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DATE	BUYING	SELLING
THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024	L\$192.1640/US\$1.00	L\$194.0088/US\$1.00

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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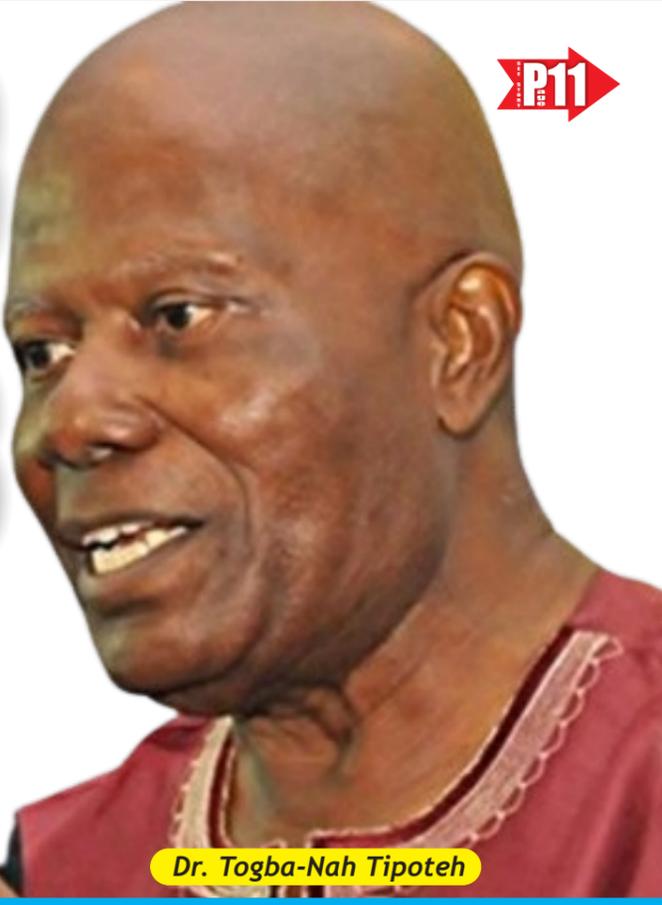
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# Dr. Tipoteh joins war crimes court campaign



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# Continental News

## New nets help prevent spread of malaria in Africa

A new kind of mosquito net delivered across sub-Saharan Africa averted an estimated 13 million malaria cases and nearly 25,000 deaths over three years, the project's backers said Wednesday.

There were 249 million recorded malaria cases and

pyrethroid insecticide—did a far better job at malaria control.

One major challenge as the world strives to drive down the stubbornly high numbers is the growing insecticide resistance seen in the mosquitoes that carry the disease.

In a bid to tackle that problem, the New Nets Project delivered 56 million dual-insecticide nets

pyrethroid insecticide—did a far better job at malaria control.

Evaluation of two clinical trials and five pilot studies showed the new nets improved malaria control by 20-50 percent in countries reporting insecticide resistance in sub-Saharan Africa, compared to standard nets, the groups said in a statement.

The backers estimated the additional cost per case of malaria averted using the new nets compared to the standard ones was between \$0.66 and \$3.56.

At the same time, the reduction in malaria cases and deaths attributed to the new nets "equated to a potential \$28.9 million in financial savings to health systems," the statement said.

"The success of the New Nets Project is proof that, by fostering collaboration across global health partners, harnessing innovation, and using market-shaping approaches, we can fight insecticide resistance, make our interventions highly cost-effective and accelerate progress against malaria," Global Fund chief Peter Sands said in the statement. VOA



608,000 deaths in 2022, according to the latest figures from the World Health Organization, with most of the burden in Africa.

Nearly half a million children in the African region die every year from the disease, which is caused by a parasite carried by

across 17 malaria-endemic countries between 2019 and 2022.

The initiative was funded by Unitaid and the Global Fund and led by the Innovative Vector Control Consortium.

It found that the new nets—which were coated in a new generation pyrrole insecticide in combination with the standard

## Cubana Chief Priest: Nigerian socialite charged for throwing money in air

Nigerian socialite and businessman Cubana Chief Priest has become the latest local celebrity to be charged with abusing banknotes.

The socialite, whose real name is Pascal Okechukwu, pleaded not guilty to three counts of abusing banknotes during a court appearance on Wednesday. Authorities say he threw money into the air at various social events. This is technically an offence as notes fall to the ground where they can be trodden on.

The practice, known as "spraying", is commonly done at Nigerian weddings and celebrations as a token of appreciation. On Tuesday, Nigeria's elite anti-crime agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), said it was leading a drive against "all forms of naira [the currency] abuse".

The EFCC accused Okechukwu of "spraying" and tampering with 500 naira notes at events held this year in Nigeria's main city, Lagos.

After being charged at Lagos' Federal High Court, Okechukwu was given bail for 10 million naira (\$8,600; £6,970). Okechukwu, who owns a

popular nightclub in Nigeria's oil-rich Delta State, addressed his five million Instagram followers after his court appearance. Tagging his location as the federal court, he wrote: "Seeing all your messages & love I'm so humbled." Just two weeks ago, popular internet personality Bobrisky was sentenced to six months in prison for a similar offence.

The judge said that "the act of mutilating the naira notes has become a menace, which has continued to damage the image of the country".

In February, actress Oluwadarasimi Omoseyin was also sentenced to six months in prison for spraying and stepping on new naira notes.

On Sunday, the EFCC said that several celebrities were being investigated for allegedly abusing the notes, and "many of them have made useful statements" to investigators. The agency said 200 people across the country face prosecution, while 24 people have already been convicted. BBC



Cubana Chief Priest appeared in court in the main city Lagos

## Nigeria's Tinubu says country will no longer pay ransom to armed gangs

Nigeria will no longer pay ransom to armed gangs that have plagued the country with kidnapping and extortion, President Bola Tinubu said in an opinion piece published earlier this week.

He made the statement as activists commemorated the 10th anniversary of the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls from the town of Chibok. Acknowledging that "legitimate concerns" over kidnappings persist, Tinubu said Nigeria must address the root causes of poverty, inequality, and a lack of opportunity if it hopes to eradicate the threat posed by criminal gangs. In the Newsweek magazine piece, titled "Ten Years Since Chibok - Nigeria Will No Longer Pay the Price," Tinubu said ransom payments to gangs only encouraged them to commit more crimes and said, "the extortion racket must be squeezed out of existence."

Tinubu said the government's response to the Chibok abduction in 2014 was slow.

But, the president said, Nigeria must recognize the changing nature of the threat. He said criminal gangs behind more recent kidnappings are primarily after cash rewards, unlike Boko Haram, which sought to impose Islamist rule. In 2022 Tinubu's predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari, tried to criminalize ransom payments to kidnappers, but the decision was met with resistance from activists and the families of victims.

Security analyst Senator Iroegbu said the lack of accountability from authorities is the main concern.

"There will not be ransoms in the first place if measures are on the ground to prevent it," Iroegbu said. "Why is it easy for kidnappers to kidnap Nigerians and keep them for long? Ten years after Chibok girls, why are the cases still rising? It's not trying to blame victims who are desperate to do everything they can to rescue their loved



The remaining belongings of students abducted at Bethel Baptist High School are seen inside the school premises as parents wait for answers, in the Chikun Local Government Area of Kaduna state, northwest Nigeria, July 14, 2021

The president said instead of ransom, perpetrators of the violence will receive the security services' counter actions. He cited the recent rescue of 137 school students kidnapped in Kaduna state. Their abductors had demanded \$600,000 in ransom, but the president said no ransom was paid. Ndu Nwokolo, managing partner at Nextier, a public advisory firm with focus on security and economic issues, agreed that ransom payment emboldens perpetrators, but said Nigeria is not ready to take such a stance "The Nigerian state is obviously very weak to do those things it says it wants to do. If you're someone, you have your [relative] kidnapped and you know that the state security agents can't do anything," Nwokolo said. "How come you were able to retrieve those numbers of kids without shooting a gun, and we know that those guys demanded ransom? The entire thing shows that there's no honesty, there's no transparency."

ones. For citizens, that may be their last resort."

Tinubu said Nigeria must ultimately address the triggers for insecurity, including poverty, inequality and lack of opportunity.

In the article, Tinubu also talked about his economic reforms. The Nigerian president said they were necessary to save public finances and encourage foreign investment.

Tinubu scrapped fuel subsidies for the public and floated the naira just days after assuming office last year. The decisions sent prices soaring and were widely criticized, but have not been reversed. Tinubu said previous governments had failed to boost the economy, and 63 percent of Nigerians are multi-dimensionally poor. Iroegbu said blaming predecessors will not solve Tinubu's problems "This mentality of trying to blame past administrations, thinking you're better while you're not actually doing something different, needs to stop until there's a result that Nigerians can see and testify," Iroegbu said. VOA

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# GUEST EDITORIAL

# COMMENTARY

By Lawrence H. Summers  
and N.K. Singh

## The Importance of Respecting Authorities: A Adda Study of Liberia

## The World Is Still on Fire

In every society, across all strata and societies worldwide, there lies a fundamental tenet that is the very bedrock of societal coherency and order, respect for authorities.

This notion, however, is multifaceted.

Not only does it entail public reverence and deference to those in power, but it also necessitates a reciprocal conduct from the authorities themselves.

The public's display of respect is contingent upon the quality of conduct exhibited by the authorities.

Integrity, dignity, and professionalism must underscore their actions, both in public and private spheres.

It is within this virtuous cycle of respect that societies can thrive towards enlightened discourse and progressive development.

This principle is not only crucial to the direct participants but also instrumental in instilling the values of respect in the succeeding generations.

A probing look into the current Liberian society will illuminate this assertion.

Liberia, a small country on the West African coast, offers a compelling adda study to elucidate this point.

In recent times, it has become apparent that exhibitions of disrespect among some members of the Liberian National Legislature have resulted in a pervading public alarm.

This unfortunate development vividly illustrates the implications of an authority that appears to disregard respect, leading to a detrimental ripple effect on the public's regard for them.

Those in positions of power in Liberia, particularly those holding constitutional authority, have a cardinal role to play in shaping public attitudes.

They have a moral obligation to demonstrate high professionalism, dignity, and integrity at all times - the vanguard of public respect and trust.

Any failure to uphold these values, as is witnessed in certain quarters, can lead to a significant erosion of public confidence, which in turn could undermine the very fabric of societal order.

The evidence and implications of such defiance to professionalism and respect are rife in Liberia, and they are captivating.

Take, for instance, the growing public alarm around the conduct of some members of the National Legislature.

Whatever the causes might be, such behavior is contributing to a disquieting public perception.

It sows the seed of mistrust and disrespect in the hearts of the public, subsequently affecting vital aspects such as cooperation between the populace and the government, social harmony, and national solidarity.

If we are to consider that respect breeds respect, then it stands to reason that any deviation in the conduct by those in authoritative positions presents an alarming precursor to societal discord.

For this reason, it is paramount for these individuals to encapsulate the ethos of respect in their engagements and leadership style.

By doing so, they model a pattern of respectful interaction that is integral to societal functionality, imprinting a lasting impression on future generations.

Public figures' adherence to this principle is not just a matter of expectation but a sacrosanct commitment that bolsters the entire societal edifice.

Instances of its non-adherence, as seen in Liberia, provide a cautionary tale that underscores how this neglect could chip away at societal respect for authority.

It also affirms that this respect is a reciprocal responsibility: authorities must first exhibit respect to earn it.

The dynamics of respect between the authorities and the society they serve is a delicate equilibrium that would do well to hinge on the principle of respect begets respect.

Through the lens of the unfolding scenario in Liberia, it is clear that any neglect of this symbiotic relationship poses a profound threat to societal harmony and, consequently, the proviso for development.

The country's situation emphasizes the paramount importance of upholding respect for authorities and, in turn, the authorities' obligation to act respectably for societal well-being.

It serves as a strong reminder that we must be mindful of the values and lessons that we impart to future generations, who will one day hold the reins of authority themselves.

**C**AMBRIDGE/DELHI - The world is facing the worst five-year span in three decades. Higher interest rates have left developing countries crushed by debt, and half of the poorest economies haven't recovered to where they were before the pandemic. Growth is weak across large swaths of the world, and inflation remains persistently high. And behind it all, the thermometer keeps inching up. Last year was the warmest on record, as is true of nearly every month.

For the last several years, world leaders have made big promises and laid out bold plans to mitigate the climate crisis and help poor countries adapt. They pledged that the World Bank would transform itself to work on climate change, and that the multilateral system would get new money and lend more aggressively with the resources it has, including to meet concessional needs.

An agreement between creditors would provide debt relief to countries that most needed it. And where public money was insufficient, the multilateral system would be able to catalyze private investment in developing countries.

Despite the bold rhetoric, 2023 was a disaster in terms of support for the developing world. As the chart below demonstrates, the private sector collected \$68 billion more in interest and principal repayments than it lent to the developing world. Amazingly, international financial institutions and assistance agencies withdrew another \$40 billion, and net concessional assistance from international financial institutions was only \$2 billion, even as famine spread. "Billions to trillions," the catchphrase for the World Bank's plan to mobilize private-sector money for development, has become "millions in, billions out."

[Chart]

It is little wonder given that World Bank shareholders have not raised capital, substantially changed financing practices, or taken other bold steps.

The International Monetary Fund is on net withdrawing funds from the developing world; the idea of comprehensive debt relief has gone nowhere; and financial defaults have been avoided only by the moral default of slashing health and education spending.

Setting aside the complex problem of climate change for a moment, world leaders haven't even been able to tackle the simplest, most straightforward challenges.

War, inflation, and poor governance have brought some of the poorest people - including in Chad, Haiti, Sudan, and Gaza - to the brink of famine, yet the international response has been slow and muted. This is both a humanitarian disaster in its own right and a symbol of our broader inability to act in the face of a crisis.

If the world can't even get food to starving children, how can it come together to defeat climate change and reorient the global economy? And how can the poorest countries trust the international system not to leave them behind if that system can't address the most basic challenges?

This week, finance ministers, central bankers, and economic leaders are gathering for the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF in Washington, DC, where they will discuss the global economy and lay out plans to strengthen

it. But these efforts will fail if rhetoric falls as flat as it did during 2023 in terms of concrete action. Here are four big ideas as to what is necessary:

First, reverse the capital flows, so that the lowest-income countries are receiving more support than they are paying out to private creditors. In the short term, that means expanding the multilateral development banks' use of innovative financial tools such as guarantees, risk-mitigation instruments, and hybrid capital.

In the slightly longer term, it means stepping up with new money from shareholders - a capital increase for the World Bank and regional development banks, which will require legislative approval in shareholding countries.

Second, transform MDBs into big, risk-taking, climate-focused institutions. Development banks have tinkered around the edges with bolder approaches to lending, but it is time for them to scale up those efforts. The wealthy countries that are the biggest shareholders in the multilateral system need to provide the political support for that risk-taking.

Third, fully fund the International Development Association, a highly effective institution that provides much-needed resources to the lowest-income countries. The World Bank's president has called for the largest-ever IDA replenishment from donors; given the challenges ahead, the world cannot afford to deliver anything less.

Fourth, tackle food security. Last year, the United Nations was able to raise from international donors only about one-third of what it sought for humanitarian relief, and it had to slash its goals for 2024.

Stepping up with funding for the several hundred million people without enough food to eat would alleviate a humanitarian disaster and provide evidence to skeptical countries that the international system still can work.

Half the world goes to the polls this year, from the United States and the United Kingdom to India and Mexico. Pervasive distrust of governments and their promises is a ubiquitous issue, and we see every day that the idea of an international community is becoming an oxymoron. The conventional wisdom is that foreign policy falls by the wayside as politicians turn their focus to campaigning and to domestic issues that will win them votes.

We dare to hope that historians will look back at this week's meetings as a moment when global leaders seriously addressed global challenges. The problem is not primarily intellectual. Blueprints like that of the G20 expert group we chaired on strengthening the MDB system abound.

It is a problem of finding the political will to take on the most fundamental issues facing humanity.

Lawrence H. Summers was US Secretary of the Treasury (1999-2001), Chief Economist of the World Bank (1991-93), Director of the US National Economic Council (2009-10), and President of Harvard University (2001-06), where he is currently University Professor. N.K. Singh, President of the Institute of Economic Growth, is a former chairman of India's Fifteenth Finance Commission, member of Parliament, and secretary to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

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# OP-ED

By Daoud Kuttab

## The Middle East Needs a Ceasefire Now

**J**ERUSALEM- It is hard to imagine that anyone in the Levant or the broader Middle East managed to sleep on Saturday night, as Iran launched hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles toward strategic sites in Israel and Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank.

Almost all of the drones and missiles were intercepted before reaching their targets, as a result of a coordinated effort by the United States, Israel, Jordan, and the United Kingdom.

The trigger for Saturday's attack was Israel's bombing of the Iranian consulate in Damascus on April 1, which killed 13 people, including several high-ranking members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. This act, a clear violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, compelled the Islamic Republic to respond.

Iran chose to strike Israel directly, a decision likely driven by a desire to defend its national pride following the attack its consulate, which, according to the Vienna Convention, is the Islamic Republic's sovereign territory.

Paradoxically, this dangerous escalation presents a unique opportunity for a regional ceasefire - potentially ending the war between Israel and Hamas, preventing a direct military showdown between Israel and Iran, and stopping the Yemeni Houthi attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea.

With both sides having demonstrated their military capabilities, and assuming that Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu heeds US President Joe Biden's warning not to retaliate against Iran, the region could revert to an uneasy equilibrium. As the Cold War showed, a balance of terror can act as a powerful deterrent, fostering peace and stability.

But to capitalize on this narrow window of opportunity, the United Nations Security Council must pass a robust, binding resolution calling for a regional ceasefire. In addition to Israel and Iran, this resolution should apply to all the countries of the region and third-party combatants.

Moreover, this binding resolution must address the central issue driving the current bout of regional instability - the war in Gaza.

In line with its previous March 25 resolution, from which the US abstained, the Security Council must demand an immediate cessation of Israel's ongoing bombardment of Gaza and the release of all Israeli hostages and detainees.

By requiring both parties to "comply with their obligations under international law in relation to all persons they detain," the resolution could also facilitate a release of Palestinians detained by Israel.

Contrary to the claims of some US representatives, the March 25 resolution was binding. But given the risk of an all-out war, the Security Council must immediately draft and vote on a new resolution, under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, covering the entire region.

The new resolution should aim to facilitate a permanent and just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, providing a detailed roadmap for establishing an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders. As Saudi Arabia has stated, a credible "pathway to a solution" is a precondition for normalizing relations with Israel.

Over the past six months, the Biden administration has backed Israel unreservedly, even at the cost of losing political support among progressive and Arab-American voters. Now, US policymakers must make the Israeli government understand that they will not tolerate further delays or gamesmanship when it comes to pursuing peace.

To be sure, rebuilding Gaza will take years and require a significant international effort. But achieving an effective, enforceable regional ceasefire is a crucial first step. Anything short of that risks perpetuating an endless cycle of war and suffering that benefits no one, especially not the Palestinians and Israelis, who are tired of this decades-old conflict.

The bombing of the Iranian consulate and Iran's retaliatory attack on Israel underscore the potential cost of a regional war. Failing to seize this critical opportunity for de-escalation could hold the region back for decades. Securing an immediate regional ceasefire must be the international community's top priority.

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# OPINION

By Shang-Jin Wei

## Is India's Economy Overhyped?

**N**EW YORK - Perhaps no phrase better captures the changing views of financial markets and the news media regarding the world's two largest developing economies than the title of a 2023 S&P report: "China slows, India grows."

While China is grappling with an economic slowdown, India appears to be thriving. The Indian stock market is booming, with the number of trading accounts registered with its National Stock Exchange skyrocketing from 41 million in 2019 to 140 million in 2023. Moreover, as Western companies exit China, India is emerging as a leading alternative. With an annual growth of 7-8%, it is widely expected to become the world's third-largest economy by the end of this decade.

But could India really overtake China and the United States to become the world's largest economy by the end of this century, as some predict? Or is its economic boom overhyped?

On surface, India holds significant advantages over other major economies. The first is its favorable demographic profile. In April 2023, India officially overtook China as the world's most populous country. With 43.3% of its population under the age of 25, compared to just 28.5% in China, its workforce is also significantly younger.

Moreover, higher US and EU tariffs on Chinese imports, together with rising labor costs and regulatory pressures within China, will sustain multinational corporations' shift away from the Chinese market. India, with its vast population and booming economy, is a natural alternative. The significant presence of Indian expatriates in senior roles within major Western firms and international organizations also yields substantial benefits for the Indian economy.

The Indian economy also stands to benefit from the government's ambitious economic-reform agenda. Over the past few years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has introduced various reforms aimed at improving the country's investment climate. The business sector has enthusiastically embraced initiatives like "Make in India," "Self-Reliant India," and "Digital India." And with Indian wages roughly one-third of those prevailing in China and less than one-fourteenth of US wages, there is significant scope for rapid catch-up growth.

Nevertheless, there are compelling reasons to believe that India's economic potential has been overstated. For starters, India's demographic advantage over China is not as significant as it seems. According to the United Nations' population statistics, the Indian fertility rate, at two births per woman, has already fallen below the replacement level of 2.1. Importantly, India's female labor force participation rate stood at 32.7% in 2023, far below China's 60.5%. As a result, India's total labor force participation rate was just 55.3%, compared to China's 66.4%.

Likewise, although Indian wages are significantly lower than in China, India's workforce is also less educated and skilled. According to the World Bank, 97% of Chinese adults aged 15 and older were literate as of 2020, whereas India's literacy rate was 76% in 2022. This means that the gap in quality-adjusted labor costs between the two countries is much smaller. Moreover, given China's more developed roads, ports, and infrastructure, manufacturing and exporting goods from India is often less cost-effective than doing so from China.

While India is certainly benefiting from the escalating rivalry between the US and China, this geopolitical advantage is offset by its protectionist policies. According to the World Trade Organization's World Tariff Profiles 2022, barriers to trade are noticeably higher in India than in China. According to the FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index compiled by the OECD, barriers to foreign direct investment are also more severe in India. For these reasons, many of the Western firms exiting the Chinese market may favor more investor-friendly countries such as Vietnam and Bangladesh.

Crucially, corruption levels are persistently higher in India than in China. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index produces an annual ranking of national probity, for which a bigger number means more serious corruption, based on a combination of surveys of firms and experts. In 2023, India ranked 93rd (out of 180 countries), whereas China ranked 76th.

The UK government's guidance for overseas business risk in India states: "TI's Global Corruption Barometer Asia found that India has the highest bribery rate in Asia (39%) and the highest number of people who had to use personal connections to access public services (46%). Although reporting corruption is essential to curb the spread, a majority of those surveyed (63%) feared retaliation if they reported corruption."

A large number of people (89%) felt government corruption was a big problem." Given that corruption significantly affects the overall cost of doing business, the Indian government would need to take more decisive action to make the country more attractive to foreign investors.

Overcoming these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. Implementing sweeping anti-corruption reforms is a crucial first step. Over the medium and long term, India must invest in better infrastructure, raise education standards, and empower women to participate in the labor force.

Achieving all this will not be easy. But without progress in these areas, India will not be able to live up to the hype and become the world's next economic superpower.

Shang-Jin Wei, a former chief economist at the Asian Development Bank, is Professor of Finance and Economics at Columbia Business School and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

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## ARTICLE

## ARTICLE

**PUBLIC NOT PRIVATE***By Togba-Nah Tipoteh*

There is still plenty talk about the Declaration of Assets but such Declaration is kept private rather than made public. Most of the past State managers did not declare assets. Where assets were declared, they were not made public. Assets were kept private in the minds of the State managers or in the office of the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC).

The same situation is happening today. This is why there is much public outcry against the privacy of the assets of public officials.

Keeping private what should be made public is promoting corruption rather than eradicating corruption. It is impossible to eradicate corruption without the public having information about where State managers get their monies from. Let us remember that 26 political parties signed the Farmington Declaration that included a declaration to eradicate corruption.

But that Declaration has been violated by all of the signatories because the public does not have information about where they got their monies from.

Now there is plenty talk about assets recovery. It is not possible to recover assets when it is not publicly known where State officials get their monies from. State officials are talking plenty but they do not Walk The Talk.

You walk the talk against corruption when you declare your assets and make such declaration public. When you are a public official, there is nothing private about you in the public space.

Assets are not being declared publicly because State officials do not want the public to know where they, the State officials, got their monies from. This is the same reason that the signatories to the Farmington Declaration have for not making public any Declaration of their Assets.

What is most important to realize here in trying to solve a societal problem is that any money-driven person is driven by the source of the person's money.

The source of the money-driven person's money in Liberia is the production of raw materials for export system. This is why Liberia has over 200 of the best log species in the world while our children sit on the bare ground in schools. Liberians who work to change this bad system are called trouble makers by the powers that be, the money-driven State managers.

Although the powers that be continue to work hard to keep the dominant system, people who love Liberia are also working hard to change this bad system. This work to change the bad system is working well, as seen in the non-re-election of nearly all members of the National Legislature of Liberia who wanted to be re-elected during the October 10, 2023 Election.

Some persons with bad records got re-elected but they were few and they will be put out during the next election, as the raising of awareness continues. The non-re-election trend will continue in the ensuing elections.

The best and only way for the prevailing bad system to be transformed into the enduring good system is through the transformation of the bad electoral process into the good electoral process.

This transformation will take place as the awareness raising continues, within the Rule of Law, to get persons with good records elected to the National Legislature so that they can bring in the system of Justice, the indispensable ingredient for Peace and Progress in Liberia and in any other country.

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## COMMENTARY

*By: Austin S. Fallah:  
A Concerned Son of the Soil*

**The Mysterious Outbreak of Fires in Liberia  
- A Critical Examination:**

Recently, an alarming surge of fire incidents has swept across Liberia, prompting both local and international stakeholders to question the root cause of this worrisome development.

Despite numerous conjectures ranging from lousy home wiring systems and unreliable power supply from the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) and the Ivory Coast power to internal sabotage by miscreants, and the use of low-grade home electric wires, no definitive conclusion has been arrived at yet.

First, let us examine each of these possibilities in more detail to discern which, if any, holds water in this fiery predicament.

(a) Substandard Home Wiring Systems:

Many homes in Liberia still employ outdated or substandard electrical wiring, posing a significant risk of electrical fires.

Inferior wiring systems are often constructed cheaply, disregarding established safety guidelines, leading to potential shorts or overloading.

In a nation where electrification remains a major challenge, the use of such low-grade materials exacerbates the problem, increasing the risk of electrical fires.

(b) Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC):

The Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC), the state-run power corporation, has a dubious reputation for poor service provision, inefficiency, and infrastructural inadequacy.

These shortcomings could invariably contribute to the recent upsurge in fire incidents.

Unstable power supply, voltage fluctuations, and power outages may strain the already deficient electrical installations in homes, resulting in an increased propensity for electric fire outbreaks.

(c) Ivory Coast Power Supply:

Although Liberia benefits from an additional power supply from the Ivory Coast under the West African Power Pool program, adverse issues may arise from this arrangement's technical complexities.

As two different countries, the compatibility of their power systems is not guaranteed.

Sustainable electricity supply is contingent on the synchronization of the two power infrastructures, and any hiccups could potentially lead to electrical fires.

(d) Internal Sabotage by Miscreants:

A less technical but equally ominous possibility is that deliberate, malicious acts could be responsible for these fire outbreaks.

In an era beset with numerous socio-political upheavals, acts of vandalism can not be entirely discounted.

Such actions, motivated by personal vendettas, political vendettas, or just plain old mischief, could very well be the genesis of these fires.

e. Use of Low-Grade Home Electric Wires:

Finally, the use of low-grade electric wires in home installations can't be overlooked as a possible catalyst for fire incidents.

The persistent proliferation of counterfeit electrical materials in local markets is a weak link in the chain of fire prevention.

When these inferior products are used in house wiring, they inevitably create a dangerous setup that could easily ignite a fire.

Each of these conjectures looks credible to a certain degree as a potential cause of the recent fire tsunami in Liberia.

Yet, to pinpoint the exact origin of this calamity or attribute it to one particular factor would be premature without a thorough scientific investigation.

What is desperately needed now is a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary probe into this matter and swift action by the Liberian government.

This situation is also a wake-up call for other developing countries, particularly Liberia's neighborhoods, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing comprehensive electrical safety measures and strategies to prevent such disasters from recurring in the future.

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## LRA hands over 69 smuggled phones to Police

Customs officers of the Liberia Revenue Authority have confiscated and handed over dozens of mobile phones smuggled here.

Monrovia, Liberia - April 17, 2024] - The Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), acting through its Customs Department, has turned over sixty-nine (69) pieces of assorted mobile phones that were intercepted during an attempted smuggling operation

intercepted a suitcase containing the 69 pieces of assorted mobile phones brought aboard the aircraft Air-Peace SIV-107.

Prime suspect Roland Dolo Sr. and accomplices were identified as the perpetrators who attempted to smuggle the

Contractor Services Firm, an aircraft food catering company at RIA, whose bus was involved in the attempted smuggling of the mobile phones.

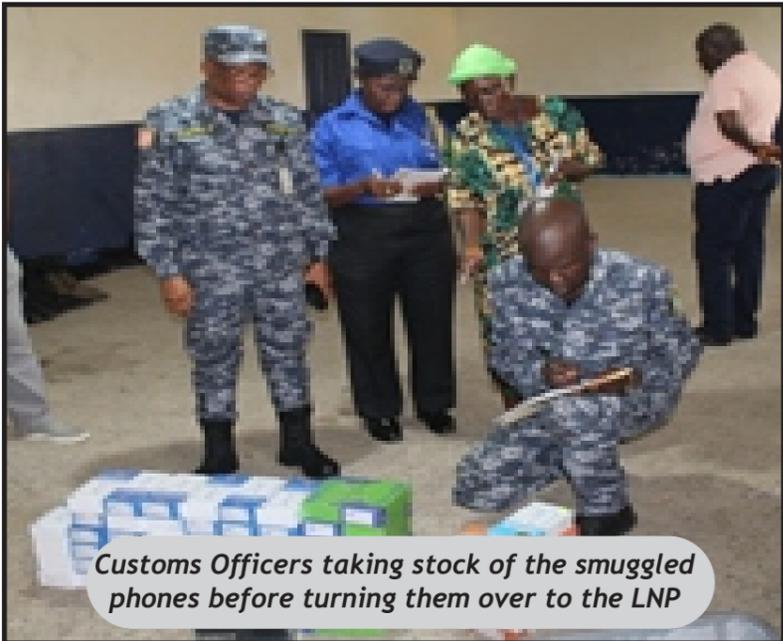
Customs turned over the mobile phones and suspects were promptly turned over to the Liberia National Police (LNP) on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, to facilitate an inter-agency investigation and subsequent prosecution in accordance with Liberian law.

Speaking on behalf of the Customs Department at the handover ceremony, Abel Sneh, Manager of the Customs Anti-Smuggling & Investigation Unit (ASIU), commended the vigilance displayed by the AFL officers in detecting the phones.

He also emphasized the importance of vigilance among Customs officers and joint security personnel stationed at RIA in protecting the state and facilitating international trade.

Manager Sneh reiterated that smuggling is a severe offense against the state, violating Section 1726 of the Modernized Customs Code of 2018, and punishable under Sections 12.11 and 15.80 of the Penal Law of Liberia as 'Smuggling and Economic Sabotage.'

Manager Sneh urged members of the joint security to continue their efforts in assisting the LRA to mobilize domestic revenue for Liberia. Press Release



Customs Officers taking stock of the smuggled phones before turning them over to the LNP

into the country.

The LRA in a press release says the interception occurred at Roberts International Airport (RIA) on Saturday, April 13, where officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)

phones via a bus from the airport tarmac through an illegal exit (Golf 9) next to the Presidential Lounge.

Notably, Roland Dolo Sr. is employed as a staff and bus operator of the Justice

## LDEA chief warns deputy

Despite the internal conflict within the LDEA, Col. Kromah says the agency under his watch has succeeded in reducing the supply of Kush and battling other illicit substances in the

By Emmanuel wise Jipoh

Monrovia, April 17, 2024: Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agency (LDEA) Director General Col. Abraham Kromah has warned his deputy for operations Hassan Fadiga to prioritize the nation's interest and refrain from alleged unethical conduct.

Col. Kromah told his deputy to adapt to his role and recognize his position as a key figure within the institution.

His comments came this week in the wake of reports of bad blood between the two officials.

But Kromah suggested that there was cheap propaganda about his operation in combating drugs here.

According to Col. Kromah, propagandists have been claiming that he is overlapping the functions of his deputy for operations, Mr. Fadiga.

Since taking office this year, Col. Kromah and his team at the LDEA have been robust carrying in combating illicit drugs here.

The new government has

committed to combat illicit drugs, declaring it a national public health emergency.

Since that declaration, Col. Kromah and his LDEA team have raiding ghettos and arresting drug dealers and users.

Col. Kromah defended his rights as head of the agency to carry out raids to seize illegal substances and arrest drug traffickers.

"I do not need the OPS to do raiding, I do not report to the OPS because he feels

that he's the operations director, I have to go to him," said Col. Kromah, a former deputy police chief for operations.

He reaffirmed the LDEA's commitment to wage war against illicit drugs, detailing that the agency has made some tremendous progress in the fight so far.

The evidence, he said, points to the scarcity of "Kush" supplies, a major substance that has been destroying a long of young people across Liberia before Kromah took office.

"We are turning curves of the fight against drugs. We will remain robust in [this] effort," said Col. Kromah.



(LDEA) Director General Col. Abraham Kromah

## Lonestar Cell MTN and partners launch Xtracash MoMo Loan

GSM Company Lone State Cell MTN launches a loan program for MobileMoney subscribers in partnership with United Bank of Africa and Optasia.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, Liberia, April 18, 2024—Liberia's leading communication GSM Company, Lonestar Cell MTN, in partnership with United Bank of Africa (UBA) and Optasia, launches the XtraCash MoMo loan, a digital micro-financing loan for Liberians and mobile money subscribers.

The XtraCash MoMo digital micro-financing loan aims to provide Lonestar Cell MTN subscribers who use mobile money with an opportunity to borrow money from the company via MobileMoney and pay later.

Subscribers using the service can borrow money by dialing \*156\*6, selecting Xtracash, and

hundred United States dollars and one hundred Liberian dollars to twenty Liberian dollars and pay it back within 48 days.

"We have deployed a very robust loan storage system that relies on and determines your eligibility in terms of the amount that you will be qualified to borrow. We have come with our hearts filled with joy for what we have achieved in our quest to digitize the country's financial ecosystem," he says.

Representing the Central Bank of Liberia, Mrs. Miatta O. Kuteh describes the project as exciting, adding that it's in fulfillment of the Central Bank Financial Inclusion Strategy, which aims at ensuring that in 2024, 50% of the adult population is financially included.

According to her, that means



following the option.

Introducing the product on Wednesday, April 17, 2023, Manju Konneh, Product Manager, noted that since the formation of Liberia, the only known manual

they should have a bank account or an account from a mobile financial service provider. She assures that the CBL will continue to support and regulate its legal and regulatory framework to enhance service



for lending and borrowing money has been through physical means of traction to different financial outlets.

He says that the process has been solely manual, and this has limited financial access to a particular segment of the Liberian population.

"Today is a major milestone in our existence as a business and as a country. Today, for the first time in our history, we launched the Xtra Cash MoMo loan. The Xtra Cash MoMo is another loan service that we were able to partner with UBA and others to secure funding and lend subscribers to pay back on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis," he explains.

Mr. Konneh continues that subscribers can borrow up to one

provision.

For his part, United Bank of Africa (UBA) Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Ayonkunle Olajubu is elated over the product, which he says will enhance Liberian business.

"We are grateful for partnering with you people. We will continue to provide our support for the sustainability of this project. With this, we believe there will be improvement in our financial ecosystem", Mr. Olajubu notes. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

# Liberia records 41 fire outbreaks in 2 months

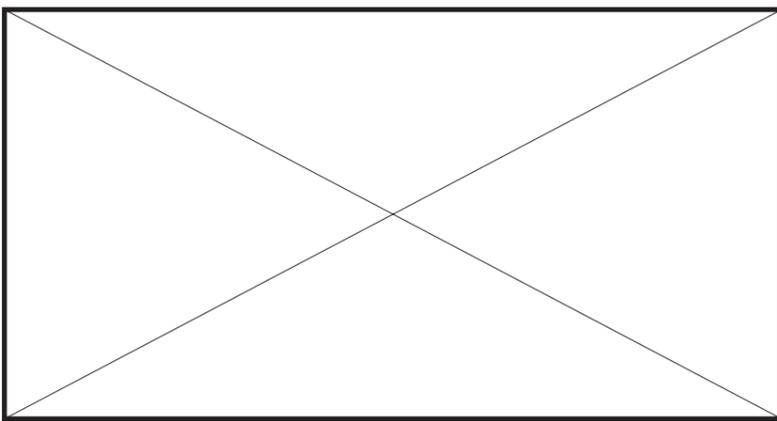
**-Says National Fire Service**

Liberia records highest fire outbreaks in the last two months.

By Kruah Thompson

Monrovia, Liberia, April 18, 2024—Monrovia, Liberia—The Liberia National Fire and Rescue Service has

Colonel G. Warsuwah Barvoul Sr., Director of the Liberia National Fire and Rescue Service, highlighted the breakdown of recent fire outbreaks. Among them, 12 were classified as Class A,



revealed that the country experienced a staggering 41 fire incidents from January to February, marking the highest recorded outbreak in recent months.

According to officials from the National Fire Service, the causes of these fire incidents vary, ranging from electrical faults to negligence in handling flammable materials, as well as a lack of proper fire prevention infrastructure and resources to combat such tragedies.

Speaking at a press conference in Monrovia,

involving combustible or turbo fires, while 3 were categorized as Class B, referred to as rapid-able fires, and 26 were classified as electrical fires. Regrettably, these incidents resulted in 11 deaths and 2 injuries.

"Also, in March, there were 11 fire outbreaks, consisting of four Class A fires, one Class B fire, and six electrical fires. These incidents affected fifty individuals, of whom seven were impacted by Class A fires, one by a Class B fire, and three by Class C fires."

The unprecedented scale of

the fire outbreaks has also prompted widespread public concern here about the safety of residential and commercial properties. Many Liberians are calling for stricter enforcement of building codes and regulations to prevent future tragedies.

However, in response to these incidents, the Director announced that they will soon be launching a fire protection awareness campaign. This initiative will focus on educating the public about housekeeping practices and safe handling of appliances in homes.

The awareness campaigns, according to him, will utilize jingles in local languages, community outreach programs, and talk shows. Additionally, stickers will be distributed to ensure that all households in Liberia have a safety box for fire outbreaks.

Meanwhile, in response to the escalating crisis, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community leaders have rallied together to address the root causes of fire outbreaks and implement proactive measures to mitigate future risks. These efforts include conducting public awareness on fire safety practices, enforcing the purchase of fire extinguishers to vulnerable communities.

Editing by Jonathan Browne

# Police arrest key suspect in Officer Amanda Nebo's death

The Liberian National Police says it has napped a prime suspect in death of a female officer.

By Kruah Thompson

Monrovia, Liberia, April 18, 2024 - The Inspector General of the Liberia National Police (LNP), Col. Gregory Coleman, announced the arrest of a key suspect believed to be involved in the tragic death of Police Officer Amanda Nebo. The suspect is currently undergoing police interrogation.

According to report, Officer Nebo met her untimely demise in a chilling incident on April 14, 2024, around midnight, after she was confronted by unidentified individuals demanding her handbag.

When she refused to comply with their demands, she was fatally attacked, which led to her sudden demise.

However, conflicting reports have emerged about the exact location of the incident, with some sources indicating Barnesville Junction and others citing Dry Rice Market Junction.

Briefing reporters at the Ministry of Information, Culture

Affairs, and Tourism on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, IG Coleman disclosed that the apprehended suspect has provided crucial information, leading to the identification of additional suspects in the crime.

He indicates that efforts are underway to apprehend these individuals, with plans to have them in custody within the next day or two.

To address rise in crime, particularly related to motorcycle offenses, the Police Chief outlined proactive measures implemented by the LNP.

According to him, these measures extend beyond resource deployment, with consideration to impose curfew on motorcyclists to bolster safety measures for both riders and passengers.

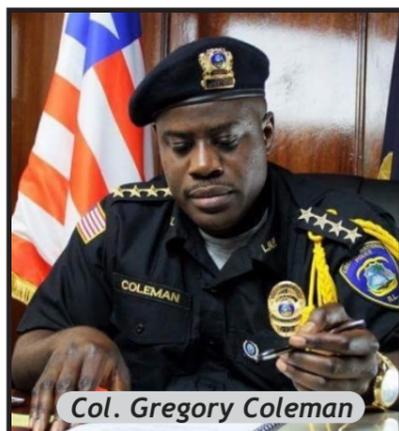
Highlighting the urgency of targeted interventions, Col. Coleman recounted a recent incident where prompt action from a citizen

averted a potential tragedy involving motorcyclists wielding machetes.

He reveals that two days ago, a woman visited his office to report an incident she witnessed while driving home around Somalia Drive at 11:30 pm.

She described seeing two motorcyclists armed with machetes chasing a cyclist. To intervene, she maneuvered her vehicle between them, forcing the assailants off the road and rescuing the victim.

The Police IG notes prevalence of motorcycle-related crimes in the area and discussed plans to enhance safety measures.



Col. Gregory Coleman

# I'm slowly dying

**-Former Superintendent Karbiah cries out**

A former superintendent battling stroke, appeals for assistance.

By: Emmanuel wise Jipoh

Monrovia, Liberia, April 18, 2024- Rivercess County former Superintendent J. Bismark Karbiah is alarmed about his ill health as he appeals for help from the government, humanitarian, and NGOs to save his life.

Mr. Karbiah has battled stroke nearly for the past six years. His cry comes barely less than four months after the former ruling Coalition for Democratic Change-led government in which he served left power in January.

He served as Superintendent for Rivercess from March 2018 to January 2024 under former President George Manneh Weah.

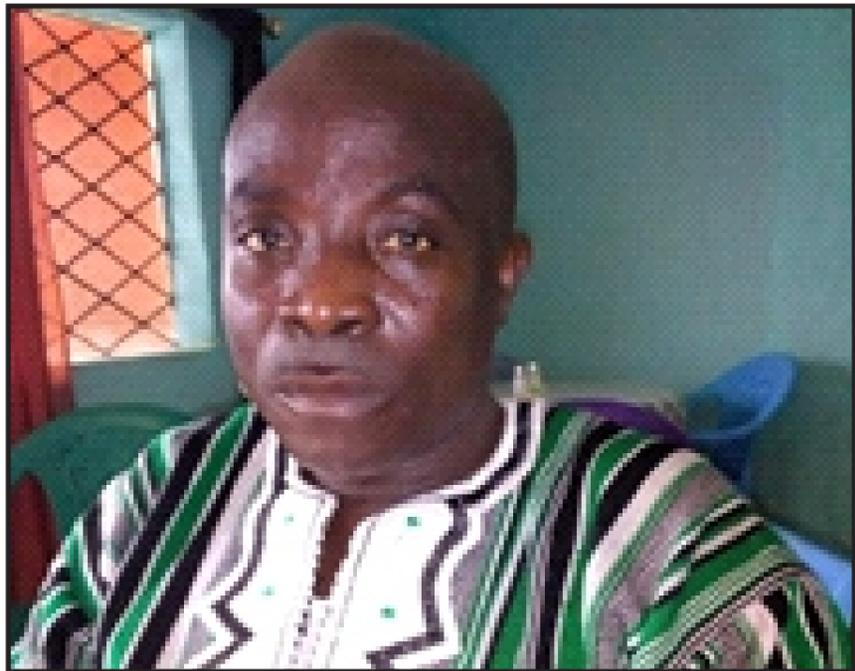
"I'm not okay, my brother. As you can see, I am crossing the road to go and beg those senators and representatives at the Capitol Building for help. I'm

explain his health condition, but to no avail until the administration's tenure expired and he was defeated at the poll.

However, he lauds former President Weah for the confidence reposed in him to serve as Superintendent while blaming officials for barricading the ex-President from seeing him about his deteriorating condition.

He accused former Chief of Protocol Norah Finda Bundoo, Margibi County Senator Nathaniel McGill, former Minister of Finance Samuel Tweah Jr., and former Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment (LACE) Boss Mr. Perci Yeke, among others, who denied him access to Weah.

"This is an unbearable condition I'm left to live with, and even my own government did let me down, those officials - Samuel Tweah, Perci Yeke, Nathaniel McGill prevented me from seeing the former President until the



suffering, even to find food to eat on a daily basic is difficult, all I left now with is to beg or die", he laments.

He told The NEW DAWN that he had been suffering from depression less than a month after assuming office in the county.

"I'm suffering from stroke and complete loss. I feel like killing myself. I'm tired of this condition. No assistance to have me treated. No food to eat, no car, and everything is totally worthless living, and I'm left with no option but to kill myself and call it an end to this traumas."

Karbiah says he has gone to America for medication, where he spent all his money and resources without help from anywhere.

He has requested to meet former President Weah to

government left office."

Meanwhile, with a paralyzed leg and arm, the former superintendent is calling on the government of President Joseph Nyuma Boakai for assistance to enable him to seek advanced treatment abroad.

He details that his sickness has gone beyond western medical therapy, and now needs traditional treatment, thus he wants US\$15,000 to go to neighboring African countries such as Benin, Gambia, Mali, Guinea or perhaps India for herbal medication.

Karbiah laments that his family abandoned him because he worked in the Weah administration and couldn't help them.

Editing by Jonathan Browne

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# Français

## Verdier a divulgué les avoirs de Weah et d'autres, selon la directrice de la LACC

Les fonctionnaires publics libériens sont tenus de déclarer leurs avoirs lors de leur entrée en fonction et de faire de même après avoir quitté leur poste. Les collaborateurs, ont été divulgués au public il y a environ trois ans par l'ancien patron de la Commission anti-corruption du Libéria (LACC), James Verdier, selon la directrice actuelle de la LACC, Alexandra Zoe.

fonction et de leur départ. Cependant, pour des raisons de confidentialité, seul un tribunal compétent peut assigner ces documents en justice en cas de litige sur ces avoirs, ou les individus peuvent demander à la LACC de les publier en vertu de la loi sur la liberté d'information.

Le gouvernement du président Weah a transféré le pouvoir le 22 janvier de cette année, mais la nouvelle de la divulgation de ses avoirs n'a fait la une des journaux que quelques jours auparavant. Cela a incité la Chambre des représentants à convoquer l'ancien patron de la LACC, Cllr. Edward Martins, et la directrice actuelle Zoe pour expliquer comment les avoirs de l'ancien président et de ses lieutenants ont été divulgués au public.

Lors de l'audience de mardi, Mme Zoe a allégué que les avoirs du président Weah et de ses anciens lieutenants avaient été divulgués par son prédécesseur, James Verdier.

Mme Zoe a expliqué qu'à la réception de l'invitation de la Chambre à expliquer comment les enregistrements des avoirs de ces individus ont été



Ex-Min. Tweah

Ex-Pres. Weah

Mrs. Taylor

Ex-Min. McGill

Cependant, la loi ne les oblige pas à publier à moins d'y être contraints par leur propre volonté ou par une assignation en justice. Ainsi, cela reste secret.

Les avoirs de l'ancien président George Weah et de son vice-président, Jewel Howard Taylor, ainsi que de trois de ses anciens

Les trois fonctionnaires de l'administration Weah étaient l'ancien ministre des Finances Samuel Tweah, l'ancien ministre d'État Nathaniel F. McGill et l'ancien maire de la ville de Monrovia, Jefferson Koijee.

Les fonctionnaires publics libériens sont tenus par les lois anti-corruption de déclarer leurs avoirs lors de leur prise de

▶ CONT'D page 9

## La famille du président de la Chambre des Représentants se remet encore du désastre de l'incendie survenu dimanche

Dans le sillage du désastre de l'incendie du dimanche 14 avril 2024 au domicile du président de la Chambre, Jonathan Fonati Koffa, son épouse, Madame Dama Reter Yekeson-Koffa, décrit l'arrivée tardive des pompiers, notamment du Service de lutte contre l'incendie et de secours du Libéria, comme étant non productive et sans valeur.

Madame Koffa, spécialiste en anesthésie et directrice générale adjointe du Centre Médical John Fitzgerald Kennedy à Monrovia, a déclaré au Nouveau Matin le lundi 15 avril 2024 que les pompiers ont peu fait pour sauver sa maison lors de l'incident, laissant sa famille et elle-même dévastées.

"Il n'y avait pas vraiment grand-chose qui a été fait; ils sont arrivés ici après 45 minutes, mais nous ne pouvions pas apprécier grand-chose vraiment fait. Au fur et à mesure que les explosions augmentaient, nous étions dévastés, et je pense que le service d'incendie était vraiment non productif et sans valeur. Vous ne pouvez

pas avoir un service comme celui-ci", raconte-t-elle, exprimant sa frustration face à une situation qui a rendu le président et sa famille sans abri.

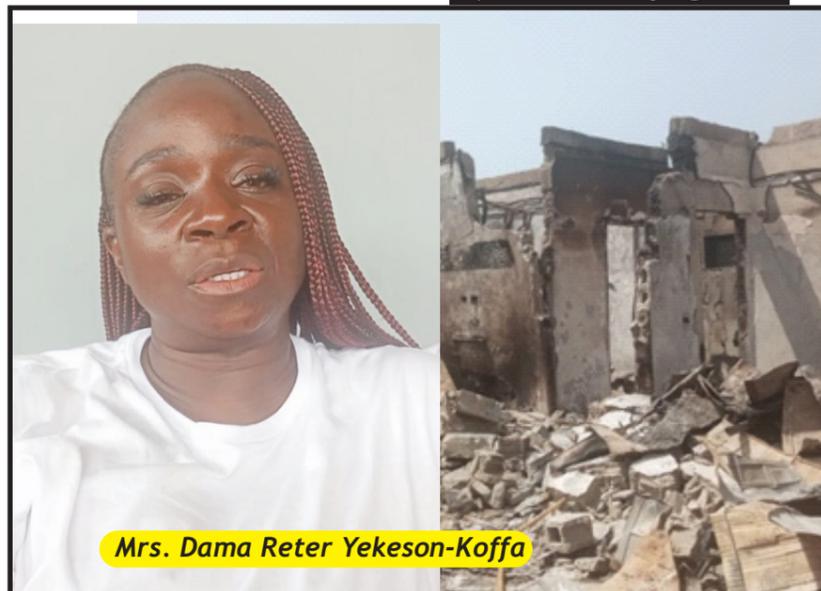
Elle raconte en outre que le feu a éclaté dans la salle de spectacle de sa maison valant plusieurs millions de dollars située sur la route de la réhabilitation à Paynesville, en dehors de Monrovia. Il a été caractérisé par une propagation rapide des flammes, à laquelle les pompiers n'ont pas pu répondre à leur arrivée tardive sur les lieux.

Madame Koffa : "Nous étions dans notre chambre, prêts à nous

retirer pour la soirée, et j'étais descendue pour prendre quelque chose à manger. Pendant ce temps, un de nos gardes est venu nous alerter qu'il y avait un feu dans la salle de spectacle, et il y avait tellement de fumée noire partout qui sortait. Nous ne pouvions rien voir, et il y avait une incertitude sur l'endroit où se trouvait réellement ce feu."

Elle soupçonne que cela aurait pu être causé par un défaut électrique, notant qu'alors qu'elle dînait, le garde

▶ CONT'D page 9



Mrs. Dama Reter Yekeson-Koffa

## Éditorial

### Le gouvernement libérien doit agir pour stopper l'extraction de sable noir

Le gouvernement libérien, par l'intermédiaire du ministère des Mines et de l'Énergie, semble garder le silence sur l'extraction, l'exportation ou la contrebande de sable noir du Libéria par une compagnie d'extraction de sable chinoise.

Des images vidéo récentes obtenues par le NEW DAWN montrent des centaines de sacs de sable noir collectés par des mineurs chinois de Virginia, dans le comté de Montserrado, prêts à l'exportation.

Dans la vidéo, un habitant de la communauté de Waterside, en Virginie, tire la sonnette d'alarme : des tonnes de sacs de sable noir sont exportées du Libéria chaque mois par des mineurs chinois. Ces derniers se livrent également à l'extraction de sable de plage, destiné à la vente aux personnes et aux institutions du secteur de la construction.

Or, l'extraction de sable noir à des fins d'exportation soulève des questions au sein de la population quant à savoir si les autorités du ministère des Mines et de l'Énergie sont au courant et ont donné leur accord pour une telle exportation.

Les autorités du ministère des Mines et de l'Énergie affirment enquêter sur la question. Cependant, on observe des lenteurs ou un manque total d'enthousiasme, alors que les plaintes des riverains se font de plus en plus pressantes.

Le sable noir, également appelé sable de magnétite ou sable de minerai de fer, est un minéral lourd que l'on trouve couramment dans les zones côtières. L'exploitation du sable noir, qui peut sembler banale à première vue, a de nombreuses applications importantes dans de nombreuses industries.

Les experts soulignent l'importance du sable noir dans l'industrie de la construction. En raison de sa teneur élevée en fer, il est utilisé comme additif dans la production de béton et d'asphalte. L'ajout de sable noir améliore la résistance et la durabilité de ces matériaux, les rendant plus résistants à l'usure. De plus, ses propriétés magnétiques le rendent utile pour la fabrication d'aimants utilisés dans les projets de construction.

Le sable noir joue également un rôle important dans la production d'acier car il contient des quantités importantes d'oxyde de fer. Le minerai de fer extrait du sable noir est une matière première essentielle pour la sidérurgie.

Grâce à des techniques de fusion et d'affinage, le minerai de fer est transformé en acier, largement utilisé dans le développement des infrastructures, la construction automobile et de nombreuses autres industries. Les propriétés uniques du sable noir en font un excellent milieu pour les systèmes de filtration de l'eau.

Les riverains et les propriétaires des terrains sur lesquels les Chinois opèrent illégalement qualifient ces agissements de désastreux et appellent le gouvernement à se "réveiller" et à protéger la zone du pillage. Les ravages environnementaux causés par l'extraction de sable noir suscitent de graves inquiétudes économiques parmi les populations locales.

Selon eux, les activités de ces mineurs illégaux ne font pas seulement détruire leurs terres, mais ont également un impact dévastateur sur l'environnement, ce qui, déplorent-ils, constitue une parodie de l'État, car le dragage sillonne la mangrove, zone humide pourtant préservée pour le bénéfice environnemental du Libéria.

Nous pensons que cette situation est importante et nécessite l'attention immédiate du gouvernement afin d'éviter que notre population ne se fasse voler ses richesses naturelles en plein jour, pendant que quelques fonctionnaires assis quelque part en profitent aux dépens de la majorité.

# Français

Starts from page 8

## Verdier a divulgué les

divulgués, elle a immédiatement mené une enquête interne et il a été établi qu'il y avait eu une fuite de déclaration des avoirs il y a deux à trois ans par M. Verdier juste avant son départ.

Mme Zoe a ajouté qu'il y avait des traces d'échanges d'e-mails entre l'ancien patron de la LACC et l'équipe de déclaration des avoirs à des fins de vérification.

La Chambre des représentants a invité les responsables de la LACC après que le représentant du district de Montserrado n° 9, Frank Saah Foko, ait attiré l'attention de la plénière sur le fait que le mardi 2 avril 2024, Spoon Network, lors de leur émission très suivie, a révélé le formulaire de déclaration des avoirs de l'ancien président Weah. Selon le représentant Foko, bien que l'exercice soit louable, la Loi sur la LACC de 2022 est clairement guidée par la confidentialité, nécessitant précision et conformité aux normes légales. "La déclaration des avoirs n'oblige en aucun cas les individus à publier leurs avoirs en tant que tels. Le président Weah a choisi de ne pas publier, tout comme le président Joseph N. Boakai. La loi dit que l'on peut déclarer mais ne force personne à

publier sauf de son propre gré."

Il a ajouté qu'il serait intéressant de noter que Cllr. Kla Martin, l'ancien patron de la LACC qui a été limogé après l'entrée en vigueur d'une nouvelle loi le 21 mars 2021, a déclaré aux médias qu'il n'avait aucun enregistrement de l'ancien président George Weah déclarant ses avoirs. Cela s'est avéré faux et trompeur, car le GAC a confirmé que l'ancien président avait déclaré ses avoirs.

Il a déclaré que depuis cette confirmation et les appels en justice subséquents de Martin ainsi que sa nomination à la tête de l'équipe de récupération des avoirs, le formulaire de déclaration des avoirs de l'ancien président Weah est désormais disponible dans l'espace public et sur différentes plateformes.

Mais en réponse aux assertions du représentant Foko, Cllr. Martin a précisé qu'il était très clair lorsqu'il s'adressait aux journalistes et qu'il n'avait pas vu la déclaration des avoirs de l'ancien président Weah. Pendant ce temps, la Chambre a instruit son Comité de la Justice et de la Sécurité nationale de faire rapport à la plénière dans les deux semaines. - Édité par Othello B. Garblah

## Le dossier de la mort de l'officier de l'EPS refait surface



EPS Melvin Early

Des rapports ont circulé selon lesquels l'agent de l'EPS Melvin Early aurait mis fin à ses jours par plusieurs coups de feu, mais certains membres du public et la famille du défunt ont rejeté le rapport gouvernemental initial pendant le mandat de l'ancien président Weah. La police nationale du Libéria (LNP) sous une nouvelle direction a découvert des rapports contradictoires entourant la mort de l'agent de l'Executive Protective Services (EPS) Melvin Early alors qu'il était en service actif en février 2021. M. Early est décédé le 19 février 19, 2021, des suites de plusieurs balles lors d'un voyage présidentiel à Tappita, comté de Nimba.

Le rapport gouvernemental initial sous le régime de l'ancien président George Manneh Weah suggérait que l'agent Early s'était donné la mort vers 6h03 alors qu'il était en service.

La famille du défunt a rejeté le récit du gouvernement, et certains membres du public ont remis en question la possibilité pour quiconque de se tirer dessus avec une arme plus d'une fois.

La famille du défunt a contesté cette affirmation, alléguant que ses blessures étaient incompatibles avec des blessures

auto-infligées.

Après avoir vu le corps, la famille du défunt a suggéré que M. Early aurait été abattu au niveau de l'abdomen, de la poitrine et de la tête.

Le nouveau chef de la police du Libéria, le colonel Gregory Coleman, a déclaré lors d'une conférence de presse cette semaine que la police enquêtait davantage pour valider les détails fournis dans les deux rapports contradictoires.

S'exprimant au ministère de l'Information à Monrovia, le colonel Coleman a indiqué que sa direction ne tirait pas de conclusions hâtives concernant la mort de M. Early.

"Alors que nous ne supposons pas qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'un suicide, nous enquêtons davantage pour être en mesure de corroborer ce qui a été rapporté dans les deux documents", a-t-il déclaré.

Coleman a révélé qu'une enquête en cours avait révélé des rapports contradictoires entourant l'incident. En prenant ses fonctions cette année, le colonel Coleman a annoncé son intention de rouvrir certains cas inexplicables de l'administration précédente. Ces cas incluent la mort de l'agent Early.

Le chef de la police a révélé que les officiers enquêtent activement sur ces cas, comme promis, et que les conclusions seront publiées pour la consultation publique en temps voulu.

Starts from page 8

## La famille du président de la

est venu l'alerter que le feu était dans la salle de spectacle à l'étage, et qu'il y avait une énorme fumée noire partout. Cependant, elle observe : "Avant cela, il y avait eu quelques fois où le LEC était coupé, et quand nous avons allumé le générateur, le LEC est revenu, et peu de temps après, l'incident s'est produit."

Elle décrit l'incident comme dévastateur ; cependant, elle exprime sa gratitude envers Dieu car il n'y a eu aucune victime.

Elle souligne que le Libéria manque d'un système pour faire face aux catastrophes, soulignant qu'avec des systèmes seulement, le pays pourra faire face aux tragédies fréquentes et prévenir les désastres. Elle déplore qu'à moins que cela ne soit fait et que des systèmes ne soient mis en place, le Libéria continuera à être victime de désastres dévastateurs.

"Je pense que nous avons besoin de construire des systèmes dans ce pays dans tous les secteurs ; le département des pompiers est l'un de ces départements que je pense que nous ne prenons pas au sérieux dans ce pays et que nous devons prendre très au sérieux car il a des résultats dévastateurs et doit être pris avec urgence", réitère encore

l'épouse du président.

Évaluant ses pertes en termes monétaires, elle évoque des souvenirs inestimables, y compris des photos de membres de la famille et d'autres documents essentiels, que, selon elle, un million ne pourrait pas rendre. Cependant, elle indique que la valeur de la structure de leur maison moderne est de plus d'un million de dollars américains.

S'adressant lors d'une conférence de presse le lundi 15 avril, le président Jonathan Fonati Koffa a décrit l'incident comme étant triste tout en remerciant ses voisins, qu'il a notés comme étant les premiers secouristes à avoir empêché des dommages supplémentaires.

Il a déploré que l'incident l'ait laissé, lui et sa famille, dans un état de choc complet, ajoutant que tandis qu'il cherchait refuge à l'extérieur de sa maison, l'ancien président George Manneh Weah, qui réside dans la même communauté, lui a rendu visite et lui a fourni deux valises de vêtements.

Le président a révélé qu'en plus des dommages matériels d'une valeur de plus d'un million de dollars, il n'y avait aucun dommage monétaire ou documentaire, car son coffre-fort privé et ses documents étaient conservés dans le sous-sol de la maison en prévision d'un tel incident.

## Le parlement libérien entame l'audition budgétaire

Le projet de budget national 2024 est le premier instrument financier du président Boakai après que le Parlement a renvoyé la version précédente du document laissé par son prédécesseur pour permettre au nouveau régime d'aligner le budget sur ses plans de développement national.

La 55e Assemblée législative du Libéria devrait entamer aujourd'hui, le 17 avril 2024, une audition publique sur le projet de budget national 2024.

Le comité mixte des voies et moyens et des finances lancera l'audition publique dans les chambres communes du bâtiment du Capitole.

L'audience sera présidée par le comité mixte, présidé par le représentant Dixon W. Seboe et coprésidé par le sénateur Prince Moya.

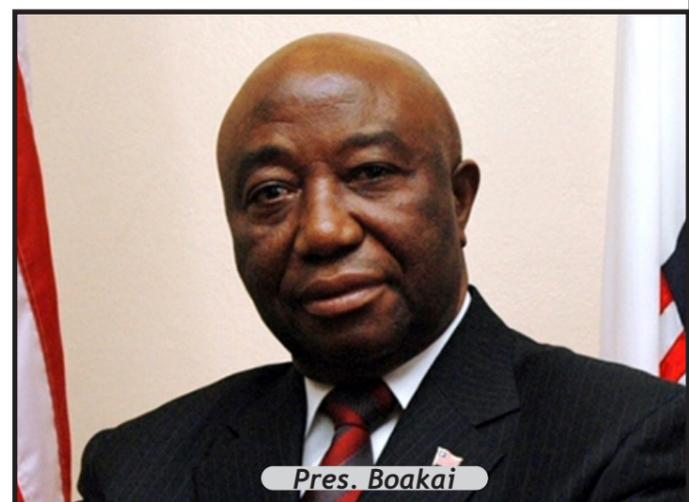
L'audience publique débutera à 9h00 et divers ministères, corporations et agences gouvernementales comparaitront pour défendre leurs allocations budgétaires respectives.

Il s'agit du premier instrument financier du président Joseph Nyumah Boakai, le Parlement ayant renvoyé la version précédente du document laissé par son prédécesseur, M. George Manneh Weah.

La démarche a permis à la nouvelle administration d'aligner le budget sur ses plans de développement national.

L'audience sur les dépenses a suivi une composante de revenus d'une semaine qui s'est tenue à huis clos.

À partir de 9h00 à 10h00 mercredi, le ministère du Développement et de la Planification financière (MFDP) prendra la



Pres. Boakai

parole pour défendre son budget.

Il sera suivi de l'Autorité de régulation des recettes du Libéria (LRA) prévue de 10h00 à 11h00.

Le ministère des Travaux publics arrivera en milieu de journée de 11h00 à 12h00 avant la pause déjeuner des législateurs.

D'autres institutions gouvernementales apparaîtront après l'heure du déjeuner. Elles comprennent la Santé de 14h00 à 15h00, le Centre médical John F. Kennedy (JFK) de 15h00 à 16h00, l'Institut national de santé publique (NPHIL) de 16h00 à 17h00, et l'hôpital Jackson F. Doe.

D'autres auditions publiques sont prévues dans les prochains jours, et certaines institutions gouvernementales devant comparaître devant le Parlement incluent le ministère de l'Éducation, l'Université du Libéria et l'Université William V.S. Tubman.

Le Conseil de l'examen de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (WAEC) [bureau du Libéria], l'Institut Booker T. Washington (BWI), le Système scolaire consolidé de Monrovia (MCSS) et le ministère de l'Agriculture sont attendus jeudi.

# LIBERIANS

# DEBATE

**Topic: Frequency of fire disasters**

*By Naneka Hoffman*

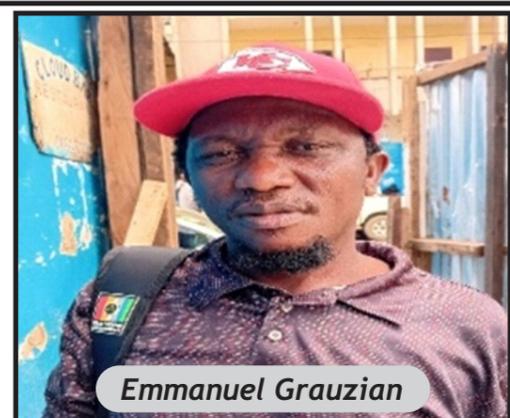
The wave of fire disasters in homes and communities is drawing attention of many ordinary Liberians who government to intervene to save lives and property, as you may read below from a random view sampling.



**Emmanuel Grauzian**

people will connect their lines for four or five years before getting to LEC, and LEC current is very strong. To connect people on LEC, they need to do assessment. I believe that fire disaster is often caused by those illegal wires and improper connection of wires, so the issue of fire disaster LEC needs to see how best they can solve it. Moreover, some of the causes can be people leaving their Meters and electronic appliances on, while going to work or school, so when LEC comes with force, it leads to some of these causes. The government needs to put measures in place by doing public awareness in communities to educate people on how it is not good to leave Meters and electronic sets on with children in the home. This will help to cease frequent fire disasters in the country.

“For my own observation, the issue of fire disaster in Liberia is that LEC needs to be involved in community awareness, because we observed that many homes are being involved in illegal connections, which isn’t sometimes suitable. So I call LEC the last time that they should go in the community before connecting someone to assess the place, because if you observe, sometimes



**Emmanuel Grauzian**

“I think fire disaster in the country is getting serious now. It isn’t one or two times; it has occurred on several occasions, seeing the fire going to high areas because when the fire disaster was taking place in other areas, I think people weren’t looking at it, but the way it is now, it is going to make more people concern, because it has become something uncontrollable. We don’t think about this thing in our whole life, to see it happening, is a serious issue for us to look at. Some of the causes have to do with the on-and-off current we are using. There are no Meters being given to householders for people to have access to the own Meters to control in their houses, so at the end of the day, you will see other people going for illegal wires just to get current, because if you don’t do that, you will not have current. And the heat is all over, so at the end of the day,

they don’t know the types of wire to use and when current comes, the wire starts to burn, causing serious problems for the various communities. I think the government should give people Meters, but if we don’t do it, we will continue with this fire disaster thing.”

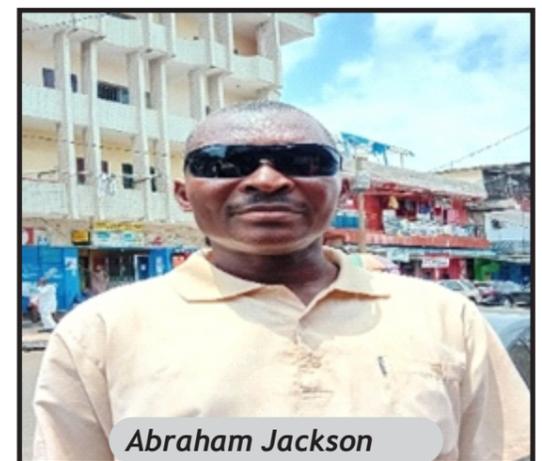
“The fire disasters could be due to ignorant or carelessness of owners of property. It could be due to electrical shocks. Some ordinary people will light candles unattended, at the end of the day the house burns. The country needs more fire extinguishers. One awareness the National Fire Service should embark on is to ensure every home has one or two fire extinguishers, and to make it a law just the way every Liberian has national ID card.



**David N. Targbe**

“Some of the causes of fire disasters in the country, I will blame LEC because LEC will allow people to run their own wires, connecting to the pole. We are using substandard materials in our country without them being tested by LEC and Fire Service. The managements of Fire Service, LEC and the Monrovia City Corporation need to work together in different capacities that water trucks will be able to in alleys to help fight fire. Fire Service and the government need to do awareness on the radio every day and even on Facebook, because some people burned coal and leave the ashes and when the breeze blows, the fire catches in the house; they don’t know and blame it on LEC. So, the government needs to do more

awareness to educate our people in the community and on the radio, because some of the houses that burn, it cannot be attributed to LEC. We just need to educate our people on so many issues.”



**Abraham Jackson**

Every Liberian should have fire extinguishers in their home, whether it is a zinc house or concrete, they should have it there. Fire Service will also generate money and at the sometime save lives and

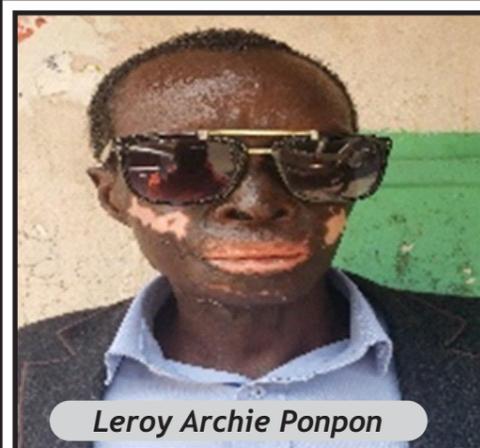
properties. Fire Service needs to do awareness on why it is important to have fire extinguishers in homes. Parents should also educate their children how to take care of electricity at home and about its danger. All these things should be taught to citizens and families at home then we will control the number of fire incidents we hear about.”



**Emmanuel Tamba**

Liberia has only three fire trucks in the entire country, so it is unfortunate and they need to be proactive with more programs to halt frequent fire disasters in the country. Looking at causes of fire in the country is due to high poverty rate, leading to illegal connections in communities. All of these illegal connections today are causing fire in the country; some people buy appliances they don’t know how to use. So LEC and the government need to do more awareness in communities, on the radio and even in schools to stop this frequent fire disasters.”

“The incident is an issue and I think the government needs to stress on more budget allocation for the Fire Service. I listened to the Director on Okay FM; he said the Fire Service in



**Leroy Archie Ponpon**

“The issue of fire disaster has become a situation now that we all need to look at. This gone Friday, seven houses got burned, but what needs to be done is strong awareness in terms of

early warning to people. I want to believe that illegal connections could be a driving force behind most of the fire outbreaks in many of the communities, and it’s coming mainly from poor communities. Poor community is where illegal connections take place. In the absence of professional electricians doing their job, poor people are the ones that are getting this kind of huge victimization. LEC must be able to step up her game with respect to enforcement and illegal connections. If that is not done, there will be more weeping in terms of fire victimization, and those who suffer are mainly poor people. If LEC isn’t providing Meters, of course, we find solution, which is illegal connection. Illegal connection is harming and causing fire outbreaks. The government should step in.”

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# Dr. Tipoteh joins war crimes court campaign

# HPX completes technical due diligence

A renowned Liberian politician welcomes current efforts to legislate war and economic crimes courts for Liberia to revert the nation from sliding into its ugly past.

sharing information about these things to motivate people to work through the rule of law instead, adding that the information is working into effect.

By Lincoln G. Peters

hundred million a day, and the rest of the Liberian people have at most three hundred Liberian dollars a day.

The renowned economist laments that the country

Monrovia, Liberia, April 18, 2024 – Veteran Liberian politician, economist,

Founder and former standard bearer of the Liberian People's Party (LPP), he notes that through the rule of law, Liberians have brought down policymakers who went to the legislature so that they can have good laws implemented.

"The evidence by this information I have been sharing is the recent 2023 election. From the 52-54 legislature, 75% of people who wanted to be elected were not re-elected. That happened as a result of the information. We are giving the people information on the legislature's bad record."

Meanwhile, Dr. Tipoteh says he welcomes and supports the establishment of a war and economic crimes court in Liberia, adding that it is time that those who committed crimes against the state and humanity be brought to justice to end impunity.

He notes that impunity is, however, gradually disappearing because of the information they share and provide, which prevented over 75% of lawmakers from being re-elected.

"I support anything that promotes justice. And so, I support the war and economic crimes court. Justice prevails when those people who committed crimes against the state and humanity are brought to justice. So, it's impossible to have justice when people commit crimes and go with impunity," he says.

In early February this year, the technical team of the US company HPX completed extensive review work and a site visit to review the assets.

Monrovia, April 18, 2024: US High Power Exploration Inc. ("HPX") announced today that it has completed technical due diligence on Liberia's St. John River iron ore licenses. These licenses are the subject of an acquisition agreement with Intra Ferrous Pte. Ltd., signed in December 2023.

HPX's technical team completed extensive review work and a site visit in early February this year to review the assets.

A press release dated 17 April 2024 explains that during the site visit, the HPX geological team identified significant showings of Banded Iron Formations (BIF), which supports the company's view of the licenses' productivity.

The St. John River licenses are strategically located within

Agreement between the parties that can be presented to the Liberian Government's Inter-Ministerial Concessions Committee for finalization, approval by the President of Liberia and ratification by the Liberian Legislature.

The release said significant work has also been completed by the Nimba Project Technical Team over the last six months, which has focused on streamlining the project, reducing the proposed capital required for Phase 1 development, and increasing available resources.

These significant project advances include commencement of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment for Phase 1 mine development.

They include completing a contract tender process for mining, processing, and hauling for Phase 1 and updating the 2021 feasibility study to generate a JORC-compliant reserve, including technical updates to geology, geotechnical, and



Dr. Togba-Nah Tipoteh

and scholar Dr. Togba-Nah Tipoteh joins the call for the establishment of war and economic crimes courts to end impunity, noting that Liberia is headed for poverty, lawlessness, and corruption.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with The NEW DAWN, the former Presidential candidate notes that research conducted by AfroBarometer in 2022 found that the people of Liberia believe their country is headed in the wrong direction.

According to him, the Liberian legislature has access to two hundred thousand Liberian Dollars a day. In contrast, their foreign friends have access to sixty-three

currently wallops in a culture of "rule of outlaw" amid widespread impunity, using the phrase, 'That's the way it ends now, oh because that is how it was built.'

Dr. Tipoteh: "Now, what is the wrong direction? The wrong direction is poverty, corruption, and lawlessness. This is the situation that has led to violence. Violence in evidence is the coup and the civil war. The civil war killed over three hundred thousand persons, while several were wounded and displayed."

A member of the Progressive class reveals that in a bid to prevent Liberia from sliding into its ugly past, he has been providing leadership by

# CDC alarms troubling trends

Starts from back page

within the margin of errors, points to the UP that although they have legitimacy to govern, but they don't necessarily have the popular mandate of the

Liberian people.

"The death rate in Kinjor, Grand Cape Mount County was troubling. Six years of the CDC administration didn't see death of

demonstrators. We call on the UP to respect the human rights of the Liberian people; they have the right to protest, as UP did during the CDC six years" he emphasizes.

the proposed Liberty Corridor, and previous work completed by the United States Geological Survey ("USGS") identified a potential exploration target of 650 million tonnes of up to 58% Fe.

The St. John River iron ore licenses are highly prospective, and with the extensive exploration experience and success within the HPX group, the release said.

The company looks forward to implementing an active exploration program to advance the St. John River projects.

The release detailed that HPX will now move to complete financial close of the acquisition during this quarter. In addition to completing technical due diligence on the St. John River assets, HPX has significantly advanced the Liberty Corridor Development Agreement with the Liberty Corridor Steering Committee. With the first meeting of the Steering Committee held on 28 February 2024, members of the Steering Committee have been working to finalize a Development

metallurgical data.

They also include the identification of a super high-grade zone in Phase 1 comprising 20 million tonnes at 68% Fe—a high-quality product that will attract a significant pricing premium—and the simplification of the Phase 1 Mining Flowsheet to remove complexity and reduce CapEx. It also named anticipated capex to bring Phase 1 into full production, circa US\$100 million; the potential to increase the project resources by 300 Mt. across Phase 1 and 2 with mine plan and scheduling improvements, taking the mine life past 25 years at 30Mtpa rate. The project advances further include reduction of overall capex required for Phase 2, 30 Mtpa, to US\$1.9 billion - a reduction of US\$375 million

The President and CEO of HPX, Bronwyn Barnes, commented: "HPX is pleased to have completed technical due diligence on the St John River licenses in Liberia and will now move to financial close of the proposed acquisition." "As we continue to grow the Company's asset base in West Africa, we look forward to expanding our presence in Liberia with the completion of this acquisition," Barnes continued.



# CDC alarms troubling trends

**-Cautions UP-led government not to self-disrupt**

Monrovia, Liberia, April 18, 2024 - Former ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) cautions the Boakai administration to desist from activities that could disrupt its governing of the State.

By Lincoln G. Peters  
**M**onrovia, Liberia, April 18, 2024-The former ruling Coalition for Democratic Change alarms of troubling

The Acting National Chair of the CDC, Atty. Augustine Janga Kowo, says the recent fire that engulfed the homes of Speaker Jonathan F. Koffa, and Montserrado County Senator

government in conducting the affairs of the State is very disruptive, adding that targeting ex-government officials through illegal removal of tenure holders, civil servants and Foreign Service is disruptive to the peace.

He cautions the current administration to be very careful about the way they are proceeding, to protect the peace of the country.

“We see a troubling trend and we think those fire disasters are looking suspicious. We call on the government authority to initiate speedy investigation into the matter. We also urged the government to not be disruptive of its own governing process”, Atty. Kowo cautions.

He recalls that few months into the Unity Party-led administration, the CDC wrote Speaker Koffa and Senate President Pro-Tempore Nyonblee Kargan Lawrence, pointing out the UP’s misconduct, just few months into its leadership.

The former Comptroller General of Liberia disclosed that UP victory which was



trend of the ruling Unity Party-led government, cautioning it to desist from negative conduct that has a propensity to disrupt governing process of the State.

Saah Joseph along with several others across the country is a troubling trend for the government.

Accordingly, he observes that the operation of the

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