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These are indicative rates based on results of daily surveys of foreign exchange market in Monrovia and selected cities of Liberia. These rates are collected from the Central bank, commercial banks, parallel market and the license forex bureaux. The rates are not set by the Central Bank of Liberia.  
Source: Research, Policy and Planning Department, CBL.

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Cllr Edwin Kla Martin

# Assets Recovery faces court today



Gracious Ride vehicles being set free over the weekend



# CBL seeks extension of old cash retrieval?

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# Continental News

## 18 Dead As Cyclone Gamane Hits Madagascar

A slow-moving cyclone that unexpectedly turned towards Madagascar has killed 18 people, washing away homes and displacing thousands, officials said Friday.

trees, authorities said. A previous death toll had stood at 11.

Due to the floods "we have nothing to eat. What's more, our children are sick because of the dirty water," Pasy, a middle-aged

amplifying its destructive impact.

"It's rare to have a cyclone like this. Its movement is nearly stationary," Elack Andriakaja, director general of the BNRGC, told AFP on



Aerial view of a flooded area after tropical cyclone Gamane crossed the northeast of Madagascar, in Hell-Ville, Nosy Be, Madagascar, in this screengrab from video released on March 28, 2024 and obtained from social media.

High winds ripped down trees and torrents of water gushed through villages after the cyclone, which was initially projected to skim the Indian Ocean island, changed course and made landfall in the north on Wednesday.

According to statistics released on Friday by the national risk and disaster management office (BNRGC), 20,737 people have been displaced and 5,371 households affected.

Some victims had drowned, while others were killed by collapsing houses or falling

woman in northeastern Sava region, told AFP.

"We are asking for help," she said, dripping from the rain, as locals helped each other out of deep gushing water which for some reached just below their necks.

They carried the last of their belongings that could be saved.

Numerous routes and bridges were flooded and cut off.

"We haven't eaten yet. All our coal stocks are flooded and the sacks of rice are washed away. We don't know what to do," shopkeeper Fregins said.

The cyclone moved slowly,

Thursday.

"When the system stops in one place, it devastates all the infrastructure. And that has serious consequences for the population. And significant flooding," he added.

Gamane has been reclassified as a tropical storm and was expected to leave the island on Friday afternoon, according to meteorologists.

Cyclone season in the southwest of the Indian Ocean normally lasts from November to April and sees around a dozen storms each year. VOA

## South Africa Fires Leave Hundreds Homeless

Two people died and almost 2,000 were left homeless when fires engulfed hundreds of shacks in three separate incidents in South Africa's Cape Town during the weekend, emergency services said Sunday.

Two of the fires occurred on Saturday evening and one in the early hours of Sunday morning, they said.

"An adult male and female sustained fatal burn wounds and were declared deceased by medics" at one of the informal settlements, the Cape Town's fire and rescue spokesman Jermaine Carelse said in a statement.

The biggest fire which happened around 2:30 am on Sunday engulfed over 150 shacks leaving over 1,000 people displaced in the Mfuleni settlement, some 30 kilometers (19 miles) southeast of Cape Town.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, Carelse said.

Shack fires are common in South Africa and are a perennial threat to the impoverished

residents of the sprawling informal settlements near major cities throughout the country.

According to the housing ministry as of 2022, 12.3 percent of people lived in shacks in South Africa.

Thirty years after the end of apartheid, land ownership and housing policy are still hotly disputed issues in the country's politics and a key talking point in the upcoming May 29 polls.

South African Muslim charity

Gift of the Givers told AFP it was bringing humanitarian aid to the homeless at all three locations, including hot meals and clean drinking water as well as blankets, mattresses and baby care products.

A handful of people were being treated for injuries, while one remained missing, the charity said, adding that community halls were being organised to house the displaced. VOA



Firefighters work to extinguish a vegetation fire near Hanover Park on the Cape Flats, in Cape Town, South Africa, March 11, 2024.

## Pope Francis Delivers Easter Mass, Appeals for Gaza Cease-fire

Pope Francis on Sunday gave Easter Mass with tens of thousands of Catholics at Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City before his traditional blessing, as concerns persist over his health.

The 87-year-old arrived in a wheelchair to preside over the mass from 10:00 am (0800 GMT) in cloudy and windy weather, with the events broadcast live around the globe.

Pope Francis urged the world to resist "the logic of weapons" in his Easter message at the Vatican on Sunday, easing growing health fears as he greeted thousands of Catholics.

The pontiff's "Urbi et Orbi" (To the City and the World) blessing came after he led Easter Mass in front of 60,000 worshippers at Saint Peter's Square while appearing in good spirits.

In his traditional speech

combatting the scourge of human trafficking" to free its victims.

Moments before the blessing, Francis passed through the adoring crowd on his "popemobile" as pilgrims shouted "Long live the pope!," waved flags and strained to take pictures.

Easter Sunday marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ and is the culmination of Holy Week, a major part of the Catholic calendar followed by 1.3 billion people.

The pope on Saturday presided over the Easter Vigil at the Vatican in front of some 6,000 people from around the world, a day after his last-minute cancellation at a major Good Friday procession revived questions about his health.

He delivered a 10-minute homily in Italian, speaking without any undue difficulty and condemning "the walls of selfishness and indifference" in the world.

At the end of the two-and-a-



Pope Francis asperses holy water as he celebrates Easter mass in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, March 31, 2024.

broadcasted worldwide, Francis condemned war as "always an absurdity and a defeat," raising conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Myanmar and beyond.

He renewed appeals for a ceasefire in Gaza, calling for greater aid deliveries to the devastated territory and the release of hostages taken by Hamas during its unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel that sparked the war.

The civilian population is "now at the limit of its endurance," he said, lamenting the impact on children especially.

"Let us not allow the strengthening winds of war to blow on Europe and the Mediterranean. Let us not yield to the logic of weapons and rearming," he added.

The pope proposed a "general exchange of all prisoners between Russia and Ukraine" as the war between the two countries grinds through its third year.

Francis also urged world leaders to "spare no efforts in

half-hour service he showed little sign of fatigue, taking time to greet and bless some of the worshippers.

In a brief statement Friday, the Vatican had said that "to preserve his health ahead of tomorrow's vigil and the Easter Sunday mass, Pope Francis will this evening follow the Way of the Cross at the Colosseum from the Santa Marta Residence," where he lives.

The last-minute decision raised questions about how long Francis can continue to lead the Catholic Church.

A Vatican source told AFP on Friday there was "no particular concern" about his health and the decision to pull out had been "simply a measure of caution."

The Argentinian Jesuit had also cancelled his participation in the "Via Crucis" in 2023, but that followed a three-day hospital stay for bronchitis, and was announced well ahead of time. Weeks later, he underwent a hernia operation.

Up until Friday, the pope had attended his various engagements throughout the week, but he recently appeared tired and has sometimes delegated speaking roles to colleagues. VOA

# EDITORIAL

## CBL's second thought is welcoming

Following our editorial of Friday, March 28, 2024 captioned "CBL brought the panic on Liberians", the NEW DAWN has gathered reliably that authorities of the Central Bank of Liberia are reconsidering the March 31, 2024 deadline previously set for the withdrawal of old bank notes (legacy currency) and coins from circulation, and are now seeking approval from President Boakai for a 40 days' extension of the exercise across the country.

The Central Bank is instead, resolved to extend the deadline for the exchange exercise and termination of the legal tender status of the legacy banknotes by 45 days, beginning today, 1 April 2024 to 15 May 2024.

On October 22, 2022, the Bank commenced a nationwide campaign to replace the legacy banknotes and coins with the new family of banknotes and coins. Subsequently, in July 2023, it announced 31 March 2024 as the cut-off date for the termination of the legal tender status of the old banknotes, which left the public panicking and flatly refusing to trade in the old bank notes and coins, adversely affecting market transaction.

Reconsideration of the March 31 deadline by authorities of the CBL is laudable, as it demonstrates thoughtful leadership and listening ears to public concerns about the cutoff date.

We applaud the leadership of Executive Governor J. Aloysius Tarlue for this far-sighted thought buttressed by our Friday's editorial in alleviating embarrassment faced especially by consumers who have as yet legal tenders in their hands but were being rejected in the market because of panic they could seize to remain legal tenders in matter of days, as the March 31, 2024 closing date drew near.

The entire exercise, we have learned was hindered by bad road conditions mainly in accessing rural places, as well as the 2023 presidential and legislative elections, among other challenges.

However, is said to have significantly retrieved a substantial amount of the old banknotes from circulation during the period under review, and replaced a total amount of L\$21.41 billion of the old banknotes, which constitutes about 85% of the estimated amount of L\$25.258 billion worth of banknotes that it seeks to take from out of the market. This is commendable!

We join Executive Governor Tarlue and his team of governor at the CBL in appealing to President Joseph Nyuma Boakai to grant approval to the call for 40 days' extension of the exercise to adequately afford commercial banks and citizens at large bring forth old bank notes in their possession for exchange with the new bank notes and coins that were printed in 2022.

It is important to do so that the process may reach a conclusive end though authorities of the CBL say the old bank note may be exchanged for the new families of bank notes even after the official deadline, which is good.

By this request for extension of the March 31 deadline, the CBL has demonstrated that it truly run a people-sensitive administration that listen public concerns and seeks ways to addressing such concerns for the general good.

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# COMMENTARY

By Jane Kabubo-Mariara

## Africa's Prosperity Depends on Achieving Gender Equality

**N**AIROBI - Despite the progress made toward gender equality over the past century, women worldwide still lag behind men in pay and job quality. The global labor-force participation rate for women is just 53%, compared to 80% for men. This is not due to a lack of will or effort. Childcare obligations, limited access to education, and poor workplace and public-safety measures often curtail women's ability to secure "decent" work.

For this reason, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to achieve "full and productive employment and decent work for all" by 2030 (SDG 8). But this objective cannot be achieved as long as African women face significant barriers to equal pay and job opportunities.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), "decent" employment implies fair wages, safe and healthy working environments, job security, and equal opportunities and treatment. While several African countries have made efforts to improve women's access to decent work opportunities, recent research by the Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) underscores the challenges facing policymakers.

The study, which involved researchers in six countries, covered two African states: Kenya and Senegal. In Kenya, researchers found that while more than 75% of women participate in the labor market, only 39% are employed in the formal sector. In Senegal, the study revealed that 70% of women have been engaged in vulnerable jobs over the past 30 years, with little to no improvement despite government interventions. Consequently, most women in both countries work in precarious jobs, mainly in agriculture, the informal sector, and domestic service, and often lack access to social benefits.

A separate study focusing on women's integration into the labor market in eight Sub-Saharan countries - Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone - found that, with the exception of Sierra Leone, women are less likely to be employed than men. Moreover, women are primarily engaged in insecure, low-paying, and informal jobs. On average, eight out of ten women in these countries hold vulnerable jobs.

Unsurprisingly, motherhood and childcare-related duties significantly impede women's ability to realize their full potential in the labor market, owing to regressive social norms that perpetuate gender inequality. To address these disparities, public policies must be thoughtfully designed and tailored to specific contexts. For example, PEP researchers recommended that governments offer affordable, high-quality, and safe public childcare services. This includes establishing daycare centers within public schools and subsidizing private childcare services in countries like Kenya and Senegal.

A 2019 randomized control trial in Korogocho, an informal settlement in Nairobi, underscored the vital role of free childcare in boosting women's participation in the labor market. The study pointed to cost as the main barrier to accessing childcare services, with nearly 25% of local mothers unable to afford them. Childcare subsidies, in the form of vouchers for daycare centers, resulted in a 17% increase in job opportunities for impoverished urban

mothers with children aged one to three. Those who received these subsidies benefited from an average 24% increase in their earnings.

A 2018 ILO report, based on data from more than 90 countries, also highlighted the role of caregiving work in advancing women's economic empowerment. Globally, 19.3% of women work in care jobs, compared to 6.6% of men. Given that the number of people who need care is expected to grow to 2.3 billion by 2030 (from 2.1 billion in 2015), the report advocated doubling investment in the care economy to \$18.4 trillion. The ILO projected that this would create 269 million new jobs by 2030 and enable countries to meet multiple SDGs, including universal health care, education for all, gender equality, and decent employment.

But there is no one-size-fits-all model for creating high-quality care jobs. With this in mind, the African Population and Health Research Center assembled a team of international and regional experts to evaluate the early childcare and long-term care systems in Kenya and Senegal. Through an in-depth examination of indigenous expertise and the current support structures in these countries, the project aims to lay the groundwork for a care economy tailored to Africa's unique needs.

Drawing on insights from Kenya, the researchers outlined several steps that governments can take to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work among different stakeholders. These include investing in high-quality, affordable childcare services, particularly for early childhood; enhancing the capacity of county-level government departments to oversee unpaid caregiving through adequate budgetary support and intra-governmental cooperation; aiding local entrepreneurs who serve low-income women through public and private investment; exploring community-based models or those tailored to pastoralist communities; and recognizing long-term care for the elderly as an integral part of this work.

This study, which provides a template that could be applied across Africa, represents a crucial step toward gender equality on the continent. Its findings have the potential to influence the Kenyan government's efforts to draft policy guidelines on unpaid care work as part of its Vision 2030 development initiative.

Among its seven core objectives, the African Union's Agenda 2063 highlights the need to achieve gender equality and parity in the political, economic, and social domains. But this goal will remain out of reach until we develop a holistic, evidence-based, Africa-centric care economy that enables women to participate as equals in the labor market.

This commentary is published in collaboration with the International Economic Association's Women in Leadership in Economics Initiative, which aims to enhance the role of women in economics through research, building partnerships, and amplifying voices.

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# OP-ED

By Rabah Arezki

## Senegal's Election and Africa's Future

**W**ASHINGTON, DC - Although Senegal's GDP is dwarfed by that of the West African giant Nigeria, this small country with an open economy plays an outsize role on the continent, owing to its status as a "maturing democracy." Senegalese pride themselves for having never suffered a coup since achieving independence from France in 1960. That record stands in stark contrast to the rest of the region, where, just in the past few years, governments have been overthrown in Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Gabon.

Of course, there have been fraught transitions of power and other related difficulties, not least under Senegal's outgoing president, Macky Sall, who long remained silent about whether he would run again in violation of the constitutional term limit. Under mounting pressure from street protesters, he eventually announced that he would not seek another term - but then proceeded to postpone the election until a date long past the expiration of his mandate.

Following the deaths of several protesters and other incidents, Senegal finally held an election on March 24, owing in no small part to a constitutional court ruling striking down Sall's attempt to extend his mandate. The president-elect is Bassirou Diomaye Faye, a former tax inspector who was in prison just days before the election, alongside his mentor, Ousmane Sonko. Sonko himself was barred from running, and his party, PASTEF ("Patriots of Senegal"), was dissolved last summer.

Faye ran (as an independent) on a platform to fight corruption and promote economic sovereignty, an agenda that resonates with an overwhelmingly young population whose patriotism is reminiscent of the post-independence era. In today's quickly evolving geopolitical environment, many African societies see an opportunity to pursue their interests more assertively. And, like many other Africans, young Senegalese are frustrated with leaders who have proven unable or unwilling to focus on domestic priorities, and who have grown increasingly entangled with business interests.

Across the continent, economic liberalization, often promoted by international organizations to foster investment, has ended up backfiring, because weak anti-corruption rules allowed nurtured widespread collusion between politicians and foreign companies. According to Afrobarometer data for 2022, 73% of Senegalese believed that corruption had increased over the past 12 months.

To see what Africans see, consider BP's 2017 discovery of large oil and gas reserves off Senegal's coast. Initially, many hoped the bonanza would drive a national economic transformation. But the project has since been plagued by delays, corruption scandals, and concerns about environmental degradation. Similarly, liberalization policies targeting Senegal's fisheries have failed to deliver economic inclusion. Instead, large companies have gotten away with overfishing, while ordinary Senegalese have been left behind.

In fact, despite recent data pointing to strong economic growth prospects, a significant drop in extreme poverty, and a continuous rise in access to electricity, young Senegalese now account for a growing share of undocumented migrants risking their lives to reach Europe (often by way of the Canary Islands).

This disconnect between an improving economic outlook and negative perceptions can be seen elsewhere in Africa, too. An increasingly educated, social media-connected younger population has higher aspirations than past generations, and it is demanding more from political leaders. That said, the aggregate figures may be masking issues such as low-quality services, including for basic utilities such as water and sanitation. Perceptions of rampant corruption make these problems seem even worse, feeding into public anger and discontent.

Another salient issue that Faye has promised to tackle is the uncertainty surrounding the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Through a newly forged alliance, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali recently announced they are quitting the Economic Community of West African States in response to the sanctions it imposed on them following their respective coups. Though the sanctions have since been lifted, the coup leaders seem committed to going their own way. Among other things, they intend to form a joint defense force, and to break away from the CFA Franc (shared by eight West African countries).

While attacks on the CFA Franc appeal to populations that are newly interested in asserting their sovereignty, abandoning the currency union altogether would certainly do more harm than good in the short run. If Faye manages to preserve the unity of the West African bloc, that outcome would be a notable achievement. The WAEMU could become the engine that powers a broader regional integration process under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Trade within the AfCFTA commenced in 2021 - in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite member states lifting tariffs, pervasive non-tariff barriers remain, highlighting the need for new reforms to promote fairer competition within and between African countries. Realizing the AfCFTA's potential would not only stimulate cross-border investment and trade; it would also promote deeper continental integration in priority sectors such as agriculture, telecoms, electricity, and finance.

In this context, the continent's growing population could provide an impetus for more local production and job creation.

Faye's resounding victory gives him a strong mandate to pursue anti-corruption measures and promote economic inclusion. But to make good on his campaign promises, he must first reinforce the country's political checks and balances - including the independence of the judiciary - and ensure transparency at all levels of government. Failure to shore up Senegal's democratic institutions would lead to more political roller-coaster rides like the one the country has just been through.

Across the continent, Africans - especially younger ones - are clamoring for change. Senegal's new 44-year-old president could be the first to meet their demands.

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# OPINION

By Michael R. Bloomberg

## What Can Stop the Shortening of American Lives?

**N**EW YORK - Even as COVID-19 recedes into the background of everyday life, the broader decline in US life expectancy is still with us, because too many elected officials refuse to take its causes seriously.

COVID-19 has killed nearly 1.2 million Americans, making it the main reason that US life expectancy fell by 2.4 years between 2019 and 2021. But while life expectancy has started to tick back up, it is still 1.3 years lower than it was in 2019, according to the latest data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Every racial and ethnic group now has a lower life expectancy than before the pandemic, with American Indian and Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic people suffering the largest setbacks. Meanwhile, other countries - including Sweden, Belgium, and Denmark - have returned or nearly returned to pre-pandemic life expectancy.

The main reasons that the United States lags many other rich countries can be summed up in three words: guns and drugs. The US far outpaces other high-income countries in overdose and gun deaths, and both problems have worsened since 2019.

In fact, they have reached record levels. At the same time, chronic illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes are among the leading causes of death in the US. Obesity is a major risk factor for all these conditions, and America's obesity rate is the highest among large, developed countries.

Despite having the world's largest economy and the world's most advanced health-care facilities, the US ranked 40th in global life expectancy, according to the most recent available data. And that data was released in 2019, before COVID pushed the US even further behind. Given the cascading challenges of the past five years, it probably still ranks at the bottom of the Western world.

This is a national disgrace, but it isn't inevitable. Americans don't have to live and die like this. We can use public health - the science of protecting as many people as possible from diseases and injuries - to preempt threats every day. Change starts with listening to public-health experts and developing practical, data-driven responses.

Unfortunately, the pandemic's path of destruction did not spare the field of public health. Scientists and doctors were subjected to relentless attacks from partisans trying to score political points, and public trust in their views declined as a result. Of course, scientists and doctors are fallible like the rest of us. But ignoring their warnings and guidance is deadly. We saw that during the pandemic and during the vaccine rollout, and we are still seeing it today.

Even before the pandemic, public health was undervalued, because its power is so often hidden. Patients leaving a hospital after receiving emergency surgery are almost always grateful, and they know exactly whom to thank for saving their lives. By contrast, public-health interventions save lives every day, but those who are saved rarely even know it. Such interventions - whether it's a seatbelt or an airbag, a smoke-free workplace or a trigger lock - do not produce grateful patients (or grateful policymakers, who could better fund them), because they keep people out of hospitals (and the morgue).

Strengthening trust in those who work in public health begins with raising awareness of what they do and how they do it. That is why the new four-part documentary series *The Invisible Shield* (produced by RadicalMedia, supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, and airing in the US on PBS) aims to shine a spotlight on public health and the historic gains it has made possible.

From 1900 to 2000, US life expectancy increased by more than 30 years, and child mortality plummeted as measles and diphtheria were nearly eliminated. By 1980, the world had eradicated smallpox. Polio could be next. These extraordinary successes, once unimaginable, show what is possible when societies commit to keeping children safe and extending all our lives. But the political courage to take the steps necessary to save and extend lives - from enacting stronger gun laws to taxing tobacco - seems to be in shorter supply than ever before.

During my 12 years as mayor of New York, average life expectancy in the city increased by three years, because we refused to bow to lobbyists and naysayers who opposed our groundbreaking public-health protections. Some of those protections, such as posting calorie counts and banning artificial trans fats, proved so popular and effective that the federal government later adopted them. But over the last decade - and especially after the pandemic - data-driven public-health interventions have stalled in Washington.

To push life expectancy back to its pre-pandemic highs - and then higher - we need elected officials to be braver and bolder in deploying the "invisible shield." And for that, we need voters who recognize the stakes and hold their representatives' feet to the fire.

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## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

# Exporting unprocessed rubber makes no economic sense

By: Samuel P. Jackson Development Consultant

The Liberian rubber industry is dying. Exporting unprocessed rubber will accelerate its demise. The country was one of the largest global rubber producers, but inadequate investments in the agriculture sector, wars and inefficient economic management have disrupted production. Aged rubber trees, inadequate value additions and lack of financing to the agriculture sector all have negatively impacted its growth and development. The rubber industry needs a lifeline and the ban on the export of unprocessed rubber is a good starting point.

Rubber has dominated the Liberian economy for over 96 years, and for generations, since 1926 integrated into the economic, social, and political order. Liberia at one time accounted for the second highest economic growth rate in the world due to exports of iron ore and rubber. Liberian rubber helped in the defeat of the Nazis in World War II. Liberia's contribution to global rubber production also supported the expansion in the American automobile industry creating economic opportunities in Akron and Detroit.

The rise and fall in the price of rubber determined the livelihoods for most Liberian farmers and the general population. When rubber prices were significantly high in the 1950's and 60's, Liberia saw millionaire rubber farmers who purchased villas in Las Palmas and sent their children to fancy boarding schools in Europe and America.

Unfortunately, the rubber industry now only contributes to .7 percent of global production and with little value addition, the industry continues to slide into oblivion. Liberian rubber farmers are poor and struggling. The industry is dying from within. It is being cannibalized. The ban on the export of unprocessed rubber can stop the bleeding in the Liberian rubber industry, stabilize and increase production, income and improve livelihoods.

According to the Central Bank of Liberia, "rubber output declined by 2.0 percent to 63,211 metric tons, from 64,516 metric tons reported for 2022, on account of decreased harvest by small farmers as well as the largest producers". The price of the commodity also declined by 12.9 percent to an average price of US\$1,576.72 per metric tons in 2023, from US\$1,810.19 per metric ton in 2022. In addition to the fluctuating prices of the commodities, objective conditions in Liberia, where unscrupulous middlemen enable the stealing and smuggling of rubber to neighboring countries are also negatively impacting production and the lives of farmers.

One of the last singular and most effective actions by the George Weah Administration was to impose a ban on unprocessed rubber from Liberia by an Executive Order 124 in November of 2023. The Executive Order intended to stem the gross abuse, misuse, and theft of rubber and to create a framework for the long-term development of the industry. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is precluded from issuing export permit for the commodity and the ministry was tasked with coordinating with rubber farmers in border counties to create a marketing program to sell rubber to domestic companies. The Executive Order also prohibited the transportation of rubber from 6 PM to 8AM to prevent the nightly surreptitious smuggling of the commodity.

The Executive Order was not the first time such had been done in Liberia and in fact other countries including La Cote d'Ivoire have enacted laws to prevent the export of unprocessed rubber. In April of 2013, the administration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf imposed a ban on the export of unprocessed rubber stating that the act would boost domestic economic activity including jobs creation and improve socioeconomic conditions.

La Cote d'Ivoire routinely enacts executive and legislative actions that ban the export of unprocessed rubber to stabilize and grow its rubber industry, now the third largest producer of the commodity, with 12 percent of global production. In September 2021, the country's legislature placed a ban on the export of unprocessed rubber to "boost industrialization". In November of 2023, the Ivorians also stopped the exports of "cup lumps" or unprocessed rubber. The Ivorians wish to build a thriving and sustainable rubber industry and they are enforcing laws and creating the framework to do so. Liberians can learn from the case study of that country's rubber industry. We need to adopt policies to affirmatively protect the Liberian rubber industry. The ban on the export of unprocessed rubber is a step in the right direction.

The ban is supported by the Rubber Planters Association of Liberia (RPAL). The RPAL affirmed their support after a Congress. The Association says, "unrestricted export of unprocessed rubber exceeds the sector's productivity." It urged the current administration to maintain the ban. I support that.

The Boakai Administration is urged to maintain the ban on the export of unprocessed rubber as it will indicate the desire to stabilize the industry, boost production, and start a veritable process to ensure value addition. Liberian rubber processors have the capacity to purchase and process all rubber produced in the country. Liberian economic empowerment should be a hallmark of an administration that has as its mantra "no business as usual." Removing the ban on the export of rubber will continue business as usual that have led to the rapid decline in the rubber industry.

Liberian rubber farmers are depending upon the new administration to protect the industry, inspire confidence to attract new investments in planting, harvesting, processing, and creating an enabling economic environment that can see Liberia regain its place in global rubber production, but this time with creation of rubber products through value additions. The growth and development of Liberia's rubber industry is a low hanging fruit in economic opportunities in the country. I am counting on the Boakai administration to seize the moment and begin the framework to save Liberian rubber farmers from extinction. And so it goes.

## ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

## How Gov't kills local businesses in Liberia

Monday, March 4, 2024:-Ideally, business failure means a company ceasing operations because of its inability to make a profit or to generate enough revenue to cover its expenses. Equally so, a profitable business can fail if it does not generate adequate cash flow to meet expenses.

In Liberia, the failure of businesses is not only the presence of the conditions listed above but lack of government support is the main reason why businesses failed here. The country's dual currency regime, tax incentives, and laws protecting investments make it an appealing destination for investors.

However, political interests, corruption, and the country's weak legal system influenced by government actors continue to kill off small businesses and some foreign investments.

Ideally, to grow their economies, countries put in place regulations and laws to protect local industries, small businesses, and or indigenous businesses which are the engines of economic growth in any society, but in Liberia, those laws and regulations only exist on the books, while politically motivated interests take precedent.

The Liberian government on paper appears to put in place some protective clow for indigenous businesses, but in practice, government actors are the canker worms that undermine these indigenous businesses for their selfish interests or kickbacks.

Take for example the Liberianization policy which reserved certain businesses for Liberians only. There are sixteen businesses exclusively reserved for Liberians. Those businesses are Supply of sand, Block making, Peddling, Travel agencies, Retail sale of rice and cement, Ice making and sale of ice, Tire repair shops, Auto repair shops with an investment of less than USD 550,000, Shoe repair shops, Retail sale of timber and planks.

The rest are the Operation of gas stations, Video clubs, Operation of taxis, Importation, or sale of second-hand or used clothing, Distribution in Liberia of locally manufactured products, and the Importation and sale of used cars (except authorized dealerships, which may deal in certified used vehicles of their make.

The reason for these exclusive reserves is to protect Liberians from competing with foreign investors in these sectors so that they do not become spectators in their own country due to the belief that the foreign investors who are mostly Indians and Lebanese have financial capacity as compared to the Liberian businessman or woman. Unfortunately, these exclusive businesses are being taken over by foreigners authorized by government agencies and ministries who grant them such licenses to operate, thereby pushing Liberians off their businesses.

A typical example is the supply of sand or sand mining. Today, the Chinese are supplying sand and crushed rocks all over the place with the blessing from the Ministry of Mines and Energy, while Liberians who once spearheaded this supply chain are now at the beg and calls of the Chinese who are siphoning millions of US Dollars out of the country.

A ten-tyre load of sand that was once sold between US60 to 75 USD is now being sold for between US 250 and US300, making it difficult for a poor man to build a concrete house.

Not only are the Chinese engaging in sand and crushed rocks supplies, but they are also into block making as well. These are proudly patronized by not just government officials but even government agencies as well during construction.

Next comes the Lebanese and Indians who are into retailing almost everything from used clothing to rice and cement. As if that was not enough, the Lebanese now control the auto repair industries with their garages on every street corner.

But these are supposed to be businesses reserved by laws for Liberians. However, these are the very businesses government officials will patronize over Liberian ones. In the Printing industry, for example, the Liberia Revenue Agency and other revenue-collecting agencies will squeeze taxes out of these businesses just to pay government officials.

In return, these government officials and agencies take their printing contracts to Ghana and China to businesses that pay no dime in taxes to the Liberian government.

The Liberian businesses are not alone. Policies to protect local industries and promote manufacturing are lacking and if they exist, the laws protecting them are weak. Yet government will want you to believe that it is bent taking the economy from being import-driven to consuming locally manufactured goods.

The rubber industry is a good example. Last year, former President George Weah, like his predecessor, Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf put a moratorium on the exportation of unprocessed rubber.

The aim is to ensure that local rubber manufacturing companies here whose existence depends on unprocessed rubber have the supply to continue doing business.

As good as this intention is, the possibility of it being revoked to satisfy just a few political interests over the greater good of the country's economy is most likely. The question then is how can the country grow its local industries when raw materials needed are being allowed to be sold to companies operating outside of its borders with no Liberian in their employ.

Until, the new administration, takes an inner look, and puts in place appropriate policies that stop the killing of Liberian businesses and prioritize the same, the Liberian economy is bound to be stagnant forever.

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## Dr. Yarkpawolo proposes Bong Development Corporation

The Acting EPA chief has suggested that the establishment of the Bong County Development Corporation will mitigate poverty across the country and buttress central development efforts.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, April 1, 2024: Liberia's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acting Executive Director Dr. Emmanuel King Urey-Yarkpawolo has proposed the establishment of a Bong County Development Corporation

Technical College in Gbarnga, Bong County on 30 March 2024. "I propose the establishment of the Bong County Development Corporation (BCDC) with the county development fund as the largest shareholder. The idea is to use a business model to support development using

buttress central development efforts. He suggested that the BCDC is an innovation to solve some of the development challenges and stalled development projects in Bong County.

Citing an example, he disclosed that in the County Development Agenda that was developed in 2007 with an implementation timeline from 2008-2012, several major projects were identified.

He said they included the construction and or rehabilitation of 144 roads, seven major bridges, six high schools, 83 elementary schools, two teacher training centers, and two nursing schools.

He added that they included 64 health clinics/health centers, midwifery clinics, and two hospitals.

"Seventeen years after the first post-war development agenda was developed for Bong County, little has been achieved," Dr. Urey-Yarkpawolo lamented. "Development Leagues as an instrument for development: What I am envisioning and proposing is to use sports as a development tool to rally our people to support the implementation of these projects," he urged.

With the support from the Bong County Development Corporation, he said each major town could have a football and kickball team named after the town (many of these towns already have these teams).

sports as a unifying tool," said Dr. Urey-Yarkpawolo. The Acting EPA chief said the establishment of the corporation will mitigate poverty across the country and



BCDC). Dr. Urey-Yarkpawolo's proposal was contained in a keynote speech he at the first commencement convocation of the Sumo Moye Memorial

## LiMA boss visits maritime facilities in Monrovia

Monrovia, Liberia, March 28, 2024: New Maritime boss Cllr. Neto Zarzar Lighe, Sr. made a number of working visits to maritime facilities in Monrovia, on March 26, 2024.

Cllr. Lighe visited the offices of the Department of Port State Control (PSC) at the Freeport of Monrovia, where he was briefed by Director John F. Harvey about the ongoing project to upgrade the department's office complex, something that is nearing completion. The PSC Department is responsible for the inspection of foreign vessels that call at Liberian seaports to verify that the condition of the ship and its equipment are in compliance with international regulations and standards.

Director Harvey and his team also check to ensure that the ship is manned and operated in compliance with international maritime rules and conventions. The completion of the Port State Control office facility would enhance the Department of

Port State Control's performance as it carries out Liberia's Flag State responsibilities of maintaining safety in the country's waters and inspecting foreign ships that visit our ports. Next, Commissioner Lighe, visited the Monrovia Regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Center (MRMRCC). There, having assessed the facility, he promised that his administration would do all that is necessary to lift MRMRCC to expected international standards. MRMRCC, with its primary focus on safety of life at sea in our coastal seas and our exclusive economic zone (EEZ), provides 24/7 operations and support. Cllr. Lighe also visited the technical center of

the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA) to familiarize himself with the workings of NaFAA. While there, he met Madam Emma Metieh Glassco, the Director General of NaFAA. The two maritime leaders had an abridged working session. At the end of his visit, the Commissioner assured the technical staff of LiMA of his commitment to upgrade those critical infrastructures that he had just surveyed, and that he would do all it takes to improve the working environment. He also promised that in alignment with the strategic goal of LiMA, deserving students would be given scholarships to pursue disciplines that would directly benefit the authority's plans and objectives.



## Fire razes down 9-bedroom house

A fire disaster in Kakata, Margibi County has left over a dozen occupants homeless, including a pregnant woman, students and taxi driver, among others.

By Ramsey N. Singbeh, Jr.

Kakata, Liberia, April 1, 2024- A fire the gutted a 9-bedroom house in New Kakata Community, Kakata, Margibi County has rendered several residents homeless, including students, a pregnant woman, a taxi driver and some petty traders.

The incident occurred on Wednesday March 27, 2024 at 10:00 A.M. when most of the occupants of the house had gone about their normal daily routines.

In their absence, the fire burnt cash, car spare parts, traveling documents, school materials, business items, clothes, food, and other personal effects, but no life was lost.

The cause of the fire which is yet to be established, left the entire community in disarray with almost everyone wondering how it started, as they made efforts to quench the flame but to no avail.

The rented house had sheltered more than 12

He continued that there was no LEC or any source of electricity connected to the house and no one had lit fire in the house when the incident occurred, as he lamented they are homeless and have lost everything.

He appealed to government, philanthropists and well-meaning Liberians to come to their aid to enable them restart life.

Also narrating in complete disappointment, Taxi Driver Joseph Masay, narrated he and his family are now sleeping at a church along Bong Mines Road in Kakata while rest of the other occupants are left with no alternative but to sleep in a single room provided by a neighbor though they are many.

He continued that his car spare parts, money totaling 90,000 Liberian Dollars and US\$1,000 and all other items left in the fire.

Mr. Masay disclosed he went out as early as 5:00 am to run traffic but got a call that the house had gutted the house, detailing that the fire started from the side of the house and he had



occupants.

Speaking to the NEW DAWN at the scene of the misfortune, one of the victims, Othello Gesuah, who is also a student, narrated that he surprisingly heard the pregnant woman screamed: 'fire ooo, fire ooo' from inside the house while sitting outside noting, at that moment the fire had almost engulfed the entire house.

Other residents in the community he noted went around to help but the smoke could not enable them to enter into the house.

Student Gesuah lamented that nothing was taken out of the house, as most of the rooms were locked and the occupants were out.

rented three rooms in the house.

In his explanation, he recalled that his wife and some occupants had misunderstanding before and that neighbors were in the wrong according to what the community established, but the matter was resolved.

He observed that immediately the next day, fire gutted the house, starting from their room.

This paper also saw a box of matches right behind the house under the window of the room where the fire started.

He maintained that they will continue to sleep in the church until they can find a way out, but called on government and everyone to go to their aid. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## CDC complains Boakai

The former ruling Coalition for Democratic Change is not happy with the Boakai administration and writes the Speaker, the United States Embassy and other foreign missions near Monrovia, citing alleged violations.

**By Lewis S Teh**  
Monrovia, Liberia. April 1, 2024- The former ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) accuses the Boakai administration of violating the Constitution of Liberia and writes a formal

grave national concern pertaining to serious violation of the Liberian constitution and other statutory laws by the Unity Party headed by President Boakai", the CDC says. Acting national Chairman Attorney Augustine Janga Kowo, in a news conference recently at the CDC headquarters in Oldest



compliant to Speaker Fonati Koffa, the United States Embassy and other foreign missions near Monrovia. "We write to bring to your attention and that of the entire membership of the House of Representatives, matters of

Congo said their attention has been drawn to what he described as matters of grave concern in the country. He observed that since the inception of the Boakai administration on January 22, 2024, there has been series of

actions that clearly violate the constitution, statutory laws and established protocols.

Chairman Kowo explained that paramount among these disruptive actions by the government is disregard exhibited to former President George Weah when he was denied access to the VIP Lounge at the Roberts International Airport upon his return to the country in March, something, he described as total disregard to the former president. He also alleged there has been harassment of EPS officers who provided protection for Mr. Weah but are being suspended and declared Absence Without Leave (AWOL). "Another issue we wish to draw to your attention is the harassment of civil servants and other public sector workers in agencies, commissions and state-owned enterprises" He said harassment of public sector workers for political reason is counterproductive and a clear violation of the Constitution that guarantees every citizen the right to work and guarantees freedom of speech and association. "We are calling on the government to desist from harassing perceived supporters of the CDC across the government", he warned, nothing that summary dismissal and unwarranted suspension on flimsy grounds are totally

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## USAID-sponsored program graduates second cohorts

USAID-sponsored Entrepreneurship Advancement Leveraging Research program (HEALR) graduates its second cohort at the University of Liberia

**By Lincoln G. Peters**  
Monrovia, Liberia. April 1, 2024- The Entrepreneurship Advancement Leveraging Research program (HEALR) by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has trained its second cohort in Liberia. The Health Innovation and Entrepreneurship activity is part of the USAID-funded Bridge-U: Applying Research for a Healthy Liberia, project at the University of Liberia College of Health Sciences.

Advancement Leveraging Research program. "We are delighted to celebrate the second cohort of the creation program with this closing ceremony, awards, and dinner", Ms Kerr said. She noted that few years ago, Bridge-U supported ULCHS to launch the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation. "The participants were eager to learn. Thanks to the judges for taking up the time to select the participants." Moreover, the Center houses various programs that enrich academic activities at the college, to strengthen the health workforce pipeline and

ultimately the health system. "These programs range from faculty development and research projects to clinical simulation education and the activity that brings us here today", she added Certifying the graduates, Dr. Plenseh Paye McClain, CTLI Deputy Director said, it is interesting how people have been able to come up with ideas in the past months that are going to be scaled up to support the economy. She expressed delight in celebrating the second cohort of the Creation program with the closing ceremony and urged the beneficiaries to get others involved into the short-term training.

For their part, the graduates appreciated their mentors for pushing them far, saying beyond the class, they maintain a good relationship.

The program aims to strengthen the health board and the health sector of the entire country. Speaking during the graduating ceremony in Congo Town recently, the project director of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (CTLI) Lila Kerr, said she was grateful that her team is celebrating another milestone of the Health Entrepreneurship



## Civil Services Boss calls for reforms

The Civil Service Agency here concedes excesses, including fraudulent payments, ghost employees and widespread discrepancies, as captured in latest audit by the General Auditing Commission.

**By Kruah Thompson**  
Monrovia, Liberia. April 1, 2024- The latest audit report by the General Auditing Commission (GAC) published on its website unveils troubling findings for the Civil Service Agency (CSA), prompting its Director-General, Josiah F. Joekai, Jr, to announce a comprehensive overhaul aimed at enhancing transparency and productivity within the Agency.

According to him, the former administration spent a staggering sum of US\$ 6.1 million in the last fiscal year alone on consulting services, and that this astronomically high expenditure did not reflect the quality of consultancy provided, something, he noted undermines the integrity and efficiency of the civil service.

Key findings of the GAC audits include instances of fraudulent payments made to individuals for services not rendered, as well as payments to ghost employees, resulting in significant financial losses due to fraud and mismanagement of funds.

"Taking the CSA as a case study, we reviewed the folders of 18 consultants selected, employed, and remunerated; I found the following:

The findings also captured violations of established regulations, such as payment of full salaries to employees on study leave and unauthorized absences, highlighting serious flaws in

- None of the 18 consultants received a contract until after 9 months into the so-called annual engagement;
- Of the 18 consultants, 8 did not have a valid contract in their folders
- Only 12 consultants participated in a headcount exercise. The remaining 6 did not show up to date and are still unaccounted for despite receiving payments. In short, they're ghosts, and
- No reports for services provided, no performance appraisal reports, no



payroll management, amongst others. timesheets, and no Terms of Reference (ToR)", he explained.

Making the disclosure in Monrovia over the weekend, Director-General Joekai emphasized that while going through the report, he discovered discrepancies in consultant contracts and documentation, indicating a lack of proper control and accountability by the Weah administration.

He emphasized urgent need for comprehensive reforms to rectify these egregious discrepancies and prevent further misuse of public funds adding, "Such reforms are imperative to restore our civil service's efficiency, responsiveness, and integrity thereby ensuring accountability and transparency." Editing by Jonathan Browne

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# Français

## Joseph Nyumah Boakai se moque de la Cour des crimes de guerre, déclare le juge Dixon

Le juge Dixon a affirmé qu'une résolution adoptée par les membres de la Chambre des représentants ne peut être utilisée pour établir la Cour des crimes de guerre et économiques.

Le juge Blamo Dixon de la Cour de circuit libérienne

a prononcé un discours liminaire lors d'un rassemblement de collecte de fonds où il a publiquement critiqué l'approche du nouveau président pour garantir que les criminels de guerre et économiques soient traduits en justice.

La guerre civile du Libéria, qui a duré plus d'une décennie, a

continué dans le pays en toute impunité depuis plus de 20 ans depuis la fin de la guerre.

L'administration Boakai déclare vouloir établir une cour des crimes de guerre et économiques pour que les coupables soient jugés.

Jusqu'à présent, les membres de la Chambre des représentants ont adopté une résolution soutenant l'effort, et le Sénat examine l'instrument pour décider.

Mais Dixon n'est pas à l'aise avec l'approche. Selon lui, la meilleure chose à faire est de soumettre un projet de loi à la Chambre des représentants afin qu'il puisse être adopté.

«Le président Boakai se moque du peuple libérien en ce qui concerne l'établissement de la cour des crimes de guerre et économiques au Libéria, comme les gouvernements précédents. Une simple résolution ne peut établir la Cour des crimes de guerre et économiques», a argumenté le juge Dixon.

Il a expliqué qu'une loi doit être soumise pour préciser le champ d'application, les fonctions et le mode opératoire de la cour des crimes de guerre

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President Joseph Nyumah Boakai

estime que le président Joseph Nyumah Boakai se moque des efforts visant à établir une Cour des crimes de guerre et économiques (CCGE).

Le juge résident de la Cour pénale "C" à Monrovia

fait plus de 250 000 morts et des millions de personnes ont été déplacées.

Des biens d'une valeur de plusieurs millions de dollars ont également été détruits pendant la crise civile. Même en temps de paix, les crimes économiques ont

## CRIMES CONTRE L'HUMANITÉ : UN ANCIEN CHEF MILITAIRE DU LIBERIA CONDAMNÉ À 30 ANS DE RÉCLUSION À PARIS

TORTIONNAIRE • Kunti Kamara, ex-commandant rebelle libérien, a été lourdement condamné en appel pour des actes de torture et complicité de crimes contre l'humanité survenus lors de la guerre civile au Liberia.

Il a été reconnu coupable mercredi d'une série « d'actes de tortures et de barbarie inhumains » contre des civils en 1993-1994. Dans cette liste, le supplice infligé à un enseignant, dont il aurait mangé le cœur, la mise à mort d'une femme qualifiée de « sorcière » et des marches forcées imposées à la population. La cour d'assises de Paris a condamné mercredi à trente ans de réclusion criminelle l'ex-commandant rebelle libérien Kunti Kamara, jugé en appel pour actes de barbarie et complicité de crimes contre l'humanité lors de la première guerre civile au Liberia (1989-1997).

Cet ancien commandant, aujourd'hui âgé de 49 ans, faisait partie du Mouvement uni de libération pour la démocratie (Ulimo), qui luttait contre la milice rivale de Charles Taylor. Il avait été condamné à la réclusion

criminelle à perpétuité en première instance à Paris, fin 2022, au terme d'un procès inédit qui s'était tenu au titre de la « compétence universelle » exercée par la France, sous certaines conditions, pour juger les crimes les plus graves commis hors de son sol.

« UN MESSAGE AUX TORTIONNAIRES DU MONDE ENTIER »

Selon le verdict rendu après plus de huit heures de délibéré, Kunti Kamara a également été reconnu coupable d'avoir facilité des crimes contre l'humanité par son indifférence devant les viols répétés commis sur deux adolescentes devenues esclaves

sexuelles pour des soldats sous son autorité, en 1994.

L'avocate générale Myriam Fillaud avait insisté sur la nécessité de « lutter contre l'impunité sans considération des frontières » et demandé aux jurés d'adresser « un message aux tortionnaires du monde entier, (...) la France n'est pas le dernier refuge des criminels contre l'humanité ».

Kunti Kamara avait obtenu l'asile politique aux Pays-Bas. Il avait ensuite été interpellé dans la région parisienne en septembre 2018 après la plainte de l'ONG Civitas

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## Éditorial

### Il faut rapatrier nos concitoyens du Ghana

Le sort des Libériens expulsés du camp de réfugiés de Budumburam au Ghana, dont les maisons ont été démolies et se retrouvent sans abri, devrait retenir l'attention immédiate de l'Etat du Libéria. Peu importe qu'ils soient encore des réfugiés ou non, aucun gouvernement responsable ne devrait rester les bras croisés et voir ses citoyens subir une telle humiliation dans un autre pays.

Depuis le mardi 28 février 2024, la démolition du camp de Budumbura par des personnes que l'on croit être des Ghanéens ordinaires a laissé les Libériens concernés sans nourriture, sans eau et sans abri, selon les rapports. C'est un acte de cruauté contre l'humanité !

Officiellement, le gouvernement ghanéen n'a déposé aucune plainte accusant les Libériens de violer les lois de ce pays ou de se livrer à des actes susceptibles de nuire à la paix et à la sécurité du Ghana.

Quelle qu'ait été la raison de cette action, nous sommes d'autant plus déçus par le silence apparent des autorités ghanéennes face à cette situation qui a laissé plus de 11 000 Libériens, dont des femmes et des enfants, livrés à eux-mêmes dans ce pays, pleurant de faim, plus de 20 jours après la démolition inopinée de leurs maisons.

Nous savons qu'en 2022, le gouvernement libérien, par l'intermédiaire de la Commission libérienne pour les réfugiés, le rapatriement et la réinstallation (LRRRC), a organisé une réunion multipartite à Monrovia et a ensuite envoyé une équipe au Ghana à l'époque pour établir le profil des Libériens se trouvant dans le camp. Il a été établi qu'il y avait mille cinq cent trente-neuf (1 539) anciens réfugiés libériens au Ghana, et sur ce nombre, au moins 500 ont accepté d'être rapatriés. Ils ont été ramenés chez eux avec une somme initiale de 240 000 dollars américains, prélevée sur un budget total de 1,5 million de dollars américains alloué au rapatriement des Libériens.

Nous appelons l'administration Boakai à identifier des ressources pour régler cette question de toute urgence et sauver la dignité de ses concitoyens libériens au Ghana. Nous pensons que l'option la plus rapide est de les rapatrier au Liberia, où ils pourront retrouver leur dignité et leur respect en tant que citoyens.

C'est le moment de faire preuve de leadership dans de telles situations, et le président Joseph Nyuma Boakai devrait saisir cette occasion non seulement pour redorer l'image du pays, mais aussi pour restaurer la fierté de ses compatriotes libériens.

Il est regrettable que depuis l'incident de février, l'administration Boakai n'ait pas pris la parole publiquement pour redonner confiance et espoir à nos frères et sœurs touchés au Ghana.

Même s'ils ne bénéficient plus du statut de réfugié, où est-il fait mention dans le traité de la CEDEAO de la libre circulation des personnes et des marchandises entre les États membres sans frontières ?

Le gouvernement libérien devrait collaborer avec son homologue ghanéen pour résoudre cette question à l'amiable afin de maintenir la solidarité régionale et la fraternité entre les pays membres.

# Français

## Starts from page 8 Joseph Nyumah Boakai

et économiques.  
 “La loi précisera la composition des juges siégeant à la cour, le salaire, les allocations et les avantages des juges et des agents de la cour des crimes de guerre et économiques”, a noté le juge Dixon.

Selon lui, l'action du président est une autre forme de corruption.

“La corruption est un fléau social qui ronge progressivement le tissu de la société libérienne et doit être éliminée”, a déclaré le juge Dixon.

“La corruption ne se limite pas au vol d'argent. Le tribalisme, le népotisme et le favoritisme sont toutes des formes de corruption”, a-t-il ajouté alors que les étudiants applaudissaient lors du rassemblement de collecte de fonds.

Concernant la durée du

mandat des fonctionnaires, Dixon a déclaré que le président Boakai devait d'abord convoquer tous les titulaires de postes à mandat à une réunion pour leur rapport de performance pour le temps passé sous l'administration Weah.

“Ensuite, une solution peut être trouvée, car en droit administratif ou en code de la fonction publique, vous devez licencier un employé avant qu'il ne puisse être remplacé par un autre employé”, a argumenté le juge Dixon.

“Deux personnes ne peuvent pas faire le même travail en même temps, ou deux personnes ne peuvent pas occuper le même poste en même temps”, a-t-il ajouté.

Le juge Dixon a été le principal intervenant jeudi lors du rassemblement de collecte de fonds et de l'induction de la direction élue du lycée commémoratif D. Tweh à New Kru Town sur l'île de Bushrod.

## Un juge accuse Boakai de népotisme et de tribalisme



President Joseph Nyumah Boakai

Le juge Dixon allègue que sept nominations sur dix seraient pour des proches du président Boakai en provenance du comté de Lofa.

Un juge de circuit à Monrovia, Blamo Dixon, a accusé le président Joseph Nyumah Boakai de s'adonner au népotisme et au tribalisme dans la nomination des fonctionnaires.

S'exprimant lors d'un rassemblement de collecte de fonds à la D. Tweh Memorial High School le jeudi 28 mars 2024, le juge Dixon a allégué que sept sur dix nominations viennent du comté du président Boakai, Lofa. Le juge de la Cour criminelle “C” a accusé le président Boakai de pratiquer le tribalisme, le népotisme et le favoritisme dans la nomination de fonctionnaires publics. Le juge Dixon a argumenté que bien que la Constitution de 1986 donne au président l'autorité exclusive de nommer qui il veut à des postes au sein de son gouvernement, le président a nommé davantage de ses proches au gouvernement. “Pour chaque vingt (20) personnes nommées au gouvernement, quatorze viennent du comté de Lofa”, a allégué le juge Dixon.

“Pourtant, une erreur est commise dans le processus de nomination qui doit être corrigée. Le président continue de

pratiquer le tribalisme, le népotisme et le favoritisme dans la nomination de fonctionnaires publics”, a déclaré le juge.

Le juge Dixon a suggéré que la culture politique du Libéria sous le président Boakai n'a pas changé.

“Le gouvernement du True Whig Party était pour les Américano-Libériens. Le gouvernement de Samuel K. Doe était pour le peuple Krahn. Le gouvernement d'Amos C. Sawyer était pour le mouvement pour la justice en Afrique et le groupe de l'Union des étudiants de l'Université du Libéria”, a expliqué Dixon.

Il a poursuivi en disant que le gouvernement dirigé par Gyude Bryart était pour les factions combattantes dissoutes, et le gouvernement dirigé par Charles Taylor était pour les Américano-Libériens.

“Le gouvernement d'Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf était pour les Américano-Libériens. Le gouvernement de George Weah était pour les habitants du sud-est. Par conséquent, le gouvernement de Joseph Boakai n'est pas une exception, mais plutôt pour le peuple de Lofa”, a déclaré le juge Dixon.

Le jeudi, le juge Dixon a été invité en tant que conférencier lors du programme d'intronisation et de collecte de fonds du nouveau leadership de la D. Tweh Memorial High School à New Kru Town, sur l'île de Bushrod.

## Starts from page 8 CRIMES CONTRE L'HUMANITÉ :

Maxima.  
 DES RÉCITS GLAÇANTS ENTENDUS À LABARRE

A Paris lors de son procès en appel, Kunti Kamara a une nouvelle fois clamé son innocence. Plusieurs victimes et témoins venus du Libéria ont au contraire certifié qu'il était bien le « C.O Kundi », pour commanding officer, qui a contribué à faire régner la terreur dans le nord du pays, tombé aux mains de l'Ulimo au début des années 1990.

Des récits glaçants ont été entendus à la barre : des corps humains transportés en brouette, des supplications, un viol au moyen d'une baïonnette trempée dans du sel. Les avocats de l'accusé ont plaidé son acquittement en « l'absence de preuve matérielle concrète ».

UNE DÉCISION « HISTORIQUE

» C'est une décision « historique » dans un procès pour un crime contre l'humanité hors génocide, a salué pour sa part Me Sabrina Delattre, avocate de Civitas Maxima et de huit parties civiles libériennes. Elle est « importante pour les victimes et les parties civiles qui, pour la deuxième fois, ont été entendues et crues ». C'est « une reconnaissance sur la culpabilité des faits qui est, en miroir, une reconnaissance de ce qu'elles ont vécu ». Elle l'est aus'i parce que l'objectif était « d'obtenir la justice qu'elles n'obtiennent pas dans leur pays », ajoute Me Delattre. Les crimes des deux guerres civiles, qui ont fait au total 250.000 morts entre 1989 et 2003, n'ont jamais été jugés au Libéria, où d'anciens chefs rebelles occupent aujourd'hui de hautes fonctions dans l'appareil d'Etat.

## La Chine lance la phase deux du projet d'extension de la LBS

La République populaire de Chine s'est déclarée prête à lancer officiellement la deuxième phase de rénovation et d'extension du Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS).

Cette annonce fait suite à un accord d'assistance technique conclu en 2006 entre le Libéria et la Chine. En novembre 2008, la Chine a remis au gouvernement libérien des installations LBS entièrement rénovées et équipées.

L'ambassadeur de Chine au Libéria, M. Yin Chengwu, a révélé ce plan récemment, à la suite d'une réunion à huis clos avec le ministre libérien de l'Information, M. Jerolinmek Matthew Piah.

En 2006, la Chine a conclu un accord d'assistance technique avec le gouvernement du Libéria, permettant le lancement de la première phase du projet de rénovation et d'extension de la LBS en novembre 2007.

En novembre 2008, la Chine a remis au gouvernement libérien des installations LBS entièrement rénovées et équipées. Le coût du projet d'extension de la LBS s'élevait à 4 millions de dollars américains. Ses stations relais dans les comtés de Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa et Maryland ont été reliées au studio principal de Monrovia par des liaisons micro-ondes par satellite, ce qui a étendu la couverture de la station à de nombreux comtés du Libéria.

Récemment, l'ambassadeur Yin Chengwu a annoncé la volonté de son gouvernement de lancer la deuxième phase du projet de rénovation et d'extension de la LBS, qui appartient à l'État.

Selon lui, une équipe d'ingénieurs chinois devrait arriver prochainement dans le pays



pour lancer officiellement le projet.

« L'équipe avancée arrivera bientôt au Libéria pour travailler sur les modalités avec la direction de la LBS concernant le démarrage du projet », a déclaré l'ambassadeur Yin. « La République populaire de Chine reste engagée à soutenir le Libéria et à maintenir les relations sino-libériennes et la politique d'une seule Chine », a souligné l'ambassadeur Yin.

Pour sa part, le ministre Piah, qui préside le conseil d'administration de la LBS, s'est réjoui de l'aide apportée par la Chine à la LBS et au gouvernement du Libéria (GOL) pour diffuser ses programmes, activités et réalisations auprès du public.

Il a également réaffirmé l'engagement du gouvernement envers la politique d'une seule Chine, ajoutant que la Chine reste un partenaire stratégique du Libéria.

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## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

# “Liberia Increases Rice Production By 53%” Agriculture Minister Reveals

By Judoemue M. Kollie

Liberia's agriculture minister, Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah said the country was able to increase domestic rice production last year at 53 percent.

Minister Nuetah said Liberia increasing domestic rice production is a remarkable success.

“I realized that from the report of the Emergency Rice Production Offensive (ERPO) initiative, we were able as a nation to develop 18,000 hectares with rice seed varieties which I think is remarkable. It is remarkable because at the results of the intervention based on the record we were able to produce 30, 000 metric tons of rice which is a part of our success stories,” he recently said during the opening of the Stakeholders Engagement Forum on Addressing Pricing and Market Linkages in the rice and cassava value chains.

The Stakeholders Engagement Forum was held in Monrovia last week to address challenges faced within the rice and cassava value chains following the successful implementation of the Liberian government's World Bank funded ERPO initiative.

Liberia relies significantly on rice import to meet consumption requirements for its population. Report from the Food and Agriculture Organization shows that in 2022 the country imported approximately 350,000 metric tons of rice.

Though the nation imports huge quantities of rice each year, frantic efforts are being made to produce more of it domestically.

According to the World Bank 2023 report growth in the agricultural sector which accelerated to 5.9 percent in 2022 from 3.3 percent in 2021 was driven mainly by increase in the production of rice and cassava.

The agriculture minister has set a target to support farmers to produce 50,000 metric tons of rice annually within the next six years.

He said the country developing 50,000 of lowland will ensure sufficient rice annually to reduce importation.

Nuetah said stakeholders should see the engagement forum as an opportunity of reflection of the success of the rice offensive initiative.

It can be recalled that the previous administration of his ministry promised last year to increase the production of local rice by 50 percent.

However, the new minister said reports about farmers who were supported under the initiative finding it difficult to market the several metric tons of paddy rice produced his ministry is going to work to find a solution.

“The reason we encourage people to go into farming is to use it for income generation. When the farmers produce metric tons of rice there must be off takers. This forum is supposed to be driving the discussion about the off takers and the producers so that we can go about finding an amicable solution. But this is only possible when prices are real. If you tell me a quantity of metric tons is out there, I must be able to find the resources to purchase it,” he said.

“I want this pricing issue to be based on facts. Agriculture is a field that is based on facts. If you develop 1000 hectares depending on how you grow it will lead to a certain output. I am interested in the outcome of this forum. Whatever decision taken here will be needed for policy making purposes,” the minister added.

According to minister Nuetah, the reason why the ministry is supporting the farmers is to reduce the cost of production facing them so as to also make prices affordable for the consuming public.

“The reason why we provided support for all members of the value chain is to make reasonable profits and to make the rice affordable for the consumers,” he said.

Meanwhile, minister Nuetah has disclosed that his ministry is now revising the country's national agriculture investment plan to guide agricultural development for the next five years.

“When the investment plan is revised I will be engaging all of the donors that if they want to support our rice production they will have to go according to the development plan,” he said.

The minister said rice remains a critical commodity for Liberia and there is a need for more investment.

He also used the occasion to challenge the private sector to get the rice on the market for sale.

“We want the rice value chain to be able to establish stores for the sale of local rice on the market,” he said.

Representing the Task Team Leader of the World Bank, Kadir Osman Gyasi, the Agriculture Specialist at the Bank, Kelvin N. Doesieh said the World Bank has acknowledged contributions made by the government to increase domestic rice production.

“Both of the ministry's projects supported an increase in rice yield which has shown remarkable success. This was evidenced by the recent World Bank task team's visit in Lofa and Nimba counties during its February 2024 implementation mission,” he said.

He mentioned that during the mission, pricing and market linkages were identified as key constraints.

Doesieh, therefore, said the Bank sees the stakeholders dialogue forum as a pivotal role to improving the pricing and linkages issues.

“Increasing rice production in rural communities and stored in warehouses will often not benefit the communities in terms of income generation and the country as a whole in revenues. The Bank therefore encourages the full participation of all parties, especially the farmers, processors and institutional buyers to come with clear recommendations to resolve the market constraints for both the rice and cassava value chains,” he said.

The World Bank agriculture specialist said the Bank is committed to working with the government through the Ministry of Agriculture to make food and nutrition security achievable.

Giving an overview of the state of rice and cassava production in Liberia, the Crop Development Specialist of the Rural Economic Transformation Agriculture Project (RETRAP) at the Ministry of Agriculture, Dr. Moses Zolue said that as part of the strategy to increase rice production the Ministry of Agriculture is encouraging farmers to move into the lowland.

According to him, the lowland has the great potential to increase the production of rice for the country using technologies.

He said that to increase domestic rice production more has to be done by the government and the private sector.

Dr. Zolue said that the ministry's intervention last year for rice and cassava was mainly focussing on seven counties.

The Ministry's Crop Development Specialist said that the farmers were supported with improved rice seed varieties, fertilizers and equipment to increase yield.

He said that with the support provided to farmers mainly in Bong, Lofa and Nimba counties

they were able to increase yield to 3.6 hectares average yield.

Zolue said that to create the enabling environment for the rice sector the government has passed several legislations.

But some of the policies mentioned by him are not yet operationalized to improve rice production.

For instance, the government is yet to operationalize the Liberia Seed Development and Certification Agency Act of 2019 which is very much critical for the improvement of the rice sector.

Commenting on the cassava value chain, Zolue said there were several varieties of cassava cuttings being multiplied and distributed to the farmers.

He said that the provision for farmers with planting materials and tools has caused the country to increase cassava production on the market.

Zolue also mentioned that processors were supported to transport raw cassava tuber from farm gates through the ministry's grant program.

“Based on the intervention, we have caused farmers to progress from 5-16 metric tons of harvest for the market,” he said.

For his part, the MOA's RETRAP Project Operation Manager, Tarnue Jeke said that the findings from the workshop will go a long way in addressing pricing challenges in the rice and cassava value chains.

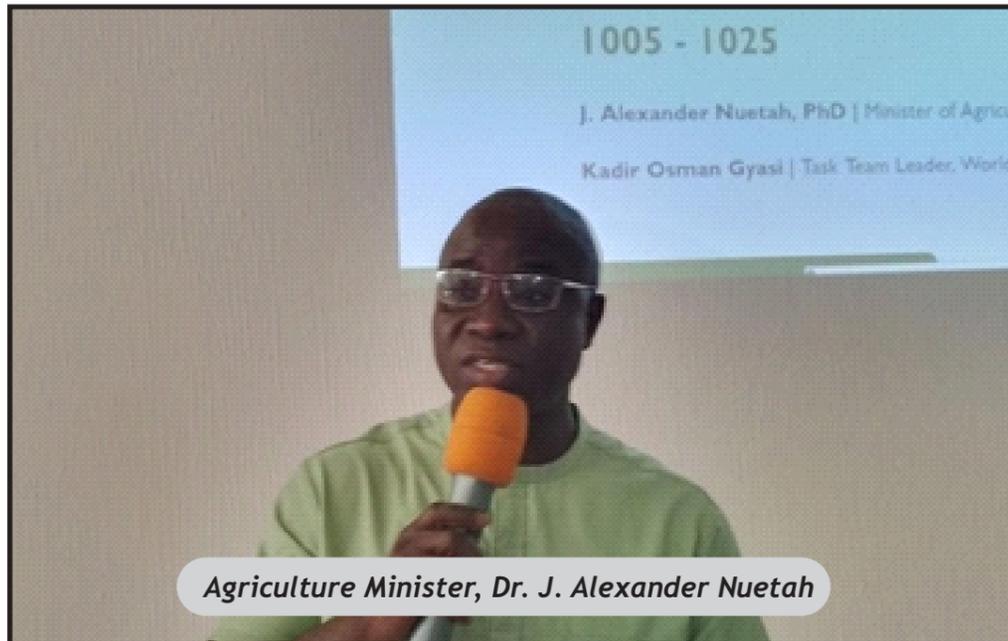
“We are not going to place the recommendations from the workshop under the table. We will make sure that we derive a final solution to the issues of pricing and market linkages,” he said.

Jeke said that there are plans by the Ministry to now focus on farm mechanization which according to him will reduce labor cost in the sector to manage the issue of pricing.

He told this reporter that though the problem of pricing still exists, there is a need for the processors to build a better relationship with the producers to improve market linkages.

Meanwhile, the participants describe the workshop as being helpful and request the organizers to arrange more of it in the future.

The participants believed that the private sector will only produce more food for the market, provided the constraints of marketing are adequately addressed.



Agriculture Minister, Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah

# Assets Recovery faces court today

Last week, the Supreme Court halted all seizure [of assets] by the Assets Recovery and Property Retrieval Taskforce after the seizure of vehicles operated by some former officials, including immediate past Police Chief Col. Patrick T. Sudue.

Monrovia, April 1, 2024: Liberia's Assets Recovery and Property Retrieval Taskforce is

addressed to Liberia's Justice Minister and Attorney General Cllr. Oswald Tweh.

Justice Kaba also ordered the Taskforce to release all

A610540 was impounded in Sinkor during the Taskforce's operation on Wednesday, 27 March 2024.

But it was later released to Col. Sudue through an instruction to the Taskforce from the General Services Agency (GSA).

Upon the seizure of Col. Sudue's vehicle, reports said the authorities had deployed officers to escort him to his destination via the seized vehicle, but with a mandate that the officers assigned should ensure that the vehicle returned to remain under custody pending further notice.

However, the former Police Chief claimed that he bought the vehicle from the Government's official assets management entity-GSA at a depreciating cost.

The Boakai administration has complained that some officials from the previous regime of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC)-led government looted their offices before leaving and even failed to turn over government vehicles.

It allegedly posed challenges to the new government regarding the availability of vehicles to aid government work.

The Assets Recovery Team has been charged with retrieving not just vehicles but also ensuring that the acquisition of questionable wealth by former and current officials can be addressed legally.

More development could unfold during its operation, as public perception of corruption remains high against Liberian officials, past and present.

# CBL seeks extension of old cash retrieval?

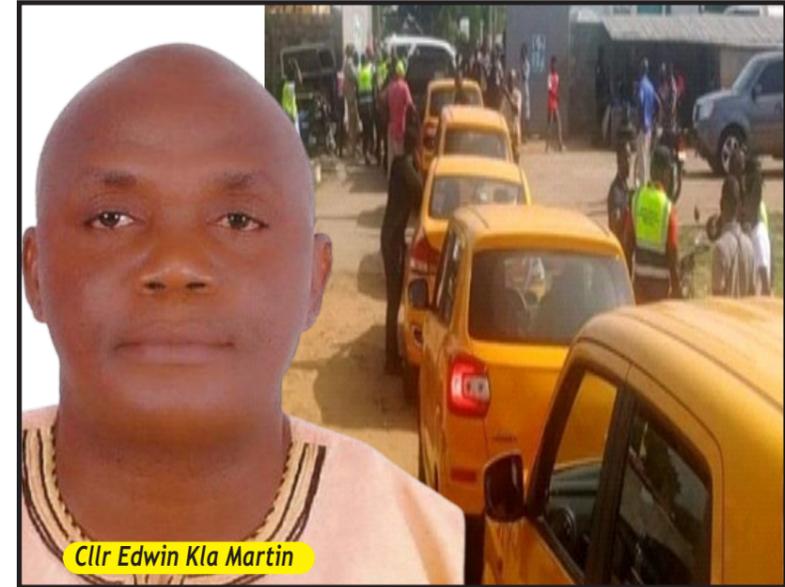
A national program to retrieve the legacy banknotes from the market was launched before the just-ended legislative and presidential elections. But the exercise faced some delays due to the election, as well as bad road conditions.

Monrovia, April 1, 2024: This paper has reliably learned that authorities of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) are about seeking President Joseph Nyumah Boakai's approval to extend an ongoing cash retrieval exercise across the country.

The CBL on 22 October 2022 commenced a nationwide campaign to replace the legacy banknotes and coins with the new family of banknotes and

off which was held in November 2023, then came a presidential transition that ushered in the Boakai-led administration. These national activities also appeared to have impacted the timeline set for cash retrieval across the country.

Despite the challenges, this paper has learned, the CBL has significantly retrieved a large amount of its targeted old banknotes. The has retrieved from circulation and replaced the total amount of L\$21.41 billion of the old banknotes constituting 85% of the estimated



Cllr Edwin Kla Martin

expected to appear before Associate Justice Yussif D. Kaba today, 1 April 2024, based on his order last week halting the Taskforce's assets seizure operations.

Gracious Ride through its manager Francis T. Blamo petitioned the Supreme Court last week for a writ of prohibition against the Asset Recovery Task Force headed by

Following the petition, the Justice in Chambers Cllr. Kaba cited the Taskforce and the rival party to a conference that is scheduled to be held at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, 1 April 2024 in connection with the case.

The communication ordering the Taskforce to stay its assets seizure operations is

vehicles seized and stay all seizures pending the outcome of the conference.

The Gracious Ride vehicles were subsequently released over the weekend setting the stage for hearing today.

Through its Assets Recovery and Property Retrieval Taskforce, President Joseph Nyumah Boakai's administration has been struggling to retrieve government assets from former officials who refused to relinquish them while exiting public offices.

As part of its operation, last week the Taskforce seized a vehicle operated by former Liberia National Police (LNP) Inspector General Col. Patrick T. Sudue.

The vehicle marked



coins.

CBL authorities are said to have resolved to extend the deadline for the exchange exercise and the termination of the legal tender status of the legacy banknotes by 45 days from 1 April 2024 to 15 May 2024.

In keeping with the 54th Legislature's mandate, the initiative was launched to be carried out through commercial banks and other regulated financial institutions to retrieve the legacy banknotes.

In July 2023, the authorities set 31 March 2024 as the cut-off date for the termination of the legal tender status of the old banknotes.

But this paper has learned that the timeline was affected by Liberia's poor road conditions mainly in accessing rural places, as well as the presidential and legislative elections, among several other challenges.

Following a presidential run-

amount of L\$25.258 billion worth of banknotes. However, there is still a large volume of old banknotes in circulation.

In recent weeks, some members of the public have been raising concerns about not being able to meet the CBL deadline of 31 March due to their location in remote places and the absence of commercial banks.

The NewDawn newspaper has learned that the CBL has considered these public concerns and wants President Boakai to approve an extension of the exercise.

To reach out to the rural parts of the country, the CBL on 18 March 2024 was said to have dispatched teams to ten of Liberia's 15 counties to ramp up the exchange exercise to meet the 31 March deadline. But even at the end of the month, this paper has learned that the exercise was still being implemented by the Bank.

Through a joint resolution in 2021, the 54th Legislature authorized the CBL to print and mint a new family of currency to the tune of L\$48,734,000,000.00 based on the Bank's request.

# China Union admits to 8 yrs failure in Liberia

Starts from back page

continue a \$2.6 billion investment that is expected to help elevate Liberians' living conditions. In 2023, former Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor, who was so disappointed in the company, described its operations in the country as "no head, no tail, no middle."

She then called on the company to allow other companies to take over the mines and help the citizens if they were unable to do the work they had signed up for.

China-Union Investment (Liberia) Bong Mines Co. Ltd is a part of China-Union (Hong Kong) Mining Co., Ltd., a corporation with head offices in Hong Kong, having the legal entities China

Africa Development Fund Co., Ltd as shareholders.

China Union operates the iron ores in Margibi and Bong Counties but transports them through Montserrado County, making them obligated to the three counties yearly.

Editing by Jonathan Browne

# CDC complains Boakai

Starts from page 7

unacceptable, inappropriate and reprehensible. Chairman Kowo noted that since the inauguration of President Boakai, the government has embarked on harassment and attempted dismissal of officials in tenure offices. According to him, most of the laws regarding tenure offices across the government were created during the twelve years administration of the UP-led

government in which President Boakai served as vice president and is a signatory to those laws.

He argued that ignoring the security of tenure officials under the statues contravenes the spirit of good governance and rule of law. "Against this backdrop we call on the national legislature, the United States government, and other foreign missions to take seize of these matters and commission urgent

investigation", he said and advised the executive branch of government to desist from taking illegal actions. President Boakai had attempted replacing tenure officials from the former administration of President Weah, but the Supreme Court of Liberia placed a hold on the process pending proper interpretation of the law and statute. Editing by Jonathan Browne

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## China Union admits to 8 yrs failure in Liberia

### -Promises to pay social development funds

China-Union Investment (Liberia) Bong Mines Co. Ltd admits eight years of failure to pay corporate social responsibility that will affect millions.

By Ramsey N. Singbeh, Jr.

Margibi County, Liberia, April 1, 2024 - More than a month after the 54th Legislature brought China-Union Investment (Liberia) Bong Mines Co. Ltd to the spotlight

the said years. The company's Public Relations Officer Morris Tate, disclosed over the weekend in Kakata, Margibi County, during a remark at the county's district four lawmaker's yellow machine dedication program.

we have not been working. We have not been doing anything. Even our social corporate responsibility with the countries, we have not been doing that, we have not been giving it, so people coming around here saying that Emmanuel Yarh, China Union, gave him a machine, it can't be true, and it will never be true."

According to him, Margibi County District#4 and Bong County District #7 Lawmakers have been pressurizing China Union to the extent that the company is now going to pay the social development funds meant for eight years.

"Secondly, Hon. Yarh and Hon. Foday have been pushing China Union, and now China Union is talking about giving some social development funds for the people for the past eight years," he added.

The company has been dormant for so many years that citizens have characterized its actions as abandonment.

China Union signed a mineral development agreement (MDA) with the Government of Liberia on January 19, 2009, to

Representative Emmanuel Yarh invited him to clarify for the public that the machine was made available by the China Union.

Mr. Tate remarked: "As I speak to you guys, China Union, for the past eight years,



for renegeing to do the needful, the company has openly admitted to failure to live up to its corporate social responsibilities for about eight years in Liberia, while promising to pay the social development funds owed for

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