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LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR

DATE	BUYING	SELLING
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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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NDC demands dismissals of defiant officials

Pres. Boakai

Police interrogate Pastor

P11

Pastor Henry Kpalleh

-for allegedly sodomizing a 12-year-old student

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Continental News

Kenyan gets 50 years for 'diabolical' murder of LGBT activist

Kenyan photographer Jacktone Odhiambo has been sentenced to 50 years in prison for murdering his housemate, LGBTQ+ activist Edwin Kiprotich Kipruto, popularly known as Edwin Chiloba, nearly two years ago. Judge Reuben Nyakundi said the decades-long sentence was based on the "diabolical manner" of the killing. Chiloba, a 25-year-old fashion designer, was smothered to death and his

body was dumped in a metal box on the roadside in Eldoret. The murder sent shockwaves

the judge.

Chiloba and Odhiambo had been housemates living near the University of Eldoret where Chiloba was a student. There were some reports that the two men were in a relationship.

The prosecution, led by Mark Mugun, told the court that Odhiambo splurged the activist's money after killing him. Evidence from 23 witnesses, including DNA tests that linked Odhiambo to the crime scene, was also presented by the prosecution. Chiloba's body was found with socks stuffed into his mouth and a piece of denim tied around his face. A post-mortem indicated he had died from asphyxiation, caused by smothering. The evidence also showed the suspect had sexually assaulted Chiloba before taking his life.

There had been speculation that this was a case of intimate partner murder but the court did not make any finding about the motive for the killing. BBC

through the LGBTQ+ community in Kenya. Justice Nyakundi said Odhiambo, 25, showed no remorse for the killing.

However, after the sentence was read out, Odhiambo caused a stir in the courtroom by falling down and crying. "I have considered all factors and found that Odhiambo was a vengeful person who committed the killing of his close friend," said

Controversial Nigerian pastor dismisses UK deportation claims

High-profile Nigerian Pastor Tobi Adegboyega has dismissed claims that he was about to be deported from the UK, where his church is facing allegations of financial misconduct.

Pastor Adegboyega, leader of SPAC Nation (Salvation Proclaimer Ministries Limited), now known as Nation Family, told the BBC: "There is no deportation order. Let me make that clear." He said the court case was still an "ongoing issue." Sporting two jewel-encrusted rings and a Louis Vuitton tie, the preacher says he arrived in the UK aged 25 in 2005 on a visitor's visa and assumed his family was handling his immigration paperwork. But this was not the case. "I lost track of time," he said, referring to the nearly decade-long delay in applying to regularise his immigration status. He also said it would be "impossible" to move his church to Nigeria in the event he was deported. In December, an investigation by the UK Charity Commission found "serious misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration" of his church. But Pastor Adegboyega dismissed these allegations. "It is false. They have been on

this thing for the past four years," he said. This is not the first allegation the church has faced. In 2019, a BBC Panorama investigation found it had been accused of financially exploiting young members of the congregation. Members said they had been forced to donate money after taking out loans and through benefit fraud. The church denied these claims at the time. Pastor Adegboyega also dismissed these allegations.

"If you have 1,000 people in a place, are you telling me 30 people will not be disgruntled? How on earth do you run an organisation without disgruntled people?" he said. The Christian evangelical church was set up in the UK as a charity in 2012 looking to help vulnerable

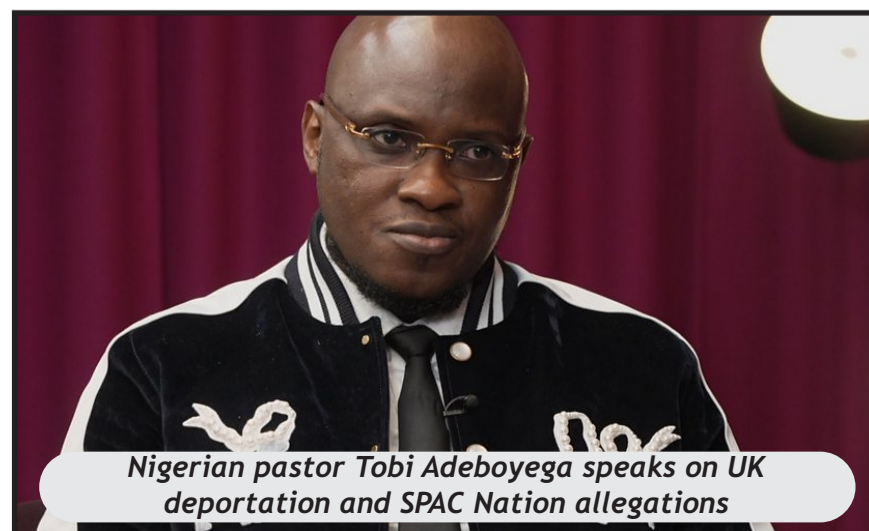
people, tackle gun violence and help young offenders.

Pastor Adegboyega said his church had helped get hundreds of knives off the streets.

"We believe in a practical approach to help a community - young people coming out of low social-economic background, taking them out of crime," he said.

Pastor Adegboyega also hit back over criticism of his lavish lifestyle and taste for designer clothes, expensive jewellery and luxury watches.

He arrived at the BBC office in central London in a Lamborghini, along with a G-Wagon [a top-of-the-range Mercedes-Benz SUV] for his entourage. BBC



Nigerian pastor Tobi Adegboyega speaks on UK deportation and SPAC Nation allegations

West African bloc approves historic exit of military-run states

Leaders of the West African regional grouping, Ecowas, have approved the withdrawal of three countries ruled by the military from the bloc, but have offered a six-month grace period for them to reconsider. Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger plan to withdraw from Ecowas in January after refusing the bloc's demand to restore democratic rule. The three departing countries were founding members when Ecowas was established in 1975 to improve economic and political integration in West Africa, so this is a huge blow to what was Africa's most developed trade grouping.

Citizens of all Ecowas countries currently have the right to live and work in all member states, while goods can circulate freely. Ecowas has not yet said whether it will impose restrictions on people and goods coming from the three departing states, who have formed a new grouping, the Alliance of Sahel States (AES, from its French acronym). The Ecowas Commission in Abuja has been

communicated from Ecowas noted. In the meantime negotiations led by Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye and Togo's Faure Gnassingbé will continue. So far the military juntas have refused to remain in the bloc despite efforts to persuade them.

After a ministerial-level meeting on Friday in Niger's capital, Niamey, the three states said in a joint statement that their decision was "irreversible". Their withdrawal would be a major blow to regional unity and efforts to boost economic and security cooperation.

At the opening of the summit, Ecowas commission head Omar Touray said their "impending exit" was "disheartening", but he wanted to "commend the ongoing mediation efforts", AFP news agency reported. With their planned departure, the bloc will lose 76 million of its 446 million people and more than half its total geographical land area.

In a statement, AES chairman, Mali's military ruler Assimi Goïta, said the right of Ecowas citizens to "enter, circulate, reside, establish and leave the territory" of the new bloc would be maintained.

His statement was seen as a signal to Ecowas leaders that Burkina



Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have strained relations with neighbouring states

mandated to work out such issues, and how the two blocs should work together in future. Over the weekend, the AES announced visa-free travel and residency rights for Ecowas citizens.

Their leaders said this decision had been taken in the spirit of friendship, and to strengthen centuries-old ties among African people. However, the three countries are poor and landlocked, so most migrants move from them to the richer, coastal countries in West Africa. Ecowas leaders meeting in Nigeria on Sunday said they respected the three Sahel countries' decision to leave but offered a transitional period of six months.

In the period between 29 January and 29 July 2025, the trio can be readmitted to the bloc should they decide to rejoin the community, a

Faso, Mali and Niger wanted to maintain good relations, despite quitting the bloc. The three states gave notice to Ecowas in January 2023 that they would withdraw in a year, meeting the timeline set by the bloc for states that decide to leave. Relations between the bloc and the three countries have been tense after military coups took place in Niger in July, Burkina Faso in 2022 and Mali in 2020. Ecowas condemned the coups, and suspended their membership, hoping they will restore civilian rule. But the coup leaders dug in their heels, and have pivoted towards Russia. They accuse Ecowas of being too close to Western powers, and are increasingly relying on Russia to fight armed jihadists who are waging an insurgency in the region.

Correction 16 December: This article originally described the trio's plans as the first split in Ecowas. In fact Mauritania withdrew in 2000 so we have removed this line from the story.

EDITORIAL

The belated LCC statement

Call by the once viable Liberia Council of Churches for both sides in the leadership impasse at the House of Representatives to uphold the law is little too late and disappointing. After more than two months of in-fighting that was sometimes characterized by threats of violence and police brutality, stalling the business of the Liberian people for this long without any intervention, was the LCC constrained to speak so lately and faintly?

We say faintly because even after the final arbiter of Justice in the land, the Supreme Court of Liberia, had spoken albeit indefinitely, with the majority bloc remaining belligerent backed by the Executive, what impact is the LCC's call.

Speaking in a reconciliatory dialogue meeting on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at Providence Baptist Church in Monrovia, the President of the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) Rev. Dr. Samuel B. Reeves, Jr, called on Majority Bloc members of the House of Representatives and embattled Speaker J. Fonati Koffa to uphold recent opinion of the Supreme Court, urging adherence to the principles of justice and the rule of law.

The Supreme Court, referencing Articles 33 and 49 of the Constitution of the Liberia recently, called on both parties to act in conformity with the law, and for honorable conduct from all parties involved.

Rev. Dr. Samuel B. Reeves said that the Supreme Court, as interpreter of the Liberian Constitution, has laid down a ruling that serves as a foundation for good governance. But we beg to differ. The Court did not rule with a specific stance or interpretation. Rather, it advised all sides to return and act in confines of the law.

One had thought that the Church, as the moral conscience of our society, would have spoken long since. But its conspicuous silence in the last two months on the issue that has a propensity to derail the governance of the state and stifle the already bleeding economy, left a vacuum that politicians took advantage of and provided interpretations that suited their quest.

At the eleventh hour when a new Speaker has been elected outside of Articles 33 and 49 of the Constitution

Article 33 of the Constitution reads, "A simple majority of each House shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a lower number may adjourn from day to day and compel the attendance of absent members. Whenever the House of Representatives and the Senate shall meet in joint session, the presiding officer of the House of Representatives shall preside", while Article 49 says, "The House of Representatives shall elect once every six years a Speaker who shall be the presiding officer of that body, a Deputy Speaker, and such other officers as shall ensure the proper functioning of the House. The Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and other officers so elected may be removed from office for cause by resolution of a two-thirds majority of the members of the House."

But the two-thirds majority, as legally required, was never met by the majority bloc in electing a new Speaker to replace Speaker J. Fonati Koffa. Notwithstanding, the Executive branch of the government gave approval, endorsing ruling Unity Party Representative, Richard Nagbe Koon as Speaker.

We deem the LCC's call as a face-saving move to give an impression that it spoke when the nation needed moral advice and direction, but the voice lacks weight and is belated.

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COMMENTARY

By Andrew Gallucci

The Dollar Diplomacy We Need

WASHINGTON, DC - Amid the recent maelstrom of political news was an important development for the future of technology-enabled public money. During the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia, the Bank for International Settlements revealed that it was withdrawing from the digital-asset and payments initiative Project mBridge.

Conceived in 2022 as a clearinghouse for central-bank digital currencies, mBridge had anchored the BIS's own work toward a global interbank settlement system to connect CBDCs beyond the control by any single government. Capitalizing on the efficiency gains of blockchain technology, mBridge offered an answer to all who are disenchanted with sluggish and unaffordable cross-border payments. As recently as June, the BIS had doubled down on the initiative, adding Saudi Arabia to its roster of founding central banks and advancing it out of the pilot phase.

Doubtless buffeted by the geopolitical headwinds coming out Kazan, BIS General Manager Agustín Carstenstold a Group of 30 meeting in late October that, "we cannot directly support any project for the BRICS because we cannot operate with countries that are subject to sanctions." Carstens's comments reflect a growing tension in Western capitals. While many support efforts to use new technology to make the financial system more efficient and egalitarian, they don't want to usher in a world order that is no longer grounded in Western law and norms.

US intelligence agencies have long highlighted this tradeoff when warning about rogue states that are building sanctions-proof alternative settlement mechanisms or using virtual assets to facilitate bilateral trade (such as between Russia and China). In Kazan, BRICS leaders made no secret of their efforts to create a new financial order and jettison the dollar, echoing long-standing Russian calls for a single blockchain-based BRICS currency to fortify trade against Western sanctions.

The uncomfortable question facing Western policymakers is whether their vision of a borderless digital economy enshrined in Western values is truly best served by a public-led model in which central banks take center stage and organize commerce at the supranational level. After all, a privately led, publicly refereed system has been the norm for the past 80 years.

It was intermediated private money that exported Western rules and norms, creating a financial bulwark beyond NATO members' borders and hard-coding US sanctions and anti-money-laundering measures into global banking and trade. Banks and multinationals have carried dollars to almost every corner of the planet, simultaneously serving as envoys for the US currency and financial system.

For decades, this system has stymied money launderers, state sponsors of terrorism, drug traffickers, and other criminals, pushing them to find ever more creative methods of evasion.

However, rogue actors' rapid adoption of unregulated forms of digital money has invigorated discussions - among both BRICS and Western leaders - about overhauling the existing global financial architecture. It is no surprise that the BRICS have been at the forefront of projects like mBridge, given its potential to upend the established Bretton Woods order. But rather than shying away from mBridge and successful pilots of new global trade and payments rails, Western leaders should be considering how to make the most of them.

Just as the old international financial rails served Western policy objectives, so can the new digital ones. With mBridge already demonstrating that blockchain technology can connect the global economy through internet-speed transactions, the only question now is how to strike the right balance between public and private involvement.

The answer may be deceptively simple: The most promising alternative to the BRICS vision is to keep the existing architecture but modernize the rails that distribute the dollar, euro, and pound. As matters stand, roughly 90% of foreign-exchange flows are still dollarized, but the Financial Stability Board's latest assessment of cross-border payments stresses that the fragile, slow, and expensive legacy fiat-currency system needs an upgrade. With consumer cross-border payment costs rising, America's not-so-secret weapon to address the system's deficiencies and counter its adversaries' ambitions is simply to embrace regulated digital dollars and allow the private sector to keep doing what it has been doing.

Can Western policymakers match BRICS leaders' enthusiasm for digitization and take steps to regulate digital dollars? If so, one of their first steps should be to create a regulatory structure for digital private money in the form of dollar stablecoins, which already has bipartisan support in the US Senate and the House of Representatives. Codifying a US standard for the safe, sound, and regulated use of digital dollars - whether publicly or privately issued - would be an authoritative response to those who want to highlight a tradeoff between using dollars and participating in the digital economy.

By contrast, ignoring the technological implications of mBridge and tokenization could result in a major strategic loss. The dollar is inching toward representing only a plurality, rather than a majority, of global settlements. To borrow Carstens's own prescient words in 2022: "Let's ensure that our financial system builds on the existing governance of money, serves the public interest, and works cooperatively with the private sector."

OP-ED

By Daniel Gros

Can Industrial Policy Revive Manufacturing?

MILAN - The United States has decisively outperformed most other advanced economies over the last decade or so. As many - including former European Central Bank President and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi in his influential report on European competitiveness - have recognized, the US owes its “exceptional” performance largely to the dominance of large American companies in high-tech sectors. US manufacturing, however, has been struggling.

The basic facts are not in dispute. Though the US economy has grown at a healthy clip over the last decade, US industrial production (comprising manufacturing and construction) has not increased: the industrial-production index remains at almost exactly the same level - about 100 - today as in 2017 and even 2014.

US President Joe Biden’s administration sought to change this by introducing major subsidy programs, including the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the CHIPS and Science Act, both of which were passed in 2022. Since then, construction activity, especially in industrial structures, has surged, with non-residential construction spending reaching record highs in 2023. OECD data show that, since 2015, US construction activity has increased by about 80%, compared to less than 20% in the EU.

Such figures tend to be the focus of official evaluations of the IRA and the CHIPS Act by the Biden administration. They might point out, for example, that non-residential construction is now running 30% higher than before the pandemic. But they make little reference to manufacturing output or employment.

The reason is not difficult to discern: manufacturing output has remained flat in the US since 2015, even as it has increased by (an admittedly tiny) 4% in the eurozone and 8% in the European Union as a whole. Likewise, manufacturing employment has not grown since the post-pandemic recovery ended in mid-2022, and it has continued to fall as a share of overall employment. So, while hundreds of billions of dollars in manufacturing subsidies can buy a construction boom - especially when they reward the construction of new facilities, as most of the subsidy programs in the IRA and the CHIPS Act do - they do not necessarily bring about a manufacturing resurgence.

One might be tempted to argue that surging construction of new structures will lead to higher output; it just takes a while. But past surges in US construction activity, such as directly preceding the 2007-08 financial crisis and in 2018, were not followed by strong industrial output growth. If things were different this time around, output should already have started to rise. The fact that much of the new investment over the last two years has gone toward data centers, not factories, further reinforces the impression that it will not lead to a manufacturing renaissance.

The failure of the Biden administration’s subsidy programs to lift the manufacturing sector, even slightly, might help to explain why so many US workers cast their votes for Donald Trump, not Vice President Kamala Harris, in last month’s presidential election. In any case, it should serve as a warning to anyone who believes that other economies, such as the EU, should be following America’s lead in implementing a more active industrial policy.

As it stands, most industrial subsidies in Europe, like those in the US, support the construction of new factories. But if production costs are too high to justify a factory, subsidizing its construction will not translate into higher industrial output.

Could Trump be more successful than Biden at boosting US manufacturing? While it is unclear whether he will follow through on this pledge to repeal the IRA on his first day in office - not least because many IRA subsidies go to Republican-led states - there is no doubt that he prefers tariffs to subsidies. The problem, as economists like to point out, is that a tariff amounts to a production subsidy and a consumption tax.

If Trump imposes the kinds of sweeping tariffs he has promised, he would effectively be subsidizing most of US manufacturing - far more than Biden, whose subsidies focused on a few selected sectors. But someone has to pay for these production subsidies. Tariff advocates claim that foreign suppliers will foot the bill, because they will be forced to lower their prices. But most of the burden of the tariffs Trump introduced during his first term was borne by US consumers, who were forced to pay higher prices for imported goods. Why would this time be any different?

Trump is unlikely to be any more successful than Biden in reviving US manufacturing. Attempts by the EU to emulate either his or Trump’s approach will probably also fail. In Europe no less than in America, resisting the secular trend of “de-manufacturing” is a losing battle.

OPINION

By Mauricio Cabrera Leal

Responsible Mining Can Advance Global Environmental Goals

BOGOTÁ - Fueled by the clean-energy transition and surging gold prices, demand for critical minerals and metals is rising at an unprecedented pace. This trend has supercharged mining activities, posing a serious threat to biodiversity and vulnerable populations, especially indigenous communities. To mitigate the impact and stave off the worst, coordinated global action is more urgent than ever.

To be sure, minerals and metals mining is vital for the energy transition and global economic growth. However, it also jeopardizes the ecosystems that sustain life, leading to habitat destruction and fragmentation, deforestation, water and soil pollution, wildlife poisoning, food insecurity, and watershed loss. Indigenous and local communities often bear the brunt of this crisis, which threatens their livelihoods and their right to a clean and healthy environment.

At the same time, recent studies project that demand for critical minerals, largely driven by the accelerating pace of the green transition, will double by 2030 and quadruple by 2040. Meanwhile, falling interest rates, geopolitical uncertainty, portfolio diversification, and speculative investments are expected to push gold prices even higher.

Against this backdrop, Colombia has recently called for a binding international agreement to ensure traceability, transparency, and accountability across the entire minerals value chain - from mining to recycling - by next year’s United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Brazil.

Unveiled during the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Colombia, this proposal follows the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General’s Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals. It aims to bolster due diligence, promote corporate accountability, and establish a global market for essential clean-energy inputs.

At its core is a commitment to promote the responsible extraction of minerals and metals without abandoning environmental and biodiversity goals. To that end, Colombia’s proposal was accompanied by a joint voluntary declaration on responsible mining practices that outlined a series of concrete steps, including the formation of an ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder working group.

It should not come as a surprise that Colombia, one of the world’s most biodiverse countries, is spearheading efforts to promote responsible mining practices. Illegal gold and mineral mining in the Colombian Amazon and along the Pacific coast - often controlled by armed criminal groups - has contaminated water sources with mercury and endangered local and indigenous communities. Rare-earth exploration in the Amazon-Orinoco region has further exacerbated these environmental and social shocks, with the industry’s most vulnerable workers forced to endure precarious conditions verging on slavery.

Colombia’s own history of armed conflict and internal displacement, along with the threat posed by criminal groups targeting indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local communities, underscores the need for a human-rights-based approach to mineral extraction. With this in mind, the joint declaration advocates a just green transition that ensures dignified livelihoods for all.

Africa’s experience offers valuable insights into how to achieve responsible resource extraction. Over the past decade, multiple African countries have adopted due-diligence requirements and traceability standards for tantalum, tin, tungsten, and gold, drawing on frameworks like the 2010 Lusaka Declaration. This landmark agreement, adopted by member states of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, introduced several accountability mechanisms, including a regional certification system aimed at enhancing transparency and reducing illegal mining.

Similarly, the 2016 OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas provided companies that source raw materials from volatile regions with practical tools to identify and report human-rights violations and environmental harm. Subsequent frameworks, such as the OECD’s 2018 Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct and 2023 Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct, urged firms to consider the broader effects of their activities, addressing issues like labor rights, sustainability, and ethical governance.

Regrettably, the application and enforcement of these measures remain largely confined to specific regions. By facilitating the cross-border exchange of knowledge and expertise, global policymakers could develop robust accountability mechanisms spanning the entire lifecycle of metals and minerals, from extraction and trade to recycling and disposal.

Multilateral cooperation is crucial for driving this transformation. Colombia’s initiative, it is hoped, will mark the emergence of a new paradigm that spurs global climate action and paves the way for sustainable development.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

Padding as Legislature criminality 101

By Seltue Karrweaye

For over three weeks, Liberians have been watching in awe as their representatives in the House of Representatives have engaged in heated debates over the allegations surrounding the embattled Speaker of the House, J. Fonati Koffa. Koffa, who once served as Deputy Speaker of the 54th Legislature, recently revealed on Spoon Talk that some members of the 54th Legislature's Joint Committee on Ways, Means, and Finance would meet in Room 1026 at the Boulevard Palace Hotel to discuss the budget. He mentioned that during these discussions, various government ministries and agencies would be invited to review the initial budget allocations proposed by the Ministry of Finance. However, Koffa also noted that some lawmakers would inform these officials of their intentions to inflate the budget to secure kickbacks for themselves.

Budget padding highlights a significant challenge within our legislative process, where the practice of creating new budget estimates often strays from the original proposals put forth by the Executive. According to the Liberian Constitution, the Executive is empowered to propose budget estimates, which the Legislature then reviews and approves. Ideally, these estimates should be grounded in well-established national programs and plans, developed by government ministries, departments, and agencies that understand revenue sources and have meticulously planned and costed their projects.

However, there are instances where the National Legislature, feeling empowered by its authority to approve the budget, introduces additional elements that may not have been originally planned. This phenomenon, known as padding, involves adding projects that lack prior planning or cost estimation.

In the last 18 years, the National Legislature has sometimes responded to perceived imbalances in funding allocations by proposing new initiatives. While these adjustments may be well-intentioned, aiming to address inequalities, they can unintentionally lead to poorly conceived projects that do not serve the public interest effectively. We must find ways to channel this legislative creativity toward initiatives that are carefully evaluated and strongly aligned with national priorities.

As such, the budget allocated to the National Legislature has increased significantly, rising from USD 9.4 million in Fiscal Year 2006-2007 to USD 57.9 million in the recast budget for Fiscal Year 2024. This growth presents an opportunity for us to re-evaluate our budgetary processes and encourage transparency and accountability that better serve our constituents and strengthen governance overall. Fostering constructive dialogue and collaboration between the Executive and Legislature will help ensure that our budget reflects the actual needs and aspirations of the people we serve.

A critical area of concern within the legislative budgeting process is the inclusion of phantom projects, often created through collaborations among like-minded ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs). These projects can lead to fraudulent collection and distribution of allocated funds. Speaker Koffa recently brought attention to this issue during his appearance on Spoon Talk. It is vital to recognize that such padding harms governance, as it distorts the alignment between governmental programs and the budget, ultimately compromising its intended objectives.

The challenge of legislative padding has deep roots in

Liberia, with notable budget increases illustrating this trend. For example, the budget for the Speaker's office has grown from \$605,412 in 2010 to \$1.9 million in the 2024 budget. Similarly, the budget for the Deputy Speaker's office rose from \$334,088 in 2010 to \$1.3 million in 2024, while the Office of the President Pro Tempore saw its budget grow from \$334,088 to \$1.5 million during the same period.

To address these challenges, current administrations must adopt a proactive approach. Over the past 18 years, no president has felt empowered to reject the budget passed by the National Legislature, despite concerns about significant additions to the budget line. Additionally, there has been limited progress in identifying inaccuracies stemming from MDAs. Moving forward, we must prioritize transparency and accountability in our budgeting processes, ensuring that every budget reflects genuine needs and supports effective governance. Through collaborative efforts, we can work towards restoring integrity in our financial practices and safeguarding public resources for the benefit of all citizens.

Oversight is an essential sector within our legislature that, unfortunately, has faced challenges due to instances of criminalization. The National Legislature holds the important responsibility of overseeing and reviewing the activities of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). To effectively fulfill this role, legislative committees are created alongside government structures, allowing them to monitor MDAs closely and ensure they operate under the



principles of good governance while serving the needs of citizens.

Recently, there have been concerns raised by embattled Speaker Koffa regarding the conduct of some committees. It has been reported that a few committees have strayed from their intended purpose by pressuring MDAs to pay bribes. When MDAs have resisted these demands, threats to reduce their budget allocations have been issued, while some committees inflated their budgets to secure kickbacks.

These practices jeopardize the integrity of the oversight function and can undermine public trust. Rather than pursuing a path of accountability and transparency, these committees risk adopting tactics that parallel organized crime, shifting focus from exposing wrongdoing within MDAs to participating in the very criminality they should be combating.

In 2024, the 55th National Legislature cleverly maneuvered to persuade President Boakai into endorsing their controversial Legislative Support Projects and district development efforts, amounting to a staggering US\$13.2 million. Through the Legislative Support Project, each of

the 73 Representatives will receive US\$100,000 for District Development Funds, while each Senator will be allocated US\$150,000. The funding distribution across counties reveals alarming sums: Montserrado will receive \$2 million, Nimba \$1.2 million, Sinoe \$600,000, Grand Bassa \$800,000, and Maryland \$600,000, among others. This strategy is designed to create the illusion for constituents that their representatives are delivering essential projects to their communities.

In these regions, influential legislators wield significant power in determining project allocations, often coordinating closely with their party and the executive branch. However, it deviates from the normal practice for each legislator to pursue their projects, as their primary roles should focus on lawmaking and legislative oversight, not project initiation.

The most alarming issue is that, while these projects are supposed to be managed by Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), legislators have manipulated the process to demand that contracts for "their" projects be awarded to companies they endorse. By personalizing the process, numerous projects remain unrealized, and substantial funds often end up misappropriated, highlighting an urgent need for accountability and reform in project management. This trend, evidenced by practices in the County Development Fund (CDF) and the Social Development Fund (SDF), severely undermines proper governance.

Maybe, the most serious element of padding in the National Legislature is the budgetary increment to their budget. Over the years, we have witnessed the emergence of a huge slush fund for the leadership of the National Legislature. The greatest secret in contemporary Liberia is the detailed budget of the National Legislature. They make their budgets and spend it without any element of transparency and accountability. It was during the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf administration that the National Legislature took a great leap forward. It went from 16 million in 2007 to US\$ 47 million in the fiscal year 2016/2017. Since then, it has continued to grow.

In the 2023 budget, the National Legislature was allocated \$51,614,330, but the outturn report amounted to \$67,963,832. This was \$16,349,503 higher than the actual amount allocated to the National Legislature in the 2023 approved budget, which included a \$1,520,854 allocation to the Office of the Senate Pro Tempore. However, the outturn report for the Senate Pro Tempore amounted to \$3,351,821, which was \$1,217,231 higher than the actual amount allotted to the

Senate Pro Tempore's office. How and where did we get the additional \$16,349,503, what did we spend it on?

We must save our legislature. The theory of representative democracy is constructed on the principle of the election of legislators by the people to represent them at the lawmaking level. It is this legitimacy derived from the electoral process that gives them the power to map and mold the views and concerns of citizens and constituents into public policy.

When, however, legislators put aside the public good and negotiate pecuniary benefits using their constitutional powers as a bargaining tool, they are abusing, rather than exercising, their powers of representation. Today, the Liberia National Legislature has developed a fairly bad reputation with the public due to criticisms of their perceived selfishness and focus on excessive benefits to themselves. The circle must be broken. The budget is neither for the executive nor for the legislature. The budget is an instrument for the pursuit of the PUBLIC GOOD Not for Conmen. I rest my pen.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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Liberia deposits instrument for Re-election to IMO Council 2025

16 December 2024) Liberia, through the Permanent Mission to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), has

Headquarters of the IMO in London today, Monday, 16 December 2024, at 12:15 noon.

Ambassador Kpadeh stressed

not only pride itself on being the leading and enviable Flag-ship registry, but the country continues to demonstrate leadership in the realm of international shipping, in all dimensions.

He emphasized that at the level of the IMO, Liberia is profoundly proud to be chairing the all-important Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) under the leadership of Dr. Harry Conway, Liberia's Alternate Permanent Representative while sponsoring or co-sponsoring important proposals to keep international shipping safe and secure.

He said, Liberia therefore believes it deserves to retain its seat on the Council of the IMO.

In a related development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued an official circular calling on all foreign missions, line ministries and agencies of the Government of Liberia to support the country's bid for re-election to the IMO Council informing that this is a matter of national obligation and pride that requires all hands-on deck. -Press release

the importance of the deposit, stating this officially kicks start Liberia's vigorous campaign to get re-elected to Category-A of the IMO 40-member Council having been elected at the 33rd Assembly session in 2023.

He said, through this instrument, the Government of Liberia is highlighting Liberia's important role in the work of the IMO as a founding member and an important contributor to the budget of the Organisation.

He stated that Liberia does



deposited the Official Note Verbale from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Liberia declaring Liberia's bid for re-election to the Council of IMO during elections at the 34th Assembly session of the Organisation in December 2025.

Ambassador Robert Wilmot Kpadeh, Liberia's Permanent Representation to IMO, at the head of a three-man delegation, presented the instrument to the Legal Department at the

Citizens alarmed over impending lack of police vehicle

Residents of River Gee County are expressing growing concerns over the impending lack of police vehicle in the region as the Christmas festival season draws near.

By Isaiah K Nyenpan

River Gee, December 17, 2024/ Our correspondent said the anticipated lack of police vehicle has raised alarms among the community, with fears mounting that criminal activities could surge during the festive period without adequate law enforcement presence.

The absence of an ample fleet of police vehicle poses a significant challenge for law enforcement officials in effectively patrolling the area and ensuring the safety and security of residents and visitors alike. This mounting concern has prompted residents to urgently call upon the government to prioritize the allocation of police vehicle to River Gee County.

With the imminent arrival

of the Christmas festival season, residents are increasingly anxious about the potential escalation of criminal activities in the absence of adequate police resources.

Our correspondent noted, the residents are Urging swift action from authorities, and they are emphasizing the critical importance of addressing

this issue promptly to equip law enforcement officials with the necessary tools to safeguard public safety.

As the community gears up for the holiday season, the safety and security of all individuals become a top priority, particularly amid the anticipated rise in gatherings and events. Residents are hopeful that their calls for action will be heeded, and measures will be promptly implemented to address the impending lack of police mobility, ensuring a peaceful and festive Christmas season for all in River Gee County.



Boakai calls for collective action against unregulated fishing

President Joseph Boakai is calling for urgent collective action to stop unregulated and harmful fishing practices in Liberia.

By Emmanuel Wise Jipoh

Monrovia, Liberia, December 17, 2024- President Joseph Nyuma Boakai has called for urgent collective action to address unregulated and harmful fishing practices here. President Boakai said this important to sustain Liberia's economic growth and fishing, which ensures food security and serves as a pillar of development. "Across Our Nations, fishing is a culture and economic activity; it helps to ensure food security and provides jobs contribution to our economic growth", President Boakai said.

Addressing the 15th Ministerial Fisheries Committee for West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) Conference, President Boakai, rallied fishing stakeholders, to foster collaborations and cooperation in fostering sustainable fisheries management. He urged delegates to work hard and end

pressing dangers of climate change to the region's marine ecosystems, including rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and unpredictable weather patterns, among others.

He rallied fishing stakeholders to collectively build their fishing capacity through assistance and strengthening resilience to improve the health of the marine ecosystem, which enhances the livelihood of the people, and reaffirms his government's commitment to Regional Corporation and sustainable fisheries management. "Today as we adopt the Monrovia declaration, we are reaffirming our commitment to Regional Corporation and sustainable fisheries Management", President Boakai said.

He reiterated the declaration will serve as a guide, as stakeholders work together to protect the future of the oceans, something he mentioned the communities most rely on for economic stability.



harmful fishing practices, which pose significant threats to unproductive development of the ocean. "We are confronted in this regard with numerous challenges that threaten the future, climate change, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, marine pollution, and unsustainable fishing practices all pose significant risks to the productivity and health of our oceans", President Boakai stated.

He stressed that illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing and Marine Pollution are threats to Oceans' health, something he said is caused by overfishing, if not daring, would contribute to the collapse or decline of fishing that is critical to economic growth.

Mr. Boakai also highlighted the

For his part, Mr. Adegboyega Oyetola, Minister for Marine of Blue Economy, Federal Republic of Nigeria, commended (FCWC) for their dedication to regional corporation and sustainability, which aligned with a collective vision to driving economic growth. Mr. Oyetola hails stakeholders for their efforts in advancing fisheries across the Gulf of Guinea.

Meanwhile, Liberia Friday took over the FCWC leadership, with NaFAA National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority Director General, Emma Metieh Glasco as Head. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

SHED Liberia convenes county dialogue on Justice System

By: Ramsey N. Singbeh, Jr., in Margibi

Margibi-Liberia, December 17, 2024 - A non-governmental organization, Serving Humanity for Empowerment and Development or SHED, has convened a day-long



dialogue aimed at discussing the Criminal Justice System of Liberia with key focus on understanding the law and its implementation. The forum held at Mamanowah Guest House along Bong Mines Road in Kakata, Margibi County, brought together justice actors from several different backgrounds, giving their own experiences with the law and what they have observed over the years.

Participants include the Liberia National Police (LNP), Liberia Marketing Association (LMA), Ministry of Youth and Sports, Kakata City Corporation, community leaders and people living with disability as well as the religious community, amongst others. SHED Liberia was represented by its Margibi County Coordinator Cecelia J. Gbee and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Alysious Flomo, who coordinated the dialogue. Speaking to this paper about the dialogue, Coordinator of SHED Liberia, Cecelia J. Gbee said the forum was important to assist beneficiaries in following the law rightfully. She said, from experience-

sharing of some of the people, it tells that there are people residing in communities who don't know the law. She recalled a case study of one of the participants, who unknowingly took the law in his hands by manhandling someone he accused of stealing from him. She insisted that the accused was supposed to be taken to the law, urging others to always seek the way of the law. She added that people should not ignore the law on the basis that the person being maltreated is not related to them. For his part, Alysious Flomo noted that the forum, which is not the first of its kind by SHED Liberia, was organized to bring together justice actors, including community leaders and the police to discuss the criminal justice system specifically, focusing on their roles and responsibilities. He explained that the police, the religious leaders and others were in attendance at the forum. He noted that it was a free and opened discussion, which allowed participants to freely speak their minds, maintaining that it was also essential because every sector needs to understand the law.

Teahjay criticizes Public Works

sufficient. The former lawmaker noted that while the ministry's staff may be qualified and well-educated, the slow pace of progress is unacceptable. "The Ministry needs to speed up its work," Teahjay maintains. "I am not questioning their qualifications, but the performance we're seeing on the ground doesn't match what we expect."

He expresses concern that if the ministry does not accelerate its efforts, the situation will worsen during the rainy season, further hindering transportation and development. "We need to hold them accountable," he continues, urging the ministry to act swiftly and effectively in addressing the country's infrastructure challenges. Reports have suggested

significant funds allocated for road maintenance, particularly a US\$22 million that has been a subject of public debate. Minister Giddings clarified that the ministry had not received the full amount but had only disbursed US\$9.9 million for ongoing roadwork, with contracts extending over two years. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

Combating IUU fishing tops govt. priorities

The Government of Liberia says combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains its top priority.

Stephen G. Fellajuah

Monrovia, Liberia, December 17, 2024 - The fisheries sector is vital for the livelihoods of Liberia's coastal communities, contributing significantly to income generation and national revenue. However, this sector faces immense challenges, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, climate change, marine pollution, and unsustainable practices. Minister of Agriculture J. Alexander Nuetah, reaffirms that combating IUU fishing remains a top priority for the current government, as it directly threatens both local employment and food security. Despite progress in fishery governance, the Minister also emphasized the need for Liberia to prioritize sustainable aquaculture, which he believes will help diversify income sources, reduce pressure on


He praised the regional collaboration demonstrated during the conference, recognizing it as an essential tool in addressing challenges and advancing sustainable development within the fisheries sector. As Liberia continues to engage with the West Central Gulf of Guinea, a region rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage, Minister Nuetah reminded participants of the vast potential of the country's marine resources. However, he stressed that this potential could only be realized through collective responsibility and innovative governance of these resources. Liberia's hosting of the conference is particularly significant, as it coincided with the country's assumption of the FCWC chairmanship. Dr. Nuetah described this role as both an honor and a call to action, urging all participants to lead with vision, determination, and a



marine ecosystems, and increase resilience against climate change. Dr. Nuetah stressed that by investing in research, capacity-building, and community engagement, Liberia is establishing a solid foundation for a fishery sector that can benefit both present and future generations. "These milestones underscore our commitment as a nation to aligning national policy with global best practices and ensuring that Liberia remains a proactive and responsible member of the global fishery community," he stated. The Minister, who also chairs the board of the National Fisheries & Aquaculture Authority (NaFAA), made these remarks at the closing ceremony of the 15th Session of the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC), held December 13, 2024 at the EJS Ministerial Complex in Monrovia.

commitment to sustainable fisheries practices. "We are humbled to take on this responsibility and pledge to work tirelessly alongside our regional partners to achieve FCWC's objectives," he said. "I am heartened by the strides we have made together as member states of FCWC, from strengthening monitoring systems to adopting regional agreements that enhance transparency," the Minister adds.. The FCWC Ministers Conference served not only as a meeting but also as a platform for progress and unity among nations. Minister Nuetah urged the participants to use this opportunity to reaffirm their shared vision and redouble their efforts in achieving sustainable fisheries practices. He reiterated that Liberia stands ready to collaborate with regional partners to build a fisheries sector that is not only sustainable but also a driver of regional prosperity. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

JUDICIAL BRANCH
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA



SITTING IN ITS DEC. TERM, A.D. 2024
BEFORE HIS HONOR: NICOLAS Y. EDWARD, JUDGE MONTHLY & PROBATE COURT.

IN RE: THE PETITION OF MOHAMMED SARNNOR OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, MONTERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA PETITIONER, PRAYING HONORABLE COURT FOR COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME TO BE KNOWN, REGARDED AND CALLED AS "MOMO SANOE"

COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME:

Whereas, Petitioner herein named in the above entitled cause of action, having filed a Petition with Affidavit attached thereto, requesting an order from this Honorable Court to have the name of the Petitioner to be formally and legally changed from MOHAMMED SARNNOR to "MOMO SANOE"

After conducting the necessary interrogations requested by law in these Proceedings, the Court observed that the intention is just and legal and that there is no objection to the change of his name Proposed by his is therefore, it is adjusted as follows:

That the Petitioner having shown with justification and satisfaction that she was born on March 5, 2001 in Tubmanburg, Bomi County, Republic of Liberia unto the union of MR. HASSAN SANOE, and MADAM FAMATTA COOPER that change of name will substantially promote her interest in all of the understanding and help to establish just identify more firmly, and being satisfied that she has met all legal requirements for the change of his name in the jurisdiction, it is therefore DECREE as follows:

That the Petition having been heard by and said is hereby ordered and now render that "MOMO SANOE" beginning this 13th day of December A.D. 2024

That Decree shall be registered in the office of the Registrar of Deed for Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia, and shall also be published twice in the recognized newspaper operating in the Republic of Liberia, within twenty (20) days from today's date. AND IT IS HEREBY SO ORDERED.

COURT'S SEAL

GIVEN UNDER MY HANDS AND SEAL OF THIS 13TH DAY OF DECEMBER A.D. 2024.

Necular G. Fellajuah
HIS HONOR: NICOLAS Y. EDWARD, JUDGE MONTHLY & PROBATE COURT, MONTERRADO COUNTY, R.L.

ATTESTED: *[Signature]*
REGISTERED ACCORDING TO THE ACT OF 1964, CHAPTER 10, SECTION 10.00008643

5.00 REVENUE AFFIXED ON THE ORIGINAL

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN LEGALLY REGISTERED AND FILED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES ON 12-24-2024 AT 10:20 AM

CENTRAL FOR NATIONAL DOCUMENTS & RECORDS REGISTRATION

Français

L'Autorité Nationale des Ports (NPA) confrontée à une masse salariale insoutenable

L'Autorité Nationale des Ports (NPA) consacre une part disproportionnée de ses revenus à sa masse salariale, compromettant sa capacité à moderniser les infrastructures portuaires essentielles au développement économique du Liberia. En 2024,

également son soutien financier au gouvernement libérien. Entre 2018 et 2024, les effectifs de la NPA ont explosé, passant de 450 à 1 945 employés, entraînant une hausse de 266 % de la masse salariale mensuelle, qui est passée de 300 000 dollars en 2018 à plus de 1,4 million de dollars en 2024. Cette augmentation a culminé

d'austérité rigoureuses, notamment une réduction de 64 % des coûts d'approvisionnement, une diminution de 20 % des dépenses opérationnelles et une baisse de 45 % des charges administratives. Cependant, ces efforts restent insuffisants face à l'impact massif de notre masse salariale », a-t-il expliqué.

Une stratégie pour la durabilité

Pour garantir une stabilité financière à long terme, la NPA a élaboré un plan global visant à réduire les dépenses tout en préservant les droits et le bien-être de ses employés. Selon M. Dukuly, ce plan permettra de réorienter les ressources vers des investissements stratégiques, de renforcer les infrastructures portuaires et de créer davantage d'emplois durables.

« Nous sommes déterminés à transformer nos ports en des infrastructures modernes et efficaces, capables de répondre aux exigences du commerce international tout en contribuant activement à la croissance économique du Liberia », a affirmé le Directeur Général.

Des ports négligés, un enjeu stratégique

Le Liberia importe plus de 80 % de ses biens de consommation et repose principalement sur l'exportation de matières



l'institution a alloué 14,04 millions de dollars - soit près de 60 % de ses recettes totales estimées à 24,4 millions de dollars - aux salaires et avantages sociaux de ses 1 945 employés.

Cette dépendance excessive vis-à-vis des salaires limite la capacité de la NPA à épargner, à investir dans des infrastructures stratégiques et à créer des emplois durables. Elle réduit

avec une hausse de 47 % durant les six derniers mois de l'année électorale 2023.

Des mesures d'austérité insuffisantes

Lors d'une récente audition budgétaire devant la Chambre des représentants, le Directeur Général de la NPA, Sekou A.M. Dukuly, a reconnu les défis financiers auxquels l'institution fait face et a présenté un plan d'action pour y remédier.

« Nous avons adopté des mesures

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 09

La Directrice Générale de la NaFAA prend la présidence du Comité des Pêches du Golfe de Guinée Centre-Ouest

La 15^e conférence du Comité des Pêches du Golfe de Guinée Centre-Ouest (FCWC) s'est achevée le vendredi 13 décembre à Monrovia par l'élection de l'Honorable Emma Metieh Glassco, Directrice Générale des Pêches et de l'Aquaculture du Liberia, à la présidence de cette organisation régionale.

Lors de la session ministérielle de clôture, en présence du Président Joseph Boakai et de son entourage, le gouvernement libérien, par l'intermédiaire de l'Autorité Nationale des Pêches et de l'Aquaculture (NaFAA), a présenté un projet ambitieux visant à élargir l'adhésion au FCWC, actuellement composé de six pays, pour atteindre un total de dix États membres. Une vision audacieuse pour le mandat libérien Dans son discours

d'investiture, l'Honorable Emma Metieh Glassco, qui succède à l'ancienne présidente ghanéenne Mavis Hawa Koomsom, a déclaré :

« Sous la présidence du Liberia, je m'engage à explorer les opportunités d'élargir le FCWC à dix États membres. Je suis convaincue que cet objectif est non seulement atteignable, mais

qu'il permettra aussi de renforcer l'impact et la portée de notre organisation.

»

Madame Glassco a également mis en avant sa vision de dynamiser le commerce interrégional entre les États

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 09



Éditorial

La chute de la maison Assad

Par Daron Acemoglu

TEL AVIV - L'effondrement rapide d'une dynastie al-Assad vieille de 54 ans en Syrie vient transformer le paysage géopolitique du Moyen-Orient. L'offensive éclair de la milice islamiste Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) a surpris tous les voisins de la Syrie, comme le reste du monde. L'annonce de la [fuite](#) du président Bachar al-Assad en Russie confirme une vérité incontournable s'agissant des guerres : des conséquences inattendues peuvent s'étendre bien au-delà du champ de bataille.

L'attaque du 7 octobre 2023 perpétrée par le Hamas contre des communautés civiles israéliennes à proximité de la frontière de Gaza a provoqué plusieurs séismes dans l'ensemble du Moyen-Orient. L'impitoyable offensive menée par Israël pour détruire le Hamas à Gaza et le Hezbollah au Liban a quasiment anéanti « l'axe de résistance » iranien, tandis que les États-Unis et le Royaume-Uni ont bombardé les Houthis soutenus par l'Iran au Yémen, en réponse à leurs attaques contre des navires commerciaux internationaux.

La guerre civile syrienne a débuté en 2011, lorsque le régime d'Assad a écrasé les manifestations pacifiques du « Printemps arabe ». Puis les combats se sont largement atténués après 2015, l'intervention de la Russie, avec l'aide de l'Iran et du Hezbollah, ayant inversé le cours de la guerre en faveur d'Assad. Dernièrement, les proxies de l'Iran ayant été détruits, et les capacités de combat de la Russie étant éprouvées par la difficulté du conflit en Ukraine, les rebelles ont saisi l'opportunité.

Avec l'[appui](#) de la Turquie, et semble-t-il du Qatar, les rebelles ont facilement pris d'assaut les défenses étonnamment fragiles du régime syrien, et l'armée d'Assad a capitulé sans combattre. L'Iran et la Russie, protecteurs d'Assad, ayant précipitamment [évacué leurs troupes](#) et abandonné le dictateur à son sort, le régime syrien fondé sur la torture et les massacres n'inspirait plus la peur.

La fin de l'alliance de l'Iran avec la Syrie, principal bastion du régime de Téhéran dans le monde arabe, est vouée à redéfinir l'équilibre régional des puissances. Comme l'[exprimait](#) l'ancien vice-président iranien Mohammad Ali Abtahi deux jours avant la fuite d'Assad, un effondrement du gouvernement syrien « constituerait l'un des événements les plus importants dans l'histoire du Moyen-Orient... La résistance dans la région se retrouverait privée de soutien. Israël deviendrait la puissance dominante ».

« Hayat Tahrir al-Sham » signifie la libération du Levant, qui dans le lexique politique du premier califat inclut la Syrie, le Liban, la Jordanie et la Palestine. Le chef du groupe islamiste HTS, Abou Mohammad al-Joulani, tente néanmoins de projeter l'image d'un islamiste d'un nouveau genre. Il semble avoir tiré les enseignements nécessaires des échecs d'al-Qaïda et de l'État islamique (EI), et se considère désormais comme un pragmatique [aspirant](#) uniquement à « libérer la Syrie de son régime tyrannique ».

Signe de ce nouveau pragmatisme, Joulani a [ordonné](#) à ses hommes de laisser le Premier ministre syrien Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali continuer de gérer les institutions publiques jusqu'au [transfert officiel](#) du pouvoir. Par opposition, l'EI aurait certainement procédé à des exécutions massives de soldats et responsables publics.

Joulani n'en demeure pas moins à la tête d'une organisation islamiste radicale. Ceux qui [s'attendent](#) à ce que la Turquie tempère l'extrémisme du HTS présument que Joulani sera le soldat obéissant d'Ankara. Ce qui est sûr, c'est que Joulani va devoir composer avec de puissantes contraintes politiques, notamment avec les nombreuses milices rivales qui se sont unies pour faire tomber Assad, ainsi qu'avec les forces kurdes qui se sont [empressées de prendre le contrôle](#) de nouveaux territoires dans l'est de la Syrie, tout en subissant les [attaques](#) des forces turques au nord.

Aux yeux du président turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan, les ambitions des Kurdes de Syrie menacent d'alimenter une rébellion nationaliste au sein des communautés kurdes de Turquie. En 2019, Erdogan a ordonné à son armée de mettre en place une « zone de sécurité » de 30 kilomètres de large dans le nord de la Syrie, et de repousser les combattants kurdes loin de la frontière turque, zone dans laquelle les Kurdes avaient saisi l'opportunité de la guerre civile pour consolider une enclave autonome.

Shlomo Ben-Ami, ancien ministre israélien des Affaires étrangères, et vice-président du Centre international de Tolède pour la paix, est l'auteur de l'ouvrage intitulé [Prophets Without Honor: The 2000 Camp David Summit and the End of the Two-State Solution](#) (Oxford University Press, 2022).

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Français

Starts from page 8 L'Autorité Nationale des Ports (NPA) confrontée

premières. Les ports jouent un rôle central dans ces activités commerciales. Pourtant, ces infrastructures essentielles ont souffert de décennies de sous-investissements. Pour remédier à cette situation, la NPA a annoncé en 2024 deux projets majeurs de modernisation en partenariat avec la Chine et le Maroc. Ces initiatives visent à répondre aux besoins critiques des ports de Monrovia et de Buchanan, en augmentant leur capacité opérationnelle et en renforçant leur compétitivité. M. Dukuly a indiqué qu'à partir de 2025, des consultations intensives seront engagées avec les principaux acteurs de l'Exécutif et du Législatif pour accélérer la mise en œuvre de ces projets. Une vision ambitieuse pour l'avenir La direction de la NPA reconnaît

que relever le défi de la masse salariale, tout en investissant dans des infrastructures modernes, nécessitera des réformes audacieuses et des consultations approfondies. Cependant, elle reste engagée à transformer l'institution en un hub portuaire compétitif, moteur de croissance économique et de création d'emplois. « Nous avons hérité d'une situation complexe, mais notre objectif est de bâtir un système portuaire financièrement viable, opérationnellement efficace et capable de soutenir de manière significative le développement national », a déclaré M. Dukuly. Avec une vision tournée vers la modernisation et l'efficacité, la NPA s'affirme comme un acteur clé de la transformation économique du Liberia, tout en consolidant sa position sur la scène internationale.

Starts from page 8 La Directrice Générale de la NaFAA prend

membres, en particulier pour le Liberia, qu'elle décrit comme disposant d'un secteur halieutique en pleine croissance, avec d'énormes potentiels inexploités dans la pêche de capture et le développement de l'aquaculture. Des priorités stratégiques ambitieuses Au cours de son mandat, la nouvelle présidente du FCWC prévoit de :

- Renforcer la coopération régionale grâce à des échanges techniques et à l'harmonisation des politiques, notamment en matière de régimes de licences ;
- Établir des protocoles régionaux communs pour négocier des accords de partenariat durable en matière de pêche avec des partenaires internationaux comme l'Union européenne ;
- Mobiliser des financements auprès des bailleurs de fonds afin de soutenir les projets régionaux au bénéfice de tous les États membres.

En signe de sa prise de fonction officielle, l'Honorable Emma Metieh Glassco a reçu le drapeau du FCWC, marquant ainsi le début de son mandat à la tête de cet organe sous-régional chargé de la gestion des ressources halieutiques. Promouvoir une pêche durable et des conditions de travail décentes Revenant sur le thème de la conférence, « Promouvoir le travail décent et renforcer la résilience des écosystèmes marins pour la durabilité du secteur halieutique », Madame Glassco a souligné les défis de sécurité associés à la pêche,

l'une des professions les plus dangereuses au monde. Elle a exhorté les États côtiers, portuaires et de pavillon à respecter les règles et traités internationaux, tout en veillant à une mise en œuvre stricte des normes de l'Organisation Internationale du Travail (OIT) pour garantir la sécurité des travailleurs maritimes. Adoption de la Déclaration de Monrovia Un des temps forts de la réunion ministérielle a été l'adoption de la Déclaration de Monrovia, par laquelle les États membres s'engagent à renforcer la coopération régionale. Ce texte prévoit notamment :

- L'organisation de patrouilles conjointes pour lutter contre la pêche illicite ;
- La mise en œuvre de périodes de fermeture synchronisées ;
- D'autres initiatives techniques en faveur d'une gestion durable des ressources halieutiques.

Le Nigeria accueillera la prochaine conférence La 15^e session ministérielle, qui a marqué la fin de trois jours de discussions internationales sur le développement de la pêche dans la région, a réuni plusieurs hauts responsables des six États membres du FCWC. Il a été annoncé que le Nigeria sera l'hôte de la 16^e conférence ministérielle. Avec cette présidence, le Liberia s'affirme comme un acteur clé dans la promotion d'une gestion collaborative et durable des ressources marines, consolidant ainsi sa position sur la scène régionale.

L'Agence de la Fonction Publique n'a pas compétence pour examiner une plainte de licenciement abusif



La Commission Nationale des Élections (NEC) a affirmé que l'Agence de la Fonction Publique (ACF) n'a pas la compétence juridique pour examiner une plainte déposée par certains employés de la NEC alléguant un licenciement abusif.

Dans une déclaration officielle transmise par son avocat, la NEC a soutenu que la loi de 1973, qui a créé l'ACF en tant qu'entité de l'Exécutif, ne confère à cette agence aucune autorité pour intervenir dans les affaires d'emploi ou pour réviser des décisions concernant la NEC.

« La loi de 1973 n'accordant pas cette autorité à l'ACF, cette dernière ne peut se l'arroger par le biais d'un ordre permanent », a déclaré la NEC.

La Commission a rappelé qu'elle a été établie comme un organe indépendant conformément à l'article 89(B) de la Constitution de 1986 et qu'elle gère ses affaires internes sans interférence de l'Exécutif.

La plainte et les contestations

Cette déclaration fait suite à un communiqué publié par l'ACF le 10 décembre 2024, annonçant qu'elle avait reçu une plainte de 25 employés licenciés par la NEC. Ces derniers accusaient l'institution de licenciement abusif.

Dans son communiqué, l'ACF a indiqué qu'elle avait lancé une enquête sur cette plainte. Toutefois, la NEC a nié toutes les accusations et a officiellement demandé à l'ACF de classer l'affaire.

En particulier, la NEC a signalé que l'un des signataires de la plainte, M. Rennie B. Gleebar, est toujours employé par la NEC et n'a jamais été licencié.

« En tant qu'employé actif, M. Gleebar n'a ni la capacité légale ni la légitimité factuelle pour déposer une plainte pour licenciement abusif », a précisé la NEC.

Un groupe non reconnu

La NEC a également contesté l'existence d'un collectif intitulé « Le Personnel Mécontent », affirmant qu'aucune

preuve officielle n'a été présentée à l'ACF pour démontrer que ce groupe est légalement reconnu, que ce soit en tant qu'entité incorporée ou non incorporée.

De plus, la Commission a souligné que M. Gleebar, en tant que non-juriste, n'est pas habilité à représenter d'autres individus dans une affaire de licenciement.

Si M. Gleebar souhaitait agir au nom de ses collègues, il aurait dû fournir des autorisations écrites de leur part, lui conférant légalement le droit de les représenter. Faute de ces documents, la NEC considère que la plainte est irrecevable pour défaut de capacité juridique.

Des incompatibilités légales

S'appuyant sur la loi de 1973 et les ordres permanents de 2012, la NEC a rappelé qu'un employé non nommé en vertu de cette loi et n'ayant pas réussi l'examen de la fonction publique ne peut faire appel devant le Comité d'Examen ou le Conseil d'Appel de l'ACF.

La NEC a précisé que le plaignant a été recruté sous l'autorité de la Nouvelle Loi Électorale de 1986, telle qu'amendée, et non en vertu de la loi de 1973.

« Par conséquent, cette plainte doit être rejetée », a conclu la NEC, ajoutant qu'elle a déposé une requête formelle pour son rejet auprès de l'ACF.

Une mise en garde sur le respect des cadres juridiques

La NEC a réitéré l'importance de respecter les compétences institutionnelles et les cadres juridiques établis. Elle a insisté sur la nécessité de se conformer aux lois en vigueur pour garantir une gestion transparente et équitable des affaires publiques.

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LIBERIANS DEBATE

Topic: *Data Reduction*

By *Naneka Hoffman*

The recent deduction of data and minutes by GSM Companies is still raising concern among subscribers with many blaming government and the service providers as you may read below.



Karluminus Meshach Karngar

“The data issue in this country is even worse than the harmonization process. In the harmonization process, not everyone was on government payroll; there were few people on government payroll that were making salary from government

and they brought their pay down. It affected them, even the government and it led them to their defeat. In this instead case, even the least man in society is on social media. He sees Facebook, TikTok and all the different social media platforms, as sources of happiness to remove the stress after a hectic day. For you to see a government that said they will rescue this country, and under this administration to find both Lonestar and Orange leading to the cause to extend data package or to reduce any package at all level that was positively affecting the lives of the least in the country. I feel it is wickedness. This isn't how you rescue a country.”

“This data issue is really disappointing we the citizens of Liberia and they cut off the data without telling us. At least when you give offer before you take it, you have to inform the people that you taking the data, so we can prepare for the effect of it, but they just took the data without sending messages to us. I blame the GSM companies because the companies supposed to inform the public and the government got a part to play, because if something happens between the companies and the government, they supposed to sit down and discuss and inform us the citizens. Let the companies try



Mohammed Bah

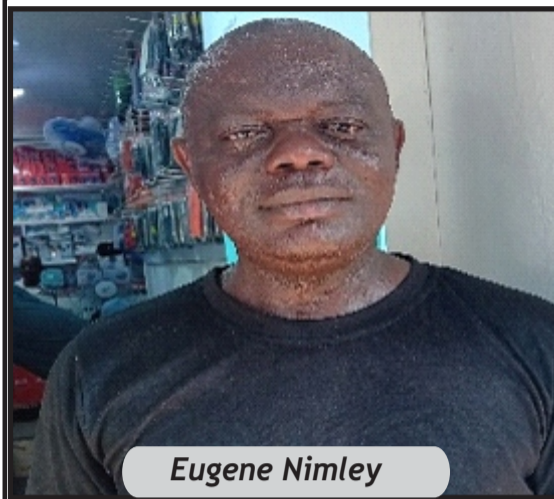
to restore our data back; we will be happy for it because data just looking like rice bag. As for me, I prefer I don't eat but data must be in my phone.”



Dominivc Goodrigde

“As for the data issue, for me, I will say it comes from the government, because the

government put huge tax on the GSM companies, so for that reason, you will not expect a business man to be paying tax in a huge amount then you expecting him to sell this business at a low price, so for that reason they have to do some increasing or take away some offer that was given to customers. I feel that I am not getting what I supposed to receive so for that reason, I have to reduce the cost to meet up with the payment of the tax.”



Eugene Nimley

“The data is a problem, but you see there are two ways. Everything we can politicize it; where we are facing problem with the data, there is a major issue nobody is looking at; they are only talking because we want to politicize

data. The major issue when you purchase your data, network facing problem and data and minutes have expire time. There is a possibility that you don't use your data and call and when that date and time reach, the GMS companies will collect all your data and minutes in your phone which isn't supposed be that way. I think the GMS companies need to stop taking our data and minutes, because some of us cannot use our data and minutes and then when the network gets bad and the expiring time reaches, they will collect all our data and minutes without leaving our data and minutes in our phone. I think it's bad; they need to stop it.”

“Our rescue government we brought to power is trying to make us so we will not remain silent; first our data must be restored and secondly, the law is the law.

I blame LTA. Yesterday, we were in data struggle; we started enjoying data 3.00usd for 12G. Today, our data has gone, so we want our data to straighten our minds. Everyone isn't working in government, but we use data to do research.”



Mustapha Salaam Metzger



Mohammed A. Kamara

“I think the data issue both the government and GSM companies need to be blamed. The GMS companies supposed to inform the

public that they are reducing the data because of so, so reasons. We are paying tax to them and the government. And secondly, the government needs to take the blame because they told us that they came to recuse the country, and we are paying tax, so anything the government and GSM companies are going through, they supposed to inform us ahead of time but both of them left the entire citizenry in doubt, so at the end of the day, we started protesting on Facebook and in the streets because of lack of communication from the both parties.”

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Police interrogate Pastor

A 30-year-old pastor and school teacher faces police investigation for allegedly abusing a 12-year-old student sexually.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, Liberia, December 17, 2024 - Police in Monrovia are investigating a pastor-in-

intercourse with her since last September and threatened that if she told anyone of their affairs, she would die. "That's why I was afraid to tell you,"

siding with the accused and refusing to assist in the ongoing investigation.

They accused the administration of remaining silent despite being aware of the accusations.

They claim the school has shown no support for their daughter, who is grappling with the trauma of repeated sexual abuse allegedly perpetrated by Kpalleh on the church's premises.

"We are deeply disappointed in the school. They are supposed to protect children, but instead, they have chosen to stay quiet, as if nothing happened," said the survivor's mother.

"The administration is clearly taking side with the accused. They've made no effort to support the investigation or stand by our daughter. This is a betrayal of trust", laments the victim's father.

The alleged assaults reportedly took place during school hours in Kpalleh's private room on the campus, where he worked as a primary school teacher and administrator.

Despite these allegations, the school has not issued a public statement or engaged with investigators, according to the parents. The parents believe the school's silence is an attempt to shield itself from public backlash and protect its reputation.

The school's lack of involvement has drawn criticism from child rights advocates and community leaders thereby portraying the silence of the school as deeply troubling.

"It is unacceptable for any school to remain silent in such a serious case. Institutions have a duty to protect children and cooperate fully with investigations into allegations of abuse."

The parents are calling for swift action to ensure justice is served and for educational institutions to prioritize the safety and welfare of their students.

"Our daughter has already been through so much. We demand justice and accountability, not just for her, but to send a message that this kind of behavior cannot be tolerated," the child's mother notes.

Meanwhile, family members of the accused are reportedly trying to visit the survivor and her family at their residence in an attempt to offer an appeal for the matter to be compromised. Editing by Jonathan Browne



Pastor Henry Kpalleh

training at the Garden of Prayer Church of God for allegedly raping a 12-year-old female student. Medical reports shows that the survivor had been sodomized repeatedly.

The incident allegedly occurred within the church compound in Jamaica Road Community on Bushrod Island, outskirts of Monrovia where it operates a school. The institution has a private room for junior pastors dubbed as Levites to rest. It is in there the alleged act was committed.

In Biblical times, a Levite is a member of the Hebrew tribe of Levi, who assisted priests during worship in the Jewish temple. The accused, Pastor Henry Kpalleh, believed to be in his 30s, was arrested by the Liberia National Police on Thursday, December 12, 2024, following a complaint from the victim's parents.

According to parents of the victim, the health condition of their daughter has been deteriorating rapidly, which prompted them to investigate her.

Pastor Kpalleh, who is also Dean of Students Affairs of the Frazer Memorial Institute and a second grade teacher, allegedly had multiple sexual affairs with the victim, both in her anus and private part, resulting to serious damages in her rectum and vagina, but he claims innocence and is currently in police custody. Medical reports indicate that the victim experienced serious lacerations in her vagina and anus, which may cause damages. Doctors have advised that she seeks advanced medical care. The victim informed her parents that Pastor Kpalleh began having sexual

parents quoted her as narrating after they quizzed her multiple times.

"Every day at recess period, he will tell me to go to his room. Then he will come and do the thing to me," the minor continues, adding, "Sometimes in my butt. He says when I tell anyone I will die."

For his part, Pastor Kpalleh, who is described as one of the Levites in the church, denied all allegations against him, describing the victim as one of the stubborn students in the school.

Meanwhile, family of the victim says that they are constantly being harassed by other family members, friends and church members to pardon the pastor. The victim's family stress that the presence of Pastor Kpalleh's family is embarrassing an already depressed child, who is traumatized by seeing them.

According to them, the family is using profanity against the victim, claiming that their son is innocent, and that more cases of such had occurred and that their daughter is not the first person to be raped.

They further alleged that the family even tried attacking the survivor saying, "The girl doesn't look like someone that was raped; maybe she had her boyfriend."

"Is this the girl they claimed was raped, and she's walking properly, we will not come back here again. We will visit the herbalist," they threatened, describing the medical report which confirmed that the girl was tempered with, "false and misleading."

Meanwhile, parents of the survivor have expressed deep frustration with the school's administration for allegedly

NDC demands dismissals of defiant officials

President Boakai mandated all appointed government officials on 27 November 2024, to comply with the Code of Conduct by declaring their assets within ten days.

Monrovia, December 17, 2024: The National Democratic Coalition (NDC) has demanded the dismissals of appointed government officials who have failed to declare their assets, defying a presidential directive.

On 27 November 2024, President Joseph Nyuma Boakai signed a directive mandating all appointed government officials to comply with the Declaration of Assets requirements as outlined in the 2014 Code of Conduct. Despite repeated calls for compliance, several officials have failed to declare their assets within the required timeframe.

The Executive Mansion in November noted that the officials' failure to declare their assets contravened Article 2, Section 10.2(h) of the Act to Amend Section 5.2 and Section 10.2 of the 2014 Code of Conduct. The law stipulates that an official appointed by

undermined the core principles of good governance and public accountability.

"It is expected that by now, all [non-compliant] appointed officials [would] have declared their assets in accordance with the mandate," the NDC said.

The party warned that the non-compliant posture of these officials not only violates the National Code of Conduct, specifically Section 10.2(h) but also serves as a gross disrespect to the Office of President.

Additionally, the party suggested that such action undermined the integrity of the office of the government and those involved did not go unpunished.

"The Code of Conduct clearly stipulates that appointed officials must declare their assets within thirty (30) days of appointment," the NDC argued. Assets declaration, according to the NDC, is a crucial component of good governance.

The NDC added that assets declaration serves as a preventive



the President shall declare his/her assets no later than 30 days after appointment. It also requires the immediate suspension of officials from offices until full compliance is obtained. The Executive Mansion warned in November that failure to adhere to the presidential directive

measure against corruption, helps detect illicit enrichment, and fosters public confidence in elected and appointed officials.

By ensuring transparency and accountability, the NDC said assets declaration strengthens the integrity of public service and promotes trust in government institutions.

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