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## Liberia launches national campaign for UN Security Council Seat

# 142 United Methodists breakaway



**-At 72 UMC over same-sex marriage** P11

Pastor Kenneth Jackson of the 72nd United Methodist Church

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Continental News

## Ivory Coast asks French troops to leave, latest African country to do so

*Ivorian soldiers conduct an urban reconnaissance exercise under the supervision of French special forces at Camp Loumbila, Jacqueville, Ivory Coast, on Feb. 16, 2022. Ivory Coast said on Dec. 31, 2024, that French troops will leave the country in the next month.*

**A**BJIDJAN, IVORY COAST — Ivory Coast announced on Tuesday that French troops will leave the country after a decadeslong military presence. It is the latest African nation to downscale military ties with its former colonial power. Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara said the pullout would begin in January. France has had as many as 600 troops in Ivory Coast.

"We have decided on the concerted and organized withdrawal of French forces in Ivory Coast," he said, adding that the military infantry battalion of Port Bouet that is run by the French army will be handed over to Ivorian troops. Outtara's announcement follows that of other leaders across West Africa, where France's military is being asked to leave. Analysts have described the moves as part of the wider structural transformation in the region's engagement with Paris.

Several West African nations — including coup-hit Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger — have recently asked the French to leave. Most recently, Senegal and Chad did the same. Chad is considered France's most stable and loyal partner in Africa.

The downscaling of military ties comes as France has been making efforts to revive its waning political and military influence on the continent by devising a new military strategy that would sharply reduce its permanent troop presence in Africa.

France has now been kicked out of more than 70% of African countries where it had a troop presence since ending its colonial rule. The French remain only in Djibouti, with 1,500 soldiers, and Gabon, with 350 troops.

After expelling French troops, military leaders of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso have moved closer to Russia, which has mercenaries deployed across the Sahel who have been accused of abuses against civilians.

The security situation has worsened in those countries, with increasing numbers of extremist attacks and civilian deaths from armed groups and government forces.



*Ivory Coast said on Dec. 31, 2024, that French troops will leave the country in the next month.*

## Senegal to close foreign military bases, cuts ties to ex-colonial power France

**D**AKAR, SENEGAL — Senegal has announced the closure of all foreign military bases, without setting a timeline for the exit of foreign troops. Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko made the announcement Friday during a general policy statement to the National Assembly. "The president of the Republic has decided to close all foreign military bases in the very near future," Sonko said. France's military and Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to the announcement. President Bassirou Diomaye Faye last month expressed his desire to close the French bases in Senegal. "Senegal is an independent

country, it is a sovereign country, and sovereignty does not accommodate the presence of foreign military bases," the head of state said in a rare media interview.

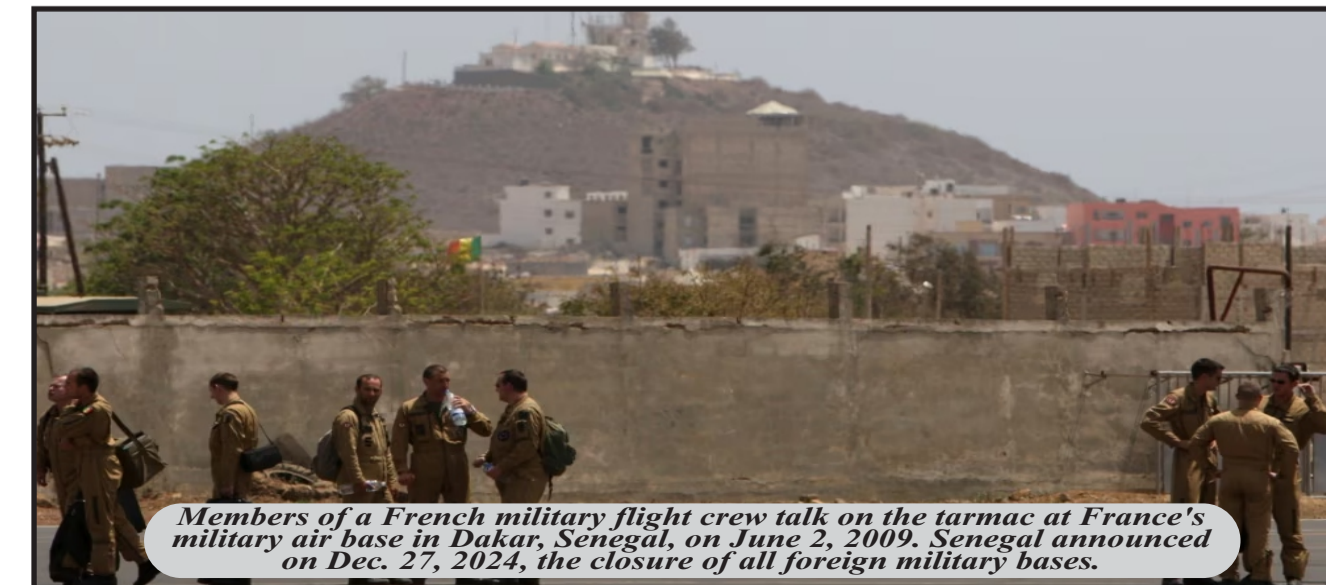
This decision to close bases appears to be aimed primarily at France. A former colonial power in much of Africa, France has faced opposition from some African leaders over an alleged demeaning and heavy-handed approach to the continent.

France, which has already left Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, on Thursday confirmed it had pulled its last troops out of the Faya base in Chad. France's permanent military presence in Chad "no longer met the expectations and interests of each party" and

described the withdrawal as part of a "reconfiguration of its system in Africa" since 2022, the military said.

French officials have said that France aims to sharply reduce its presence at all its bases in Africa except Djibouti. That includes the 350 French troops in Senegal. France could instead provide defense training or targeted military support based on needs expressed by those countries, according to the officials.

Senegal's new government, which has been in power for less than a year, has taken a hardline stance on the presence of French troops as part of a larger regional backlash against what many see as the legacy of an oppressive colonial empire.



*Members of a French military flight crew talk on the tarmac at France's military air base in Dakar, Senegal, on June 2, 2009. Senegal announced on Dec. 27, 2024, the closure of all foreign military bases.*

## Hardest-hit Nigeria is latest African country to provide malaria vaccine to young children

**B**AYELSA, Nigeria (AP) — Ominike Marvis has lost count of the number of times her 6-year-old son has had malaria. So when Nigeria started offering a [malaria vaccine](#), she was eager to protect her

borne disease.

"At least I know he's safe from it now," Marvis, 31, said.

[Africa accounts for the vast majority of malaria in the world. Nigeria, the continent's most populous country, has the biggest burden with about a quarter of the cases.](#)



[youngest child.](#)

She took the 6-month-old baby to get his first shot at a health center in hard-hit Bayelsa state, where the country's vaccination campaign kicked off last week. The vaccine aims to prevent severe illnesses and deaths from the mosquito-

According to a World Health Organization report released Wednesday, there were an estimated 263 million cases of malaria and 597,000 deaths worldwide last year, mostly in children under 5. That is 11 million more malaria cases compared to 2022 with nearly the same number of deaths.

## Ugandan health authorities are set to begin an Ebola vaccine trial after new outbreak kills a nurse

**K**AMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Ugandan officials are preparing to deploy a trial vaccine as part of efforts to stem an outbreak of [Ebola in the capital, Kampala, a top health official said Sunday.](#)

A range of scientists are

"Protocol is being accelerated" to get all the necessary regulatory approvals, he said. "This vaccine is not yet licensed."

The World Health Organization said in a statement that its support to Uganda's response to the



*Ebola Worker in Ugandan*

developing research protocols relating to the planned deployment of more than 2,000 doses of a candidate vaccine against the Sudan strain of Ebola, said Pontiano Kaleebu, executive director of Uganda Virus Research Institute.

outbreak includes access to 2,160 doses of trial vaccine.

"Research teams have been deployed to the field to work along with the surveillance teams as approvals are awaited," the WHO statement said.

# EDITORIAL

## The Bar's fear should draw our concern

The Liberian National Bar Association alarms here that recent events in the country pose threats to Liberia’s constitutional democracy. The Bar expresses fear over alleged violations of fundamental rights, questionable Executive actions and disregard for judicial decision, including Legislative overreach, which it warns, undermine the very fabric of our democracy.

The LNBA promises to continue to engage with policymakers to ensure that the Constitution of Liberia is upheld and that legal reforms reflect aspirations of the Liberian

The newly inducted President of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA) Cllr. Bornor M. Varmah, says the LNBA operates under statutory guidelines that subject its regulatory, disciplinary, and administrative functions to external influences. However, he notes that to effectively fulfill its mandate, they want autonomous status that would grant the Bar greater control.

“The LNBA should have authority to set and enforce ethical standards, improve licensing requirements, and disciplinary actions for legal practitioners without undue interference. As a body committed to justice, the LNBA must have the institutional independence to challenge unconstitutional actions, advocate for judicial reforms, and engage in public interest litigation without fear of political influence”, Cllr. Varmah underscores.

His call followed recent legal interpretations, misinterpretation, and in some instances, ambiguity that surrounded the removal of House Speaker J. Fonati Koffa, and brought the Supreme Court of Liberia to public scrutiny and criticism regarding procedures enshrined in the Constitution on removal of the Speaker.

But unfortunately, the High Court left its opinion on the matter hanging, a situation which the Executive branch of the government took advantage of and provided its own interpretation in support of the replacement of the Speaker outside of established rules.

As the Bar points put, the public must never be left in doubt whenever the Supreme Court reviews and brings finality to any subject matter because it is the only branch of government that is mandated by the Constitution to ensure serenity and stability in the democratic system, through its judicial review and interpretation of the laws of Liberia.

We totally agree with Cllr. Bornor M. Varmah, the new president of the Bar, for this is where the Supreme Court left the entire country in doubt about legal ramifications concerning procedures at the House of Representatives of the 55th Legislature, up to date.

It is clear that the Executive, that had instigated and sponsored Speaker Koffa’s illegal removal, had its way, because the Supreme Court kept a conspicuous silence, for fear of what, only God knows.

Cllr. Varmah announces that the LNBA will work with the Supreme Court to improve quality of opinions in matters brought before it, to save the best interest of law and public policy, adding “This is urgent and paramount as the Court's greatest power bestowed upon it by the 1986 Constitution is the power of judicial review to bring definitions, clarity and finality in all matters without influence and interference from anywhere.”

# COMMENTARY

by J. Bradford DeLong

## Trump's Smoke and Mirrors

BERKELEY – “It's almost like they knew Trump was bluffing.” That is how Bloomberg columnist John Authers described Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's handling of the US president after he unjustifiably threatened their countries with 25% tariffs. The tariffs were postponed just before they were supposed to take effect. The reason, according to Kelly Ann Shaw, a former Trump adviser, was that America's neighbors “came to the table ... with commitments that sufficiently addressed the president's concerns.”

But what did Sheinbaum and Trudeau offer? As far as I can tell, they committed to things that they had already committed to, albeit with some additional symbolic gestures – like a new Canadian “fentanyl czar” – thrown in. One is reminded of January 21, 2025 (a date that has already receded into the mists of time), when Trump announced that OpenAI, SoftBank, and Oracle would embark on a massive AI-infrastructure project that promises to create “more than 100,000 jobs almost immediately.” CBS journalist Jennifer Jacobs left that event believing that “the companies are expected to commit \$500 billion into Stargate over the next four years,” even though “details of the new partnership were not immediately provided.”

In fact, there will be no \$500 billion, and the partnership was not new (it was in the works long before Trump's inauguration). Nothing close to \$100 billion, let alone \$500 billion, will be deployed immediately, and nothing close to 100,000 jobs will be created. Welcome back to the chaos that prevailed during Trump's first presidency, in 2017-20.

But the next four years will not feature only chaos. The second Trump administration also will pursue policies with effects on the United States that will almost certainly be deeply harmful. Beyond deportations, tax cuts for the rich, symbolic measures to stoke the culture war (banning all mentions of “diversity”), and schemes to extort massive bribes from corporations and other private parties, it is anyone's guess what the agenda will look like. But it would be wrong to conclude that Trump II is a paper tiger.

Whatever is coming, one must remember that the principal purpose of any Trump pronouncement is to gain attention. In every instance, slapdash

ideas that provoke meaningful pushback – especially from the market – will be quietly dropped, as long as the immediate news cycle can close with a declaration of victory.

We saw Shaw provide such a declaration in the case of the tariffs; and Jacobs dutifully transcribed the purely aspirational \$500 billion figure. Trump can now claim to have bested Joe Biden's \$280 billion CHIPS and Science Act, and Trumpists and other uninformed Americans will believe him. Yes, Elon Musk – who has been playing the role of co-president – immediately threw a tantrum following the Stargate announcement, pointing out that “they don't have the money.” But this is a man who claims that all Teslas currently on the road will become fully automated driverless cybertaxis in the next two years.

How are those of us who want to inform the public and advance public reason supposed to react to all of this performative con-artistry, when we know that it is 90% mirage and 10% destructive chaos? Most of us are doing what we can. For example, Michael R. Strain of the American Enterprise Institute is out there on X (formerly Twitter) earnestly telling people that Trump's threatened tariffs would probably be as destructive to the US economy as Brexit has been to the British economy:

“The Vice President argues that President Trump is looking out for the interest of American citizens. But these tariffs will raise prices for consumers and reduce employment opportunities for manufacturing workers. President Trump's first trade war increased consumer prices. It reduced manufacturing employment and made domestic manufacturing less competitive. It failed to reduce the trade deficit. The second trade war is likely to more severely increase prices and reduce employment and competitiveness. The first trade war hit \$380 billion of imports. This one hits \$1.4 trillion. And economic integration with Canada and Mexico is substantial.”

Strain is absolutely correct. But what the US desperately needs is media outlets that take the trouble to discern which Trump pronouncements are backed by dedicated policymaking teams and bureaucracies with the intent to follow through, and which are not. As matters stand, too many respected outlets represented among the White House press corps are more interested in being part of the show than in assessing the play.

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# Happy New Year to all our Readers

OP-ED

by Peter Singer

“America First” in Action

MELBOURNE – Donald Trump has wasted no time clarifying what “America First” – the dominant idea driving his election campaign – means in practice. So far, it means a 90-day freeze on most foreign aid spending, as well as the withdrawal of the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Paris climate agreement.

The ostensible purpose of the foreign aid freeze is to review the efficacy of US programs. I am a strong advocate for getting the best value for every dollar available to assist people in poverty. I founded The Life You Can Save to promote that idea and enable individual donors to find the most cost-effective charities combating extreme poverty. But reviewing aid programs takes time and expertise. It is not possible to conduct an adequate review of all the aid programs that the US funds in three months, and to freeze spending while waiting for the review to be completed is an irresponsible way to manage aid that is often life-saving.

The freeze has already disrupted programs that prevent deaths from AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria in many poor countries. Thousands of health-care and aid workers have been placed on leave without pay. Many will have to find other work to support themselves, so even if programs survive the review and funds are restored, their expertise may be lost.

Ongoing clinical trials have had to stop, which means that months or even years of work have been wasted. An administration that had any real concern for the well-being of those assisted by US aid would have left funding in place, pending the outcomes of the reviews.

It is not as if there was an urgent need to cut official US foreign aid for fiscal reasons. When Americans are asked what proportion of US government spending goes to foreign aid, the average answer is 25%, and when asked what they think an appropriate level would be, they say 10%. The truth is that official foreign aid amounts to only around 1% of the US budget.

The United Nations' target for wealthy countries' official foreign-aid spending is 0.7% of gross national income (GNI), or 70 cents of every \$100 that the country earns. In 2023, the most recent year for which data are available, only Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden, Germany, and Denmark surpassed that figure. The US gave only 0.24% of its GNI in official aid, below several less affluent countries, including the United Kingdom, Japan, and Poland.

Likewise, withdrawing from the WHO will save very little money. The WHO's annual expenditure is roughly half that of the health department of the US state of Rhode Island, which has a population of 1.1 million, and US contributions amount to only 15% of the WHO budget.

The US withdrawal will significantly reduce international cooperation on health issues, and will deprive US health authorities of information about disease prevalence abroad, which could mean that Americans are less informed about risks when they travel. But pharmaceutical companies outside the US may benefit, because withdrawal will remove America's voice from discussions within the WHO on evidence and quality standards for new drugs – a voice that American pharmaceutical companies have previously used to give themselves a competitive edge over international rivals.

Of all the decisions made by Trump thus far, the most catastrophic are likely to be those related to climate change, including pushing for more oil and gas production (even allowing this to override the Endangered Species Act); removing tax credits for electric vehicles; and, above all, withdrawal from the Paris agreement. US per capita greenhouse-gas emissions are 50% higher than China's, and almost seven times those of India. Those countries' leaders will now be able to argue that there is no reason why their own, less affluent, economies should forego fossil fuels if the US is not going to be bound by the targets it accepted in Paris and at subsequent international climate conferences. Other, smaller countries will then say that their emissions are insignificant compared to those of the US, China, and India. Why should they do what the world's largest emitters are not doing?

Ironically, given that these actions have been taken in the name of “America First,” they are contrary to America's true long-term interests. Over the coming decades, Americans will swelter through hotter summers, struggle with more severe storms and floods, battle even worse wildfires than those that recently gutted swaths of Los Angeles, and retreat inland as rising sea levels inundate low-lying coastal areas, including Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort and much of South Florida.

The US has greater capacity to cope with the effects of climate change than poorer countries. Still, the outcome will be far worse for Americans than the much more limited costs of complying with international agreements to mitigate the severity of climate change.

Taken as a whole, Trump's policies will damage, perhaps irretrievably, whatever claims the US had to be listened to in global forums. His decisions will only confirm the views of those who have been saying for decades that the US government is a short-sighted, self-seeking plutocracy.

None of this will make America great again. On the contrary, Trump's return to the White House has given a giant boost to China's claims to world leadership.

OPINION

by Mohamed A. El-Erian

Give the UK Growth Agenda a Chance

CAMBRIDGE – Pity Rachel Reeves, the United Kingdom's Chancellor of the Exchequer. Before she had even gotten through her highly anticipated “growth speech” on January 29, criticism flooded social media and the airwaves. Her approach is too scattered, some said, and too reliant on measures whose impact will be felt only over the long term. Some programs run counter to the government's environmental commitments, others said, and they are not evenly distributed across the UK. It is all too expensive. Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary even went so far as to declare publicly that Reeves “hasn't a clue.”

Don't get me wrong: the speech was not perfect. But perfection is not possible under the UK's current economic and financial conditions, and to pursue an elusive optimum would be to make the perfect the enemy of the good. Moreover, Reeves' speech did succeed in five areas.

First, it reinforced the message that the government will go “further and faster” to boost growth – its “number one mission.” Second, it laid out several specific efforts – including planning (zoning) reforms, reducing over-regulation, and improving the use of pension-fund surpluses to increase domestic investment –to ease constraints on existing growth engines.

Reeves also focused on the need to promote new drivers of growth, such as by creating a European “Silicon Valley” in the corridor linking Oxford and Cambridge, thereby scaling up these research hubs and the startups that draw on their breakthroughs. She wants to improve the UK's trade relations to expand its available markets and attract more foreign direct investment. And, finally, she recognized that trade-offs are inevitable when pursuing a far-reaching reform agenda.

Such a multipronged approach is what the UK needs to break out of decades of insufficient investment, lagging productivity, disappointing growth, and shrinking growth potential. Reeves' growth agenda is about enabling the private sector to invest, create jobs, and expand. It is also about avoiding the 1%-of-GDP cut in public investment that was on the table last year.

Of course, success will depend on whether the Chancellor's words are urgently translated into action. The various elements of her plan must be executed simultaneously and in an accountable fashion. That will require a well-coordinated, whole-of-government approach to “hardwire growth into all decisions in the Cabinet,” as Prime Minister Keir Starmer put it before her speech.

True, even if the government can meet all these requirements, its strategy may still lack some important elements. But many of Reeves' critics fail to acknowledge the scale of the challenge and how she is stepping up to it. The UK has underinvested for decades and now faces serious growth and budget constraints.

According to a widely cited study published by the Institute for Public Policy Research last year, “the UK has had the lowest level of investment in the G7 for 24 of the last 30 years. The last time the UK was 'average' in the G7 for total investment was in 1990.” The result of this chronic neglect is a staggering cumulative shortfall of £1.9 trillion. Just imagine how different things would look if the UK's level of investment had been merely average.

Given such poor investment performance, any government would need time and luck (especially with respect to external economic factors) to turn things around. The lack of budgetary space leaves the government with no single measure, no silver bullet, to deploy. Even the best growth-oriented policy package would have to comprise a wide variety of measures. Implementation was always going to take time, even if it did not require a broad range of public-private partnerships.

Ultimately, the Starmer government's growth mission will fail if it does not secure the buy-in of companies and households alike. The currently low level of business and consumer confidence is a major headwind to stronger growth, better budget outcomes, and higher inflows of foreign direct investment. It is why the government pivoted from its gloomy talk about the economy to statements about economic performance “turning around.”

For the same reason, it is counterproductive – even dangerous – for politicians, media commentators, and economists to be so quick to trash Reeves's speech, especially when they have no feasible alternative to offer. That is also why it is unhelpful to reduce the multifaceted growth strategy to the third runway at Heathrow airport, the item that is attracting the most attention.

In March 2008, I co-authored a paper, “Growth Strategies and Dynamics: Insights from Country Experiences,” with the Nobel laureate economist Michael Spence. One of our findings was that successful growth strategies hardly ever specified every step in the policy journey. Indeed, it is almost impossible to do so. Instead, policymakers defined their destination, embarked with only an initial set of measures, focused on implementation, and remained open to course corrections as more information came in. What they did not do was fail to get off the starting block because the strategy was imperfect, incomplete, or would take too long to bear fruit. They gave growth a chance. The UK needs to do the same.

ON 2ND THOUGHTS



with Othello B. Garblah

# Liberia's Bid for the UN Security Council: A Historic Opportunity for Economic Growth and National Unity

The 193 member states of the United Nations are poised to head to the polls in June this year to elect ten new non-permanent members to the UN Security Council. The newly elected members will join the five permanent members, who possess veto powers, to serve rotational terms of two years each. The Security Council is the UN's primary organ tasked with maintaining international peace and security.

Liberia, a founding member of the United Nations since June 1945, is among the nations vying for one of these coveted seats. This bid marks a significant moment for the country, coming 65 years after it last shared a two-year term on the Security Council with the Republic of Ireland, with each serving one year. This week, President Joseph N. Boakai is set to officially launch Liberia's campaign for the Security Council seat locally, aiming to garner national support amidst a politically divided populace. The launch is not only intended to rally local endorsement but also to foster unity among citizens despite political differences.

Liberia's Permanent Representative to the UN, Lewis G. Brown, has expressed optimism that Liberia's election to the Security Council will translate into significant economic opportunities and growth potential at home. He pointed to the economic booms experienced during President William VS Tubman's administration when Liberia last shared a term with the Republic of Ireland. “When Liberia succeeds in the June elections, it will be 65 years since Liberia had the opportunity to sit on the highest platform in the world responsible for maintaining international peace and security. This time, the chance to sit on the Council will be even more historically significant and prouder for our country as it would be the first time Liberia will serve a full two-year term,” stated Ambassador Brown.

It is important to note here that Liberia's tenure as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, some 65 years ago, marked a remarkable period in its history. During this time, Liberia utilized its position to advocate for the unity and independence of African nations, promote and support UN peacekeeping missions, and mediate in various international disputes. As a symbol of black sovereignty and independence, Liberia played a pivotal role in fostering dialogue, supporting decolonization processes, and advocating for peace and stability in conflict zones.

Liberia's contributions to UN peacekeeping efforts were significant and impactful. The country actively promoted the deployment of peacekeeping forces in Africa with the aim of stabilizing regions. One notable example of Liberia's support for peacekeeping missions was its involvement in the Congo crisis.

Liberia's contributions during its time as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council remain a testament to its enduring legacy of advocacy, mediation, and support for peace and independence in Africa. Through its unwavering commitment to African unity, its promotion of UN peacekeeping missions, and its role as mediator, Liberia played a vital role in shaping the course of international relations and supporting the aspirations of African nations

This time, expectations are high that Liberia's position on the UN Security Council will bring tangible benefits to the nation. Economic advantages, including increased foreign investment, job opportunities, and overall economic growth, are anticipated as a result of Liberia's elevated status on the international stage.

In conclusion, Liberia's bid for the non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council represents not only a significant historical milestone but also a potential catalyst for economic development and national cohesion. The outcome of the June elections is eagerly awaited, with hopes that Liberia will secure its place on this prestigious global platform.

Happy New Year to all  
our Readers

AS I SEE IT



with By Prof. Tom Kaydor, Jr.; PhD.

# The Government of Liberia needs to fully decentralise the National County Sports Meet

The National County Sports Meet in Liberia ended on 2 February 2025. Grand Bassa County girls won the first place beating my county, Grand Kru, girls to the second place. My wife's county, Lofa County, for its part, defeated Grand Gedeh County in the football final match. Lofa County also won the basket basketball finals. Congratulations to all the winning teams. Congratulations also to all those who did not win. In every competition there must be a winner. So, I urge all winners and losers to celebrate their statuses. Congratulations to the Ministry of Youth and Sports for organising the peaceful games and congratulations also to the entire Government of Liberia. I like to equally thank the people of Liberia for the show of support for their counties. The Unity and love displayed for our counties and the good sportsmanship exhibited during the finals is an attestation that unity can take Liberia to higher heights. Congratulations to all. Now that the games are over, what next? I have always heard that the games are intended to scout players and to unite the people of Liberia. If this is true, I thank God and strongly think that the planners or organizers of the tournaments should do more using the various games to Unite the Liberian people. The tournaments should also be used to scout for new players that could be brought up to the national and international stage to foster their talents. I am aware that there were competitions in basketball, kickball, and football. I do not know about other sporting disciplines being a part of the competition. However, I would like to encourage the planners and organizers to incorporate other sporting disciplines that other Liberians love. This could help to promote those other disciplines.

From my observation football seems to be the most popular game that Liberians love. The Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Stadium was jammed packed when the final match between Lofa County and Grand Gedeh County played. We took many sides due to several reasons. After it all, Lofa County defeated Grand Gedeh County 2 goals to 1 goal. After that game, several Honors and Awards were given to players, teams, referees, and many other partakers in the various disciplines. I personally wish to congratulate all those who won awards. I hope and pray that you will progress in your various careers. I equally urge all those that did not win any award to keep pressing on. Your time will come one day. That you did not get the award this time, you could get it tomorrow. Your time will surely come one day. Congratulations to all of you for your participation in all the different games. Liberia is proud of you all.

I support unity, peace, and reconciliation amongst Liberians because, with these, the country can make irreversible progress towards national economic growth and development. With peace and unity, progress is assured. I also support the ambition that the games should be used to scout new players and support them to advance their careers in the areas they like. Imagine if the enthusiasm for the finals were present and shown for the Liberia Nation Lonestar Teams! I think the games should be used to expose the talents of new players in all the sporting disciplines. Let us support them at the national levels and elevate to international levels. I am not certain about the rules governing participation in the games, but I think those guidelines are done in the best interest of our young players and competitors, and the National Interest of Liberia.

AS I SEE IT, the County Sports Competition should really be genuine and focused on exposing the different talents from the County. As such, there should be competitions at the town, clan, and district levels within the counties. Players should be drawn from those internal county competitions to form the county teams. That means that all county players will be the actual residents from those counties. With that, each county will have fresh and brand-new talents given the opportunity and chance to compete and emerge from within the counties. It is not a good practice to have players from Lofa featuring for Grand Kru or players from Montserrado playing for Nimba and vice versa for instance. It is good that the hidden talents within the counties are brought out. We need to fully decentralise the competition and expose the hidden talents in our counties. We should not recycle players from first, second and third divisions to take the place of those young talents that cannot easily find exposure opportunities in the counties. The Government should allocate monetary support to this process so that we can get the best out of it. As I See It, if this actual localisation process is taken into consideration, I think the Government of Liberia will realise its intent of genuine unity and reconciliation in the counties, scout new talents and Take the National County Sports Meet to Another Level.

About the Author: Prof. Tom Kaydor, Jr. is an Assistant Professor at the IBB Graduate School of International Studies. He holds a PhD from the Department of Government and European Studies, the New University, Slovenia where he specialized in International Development and Diplomacy (with Security Aspects). His dissertation topic was 'Reconceptualizing Africa's Regional Integration for Peace and Sustainable Development.' This dissertation was supervised by Prof. Dr. Gorazd Justinek who was also then Dean of the Faculty of Government and European Studies. Dr. Kaydor earned his second master's in public policy (MPP) specialized in Development Policy or Development Economics with Distinction from the Crawford School of Economics and Government (now the Crawford School of Public Policy), Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. He obtained his first master's degree as a Master of Arts (MA) in International Relations (Highest Distinction), and Bachelor of Arts (BA) Magna Cum Laude in Political Science with emphasis in Comparative Government and Politics from the University of Liberia where his Minor was History with Mass Communication his Elective. Tom holds a Diploma in Leading Economic Growth from the Kennedy Graduate School, Harvard University, USA; a Diploma in Contemporary Diplomacy and Negotiations from the Islamabad Foreign Service Academy in Pakistan and he holds other professional diplomas and certificates from Italy, UK, China, and Israel. Prof. Kaydor is also an Adjunct Professor of International Development Studies at the AME University Graduate School. He is an evidence-based researcher, a blogger, a columnist, and a published author. He is a Reviewer for 6 peer-reviewed International Journals. Prof Kaydor has published 6 books in English; French; Portuguese; Spanish; Italian; German; Italian; with several peer-reviewed articles indicated in his CV @ <https://tomkaydor.blogspot.com/2024/09/prof-dr-tom-kaydor-cv.html>. Dr. Kaydor served as Deputy Foreign Minister for International Cooperation and Economic Integration in Liberia; Assistant Foreign Minister for Afro Asian Affairs in Liberia; UN Coordination Advisor in Ethiopia; UN Coordination Analyst in Liberia; UNICEF-Liberia National Consultant on the Formulation of the Roadmap for Children Living in Street Situations; UNICEF-Liberia Volunteer Engagement Specialist; Chief of Staff-Office of the Chairperson on Executive, House of Representatives; Field Supervisor for LCIP/USAID/DAI Social and Economic Reintegration-Liberia; Psychosocial Officer, World Vision International-Liberia Program. He can be reached via (Email: [kaydorth@ul.edu.lr](mailto:kaydorth@ul.edu.lr) or [kaydorth@gmail.com](mailto:kaydorth@gmail.com)).

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

### Fouta Corporation gives back to retired employees

Three retired employees of Fouta Corporation in Liberia go home with big smile, as Management dashes them with newly-constructed housing units, respectively for their services over the years.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Monrovia, Liberia, February 10, 2025 - Fouta Corporation (FCC), Liberia's largest indigenous export and import trading company, has officially

turned over three housing units to three retired employees of the company. The three beneficiaries were awarded one unite each after serving the institution for over twenty and twenty-five years respectively, and reached the Labor Law's retirement ages of

and also electricity. The facilities are contained in a separate fence in upper Caldwell Township, New Redemption Community. The presentation was witnessed by Mr. Hamidou Gnan, Founder and Managing Director of Fouta; and Mr. Mohammed Sow, President and Executive Director of Fouta.

The ceremony, which was graced by employees and executives of the company as well as family members of the beneficiary, was held in Caldwell. Providing updates on the housing projects, President and Executive Director of Fouta Corporation said it was the company's way of appreciating people that served the company and when it's time they are leaving, they should be happy and to go without tears.

According to Mr. Sow, this is not the first time the company has done such housing projects and turned them over to employees, saying this is something they are committed to doing time to time. He said it's very bad to see people worked for the company and when they reach age of



turned over three housing units to three retired employees of the company. The three beneficiaries were awarded one unite each after serving the institution for over twenty and twenty-five years respectively, and reached the Labor Law's retirement ages of

were constructed by the Fouta Cooperation as a way of appreciating them for services rendered the company for years. The three apartments include two bedrooms, one bathroom a kitchen, back and front porches and living room, solar panel

### Ngafuan advocates for strong anti-corruption measures

Liberia's Minister of Finance calls for tough action against corruption in government.

By Lewis S. The

Monrovia, Liberia, February 10, 2025 - Liberia's Minister of Finance and Development Planning Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, strongly emphasizes that for Liberia to progress, it is crucial to prevent corruption.

"If we are to make progress, we must prevent corruption," Minister Ngafuan declares in a firm statement.

While acknowledging efforts of courts here in prosecuting corruption cases, Ngafuan highlights the importance of instituting laws and policies aimed at preventing corruption before it occurs.

He expresses full support for prosecuting corruption cases in court, but stresses, "There should be no opportunity for individuals to steal in the first place."

He made the call in remarks during climax of the official launch of the Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) system in Monrovia.

The event, attended by President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, who officially launched the system, marked the introduction of the e-GP system.

The new platform is designed

to streamline operations, reduce costs, and increase organizational efficiency, offering a valuable tool for businesses of all sizes.

Minister Ngafuan also urges spending entities to prioritize Liberian-owned businesses, particularly small businesses, which he believes are key to fostering economic growth.

He points to "Fiscal Rule" recently released from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, which directs spending entities to allocate a percentage of contracts to small businesses, particularly those in the counties, to help them grow and thrive.

"As we continue with public procurement reforms, we

should explore ways to incentivize procurement at the county level with some flexibility, while ensuring necessary controls are in place."

The Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP) system is a digital platform used by governments to manage and streamline procurement of goods, services, and works.

It replaces traditional paper-based procurement processes with electronic tools that allow for online interaction between government agencies and suppliers.

This system aims to increase efficiency, transparency, and accountability in public procurement. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**



### Expert outlines steps to enhance Liberia's tourism & heritage sales

By Lincoln G. Peters

Renowned Liberian film producer, writer and culture advocate, Dr. Clarice F. Kula, outlines film production, dance, drama, storytelling and theater arts as potential and valuable undertakings that sell tourism and inspire pride in Liberian heritage to the world.

Remarking over the weekend at the launch of "Behind the Scenes" radio show in Monrovia, Dr. Kula noted that tourism is a billion-dollar industry, and films making have the power to showcase Liberia's breathtaking beaches, historical landmarks, and unique cultural identity.

Dr. Kula, who resides both in Liberia and the United States, has commit to uplifting Liberia's emerging talents, particularly in film, dance, drama, and theater arts.

"My goal is to uplift the artistic community here in Liberia. I also love to emphasize the significance of storytelling in preserving Liberia's culture and promoting the country's rich history and

having only one rehearsal, their performance was outstanding, something, she believes proved there is raw huge talents here that just need to be harnessed.

Dr. Kula's dedication is not limited to mentoring local actors and actresses but extends to creating opportunities for them to collaborate with international stars.

In one of her notable films, Providence, she brought together celebrated actors like Eddie Watson, Juliet Ibrahim, and Van Vicker to work alongside local talents.

"I promised the young people of Liberia that we would film here, despite the financial challenges. It was important for me to give back to Liberia and showcase our authenticity," she recalls.

Her gamble paid off. The editor of Providence, working from the United States, was so impressed by Liberian actress Korto Davis that he cast her in one of his films. Korto went on to become one of Liberia's biggest stars, inspiring countless others to follow in her



potential to the world. When you make a film, it's not just about entertainment; it's about telling your story and showing your world to others. That's how we sell tourism and inspire pride in our heritage." She explains.

According to her, by putting these elements into film, Liberia can position itself as a vibrant and inspiring destination to the world. She reflects that when they did the bicentennial play on Providence Island, there were so many young people who came out, but, despite

footsteps.

To further amplify local voices, Dr. Kula co-founded the Johnny Home Film Festival and Liberia Film Awards, an annual event aimed at celebrating and elevating Liberian talent.

"We started this festival four years ago to showcase the incredible work of Liberian filmmakers, many of whom are not formally trained but have immense passion and drive," she adds. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**



## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

## MORE HEADLINE NEWS

### *start from page 6* **Fouta Corporation gives back to retired employees**

pension, they have nothing to show except small money from the National Social Security and Welfare Corporation with a little package from Fouta Management.

President sow disclosed that as part of the company Social Corporate Responsibility, they have acquired a portion of land to construct housing units for employees, who reach retirement age.

"It's good to honor people in a dignified manner whenever they have served, and it will add value to the institution and the nation as a whole."

Speaking on behalf of fellow beneficiaries, former Sales Executive, Bondca M. Bar, said they never saw this coming, since they started working for the company and they are forever grateful to the management for putting smiles on their faces at a critical time in their life.

He said what the company did is something that will live with them for rest of their life and called on other employees to work hard in order to

reach pension age too.

Bar said as a Liberian it's always good to be patience, honest and self- control whenever working for a company, not only Fouta Cooperation but other companies with discipline.

"Words are inadequate to express to the company for such gesture and there are so many reasons for us to celebrate this milestone gift and this will carry us a very long way in our life, while we are out of the employed of the company", he added.

The Fouta Corporation ("Fouta") was established in 1995 as a trading company in Liberia, engaged in importation and distribution of rice, steel, building materials and bagged cement. The cement is imported under the "Goltas" brand with whom Fouta has a licensing agreement. Fouta had recently established a subsidiary, Fouta Cement Corporation to develop and operate a cement grinding plant in Monrovia. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

## Senate orders review of business laws

*Plenary of the Liberian Senate embarks on a process to review existing Patent laws here.*

*By Lincoln G. Peters*

Monrovia, Liberia, February 7, 2025 - The Plenary of the Liberian Senate mandates its committees on Judiciary and Commerce to review a proposal from Lofa County Senator Momo Tamuekollie Cyrus, for possible amendments to existing Patents and Associated Laws.

The Plenary decision is based on a communication from Senator Cyrus, indicating that current patents and associated laws are creating bottlenecks for Liberian businesses.

The Senator, in his communication date Thursday, February 6, 2025, notes that several of these laws were enacted during periods when Liberian entrepreneurs had limited participation in certain business sectors.

Consequently, he argues that these legal frameworks have inadvertently established bottlenecks that hinder fair competition and impede growth of a thriving business

environment, particularly for Liberian-owned enterprises.

Cyrus acknowledges that a specific area of concern is exclusivity granted to select companies and businesses for production and importation of essential commodities such as clorox and other forms of detergents, and other general commodities.

He further argues that current structure of these laws restrict broader participation, stifling competition and limiting the choices available to consumers. These constraints, he notes, are in turn affect pricing and accessibility, placing an undue burden on the Liberian populace.

Senator Cyrus prays wisdom of the Senate to endorse his request, aimed at fostering a more competitive and inclusive economic landscape, by ensuring that reviewing of the law aligns with national interest of promoting economic growth, enhancing competition, and protecting Liberian consumers from potential monopolistic practices. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*

### **Senate revises Ministry of Internal Affairs**

*By Lincoln G. Peters*

Monrovia, Liberia, February 7, 2025 - The Liberian Senate has finally repealed Chapter 25 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Title 12, Executive Law of 1972, Liberia Code of Law Revised to establish in its stead, a New Chapter 25, to be known as the Ministry of Local Government.

The Senate's decision is triggered by a report from the Joint Committee on Internal Affairs, Governance & Reconciliation and Judiciary, Human Rights, Claims & Petitions, proffering key recommendations for the passage of the Act.

When passed into law, the Ministry of Internal Affairs will be renamed Ministry of Local Government.

This amendment seeks to provide an operational framework for local government, aligning the 2018 Local Government Act, Revenue Sharing Law and other instruments covering local government.

The amendment holds that during the transitional period, no employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs will lost job and that Ministers, Deputy

Ministers, including Assistant Ministers will act in their various positions within the Ministry of Local Government, pending nomination by the President.

This amendment has been lingering within the corridors of the Legislature since 2018, experiencing several setbacks.

The new Ministry of local government shall be responsible for providing executive oversight of local governments, specifically in management of balanced, socio-economic development programs, empowerment of local communities, strengthening delivery of social services, and promotion and delivery of good governance, including popular participation, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, and access to justice at local levels.

It shall be responsible also for providing executive oversight of peacebuilding, promotion of reconciliation, local cohesion, and national unification and integration to ensure sustainable peace, development and political stability. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



## The traditions of Nimba must be obeyed

*-Ex-representative candidate Amos Myers*

*Ahead of senatorial by-election in Nimba County, a former representative candidate from the county throws light on dynamics of politics there.*

*By Stephen G. Fellajuah*

Monrovia, Liberia, February 10, 2025 - A former representative candidate, Amos Myers, shares his perspective on the political dynamics of Nimba County, shedding light on crucial role that tribal and traditional customs play in shaping the county's political landscape.

As the people of Nimba gear up for upcoming senatorial by-election, Myers emphasizes the importance of respecting and adhering to deep-rooted traditions in order to secure political success.

According to him, politics in the second most populated county is not just a matter of campaigning and rallies but also involves an understanding of the customs that govern the people. These traditions, he notes, have a direct impact on voter behavior and candidate selection, which political contenders cannot afford to overlook.

His assertion that it is a "mandate to obey the traditions of the County" indicates that political decisions, especially during elections, are heavily influenced by cultural and

traditional structures.

By endorsing incumbent Representative Samuel G. Kogar of District 5 for the by-election, Myers is aligning himself with a candidate, who likely has the support of these traditional authorities and structures.

"The connection between politics and tradition in Nimba County reflects how tribal affiliations, family ties, and respect for local customs often determine political outcomes. It's not uncommon for leaders in the region to secure support based on their alignment with these traditional values", he narrates.

He emphasizes his political standing and influence in Nimba County, pointing out that his decision to support someone, who he describes as the county's choice, is not only supported by traditional authorities but also by a team of local politicians.

By mentioning that he came third in the District 9 race during the 2023 Presidential and Legislative elections, indicates his growing political relevance and influence in the county. This may play a key role in garnering more support for Kogar in the upcoming by-election.



# Français

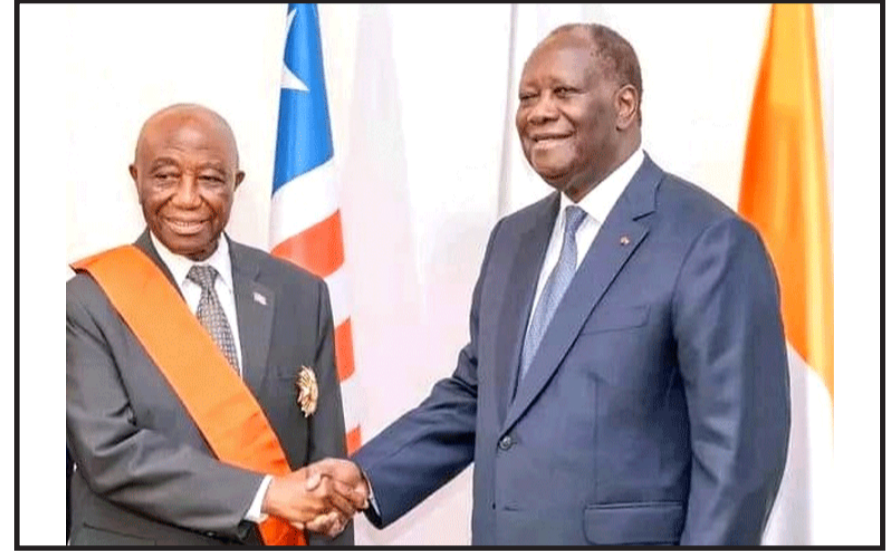
## La Côte d'Ivoire réduit de 85 % sa fourniture d'électricité au Libéria

La Corporation d'Électricité du Libéria (LEC) a annoncé une réduction significative de son approvisionnement en électricité, à la suite d'une coupure décidée par son fournisseur, la Compagnie Ivoirienne d'Électricité (CIE), dans le cadre de l'accord

maintenances cruciaux. En conséquence, la quantité d'électricité fournie est passée de 50 mégawatts (MW) à seulement 7,5 MW, et ce, jusqu'à nouvel ordre. Cette réduction est présentée comme nécessaire pour garantir la stabilité à long terme du réseau. Toutefois, la LEC a averti que cette situation aurait un impact majeur

sur la distribution d'électricité à mesure ne suffira pas à combler entièrement le déficit, en raison de la baisse du niveau d'eau au barrage de Mt. Coffee, ce qui réduit la capacité de production de la centrale hydroélectrique. La LEC a présenté ses excuses à la population pour les désagréments occasionnés et a appelé à la patience et à la coopération des citoyens.

« Nous tenons à rassurer le public que la LEC reste en contact étroit avec la CIE et fournira des mises à jour régulières sur l'évolution de la situation », a indiqué le communiqué. Cependant, la Corporation n'a pas précisé de calendrier pour le rétablissement de l'approvisionnement normal en électricité, ce dernier dépendant des efforts de la CIE pour résoudre ses problèmes de production. En attendant, les habitants de Monrovia et des zones voisines devront faire face à des coupures prolongées et à un accès limité à l'électricité, en raison des ajustements opérés tant en Côte d'Ivoire qu'au Libéria.



d'achat d'électricité entre les deux pays. Dans un communiqué publié le 5 février, la CIE a annoncé une diminution de 85 % de l'électricité fournie au Libéria, invoquant des difficultés de production et des travaux de

sur la distribution d'électricité à Monrovia et dans les zones environnantes, entraînant des coupures prolongées au-delà des horaires de délestage habituels. Pour compenser cette pénurie, la LEC a mis en marche sa centrale thermique. Cependant, cette

## Buchanan : Le projet hospitalier conjoint GoL/ArcelorMittal prend de l'ampleur

L'Agence libérienne pour l'autonomisation des communautés (LACE) a annoncé que le projet hospitalier de Buchanan, financé conjointement par ArcelorMittal et le gouvernement du Libéria, progresse comme prévu. Ce projet, d'un montant de 3,5 millions de dollars américains, est en cours de réalisation par la société Delta Construction Company, illustrant l'engagement de l'État et du secteur privé dans l'amélioration du système de santé dans le comté de Grand Bassa.

Lors d'une réunion avec le conseil d'administration, le directeur exécutif de LACE, Julius Sele, a précisé que, une fois terminé, l'hôpital de Buchanan servira de centre de référence pour plusieurs comtés voisins, notamment Rivercess, Sinoe et Grand Kru.

Le projet vise à renforcer l'infrastructure sanitaire de la région, assurant ainsi un meilleur accès à des soins médicaux de qualité pour des milliers de résidents. Situé stratégiquement à Buchanan, capitale du comté de Grand Bassa, l'hôpital répondra aux

besoins d'une population croissante qui a longtemps souffert du manque d'accès à des établissements de santé modernes et bien équipés.

Les travaux, dirigés par Delta Construction Company, comprennent la création de nouvelles infrastructures médicales modernes, notamment des départements de consultations externes, des unités d'hospitalisation, des services de maternité et de pédiatrie, des blocs opératoires ainsi que des installations de diagnostic.

M. Sele a souligné que ce projet réduira considérablement les distances que les patients doivent parcourir pour accéder à des soins spécialisés, car l'hôpital offrira une

gamme complète de services médicaux sur place.

Le directeur exécutif a également salué le partenariat entre ArcelorMittal et le gouvernement libérien, qu'il a qualifié de modèle de collaboration public-privé dans le domaine de la santé. En tant qu'acteur majeur du secteur minier libérien, ArcelorMittal confirme ainsi son engagement en faveur de la responsabilité sociale à travers des initiatives qui améliorent le bien-être des Libériens.

Le gouvernement du Libéria, par le biais de LACE, reste quant à lui déterminé à garantir que les projets de développement profitent



## Éditorial

### Les préoccupations du Barreau méritent une attention sérieuse

Par Daron Acemoglu

L'Association du Barreau National du Libéria (LNBA) exprime son inquiétude face à des événements récents qui, selon elle, compromettent la démocratie constitutionnelle du pays. Elle dénonce des violations présumées des droits fondamentaux, des décisions exécutives discutables, le non-respect des jugements judiciaires et une ingérence excessive du pouvoir législatif. Autant de dérives qui, selon le Barreau, menacent les principes fondamentaux de l'État de droit.

Face à cette situation, la LNBA réaffirme son engagement à collaborer avec les décideurs politiques pour garantir le respect de la Constitution et promouvoir des réformes juridiques conformes aux aspirations du peuple libérien.

Le président récemment élu de l'Association, Me Bornor M. Varmah, souligne que la LNBA opère sous un cadre statutaire qui expose ses fonctions réglementaires, disciplinaires et administratives à des influences extérieures. Il plaide pour une autonomie renforcée afin de garantir au Barreau une plus grande indépendance dans l'exercice de ses missions.

« La LNBA doit disposer du pouvoir de fixer et d'appliquer des normes éthiques rigoureuses, d'améliorer les exigences en matière d'agrément des avocats et de mener des actions disciplinaires sans ingérence indue. En tant qu'institution dédiée à la justice, elle doit bénéficier d'une indépendance institutionnelle lui permettant de contester les actes inconstitutionnels, de plaider pour des réformes judiciaires et d'engager des actions d'intérêt public sans crainte d'influence politique », affirme Me Varmah.

Cette déclaration intervient alors que des divergences d'interprétation juridique entourent la destitution du président de la Chambre des représentants, J. Fonati Koffa. Cette controverse a suscité des interrogations quant à la gestion de l'affaire par la Cour suprême, qui s'est abstenue de rendre un avis clair sur la procédure à suivre.

Ce silence a laissé un vide juridique dont l'Exécutif a profité pour imposer sa propre interprétation et justifier la destitution du président de la Chambre en dehors des règles établies. Une situation qui, selon la LNBA, affaiblit la confiance du public dans le système judiciaire et nuit à l'équilibre des pouvoirs.

Il est impératif que la Cour suprême exerce pleinement son rôle en apportant des clarifications définitives sur les affaires qui lui sont soumises. En tant que seule instance habilitée à garantir la stabilité du système démocratique par le contrôle judiciaire et l'interprétation des lois, elle doit éviter toute ambiguïté qui pourrait semer le doute.

Dans cette optique, Me Varmah appelle à une collaboration étroite entre la LNBA et la Cour suprême afin d'améliorer la qualité des décisions judiciaires. Il insiste sur l'urgence d'une telle réforme, rappelant que la Constitution de 1986 confère à la Cour suprême un pouvoir fondamental de contrôle judiciaire. Ce rôle essentiel doit être exercé avec rigueur et indépendance pour garantir la clarté, l'impartialité et la stabilité du droit au Libéria.

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## Happy New Year to all our Readers

# Français

Starts from page 8

## La Côte d'Ivoire réduit de 85 % sa

directement aux communautés locales. Le projet hospitalier de Buchanan devrait avoir un impact considérable sur la santé publique, en particulier dans les domaines des soins maternels et infantiles, des services d'urgence et des interventions de santé publique en général. Les autorités locales et les communautés exprimant déjà un optimisme croissant quant aux bénéfices

futurs du projet pour la région. Une fois achevé, l'hôpital de Buchanan deviendra un symbole de progrès et d'espoir pour la santé au Libéria, en comblant les lacunes actuelles du système de santé et en établissant un précédent pour les futures initiatives d'infrastructure.

## Le FMI approuve un financement de 46 millions de dollars pour le Liberia

*-Un soutien pour renforcer les réserves et accompagner les réformes économiques*

Monrovia, Liberia – 7 février 2025 – Le Fonds monétaire international (FMI) a accordé un financement de 46 millions de dollars américains au Liberia, dans le cadre de son programme de Facilité élargie de crédit (FEC), après avoir effectué un examen des mesures prises dans le cadre de cet arrangement. Le ministère des Finances et de la Planification du développement a annoncé que ces fonds serviront principalement à renforcer les réserves internationales du pays, dans le cadre de réformes économiques visant à assurer la stabilité et à stimuler la croissance à long terme. En septembre 2024, le FMI avait déjà approuvé un prêt de 210 millions de dollars sur une période de 40 mois, destiné à soutenir le programme économique du Liberia, baptisé Agenda A R R E S T pour un développement inclusif (AAID). Ce programme a pour objectifs de résorber les déséquilibres macroéconomiques, d'améliorer la soutenabilité de la dette, et de favoriser une croissance plus inclusive et dirigée par le secteur privé,

au-delà des secteurs traditionnels de l'économie. Une croissance solide malgré les défis Le FMI relève que l'économie libérienne affiche une croissance robuste, avec une projection de 5,6 % de croissance du PIB réel pour 2025, contre 4,8 % en 2024. L'institution met également en avant la stabilité de l'inflation et des taux de change, ainsi qu'une réduction continue du déficit du compte courant, témoignant d'une amélioration progressive de la gestion économique. Les autorités libériennes ont également réussi à restaurer la discipline fiscale, un élément fondamental pour maintenir la stabilité macroéconomique. Le FMI note également que le ratio dette publique/PIB a commencé à diminuer, ce qui reflète une consolidation réussie des finances publiques. Réformes fiscales et financières : des progrès encourageants L'institution internationale salue les avancées dans la mobilisation des recettes fiscales, le contrôle des dépenses publiques et la stabilisation du système

financier. L'introduction de la TVA, élément clé des réformes fiscales, est perçue comme essentielle pour élargir la base fiscale et accroître l'espace budgétaire, tout en garantissant la viabilité de la dette à long terme. Cependant, le FMI insiste sur l'importance de réduire les prêts non performants (NPLs), un défi majeur pour renforcer la stabilité du secteur financier. Il souligne également l'urgence de résoudre les problèmes dans certaines banques en difficulté et d'améliorer la gouvernance au sein des institutions publiques. Une gouvernance renforcée et des mesures correctives Le FMI a également approuvé une dérogation concernant les arriérés extérieurs, en reconnaissant que les problèmes rencontrés étaient mineurs et que des mesures correctives avaient déjà été prises. Le directeur général adjoint du FMI, M. Bo Li, a salué les bons progrès réalisés par le Liberia dans la mise en œuvre de politiques macroéconomiques solides et de réformes structurelles. Il a ajouté que le programme était « largement sur la bonne voie, et que les efforts du pays pour renforcer la soutenabilité fiscale, reconstituer les réserves internationales et améliorer la gouvernance publique portent progressivement leurs fruits. »

## Samuel Kogar : « Je suis venu accomplir la volonté du sénateur Johnson »

Le représentant Samuel Kogar, candidat déclaré à l'élection sénatoriale partielle visant à pourvoir le siège laissé vacant par le défunt sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson (PYJ), a affirmé sa volonté de poursuivre l'héritage politique de ce dernier.

S'exprimant mercredi lors d'une cérémonie marquant son retour au Mouvement pour la Démocratie et la Reconstruction (MDR), le parti fondé par feu le sénateur Johnson, M. Kogar a souligné que sa décision s'inscrit dans la continuité d'un engagement pris de son vivant avec l'ancien sénateur.

Un engagement en hommage à Prince Y. Johnson « Je ne rejoins pas le MDR parce que le sénateur Johnson est décédé. Je le rejoins parce qu'il m'y avait invité de son vivant. Aujourd'hui, je reviens pour honorer sa volonté », a-t-il déclaré devant une assemblée de militants.

Le sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson, décédé en novembre 2024 à l'âge de 72 ans, avait exercé deux mandats de neuf ans au Sénat et en était à son troisième mandat lorsqu'il a rendu l'âme.

Depuis son décès, plusieurs personnalités de Nimba ont manifesté leur intérêt pour sa succession, cherchant à préserver son influence politique au sein de la région et du Sénat.

Une candidature confirmée en attente du scrutin



Rep. Samuel Kogar

M. Kogar a confirmé son intention de se présenter à l'élection sénatoriale partielle, sous réserve de l'officialisation du scrutin par la Commission nationale des élections (NEC). Comparant son engagement politique à un testament moral et politique, il a expliqué :

« Avant de disparaître, une personne rédige un testament pour organiser la répartition de ses biens. Lorsque le sénateur Johnson était encore en vie, il m'a personnellement invité à rejoindre le MDR. Aujourd'hui, je considère cette invitation comme une volonté à laquelle je me dois de répondre. »

Un appel à l'unité et au renforcement du MDR

Dans son discours, M. Kogar a exhorté les militants du MDR à s'unir et à renforcer le parti, appelant en particulier les anciens membres à regagner le mouvement pour bâtir une force politique plus cohérente et influente.

« Lorsqu'on est dans l'opposition, on est un gouvernement en attente. Nous devons donc nous comporter comme tel, en cultivant l'unité et en renforçant notre crédibilité politique. »

Il a encouragé les anciens représentants Gonpue Kargon et Garrison Yealue, ainsi que d'autres figures du parti, à revenir au MDR pour consolider son assise politique.

Le MDR réaffirme son alliance avec l'Union pour l'Unité (UP)

Le président du MDR, Me Cooper W. Kruah, a salué le retour de M. Kogar et réaffirmé l'engagement du parti à maintenir son alliance avec l'Union pour l'Unité (UP), actuellement au pouvoir.

« Je suis ici pour réaffirmer la position du MDR sur l'avenir politique du Liberia : nous soutiendrons le président Boakai pendant 12 ans », a déclaré M. Kruah, par ailleurs ministre du Travail dans l'administration en place.

Pour rappel, le président Joseph Boakai avait choisi Jeremiah Kpan Koung, actuel vice-président du Liberia et membre du MDR, comme colistier lors de l'élection présidentielle de 2023.



# The Power of the Pen and Africa's Dependence: A Call for Self-Reliance

By: Austin S Fallah-*A True Son of the Planet Earth Soil:*

The power and influence of the United States Presidency extend far beyond its own borders, shaping the economic and political landscapes of countries around the globe, particularly in Africa.

Recent actions, most notably those of the US President, have exposed the vulnerabilities of many African nations. These stem not only from external pressures but also from a lack of self-sufficiency and a clearly defined vision for sustainable development.

Examining the suspension of aid through USAID and the overarching dependency on foreign handouts makes it increasingly evident that a paradigm shift is essential.

Africa must transition from a handouts of dependency syndrome to a posture of self-reliance to gain respect and foster its own development.

The Pervasiveness of Dependency:

Dependency on foreign aid has become an ingrained aspect of many African economies.

Foreign governments, NGOs, and multilateral organizations have poured billions of dollars into the continent for decades.

Unfortunately, this aid, often framed as humanitarian or developmental assistance, has led to breast-sucking nations handout receiving nations-neocolonialism) in which the giver holds the power (givers of aid, grants, loans, etc).

The recent suspension of aid by the US Presidency is a stark reminder of the precarious situations of many African countries.

With the stroke of a pen, entire programs can be halted, and nations can be left scrambling to fill financial gaps, revealing their insufficient self-reliance and economic preparedness.

The over-reliance on foreign aid has stunted growth by creating a mindset prioritizing short-term solutions over long-term strategic planning.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are neglected when nations develop policies expecting to receive aid.

Countries begin to view foreign entities as lifelines rather than partners, diminishing their urgency to cultivate internal resources and systems.

Moreover, economic dependency perpetuates a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment, where nations cannot make decisions that align with their needs and values.

The Impact of Foreign Aid Suspensions:

The suspension of aid through USAID is not merely a bureaucratic or political maneuver but has profound implications.

Many African nations have grown accustomed to this external financial support, which often funds critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure.

The sudden withdrawal of such aid can lead to a cascading series of crises: medical facilities may go underfunded, schools may lack the resources to operate, and critical infrastructure projects may stall.

These are not hypothetical scenarios but realities that have played out across the continent, evidencing the dangers of relying heavily on foreign contributions for development.

Furthermore, the lack of consistent aid can exacerbate existing inequalities and tensions.

Regions or demographic groups previously relying on assistance may struggle disproportionately when funds are cut.

This can lead to political instability, social unrest, and even conflict.

The recent history of many African nations reveals that when external funds dry up, so too does the perceived legitimacy of those in power, as citizens grow frustrated by their leaders' inability to deliver on services and opportunities.

The Need for Vision and Economic Preparedness:

African countries must cultivate a vision prioritizing sustainable development to shift from dependency toward self-reliance.

It is insufficient for governments and leaders to hope for continued foreign assistance.

They must develop robust economic strategies that empower citizens and harness local resources.

This requires long-term planning that integrates economic, social, and environmental goals.

Investment in education is a cornerstone of this self-reliance paradigm.

An educated populace is key to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and self-sufficiency.

Governments should focus on building educational systems that impart theoretical knowledge and practical skills, enabling the youth to create their own businesses and ventures.

This educational shift can empower traditionally marginalized groups, including women and rural communities, ultimately fostering a more inclusive economy.

In addition, African nations must invest in local industries and promote agriculture, manufacturing, and technology sectors.

By prioritizing local production, countries can reduce their dependency on foreign goods and services, enhance job creation, and retain more wealth domestically.

This economic diversification will also bolster resilience against external shocks, including fluctuations in global markets or the sudden withdrawal of foreign aid.

Promoting Policies of Self-Reliance:

African governments must implement policies incentivizing local production and entrepreneurship while improving the business environment.

This involves creating regulatory frameworks that support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and provide them with access to finance, infrastructure, and markets.

With adequate investment in local businesses,

communities can begin to generate their own wealth and create job opportunities.

In tandem with these economic policies, African leaders must engage in diplomatic efforts that foster genuine partnerships rather than dependency on aid.

This requires establishing frameworks for mutual benefit in trade agreements, foreign investments, and resource management.

By advocating for policies that prioritize African interests and ensure equitable exchanges, countries can reclaim their agency and foster collective respect on the global stage.

Overcoming Cultural Barriers to Self-Reliance:

Cultural perceptions of development and aid must also shift.

Many African nations have internalized the narrative of dependency, viewing foreign aid as a necessary means of survival.

Efforts must be made to reshape this narrative, celebrating local success and resilience stories.

Media campaigns, educational initiatives, and grassroots movements can be crucial in fostering pride in local capabilities and solutions.

Moreover, as new narratives are formed, the African diaspora can be a powerful ally in promoting self-reliance.

By engaging with well-meaning expatriates who have experienced success abroad, nations can tap into valuable resources, expertise, and investment.

The Diaspora Africans can help to bridge the knowledge and technology gap, facilitating a flow of ideas and capital back to their home (continent)countries.

A Path Forward:

As demonstrated by recent political actions from the United States Presidency, the specter of aid dependency hangs heavily over many African nations.

The suspension of funds through USAID is a clarion call for change, a call to action that urges African countries to confront their vulnerabilities and embrace a future grounded in self-reliance and resilience.

The transition from dependency to self-sufficiency will not happen overnight.

It will require visionary leadership, comprehensive strategies, and a collective cultural shift.

If Africa is to secure respect on the global stage, it must dismantle the structures of dependency and forge its own path.

By investing in education, fostering local industries, and promoting self-reliance, African nations can strengthen their economies and enhance their capacities to manage their futures.

Now is the time for action, and the power of the pen can only carry weight if strong hands are ready to wield it.

Redefining the relationship with aid, embracing innovative ideas, and prioritizing internal growth.



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# Liberia launches national campaign for UN Security Council Seat

Liberia is officially launching a national campaign today to gain support from citizens for its bid to join the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a non-permanent member for the 2026-2027 term.

By: Kruah Thompson

Monrovia, February 10, 2025 – President Joseph Nyumah Boakai will be leading the event at 11 AM at the Centennial Pavilion on Ashmun Street to

Liberians and persuade them of the significance of this historic international effort. Speaking ahead of the launch, Ambassador Lewis Brown, disclosed that while all 193 UN member states are entitled to equal



Hon. Lwise Brown



President Boakai

encourage Liberians at home and abroad to back this important international effort. Although the bid campaign was formally launched in New York, where the actual voting will take place in June this year, President Boakai will today launch a local bid campaign at the Centennial Pavilion on Ashmun Street. The goal is to engage all

representation in the General Assembly, only 15 countries serve on the Security Council—five permanent members with veto powers and ten non-permanent members rotating for two-year terms. Africa holds three non-permanent seats. He stated that while the African Union has unanimously endorsed Liberia to represent Africa during the 2026-2027 term, the bid's

success will require strong national support to secure Liberia's rightful place at the global decision-making table. He called on every Liberian—including the diplomatic corps, religious leaders, traditional leaders, political leaders, civil society leaders, women and youth groups, students, teachers, and journalists—to join the ceremony and help ensure that the nation wins the bid. He claimed that securing this seat would lead to job creation, better roads, access to clean water, and electricity. "These are not just dreams; these are achievable goals that will make a real difference in our daily lives." Citing examples, he mentioned that Sierra Leone, during its previous term on the UNSC, established lasting partnerships with countries and development partners, leading to significant infrastructural projects such as the Youyi Building and the Siaka Stevens Stadium. He also noted that Ghana, during its recent term, focused on enhancing global peace and security, which resulted in increased international cooperation and support for domestic projects. Additionally, he urged all political parties in the country to set aside their differences and prioritize the nation's interests.

## from back page Club Beer Factory's lawyer faces probe

empering compliant, Cllr. Tomah and Evelyn Karyee, one of the court staffers, claim that they saw with their eyes Cllr. Sims and Juror Gbaboh exchanging contact numbers, right after the court adjourned, and everyone was asked to stand for the jurors to walk outside of the courtroom, which said order was obeyed. Immediately, Tomah told the investigation that when the jurors walked outside in split seconds, he (Tomah) left his colleagues standing at the bar and walked out but to his dismay and disbelief, he saw Cllr. Albert Sims and Juror Gbaboh exchanging contact numbers right before the court. Unfortunately, Tomah claims that he never had his phone with him to photograph the alleged exchanges between Sims and Gbaboh, but immediately called Evelyn to witness the incident. That accusation was confirmed by Evelyn, when she testified during the investigation. After he had a witness, Tomah claimed that he immediately came back to the court and informed his colleagues about the incident, which they later reported to the court for an investigation. However, Sims and Juror Gbaboh denied the accusation, describing it as false and misleading, and intended to damage their respective characters. Cllr. Sims term the allegation as "malicious, wicked and is intended to spoil my character." "In fact, after the hearing, I proceeded to the National Labor Court. I did not have any interaction with anybody, least in question that we were in

conversation in which we exchanged contract numbers," "For the records, let me say to this court, that I have been in the practice for a little over twenty years now so; I know the gravity of the offence when it comes to jury tempering, so the allegation by Cllr. Tomah is malicious, wicked and is intended to spoil my character," Sims told the investigation. Juror Gbaboh responds, "I never interacted with Cllr. Sims; after the case was adjointed, I left the court; I used the left side of the court, got in my vehicle and went to my office to do a report." According to him, the next day, when he came back to the court, he was surprised for him to be accused by Cllr. Tomah and Evelyn Karyee of talking to Cllr. Sims and taking his number. He requests that all of his call logs from any of the GSM companies be subpoenaed, to prove whether he had ever communicated with Cllr. Sims. In the main suit, the Intestate Estate is asking the court to oust, eject, and evict defendant (Club Beer Factory) from its property it continues to occupy since May 2022 to the disadvantage of plaintiff. "Levy and institute Compensatory and Punitive Damages against defendant and to further hold them (defendant) liable for illegally occupying and doing business on our property without any color of right, the fear of God and in total disregard to the rule of law," the lawsuit argues. According to the suit, the Estate of the late Jeda Tor, genuine owner of

Forty-six (46) Acres of land laying and situated in Bushrod Island, Montserrado County, was purchased by the late Jeda Tor, their late father and grandfather. The lawsuit claims that during the life of the late Jeda Tor, the original owner of the parcel of land, he leased to Monrovia Breweries, Inc., (MBI), 19.695 acres of land on 22 Day of May, A. D. 1957, to have and to hold the same said parcel of land, pending expiration of the said Agreement of Lease, which was extended by the Jeda Tor Estate on May 22, 2000. They allege that the said Agreement of Lease has expired since May 22, 2022 and brings to closure the Agreement of Lease signed by the late Jeda Tor and subsequently extended in 2000. The suit says further that since expiration of the May 22, 2000 agreement of lease, there has been no further extension made for which the defendant continues to illegally occupy its property and continue to do business on the said property to the disadvantage of plaintiff, and the heirs of the late Jeda Tor Estate, "something the late Jeda Tor did not intend would ever happen that such action would be perpetrated against the estate and its heirs." The lawsuit contends that the action of defendant has caused and continue to cause untold hardship on the estate and its beneficiaries as the estate's bills cannot be settled, including other financial burdens of the Estate. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**

# 142 United Methodists breakaway

## -At 72 UMC over same-sex marriage

The United Methodist Church in Liberia remains deeply divided over debate regarding same-sex marriage in the Church with some members breaking away from the denomination here.

By: Wise Wesseh

Monrovia, Liberia, February 10, 2025 - Over hundred members of 72nd United Methodist Church here have broken away or disaffiliated from the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The congregation's decision is in response to alleged supportive stance of the United Methodist Church for same-sex marriage or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer LGBTQ, into regionalization worldwide. The decision also comes amidst schism over theology and role of LGBTQ people in the church, and at the helm of the 192nd Liberia annual Conference of the United Methodist Church (LAC-UMC) in Gbarnga, Bong County, beginning today, February 10-16, 2025. Church delegates are expected to decide the Liberia Annual Conference's position on the United Methodist Church's general conference regarding regionalization law. In April 2024, the global United Methodist Church at its general conference approved the regionalization law, which supports same-sex marriage within the church among its congregation. However, amendment to the new regionalization law allows gay bishops, pastors and lesbians to preside over the congregation, something that has met resistance from congregations globally characterized by series of breakaways. On Sunday, February 9, 2025, in an open church service, 142 out of 162 membership of the 72nd United Methodist Church in Paynesville openly opposed same-sex marriage, and announced their withdrawal from the United Methodist denomination. "We cannot support a gay Church, where a man and a man getting marry; a woman and a woman getting marry, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, that is demonic, and we believe in one Bible; not two bibles, where the United Methodist Church wants to lead us to hell and we do not want to go to hell", says Francestina C. Sesay, a 67-year-old member of the 72nd United Methodist Church congregation. Speaking on the latest move, Pastor Kenneth Jackson says the congregation's decision comes amid increasing support for homosexuality. Pastor Jackson explains that the 72nd United Methodist Church is a democratic body of believers, so it has decided to vote against homosexuality and withdraw from the Liberia Annual Conference, after a seven (7)-count resolution endorsed by the 142 congregants. He acknowledges the difficulty of breaking away but emphasizes the need to uphold biblical truth and spiritual integrity.

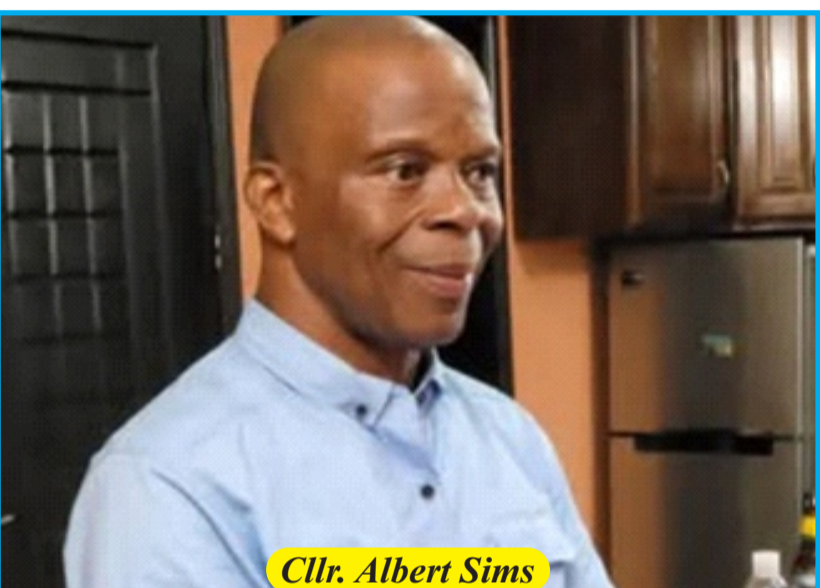
"We are being deceived, and we need to understand that this is not the right way to serve God," Rev. Jackson notes. He describes same-sex marriage as "demonic", vowing to guide his congregation in what he believes is the true path of Christianity. "Same-sex marriage is demonic, and I will not sit here and watch my people go to hell," he adds. Reading a seven-count resolution, withdrawing their members from the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Mr. Lincoln Mayson, a lead servant of the Church states: "Whereas, at the UMC General Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, USA from 23 April to 3 May 2024, the UMC worldwide took a decision that is against the clear teachings of Scriptures and the moral will of God in so far as homosexuality, ordination of LGBTQ persons for pastoral ministry and Episcopal leadership, and the change in the definition of marriage are concerned, Therefore, we the officers and members of the 72 United Methodist Church located at 72nd Junction, Japanese Freeway, Paynesville City, Liberia, believe that we can no longer, in good conscience, remain a part of the UMC in general, and the Liberia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in particular." Mr. Mayson continues; "Whereas we cannot in good conscience be a part of a denomination that has legally become a 'Gay Denomination', based on its official decision to ordain lesbians and gays as pastors and consecrate some as bishops. Already, there are two avowed lesbian pastors (two women openly married to other women) who are serving as Bishop of the UMC in America, and one avowed gay pastor (a man openly married to another man) also serving as Bishop, for the congregation in the church." Meanwhile, dozens of members of the 72nd United Methodist Church echoed the church's decision, emphasizing their opposition to same-sex marriage and their commitment to preserving traditional Christian beliefs. "We will join the Global United Methodist Church, so that they can fight for us, if the UMC tries to take our church or take us to court. The church is global," one member underscores. With this move, the 72nd United Methodist Church joins a growing number of congregations worldwide that have broken away from the United Methodist Church (UMC) due to theological disagreements over human sexuality, marriage, and church leadership. **Editing by Jonathan Browne**



# Club Beer Factory's lawyer faces probe

***-In Jury's tempering allegations***  
*Defense Lawyer Cllr. Albert Sims is accused of jury-tempering, but he denies.*

**By Lincoln G. Peters**  
 Monrovia, Liberia, February 10, 2025 - One of the lawyers representing Club Beer Factory in the Action of Summary Proceedings to Recover



Cllr. Albert Sims

Possession of Real Property case, Cllr. Albert Sims, is trouble with the Civil Law Court here for alleged tempering. The case against Club Beer Factory was filed by the Intestate Estate of the late Jeda Tor, who accused the Factory of illegally occupying forty-six (46) acres of its land, laying and situated in Bushrod Island, Montserrado County.

tempering with one of the male Jurors, Arnold Gbaboh, on February 4, 2025 during hearing of the case. Sims was accused by Cllr. Lawrence Tomah, one of the lawyers for the Estate and a female Court's staffer, Evelyn Karyee. However, based on the accusations, Judge Scheaplör Dunbar temporarily suspended hearing, concluded investigation of the

alleged acts and subsequently reserved his ruling. Both Cllr. Tomah and Evelyn Karyee, in their separate testimonies, claimed that Cllr. Sims and Juror Gbaboh were seeing exchanging contact numbers, immediately after the day's hearing outside of the courtroom. Cllr Sims and Juror Gbaboh had denied having any interaction with each other. However, Sims admitted that he gave US\$10.00 to two of the jurors, who had asked him to assist them with transportation. According to him, the money was not meant to bribe the jury, rather, it was part of his kind gesture to help people. It may be recalled that Juror Gbaboh, early this year served on the jury panel that decided the unanimous verdict in favour of Ecobank Liberia Limited, in the US\$700,000 libel case brought against the bank by Wilmot Smith, a dismissed former deputy director general for information coordination at the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS). Cllr. Sims was the lead lawyer in the case for Ecobank, though Smith's lawyers rejected the jury's verdict and have filed for a new trial. In the case of the Estate's jury t

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