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# Rubber actors defend ban on unprocessed rubber export

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**P11**

RPAL President Wilhelmina G. Mulbah Siaway

# Weah draws battle line

**-upon arrival here**



Liberia: Former President George Manneh Weah returns home, vowing to speak out against ills affecting the Liberian people

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# Continental News

## Global Black Impact Summit (GBIS) 2024 examines the Impact of Media and Storytelling Organized by Energy Capital & Power

The Global Black Impact Summit takes place under the theme, Black Excellence: impact representation has on perceptions of the global Black community as well as the various ways to promote positive



Unleashing the Unexplored Potential for Global Unity Access Multimedia Content DUBAI, United Arab Emirates, February 27, 2024/ -- The Global Black Impact Summit (GBIS) (<https://apo-opa.co/3IzLHCZ>) on Tuesday featured panel discussions on Media Representation, Marketing and Storytelling and Nurturing Future Leaders - Empowering Black Youth for Excellence. The sessions provided insight into the role media and education play in advancing inclusivity worldwide. During the media panel, speakers explored the

narratives and authentic storytelling. Allie Merrick McGuire, Founder of AwareNow Media, drew awareness to and called for brands to think carefully about their communication surrounding diversity and inclusiveness.

"We need to be careful about the checking of boxes ... because if we are doing something just to check a box, then we are not doing it the right way," McGuire stated. Rania Rostom, former Head of Global Marketing & Communications at GE, said that companies need to "start with making sure we are driving the right priorities within the

responsibility to bring that 'outside voice' back into the company."

Sharing her experience in producing television and movies, Bree West, Executive Producer at OCTET Productions said that "it is our responsibility to not just go, but to go and to share. The next generation should be better than us. We can open the door to very guarded avenues [in the entertainment industry]. If the door closes, we open a window."

Adding to these remarks, Arno Peperkoorn, Chief Talent Officer at Omnicom, highlighted the power of leadership to make change happen. "It starts with leadership and humanity. Our industry needs to sell products to the audience. If the audience consists of different people with different backgrounds, that's what your product should reflect."

Meanwhile, the future leaders panel highlighted the role of education in economic advancement and wealth creation, with speakers discussing initiatives that focus on improving access to quality education and skills development within the Black community. Moderator Lashai Ben Salmi, Cultural Connectivity Specialist and Content Creator, opened the

## Republic of Congo Debuts First Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Carrier, Paving the Way for Major Gas Exportation

Centered on natural gas monetization and development, the unveiling of the Republic of the Congo's inaugural LNG carrier offers a lucrative prospect for the nation to emerge as a key player in global gas exports.

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa, February 27, 2024/ -- The launch of the Republic of the Congo's first LNG carrier, emerging from the nation's premier Congo LNG Project, showcases the country's firm dedication to responsibly harnessing its natural resources and advancing towards a more sustainable and eco-friendly economy. This inaugural LNG delivery stands ready to bolster the local electricity supply and provide essential gas to other countries, marking a significant step forward in the Republic of the Congo's energy sector. With its first LNG delivery, the Republic of the Congo takes a historic step in

long-awaited expansion of the Marine XII project is set to raise the country's hydrocarbons output to 500,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) and 4.5 bcm of gas within two years.

LNG production at the project will be driven further by the arrival of a second LNG vessel with a capacity of 3.5 bcm, which is currently under construction and will begin production in 2024. This additional unit will be able to store over 180,000 cubic meters of LNG, which will be used to meet domestic demand.

Aimed at driving the optimal exploitation of the Republic of the Congo's abundant gas resources - which are estimated at 10 trillion cubic feet - and boasting a zero-flaring technological approach, the entire volume of LNG produced from the project will be marketed to international buyers by energy supermajor Eni.

Meanwhile, with the anticipated start-up of the Republic of the Congo's new 50,000 bpd refinery - due to come



## Guinea-Conakry's Société Nationale des Pétroles (SONAP) Joins Invest in African Energy (IAE) 2024 as Bronze Sponsor

Through improved seismic data and an upcoming 22-block licensing round, Guinea-Conakry is showcasing its frontier oil and gas prospects to the global investment community PARIS, France, February 27, 2024/ -- Société Nationale des Pétroles (SONAP) - the national oil company of Guinea-Conakry - has joined the Invest in African Energy (IAE) forum (<https://apo-opa.co/49PYw2M>) as a Bronze Sponsor. Taking place in Paris on May 14-15, the forum will showcase the continent's leading energy prospects, including Guinea-Conakry's untapped hydrocarbon potential and pledge to renew and de-risk exploration.

Guinea-Conakry is currently finalizing the terms of its 22-block bid round, which is expected to bring new players into the market and incentivize exploratory drilling. To date, five prospect wells have been drilled in the country's acreage, which is located near existing commercial discoveries in Ivory

Coast, Senegal and Mauritania. Under SONAP - which was established in 2021 to integrate the country's upstream and downstream sectors - Guinea-Conakry is on a mission to promote its hydrocarbon potential to foreign investors. Organized by Energy Capital & Power, IAE 2024 (<https://apo-opa.co/49krKXM>) is an exclusive forum designed to facilitate investment between

African energy markets and global investors. Taking place May 14-15, 2024 in Paris, the event offers delegates two days of intensive engagement with industry experts, project developers, investors and policymakers. For more information, please visit [www.Invest-Africa-Energy.com](http://www.Invest-Africa-Energy.com). To sponsor or participate as a delegate, please contact

the development of its burgeoning hydrocarbons sector. The tanker was launched in the presence of the Republic of the Congo's President Denis Sassou N'Guesso and Minister of Hydrocarbons Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua and is set to meet the country's stated goal of becoming one of the globe's major LNG exporters. First gas for the Congo LNG project - which is strongly supported by the African Energy Chamber (AEC) - the voice of Africa's energy sector - boasts a liquefaction production capacity of 1 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year and was received in December 2023. The project leverages gas resources and existing production infrastructure from the Marine XII concession - roughly 3km offshore the Republic of the Congo. As such, with a specific focus on exporting its natural gas and oil resources to Europe, the

online in 2025 - the country is set to become self-sufficient in domestic demand while leaving excess production available for further export to international markets. Construction of the refinery is slated to begin in Q1 2024, with production expected to start 18 months later. With a focus on natural gas monetization and development, the Republic of the Congo launched its Gas Master Plan (GMP) during the 2021 edition of the African Energy Week (AEW) conference and exhibition - the continent's largest energy event that drives investment into African energy growth with the mandate of making energy poverty in the continent history by 2030. Comprising a framework that aims to incentivize the development of and investment into the Republic of Congo's natural gas sector, the plan presents significant investment opportunities for regional and international stakeholders.



# EDITORIAL

## Fight for tenure positions

Holders of tenure positions in government and the Executive Mansion are in words of war about plan by the Presidency to scratch all tenure posts.

President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., seems resolved in legally undoing or removing all those occupying tenure positions especially, from the previous administration.

Institutions with tenure posts include the General Auditing Commission, Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC), Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, National Elections Commission (NEC) Liberia Ant-Corruption Commission (LACC), Internal Audit Agency (IAA), Liberia Human Rights Commission, Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) and Civil Service Commission as well as the Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA), among others.

The President has already made nominations to several of these positions last week but the news received stiff resistance from those currently occupying tenure offices that the Executive Mansion seeks to replace, prompting the Presidency to put a hold on the process.

Fact of the matter is that these institutions with tenure posts were created by law. But the law says persons occupying each of these offices may be removed for a cause.

Interestingly, the current rigmarole would not have come about if former President George Manneh Weah had sought the approval of the 54th Legislature to remove Cllr. Kla Martin, who Mr. Weah was not comfortable with, from the Liberian Anti-Corruption despite Cllr. Martin's resistance under the law.

He went as far as the Supreme Court of Liberia, and the High Court rendered an opinion that was in favor of the former President, thus setting a precedent that current President Boakai may rely on to boot all those presently in tenure offices out.

We understand that all those appointed by the Executive work at the will and pleasure of the President, but our only qualm is if the Presidency wield so much power to undo or amend the law for his convenience, there is no need for the legislature to pass such law.

Some of these tenure offices are important for check and balance purposes, but if everyone that is appointed in those positions must dance at will and pleasure of the President, then it defeats the objective for which they were created.

As the Executive Mansion and current tenure office holders dig their heels into the ground for a faceoff, we can but only caution all sides to proceed with care to avoid sending a wrong signal.

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# COMMENTARY

By Jean Kaseya,  
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

## Strengthening Africa's Community Health Programs

**M**ONROVIA/ADDIS ABABA - In 2017, African Union heads of state pledged to deploy two million community health workers (CHWs), recognizing their role in advancing health for all. Seven years on, as African leaders prepare to convene in Addis Ababa, we must reflect on our progress. By 2030, Africa will face a shortage of six million health workers, making CHWs a key component and a fast solution to bridging the continent's health needs. Developing resilient community health-worker programs across Africa has never been more urgent.

We have witnessed how disease outbreaks can plunge a country into darkness - and how the power of CHWs can help pull it back into the light. As Liberia's experience shows, CHWs need adequate resources and financial support to be effective. In the early 2010s, Liberia's efforts to offer primary health care in remote areas faced significant challenges.

There was a shortage of health workers, and where CHWs were deployed, they were under-compensated and did not have the necessary equipment or training to deliver the essential care that was so desperately needed. As a result, different community health initiatives run in parallel by the government and other stakeholders failed to have a significant impact on patients - a common problem in many African countries.

In 2016, the Liberian government launched the National Community Health Assistant Program to address these issues and apply the lessons learned from the Ebola outbreak that began in 2014. With proper supervision, adequate salaries, and enough supplies to reach every household in their communities, CHWs were empowered to provide standardized, integrated primary health-care services. The results speak for themselves. Liberia's 4,000 CHWs now deliver nearly 50% of all reported malaria treatments for children under five and consistently provide access to health services, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Programs that take a similar approach have yielded positive results in other African countries. Since Ethiopia implemented its community-based Health Extension Program, which has deployed 40,000 community health workers, vaccination rates have tripled and child mortality has fallen dramatically. The experience of these and other countries shows that supporting CHWs and integrating them into national health systems can save lives and create livelihoods. It should serve as a guide for expanding community health services across the continent.

A resilient community health workforce is key to overcoming existing and future health challenges in Africa, which currently range from alarming maternal

and infant mortality rates to a high burden of communicable diseases. Equally worrying is the escalating climate crisis, which has underscored the urgency of improving access to care and building health systems that can adapt to a changing environment. Increasing the number of CHWs, and ensuring that they have adequate resources, is one of the most cost-effective and sustainable ways to achieve these goals.

Unfortunately, a daunting \$4.4 billion annual funding gap - compounded by fragmented financial flows - continues to slow our progress toward a healthier, safer, and more prosperous Africa. The solution is to adopt a "one plan, one budget, one report" framework, like that used by Liberia and Ethiopia. With this approach, governments outline their strategies for national community health programs, and partners coordinate resources and technical expertise to reduce the bureaucratic burden.

To that end, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and partners launched the first-ever continental coordination mechanism for community health in November 2023. Encouraging coordination among stakeholders will enable African countries to build effective and efficient CHW programs to tackle the challenges of high-burden communicable diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, and non-communicable diseases, as well as to respond better to emergencies, including epidemics and climate shocks.

The Africa CDC remains firmly committed to strengthening the community health workforce, which dovetails with the New Public Health Order - the organization's health-security agenda - and the AU's initiative to deploy two million additional CHWs on the continent. As part of this effort, the Africa CDC has collaborated with Africa Frontline First to mobilize the financing needed to professionalize CHWs.

Last year's Reaching the Last Mile Forum in Dubai was a success on that front: 12 partners committed to accelerating support for professional CHWs. This announcement also included \$900 million from the Global Fund over the next three years, 74% of which is earmarked for Africa.

The private and public actors in Africa must take coordinated action. As heads of state convene for the AU Summit, we urge them to make the development of an integrated professional community health workforce a top priority, with clear metrics of success to enable data and evidence to be shared with member states. This will foster a culture of continuous learning and standardization of CHW programs across Africa.

Community health is the key to a more prosperous, healthier Africa. We must seize the opportunity to train and deploy a robust corps of CHWs.

# OP-ED

By Bogolo Kenewendo

## The Case for Mission-Driven Climate Finance

**G**ABORONE - As sea levels rise, Tuvalu, a small archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, is slowly disappearing under water. Australia recently signed a landmark agreement with the island state that offers residency to Tuvaluans displaced by climate change - a sign of the emerging economic, geopolitical, and humanitarian implications of global warming. Tuvalu's reckoning with its potential extinction offers a glimpse of what the future holds on a rapidly warming planet.

And yet many policymakers seem oblivious to the transboundary nature of the climate crisis and its imminent impact on all countries. Research shows that 3.6 billion people - nearly half of the global population - now live in areas that are highly susceptible to climate change. People in the world's poorest countries - in particular, women, girls, and indigenous communities - are especially vulnerable to its effects, despite contributing the least to creating the problem.

These populations often rely on the natural environment for their survival, which means that extreme weather events are more likely to destroy their lives and livelihoods. Over the last decade alone, natural disasters in the poorest countries have resulted in a threefold increase in economic damage compared to three decades ago and the reversal of hard-won development gains.

Developing countries cannot be left alone to face the frightening consequences of global warming. The severity of the current and future effects of climate change will depend on the world's ability to advance collective adaptation, mitigation, and resilience-building goals in a gender-sensitive and inclusive manner. These efforts must put human welfare and our planet's health front and center, which implies capitalizing on the wealth of knowledge that indigenous communities have amassed. Equally important, they will require adopting innovative, efficient, transparent, and equitable financing solutions.

The agreement at last year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) to operationalize the loss and damage fund, which will provide financial assistance to climate-vulnerable countries, is a step in the right direction. However, the initial pledges of \$700 million fall short of the \$215-387 billion that developing countries will need annually up to 2030 to meet their adaptation needs. As the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change executive secretary, Simon Stiell, stated, the loss and damage fund "is in no way a replacement for, or a reason to diminish, the urgent need for the scaling-up of adaptation finance."

Moreover, around \$4.3 trillion per year must be invested in clean energy until 2030 to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. This further highlights the urgent need to establish a comprehensive adaptation framework with monetary, qualitative, and quantitative targets that can be used to secure financing from high-income countries.

The incremental progress on climate finance achieved at COP28 is not ambitious enough. To pursue climate action that meets the needs of vulnerable and indigenous communities will require a mission-oriented approach to financing that focuses on achieving the most efficient and just transition. It will also be necessary to scale up investment in mitigation and adaptation efforts dramatically. At COP28, for example, governments agreed to triple renewable-energy production capacity and transition away from fossil fuels. To succeed, they will need to make bold, concrete commitments to boost transition finance.

Africa provides abundant evidence that climate finance continues to be unjust and insufficient. The continent is disproportionately affected by climate change (even though it contributes the least to greenhouse-gas emissions). Between 2016 and 2019, however, it received only 3% of global climate-finance flows, despite various initiatives aimed at supporting climate adaptation and mitigation on the continent.

Africa can play a leadership role in defining and championing progress and could even become a model for innovative, efficient, and equitable climate-finance deployment. African institutions, including the African Export-Import Bank, the African Development Bank, and the African Risk Capacity Group, are reputable partners with experience in financing and in navigating the political and economic environment on the continent. But we must urgently close the gap; climate shocks are exacerbating tensions in fragile areas such as the Sahel, fueling mass migration and security concerns worldwide, and disrupting global supply chains and trade.

Africa has the ideas, ambition, and capacity to implement climate solutions. For example, we have identified dozens of shovel-ready green projects that only need a financial push to get off the ground. The continent is also home to some remarkable women who are leading the fight against global warming. I have collaborated with some of these climate champions, whose dedication and expertise are second to none.

The Global South has immense potential to achieve a just transition and build climate resilience. All that is missing is the funding. Governments of high-income countries, multilateral institutions, the private sector, and international organizations should provide the necessary investment, while also ensuring that women have a say in the development of climate-finance strategies. But first, they must stop seeing investing in our countries as a risk - and understand that the real risk lies in the failure to act swiftly enough. It is time to rebuild trust and reconceive development cooperation through just, equitable, and financed frameworks.

# OPINION

By Ana María Ibáñez

## Rethinking Inequality in Latin America

**W**ASHINGTON, DC - Nearly everyone agrees that the unequal distribution of income, wealth, and opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has hindered efforts to build cohesive societies and robust democracies, as well as frustrating the ambitions of young people. But efforts to close the gap between rich and poor have fallen short, and progress has stalled. Governments urgently need better evidence on how to remedy this longstanding problem.

To this end, the Inter-American Development Bank has teamed up with the London School of Economics, Yale University, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, and academics from more than a dozen leading universities to launch a comprehensive reconsideration of inequality in LAC. The project's initial research - including critical reviews of the existing literature, fresh data, and new analyses - has already shown that inequality in the region is neither as predictable nor as static as many believe.

For starters, LAC is not uniformly unequal. Some countries, such as Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama, have extremely high income inequality, whereas others, including Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Uruguay, have income disparities similar to that of the United States.

Moreover, far from being a fixed feature of LAC societies, inequality has fluctuated over time. In most countries, it began to rise rapidly in the 1970s, peaked in the 1990s, and then began to drift downwards. Inequality in the region today is lower than it was three decades ago, owing to educational gains (which narrowed the wage gap), commodity-fueled economic growth, and a host of government social programs. But it has essentially plateaued at unacceptable levels since 2014, when economic stagnation set in across the region.

A study tracking the evolution of inequality since 1980 until today shows that this broad pattern hides significant variations. For example, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru significantly reduced inequality between 1980 and 2010, even though their levels remain high compared to other countries at a similar stage of development. By contrast, inequality has steadily increased in Costa Rica over this period. The fatalistic assumption that the entire region is cursed by structural inequality that is impervious to policy interventions should be abandoned.

The project has also revealed that wealth inequality in the region seems to be more deeply entrenched than income inequality. Although data are still quite limited, one study finds that in Chile, Colombia, and Uruguay, around 1% of the population controls 37-40% of total wealth, while the poorest half of the population controls only one-tenth. Moreover, many low-income households have negative equity, because their outstanding debts are greater than the combined value of their home, vehicles, and other assets.

There is also new evidence that the opportunities and potential income of children in the region tend to mirror that of their parents, implying low levels of intergenerational mobility. One study shows that between 44% (Argentina) and 63% (Guatemala) of current income inequality in nine LAC countries is explained by "inherited" factors. Among the variables that contribute to the persistence of inequality across generations are being born in a low-income areas, belonging to an ethnic minority, and having parents with limited schooling or low-paying occupations. But here, again, the picture that emerges is more nuanced. In countries with a history of slavery or oppressing indigenous peoples, racial or ethnic factors predict much lower levels of intergenerational social mobility.

Finally, geography matters - but not always in predictable ways. The fact that 80% of the LAC population lives in cities, for example, has reinforced the assumption that rural dynamics have little effect on income inequality in the region. But new evidence suggests that agricultural income gaps, owing largely to the low labor productivity of small farms, explain between 11% (Uruguay) and 58% (Bolivia) of overall income inequality in nine countries.

So far, the project has confirmed that inequality in LAC is unacceptably high, while also demonstrating its fluidity and responsiveness to factors that can affect the degree to which it is "inherited." Armed with this nuanced understanding, policymakers should abandon some approaches to the problem, refine others, and test entirely new strategies that are more tailored to their country's specific needs. For example, countries such as Colombia and Peru, where many workers have informal contracts and thus pay little or no tax, would need a different set of policies for their tax and pension systems compared to countries such as Chile and Uruguay, where a larger share of the workforce contributes to pensions and social security.

While traditional strategies such as expanding and improving the quality of education and offering cash assistance to low-income households can be effective, they are not sufficient to reduce inequality in all settings. To achieve this, LAC governments must promote economic growth that can generate more productive (and formal) jobs and adopt a new generation of fiscal policies that give everyone a seat at the table.

# ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

## Liberian Aliens and Nationality laws-what are we protecting?

The sudden outburst of some Liberians, when it comes to debates surrounding the amendment of the country's Aliens and Nationality Law to be specific getting rid of Article 27 (b), of the 1986 Constitution leaves much to be desired.

Article 27 (b) of the 1986 Constitution, a clause retained from the 1847 Constitution states: "In order to preserve, foster and maintain the positive Liberian culture, values, and character, only persons who are Negroes or of Negro descent shall qualify by birth or by naturalization to be citizens of Liberia."

This law on our nation's statute books has become obsolete and is not in tune with current global reality it is nothing but a mere racist clause which is being used by a handful of people to foster their own political and economic agendas.

The law discriminates based on race; to say that only persons who are "Negro", (black) regardless of whether they were born on Liberian soil, jus soli, or abroad to Liberian parents, jus sanguinis, "shall qualify by birth or by naturalization to be citizen of Liberia," is racist- plain and simple.

Understandably, this Negro clause was inserted from the founding of the colony as a refuge for free people of color, and later former slaves, to prevent economically powerful communities from obtaining political power but same has no relevance today.

Today, the law appears to be "protecting" a privileged few, as it were in 1876 during the colonial and slave period, against being flooded by immigrants and even diaspora Liberians.

In 2022, the law was amended to remove discrimination in granting citizenship to children born outside Liberia. However, the amended law retained the statutory attribution of citizenship to every child born in Liberia (if of "negro descent"); the 1986 Constitution, meanwhile, provides explicitly for attribution of citizenship at birth only if either the father or mother is a Liberian citizen.

This law intends to prohibit dual citizenship for adults at all costs. A referendum to amend the Constitution to permit dual citizenship in all cases (among other propositions) failed in 2020, although many blame the past regime for not doing much to publicize the proposition.

The 2022 amendments to the law, albeit allow a Liberian citizen who acquires another citizenship to retain Liberian citizenship. This amendment comes on the heels of a 2019 Supreme Court decision which ruled that the statutory provision for automatic loss of citizenship was unconstitutional.

However, in the case of a person with one Liberian and one foreign parent, the Constitution requires the person to renounce the other citizenship when he or she turns 18 to retain his or her Liberian citizenship.

But who are we protecting?

Many of the arguments against getting rid of Article 27 (b), which when amended would permit persons of non-negro descent to acquire Liberian citizenship argued that indigenous Liberians are not yet economically empowered to compete with people of non-negro descent should they be allowed to acquire Liberian citizenship. But like it or not, the supporters of this race law are the same who are leasing land and properties all over the place to Lebanese, Indians, and other nationals of non-negro descent, lining their pockets under the protection of such law, while the entire country lieth in poverty and underdevelopment.

So, in reality, the law seems to protect the powerful few who parade with this assertion that granting people of non-negro descent citizenship will rob indigenous Liberians of their rights to own land in urban areas, etc, simply because they lack the economic muscle. But even as it stands, indigenous Liberians do not have such economic muscle to compete with the privileged few who are earning millions in property and land leases to these non-negros. If the law were to be removed and these non-negros were allowed to own land, these people will go out of business. This is what they are trying to protect not the impoverished indigenous people-plain and simple. Like NGOs who thrived in crisis, they thrived in abject poverty.

The Musa Bility bill to amend the Aliens and Nationality law.

So last week, Nimba County District #7 Representative Musa Hassan Bility, presented a bill to the House, seeking to amend certain provisions of the Liberian Aliens and Nationality laws of 2022.

According to Rep. Bility, the Bill undertakes a general revision and modernization of these laws that he says are needed and long overdue, particularly concerning citizenship, immigration, and naturalization, and seeks to provide a policy that is in tune with the current global realities. Rep. Bility is right, but only if his colleagues would see the importance and what the impact of such an amendment will add to the economic growth and development of Liberia, remains to be seen.

Rep. Bility's bill seeks an improved version of the 2022 Alien and Naturalization law but also frowns on the existing Article 27 (b) which discriminates on who becomes a Liberian citizen and it also seeks its amendment.

The Bility bill recognizes the domestic and international significance of Liberian citizenship, immigration, and naturalization policies, and takes a step to improve existing laws to alleviate the perpetuation of division that hampers efforts being made to rally support for unification and decrease the repressive and inhumane aspects of immigration procedures by removing restrictions on citizenship of natural born Liberians and their children, removing unnecessary barriers to immigration and naturalization, and proposing alternative immigration and migration requirements.

## DATE WITH THE NATION WITH D. WAHNE, JR.

By D. Wa Hne, Jr.

## The President's Promise Of Inclusion, Reconciliation And Unity: Are The Building Blocks Being Utilized?

With more than 30 days in Office, the political climate of Liberia seems more cloudy with less visibility of the direction the nation is taking as expectations are dwindling and pessimism is on the upsurge.

On January 22, 2024, President Joseph Nyumah Boakai clearly defined and laid out his government's direction. The construction design was comprehended, but it appears that the construction approach is de-shaping the image of the design held in mind by Liberians.

President Boakai emphasized reconciliation, government of inclusion, and unity as key elements to achieving his rescue mission under the ARREST Agenda.

There should be no arguments that these three elements are the soul of nation building and Liberia is in dire need of them. But will the President succeed in gathering or utilizing the prescribed building blocks?

Senators Prince Yormie Johnson, Amara Konneh and Representative Yekeh Kolubah are already critical that the initial steps of the President don't seem to suggest that these three elements will ever be achieved. But others think it is too early to judge the President's direction.

What are the building blocks that are needed for the construction of a government of national inclusion? Experts believe they are the formation of the government and the geographic and political contents of appointments made by the President.

Though Article 54a gives exclusive constitutional privileges to the President to appoint at his will and pleasure, he needs to create a space for each county to be represented in cabinet and in junior cabinet positions.

The UP and the opposition family were very critical of President Weah's regional approach which saw more southeasterners in cabinet. They vowed to make a change by ensuring that each county would be represented in the cabinet.

In other to achieve the doctrine of inclusion which produces a government of national unity and reconciliation, a winning party should avoid the temptation of winners takes it all and regional or county supremacies in setting up an administration.

Experts say the need to extend appointment opportunities to losers are building blocks for peace, reconciliation and unity. It reduces the urge for conflict and crisis as the opposition sees themselves as part of the governing process and takes national responsibility to keep the peace, foster national unity, and ensure a strong and capable state.

As the formation of the Boakai's government comes to a near close with the southeastern region boasting of one cabinet position and less visibility in other sectors, there are cries of victimization while other counties decry the large import of Lofa and Bomi into the structures of government.

The Boakai's reconciliation and unity platforms seem to lack the prescribed blocks to build the superstructure that these indispensable programs should rest on. Political pundits believe that the anticipated change is being defaced to the wonderment of those who believed that business as usual would come to an end.

Senator Amara Konneh and Representative Yekeh Kolubah are uncomfortable and are openly challenging the commitment of the President to change. Senator Prince Yormie Johnson accuses the President of being tribal and sectional in the formation of his government. However, his recent call on Nimbanians to assure them that the President will not be ungrateful seems to give hope that there is light at the end of the tunnel for he and his people. Critics of the Senator say that he is not nationalistic as his only concern is for Nimba County and not the nation as a whole.

As regarding the opposition, not one person has been named. As it stands at the moment, inclusivity is off the table and might not ever be a part of the governance of the state under President Joseph Boakai which might leave the opposition with the only option and that is to resist and overheat the nation.

President Boakai is a leader with many years of experience and is sensitive to Liberian politics as he, in his lifetime, experienced factors that led to the fall of the TWP and the NDPL.

While we might want to summon up all energies to indict the President of many missteps, we think President Boakai may be drawing from the NDPL and CDC fatal experiences of including opposition in government who undermined the successes of those governments through leaks of sensitive information and negative collaborations that wrecked constructive developmental agendas of those governments and brought an end to them.

If that is the thought and consideration of the current trend, then one may say that the platform of Rescue was only a springboard to power and may not be attainable. The UP needs to do internal scrutiny of its methods and quickly readjust to avoid broken promises and failed expectations.

There are discussions in circles that the UP is embarking on its infamous policy of downsizing and then later upsized. Over 700 persons at the Ministry of State may be victims of downsizing.

To make this a reality, payroll audits of all spending agencies and ministries are instituted to identify those who are not within the civil service categories. They will be downsized. Consultants and contractors are also in the fray. They might soon find themselves unable to fend for their families.

In his campaign promise, President Boakai told the nation that he will increase the salaries of government employees. In order to do so, he must find alternative sourcing. The downsizing of thousands of Liberians might provide the needed funds. Salaries might be increased at the sacrifice of others on the altar.

Liberians and the opposition community who are working within this government should expect sad days ahead, except President Boakai becomes magnanimous as former President George Manneh Weah.

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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## "Farms to Market roads are key to the ARREST Agenda" says Minister Kamara

Finance and Development Planning Minister, Hon. Boima S. Kamara says farms to market roads are key under the ARREST Agenda of President Joseph

The Liberian Finance Minister stressed that farms to market roads will help alleviate extreme poverty by the smooth movement of goods and services transported when construction of roads is critical because it will serve as a great factor to the private sector growth" he explained.

Currently, the Government of Liberia has over 13,000 km of roads that needs to be paved in order to boost the private sector. Out of 13,000 km of roads, only 9% have been done.

For his part, World Bank Country Director for Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia, Mr. Robert Taliencio O'Brien explained that the Bank remains committed to support the ARREST Agenda of President Joseph N. Boakai.

"We are also committed to support the government budget in various sectors including the private sector development and climate resilience", World Bank Robert Taliencio O'Brien said.

According to him, the government 100-day deliverables plan is an excellent initiative and the Bank looks forward to giving technical assistance wherever necessary.

"Going forward, we need to be more ambitious, and focused on how the bank can help Liberia through its development challenges. The Bank is excited to foster and strengthen stronger relationships with Liberia." Said O'Brien.-Press release



Nyumah Boakai.

"We need a robust turn around that will help the free movement of goods and services transported from one rural area to another urban area across the country through road connectivity."

Minister Kamara made the disclosure on Monday, February 26, 2024, when the World Bank Country Director for Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia paid a courtesy visit at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.

businesses, farmers and private farms owner's produce are ready for the market.

According to him, the national development plan of President Boakai, which is acronym as the "ARREST" will focus on the construction of roads and other areas over the next six years, because road is a great factor to private sector growth.

"Under President Boakai national development plan for the next six years the

## First Lady Boakai Rallies Strategic Support to Address Critical National Issues

(Monrovia, February 27, 2024) - First Lady Kartumu Yarta Boakai continues her strategic engagements with key stakeholders aimed at fostering partnerships for addressing critical issues affecting marginalized groups, including women, girls, and children across the country.

One of such engagements was held over the weekend when Mrs. Boakai met with the UN Women Liberia Country Office headed by Madam Comfort Lamptey at the Executive Mansion office in Monrovia.

Mrs. Boakai welcomed the UN Women's efforts in supporting the Liberian government empower women and girls, as she expressed willingness to partner at various levels in alleviating challenges women face.

Madam Lamptey, for her part, thanked First Lady Boakai for the warm reception and used the opportunity to abreast Mrs. Boakai of UN Women's various programs across Liberia.

Key amongst them, Madam Lamptey named the Gbatala, Gbar and Bomi Women Cooperatives established for women and girls' education initiatives, support to market women and farmers, among others.

Mrs. Boakai commended the UN Women for such initiatives, which she noted are bringing significant relief and improving the lives of women and girls across the country.

However, the Liberian First Lady disclosed plans to undertake programs that would support the government

of Liberia in addressing drug addiction and abuse in addition to adult literacy, especially for women, and craving the UN Women's support.

Following the interactive exchange, the two influential women agreed to continue to work together in the interest of improving the lives of women and girls. They agreed to multiply opportunities that would create alternative livelihoods for women who would potentially become pacesetters for younger girls. - Press release



(Monrovia, February 26, 2024)

## Golden Key Hotel faces bad labor allegation

-victim demands eight months' salaries

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh  
Liberia: Golden Key Hotel Management grapples with bad labor and eight months' salary arrears claims by a dismissed female employee.

However, hotel management says Complainant Decontee Dennis was a casual worker, as she was never given an employment letter.

Tuesday, February 27-The Management of Golden Key Hotel in Paynesville faces allegations of bad labor practices and inhumane treatment at its facility.

A former employee of the hotel, Decontee Dennis, alleges mistreatment, discrimination, and physical assault by the hotel owner Madam Nowai Gorlorwulu.

Madam Dennis, who is demanding eight months' salaries owed by the

workshop which coincided with the return of Madam Gorlorwulu from America.

She continues that her former Boss then asked her and a fellow employee only identified as Evelyn, to clean the warehouse because the Management was expecting a container of goods from the United States but she told Madam Gorlorwulu that she was catering to the USAID guests, which angered the Boss, who allegedly slapped her for being disrespectful and rude.

"It was one day while I was working in the kitchen that my Boss Lady came to me, saying she got her container with goods coming and that I and my friend Evelyn should go clean the warehouse for the goods. It was then I told her I was already catering and attending to guests, which she saw as disrespectful and began to slap me. It was only me she slapped, beating on me as her slave, when she doesn't even pay for work we are doing",



management, also accuses Madam Gorlorwulu of brutal assault, inflicting physical pains in her body, for which she is currently seeking medication while her former Boss is allegedly refusing to pay her arrears.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, 26th February 2024, she said employees of the Golden Key Hotel work under harsh and unfair conditions, noting that she didn't speak out while in the employ of the entity for fear of intimidation and lack of job opportunities here.

According to her, after she was allegedly flogged by Madam Gorlorwulu, a few days later she was sent home from work on February 12, 2024, and told that her services were no longer needed without paying her off.

Narrating the story of the alleged physical assault, Madam Dennis says it all started on a faithful day while working as a waitress, serving guests of the National Elections Commission (NEC) through a USAID-funded

Madam Dennis narrates.

"Sometimes it takes five, six, or four months before we get one month's salary; then she always aggravated us, and sometimes illegally sent us home without salary. There's never an extra service, so when she came to ask me and Evelyn to help her clean the warehouse for her goods and told her I was already engaged that's how she started to beat on me", Decontee continues.

She explains how she went home the very day of the assault and began to take treatment and when she returned on Monday, February 12, 2024, Madam Gorlorwulu told her that her contract at the hotel was terminated without salary and asked to leave the premises of the hotel immediately by private security.

She says she went home and told her husband, identified as Alphonso Dennis, about the situation.

Speaking on the alleged maltreatments meted against his wife by the Golden Key Hotel Management, including alleged illegal dismissal, Mr. Dennis, a

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Fire disaster shouldn't be politicized

**-VP Koung tells Montserrado Senators**

By Ethel A. Tweh

Tuesday, February 27- Liberia's Vice President Jeremiah Koung who doubles as President of the Liberian Senate, has admonished

serious matter that needs to be written and dealt with as an agenda item and not on Any Other Business/AOB," said Vice President Koung.

"This is not politics that we will come here and start

or regular agenda, they can still discuss it with importance.

"You are violating our rules Presiding, you are here debating which is not supposed to be like that. Leave the issue on the floor let the senators decide if they want the issue to be discussed or not," said Mr. Dillon.

He said he stands with his colleague Senator Saah H. Joseph that the issue of fire disasters should be added to the agenda for discussion because it is an emergency in the country. For his part, Senator Saah H. Joseph made the amendment that the constant fire outbreaks in the country be placed under AOB for discussion and that the Senate look into the matter urgently.

But he said it was a slap in the face when Vice President Koung seized the motion and told him to put it into writing to appear before plenary on Thursday. "There is nothing as fire disaster before us, put it to writing. We can not discuss what we do not have in front of us; moreover, this is a very serious matter and we will have to deal with it as such," Koung added. Senator Joseph recently survived a fire incident that destroyed his residence. His house was gutted by fire and burned down to ashes, leaving him injured. He collected nothing from his house.

flabbergasting for eyes to be on us and at the end there is no result," he continued.

The Chambers of the Liberian Senate got in disarray as the two Montserrado County Senators insisted on getting their concern included on the day's agenda for discussion. Senator Dillon angrily replied Vice President Koung saying it is not politics and urged the presiding to stop allegedly violating the Senate's rules.

According to Dillon, even if the issue is placed under AOB

Montserrado County Senators not to deal with fire disasters here like politics.

Koung's comment came against Montserrado County Senators Abraham Darius Dillon and Saah H. Joseph's demand to add to the Senate's agenda for discussion, of the constant fire outbreaks in the country.

But Vice President Koung told the Senators that the fire outbreaks in the country are a serious issue, and they must be presented to the Senate in writing, not verbally. "This is a

## Third eye on LDEA's operation

By Kruah Thompson

Monrovia: Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency receives praises for recent raids in communities, confiscating huge quantity of dangerous narcotic substances and suspects. But some community residents are skeptical about the LDEA's operations, judging from past experiences.

Tuesday, February 27- Several residents of Monrovia have expressed concerns and doubts over the effectiveness and outcomes of the recent operations conducted by the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in neighborhoods across the city. Despite the Agency's intensified efforts in combating narcotics trafficking with recent strings of successes, resulting in multiple arrests and significant drug seizures, many residents remain skeptical about the long-term impact and accountability of these raids.

Their skepticism arises amidst the backdrop of a history marked by challenges in prosecuting high-profile drug

cases and demanding accountability from individuals caught in illicit drug activities.

One resident, who preferred to remain anonymous, expressed doubts, stating, "We've seen these crackdowns before, but what happens after the arrests? Will the perpetrators face justice, or will they slip through the cracks once again?" Drug cases in Liberia are difficult to handle by Liberian security. It is further stated that some individuals who are attempting to impress their new bosses whether President Joseph Nyuma Boakai or the LDEA's new director AB Kromah are the very ones

distributing the substances back into the community. "If one visits the ghettos, it will be shocking to see some of them actively participating in the process," the source noted further stating that most of the LDEA officers have associates who sell for them in various ghettos across the country, and after carrying on raids, some of the drugs seized are redistributed. Most of the various community members we spoke with fear that despite the current visible efforts by the Agency, the ultimate outcome might not address the root causes of drug trafficking or hold accountable those responsible for perpetuating the illegal trade.



## House recalls AFL and ERU

Starts from back page

Konneh District. During that visit, he said he took a keen note of a number of AFL officers and ERU officers whom he accused of allegedly behaving like contractors for the company. He further alleged that the security forces are doing hard labor work for the company.

"They came to this country, they say they are investors but they are not. They came here to suppress us," Dosii lamented.

He explained that on 14 February, a group of peaceful citizens constellated at the company's gate to stage a peaceful protest concerning the company's alleged continued bad labor habit.

Unfortunately, he said the said the protesters were belabored by the AFL and ERU personnel.

Dosii added that the People of Kinjor need free movement and the army needs to be in the barracks and not among civilians.

Also speaking, Nimba County Representative Musa Bility said there is a need to make a change and inform about direct withdrawal.

"The Army's internal capabilities are limited and require legislative consent, thus, we must address this issue. Moreover, most concessions across the country face similar problems, which is a legacy issue," said Bility.

For his part Montserrado County Electoral District #16 Representative Dixon Seboe said he strongly believes that with the authority and consideration of the pain of those affected, they can make a difference and reverse the deployment of the army in certain areas.

Meanwhile, House Speaker Cllr. J. Fonati Koffa during the next session is expected to set up a committee to look into the concession agreement.

And at the Liberian Senate, Sen. Varpilah has complained that for at least two years now, the state security forces remain deployed at the company's

mining site. Presenting her communication on the Senate floor, Varpilah said the deployment has brought fear to the residents of the community.

According to her, the concerned citizens have consistently complained to her office about the matter, recounting that almost two weeks ago, the people staged a protest against the company.

"One of their key issues was the deployment and they are asking the government to withdraw the military from the concession area," said Varpilah.

"And we know from our colleagues that as far as our recollection, there has not been such a deployment before in any concession area," she added.

The Grand Cape Mount County Senator argued that there is ongoing gold mining by the MNG Gold Liberia in Bong County without any deployment of AFL personnel.

Senator Varpilah also named the ongoing operations of Liberia's steel giant, ArcelorMittal in Nimba County where there is no military deployment unlike in Grand Cape Mount County.

"We know that even in the urban areas, when you see military deployed, that's a serious security issue, less I say in the interior," she noted.

"So when they see those military people they're always in fear. So they want for these people to be withdrawn," Varpilah noted.

Additionally, Senator Dabah Varpilah has requested the plenary to invite authorities of the security apparatus to explain to the body what has led to such level of military deployment among peaceful citizens at the concession area.

"If they have any concern of local security normally in a civilian setting, there should be police officers but not armed men."

Meanwhile, the plenary of the Liberian Senate has forwarded the communication to the Committee on Security, Défense, Intelligence and Veteran Affairs to report back to the body subsequently.

## Weah draws battle line

Start from page 11

Mr. Weah's response to reporters here Tuesday upon his arrival at the Robert International Airport indicates his readiness for what could apparently be a political fight against the ruling Unity Party Administration that could ensue sooner rather than later.

He comments could also intensify the political flames here, especially, ongoing debates regarding the now contested tenure positions in government, where the former

President still has most of his former officials.

President Joseph Nyumah Boakai has already come immense opposition nominating new officials to those positions, while tenures of past official have not expired. Amid the outcry, President Boakai has appointed a committee to look into the matter and report to him to find a way out of the stalemate. Editing by Jonathan Browne

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# Français

## Appels à la destitution de Boakai

Yekeh Kolubah, le Représentant controversé de la circonscription électorale n° 10 du comté de Montserrado, s'est associé

à la destitution de Boakai. L'instrument est rédigé et parrainé par M. Foko, Représentant de la circonscription électorale n° 9 du comté de Montserrado, et

2024. L'année dernière, Kolubah a accusé le président élu Boakai d'être corrompu parce qu'il n'avait pas révélé la source des 10 millions de dollars libériens qu'il avait donnés aux victimes de l'explosion du pétrolier du comté de Bong.

Depuis lors, il a démontré par ses attaques verbales incessantes contre M. Boakai qu'ils n'étaient plus en bons termes sur le plan politique.

Il semble que Kolubah trouve désormais du réconfort en s'alignant avec le CDC, la principale opposition de Boakai, pour faire des affaires, à en juger par ses efforts précipités pour détrôner un président qu'il a contribué à porter au pouvoir il y a moins de deux mois.

Dans leur pétition, Kolubah et son allié du CDC, Foko, ont accusé Boakai de "mauvaises compétences en matière de gestion du leadership et de violation de la constitution". Le Représentant Foko a été interviewé par des journalistes lors d'une visite d'inspection de l'Autorité nationale des pêches et de l'aquaculture (NaFAA).

Lors de cette interview, M. Foko a déclaré qu'il espérait que sa communication serait



Pres. Boakai

Rep. Yekeh Kolubah

à Frank Saah Foko, législateur de l'opposition de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC), pour faire adopter un projet de loi visant à destituer le président Joseph Nyumah Boakai. La Chambre des représentants, contrôlée par le CDC, devrait examiner la pétition de

co-parrainé par M. Kolubah. Lors de l'élection présidentielle de 2023, Kolubah a soutenu la candidature du président Boakai à la présidence.

Mais il a soudainement commencé à afficher de la haine pour le style de leadership de Boakai avant même que le septuagénaire ne prête serment le 22 janvier

## Raids contre des trafiquants de drogue présumés à Monrovia

Suite à la confirmation d'AB Kromah au poste de directeur de l'Agence libérienne de lutte contre la drogue (LDEA) début février, l'agence a intensifié ses efforts de lutte contre le trafic de stupéfiants, ce qui a conduit à l'arrestation de plusieurs trafiquants présumés dans divers quartiers de Monrovia.

Quelques jours seulement après son entrée en fonction, le nouveau chef de la LDEA a dirigé un groupe de travail spécial qui a mené une série de raids fructueux, ciblant des individus soupçonnés d'être impliqués dans la distribution et la vente de substances illicites.

Ces opérations, qui se sont déroulées pendant plusieurs jours dans les communautés de Sayon Town, St. Paul Bridge, Boma Bridge et Kakata, ont

permis de procéder à de nombreuses arrestations et de saisir une quantité importante de stupéfiants, notamment de la cocaïne, de l'héroïne, du kush et de la marijuana, ainsi que du matériel utilisé pour leur conditionnement et leur distribution.

En plus des arrestations, les responsables de la LDEA ont déclaré que certains des

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## Éditorial

### Un sale coup de relations publiques

La présidence à Monrovia a peiné à fournir des preuves photographiques ou vidéo de la rencontre du président Joseph Nyuma Boakai avec son homologue ghanéen Nana Akufo-Addo ou son vice-président Mahamudu Bawumia lors de sa récente visite en République du Ghana, comme elle l'a affirmé.

La semaine dernière, la présidence a annoncé dans un communiqué de presse que le président Boakai quittait le pays le mardi 13 février 2024 pour une visite de deux jours afin de rencontrer et de consulter le président Nana Akufo-Addo sur des questions d'intérêt mutuel pour les deux pays et la sous-région.

Or, au moment même où le président libérien arrivait à Accra, au Ghana, le président Akufo-Addo quittait le pays pour un voyage officiel à l'étranger. Il s'est avéré ensuite que le président Boakai n'avait pas non plus rencontré le vice-président ghanéen.

La question à 50 millions de dollars que se posent les Libériens et à laquelle les autorités n'ont pas pu répondre clairement est donc celle-ci : qui le président libérien a-t-il rencontré au Ghana ?

Dans une tentative infructueuse de fournir des explications, alors que les spéculations s'amplifiaient à Monrovia, le porte-parole de la présidence, Kula Fofana, a déclaré au NEW DAWN le jeudi 15 février que les choses pouvaient changer dans l'espace présidentiel.

La présidence avait annoncé dans un communiqué publié le mercredi 14 février : "Son Excellence Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., président de la République du Libéria, est rentré chez lui après une brève visite de travail fructueuse en République du Ghana. Au cours de son séjour, il s'est entretenu avec des membres du gouvernement ghanéen.

Lors de sa rencontre avec l'équipe ghanéenne, le président a exprimé sa gratitude pour le soutien reçu avant et pendant son investiture, ainsi que pour la visite du dirigeant ghanéen, le président Nana Akufo-Addo.

Pour sa part, le vice-président du Ghana, l'Honorable Mahamudu Bawumia, s'est réjoui de la visite et a assuré le dirigeant libérien de leur soutien continu et de leur engagement envers le Libéria".

Cependant, une enquête indépendante du NEW DAWN, qui n'a pas été contestée, a révélé que le président Boakai avait été transporté de Monrovia au centre médical de l'université du Ghana le mardi matin de la semaine dernière pour y être soigné, un endroit qu'il fréquentait régulièrement même avant de devenir président du Libéria.

En premier lieu, il n'était absolument pas nécessaire que la présidence induise le public libérien en erreur sur le véritable but du voyage du président au Ghana, ce qui a créé un sérieux embarras pour le pays. M. Boakai est désormais président de la République du Libéria et les Libériens ont le droit de savoir ou d'être clairement informés de ses déplacements et de ses contacts, au lieu de nourrir le public avec des informations totalement différentes de la réalité, comme cela s'est récemment produit.

# Français

## Starts from page 8 Appels à la destitution de Boakai

examinée par la Chambre des représentants le mardi 27 février 2024 pour la destitution du président Boakai.

En l'espace d'un mois, M. Foko a allégué que le président Boakai avait donné suffisamment de raisons et prouvé au peuple libérien qu'il était incapable de diriger le pays. M. Foko a affirmé que le leadership de Boakai était très mauvais, qu'il avait obtenu de piètres résultats au cours de son premier mois de mandat et qu'il ne devait donc pas continuer à diriger pendant les six prochaines années. Il a accusé Boakai de manquer de respect à la Constitution du Liberia en nommant des personnes à des postes permanents alors que les mandats des fonctionnaires en place n'étaient pas encore expirés. Selon M. Foko, personne n'attendait cela du président Boakai, qui a affirmé avoir été vice-président pendant douze ans et avoir plus de quarante ans

d'expérience au sein du gouvernement.

"Le président Boakai nous a convaincus en l'espace d'un mois qu'il ne peut pas diriger les affaires de ce pays et qu'il doit donc partir", a déclaré M. Foko. "Nous avons travaillé avec nos avocats pour la rédaction et d'ici aujourd'hui, elle sera déposée."

Pour sa part, le controversé Représentant Kolubah a déclaré qu'il soutenait un projet de loi de destitution contre le président Boakai, ajoutant qu'il était temps qu'il soit le président libérien ayant le plus court mandat. "Je me tiens aux côtés d'un représentant et je soutiens le projet de loi qui devrait être entendu aujourd'hui et qui appelle à la destitution du président", a déclaré M. Kolubah.

"Le président a violé la Constitution et le code de conduite, c'est pourquoi nous l'utilisons pour faire de lui le président au plus court mandat de l'histoire du Liberia par le biais de la destitution", a-t-il noté.

## Starts from page 8 Raids contre des trafiquants de

suspects appréhendés lors de l'opération seraient liés à un réseau plus important impliqué dans le trafic de drogue dans la région.

On pense que certains des arrêtés sont nigériens, mais le directeur Kromah a précisé que la LDEA, sous sa direction, n'a pas encore commencé d'opérations actives, car elle est toujours en phase de mise en place.

"Nous restons déterminés à éradiquer le fléau du trafic de drogue de nos communautés", a-t-il déclaré, ajoutant : "Ces arrestations envoient un message clair : nous ne tolérerons pas la prolifération de stupéfiants à l'intérieur de nos frontières, et nous continuerons à poursuivre les responsables avec une détermination sans faille."

Le succès de cette opération est le fruit d'une étroite collaboration entre la LDEA et d'autres services de

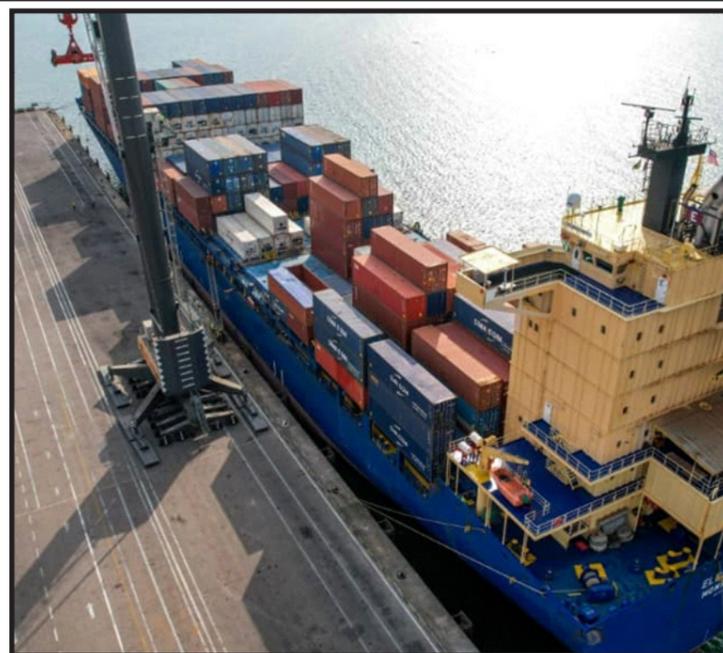
police, ainsi que du soutien des membres de la communauté qui ont fourni des informations précieuses ayant permis l'arrestation de trafiquants de drogue présumés.

Les produits de contrebande confisqués serviront de preuve au fur et à mesure de l'enquête, et des accusations devraient être portées contre ces suspects conformément à la loi libérienne.

La LDEA a exhorté les citoyens à rester vigilants et à signaler toute activité suspecte liée au trafic de drogue ou à la toxicomanie aux autorités compétentes. En travaillant ensemble, les forces de l'ordre et la communauté peuvent perturber efficacement les opérations des syndicats de la drogue et empêcher que des substances nocives ne parviennent dans les rues.

Selon les statistiques, le nombre de jeunes Libériens toxicomanes s'élève à 250 000.

## Le port franc de Monrovia adopte le commerce moderne avec l'arrivée de navires sans grue



Le port franc de Monrovia a connu une période de transformation avec la récente visite de plusieurs navires sans grue, marquant une étape importante vers la modernisation du commerce et du transport maritime au Liberia. APM Terminals Liberia, l'opérateur du port, a accueilli avec succès ces navires, mettant en avant les capacités améliorées du port et sa volonté à accueillir des navires plus gros. L'arrivée du MSC Carla en décembre 2023 et du CMA ELBSPIRIT, long de 228 mètres, en janvier 2024, a marqué le début d'une nouvelle ère pour le port franc de Monrovia. Ces navires sans grue, qui ne nécessitent pas de grues embarquées pour la manutention des cargaisons, démontrent la capacité du port à répondre aux exigences modernes du transport maritime. À la suite de ces arrivées marquantes, d'autres navires sans grue ont visité le port, consolidant ainsi la position de Monrovia comme une plaque tournante pour des opérations commerciales efficaces et de pointe.

Le traitement réussi de ces navires a été rendu possible grâce au déploiement de grues portuaires mobiles. Ces grues ont considérablement amélioré les capacités de manutention des cargaisons du port, permettant le chargement et le déchargement efficaces des navires. De plus, le dragage récent du port a augmenté sa profondeur, lui permettant d'accueillir des navires plus gros et d'étendre davantage sa capacité. L'engagement d'APM Terminals à adopter le commerce et le transport maritime modernisés est évident dans les développements du port franc de Monrovia. La capacité du port à accueillir des navires sans grue et plus gros signifie qu'il est prêt à s'adapter aux besoins changeants de l'industrie du transport maritime. En investissant dans l'amélioration des infrastructures et en adoptant l'innovation, le Liberia se positionne comme un acteur clé du réseau commercial régional. Le port franc de Monrovia symbolise la volonté du Liberia de favoriser la croissance économique et le développement grâce à des capacités commerciales et maritimes améliorées. Alors que de plus en plus de navires sans grue et plus gros continuent de visiter le port, il est clair que le Liberia est ouvert à l'adoption de nouvelles opportunités et à la modernisation de son infrastructure commerciale pour stimuler le progrès et la prospérité de la nation.

## L'ambassadrice de la culture accuse la justice d'être manipulée



L'ambassadrice de la culture du Liberia, Mme Julie Endee, a accusé le pouvoir exécutif de manipuler l'affaire qu'elle a intentée contre Nayapougma Oldpa Yeazeahn, alias Prophète Key, animateur controversé d'une émission de radio sur les réseaux sociaux.

La semaine dernière, le parquet a retiré toutes les charges pénales retenues contre M. Yeazeahn en raison de preuves insuffisantes pour le poursuivre. Toutefois, son accusatrice pourrait relancer l'affaire. M. Yeazeahn était poursuivi pour diffamation et calomnie par Mme Endee. Selon les dossiers judiciaires, Mme Endee a informé le tribunal par l'intermédiaire de ses avocats qu'elle renonçait aux poursuites pénales pour contrainte criminelle, menace et conduite désordonnée à l'encontre de M. Yeazeahn.

En conséquence, le parquet a déclaré qu'il abandonnait les charges contre le défendeur en raison d'un manque de preuves suffisantes pour le poursuivre, se réservant le droit de les re-déposer si nécessaire.

Cependant, Mme Endee allègue que le pouvoir exécutif a interféré avec le pouvoir judiciaire et le système judiciaire du gouvernement. Elle a mené une manifestation le week-end dernier, baptisée "Femmes pour la justice", sur le

terrain du Temple de la Justice à Monrovia. Lors de la manifestation, Mme Endee a déclaré aux journalistes que le pouvoir exécutif avait commencé à interférer dans l'affaire l'opposant à Prophète Key, ce qui explique pourquoi l'affaire a été classée sans qu'elle en soit informée.

"Oui, laissez-moi dire ceci, l'Exécutif interfère avec le Judiciaire. Comment pouvez-vous rejeter l'affaire au motif qu'il n'y a pas de preuves suffisantes alors que l'insulte à mon encontre a été proférée lors d'une vidéo en direct, que le monde entier a regardée ?" s'est interrogée Mme Endee.

"Le ministre de la Justice, contrôlé par l'Exécutif, a fait cela parce que Prophète Key m'a dit que rien ne sortirait de l'affaire car c'est son gouvernement", a-t-elle allégué sans fournir de preuve pour étayer ses dires.

L'ambassadrice de la culture libérienne, en poste depuis de nombreuses années, a souligné qu'elle ne renoncerait pas à l'affaire tant que justice ne sera pas rendue. Elle a déclaré qu'elle était prête à porter l'affaire devant la Cour de justice de la Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO). Commentant la solidarité que lui a témoignée le pouvoir exécutif, Mme Endee a regretté que les seules personnes qui l'aient contactée soient des sénateurs et des représentants, et aucun membre de l'exécutif.

"J'ai adressé une requête au pouvoir exécutif par l'intermédiaire de la conseillère politique, Mme MacDella Cooper.

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## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

# Boakai inherits Liberia's high debt

By Seltue Karweaye

As the 26th president of Liberia, Joseph Nyumah Boakai [1] inherits an economy that is grappling with inflation [2], chronic unemployment [3], extreme poverty [4], an enormous infrastructure gap [5], insecurity [6], etc. Liberia's debt profile stands out among these problems like a sore thumb. The external debt stock - what it owes non-residents - was US\$1.3 billion [7] in 2022. Multilateral lenders accounted for almost two-thirds of Liberia's debt. The World Bank and the IMF are Liberia's two largest external creditors.

The country's public debt stock - what the government owes in total - was about US\$2.21 billion [8] at the end of December 2023. External debts can become a significant burden for countries as they are

denominated and serviced in foreign currencies, which can lead to fluctuations in interest payments due to exchange rate changes. For example, if the currency of a debtor country depreciates, it may increase interest payments, negatively affecting the country's budget.

Furthermore, interest rates may rise, making it even more difficult for the country to manage its external debt. The country's debt profile, which includes the amount and type of debt, as well as the interest rates and repayment terms, should be a concern for Boakai and his team as they work to revitalize the Liberian economy. However, this concern need not hamper their ability to implement policies that reduce unemployment, poverty rates, infrastructure deficits, etc.

Is the current debt level in Liberia sustainable? When evaluating a country's debt sustainability, economists have a range

of indicators [9] at their disposal, however, two of these metrics stand out as the most commonly utilized and reliable.

One of the indicators is gross debt as a percentage of gross domestic product (also known as the debt-GDP ratio). In Liberia, it is 52.7% [10] in 2024. The average for sub-Saharan African countries was 56%. Debt begins to harm an economy when the debt-GDP ratio surpasses 77% according to a World Bank report. In comparing debt to GDP ratios, Liberia's ratio is moderate and significantly lower than the stipulated threshold of 77%. For example, Ghana's debt to GDP has crossed the dreaded 77% to 98.7% [11] in 2022, the country's unsustainable debt levels forced the government to go back to the IMF for another bailout in July 2022 [12] - despite the IMF deal - Ghana isn't out of trouble yet, the country's debt to GDP stands at 81.5% [11] in 2024.

Moderate increases in Liberia's national debt will unlikely lead to insurmountable repayment burdens within the next few years; however, reckless financing schemes aimed at supporting unnecessary infrastructure endeavors must be avoided as they could have adverse fiscal consequences. Instead, measures are needed to create an enabling environment conducive to encouraging investor confidence while fostering tangible progress in economic growth, employment generation, and poverty reduction.

Although the United States and Liberia differ in various aspects, the former has demonstrated that a high debt-to-GDP ratio does not necessarily constrain economic vitality. Despite having a debt-GDP ratio of approximately 126.9% [13]; the US managed to reduce the unemployment rate to 3.8% [14] while keeping inflation at a stable level of around 3.1% [15].

The debt service ratio, another indicator of debt sustainability, measures the portion of export earnings used to repay borrowed funds. A healthy rate is below 18% [16]. Liberia's debt-service ratio was 6.4% [17] in 2022 and 3.7% in 2017. The 2022 number shows Liberia is getting closer to the point where servicing its debt would become a problem. In the 2016/2017 budget, debt servicing amounted to US\$30.2 million (6.1% of recurrent expenditure), and by 2023, debt servicing amounted to 99.91

million (15.72% of recurrent expenditure) in the budget. To alleviate Liberia's increasing debt burden, the Boakai administration must prioritize boosting the country's revenue.

With one of the lowest revenue-GDP ratios, Liberia registered 27.3% government

revenue as a percentage of GDP. Unfortunately, average annual government revenue declined by 0.05% between 2015 and 2021.

Liberia's reliance on iron ore and rubber as major sources of revenue implies that revenues will continue to fall with the prices of iron ore [18] and rubber [19], given uncertainties in the global iron oil and rubber market.

The economic growth of Liberia slowed down between 2022 and 2023, specifically from 4.8 percent to 4.6 percent, which also negatively impacted the country's ability to generate revenue.

In addition, President Boakai stated in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) that government expenditure has been growing faster than expected, resulting in a significant budget deficit of over US\$80 million as revealed by Revenue collection reported for 2023 standing at US\$710.23 million while totaling expenditure was recorded as US\$796.32

million. In 2024, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported that Liberia's debt-revenue ratio was 18.1% [7], which is a consequence of dwindling revenue leading to high debt-revenue ratios and creating an unending cycle of borrowing for government expenditures as more revenues are devoted towards servicing existing debts thereby increasing the overall debt burden. Liberia's debt-to-revenue ratio might be lower, but the proportion of external debt service to revenue is alarmingly high.

In the 2022 budget, Liberia spent \$105 million on debt servicing which includes interest payments and principal repayment, however, \$79.6 million [20] was specifically

utilized for settling external debts. The Boakai administration must be mindful of the country's debt profile and avoid exacerbating it through prudent management of Liberia's debt, steering clear of the financial mismanagement that characterized the early 2000s when the debt-to-GDP ratio soared beyond 80%.

To improve the current state of affairs, Boakai's administration must reduce governance costs and eliminate wasteful spending. This can be achieved by streamlining processes, cutting unnecessary expenses, and implementing more efficient systems.

Additionally, measures should be taken to combat corruption while also exploring alternative methods for addressing economic problems that do not rely solely on perennial borrowing which can lead down a dangerous path towards unsustainable indebtedness.

Given the current low revenue and the numerous projects announced in his SONA aimed at promoting economic growth, employment generation, and poverty reduction in Liberia, the Boakai administration will have to continue implementing deficit spending policies. However, this approach is mainly financed by domestic and external borrowing.

To change the prevailing narrative about the risks associated with investing in Liberia, the Boakai administration must prioritize introducing policies that strengthen the nation's economic foundation and increase its attractiveness to potential investors.

In conclusion, a country's debt stock, although often viewed as a critical factor in assessing its economic health, pales in comparison to the significance of the quality of its economic policies. Well-crafted and effectively implemented economic policies have the potential to

generate budget surpluses that can be utilized to repay debts.

Economic growth and expansion require a strategic approach that includes investment in physical capital like roads and electricity, infrastructure, and access to capital for businesses of all sizes.

Moreover, prioritizing tourism and agricultural development can significantly contribute to the overall economy and lead to long-term success.



President Joseph Nyuma Boakai

# Rubber actors defend ban on unprocessed rubber export

The exportation of unprocessed rubber undermines the growth and development of the local rubber industry. It denies factories which rely on local latex supplies to maximize their productive strength, while putting many

allowing the unprocessed export of natural rubber will undermine Liberia's quota and participation in the Association of Natural Rubber-Producing Countries (ANRPC) and the Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber (GPNRS).

without remittance to the RPAL and Rubber Development Fund Incorporated (RDFI).

According to RPAL, the Government of Cote D' Ivoire has legislated a ban on the exportation of unprocessed natural rubber including Ghana's increasing export earnings.

"Unless value addition is upheld, promoted, and sustained, the sector risk declines," it warns.

RPAL's statement disclosed that the Delegates in the Convention Assembled in Cooper Farm, Todee District, Montserrado County, petitioned the Legislature to enact a law to prohibit the export of unprocessed natural rubber.

Regarding the economic benefits, RPAL said agriculture, including forestry, is the primary livelihood for more than 60 percent of Liberia's population and accounted for 31 percent of Liberia's 2021 real gross domestic product (GDP).

He emphasized that rubber is a dominant revenue generator, accounting for 12.5 percent of the total export receipts in 2021.

"Note that 16% of the revenue of Liberia various estimates put the number of people employed by commercial rubber farms at 20,000 and the number of smallholder households involved in growing rubber trees at 35,00," said RPAL.

Globally, the RPAL noted, that importing and exporting raw materials can influence the GDP, its exchange rate, and its level of inflation and interest rate. In the rubber sector of Liberia, RPAL observes that many smallholder farmers face problems or challenges with the drop-down of rubber prices with the prices of raw materials always depreciating because of no value, whereas the price of finished rubber is better.

"2. 16% of the revenue of Liberia is generated from the rubber industry and the exportation of Unprocessed Natural Rubber undermines value addition, diminishes revenue adversely impacts the economy," it said.

Following a National Congress of the Rubber Planters Association of Liberia convened on 23 February 2024 on Cooper Farm, Montserrado County, the group unanimously reaffirmed its unequivocal support for Executive Order 124 which bans unprocessed rubber export.

Immediate past Liberian President George Manneh Weah issued the Executive Order nearing the end of his administration, and it remains in force under current President Joseph Nyumah Boakai's regime.

President Weah is not alone, former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf issued series of executive orders banning unprocessed rubber export aimed at strengthening the local sector.

According to RPAL, unrestricted export of unprocessed rubber supersedes the sector's productivity. It laments that for more than five years; the sector has not exported more than 250,000 metric tons of processed rubber.

RPAL said it was envisaged by 2020 that producers would hit 350,000 metric tons of rubber.

"The exportation of unprocessed nature from Liberia undermines the nation's GDP. The commodity ends in Nigeria or other countries in the subregion buyers which process the commodity and export same," said RPAL.

It continued that the so-called consortium of rubber actors are nonfarmers or nonproducers but middlemen that have been used by the exporters who withhold subscription fees from farmers



RPAL President Wilhelmina G. Mulbah Siaway

jobs at risk. Wednesday February 28, 2024- The Rubber Planters Association of Liberia (RPAL) says the Government of Liberia is in no error in banning the export of unprocessed rubber.

The group which is a major rubber sector actor has unanimously declared its support of the ban, adding that exporting unprocessed rubber out of Liberia denies the government of generating needful taxes and takes jobs away from local employees.

Liberia currently has at least four companies that are engaged in exporting processed rubber. They include Jeety Rubber Factory, Firestone Rubber Plantation, Liberia Agriculture Company (LAC), and the Lee Group.

These companies employed thousands of Liberians at their factories and can only maintain their workforce and meet their production targets if the ban on unprocessed rubber remained in place.

Compared to Liberia, neighboring Ivory Coast which has over a dozen rubber factories-imposed ban on the export of unprocessed rubber on November 21, 2023, as a means of protecting local companies who rely on these locally produced rubber latexes for protection to stay in business.

At their press conference on Tuesday, February 27, RPAL President Wilhelmina G. Mulbah Siaway, cited Article 5 of the Liberian Constitution regarding safeguarding the economy and sustaining value addition as critical points in supporting the government's decision to ban unprocessed rubber exports. Additionally, she said

# Weah draws battle line

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh

Liberia: Former President George Manneh Weah arrived here Tuesday, 27 February, declaring that he is back home ready to speak against ills affecting Liberians, while pressurizing his successor, President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, to deliver on promises in what appears clearly to be an early political fight with his 79-year-old opponent, who defeated him at the poll in 2023 with a vote margin of less than 20,000. Mr. Weah, fresh from abroad where he has been since relinquishing power in January, says he will be vocal about ills in the Liberian society in an effort to reshape the nation's fortune, going forward.

Mr. Weah left the country for abroad where he visited the United States of America, Turin, Italy and Paris, France.

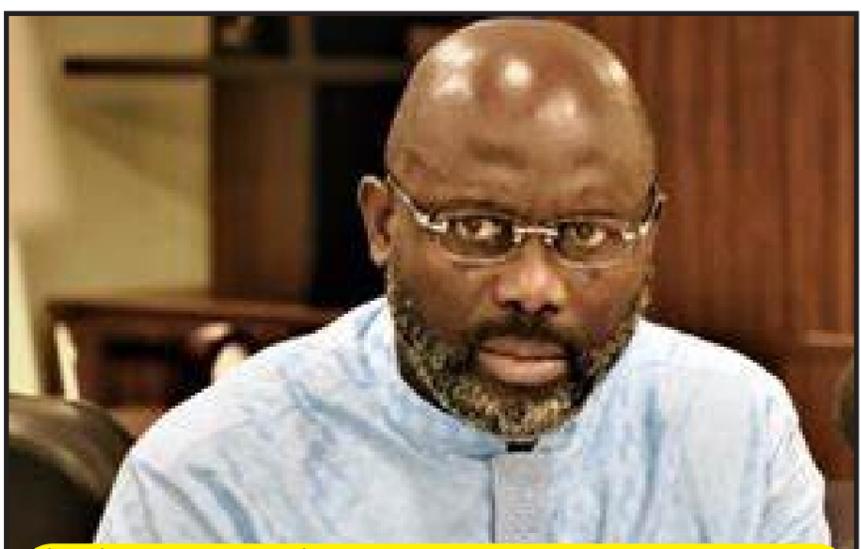
The Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) popular leader appears ready for life as an opposition where he started. He is eager to fight

was accompanied home by former First Lady, Clar Marie Weah, former Liberia Maritime Commissioner Lenn Eugene Nagbe, former Executive Mansion Chief of Protocol Amb. Nora Finda Bundoo, and other members of his entourage, but was allegedly denied entrance to the VIP Lounge Terminal at the Roberts International Airport reportedly on instructions of the current administration. The Clar Marie VIP Lounge Terminal constructed and dedicated by the former ruling Coalition for Democratic Change-led government was specifically built to host Presidents and other very important guests and dignitaries visiting Liberia.

However, Presidential Press Secretary Kula Fofana, in a Facebook post, said at no time former President Weah was denied access to the VIP Lounge Terminal at the Airport.

The former President and his delegation instead, used the old VIP Lounge Terminal at the RIA upon arrival despite prior announcement by airport security apparatus about his return to the country.

Meanwhile, the stalwarts of the former ruling CDC including former



Liberia: Former President George Manneh Weah returns home, vowing to speak out against ills affecting the Liberian people

the cause of his people in an attempt to make a return to the Executive Mansion in 2029.

"I'm back and ready to speak about the ills in the Liberian society and to do the work of my party as an institution", the former President declares. Mr. Weah

Montserrado County District #8 Representative Moses Acarous Gray, Chairman Mulbah K. Mulbah have re-energized partisans to begin a battle for a return to power, five years to election in 2029. The campaign is dubbed turning "Setback to Comeback."

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

### SURVEY NOTICE

February 22, 2024

The public is hereby notify that the undersigned registered Land Surveyor has been duly authorized based upon the request of Edwin and Telimu Kamanda to conduct a survey of a parcel of Land that contain (1 1/2 ) One and half of Land and in favor of said Edwin and Telimu Kamanda.

This parcel of Land is lying and situated at 1<sup>st</sup> Ward Louisiana Township, Montserrado County. The field re-survey exercise will commence on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup>, day of March 2024 at the hour of 11: 00PM.

Therefore, all adjoining properties owners, and interests person are requested to be present on the day of the survey with copies of their deeds, relevant documents and technical representatives' surveyors to substantiate their claims.

1. AJ
2. NJ
3. JC
4. JLT & PCT
5. The Administrator of the Estate of Powell Town
6. Officer of the Commissioner
7. Community Chairman
8. Who it may concerned

Signed By: YARKPAWOLO T. KOLLIE  
Yarkpawolo T. Kollie  
Regd. Land Surveyor  
Lic.# 087  
0777732799  
0822110193

## House recalls AFL and ERU from Bea Mountain

By Bridgett Milton & Ethel A. Tweh

Police (LNP).  
The decision was triggered by a communication from Grand Cape Mount County Electoral District #2 Representative Mohammed Dosii.

Dabah M. Varpilah is demanding the removal from of AFL Soldiers from Bea Mountain. She has separately written the Liberian Senate to decry the huge and unusual deployment of military personnel at the gold mining site

Residents' longstanding dissents have led to repeated violent protests which led to the deployment



of Liberia's elite security forces from the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and the police's Emergency Response Unit (ERU) to secure Bea Mountain.

Grand Cape Mount is the host county for BMCC which brags of being Liberia's first and largest commercial gold mine.

of Bea Mountain which she suggests has kept peaceful citizens in fear. Both Varpilah and Dosii are unhappy that the state security forces continue to be deployed at the concession site.

Members of the House of Representatives have voted recalling from Bea Mountain Mining Corporation (BMCC) and all other concession areas, officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and

The district lawmaker has requested the indulgence of the House of Representatives to ensure the immediate pull out of the AFL and the ERU from the company's facilities. In a related proposition, Grand Cape Mount County Senator

Rep. Dosii said he visited and engaged his constituents over the weekend at the Bea Mountain area in Konjor, Gola

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

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