However, Chief Justice Yuoh rejected President Boakai's statement, insisting that the Judiciary has dispensed justice without fear or favor.

"I say that we as the Judiciary branch of the government, particularly the courts, and keepers of the law, take this statement as a challenge and decisively demonstrate that we are efficient, non-corruptible, and

## Motorcyclists in Nimba return inaugural money

By Thomas Domah, Nimba County

Several thousand commercial motorcyclists from various unions in Nimba County have returned 20,000 Liberian Dollars reportedly received from the Unity Party/MDR alliance. The money was meant to have enabled motorcyclists in all of the county's 19 administrative districts to celebrate the recent inauguration of President Joseph Nyumah Boakai and Vice President Jeremiah Kpan Koung.

But the dissatisfied motorcyclists in a news conference this week returned the amount on grounds that it is too infinitesimal for a membership of over 5000 commercial cyclists spread out in the entire votes-rich Nimba. Instead, they demand from the UP/MDR leadership at least US\$1, 000 or \$500, rather than 20,000 Liberian

dollars for such celebration.

Speaking to reporters after the news conference, the regional coordinator for the motorcycle and tricycle union responsible for Bong, Lofa, and Nimba counties Emmanuel A. Sarty, said the amount is not encouraging to expect them to celebrate.

He explained that during the 2023 elections motorcyclists alongside Nimbaians

over 5000 members voted for the Unity Party to take power, but they are not being respected despite sacrifices made.

Mr. Sarty expressed disappointment and frustrations that the UP/MDR alliance could regard the union membership so low when they are an important constituency in Nimba.

"We the cyclists like any

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# Français

## Le Ministre de l'Éducation désigné pointe du doigt les défis auxquels est confronté l'école.

La Ministre de l'Éducation désignée du Libéria, le Dr. Jarso Maley Jallah, a souligné les défis complexes auxquels le secteur de

après avoir été récemment nommée par le Président Joseph Nyumah Boakai.

Elle a exprimé ses préoccupations concernant l'état actuel du secteur éducatif

l'éducation à 11,19%", a-t-elle souligné.

Le Dr. Jallah a expliqué que le budget pour l'année 2024 est estimé à 41,672 millions de dollars américains, soit près de 15% de moins que l'allocation de 2023, qui était de 43,891 millions de dollars américains. Les dépenses réelles se chiffrent à 36,770 millions de dollars américains.

D'un autre côté, le Dr. Jallah a signalé que de nombreux enseignants ne sont pas formés et manquent de matériel pédagogique adéquat. Elle a révélé que tant les étudiants que les enseignants sont contraints d'apprendre et de travailler, respectivement, dans des salles de classe inadéquates ou délabrées, avec à peine suffisamment de matériel d'apprentissage ou d'enseignement.

"Ces conditions sont particulièrement difficiles dans les zones reculées du pays, entravant la volonté des enseignants de travailler dans ces régions", a déclaré le Dr. Jallah aux sénateurs. Elle a ajouté que cela a conduit à un recours accru à des enseignants bénévoles, compromettant ainsi l'efficacité de l'apprentissage des élèves.

La ministre désignée de l'éducation a également déploré le manque d'installations, d'infrastructures et de ressources, ainsi que l'inscription d'enfants en surâge, affectant ainsi l'efficacité de

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l'éducation nationale est actuellement confronté en raison d'un soutien budgétaire insuffisant.

Devant la Commission sénatoriale de l'éducation, le Dr. Jallah a informé les sénateurs le mercredi 31 janvier 2024 que le faible soutien budgétaire compromet sérieusement la qualité de l'éducation dans le pays.

Le Dr. Jallah a comparu devant la commission pour son audition de confirmation

au Libéria, soulignant que même si l'objectif du programme Agriculture, Routes, État de droit, Éducation, Assainissement et Tourisme (ARREST) est d'offrir aux Libériens un système éducatif avancé, cela reste impossible sans un soutien budgétaire adéquat.

"Le financement demeure un défi majeur - actuellement, l'allocation budgétaire nationale pour l'éducation varie entre 11% et 14% annuellement, avec une proportion totale des dépenses gouvernementales pour

## L'EFFL menace de se retirer de l'Alliance UP

Le parti politique Economic Freedom Fighters of Liberia (EFFL) a émis une menace de retirer son soutien au gouvernement du Président Joseph Nyumah Boakai s'il choisit de s'aligner avec la Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC), l'opposition.

En tant que critique virulent de l'ancien parti au pouvoir, le CDC, l'EFFL a soutenu de manière vigoureuse M. Boakai et la candidature présidentielle du parti au pouvoir, l'Unity Party, lors des élections de 2023.

Le leader de l'EFFL, Emmanuel Gonqua, a lancé un avertissement précoce au gouvernement dirigé par l'Unity Party, indiquant qu'ils se retireraient de l'Alliance du Parti de l'Unité si le Président Boakai s'alignait avec l'ancien parti au pouvoir, le CDC.

Cette mise en garde de l'EFFL fait suite à la récente visite de Julius Malema, le

leader des Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) d'Afrique du Sud, au Libéria pour l'inauguration du Président Boakai.

À son arrivée à l'aéroport international Roberts le 25 janvier 2024, Malema a attribué la défaite électorale de l'ancien Président George Manneh Weah en 2023 à sa désloyauté envers le peuple libérien.

Malema a également mis en garde le nouveau Président Amb. Boakai contre la répétition d'erreurs similaires, soulignant la

nécessité pour son administration de tenir toutes les promesses faites au peuple libérien pendant la campagne électorale, l'incitant à ne pas trahir la confiance du peuple.

Dans une interview téléphonique avec cette publication, M. Gonqua a souligné la gravité de la déclaration de Malema, affirmant que toute tentative du Président de s'aligner avec le CDC entraînerait leur retrait.

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## Éditorial

### Le Libéria se lance sur une trajectoire démocratique irréversible

Le Libéria a emprunté un chemin historique de transition démocratique fluide suite à deux élections pacifiques. C'est une randonnée clairement irréversible.

L'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf a pacifiquement transmis le pouvoir à l'ex-président George Manneh Weah en 2018, et six ans plus tard, M. Weah a remis le pouvoir à son successeur, le président Joseph Nyumah Boakai, ce lundi 22 janvier.

Le pays peut actuellement se vanter de trois anciens présidents vivants : Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, George Manneh Weah et Charles Ghankay Taylor, qui, lui, purge une peine de prison en Grande-Bretagne. C'est une distinction remarquable par rapport aux anciens présidents William R. Tolbert, Jr., et Samuel Kanyon Doe, qui ont, tous deux, été évincés violemment lors d'un coup d'État sanglant et d'une guerre civile.

Le Libéria se joint progressivement au Ghana, au Nigeria et à d'autres nations démocratiques de la région qui souscrivent à des élections libres et équitables ainsi qu'à des transitions pacifiques d'un gouvernement à un autre. Tous les Libériens devraient s'efforcer de maintenir le pays sur cette voie enviable.

Les anciens présidents Sirleaf et Weah étant en retrait et disponibles, le président Joseph Boakai n'a aucune raison d'échouer. Il n'a qu'à consulter ses prédécesseurs, surtout étant donné qu'il a été vice-président pendant deux mandats sous la femme qu'il appelle son "ancienne patronne".

La génération actuelle de dirigeants doit cela à la nation et à son peuple pour maintenir la patrie sur la voie des élections démocratiques et de transitions pacifiques, si l'on veut le pays progresse, car c'est le moyen le plus sûr d'attirer et de maintenir l'attention de nos partenaires internationaux.

Tant Madame Sirleaf que M. Weah ont révolutionné la manière dont les Libériens devraient rechercher le pouvoir politique. La voie à suivre est de passer par les urnes et d'accepter les résultats suite à un scrutin transparent qui ne laisse aucune place à la contestation et à la violence.

Dans son discours d'investiture lundi, le président Boakai a souligné que son élection par les Libériens est un appel clair à un nouveau Libéria, un Libéria différent, un Libéria qui pratique véritablement la primauté du droit et adhère aux principes de la gouvernance démocratique dans l'intérêt de tous. Nous croyons que cela devrait être l'essence de la recherche d'une fonction politique - servir le peuple plutôt qu'un agenda égoïste qui est le terreau de la corruption.

Tous les Libériens devraient se féliciter du chemin démocratique que le pays a pris. Nous devrions être fiers de veiller à ce que le Libéria reste sur le chemin de la démocratie en exerçant toujours notre droit de vote.

Par leurs votes, les Libériens ont facilité la tâche du président Boakai, car il sollicitera l'aide des gouvernements et des nations amis. La crédibilité de notre démocratie est importante dans nos relations avec nos partenaires mondiaux.

Il n'y a pas de retour en arrière. Nous devons continuer ce voyage de transition en douceur, car nous le devons non seulement à nous-mêmes, mais aussi à la postérité.

# Français

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## Le Ministre de l'Éducation

l'apprentissage et l'acquisition de compétences.

Selon le Dr. Jallah, l'éducation de la petite enfance souffre de problèmes similaires, créant un effet domino dans tout le système éducatif, avec des taux de réussite faibles dans l'enseignement primaire et une proportion élevée d'enfants non scolarisés, notamment dans les zones rurales et défavorisées.

Elle a également souligné les faibles résultats d'apprentissage, l'insuffisance des infrastructures techniques de l'éducation et de la formation professionnelle (ETFP), ainsi que le suivi et la supervision insuffisants des écoles et de l'instruction.

"Pour concrétiser notre vision d'une société éduquée, nous, en tant que peuple et gouvernement, devons augmenter les investissements publics et privés dans l'éducation, en pourcentage de notre PIB (produit intérieur brut)", a déclaré le Dr. Jallah.

Elle a noté que cela implique d'augmenter les allocations budgétaires du gouvernement à au moins 20%, d'éliminer le gaspillage et les employés fictifs au ministère de l'Éducation. Elle a également évoqué la nécessité de rechercher un soutien bilatéral accru pour des bourses et des projets spéciaux, ainsi que d'explorer des subventions internationales et des partenariats.

La ministre désignée de l'éducation souhaite que le gouvernement collabore étroitement avec des

partenaires locaux et internationaux pour cibler les secteurs créateurs d'emplois. Elle a suggéré que ces secteurs fourniront une formation formelle et informelle qui dotera les jeunes des compétences nécessaires à la croissance économique et au développement personnel.

Le Dr. Jallah a déclaré que la base de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie est posée dans la petite enfance, exhortant le gouvernement à élargir la formation des éducateurs spécialisés et des services dans ce domaine critique pour assurer un bon départ aux plus jeunes apprenants.

Commentant l'amélioration de la qualité de l'éducation primaire, le Dr. Jallah a noté que l'éducation primaire de qualité est un pilier de la société. "Nous visons à améliorer les normes pédagogiques, à solliciter le soutien familial pour les apprenants, y compris ceux ayant des handicaps et des besoins spéciaux, en veillant à ce que chaque enfant ait l'opportunité de s'épanouir", a-t-elle ajouté.

Si elle est confirmée par le Sénat du Libéria, l'éducatrice chevronnée s'est engagée à se concentrer sur le renforcement des résultats d'apprentissage dans l'enseignement secondaire, en particulier dans les matières STEM (science, technologie, ingénierie et mathématiques). "Nous nous engageons à réduire l'écart entre les genres à tous les niveaux éducatifs, tant en termes d'inscription des étudiants que de recrutement des enseignants, en assurant des opportunités égales pour tous", a déclaré le Dr. Jallah.

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## L'EFFL menace de se retirer

Il a révélé en outre que de tels alignements pourraient compromettre leurs valeurs fondamentales, ajoutant qu'ils étaient prêts à retirer leur soutien si une telle alliance se concrétisait.

« Nous avons été des alliés dans la quête d'un Libéria meilleur, mais toute tentative de s'aligner avec le CDC va à l'encontre des principes que nous défendons. Nous voulons préciser que nous sommes prêts à retirer notre soutien si une telle alliance se concrétise », a-t-il noté.

« Je crois fermement que l'Unity Party sous Boakai n'empruntera pas cette voie, c'est la même raison pour laquelle nous avons voté contre Weah », a averti Gonquoi.

Cet avertissement précoce introduit une complexité quant

à l'unité et à la stabilité du gouvernement actuel, indiquant des changements potentiels dans les alliances et les stratégies politiques.

Bien que le leader de l'EFFL se montre satisfait des récentes nominations gouvernementales, il critique également l'administration pour ce qu'il perçoit comme un manque d'action décisive pour résoudre des problèmes pressants.

Il a ajouté que sans des mesures substantielles et radicales prises par l'administration Boakai pour rectifier les irrégularités initiales, la situation pourrait s'aggraver.

Entre-temps, il a promis que sous un gouvernement EFFL, des actions radicales seront prioritaires pour répondre aux intérêts du peuple libérien.

## Le Liberia décline dans l'Indice de Perception de la Corruption de Transparency International 2023



Dans son Indice de Perception de la Corruption (IPC) de 2023, Transparency International (TI), une organisation mondiale de lutte contre la corruption, a rapporté que le Liberia a décliné de 7 points, passant de 32 en 2018 à 25 en 2023. L'Indice de Perception de la Corruption évalue et classe les pays en fonction de la façon dont la corruption dans leurs secteurs publics est perçue, selon des experts et des chefs d'entreprise. Le score varie de 0 (très corrompu) à 100 (très propre), où 0 équivaut au plus haut niveau de corruption perçue dans le secteur public et 100 équivaut au plus bas niveau de corruption perçue dans le secteur public. En 2023, 180 pays ont été évalués, comme en 2022.

Dans une déclaration émise à Monrovia, le Centre pour la Transparence et la Responsabilité au Liberia (CENTAL), le chapitre national de Transparency International, par le biais de son directeur exécutif Anderson D. Miamen, a exprimé sa profonde préoccupation concernant la mauvaise performance constante du Liberia, en particulier sa place parmi les pires déclinants à l'échelle mondiale. La déclaration du CENTAL indique que la mauvaise performance

témoigne de l'incapacité du gouvernement libérien à s'attaquer à la culture enracinée de l'impunité pour la corruption, malgré l'adoption de nouvelles lois anti-corruption et la modification de celles existantes pour les renforcer. Le groupe de surveillance de la corruption a cité le manque d'enquêtes et de poursuites à l'encontre d'actuels et anciens fonctionnaires gouvernementaux sanctionnés par le gouvernement américain pour corruption comme l'une des raisons derrière le déclin du pays. De plus, la déclaration indique que la faible application des lois anti-corruption et le soutien financier limité aux institutions publiques d'intégrité telles que la

Commission Anti-Corruption du Liberia et la Commission des Marchés Publics et des Concessions ont contribué à cette baisse. "Le résultat médiocre de cette année montre l'ampleur du problème auquel l'administration dirigée par Boakai est confrontée. D'un autre côté, c'est un test de sa crédibilité en matière de lutte contre la corruption - si les engagements audacieux qui sont pris seront soutenus par des actions concrètes visibles pour mettre fin à l'impunité pour la corruption, inverser le déclin et faire progresser le Liberia dans l'IPC", indique la déclaration. L'IPC s'appuie sur 13 sources de données, qui captent l'évaluation d'experts et de chefs d'entreprise sur plusieurs comportements corrompus dans le secteur public. Ces pratiques et comportements corrompus comprennent la corruption, le détournement de fonds et de fournitures publics, l'utilisation du pouvoir public à des fins privées, les irrégularités dans les marchés publics, la capture de l'État et le népotisme dans la fonction publique.

## AES : le retrait du Mali, du Niger et du Burkina de la Cédéao devrait profiter à l'Alliance des États du Sahel



Après l'annonce, dimanche 28 janvier, de leur départ de la Cédéao, le Mali, le Niger et le Burkina Faso devraient renforcer leur coopération au sein de l'AES, l'Alliance des États du Sahel. Cette structure avait d'abord été créée en septembre dernier pour lutter contre les groupes jihadistes. Mais cette alliance se veut aussi économique et politique.

L'AES a été créée à l'origine comme un pacte de défense : le Mali, le Niger et le Burkina Faso avaient décidé de mutualiser leurs moyens militaires pour combattre les groupes rebelles ou jihadistes. Puis les trois pays ont souhaité aller plus loin et fonder une véritable union économique et politique. C'était l'objet d'une réunion à Bamako, fin novembre 2023. La réunion s'est conclue alors sur la volonté affichée de

progresser vers la mise en place d'une fédération réunissant le Mali, le Niger et Burkina Faso.

Après l'annonce dimanche de leur départ de la Cédéao, le Mali, le Niger et le Burkina Faso devraient renforcer leur coopération au sein de l'AES, l'Alliance des États du Sahel.

« L'AES repose sur un traité qui forme une alliance de sécurité collective, c'est-à-dire que ses différents membres s'engagent à réagir en cas d'agression, ou en cas d'attaque, contre l'un des membres. Et aujourd'hui, on peut imaginer un renforcement de la coopération économique, surtout une alliance diplomatique pour former un réel bloc et faire contrepoids face aux autres États de la Cédéao, estime Julien Antouly, chercheur en droit international, joint au téléphone par Pierre Firtion de la rédaction Afrique. On sait que la signature de la charte créant l'AES a donné lieu à plusieurs réunions diplomatiques de haut niveau. En revanche, aucune information n'a été, à ce jour, donnée sur les institutions qui seront mises en œuvre. On peut également imaginer que la coopération militaire, d'une part, prend du temps à être mise en œuvre et, d'autre part, que certaines dimensions de la coopération ne seront pas forcément annoncées au grand jour.

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**Young ICT expert extolls Pres. Boakai for pledging to empower 10,000 youth with digital skills**

By Lincoln G. Peters

Young Liberian Information Communication Technology (ICT) expert,

creation,” Jarlwood said. He also congratulated President Boakai on his outstanding leadership and vision in guiding the massive program to empower 10,000 young

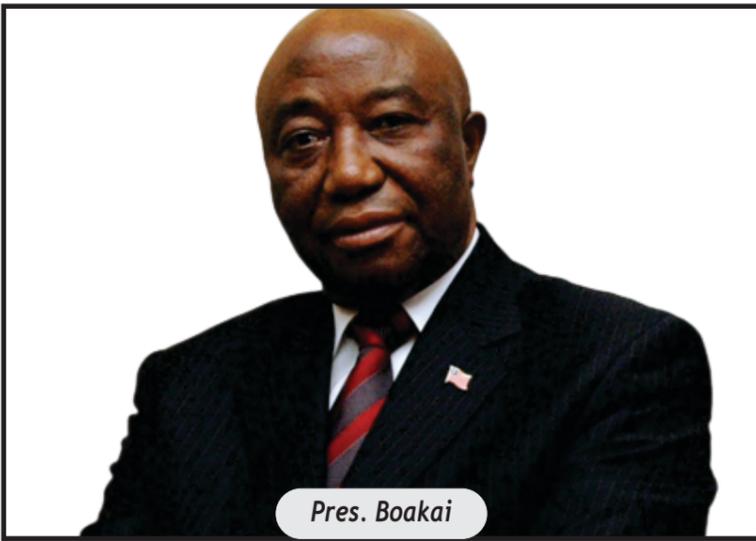
digital education during the first six months of his tenure as president.

Amb. Boakai believes that the key to unlocking Liberia's economic potential lies in the hands of its citizens. By equipping the youth with the necessary skills in digital education, he aims to create a generation of technologically adept individuals who can contribute to the growth and development of the nation. The president firmly believes that Liberians must be in control of their destiny and that investing in the youth is the most effective way to achieve this goal.

The young Liberian ICT consultant said that Amb. Boakai is taking the step at a time when innovation and economic progress are fueled by digital transformation.

He indicated that this decision has shown President Boakai is steadfastly committed to closing the digital divide by equipping the next generation with the necessary skills.

“These young people when empowered, will graduate from the extensive training program with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the rapidly changing field of information technology,” he noted. “I applaud President Boakai for realizing the importance of digital abilities in determining the direction of our country as an IT specialist.”



Pres. Boakai

Victor Jarlwood has extended appreciation to President Joseph Nyumah Boakai for prioritizing ICT as the driving tool for national development and job creation. Speaking in an exclusive interview with this paper Thursday, 1 February 2024 Mr. Jarlwood said he was excited that President Boakai has committed to training 10,000 young Liberians in digital skills in the first half of 2024.

“I want to extend my many thanks and appreciation to President Boakai for prioritizing Information Technology as the driving tool for national development and jobs

people with digital skills in the first half of 2024 as stated in his first State of the Nation Address.

According to him, this is an admirable endeavor, providing the knowledge and assets to guarantee the training program's success.

Jarlwood believes that the private sector can be a key player in promoting sustainable growth and prosperity by working with government efforts. He pledged his commitment and willingness to assist the government.

This week, President Boakai announced a plan to build the capacity of over 10,000 Liberian youth in

**Nyanti's confirmation hearing postponed**

Chamber strongly warning those sitting in the seats to leave or the hearing would be postponed.

“If y'all can't leave from the senators' seats then it means this confirmation hearing will be postponed because I can't even sit here,” he said and walked out in anger.

The embarrassing situation prevented senators from taking their seats and led to the abrupt postponement of the confirmation hearing by Senator Dillon to Monday, 5 February 5, 2024, at the same venue. Senator Dillon also told legislative reporters a few minutes after the decision was taken, that the Senate Secretary is to blame for blundering at the entry point of individuals into the Chamber.

“The Secretary blundered, and we are going to correct that,” Senator Dillon stressed.

“We know that these confirmation hearings are of public interest that is why we wanted to ensure that the media is here in a free environment,” said Mr. Dillon.

“The senate chamber is the sanity of the Senate and you saw what happened there. Everybody

sat in the chamber and the seats of the senators; where they sit,” he told legislative reporters.

The lawmaker also intimated that there was a security breach but emphasized that his committee will put all necessary things in place before the hearing is held on Monday.

“Those things were put into place, but everybody wanted to intrude in there just like the inauguration; everybody must be here so people will faint too but we didn't want it to happen today and people even wanted us to go into the Joint Chamber. No, we will not do that,” Senator Dillon noted. He maintained that the confirmation hearing of any nominee is not and should not be a cheering squad, adding that the process is serious as such people should know their boundaries.

“Everybody feels the feeling of [entitlement] must be even in the Chamber of the Senate where senators are supposed to sit down then people, they're ambassadors, former ambassadors and sitting in the Chamber of the Senate; nobody does that at the Supreme Court,” the lawmaker noted.

**ECOWAS, Red Cross provide**

Liberian Red Cross, with support from ECOWAS and in partnership with the Government of Liberia has initiated a comprehensive cash transfer through mobile money for 1,841 families in Montserrado and Margibi counties.

The cash assistance in the tune of US\$371,882.00 will directly benefit over 9, 600 persons representing affected families or households in 30 affected communities - 25 in Montserrado and five in Margibi. The flood crisis left Liberia among the hardest-hit member states within the ECOWAS region, destroying homes, disrupting basic livelihood activities.

The Liberia National Red Cross Society was however designated

by the National Disaster Management Agency as implementing partner before signing an agreement with ECOWAS on its Post-Disaster Humanitarian Assistance Project in Liberia, aims at promoting recovery and enhancing resilience in the affected communities.

ECOWAS commitment to aiding Liberia in the wake of the 2022 flood disaster highlights the organization's dedication to not only political stability but also to the welfare of its member states' citizens. As the project unfolds, it is anticipated that thousands of lives will be positively impacted, reinforcing the idea that regional cooperation can bring much-needed relief to those facing direct circumstances. Editing by Jonathan Browne

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**Motorcyclists in Nimba**

other citizen who supported the Rescue Mission, are eager to see the Unity Party government succeed; in so doing, we observe that the immediate exposure of ill will of those entrusted with public confidence to steer the affairs of the Liberian people is contingent to the very success we anticipate”, he lamented.

According to him, their action is based on continuous disrespect from the Unity Party and MDR leadership in the county.

Also speaking, an executive of the union, Emmanuel Youray, expressed disappointment over

treatment from politicians, vowing to lead a campaign in towns and villages to educate fellow motorcyclists to distance themselves from activities of the UP and the MDR.

The MDR is the Movement for Democracy and Reconstruction party of Senator Prince Yormie Johnson that produced former Senator Jeremiah Koug now Vice President of Liberia, as running mate of President Joseph Boakai.

But since the alleged mismanagement of US\$45,000 earmarked for the inaugural ball in the county, Nimbaians are in disarray over how

expenditure was made.

This paper gathered that some clans in the county received as low as US\$30 and \$20 respectively, as their share of the budget sent to the county for the inaugural celebration.

Marketers and teachers also expressed disappointment that they were unable to receive a cent from the amount allotted for the occasion.

When contacted, local officials of the UP didn't respond despite several calls made to get their comment on the matter. Editing by Jonathan Browne

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**Yuoh rejects Boakai's corruption claim**

judgment and hinder the administration of justice.

Justice Yuoh assured her unwavering stance on the strict administration of justice in the interest of peace, harmony, stability, and economic viability of Liberia. She stated that the time for warning is over, and it's now time to act.

“Therefore, the Supreme Court has constituted a review committee on the Revised Rules of Courts, the Code of Moral and

Professional Ethics of Lawyers, and the Judicial Cannons, as well as our procedural codes, with the end purpose of identifying challenges and shortcomings,” she disclosed. “I find no stronger words my conviction in ensuring the administration of justice than the words which I pronounced during the November 2022 convention of the Liberia National Bar Association... that the time for warning is over and it's now time to act,” said Chief Justice Yuoh.

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# We didn't give the presidents any figure

By Bridgett Milton

Authorities at the Central Bank of Liberia have informed members of the House of Representatives

CBL will not mislead the nation's leaders, as this has been the procedure in providing information about both accounts.

Before his exit from

Central Bank of Liberia to provide clarity over the accuracy and consistency of the Government of Liberia's net international reserves and its consolidated account



Speaker Fonati Koffa

CBL Boss Aloysius Tarlue

that the CBL did not give any figure to former President George M. Weah or President Joseph N. Boakai about the national reserves or money left in the government consolidated account by the Weah administration.

The Executive Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) Aloysius Tarlue tells lawmakers here that as of 19 January 2024, total balance in the Government of Liberia consolidated account was 2 billion Liberian Dollars and 27 million United States Dollars at the exchange rate of 88.36 Liberian dollars for US\$1.00.

Governor Tarlue reveals that each time the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning requested for the bank balance under the Weah administration, the Statement was provided in both Liberian dollars and United States dollars, and the Ministry did the conversion based on the prevailing rate of that day.

After several requests from lawmakers to the Executive Governor to sum both accounts and tell them the total, he maintains that the CBL only provides the numbers and the Ministry of Finance that is responsible for monetary policy does the conversion.

"All figures of both accounts were given to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and the inauguration team by the CBL, so I guess they were the ones that informed both Presidents", Governor Tarlue says.

Also speaking before full Plenary on Thursday, Deputy Governor for Operations at the Central Bank of Liberia, Nyemadi D. Pearson, said the

power, President George M. Weah had told the public that he left USD40 million in the state's Consolidated Account as the balance for the year ending December 31, 2023.

But delivering his first Annual Message to the 55th Legislature on Monday, 29 January 2024, President Joseph N. Boakai disputed the claim by his predecessor, rather, reporting that the new government met US\$20.5 million or only a little over half of the amount the Ex-President said he has left in the Government of Liberia (GoL) Consolidated Account as balance. "The net international reserves position reported at the end of December 2023 was US\$220 million. The report of US \$40 million as the GoL's consolidated account balance as of January 19, 2024, is not supported by the fact. The balance reported by the CBL as of the same date was US\$20.5 million, highly encumbered, NOT US\$40 million," President Boakai said. The issue of balance being left in both the country's international reserves and consolidated accounts has been a bone of contention between succeeding governments in the country's most recent history.

In 2018, Weah argued that he met around US 7 million in GoL's consolidated account as balance left behind by the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf Government, and around 150 M in the country's international reserves, something the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf administration refuted at the time.

The House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 27, summoned the

balances as of December 31, 2023, January 19, 2024, and January 24, 2024, respectively.

The summon followed a communication from Margibi County District #2 Representative Ivar K. Jones and Montserrado County District #16 Representative Dixon W. Seboe.

Rep. Jones said his action is induced by former President Weah's last address to the nation on January 21, 2024, in which the ex-President said, he was handing over to the next administration a net international reserve position of Two Hundred Twenty-Two Million, Seven Hundred Thousand United States dollars.

Mr. Weah explained that the total cash balance in the Government's Consolidated Accounts is United States Forty Million, Forty-Four Thousand, Three Hundred Sixty-Five Dollars, and Ninety Cents.

But Rep. Jones notes that this statement is not being concurred with by Mr. Weah's successor, President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr.

Meanwhile, the matter has been sent to the Committee on Banking and Finance to report to the body next Tuesday.

The Liberian Senate is similarly conducting its own investigation regarding the disagreement or inconsistency on the country's financial records.

Editing by Jonathan Browne

# Boakai picks military leaders

Liberian President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) Amb. Joseph Nyumah Boakai has nominated officials to lead the Ministry of Defense and the AFL, in a move displaying an internal military shakeup.

According to the Executive Mansion, President Boakai has retired Army Chief of Staff Major General Prince C. Johnson, III, and nominated him as Defense Minister.

President Boakai has promoted Col. Davidson T. Forleh to the rank of Brigadier General and nominated him for Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia, replacing retired Gen. Johnson.

Amb. Boakai has also retired Deputy Army Chief of Staff Brigadier General Geraldine George, and nominated her as Deputy Defense Minister for Operations.

He further nominated Col. Theophilus Dana as Deputy

list released by the Executive Mansion Thursday evening, 1 February 2024, President Boakai also nominated Madam Mamaka Bility as Minister of State Without Portfolio, Ministry of State.

Other nominees are Mr. Samuel A. Stevquoah, Minister of State without Portfolio/Special Services, Ministry of State; Attorney Cornelia Kruah Togba, Deputy Minister for Administration, Ministry of State; Madam Ora Richards, Deputy Minister for Budget and Finance, Ministry of State; and Ms. Morie Yaude Nemah, Executive Assistant, Office of the President, Ministry of State for Presidential Affairs. On the list of nominees were Mr. Sekou Dukuly, Managing Director, of the National Port Authority; Mr. James Bernard, Deputy Managing Director for Administration, National Port Authority; Mr. Jeff Blibo, Chairman, National Investment Commission; and Mr. Melvin Sheriff, Executive Director, National Investment Commission.

These nominations where applicable, are subject to



Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia, replacing retired Deputy Chief of Staff George.

Additionally, Mr. Boakai has nominated former Defense Minister Major General Daniel D. Ziankahn (retired), as Ambassador-Designate. In the

confirmation by the Liberian Senate.

Meanwhile, President Boakai, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia, has directed the Ministry of Defense and the Chief of Staff to conduct the appropriate procedures consistent with established military protocols.

## Starts from page 6 Swedish Scholars Network

sustainable development. The network's members are confident that the event will play a crucial role in shaping a harmonious and stable political environment, promoting civic engagement, and laying the groundwork for sustainable development.

According to SIANL, elections are democratic processes that come and go, and after them, citizens must maintain their unity as a people, especially the young people. "We see this pending dialogue as an investment in the future well-being of both the youth and the

nation as a whole, and we thank the Swedish Institute for supporting us to make this happen," the network said in a release.

SIANL, a registered professional non-governmental and non-political institution, is comprised of Liberians who benefited from the Swedish Institute Scholarship for Global Professionals. Having studied at various Swedish universities and residing both in and out of Liberia, the network aims to strengthen the Sweden-Liberia partnership through sustainable development initiatives. Press Release

## Nyanti's confirmation hearing postponed

### -Senate cites security breach

**By Ethel A. Tweh**  
The Liberian Senate's Committee on Foreign Affairs has postponed the confirmation hearing of Foreign Minister-



Madam Sara Beysolow Nyanti

designate Madam Sara Beysolow Nyanti, citing a security breach. Much details are not available about what amounted to the security breach, but Nyanti's nomination to Liberia's top diplomatic job has attracted positive and negative public attention. Her supporters believe she

with the UN in senior positions. However, her critics are questioning her integrity, especially based on their challenge of her academic

credentials. During Thursday's hearing on 1 February 2024, Montserrado County Senator Abraham Darius Dillon who also chairs the committee, cited a complete blunder by the Secretary of the Senate. Dillon said the Senate Secretary had allowed non-senators to troop into the Senate chamber, which led to

the abrupt postponement of the confirmation hearing for Madam Nyanti.

Senator Dillon, a staunch supporter of President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, noted that the hearing was being postponed for security reasons.

Following her nomination by President Boakai recently, the Foreign Minister-designate appeared before the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs for her confirmation hearing on Thursday.

In the main Chamber of the Senate, Madam Nyanti was accompanied by an unprecedented crowd and political leaders, former ambassadors including family members, and national and international individuals to watch the process.

Most of those individuals who were privileged to enter the chamber on the instruction of the Senate Secretary Nanborlor Singbeh, sat in the majority of the seats belonging to senators who were still awaiting proper arrangement to begin the hearing.

Bomi County Senator Edwin Melvin was heard in the

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