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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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Tale of torture and coercion

P11

Suspect being taken away by police

-Suspect details alleged abuse by state security

Pro-Temp and staffers at each other's throats

P11

Pro-Tempore, Nyonblee Kangar-Lawrence

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Continental News

Nigeria military kills 16 civilians in air strike 'mistake'

At least 16 civilians in Nigeria's north-western Zamfara State have been killed in a military air strike, apparently after being

vigilante losses". "While the operation successfully eliminated several bandits and led to the recovery of some kidnap victims, the NAF

Rights group Amnesty International Nigeria put the death toll at 20 and said dozens of others were injured in the attack on Tunga Kara village, and called on authorities to "immediately and impartially" investigate the incident.

"Launching air raids is not a legitimate law enforcement method by anyone's standard. Such reckless use of deadly force is unlawful, outrageous and lays bare the Nigerian military's shocking disregard for the lives of those it supposedly exists to protect," it said in a statement.

In recent years, Nigeria's security forces have been fighting powerful criminal gangs, known as bandits, who have been terrorising north-west and central states. The bandits raid villages, burn homes and kill and abduct residents for ransom. Several accidental air strikes have occurred in recent months including a Christmas Day attack that killed at least 10 civilians in neighbouring Sokoto state. In 2023, at least 85 civilians, mostly women and children, attending a Muslim religious gathering at a village in Kaduna state were killed after they were mistaken for bandits. In January 2017, at least 112 people were killed when a jet struck a camp housing 40,000 people who had been displaced by jihadist violence in a town near the Cameroon border. BBC



The Nigerian Air Force says has expressed "grave concern" over the reported loss of civilian lives

mistaken for criminal gangs. Residents told local media the victims were members of local vigilante groups and civilians defending themselves from armed gangs notorious for kidnapping people for ransom. The strikes targeted militant gangs in Zurmi and Maradun areas and the state governor, Dauda Lawal, offered his condolences to the community. The military has acknowledged conducting air strikes, which it said had dealt "a decisive blow to bandits terrorising villages in the area". The Nigerian Air Force (NAF) said it was investigating "reports of

views with grave concern reports of the loss of civilian lives in the course of the operation," it said in a statement. It said an ongoing "comprehensive investigation" would ascertain the truth of the matter, which would be "communicated to inform and reassure the public". The AFP news agency quoted a local as saying that the civilians were returning to their villages after chasing away bandits when they were bombed. The villagers "recovered 16 bodies from the attacks and took several other people with severe injuries to the hospital", Sa'idu Ibrahim was quoted as saying.

Ghana to investigate controversial \$400m cathedral project

Ghana's government will investigate controversial plans to build a \$400m (£330m) national cathedral, a new President John Mahama has said. Pressure has been mounting on authorities to drop the project, which has divided opinions in a country experiencing an economic crisis. Former President Nana Akufo-Addo, whose party was voted out during December's elections, had pledged to build the cathedral after crediting God for his party's success in 2016. Akufo-Addo's government said the cathedral would be privately funded, but \$58m of taxpayers' money has so far been spent on the project. There is nothing to show for this sum but a huge crater in a plot of valuable land in central Accra, previously occupied by state buildings, judges' homes and financial firms. Ghana is a deeply religious country, where 70% of people are Christians. The National Cathedral of Ghana was envisioned to be a sacred space for all Christians, where

national religious services could take place. It is also intended to house a Bible museum and a national conference centre. At a thanksgiving service on Sunday, Mahama said: "The commission on human rights and administrative justice (CHRAJ) directed government to audit the project and investigate any misuse of public funds. We would soon activate such an investigation into the project." However, he did not rule out

finishing the cathedral. "We can reach a more reasonable figure for achieving such a project and together we can raise the funding for it," he said. "Such a reconsideration of this project might even include changing the current site that was chosen for the project. The project must be achieved at a reasonable cost, in the current circumstances that Ghana is going through, it makes no sense to achieve a project at a whopping sum of \$400m." BBC



The cathedral is intended to look like this when it's finished

Dead bodies seen in videos from South African mine

Disturbing videos have emerged showing the dire situation at a disused gold mine in South Africa where scores of illegal miners have reportedly been living underground for months. They have been there since police operations targeting illicit mining started last year across the country.

In one of the videos, which the BBC has not independently verified, corpses wrapped in makeshift body bags can be seen. A second shows the emaciated figures of some miners who are still alive.

A long-delayed rescue operation, that last week a court ordered the government to facilitate, began on Monday. Last year, arguing that the miners had entered the shaft in

seen sitting on a dirty floor. Their faces have been blurred. A male voice off camera can be heard saying that the men are hungry and need help. "We're starting to show you the bodies of those who died underground," he says. "And this is not all of them... Do you see how people are struggling? Please we need help." In the other video, a man says: "This is hunger; people are dying because of hunger." He then puts the death toll at 96 and begs for help, food and supplies.

The union says the footage was filmed on Saturday. In a briefing held on Monday near the site of the rescue operation, Giwusa leadership, alongside community figures, said the videos shared "painted a very dire picture" of the situation underground.

"What has transpired here has to be called what it is; this is a Stilfontein massacre. Because what this footage does is show a pile of human bodies, of miners



The videos shot underground show scenes of dead bodies and emaciated figures

Stilfontein deliberately without permission, the authorities took a hard line, blocking food and water supplies.

In November, one government minister said: "We are going to smoke them out."

More than 100 of the illegal miners, known locally as "zama zamas", have reportedly died underground since the crack down began at the mine some 145km (90 miles) south-west of Johannesburg.

The authorities however, have not confirmed this figure as it is yet to be "verified by an official source", a spokesperson told the BBC. Hundreds are thought to be still in the mine while more than a 1,000 have surfaced in the past few months. In one of the videos released by a trade union, the General Industries Workers of South Africa (Giwusa), dozens of shirtless men can be seen

that died needlessly," Giwusa president Mametlwe Sebei said. He blamed the authorities for what he described as a "treacherous policy" that was deliberately pursued.

The department of mineral resources, leading the rescue effort, told the BBC that Monday's operation included the lowering down of a cage that has been hoisted up once loaded with people. This structure is designed to hold six or seven people, depending on their weight, according to Giwusa. It has been going down the shaft - descending about 2km - every hour. The union said that by the end of Monday 26 miners had been brought up alive along with nine bodies.

Department of mineral resources spokesperson Makhosonke Buthelezi could not confirm whether the priority will be to retrieve those who had died or those in need of medical attention. A briefing will be held by the department, together with the police ministry, on Tuesday to provide an update on the operation. BBC

EDITORIAL

We need the donation from the AU

The Government of Liberia seems to be dragging its feet in providing transportation funding for logistical equipment donated by the African Union to the Armed Forces of Liberia. The AFL that faces serious logistical challenges needs the donation so badly to enhance its mobility and service-delivery capacity to the state.

But the government, under Commander-In-Chief President Joseph Nyuma Boakai seems to be moving at a very slow pace in providing US\$1.3 million to transport equipment valued about US\$20 million from Cameroun to Liberia for its military.

The donation includes military vehicles, earth-moving machines, fire trucks and other essential assets, left over from AU peacekeeping missions that are useful for Liberia and could go a very long way in boosting operational functions of the Armed Forces of Liberia.

But it is lingering at the AU's Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon, according to Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) Brigadier General Davidson F. Forleh, who appears to be restless in knocking on every door in the government for the US\$1.3 million transportation cost to have it in the country.

Liberia seems to be behaving in a manner that we say in here that you gave a man woman and then he looks up to you for mattress. The government of President Boakai should source funding immediately to have the equipment transported to country, it is vital for our security sector especially, the military.

We believe that further delays could be dangerous, as other countries could take advantage of the opportunity, if we failed to act urgently as a country. We cannot be lackluster about everything and expect to move ahead in this contemporary era.

We should not forget that a poorly prepare military in Liberia would become a laughter in the subregion. This is something that no patriotic Liberian want. We may be a small country, but we are a proud and resilient people.

Negotiation for the equipment, including diplomatic and military engagement with the AU started since 2018, according to Chief of Staff Brigadier General Forleh, while he represented the country as Defense Attaché to the AU.

We call on the 55th Legislature to intervene in identifying funding for this important cause just as it moved with a 4G speed in budgeting US\$1.8 million to renovate the damaged floor of the Capitol Building that was gutted by fire.

We believe strongly that bringing in the equipment will be a significant boost for the security sector particularly, the AFL, a Force for Good. Government must place premium on our gallant men and women in arms as they sacrifice to defend the Motherland. This is an opportunity to modernize the capacity of our boys.

Happy New Year to our Readers

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UN Drive, P.O. Box 1266 Opposite National Investment Commission.
Monrovia-Liberia. Tel: +231-06484201, +231-77007529, +231-0555422200 /
+231-775407211 Managing Editor: Othello B. Garblah; Editor-In-Chief: Jonathan K. Browne
www.thenewdawnliberia.com; Email: info@thenewdawnliberia.com

COMMENTARY

By Richard Haass

Joe Biden's Disappearing Legacy

NEW YORK - All US presidents leave mixed legacies. The best make mistakes, and the worst get some things right. But Joe Biden's legacy is more mixed than most, if only because he got some big things mostly right and some big things mostly wrong.

Start with the positives. The US economy performed extremely well under Biden, far outpacing its peers. Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, GDP increased significantly, from approximately \$21 trillion in 2020 to more than \$29 trillion in 2024. The economy added more than 16 million jobs, and unemployment fell substantially. And major legislation - the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act - secured significant funding for infrastructure improvements, domestic microchip production, and clean energy.

But the surge in federal spending also caused inflation, with consumer prices up some 20% over four years. It also contributed to a ballooning deficit, with government debt increasing by some \$7 trillion, to \$36 trillion by the end of 2024.

Biden's biggest foreign-policy accomplishment was undoubtedly Ukraine. While the administration ultimately could not prevent Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion, it made unprecedented, creative use of intelligence to warn Ukraine and the world. It also settled wisely on an indirect strategy, in which the United States and its NATO partners provided Ukraine the means to defend itself while avoiding direct military involvement, which could have triggered a larger - or even nuclear - war.

The policy largely succeeded. Nearly three years after the war began, Putin has failed to achieve his aims, despite the disparity in military strength and population. Indeed, Ukraine has fought the Russian military to a near standstill and maintained its independence.

The policy was not perfect. It too often erred on the side of caution in providing Ukraine advanced weapons systems or allowing them to be used in a manner most likely to affect Russian action. Similarly, framing the war as one between the forces of democracy and authoritarianism got in the way of building a broad international coalition to oppose Russian aggression and support sanctions.

The Biden team also failed to articulate achievable war aims. Fearful of being accused of selling out a partner and compromising in the face of aggression, the administration deferred to Ukraine, which until late 2024 insisted on recovering all its lost territory dating back to 2014, a position that, while understandable, was not realistic militarily. Allowing objectives to be defined in terms that could not be met played into the hands of opponents of aid to Ukraine.

More broadly, Biden took important steps to revive alliances that had been damaged and weakened during President-elect Donald Trump's first administration. Biden essentially replaced America First with Allies First. He understood the strategic advantages of enlisting partners on behalf of common regional and global challenges. NATO added Finland and Sweden on Biden's watch and continued to modernize, while Biden announced a significant trilateral partnership with the United Kingdom and Australia (AUKUS) and brokered a historic rapprochement between Japan and South Korea.

Elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific, however, strategic drift prevailed. Regarding China, Biden retained Trump's import tariffs and imposed a

host of technology-related export controls. Renewed dialogue did not halt China's ongoing military build-up or its support for Russia's war on Ukraine. Similarly, there was scant new diplomacy vis-à-vis North Korea, which remained hostile to US interests, continued to produce nuclear weapons and missiles, and sent troops to Russia to fight on the Kremlin's behalf.

The most glaring hole in the administration's regional strategy was economic. Biden announced the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, which did not amount to anything, and the US did not join any regional trade pacts, allowing China to cement its position as the region's economic center of gravity. As a rule, free trade gave way to protectionist policies that emphasized costly domestic production and "Buy American" provisions.

In Afghanistan, Biden implemented the accord negotiated and signed by Trump in February 2020 that paved the way for a Taliban takeover. Even though a strong case could be made that the pact undermined a status quo that was affordable and kept the Taliban at bay, there was no effort to revise it. After years of US funding and training, the Afghan army collapsed in a matter of days, and 13 US troops died during the chaotic evacuation.

Meanwhile, efforts to put the Middle East on the back burner imploded on October 7, 2023. Biden was properly supportive of Israel in the days after Hamas's attack, but near-unconditional backing made the US appear weak as subsequent Israeli military action in Gaza caused tens of thousands of civilian deaths and created a humanitarian crisis. The administration spent the bulk of its time trying to broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that neither side wanted.

While the region is arguably in far better shape than it was four years ago, this has less to do with US policy than with Israel's decapitation of Hezbollah, its decimation of Hamas, its decision to strike Iranian air-defense and weapons facilities, and the ouster of Syria's Bashar al-Assad, which ought to be attributed to Iranian weakness, Russian distraction, and Turkish opportunism.

The Biden administration's biggest single failure was at the US southern border. Illegal immigration surged by some eight million between 2021 and 2024. The administration initially sought to differentiate its immigration policies from those of Trump, but then was slow to react when it became clear its approach wasn't working. Biden and the Democrats paid dearly, as polls indicate it contributed significantly to Trump's re-election.

Biden's decision to run for re-election, despite low favorability ratings and growing signs that he was no longer up to the job, also paved the way to Trump's victory. Had he followed through on his earlier promises to be a transitional figure and opted to be a one-term president, Democrats could have staged a competitive nomination process, giving candidates time to develop agendas and introduce themselves to voters. There is no way to know if Vice President Kamala Harris would have prevailed, but if she had, she would have been a far stronger candidate for having earned the nomination and publicly defining herself in the process.

Presidential legacies depend in large part on what successor administrations retain. It is not just Biden's misfortune to be succeeded by Trump, who is committed to undoing much of his domestic and foreign policy. It is also in no small part Biden's doing. His biggest legacy could be the lack of one.

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OP-ED

By Gordon Brown

Gender Apartheid Is a Crime Against Humanity

EDINBURGH- Convinced that their interpretation of Islam is the only legitimate one, Afghanistan’s Taliban leaders continue to issue decrees that strip the country’s women and girls of their rights and freedoms. Their latest edict bans Afghan women - already prohibited from speaking in public - from praying aloud or reciting the Quran in the presence of other women. “When women are not permitted to call takbir [Allahu akbar]or athan [the Islamic call to prayer], they certainly cannot sing songs or music,” declared Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, the minister for the propagation of virtue and prevention of vice.

Just months ago, there was some hope that the Taliban might ease its restrictions on women and girls’ education. Instead, the regime seems intent on entrenching its gender apartheid system. In response, Richard Bennett, the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan - who remains barred from entering the country - has launched a review of the Taliban’s repressive policies, calling its latest decree a “pivotal moment.”

Meanwhile, the UN’s Sixth Committee (Legal) recently approved a draft global treaty targeting crimes against humanity. As many human-rights groups, including Amnesty International, have argued, this treaty, which will be the subject of further discussion in January 2026, must recognize and codify gender apartheid as a crime under international law. Such a designation would represent a historic step toward ending the systemic discrimination, oppression, and subjugation of women and girls in Afghanistan, Iran, and beyond.

The Taliban’s gender apartheid underscores the urgent need to confront this profound moral failure. Over the past three years, the regime has denied Afghan girls and young women access to schools and universities, barred women from most forms of employment, prohibited them from traveling without a male chaperone, and excluded them from most public spaces. It also enforces a draconian dress code requiring women to wear burqas that cover them from head to toe.

In August, the Taliban intensified its efforts to silence women, banning them from singing, reciting, and speaking in public. During multilateral negotiations in Doha earlier this year, Afghan women and women’s groups were excluded, while the regime refused even to acknowledge their plight.

Despite these restrictions, Afghan girls - many of whom were already in school when the Taliban returned to power in 2021 - continue to dream of becoming doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, and entrepreneurs. At great risk to themselves and their families, some attend underground schools, participate in local home-schooling initiatives, or pursue remote learning. A few have managed to leave the country to study abroad. But these efforts fall far short of bridging the gap between the number of girls entitled to an education under international law and those who receive one.

The oppression of Afghan women has had far-reaching - and devastating - consequences. According to a recent UN Women report, child marriage has increased by 25%, owing partly to girls’ exclusion from secondary education. Mental distress, depression, and suicide attempts have also soared, and the risk of maternal mortality has surged by at least 50%, fueled by a rise in childbirth deaths among young girls.

Encouragingly, the international community has made progress in mobilizing a legal response to the Taliban’s oppressive policies. In March 2023, prominent Afghan jurists and women’s rights advocates launched the End Gender Apartheid campaign, calling for its recognition as an international crime. Building on this momentum, the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls recommended including gender apartheid in the draft treaty on crimes against humanity. And during the April 2024 session of the UN’s legal committee on draft articles, several member states expressed support for its inclusion.

The discussions in January 2026 will consider the proposed definition of gender apartheid as “inhumane acts committed within the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic discrimination, oppression, and domination by one group over another or others, based on gender, and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime.” This definition encompasses violations of fundamental human rights, such as access to education, health care, and employment, as well as freedom of expression, assembly, and participation in political, social, economic, and cultural life.

But the question remains: Can the proposed treaty deliver justice to victims of systemic discrimination? While it obligates signatories to prosecute crimes against humanity, its enforcement mechanisms remain limited. Member states would be required to cooperate and provide legal assistance on matters like extradition, but the current draft lacks a firm commitment to suppress crimes - a key provision of the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. Moreover, the draft treaty focuses on the criminal responsibility of individuals, overlooking the role of institutions and organizations in establishing and sustaining gender apartheid.

The international community must make it clear that it will not normalize relations with the Taliban until the regime ends its war on women, and predominantly Muslim countries could play a critical role. Notably, Qatar - which has long acted as a mediator between the Taliban and the West - has condemned the Taliban’s policies, as has Saudi Arabia. The United Arab Emirates has gone further, denouncing Afghanistan’s ban on girls’ education as a violation of “the teachings of Islam” that “must be swiftly reversed.”

Now, Muslim-majority countries should lead the effort to bring a case against Afghanistan before the International Court of Justice for violating the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Doing so would send a clear message: there will be no creeping reintegration or de facto recognition of the Taliban regime as long as it maintains its oppressive policies.

Importantly, such a move would also deliver a message of solidarity and hope to Afghan girls and young women that their suffering has not been overlooked and that their oppressors will be held accountable. The world cannot afford another year of inaction while these egregious human-rights violations persist.

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OPINION

By Emily Armistead

The Half Promise of Weight-Loss Drugs

LONDON - Groundbreaking weight-loss drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy have understandably generated a lot of excitement, bringing hope to the hundreds of millions of people grappling with obesity. When combined with a healthier diet and exercise, these drugs, which work by suppressing appetite, deliver an average 10% reduction in body weight that can be sustained for years.

With more than two-thirds of adults in the United Kingdom and nearly three-quarters in the United States classified as overweight or obese - a health crisis that costs national economies billions of dollars annually - physicians and policymakers could be forgiven for embracing these drugs as a panacea. US President Joe Biden’s administration, for example, recently proposed requiring Medicare and Medicaid to cover the costs of weight-loss drugs, offering access to millions of Americans. But addressing obesity requires much more than a technological fix.

To be clear, I am not suggesting these drugs are unnecessary or that medical professionals should avoid prescribing them. But they do not address the problem fueling the global obesity crisis (and contributing to the climate crisis as well): our broken food system.

The alarming rise in obesity over the past 30 years is not simply a byproduct of higher living standards or more sedentary lifestyles, though these factors play a pivotal role. The primary factor appears to be the transformation of our food environment, which has fundamentally altered both the types of food we consume and our eating habits.

In recent years, scientists and health experts have increasingly focused on the high-fat, sugar, and salt (HFSS) foods driving unhealthy dietary habits. This trend can be attributed to companies reshaping the food system to produce ultra-processed, hyper-palatable, and highly profitable foods. Consequently, people are snacking more, eating larger portions, and preparing fewer meals themselves. In the UK, for example, the snack market has boomed while the time spent preparing meals has sharply declined.

These changes haven’t just fueled the rapid increase in HFSS food consumption. They have also led to a surge in meat consumption, especially in Europe and North America, where meat-heavy diets have become all too common.

Beyond the heightened risk of heart disease and related health conditions, excessive meat consumption has had devastating effects on the climate and biodiversity. Research shows that animal-based foods generate twice the greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions of plant-based alternatives. Just as health experts urge us to reduce our HFSS intake, climate scientists consistently emphasize the importance of cutting meat and dairy consumption to keep global warming within safe limits.

In an effort to prevent a lasting change in people’s eating habits, the meat industry is seeking techno-fixes to cut GHG emissions. For example, funding for research on cutting farm emissions - such as feed additives designed to reduce methane levels in cows’ burps - has increased markedly.

Such solutions are particularly attractive to governments reluctant to introduce measures that influence consumer behavior. Fearful of opposition from the Big Food lobby and wary of accusations of overreach, policies like sugar taxes or meat taxes are deemed political hot potatoes to be avoided at all costs.

But the overlapping crises our broken food system is fueling - from the billions of dollars spent each year on diet-related health problems to the environmental degradation pushing our planet to its limits - cannot be wished away or fixed with technological band-aids. Instead, what is needed is a major shift in dietary habits toward foods that nourish both people and the environment.

To this end, the EAT-Lancet Commission - comprised of the world’s leading nutrition and sustainability experts - advocates a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and plant-based proteins while reducing consumption of animal proteins, dairy, and sugars. Taken together, these recommendations offer a clear blueprint for ensuring health and sustainability.

Admittedly, it is unrealistic to expect consumers - conditioned by food environments designed for profit rather than human or environmental health - to drive this transition on their own. With unhealthy foods widely available and aggressively marketed, many consumers often struggle to moderate their food intake and, in some cases, develop addictive behaviors.

Governments and food manufacturers must take proactive measures to reshape these environments, such as expanding initiatives aimed at reducing the consumption of HFSS foods to include meat, thereby encouraging people to eat more plant-based whole foods and meat alternatives.

Another potential solution would be to extend bans on promotional deals for unhealthy foods to cover meat products. Requiring food companies to report on the types of food they sell, including HFSS foods and the ratio of plant-based to animal proteins, would also help. These measures would incentivize businesses to prioritize healthier, more sustainable options over less nutritious ones.

None of this is to suggest that the new generation of weight-loss drugs cannot benefit individuals living with obesity. For those trapped in a cycle of poor health, Ozempic and Wegovy could even save lives, and efforts to make these treatments widely available are a welcome step.

But it is essential that we recognize that this approach treats the symptoms rather than the underlying pathology. Defusing the time bombs of ill health and environmental catastrophe requires fast, decisive action to remake our dysfunctional food system.

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Boakai: No Silver Lining in One Year

By Seltue Karweaye

It is a well-established truth that the performance of any government is scrutinized based on the success or failure of the promises it made both before and after assuming office. During the presidential campaign of the previous year, Joseph Nyumah Boakai, representing the Unity Party, made many commitments to the Liberian populace. These promises were later encapsulated by his campaign team into what they called his 6-point Arrest Agenda. The agenda aimed to address critical issues such as agribusiness, roads, and infrastructure development, establishing the rule of law and good governance, enhancing education and human capital, and promoting tourism in Liberia.

As Boakai's administration nears the one-year mark in office, it is important to reflect on the outcomes of his governance thus far. Unfortunately, it is not an exaggeration to state that his administration has faced significant challenges and has produced a record that many would consider dismal.

Throughout the past year, there has been a conspicuous lack of effective planning and a sense of impulsiveness that has marked many of his administration's decisions, raising questions about their sincerity and commitment to fulfilling their promises. The 2024 in review has undoubtedly been a difficult journey for Boakai, who aspired to lead the country as its President and Commander-in-Chief. Regrettably, instead of delivering on the envisioned progress and prosperity, the reality for many Liberians has been one of struggle and despair. The rising costs of essential goods and services have plunged ordinary citizens into a state of economic hardship, resulting in increased pain, sorrow, and hardship. Many families are grappling with the harsh realities of hunger and poverty, as the prices for basic necessities have soared to levels that are simply unattainable for the average citizen.

The stories of struggle and disillusionment that fill the lives of most Liberians today are truly harrowing. There is an abundance of evidence to substantiate these claims, and it is all too apparent in the daily lives of the citizens. As we take stock one year into Boakai's presidency, it becomes glaringly evident that Liberia is in a more precarious position. The need for decisive and effective leadership has never been more critical, as the nation seeks to find a way out of the mounting challenges it faces.

Since taking office, the inflation rate in Liberia has surged to a concerning level of 10.74 percent, marking a significant economic challenge for the nation. Concurrently, the monetary policy rate has escalated to 17.5 percent. Such high rates of inflation are particularly harmful to local businesses, making it difficult for them to maintain profitability and for potential investors to see Liberia as an attractive destination for investment.

Food inflation is especially alarming, having reached an unprecedented high of 11.5 percent during this period. This rise has directly impacted the cost of basic necessities. For instance, the national average price for a 25 kg bag of rice has soared to LRD 3,700, reflecting a staggering 21% increase compared to the same time frame in 2023. Currency dynamics also play a critical role in the current economic climate; as of last week, the exchange rate for the Liberian dollar stood at L\$186.2296 per US dollar.

Moreover, Liberians and various industries are facing a confluence of economic hardships. These include exorbitant energy costs, which burden both households and businesses, as well as ongoing challenges related to foreign exchange (FX) liquidity. The situation is compounded by multiple layers of import taxation that hinder trade, and the country's power supply remains inconsistent and unreliable, further straining economic activities. Amid these challenges, the political climate has also become tense, as evidenced by the arrest of protesters—a troubling incident that raises serious concerns about the state of civil liberties and the freedom to assemble in the country.

In light of these difficulties, many citizens are left wondering about the effectiveness of the so-called "Arrest Agenda." Questions are being raised regarding the whereabouts of the economic reboot and rescue mission that President Boakai promised to deliver. In his inauguration speech delivered on January 22, 2025, he emphasized his commitment to expanding the economy

through strategic investment in agriculture.

Now, as we reflect on the year since his inauguration, reports from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund reveal that Liberia's GDP ranks among the lowest in the world. The economy continues to struggle with stagnation, currently at a mere 5.3 percent growth rate. It is undeniable that the President inherited a challenging economic landscape, marked by a substantial debt profile, high levels of debt servicing, persistent shortages of foreign exchange, a fragile power supply, a depreciating Liberian dollar, and declining iron ore production—all of which have historically driven significant contributions to the economy.

Despite these initial challenges, it appears that President Boakai has managed to surpass the failures of his predecessor, George Weah, across several crucial indicators. Over the past year, his administration has significantly increased borrowing, racking up over US\$236 million in debt in one year, despite former assurances to curtail borrowing practices. This reckless financial strategy has led to a troubling escalation of the national debt, which climbed to over US\$2.5 billion by the end of September 2024, according to the latest figures released by the Debt Management Office in the third quarter fiscal report. This alarming trend raises critical questions about fiscal responsibility and the government's long-term economic strategy moving forward.

In his inaugural address, the president made a strong commitment to both local and foreign investors, vowing that his administration



would create a more favorable investment environment aimed at expanding the private sector and generating employment opportunities for Liberians. However, the situation is complicated by the continued presence of certain companies operating within Liberia's borders.

One such company is Global Tracking and Maritime Solutions (GTMS), which was previously expelled from Sierra Leone after being accused of defrauding the Sierra Leonean government of more than US\$11 million. Despite this troubling history, GTMS is currently permitted to operate in Liberia, where it provides container tracking services at all the country's ports. The company charges over \$270 for each container it tracks, leading to concerns among local businesses about the fairness of such fees.

Another notable player in this scenario is MedTech Scientific Limited (MTS), a company from Qatar that was introduced to Liberia by the Weah administration in 2019. MTS is responsible for conducting destination inspections of containers arriving at Liberia's seaports and charges a fee of \$250 per container inspected. This operational setup has raised significant concerns from local businesses that feel marginalized and burdened by the costs imposed by these foreign companies.

Overall, while the administration's goal to improve the investment climate is questionable, the ongoing operations of GTMS and MTS, especially in light of their controversial backgrounds, continue to provoke frustration and discontent among local enterprises struggling to thrive in such an environment.

If Boakai inherited a Liberia that was already divided along various lines, he has only succeeded in further polarizing the nation. The divisions that separate us have deepened significantly during his time in office. A thorough examination of the President's appointments thus far reveals a troubling continuity with the previous administration, where a system that heavily favors the president's county of origin has played a significant role in decision-making. Specifically, the appointments to key positions have predominantly favored Lofa County, the President's home county, raising concerns about regional bias in

governance.

Furthermore, basic necessities, particularly staple foods like rice, are increasingly becoming unaffordable for the average Liberian. The economic strain has reached such a level that this is perhaps one of the worst times to be ill in Liberia; the costs associated with medical care and prescription medications are now well beyond the financial reach of most citizens. This situation prompts a critical question: Is your life genuinely better now than it was before Boakai assumed power? The prospect of relief from the current state of extreme hardship seems bleak and uncertain.

It is fair to argue that the benchmarks for judging President Boakai's effectiveness as a leader are exceptionally high and difficult to achieve, given the damages set by previous administrations, but Boakai promised to rescue the country. The President must take responsibility for the hasty and thoughtless decisions he has made in a remarkably short timeframe. Many of his policies have led to profoundly negative repercussions that resonate across multiple sectors of the economy and society. As such, we find ourselves in a scenario where despair has overshadowed hope for a brighter future. This pervasive sense of hopelessness stands as a troubling indicator of the current administration's track record in governing the country effectively, raising serious concerns about the path forward for Liberia.

The current situation in Liberia under this administration is quite troubling and deserves careful examination. This President, akin to his predecessor, appears to regard the presidency not as a solemn responsibility, but rather as a coveted prize to be claimed. This perspective undermines the gravity of the office and the profound responsibilities that come with it. In a nation facing numerous challenges, the starting point for this government—and, more specifically, for this President—should have involved a period of introspection and thorough self-assessment. Such a process is critical for any leader aiming to understand the complex dynamics of governance. Unfortunately, there is a noticeable absence of these essential elements in the current administration's approach.

Let's clarify an important point: the success of Boakai directly correlates with the success of Liberia as a nation. It is crucial to recognize that for him, the acquisition of power seems to take precedence over all other considerations, which is deeply concerning for the future of the country. Governing is not a matter of trial and error; yet, unfortunately, this administration has operated in such a manner over the past year. We have witnessed a troubling and consistent pattern of ineffective policies that have permeated most of its reform efforts.

One of the fundamental issues plaguing this administration is its inability to acknowledge the significant and, at times, catastrophic mistakes that have been made. Rather than admitting these failures, there appears to be a reluctance to make necessary adjustments and improvements as we move forward. This lack of accountability is alarming, especially since there is a well-established principle of second chances. Many religious texts, including the scriptures, emphasize the importance of recognizing one's shortcomings and seizing the opportunity to correct them. These chances are often pivotal for personal and societal growth, but they require a sincere acknowledgment of past errors.

Therefore, I would offer my unsolicited advice to President Boakai: do not allow your legacy to become merely a footnote in the annals of history. While the image of an 'imperial' presidency might offer certain immediate advantages—such as consolidating power and enacting swift decisions without opposition—this approach carries significant risks. Such a concentration of power can undermine democratic institutions and erode public trust, leading to long-lasting and profound damage to our democratic framework. It is crucial to recognize that the opportunity for meaningful change and reflection still exists. By embracing a more inclusive and transparent approach to governance, President Boakaia can move away from the trappings of authoritarianism and work toward fostering a healthier democratic environment that respects the voices of all citizens. It is not too late to chart a new course that prioritizes the nation's and its people's well-being over personal ambition. I rest my pen.

About the Author: Seltue R. Karweaye can be reached s.karweaye1668@student.tsu.edu or karweayee@gmail.com

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Equipment for AFL delayed

-Over US\$1.3 million transport cost
The High Command of the Armed Forces of Liberia expresses frustrations here over delays in having logistics donated by the African Union delivered to Liberia.

By Stephen G. Fellajuah
Monrovia, Liberia, January 14, 2024 - The African Union's US\$20 million logistical support to Liberia faces serious delays here due to a delay by the Government of Liberia to



the delay has caused frustration for the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia, President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, who he reveals is annoyed. "Foreign Minister Sarah Bayslow Nyanti made a compelling argument that led to a commitment of these equipment. This includes not just military equipment, but also essential tools for infrastructure development, like earth-moving machines, fire trucks, and a promise of three years' worth of spare parts", the Chief of Staff detailed here on Monday, January 13, 2025 in an interview with OK fm in Monrovia. "The only remaining challenge is transporting the equipment, which will require \$1.3 million", he notes.

Koon calls for unity and transparency

The Head of the Majority bloc in the divided House of Representatives, Representative Richard Koon, preaches unity and transparency as the House convenes here.

By Bridgett Milton
Monrovia, Liberia, January 14, 2024 - As the divided House of Representatives reconvenes here, the Speaker elected by the Majority bloc, Richard Nagbe Koon, is calling for unity and transparency in the House. Speaking at the opening of the 2nd session of the 55th Legislature on Monday, January 13, in the Monrovia City Hall, Speaker Koon said it is time the House of Representatives rebuild trust with the Liberian people. He recalls recent challenges faced by the 55th Legislature, including leadership impasse and an arson at the Capitol Building. "The responsibility to promote peace, advance unity, and restore trust cannot be overemphasized", Speaker Koon continues, and calls on fellow lawmakers to use the new session as a turning point,

Importantly, Brigadier General Forleh says the AU does not require any further contributions or support from Liberia in this matter and that a specific contact person, Melvin Joseph, has been designated by the AU to facilitate the process. The reason for the delays hasn't been clearly identified, but the General suspects that there might be a disconnect or communication gap contributing to the problem. Despite the setback, he is optimistic, as Minister of Finance Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan has assured that the shipment will be expedited. The donation, once delivered, will enhance Liberia's defense and peacekeeping capabilities, strengthening its national security and regional commitments. The logistical support stems from long-term diplomatic and military efforts, with Chief of Staff Forleh playing a central role since 2018. According to him, he initially advocated for the support as Liberia's Defense Attaché to the AU. After successfully securing the donation, Forleh engaged with AU officials, which led to the approval of the equipment package. The logistics include cargo trucks, military vehicles, bulldozers, fuel tanks, fire trucks, and spare parts, all valued at US\$20.6 million. These assets are vital for the AFL's operations, including troop transportation, field missions, disaster relief, and international peacekeeping efforts.

noting, "To be true to all of us here today, our people across the country don't seem to be happy with us." At the same time, he is urging his colleagues to double their efforts to rebuild public trust through transparency and accountability. Koon expresses gratitude for the passage of the 2025 national budget, amounting to \$880.6 million, which he describes as a milestone in addressing critical sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, and agriculture.

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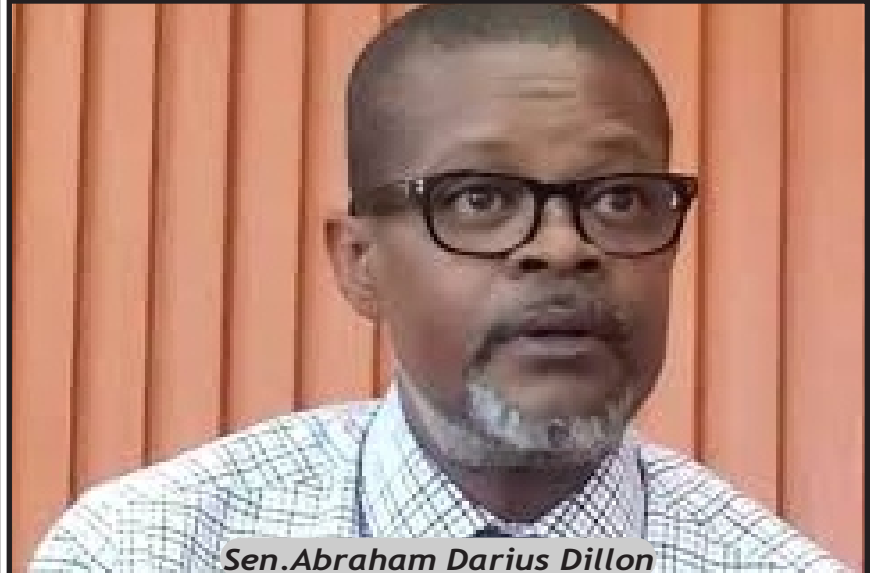


Dillon upset with Boakai

-Says honeymoon is over
Montserrado County Senator Darius Dillon says the honeymoon is over for President Boakai and that it's time to work for the Liberian people.

By Lincoln G. Peters
Monrovia, Liberia, January 14, 2025 - Montserrado County Senator and Chair on Foreign Affairs Abraham Darius Dillon is disgusted with President Joseph N. Boakai and the ruling Unity Party government over poor administration of the state of affairs here, warning the Executive that the days of honeymoons are over. Addressing a press conference at the Liberian Senate on Monday, January 13, 2025, following the opening of the Second Session of the Liberian Senate, Senator Dillon said that going forward in 2025, the Senate will be more robust and progressive in the governance of the state. He said in 2024, they allowed something to slide because they wanted the government to be fully operational with the personnel needed by the

his work to enhance the working of the President is important. He has used that by correcting some administrative errors that don't belong on the senate flow or appeared on the flow. Dillon continues that if they had not been using that, 2024 probably would have been worse than what people perceived it to be. He says 2025 and in the future, they themselves and the country deserve better; therefore, if the senate didn't set the stage, the nation would not move anywhere, adding that as a rescue senator, he has a duty to ensure that what they rescue is not just rescued, but marked by progress. "Now, the honeymoon period, the babysitting period, ended December 31, 2024. Now, in order to hold the Executive and the Judiciary accountable, we will have to start with



President in place, adding that now that they have done that, they will no longer allow honeymoons. "You want me to grade this Legislature and the government overall performance, now, on the overall governance, the country was in 2024, I am not too pleased to grade this government. The glass is half-full, not completely empty. The Senate has made some progress with the website, buying employee buses, and salary payment and insurance. We did system audit. We're putting things in place for the Senate to experience financial audits. I grade the senate in my view from a reform perspective about 80%", Senator Dillon says. According to him, he still has in his possession a key to the door that leads to the Office of the Presidency, adding that the key is still new and useable because he believes that doing ourselves. Every session, we will have to meet quorum; if we can't, it will be left with the Liberian people through the media to know who is coming to work or not", he says. He discloses that the period of feeding is done, and it's time for work because they have set the stage for the President, explaining that when a new government takes power, even in the United States, they confirm nominees forwarded by the President, which the Liberian Senate has done. He notes that after elections, there is a honeymoon period where the Executive is given one year to set up with regards to the personnel they want to work with "because you don't want them to fail," and so, in 2024, they gave President Boakai everything he wanted therefore, it's time for Liberians to have the chance. He assures Liberians that beginning this January and in

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Mines admits huge revenue loss to illegal miners

The Inspectorate Division at the Ministry of Mines and Energy has lamented huge losses in revenues to illicit mining in Liberia.

By Lincoln G. Peters
Monrovia, January 13, 2025: Liberia's Mines and Energy Inspectorate Division says Liberia is losing huge revenues to illegal and



illicit miners. In an interview over the weekend, the Inspectorate Division told journalists that this is depleting mining resources. However, the Inspectorate Division has assured Liberians of a robust and transparent inspection to address the situation. The Inspectorate Division said this is intended to ensure a full-scale implementation of Liberia's Minerals and Mining Law and to ensure that Liberians benefit from the country's resources. Mr. Agatius B. Coker, Inspector-General of the Ministry of Mines and Energy, said that the Inspectorate Division remains unbending in implementing the law. He stated that the Division will

not relent in insisting on the legitimacy of every miner and those with such business aspirations. He detailed that the ministry's fiduciary responsibility to regulate all mining activities in the country and hold miners by the law is one of the surest ways the national government can generate revenues to support development priorities. Mr. Coker was responding to the latest inspection works being done across the country by the Ministry's Inspectors assigned to the six mining districts of Liberia. Before the just-ended festive season celebrations, some unapproved mining equipment were seized from unlicensed individuals. They were caught carrying out illicit activities in towns and villages without regard for the sector's laws and regulations. In stronger terms, Mr. Coker condemned such unpatriotic

acts, saying the current administration of the Ministry is committed to discontinuing. Montserrado County's rural towns and Youth Camp, Number-Seven in District #1, have experienced confiscation of contraband mining equipment. The equipment was confiscated through robust inspection operations. Persons believed to be implicated in those unlawful practices are being pursued to face attending penalties for their actions as the law provides. Inspector-General Coker then commended the Minister of Mines and Energy, Wilmot Paye, and his team for a 'high level' of administrative will and technical support towards the functional capacities of the Inspectorate Division. With such good leadership shown by Minister Paye, Mr. Coker expressed no doubts in the Inspectors' resolve to get the job done. Minister Paye has not minced his words against unacceptable mining practices in his public statements. To tackle those bad practices, the Minister has spoken about making needed working tools and motorbikes available and establishing county offices to enhance field operations. Reports say the Ministry is getting closer to actualizing this ambitious plan, which is also seeking to make the Ministry's presence in mining locations more visible. Another report says the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) could achieve this very important plan when the 2025 fiscal budget of the Government becomes operationalized.

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I will be in Nimba" as a Son of Nimba"

President Koung; he is my little brother. Koung was supposed to come and hug me when he saw me coming from out of my car, chest to chest", Mr. Weah said at the time. But despite his clarification on the avoided handshake with Vice President Koung, a group of Nimbaians under the banner Rescue Intellectual Brigade for Vice President Jeremiah Koung and late Sen. Johnson, at the time declared that Mr. Weah's safety was uncertain in Nimba during the funeral activities of Sen. Johnson. The group, through its Chairperson, Mr. Bilton B. Leaslah, had threatened unspecified traditional actions against Mr. Weah if the former President dare defied them and appear at the funeral of the late Sen. Johnson. The Rescue Intellectual Brigade for VP. Koung and the late Sen.

Johnson, at the time, described Mr. Weah's action as a provocation and perpetual disrespect to their kinsman. "We are not preventing former President Weah from entering Nimba; we are saying that he should stay away from our father's funeral because he has not come to sympathize with us but led provocations," the group said in November 2024. But Mr. Weah insists he will be at Sen. Johnson's funeral in Nimba over the weekend. "I'm a son of Nimba County; why wouldn't I be there to honor a good person who has served this country? In fact, I'm a former President, and a former Senator, additionally this is someone that worked for the country and as a son of Nimba who going to stop me from going to Nimba" Mr. Weah, reiterated. Former President Weah would

later retrospect on the Life and Legacy of the late Nimba County Senator Johnson while reflecting on their days as Senators. "I had the opportunity to work with him at the ECOWAS, where I led our parliamentary team. We worked very well in the interest of Liberians, and of course, we are allies. We went on campaigns together and were very good friends," he added. Meanwhile, what remains uncertain is whether Nimbaians will still resist or deny the former Liberian leader. Senator Johnson is expected to be buried on Saturday, January 18, 2025, after a series of funeral activities, leading from the Book of Condolence to departure to Nimba County on Wednesday. Senator Johnson died on November 28, 2024, at the Women of Hope Hospital in Paynesville. -Edited by Othello B. Garblah

Pro-Temp decries poor senate performance

The Liberian Senate appraises itself here, grading its performance for the First Sitting as poor.

By Lincoln G. Peters
Monrovia, Liberia, January 14, 2025 - Senate Pro-Tempore Nyonblee Kangar Lawrence says the Senate was ineffective during its first sitting in 2024, with dangling legislative oversights and functions of senators, while urging a more aggressive and robust senate. The second Session of the 55th Liberia Legislature officially opened here on Monday, January 13, 2025, with a series of activities in keeping with Article 32 (a) of the Constitution of Liberia states that the Legislature shall assemble in regular session on the second working Monday of January each year. During the program, members of the legislature paraded and hosted flags of all 15 political sub-divisions, followed by an indoor program where Senate Pro-Temp Kangar Lawrence delivered a firing speech to awaken the consciousness of her colleagues for a more progressive senate. According to her, she envisages a more robust and progressive Senate in 2025. "Today, we are here to resume the 2nd Session of the 55th Legislature. I wish to present a

Lawrence specifically mandates the Committee on Public Works report a weekly list of road projects in the budget, their locations, costs, and timelines, including outstanding projects. "The Committee on Energy and Environment is mandated to finalize an assessment of the Senate building by the Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) to install a meter to pay our electricity bills. We want to take the lead in paying bills for the entity's sustainability and hold all Government Ministries and Agencies accountable for doing the same." Meanwhile, providing legislation statistics summary from January to December 2024, she discloses that they have a Report on the Senate governance and financial management practices by championing significant reforms for accountability, transparency, and efficiency. However, she notes that these reforms address longstanding challenges and pave the way for sustainable improvements. At the same time, she presents a summary of achievements, work in progress, and future outlook of the Senate with a total of 27 legislations passed, 18 ratified, three (3) amendments, six (6)



summary report of the 1st Session, including the current state of the Senate governance and financial management practices. In keeping with our oversight responsibilities, we would like to see a more aggressive approach from all Committees on tracking budget programs and implementation in all sectors. We would like to have a quarterly performance report from all ministries and agencies through the committees for debates and actions", the Pro-Tempore says. She calls on the ways, means, and finance committee to ensure that the Ministry of Finance provides quarterly disbursement reports to encourage timely payments to sectors for the timely execution of projects and programs needed for the country's growth and development and the well-being of the people. Leading the way for robust action, Senator Kangar

enactments, 996 Nominees confirmed, and 40 Legislations in Committee Rooms. "As a result of these reports, I wish to inform all Committees that the agenda for the first three months will focus on all bills in Committee Rooms," Pro-Temp Kangar Lawrence reports. She says all Committees are required to report on a weekly basis as of Tuesday, January 21, 2025, on Bills in committee rooms, warning that failure to submit on two occasions will result in setting up of Ad-hoc Committees or Committee-of-the-Whole to expedite these processes. "The Secretary of the Senate will officially communicate to all relevant Committees by tomorrow, January 14, 2025. Some of the 40 Bills that need to be prioritized are An act to amend Chapter 31 of the Executive Law of 1972 to establish the Liberia Tourism Authority;

Français

Des jeunes militants en colère perturbent le siège de l'Union pour l'Unité

Le mécontentement face à l'exclusion des emplois ravive les tensions au sein du parti
Le siège de l'Union pour l'Unité (UP), situé sur Broad Street, a été le théâtre d'une agitation sans précédent jeudi, lorsque des membres de la jeunesse du parti ont perturbé une conférence de presse



président national de la jeunesse, M. Togar M. Cephus, accompagné de son entourage. Des jeunes militants, se disant abandonnés par la direction, ont exprimé leur colère en interrompant bruyamment la conférence de presse.

Une contestation qui dégénère

Les manifestations des jeunes ont rapidement pris une tournure houleuse : slogans hostiles, tables renversées, échanges d'insultes. La tension était telle que l'intervention de plusieurs responsables a été nécessaire pour éviter des

affrontements physiques. Les militants reprochent à la direction du parti de ne pas tenir ses promesses. « Nous avons donné tout ce que nous avons pour cette cause, mais nous avons été oubliés. Nous sommes laissés à l'abandon, sans emploi, tandis que des étrangers occupent les postes qui nous reviennent », a déclaré David Nagbe, un militant présent sur les lieux. M. Nagbe a également critiqué l'absence prolongée des dirigeants de la jeunesse au siège du parti. « Depuis que l'UP est au pouvoir, c'est la première fois que nos dirigeants viennent ici. Nous nous sentons trahis. »

Une direction sous pression

En réponse aux accusations, M. Togar M. Cephus a tenté de calmer les esprits en exprimant sa sympathie pour les jeunes militants et en promettant des solutions. « Nous comprenons les frustrations de nos membres, et nous avons décidé de placer cette question au cœur de notre agenda lors de la réunion

prévue, dénonçant leur exclusion des emplois promis. Ce qui devait être un événement ordinaire s'est transformé en une scène chaotique dès l'arrivée du

Incendie au Capitole : des critiques dénoncent l'ingérence du président Boakai

Le président Joseph N. Boakai fait face à de vives critiques pour avoir qualifié l'incendie récent du Capitole d'acte de vandalisme perpétré par des hooligans, avant même que la police n'entame une enquête officielle.

Des voix s'élèvent pour reprocher au chef de l'État d'avoir compromis l'intégrité de l'enquête conjointe des forces de sécurité en émettant des conclusions précipitées. Ces critiques rejettent par avance les résultats des investigations, qu'ils estiment manquer de preuves crédibles et impartiales.

Un incendie dans un contexte de tensions politiques

Le 18 décembre 2024, un incendie a ravagé la Rotonde du Capitole, siège des sessions communes de la législature libérienne. Les autorités ont rapidement qualifié cet incident d'acte criminel. Ce sinistre s'inscrit dans un climat de tensions politiques exacerbées, où le bloc majoritaire des députés avait récemment utilisé les lieux pour élire Richard Nagbe Koon au poste de président de la Chambre, en remplacement

de J. Fonati Koffa. Cette élection controversée s'est déroulée en dépit d'obstacles juridiques persistants.

Le bloc majoritaire n'a pas obtenu les 49 voix nécessaires sur 73, comme l'exige la Constitution, pour destituer Koffa, mais a justifié son éviction en avançant des accusations de corruption et de conflit d'intérêts.

Des arrestations controversées

Le lendemain de l'incendie, le colonel Gregory Coleman, directeur général de la police nationale, a annoncé l'arrestation de 73 personnes impliquées dans une manifestation antigouvernementale sur les lieux la veille du sinistre. Parmi les suspects figurent des agents de sécurité présents lors de l'incendie et le député de



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Éditorial

L'immigration de travailleurs hautement qualifiés est-elle un problème ?

Par Daron Acemoglu

BOSTON – Les fissures au sein de la coalition « Make America Great Again » du président élu Donald Trump apparaissent plus tôt que prévu. Fin décembre, la branche des milliardaires technologiques était déjà en [guerre ouverte](#) avec l'aile identitaire du mouvement MAGA concernant le programme américain de visas H-1B, qui permet aux entreprises américaines d'employer temporairement quelque [600000étrangers hautement qualifiés](#) chaque année.

S'exprimant au nom des milliardaires, Elon Musk, le PDG de Tesla (l'un des [principaux employeurs de visas H-1B](#)), évoque une « pénurie systématique d'excellents talents en ingénierie ». « Il s'agit du principal facteur de limitation de la Silicon Valley », considère-t-il. De même, Vivek Ramaswamy, autre milliardaire du secteur technologique comptant parmi les conseillers de Trump, [explique](#) que les entreprises américaines ont besoin de travailleurs H-1B dans la mesure où « la culture américaine laisse primer la médiocrité sur l'excellence depuis bien trop longtemps (au moins depuis les années 1990, voire plus loin encore) ». De l'autre côté, un certain nombre de militants du mouvement MAGA tels que Laura Loomer et Steve Bannon – mais également des socialistes démocratiques tels que Bernie Sanders – [rétorquent](#) que ce programme favorise les grandes entreprises américaines au détriment des travailleurs américains.

Qui a raison ? Si les recherches économiques démontrent clairement que les immigrants apportent des [compétences recherchées](#), un [dynamisme créatif](#) et des [connaissances utiles](#) qui bénéficient aux innovateurs nationaux, cela ne signifie pas pour autant qu'il n'existe aucun inconvénient à un recours massif aux visas H-1B. À titre d'exemple, l'argument selon lequel le programme H-1B permet aux employeurs de s'assurer des compétences en STIM (science, technologie, ingénierie et mathématiques) néglige le fait que si ce programme n'existait pas, les établissements d'enseignement américains seraient davantage poussés par le monde des entreprises à répondre à ce besoin.

L'idée de cette pression des élites sur le système éducatif aux fins de la production de travailleurs aux qualifications et compétences utiles remonte au moins à l'ouvrage [Schooling in Capitalist America](#), publié en 1976 par Sam Bowles et Herb Gintis, En appliquant leur argument à la période actuelle, on pourrait s'attendre à ce que le besoin croissant des entreprises américaines en travailleurs qualifiés dans le domaine des STIM se traduise par la promotion de l'enseignement de ces matières et par des investissements à l'appui. Or, il est possible que le recours excessif au programme H-1B ait rompu ce lien, et rendu les élites américaines indifférentes aux [échecs largement reconnus](#) du système éducatif américain. Autrement dit, le problème ne réside potentiellement pas dans une vénération culturelle de la médiocrité, comme l'affirme Ramaswamy, mais plutôt dans une négligence de la part des chefs d'entreprise, des élites intellectuelles et des dirigeants politiques.

Bien entendu, il ne s'agit là que d'une hypothèse. Nul ne peut affirmer avec certitude que la réaction du système d'enseignement serait suffisante s'il était soumis à davantage de pression de la part du monde des affaires. Il n'en demeure pas moins que les dirigeants politiques américains auraient tout intérêt à prêter davantage attention aux potentiels effets secondaires du programme H-1B.

Une réflexion similaire s'applique aux choix technologiques. Certes, les [travailleurs H-1B stimulent l'innovation](#), mais leur présence est susceptible d'influencer la direction que prend l'innovation. Mes propres travaux démontrent ([théoriquement](#) et [empiriquement](#)) que lorsque l'offre de main-d'œuvre qualifiée augmente, les choix technologiques commencent à favoriser ces travailleurs. Au cours des dernières décennies, les entreprises ont de plus en plus adopté des technologies qui favorisent les travailleurs hautement qualifiés, et qui [automatisent des tâches](#) auparavant effectuées par des travailleurs moins qualifiés. Bien que d'autres facteurs aient pu être à l'origine de cette tendance, la disponibilité de travailleurs hautement qualifiés à un prix abordable pour l'industrie technologique y a vraisemblablement contribué.

Cet effet reflète ici encore une indifférence de la part des chefs d'entreprise et des dirigeants politiques. Il suggère par ailleurs que si les États-Unis entendent compter sur les travailleurs H-1B, les dirigeants politiques vont devoir envisager d'autres ajustements pour veiller à ce que les stratégies d'entreprise et les conceptions de nouvelles technologies fassent appel à des travailleurs sans qualifications ni diplôme universitaire en STIM.

Une dernière question pertinente consiste à savoir si les programmes de type H-1B pourraient nuire aux pays d'origine en provoquant une fuite des cerveaux. Le débat est ouvert sur cette question. Ces programmes pourraient constituer une démarche gagnant-gagnant si les économies de destination disposaient de technologies, d'institutions et d'autres travailleurs qualifiés particulièrement complémentaires aux immigrants hautement qualifiés. Dans ce cas, un travailleur indien en STIM contribuerait davantage à la production mondiale ou à l'innovation depuis les États-Unis que depuis l'Inde, et une partie des connaissances scientifiques et techniques supplémentaires produites se diffuserait en retour dans le pays d'origine.

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Français

Starts from page 8Des jeunes militants en colère

nationale prévue du 30 janvier au 2 février 2025 à Nimbia County. Cette rencontre vise à renforcer notre base et à répondre aux préoccupations légitimes de nos militants », a-t-il expliqué. M. Cephus a également dénoncé ceux qu'il a qualifiés d'« opportunistes », accusés d'avoir détourné les bénéfices de la révolution menée par le parti. « Nous envoyons un avertissement clair à ceux qui tentent de dénaturer notre mission. Ce mouvement appartient aux jeunes, et nous agirons

dans leur intérêt. »
Une fracture inquiétante
Cet incident met en lumière une fracture croissante au sein du parti entre la base militante et ses dirigeants. La réunion nationale de Nimbia County sera cruciale pour apaiser les tensions et rétablir la confiance. L'Union pour l'Unité, qui fête bientôt sa première année au pouvoir, devra prouver qu'elle reste fidèle aux idéaux qui ont mobilisé ses partisans.

Starts from page 8Incendie au Capitole : des critiques dénoncent

« Dès le départ, le président a qualifié cet acte de vandalisme commis par des hooligans, sans attendre les conclusions des enquêteurs. Cela compromet l'impartialité du processus et montre une volonté de cibler l'opposition », a-t-il déclaré.

Gray a également dénoncé le rôle de la police nationale, qu'il accuse de partialité dans le conflit entre les blocs majoritaire et minoritaire. Il a demandé la récusation du colonel Coleman, estimant qu'il n'était pas en mesure de mener une enquête indépendante.

Réactions partagées au sein de la classe politique

Malgré ces critiques, Mohammed Ali, directeur général de la Liberia Water and Sewer Corporation et porte-parole de l'Union pour le Progrès (UP), a défendu le travail de la police : « La mission de la police est de rassembler des preuves solides qui seront examinées par le

tribunal. Ce n'est pas à elle de juger, mais aux cours de justice. »

Foday Fahnbulleh, député du bloc majoritaire, a également exprimé sa confiance dans l'enquête : « Les preuves disponibles, les menaces proférées avant l'incendie, tout pointe vers un acte criminel. Je crois que la police fait un travail objectif et professionnel. »

Appel à la retenue et à la patience

Edwin Massally, un citoyen engagé, a appelé au calme et à la patience : « Nous devons laisser l'enquête suivre son cours et éviter de politiser cet incident tragique. Toute conclusion doit être fondée sur des preuves tangibles, pas sur des allégations partisans », a-t-il insisté.

Alors que le débat fait rage, l'incendie du Capitole reste un sujet hautement sensible, mêlant enjeux politiques et interrogations sur la crédibilité des institutions en charge de l'enquête.

Crise à la Chambre des représentants : L'ex-ministre Akerele interpelle la Cour suprême sur son avis ambigu

Olubanke King Akerele, ancienne ministre des Affaires étrangères sous l'administration Sirleaf, appelle la Cour suprême du Liberia à clarifier son avis sur la crise de leadership qui divise la Chambre des représentants.

Rendu public le 6 décembre 2024, l'avis de la Cour suprême a abordé la légalité constitutionnelle des actions menées par certains membres de la Chambre, notamment la destitution du président J. Fonati Koffa. Cependant, il n'a pas tranché clairement en faveur du bloc majoritaire ou de M. Koffa et ses partisans, alimentant des interprétations contradictoires.

Des ambiguïtés qui suscitent l'inquiétude

Mme Akerele déplore l'ambiguïté de cet avis, en particulier l'usage du terme *ultra vires*, qui complique sa compréhension. « Les citoyens méritent des explications accessibles et cohérentes sur les implications juridiques de cette décision », a-t-elle déclaré, appelant le Barreau national du Liberia (LNBA) à intervenir pour fournir des éclairages. L'avis découle d'un différend concernant une résolution adoptée le 17 octobre 2024 par un groupe de 47 députés s'autoproclamant « bloc majoritaire ». Ils avaient alors décidé de destituer J. Fonati Koffa, qu'ils accusaient de mauvaise gestion et d'incompétence administrative. Cette décision a été confirmée par un vote officiel le 21 novembre 2024, réunissant 50 voix en faveur de sa destitution.

Toutefois, la Cour suprême a

rappelé dans son avis la nécessité de respecter strictement les articles 33 et 49 de la Constitution, qui régissent les procédures internes de la Chambre. Elle a précisé que toute action menée en dehors de ce cadre constitutionnel serait considérée comme *ultra vires*, c'est-à-dire au-delà des limites légales de l'autorité.

Une crise amplifiée par l'Exécutif

L'ambiguïté de l'avis a conduit le ministère de la Justice, au nom de l'Exécutif, à adopter une interprétation en faveur du bloc majoritaire. Cette prise de position a été critiquée par Mme Akerele, qui estime qu'un tel manque de consensus juridique nuit à la compréhension publique de la décision. « Bien que le ministre de la Justice ait affirmé que le gouvernement applique la décision, l'absence d'une interprétation unifiée par les juristes compétents a laissé les citoyens perplexes », a-t-elle souligné lors d'une retraite organisée par le groupe *Voices of Elders* le 9 janvier 2025.

Un plaidoyer pour une clarté juridique

Se décrivant comme une « patriote engagée », Mme Akerele insiste sur l'importance d'une transparence juridique accrue. Elle a exprimé son souhait de rencontrer le président Joseph Nyuma Boakai afin de discuter de la situation et de solliciter des explications supplémentaires. Ce plaidoyer intervient dans un contexte de pression croissante sur la Chambre des représentants pour qu'elle se conforme aux exigences constitutionnelles. Mme Akerele a également évoqué son expérience passée, rappelant que l'ancien président George Weah avait refusé de rencontrer les aînés du groupe *Voices of Elders*.

Une voie vers la stabilité constitutionnelle

Dans son avis, la Cour suprême a réaffirmé son rôle d'arbitre ultime des différends constitutionnels, conformément à l'article 66 de la Constitution. Elle a également souligné l'urgence d'aligner les opérations législatives sur les dispositions constitutionnelles, notamment en ce qui concerne la gestion des absences et les mécanismes de vote.



Ex-Min. Olubanke King Akerele

Ngafulan appelle à une gestion rigoureuse des dépenses publiques

– Le ministre des Finances insiste sur la maîtrise des fonds alloués dans le budget national

Augustine K. Ngafulan, ministre des Finances et de la Planification du Développement, a appelé ses collègues du gouvernement et les responsables des institutions publiques à adopter une gestion stricte des fonds alloués dans le budget national, en évitant toute dépense superflue.

Lors de son intervention le jeudi 9 janvier 2025, au complexe ministériel Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, à Congo Town, à l'occasion de l'ouverture d'un atelier de trois jours sur l'exécution du budget national pour l'exercice fiscal 2025, Ngafulan a insisté sur la nécessité de limiter les dépenses inutiles et de gérer avec parcimonie les ressources disponibles. « Je vous invite, chers ministres et responsables d'institutions publiques, à mettre en place des restrictions sur les dépenses superflues et à gérer de manière responsable les ressources qui vous sont allouées », a-t-il déclaré.

Une gestion prudente pour une exécution efficace

Le ministre a particulièrement mis en garde les responsables nommés en avril dernier, leur conseillant de ne pas adopter une approche consistant à épuiser leurs budgets en seulement neuf mois. Selon lui, cette méthode pourrait entraîner une rupture de financement avant la fin de l'exercice budgétaire.

« Pour assurer une gestion budgétaire efficace, il est essentiel d'adopter des mesures de restriction strictes. Sans cela, vous risquez de vous retrouver sans fonds avant la fin de l'exercice », a averti Ngafulan.

Il a aussi rappelé que le budget est conçu pour une période de 12 mois, et non de trois, six ou neuf mois, soulignant l'importance d'une planification trimestrielle et annuelle pour une gestion budgétaire efficace.

La gestion des ressources : un défi constant



Min. Augustine K. Ngafulan

Le ministre a insisté sur le fait que ce n'est pas la taille du budget qui importe, mais la manière dont il est géré. « Deux ministères peuvent avoir des budgets similaires, mais l'un peut réussir son exécution tandis que l'autre échoue, en fonction de la gestion financière de chaque entité », a-t-il expliqué.

Ngafulan a fait état des difficultés rencontrées l'année précédente, notamment les ajustements budgétaires tardifs et les problèmes liés à la transition gouvernementale. Cette année, a-t-il ajouté, les ministères ont suffisamment de temps pour mieux préparer et exécuter leurs budgets.








Fort de son expérience, ayant déjà servi sous l'administration de l'ex-présidente Sirleaf, Ngafulan a souligné que l'administration actuelle attend une gestion plus rigoureuse et une exécution plus transparente des budgets pour l'année en cours.

Renforcement des capacités des responsables publics

De son côté, Tanneh Brunson, ministre adjointe des Finances en charge du budget, a insisté sur l'importance de l'atelier pour renforcer les compétences des responsables publics. « Aujourd'hui, nous ne sommes pas seulement des représentants d'institutions, mais des gardiens de la confiance publique, chargés de gérer efficacement les ressources financières de la nation dans l'intérêt de tous », a-t-elle souligné.

Elle a rappelé que la 55e législature a récemment adopté un budget national de 880 millions de dollars pour l'exercice fiscal 2025, une somme importante qui représente une occasion unique de stimuler le développement du pays. Cependant, elle a averti que cette opportunité impose également une responsabilité accrue en matière de gestion financière transparente et de respect des principes budgétaires.

L'atelier, qui se termine le samedi 11 janvier 2025, réunit des responsables ministériels, des agences gouvernementales, des commissions ainsi que des partenaires au développement. L'objectif est de renforcer les connaissances sur la gestion des finances publiques et d'assurer une exécution efficace du budget national.

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Tale of torture and coercion

The horrifying details of alleged torture and coercion by state security forces investigating the Capitol Building fire incident send a wrong signal.

By Stephen G. Fellajuah

Thomas Etheridge, a staff member of embattled House Speaker Fonati Koffa and a

to the fire incident by associating him with others, including Eric Susee and Amos Kofa, who were supposedly involved in the protest.

providing his own version of events, which led to further beatings.

The Capitol Building fire occurred on December 18, 2024, when the Rotunda, the Joint Chambers of the Liberian Legislature, was gutted by a blaze. This devastating incident took place amidst ongoing political turmoil, particularly a power struggle between the majority bloc led by Representative Richard Nagbe Koon and embattled Speaker J. Fonati Koffa. The fire has been confirmed as an act of arson.

The fire occurred just a day after a protest at the Capitol, which led to the arrest of 73 individuals, including opposition figures and security personnel present at the time of the arson. Authorities have since named several individuals as persons of interest in connection with the attack.

On January 8, 2025, Police Inspector General Col. Gregory Coleman confirmed that the fire had been identified as an act of arson, with sufficient evidence gathered to support this conclusion. Investigations continue as authorities seek to bring those responsible to justice.

Etheridge, now speaking out about his treatment, emphasized his intention to reveal the coercion and mistreatment he endured during his detention, raising significant questions about the integrity of the ongoing investigation.

His claims underscore the broader issues surrounding handling the Capitol fire case and the potential for unjust treatment of suspects in high-profile cases. -Edited by Othello B. Garblah



Suspect being taken away by police

person of interest in the ongoing Capitol Building fire incident, has come forward with a troubling account of his interrogation by security personnel.

Mr. Etheridge revealed multiple instances of alleged abuse, coercion, and fabrication. Etheridge's statement sheds light on the troubling interrogation methods used to extract confessions that he claims were false and made under duress.

Etheridge describes being pressured to falsely admit involvement in the Capitol fire and other related activities. He highlights how security personnel manipulated his statements by presenting recordings taken out of context.

"They made a statement that indicted me saying I called people to the Boss Man house from the CDC headquarters," Etheridge said, adding that when he refuted this claim, they cut off the recording.

Etheridge also recalls how the authorities linked him

"Then they said you were with Janga Kowo. You were calling Kowo and others to meet to your boss man place. I told them that the people who you are calling I don't know them, only hear their names. I don't go on CDC party headquarters. Then, they brought in another guy's statement. I have already stayed there from 11 am to 3 pm in the underground place. They threatened to sodomize me if I do not give them what they want", he tearfully explained.

He recalls an exchange regarding a fabricated statement where Eric Susee allegedly said he bought gas for the fire, a claim Eric later refuted, asserting that he was coerced into making the statement.

Etheridge claims that during his time in custody, security personnel used threats of violence and even physical abuse to coerce him into providing the answers they wanted. He describes how, after being subjected to physical abuse, he attempted to resist the fabricated narrative by

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Dillon upset with Boakai

the future, they will not sit and watch the President have people acting in tenure positions, which violates the Tenure Law of Liberia, stressing that it should not be and will not happen.

Dillon points out that the Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia, who presides over the country's money and monetary policy, can't be acting for more than a year, noting that this January will end all those periods because the

government is sitting. They will ensure that they do the right things.

"We give the President a free hand in the first year to run his government, especially in settling. Because if you're too technical, it's possible that the government doesn't run. Imagine February 11, 2024, when the AFL wives took to the street, the Country didn't had a Defense and Justice Minister, the security sector was not functional. So, when we say

honeymoon, we are talking about allowing something to slide that you couldn't have ordinarily allowed", argues.

Sen. Dillon is a member of the Liberty Party, one of the collaborative parties that supported Boakai in the 2023 elections. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Pro-Temp and staffers at each other's throats

Senate Pro-Tempore and staffers are in disagreement over benefits and salary.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, Liberia, January 14, 2025 - Bad blood and misunderstanding are brewing between staffers of the Liberian Senate and Senate President Pro-Tempore, Nyonblee Kangar-Lawrence, amid her warning to the Staffers Association against unlawful disruptions and spread of misleading information. She gave the stern warning during official opening of the Second Session of the 55th Legislature on Monday, January 13, 2024. In a recent press conference, the staffers accused Pro-Tempore Kangar Lawrence of withholding their benefits and salary from the just-ended special session. However, responding, she says the Liberian Senate will no longer tolerate unlawful disruptions of its functions, including misleading information to the public.

"We would like to inform the leadership of the Senate staffers that the Senate will no longer tolerate unlawful disruptions of the Senate functions and misleading information to the public. The press conference by the leadership accusing the Senate of denying staff Special sitting benefits is false and misleading, and the Senate Rules Order and Administration Committee (ROA) Chairman has been asked to investigate this matter and take appropriate actions", she notes. According to the Pro-Tempore, the Liberian Senate had three special sittings in 2024, and all staffers were paid for

they have taken some decisions and pensioned some staffers.

In collaboration with the Civil Service Agency, the Liberian Senate has retired 43 persons. In addition to their required civil servants' benefits, the Senate has given a handshake envelope to each retiree in appreciation of their services rendered. Those retired have worked at the Senate for over 15 years or are 65 years and over. Our oldest retiree is 83 years", Senator Kangar Lawrence explains. According to her, at a retreat in Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County, in June 2024, the Senate reviewed its Rules. It passed on all amendments in Plenary, adding that the Rules have been printed and distributed to all Senators. "Renovation work of the Senate, which will include the renovation of the Senate's original Chambers, is ongoing. Security: We have asked the Liberia National Police to take charge of the security at the Senate and work in collaboration with the Senate security department until all security measures are put in place by our Defense and Security Committee. We ask for everyone's cooperation to ensure the proper execution of measures that will be put in place." Madam Kangar Lawrence further discloses that they are concluding arrangements with the Minister of Public Works to install Solar-Powered Streetlights to enhance nighttime visibility and deter criminal activities around the Capitol Building. She says the Security and Defense Committee is



Pro-Tempore, Nyonblee Kangar-Lawrence

two sittings. Payment for the final sitting is being processed from the 2025 National Budget signed recently by President Joseph N. Boakai after the press statement from the leadership of the staffers. Senator Kangar-Lawrence, instead, says she looks forward to a more productive year, best working relationship, and dedication to work in the interest of the state, adding that she wishes to encourage the leadership always to use the options of engagement and proper research to address matters of concern, because the chairperson of the Rules, Order and Administration committee has been very assessable and cooperative.

Meanwhile, providing updates on the Rule Order and Administration (ROA) and Central Administration's redundant staff, she explains that

also consulting for installing a state-of-the-art CCTV surveillance system that would cover all key areas within and around the Capitol Building to complement what she terms "real-time monitoring" that will enhance rapid response to incidents and aid in post-event investigation.

"Before I close, we again extend our deepest sympathies to the Senate, Counties, and Families for the loss of our former and sitting Colleagues: Sen. Sumo Kupee, Lofa County, Sen. Prince Y. Johnson, Nimba County, Sen. Joyce Musu Freeman-Sumo, Montserrado County, Former Vice President John D. Gray and Former President Pro-Tempore, Sen. Cletus Segbe Wotorson, Grand Kru. The book of condolence is open for Senator Prince Johnson", she adds.

-Former President

But Speaking to Journalists on Capitol Hill, shortly after signing the Book of Condolence

"I have nothing against Vice



"As a son of Nimba County" I will be there," he said, adding, "In fact, I'm a former Senator of the Republic of Liberia and my

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