



#### CENTRAL BANK OF LIBERIA **MARKET BUYING AND SELLING RATES**

**LIBERIAN DOLLARS PER US DOLLAR** DATE **BUYING SELLING** 

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

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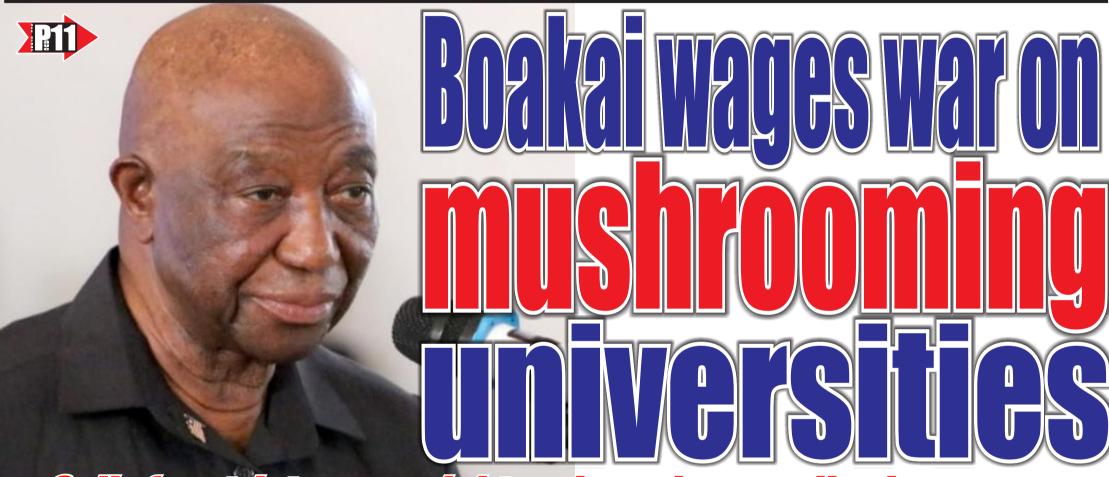
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## Continental News

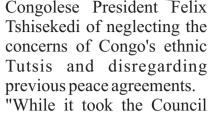
#### N calls for ceasefire in Congo he United Nations long-standing conflict with Congolese President Felix

Security Council Congolese forces. unanimously adopted Nicolas de Rivière is the a resolution on Friday calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

rich eastern region in less ceasefire agreement."

Representative to the United Nations in France: "There is no military solution to the conflict. The M23 offensive, supported by Rwanda, must Rwanda-backed rebels have end. The priority now is to taken control of two key reach an effective, cities in Congo's mineral- unconditional, and immediate

than a month, following a Rwanda's President, Paul major escalation in their Kagame, has accused



some time to reach a consensus, its resilience is evident. On behalf of the Government and all citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially those from Bunagana to Kamanyola, Goma, Sake, Minova, Nyabibwe, Kalehe, Kavumu, and Bukavu, I sincerely thank all members of the Council," said Zénon Mukongo Ngay, the Representative to the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The rebels are supported by roughly 4,000 troops from neighbouring Rwanda, according to U.N. experts. At times, they have threatened to march as far as Congo's capital, Kinshasa, located over 1,000 miles away.

focuses on economic autonomy aptain Ibrahim Traoré, of economic priorities, with who has led Burkina

**Burkina Faso's military leader** 

Faso since a 2022 coup, is focusing on economic autonomy to reduce reliance on foreign aid and harness internal resources.

This strategy, aligned with the Alliance of Sahel States alongside Mali and Niger, reflects a push for economic sovereignty.

"This model is based on leveraging internal resources. It has enabled the head of state and his government to prioritise agriculture. But the other key aspect is the industrialisation of our production," says Hamidou Sawadogo, a professor of monetary and financial economics at the University Joseph KI-Zerbo.

Agriculture is now at the core

dedicated funding and increased production capacity. The result is that nearly six million tonnes of cereal were harvested in 2024.

However, given the country's decade-long fight against Islamist insurgents, securing the territory remains crucial.

"Personally, I would recommend further investment in territorial defence to ensure our survival. Once that is secured, we can continue developing our internal growth model," says Sawadogo.

In the meantime, the impact of the new policies is clear. Economic growth is improving, GDP is accelerating, with a 3.7 per cent increase projected for 2024.

However, with persistent security and structural challenges, Burkina Faso must adapt its model to the realities of its development.



#### **Where do DRC's plundered minerals go?**

Kagame admitted that plunder remains unclear. from its neighbor.

Congo; whether they accusation. Dubai, Brussels, Tel Aviv, their suppliers. were being smuggled.

CNN has reached out to his tantalum and gold) and government's spokesperson for comment.

In 2022, the United States Treasury Department said that over 90% of DRC's gold was being "smuggled to regional states, including Uganda and Rwanda" where they are "refined and exported to international markets, particularly the UAE," and sanctioned a Belgian businessman for

facilitating the trade. For DRC's other valuable

drew outrage last year, and cobalt, the scale of the cobalt and lithium from

for minerals smuggled from subsidiaries of Apple in a n d e x c e e d i n g DRC, but insisted his Belgium and France, internationally accepted due country was not stealing accusing the company of diligence standards for sourcing conflict minerals. primary minerals and "Some people come from Apple denied the recycled materials in our

right channels, they bring as Apple and Microsoft "found no reasonable basis minerals. Most of it goes publish reports saying that for concluding that any of through here (Rwanda) but they demand responsible the smelters or refiners of

everywhere," Kagame said, Securities and Exchange or indirectly financed or recorded as of 16 February, the crisis Public awareness campaigns are without providing evidence Commission in 2023, Apple benefited armed groups in has put immense pressure on health educating communities on preventive or specifying what minerals said that while it continued the DRC or an adjoining to source 3TG (tin, tungsten, country."

n a public address that minerals including coltan other minerals such as DRC and other countries, it Rwanda was a transit point In December, DRC sued was "committed to meeting supply chain." It added that smuggle or go through the Every year, tech giants such its due diligence efforts had does not stay here. It goes to sourcing of minerals from 3TG determined to be in our supply chain as of (and) Russia. It goes In an earlier filing to the US December 31, 2023 directly





#### Ghana struggles to deal with a cholera ou

Tcholera outbreak, with thousands infected and dozens of lives lost.

The bacterial disease initially emerged in the Greater Accra Region, but has now impacted the Central, Western, Ashanti, and Eastern

authorities.

"People have to go to the theatre, and we have to take care of them. Last week, I single-handedly did more than 20 cases alone. I had to step up because my officers were busy in the ward managing cholera cases," said Dr Douglas Amponsah, Medical Superintendent of Winneba Government Hospital.

While the situation remains critical, intensified response efforts, including vaccinations and improved surveillance, are beginning to show the fight against this deadly disease.

results, offering a glimmer of hope in "Despite the worrying situation in the Central regions, new cholera cases are decreasing and the districts of Agona West and Effutu, which were initially

hard-hit, are now showing a decline in new cases," said the Minister for Health, Kwabena Mintah Akandoh. Enhanced surveillance, rapid

Thana is facing a growing diagnosis, and environmental assessments are helping to contain the

> Cholera treatment centres have been set up, and nearly 854,000 people in high-risk areas have received oral vaccines.

The bacterial disease, which is spread through contaminated water and food, With over 6,100 cases and 51 deaths thrives in poor sanitary conditions.

measures, including improved sanitation and hygiene practices.

"We would also do some jingles for their local media houses to play so that it will hammer home the message that we need to be clean to avoid cholera," said Nenyin Ghartey II, Paramount Chief of the Effutu traditional area.

While the declining cases offer a glimmer of hope, experts warn that sustained efforts are needed to prevent future outbreaks.



by Masatsugu Asakawa

### EDITORIAL

## The Sethi incident: Government should share some blames too

t is hardly believable that a huge steel manufacturing company like Sethi Steel Factory would operate in Liberia without license and other requisite operational documents. Sethi also faces concerns over safety issues that its employees have protested against for time in memorial.

The glaring deficiencies came to public attention when an Oxygen explosion at the factory killed an employee on Monday, February 19, 2025, with reports of injuries, though the company says there was no injury besides the death of an employee, Saah Samukai.

Perhaps what is even more disappointing and disgusting about the incident is disclosure by the Environmental Protection Agency that Sethi that enjoys a monopoly on building materials such as steel, zinc, nails and others, has been operating in the country without license.

"This is a serious matter, because a Liberian's life has been taken away, so my team of the EPA has come to observe and find out exactly how the accident took place.

And we have gathered in our preliminary findings a bit of safety concerns; there are several things: some are good and some are bad, and we must take the bad ones very seriously", EPA Executive Director, Dr. Emmanuel Urey Yarkpawolo, told reporters last week.

But how come that the EPA, under the watch of Dr. Emmanuel Urey Yarkpawolo did not know that Sethi Steel Factory has been operating in | the country without license and safety gears for its workforce, most of whom are Liberians, who do the physical labor-intensive aspect of the job.

We are getting to know now that it took Dr. Yarkpawolo and the EPA more than a year since he took office in 2024 to visit Sethi Steel Factor which is less than an hour's drive from central Monrovia to Japan Freeway in Gardersville to know that the company has been operating outside of Liberian law.

"The first thing, when we heard about the accident, our team came immediately and shut down the factory; another thing, we have observed Sethi Ferro has been operating without license, and we are going through the investigation for a stringent action", he added.

The Government of Liberia has reportedly fined the company US\$5,000 and shut it down, for operating without license and standard safety policies. However, it took the death of a fellow Liberian to have Dr. Yarkpawolo and his team at the EPA do their job of proper monitoring and enforcement of required safety regulations.

We wonder how many companies out there across Liberia that are having | their way, violating the laws of the country and endangering public lives, especially Liberians that work in those places just to earn a living at the expense of their lives.

We are hearing that the House of Representatives has summoned the Ministers of Labor, Commerce, Bureau of Concession, Environmental Protection Agency and Serthi Ferro Fabrik Steel Factory to appear before it this Tuesday, 25 February to address the oxygen explosion at the factory that led to the death of an employee.

Plenary took the decision last Thursday, 20 February based on a communication from Rep. Ivar K. Jones of Electoral District 2, Margibi County.

In his communication, Rep. Jones cites Article 8 of the 1986 Constitution, which guarantees just and humane working conditions for all citizens, stressing that the government must ensure that factories operating in Liberia adhere to strict safety standards.

"When people leave their homes in the morning to go to work, their families expect them to return safely. If safety measures are not enforced, and these investors continue to operate without regard for human life, then this is a concern for all of us", he emphasized.

However, it is glaring that both the Legislature and the Executive are paying lip-service when it comes to safety and enforcement of laws on the book, leaving the citizenry vulnerable. The two important branches of government are preoccupied with achieving their selfish desires at the detriment of the people they claim to serve.

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### Meltdown at the Top of the World

world's ice sheets are melting. Climate upstream and downstream. change is accelerating this trend, ice outside of the Arctic and Antarctica.

the global average. If temperatures rise by flood-plain restoration. 3° Celsius above pre-industrial levels by

damage to nearby communities and local agricultural and industrial activities. economies. But it would also fuel food prices to rise.

rains, coupled with excessive snowmelt, than conflict. triggered a debris flow that wiped out without access to water.

afflict the Hindu Kush Himalayas by agriculture in Central and West Asia. 2050.

access to basic sanitation in the region. sustainability-linked bonds. Food insecurity will almost surely worsen as well, while communities and even entire industries will likely need to migrate in search of fresh water. Asia's poorest and most vulnerable populations will be hit the hardest.

The world must take urgent action to avert multi-hazard risk assessment, because the extent of the damage will largely depend on whether global temperatures rise by  $1.5^{\circ}$ ,  $1.8^{\circ}$ ,  $2^{\circ}$ , or  $3^{\circ}$ C. We must also

ANILA - The United Nations strengthen integrated river-basin has declared 2025 to be the management by enhancing data collection, International Year of Glaciers' facilitating knowledge sharing, optimizing Preservation, making it a fitting moment water management, and coordinating to confront the stark reality that the among people and communities living

particularly in the Hindu Kush Himalayas Ensuring that new and existing - a region known as the Earth's Third Pole infrastructure is climate-resilient is because it contains the largest volume of essential for maintaining access to safe drinking water and energy security, as well as sanitation, irrigation, and transport This mountain range, which stretches systems. It is equally important to protect across 3,500 kilometers and spans eight ecosystems and promote nature-based countries, from Afghanistan to Myanmar, solutions such as afforestation, is warming roughly three times faster than reforestation, wetland preservation, and

the end of this century, up to 75% of the Every component of this strategy requires region's glaciers will melt, reducing water more financing. Development institutions availability, undermining food and energy must continue to scale up investment in the security, and exacerbating biodiversity Hindu Kush Himalayas, and to work together to recast this glacial region and its river basins as a global public good, Glacial melt thus threatens irreversible especially given their importance for

instability around the globe by increasing Lastly, the international community must migration, disrupting trade, and causing advance the equitable use of shared glacial resources through cooperation and diplomacy. This would help defuse The 2021 flood disaster in Nepal's potential tensions and promote sustainable Melamchi River offers a glimpse of what development, ensuring that the region's is to come. Unusually heavy monsoon glaciers serve as a force for peace rather

thousands of hectares of agricultural land The Asian Development Bank (of which I and destroyed critical infrastructure, am president) has taken steps to meet some leaving hundreds of thousands of people of these goals. Together with the Green Climate Fund and country partners, ADB recently launched the Glaciers to Farms As the glaciers retreat, there will be too program, which will mobilize \$3.5 billion little water – a problem that is projected to to strengthen climate resilience in

Meanwhile, its Building Adaptation and Dwindling river flows would make it Resilience in the Hindu Kush Himalayasmore difficult to irrigate crops in an area Bhutan and Nepal initiative is helping plan that produces around one-third of the and design climate-resilient infrastructure world's rice and one-quarter of its wheat. and services. And ADB is also piloting new Water-supply and sanitation systems will financing instruments, such as ecobecome difficult to maintain, adding to compensation mechanisms, carbon the one billion people who already lack markets and water trading, and

When UNESCO and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) launched the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation last month, WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo said that it should serve as "a wake-up call to the world." The global community must do everything in its power – from building the disastrous effects of accelerating climate resilience to accelerating the green glacial melt in this region. That means transition and promoting regional deepening our knowledge by investing in cooperation – to ensure a sustainable future for the billions of people who depend on glaciers and their related ecosystems. Failure to act now would have catastrophic consequences for us all.

By Jayati Ghosh

### **Decommodify Electricity**

EW DELHI – The international community has long recognized the urgent need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and shift to renewable energy, and in recent years many governments have pledged to reach net-zero greenhouse-gas emissions, albeit over extremely long timeframes. But they will never get there so long as they treat electricity, which is central to the clean-energy transition, like any other market good.

The green transition is driven by several factors, such as energy intensity, investment flows, consumption patterns, and distribution systems. But its success hinges on humanity's ability to move away from "dirty" fossil fuels toward clean, renewable energy sources, particularly solar and wind. And that requires a profound transformation in how electricity is generated, distributed, and consumed.

Economists and policymakers have long framed the energy transition as a question of relative prices. In recent decades, wind and solar costs have plummeted, driven by technological advances – especially in China, where government interventions have helped scale up green industries and drive down the so-called levelized cost of energy (LCOE). According to this widely used metric for comparing power sources, renewables have consistently outperformed fossil fuels, even before external shocks like the Ukraine war sent oil and gas prices soaring.

In theory, these developments should have expedited the global transition away from fossil fuels. In practice, however, renewable-energy sources merely supplement the total power supply. Meanwhile, both developed and developing countries continue to <u>increase</u> fossilfuel production and invest heavily in exploring new reserves.

The discrepancy cannot be fully explained by market forces or relative prices. Over the years, many have blamed political leaders for the lack of climate progress, especially after climate-change denialists rose to power in countries like the United States and Argentina. But this explanation, too, is incomplete.

As economic geographer Brett Christophers argues in his book The Price is Wrong: Why Capitalism Wont Save the Planet, the real problem lies in the failure to confront two fundamental truths about the limitations of open markets. First, the driving force behind private-sector investment and production is not output prices but relative profitability. Second, the nature of electricity makes it ill-suited to being "governed by the market," inevitably leading to suboptimal outcomes in the absence of massive government intervention.

Electricity, Christophers notes, aligns with economic historian Karl Polanyi's definition of "fictitious commodities." In his seminal work The Great Transformation, Polanyi argued that land, labor, and money were not intended to function within market systems. Unlike conventional goods explicitly produced for trade, the commercialization of fictitious commodities leads to inefficient and unstable market transactions and inevitably results in economic and social distortions.

To operate, these markets rely on extensive public intervention in the form of laws, regulations, social norms, and subsidies – both explicit and implicit. Such interventions create the illusion of a functioning market, even though prices and profits are ultimately shaped by public and social mechanisms.

For much of its existence, Christophers notes, electricity was treated as essential public infrastructure, with its production and distribution operating outside the market. In recent decades, the pursuit of profits has fueled a global push to unbundle and commercialize generation, distribution, and consumption. But, despite the façade of competitive markets, the sector still depends heavily on various forms of state intervention.

Electricity's unique characteristics pose significant challenges for the clean-energy transition. Wind and solar power are inherently intermittent, resulting in fluctuating output and price volatility. Compounding the problem, public subsidies for "green" investments can lead to overcapacity during periods of low demand, while their withdrawal often causes investors to exit the sector.

Moreover, although renewable energy has become cheaper than fossil fuels, the profits it generates are low and unreliable. Christophers vividly describes this self-cannibalizing dynamic, highlighting how it has played out across different economies, from the US and Norway to India.

Instability undermines the "bankability" of green projects, making it harder to secure financing for renewable energy. It should be no surprise, then, that the much-hyped <u>Glasgow Alliance for Net Zero</u>, launched in April 2021 at COP26 and championed by former Bank of England Governor and UN Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance Mark Carney, has already begun to falter after the <u>six largest US banks</u> withdrew from it in quick succession. This was before Donald Trump's return to the White House further disincentivized such investment by issuing an <u>Executive Order</u> that effectively terminates efforts to achieve a Green New Deal in the US.

But the solution is not to subsidize green capitalism by derisking investments, although such measures are unavoidable if renewable energy is to remain viable. Instead, the key is recognizing that electricity is not a commodity. Consequently, we must restructure all aspects of energy production and distribution, encompassing renewables and fossil fuels alike.

Most importantly, achieving true decarbonization requires governments to adopt a more proactive approach. Instead of acting as behind-the-scenes market facilitators, policymakers must take direct responsibility for producing and distributing renewable energy.

Such an approach is far from radical. Before the rise of neoliberalism, governments played a pivotal role in building and managing critical infrastructure, including energy systems. To facilitate the green transition, they must reclaim that responsibility. The expected private-sector profits from renewable-energy generation are simply not sufficient to drive the necessary transformation, despite the urgent global demand. Until policymakers come to terms with this reality, their efforts to accelerate the shift to renewables will continue to fall short.

Jayati Ghosh, Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, is a member of the Club of Rome's Transformational Economics Commission and Co-Chair of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation.

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#### OPINION

By Mariana Mazzucato

### **Resisting Digital Feudalism**

ONDON – This month's AI Action Summit in Paris comes at a critical juncture in the development of artificial intelligence. At issue is not whether Europe can compete with China and the United States in an AI arms race; it is whether Europeans can pioneer a different approach that puts public value at the center of technological development and governance. The task is to move away from digital feudalism, the term I coined back in 2019 to describe the dominant digital platforms' model of rent extraction.

AI is not just another sector. It is a general-purpose technology that will shape all sectors of the economy. That means it could either create tremendous value or cause serious harm. Though many commentators talk about AI as if it was a neutral technology, this understates its fundamental economic power. Even if AI was free to build, it would need to be powered and deployed, which requires access to the gatekeeper's cloud computing platforms – such as Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, and Google Cloud.

This dependency makes steering the technology's development toward the common good more urgent than ever. The real question isn't whether to regulate AI, but how to shape markets for AI innovation. Rather than regulating or taxing the sector only after the fact, we must create a decentralized innovation ecosystem that serves the public good.

The history of technological innovation shows what is at stake. As I argued in my book The Entrepreneurial State, many of the technologies that we use every day came about as a result of collective public investment. What would Google be without the DARPA-funded internet? What would Uber be without US Navy-funded GPS? What would Apple be without CIA-funded touchscreen technology and DARPA-funded Siri?

The companies that have profited from these public investments – while often dodging their tax contributions – are now using their excessive rents to drain talent from the very public institutions that made their success possible. This parasitism is best epitomized by Elon Musk's "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE), which advocates cutting the government funding programs that allowed for Tesla to benefit from \$4.9 billion in government subsidies.

A lack of state capacity will make regulating new technologies in the public interest increasingly difficult. The state has already been depleted of expertise, owing to higher private-sector wages and decades of outsourcing to private consultants (what Rosie Collington and I call The Big Con). What happens when most technical knowledge becomes concentrated in just five private companies? Instead of waiting to find out, we must step in now to regulate AI in a dynamic and adaptable way, while the AI technology stack and various mechanisms of monetization are still evolving. In a recent research project at the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, my colleagues and I took another look at digital feudalism and the need to differentiate between value creation and value extraction in AI – what we call "algorithmic rents." We show that platforms like Facebook and Google have evolved in ways that focus on "attention rents." As users' experience is manipulated to maximize profit, their feeds are crammed with ads and "recommended" addictive content in a process the Canadian journalist Cory Doctorow colorfully described as "enshittification." Infinite scroll, nonstop notifications, and algorithms designed to maximize "engagement" by displaying harmful content and borderline-illegal activities have all become the norm. AI systems could follow the same extractive path and supercharge this rent-seeking behavior, such as by requiring payment for access to essential information, data privacy, online safety, freedom from advertising, or basic listings for one's small business in global information searches. Because platforms currently hide their algorithms and attention-allocation mechanisms (the sources of their "algorithmic attention rents"), the key to regulating the sector, as in addressing climate change, is to force digital gatekeepers to disclose how their algorithms are being used. This information should then be integrated into reporting standards for all digital platforms.

Similarly, AI developers like OpenAI and Anthropic hide, among other things, the sources of their training data; what guardrails they have placed on their models; how they enforce their terms of service; their products' downstream harms (such as addictive use and underage access); and the extent to which their platforms are being used to monetize eyeballs around the world through targeted advertising. Moreover, AI's large and growing environmental impact adds yet another layer of urgency to the challenge. Major AI companies' emissions have surged, leading the International Energy Agency to warn that global "electricity consumption from data centers, AI, and the cryptocurrency sector could double by 2026." Fortunately, recent developments suggest that alternative pathways are possible. DeepSeek, the Chinese AI company that sent many US tech stocks into a brief tailspin in late January, appears to have demonstrated that comparable performance can be achieved with significantly less computing power and energy consumption. Could more efficient approaches to AI development help break the stranglehold that major cloud computing companies have established through their control of vast computing resources? While it is too early to tell whether DeepSeek's breakthrough will lead to a market restructuring, it does remind us that innovation at the software level remains both feasible and necessary for addressing AI's environmental impact.

As UNESCO's <u>Gabriela Ramos</u> and I have argued, AI can enhance our lives in many ways, from improving food production to bolstering resilience against natural disasters. European leaders from <u>Mario Draghi</u> to <u>Ursula von der Leyen</u> and <u>Christine Lagarde regard AI</u> as crucial for reviving European productivity. But unless they address the nature of digital feudalism, the extractive behavior that underpins AI model development, and the current lack of regulatory capacity in the public sector, any attempt to unleash more robust, sustainable growth will crash on the rocks of new and deeper inequalities. One potential path forward is "EuroStack," an independent digital infrastructure initiative that includes cloud computing, advanced chips, AI, and data, all governed as public goods rather than through monopolistic enterprises. This isn't about choosing between innovation and regulation, nor is it about managing technological development from the top down. It is about creating incentives and conditions to steer markets toward delivering the outcomes we want as a society. We must reclaim AI so that it provides public value, rather than becoming another rent-extracting machine. The Paris summit offers an opportunity to showcase this alternative vision.

Mariana Mazzucato is Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value at University College London and author, most recently, of Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism (Penguin Books, 2022).

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#### Remembering Boakai's First Year in Office

n January 18, 2025, President Joseph N. Boakai marked his first year in office, a year that has been fraught with dramas and controversies that will undoubtedly shape the legacy of his presidency.

From allegations of corruption to the burning of the Capitol Building amidst a speakership row, Boakai's administration is entering the second year of his administration with mixed baggage.

From the very onset of his administration, President Boakai has had to contend with numerous allegations of corruption. These accusations have cast a shadow over his leadership, raising questions about the integrity and accountability of his government.

The suspension of tenure officials and apparent disregard for the rule of law have further fuelled these suspicions, leading to widespread public concern.

Just months into office, Boakai's administration announced a deal to procure 285 pieces of earthmoving equipment. This move was reminiscent of the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) EBOMAF deal that ultimately fell short of reality.

The lack of transparency surrounding the funding for the procurement sparked skepticism across the nation. Legislators, opposition figures, civil society organizations, and media outlets have all questioned the government's commitment to transparency and respect for the rule of law.

For the last six years, President Boakai and his Unity Party criticized the former ruling CDC for massive corruption, human rights abuses, and a flagrant violation of the rule of law, and rightfully so.

Now, one year into office, President Boakai appears to be treading similar pathentering deals and committing the country to surreptitious transactions that have left citizens asking more questions than getting answers.

Despite the growing criticisms, some commend the administration's efforts for what they described as full-sightedness in seeking to procure the 285 pieces of equipment to advance road construction and rural development.

Amidst these unfolding events are also the allegations of corruption, which have led to the dismissals of several senior government officials just one year into the UP administration. Ministers have been suspended for purchasing luxurious vehicles and issuing fat checks that benefit them and their cronies.

Last week, President Boakai suspended over 450 officials for failing to declare their assets as required by law. They have suspended for time indefinite till they declare their assets.

All these are unfolding at the time thousands remained jobless, many turning into beggars and unable to pay medical bills and school fees, while the government remained indebted to Ivory Coast for unpaid electricity bills and the domestic debt portfolio remained high.

Meanwhile, one of the most dramatic events of Boakai's first year in office was the burning of the Capitol Building amidst a speakership row. The administration has been accused of playing a major role in the impasse at the Legislature, a standoff that has had far-reaching consequences. The Executive and the Senate have all been engaging with the majority bloc-passing budget and citing officials to appear before it.

Despite a Supreme Court ruling that called for both parties to return to the status quo, adding that decisions taken from both sides in the dispute are ultra vires, the Executive has remained engaged with the majority bloc headed by Rep. Richard Koon, who has described himself as a regime speaker.

With such backing from the Executive, the majority bloc has continued to engage in lawless activities, one of which was breaking into the office of embalmed House Speaker Cllr. Fonati Koffa to remove his belongings in his absence.

On Second Thoughts: As President Joseph N. Boakai moves into his second year in office, the challenges and controversies of his first year will continue to shape his presidency. The allegations of corruption, the contentious earthmoving equipment deal, and the Capitol Building impasse are significant issues that will require careful and decisive action.

At the same time, the administration's desire to embark on road construction and rural development offers a glimmer of hope for positive change. The coming years will be crucial in determining the ultimate success and legacy of Boakai's presidency.



#### **An Effective Legislature Can Reverse** the Powerful Presidency in Liberia

n a republican form of government, power rests with the people who elect their leaders to represent their interests and remove same (leaders) if the people's happiness and safety so require (Liberia Constitution 1985). Even though Liberia is a Republic, the Legislature is dormant, thereby shifting domineering power to the Executive, headed by the President. Historically, the Republic of Liberia did not experience intense presidential dominance from the date of the country's independence until the ascendancy of William V.S. Tubman to the presidency in 1943. Tubman established himself as the "father" of the state and head of all its institutions. This was possible because he was the first President to have brought in and signed several mining concessional agreements with foreign businesses and investors. Tubman accrued enormous wealth from those concessions thus making him the most influential statesman in the country then. The then international and economic system, nepotism and one-party system gave him too much power to rule autocratically. Succeeding presidents to Tubman continued the autocracy of the presidency owing to weak, many a time, inept, inexperienced, and impoverished egislators. Although the presidential cult in Liberia germinated during the Tubman era, egislators themselves are predominantly responsible for the domineering presidency in the State. Many a time, majority of Liberia's legislators are either illiterate or semi-literate, and or ill nformed about public policy making. They often lack thorough understanding of their duties and responsibilities, least to talk about the intricacies occasioning the issue of checks and balances in a republican form of governance, the operation of national government, understanding of the international socioeconomic, political, and diplomatic dynamics and legislative techniques. Sometimes the few literates or "educated" ones come to the legislature as inexperienced and impoverished individuals, thereby making them gullible to financial gains leading to the dollarization of legislative processes through receipt of bribes and huge "lobby fees". These bribes and extravagant lobby fees dictate the enactment of laws against the national interest of the state and the general population. The executive collects revenues, stores and expends them. Hence, gullible, and indigent legislators become subservient to the Head of State who proffers money to woo legislative support in times of making critical political decisions, some of which are against the national interest of the state and its people. The legislators sometimes neglect the use of their constitutional power to approve the scrupulous use of the country's resources during national budget formulation processes. They place emphasis on their amenities and benefits in the national budget as opposed to allocating substantive resources to pertinent national development priorities thereby negatively affecting the state and its people. The Chief Executive, in many instances, uses money and other emoluments to convince them pursue presidential agenda rather than an all-inclusive agenda agreed by all branches of the government and the people. Another factor responsible for presidential dominance is the people's failure to elect competent and well knowledgeable persons to the legislature. Similarly, the public fails in holding legislators accountable. Generally, the elections of lawmakers in Liberia have been influenced by persons, parties, emotions and sometimes tribalism or regionalism, instead of ssues based on public policies and national interest. Furthermore, majority of the citizens do not have access to the correct civic and voter education that would allow them vote for the rightful candidates. This can be blamed on the civil society and the national government. First, the civil society sometimes lacks the will power and resources to adequately educate the citizens on electoral matters. Some civil society agents advocate and gain public recognition that would later lead them to top political positions in which they entrench the very elitism they advocated against. **Equally**, the government deliberately downplays civic and voter education fearing that this would empower citizens to gain insights in the operations, rights and obligations, duties, and responsibilities of government, thereby providing critique of the political system. As a result of the foregoing, constituents blindly elect representatives and senators based either on kinship, campaign finances gained illegally and at the detriment of the very people, fraternity, political parties, and or just on mere popularity, thereby begging the question of who is really fit to serve in

ASISEE IT, a combination of the aforementioned factors results into the formulation of policies that victimize, marginalize, and neglect the rights holders (citizens or electorates). Legislators enact laws that serve the interest of the elites rather than the mass population of the citizens. However, this trend of a powerful presidency can be reversed if legislators become independent in their thought, actions, deeds, and when they are well abreast of their constitutional duties and responsibilities and check the other two branches of government in the true spirit and intent of the Liberian Constitution. Equally, lawmakers need the requisite knowledge and experience to be effective and efficient. They need to have the knowhow to formulating pro-poor policies entrenched by and anchored on Human Rights Principles and Results Based Management If the ment and civil society, as duty bearers, empower the electorates, they may likely elect the appropriate legislators who will enact laws for the common good of the people, be forthright with their duties, and exhibit the independence of the "first branch of government". The constituents themselves need to rise to the call to demand that their representatives do the right things or remove those (legislators) through the ballot box, if they fail to so do.

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.

#### MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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### Bong County: UMC Superintendent ordered arrest of members Bong County: Padmore Foundation donates

2025

Crisis in the United Methodists church deepening as District with two other districts. Superintendent of the Jorquelleh District Conference allegedly has been met with resistance from ordered the arrest of some of their members in Bong.

By: Edwin N. Khakie barnga, Bong County-February 24, 2025/ The District Superintendent of the Jorquelleh District Conference Rev. Anthony Karpee and the Associate Pastor of the Jorquelleh Community United Methodist Church have allegedly ordered the arrest of some of their members for reportedly standing against "regionalization."

The District Superintendent of the Jorquelleh District Conference, Rev. Anthony Karpee, and the Associate Pastor of the Jorquelleh Community United Methodist Church, Rev.

George Gargboh have been accused of ordering the arrests of members Joseph Voker and David T Dolo.

The arrested men have been charged with "disrupting public order" and are currently being held at the Gbarnga Central

According to the two church leaders, the two men are obstructing the work of the church by breaking down the church signboard and, at the same time, beating the Associate

The regionalization plan, which would merge the Jorquelleh

some members who feel that it would negatively impact their local church and community. The arrests have sparked outrage

among church members, with many calling for the immediate release of the detained members. Some have accused the church leaders of using intimidation and force to push their gay or same sex marriage agenda.

In response to the allegations Rev. Karpee and Rev. Gargboh told journalist that they were not in the position to respond to the allegation.

This incident highlights the ongoing tensions within the United Methodist Church in Liberia over the proposed regionalization plan.

While some see the plan as a way to strengthen the church and improve efficiency, others are concerned about the potential impact on local communities and traditions.

The Liberian government has been urged to intervene and ensure the fair treatment of the arrested members and to address the underlying issues within the United Methodists church in Liberia.-Edited By Othello B. Garblah.

## medical supplies to Phebe Hospital

A local humanitarian organization under the canopy "Padmore's Foundation" has donated Medical and non-medical materials to the Phebe Hospital in Gbarnga, Bong County.

By: Edwin N. Khakie

ong County, February 21, 2025---Presenting the medical supplies to the administration of the Phebe Hospital, Victor N. Padmore, Chief Executive Director of the Padmore's Foundation, said the donation is the entity's only way of identifying with the Hospital. Mr. Padmore, a prominent son of

Suakoko District, said he feels disappointed when he sees patients struggling to get medical attention at the hospital.

Patrick Y. Jackson, the hospital's chief financial officer, received

the materials on behalf of the Phebe Hospital and lauded the Padmore Foundation for the donation.

He further called on other wellmeaning citizens of Bong and Liberia at large to emulate the good example of the Padmore's Foundation through its Executive Director, Victor N. Padmore.

Phebe Hospital's Chief Financial Officer guaranteed the Padmore Foundation that the donated materials would be utilized for their intended purpose--Edited by Othello B. Garblah.



### **Gol Donates 2 Vehicles To Phebe Hospital In Bong**

By: Edwin N. Khakie

he Government of Liberia has presented two Nissan pick-ups to the Phebe Hospital in Gbarnga, Bong County.

Bong County-February 24, 2025/ Dr. Minnie Sankawulo Risks, Medical Director of Phebe, who received the donation revealed that sixty thousand United States Dollars was allocated to the hospital through the government of Liberia in its fiscal year 2024 budget for the purchase of vehicles.

The Phebe Hospital Medical Director said the two vehicles and beyond. will be used for utility and administrative purposes at the

hospital in the County.

expressed deep appreciation for the donation, emphasizing its importance to the hospital's ability to provide care to patients in need.

She assured the government that the vehicles would be used to transport staff at the Hospital.

government's contributions through budgetary allocation to the hospital in the county.

its mission to provide healthcare internal medicine.

February 22, 2025, at the healthcare needs of the hospital compound in Suakoko community.

District#5, Bong County.

The Hospital Medical Director For her part, the Minister of Health reiterated the Government's determination to continue supporting health facilities and ensuring the availability of quality healthcare services for all Liberians.

The Phebe Hospital is a referral hospital that serves as a major Dr. Ricks also acknowledged the healthcare center in Bong

It provides a wide range of medical services, including She lauded the government for general surgery, obstetrics and always supporting the hospital in gynecology, pediatrics, and

She made the statement on hospital's ability to cater to the



### linto alleged abuse of 9-vear

The reported abuse of the 9-year-old boy reveals how these manors are often abuse at these sidewalk garages under the guise of training.

By Lincoln G. Peters

he Ministry of Justice has instructed its Child Justice perpetrated by a local garage futile. owner at an unidentified location in Monrovia.

& Public Affairs over the Rights Law of Liberia (2011). weekend said that the Ministry of Meanwhile, Director Kollie is abuse of the child. " The Ministry has instructed its

Child Justice Division to investigate an alleged physical of the Law. abuse of a 9-year-old boy location in Monrovia. The children" he concluded. Ministry mandates its Justice Division to take cease of the matter to swiftly investigate and take appropriate legal actions against the alleged perpetrator"

he stated. According to him, the incident, originally posted by a man identified as Daniel S. Mulbah, showed an adult believed to be

the owner of the said garage sitting on the head of a child

allegedly as punishment for committing wrong.

He added that Mr. Mulbah further Division to investigate an stated in his post that all efforts to alleged physical abuse of a 9- release the child from the hold of year-old boy allegedly the alleged perpetrator proved

Director Kollie further indicated that this action, is condemnable Jutonu Kollie, Director of Press and a gross violation of the Child

Justice notes with grave concern, calling on members of the public to the people of Bong County The addition of the two pick-ups publications by various social to contact the Division of Child will undoubtedly enhance the media blogs, the alleged physical Justice at the Ministry of Justice with any information on the identity of the alleged perpetrator so that he can face the full weight

> " This Ministry emphasizes the allegedly perpetrated by a local importance of collective actions garage owner at an unidentified in protecting vulnerable





#### MORE HEADLINE NEWS

#### MORE HEADLINE NEWS

### Bong County: World Bank Group ends symposium with citizens **Rep. Cole broke ground for**

The World Bank Group consultation is intended to add local input to its new Country Partnership Framework.

By: Edwin N Khakie

he World Bank Group (WBG) has concluded a consultative symposium on the ongoing development of its new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) with the government of Liberia for fiscal years 2025-2030 in Gbarnga, Bong County.

"With roughly five years remaining of Liberia rising 2030. We are committed to partnering with Liberia for accelerated results through a selective program aligned with the government ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID)," Georgia Wallen, World Bank Country Manager revealed.

According to the World Bank Country Manager, the CPF will underpin World Bank Group efforts to foster impact at scale, working closely with the government of President Joseph Nyumah Boakai, development partners, and stakeholders across the private sector and civil society. The World Bank Country Manager

emphasized the draft of Liberia Competition and Learning Reviews (CLR), an assessment done by the Country Partnership Framework for fiscal 2019-2024, and the CPF for 2025-2030.

She said key findings from the CLR included Liberia demonstrating remarkable resilience despite multiple challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and rising global oil and food prices, the economy rebuilding in 2021 with an average real GDP growth of 4.8 percent per year, with continued progress in key sectors such as energy and transport.

Significant progress was observed

in macroeconomic stability, transparency, and accountability in public institutions, along with notable advancement in education and healthcare services.

Wallen said persistent challenges remain in tax revenue mobilization, infrastructure development, and private sector growth.

In addition, limited government capacity in contract monitoring and weak contractor performance were persistent challenges, leading to project delays and inefficiencies.

Madam Wallen further revealed the draft CPF for FY 2025-2030. something she said proposes to focus on improving the quality of life of the Liberian people through inclusive service delivery and inclusive growth and jobsunderpinned by accountable governance.

She said the program would aim to achieve five outcomes, which include reduced learning poverty, enhanced primary education to improve foundational literary and numeracy, and targeting vegetable groups. This includes better teacher training, expanding access to schools, and addressing factors causing dropout rates among girls. Expanded Access to Energy:

Increase electricity access through renewable energy projects, including hydropower and solar, to ensure reliable and affordable energy. Emphasis on private sector participation and institutional strengthening for sustainable energy development.

The discussions took place on the sidelines of an official IALA where meeting, Commissioner/CEO Lighe, Sr also extended gratitude to the Singaporean Maritime and Port Authority for hosting delegates at a

would mark a significant **u** global leader in shipping regulation and safety.-Press

district.

"I promised during my campaign that I will work to improve the lives of my people, and this barge is just one of the many projects we have in store for the district," Rep. Cole said.

He added that the total cost of the project is little over Ten Thousand United States dollar.

According to him the barge will not only benefit the people of Beamah town but also other challenges and boost economic

activities in our district," said one

Barge construction is just one of the many development projects that Rep. Cole has implemented since taking office in 2018. He has also constructed several schools, clinics, and roads in district#3.

The groundbreaking ceremony was attended by government officials, traditional leaders, and other stakeholders in the county.

## ect in

By: Edwin N. Khakie ong County District #3 lawmaker, Representative J. Marvin Cole, over the weekend broked ground for the construction of a barge in Beamah town District #1, Bong County.

The groundbreaking ceremony was held on Saturday, February 22, 2025, with hundreds of residents in attendance to witness the historic occasion.

The construction of the barge is part of Rep. Cole's development agenda for the district, aimed at improving transportation and economic activities for the people of Beamah town.

In his remarks, Rep. Cole said the construction of the barge is a fulfillment of his campaign promise to bring development and improve the living conditions of the people in the

neighboring towns and villages, as it will provide easy access to markets and other economic activities.

The lawmaker also assured the people that the construction of the barge will be transparent and that all procurement processes will be followed to ensure the project is completed on time and to high standards.

The construction of the barge is expected to take six months and will be carried out by an international construction company.

Meanwhile the people of Beamah town expressed their gratitude to Rep. Cole for fulfilling his promise to bring development to their area.

"We are grateful to district #3 lawmaker for this barge, which will ease our transportation



resident.

#### **Commissioner Lighe Pushes for Full Membership At IALA** -Congratulates new SG Zachariae

Georgia Wallen, World Bank Country Manager

Liberia Maritime Authority (LiMA), Cllr. Neto Zarzar Lighe, Sr. has congratulated Francis Zachariae on his reelection as Secretary-General of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), now recognized as an

intergovernmental organization

(IGO).

during IALA's elections held on Thursday, February 20, where 23 Council members, including its Secretary-General, Francis Zachariae were elected. Representing Liberia—the world's largest open ship registry—Commissioner/CEO Lighe, Sr. commended Zachariae's leadership and reaffirmed Liberia's commitment to strengthening its relationship with IALA.

During discussions, Commissioner/CEO Lighe, Sr. expressed Liberia's desire to transition from an associate member to full membership within the organization. Secretary-General Zachariae outlined that achieving this status requires ratification of the IALA

Convention by Liberia's National

ebruary 24, 2025 – The Legislature before the instrument Commissioner/CEO of the is formally deposited with the French government.

> Commissioner/CEO Lighe, Sr. pledged to lobby the Liberian Legislature to expedite the ratification process, ensuring the country secures full membership ahead of the next IALA General Assembly in 2027, which is set to take place in India. "We are going to lobby with the National Legislature to ensure the country's

> Additionally, Commissioner/CEO Lighe, Sr. requested an IALA assessment mission to Liberia, citing the need for an updated review of the country's maritime

infrastructure since the last assessment in 2016. He emphasized that such a mission would help enhance Liberia's domestic navigation safety programs.

formal dinner. milestone in its maritime sector, further reinforcing its position as a

#### Zachariae secured another term quest for IALA full membership is Liberia's full IALA membership GVI rehabilitates roads in Singe and Grand Kru counties

inoe County, Liberia, roads caused by heavy rain. operates palm plantations.

movement of people and goods in season. both counties and several other Despite several interventions

February 21, 2025 - The Besides helping to fulfil its Management of Golden commitment to promote Veroleum Liberia (GVL) begins development and improve major road repair works in Sinoe accessibility for Liberians in the and Grand Kru counties, where it southeast, the move will also help the company recover from losses According to a press release, the incurred due to logistical maintenance of roads aims to ease difficulties during the rainy

areas that have struggled over bad made by the company to ensure



#### Le Ghana, la Côte d'Ivoire et Dubaï, paradis des richesses volées au Liberia dans le processus de rapatriement de ces actifs » autdans le processus de

e Czar chargé de la l'équipe de récupération des biens et récupération des biens

✓ volés du Liberia, Me Edwin K. Martins, a révélé que le Ghana, la Côte d'Ivoire et Dubaï sont devenus des refuges pour les richesses détournées du pays. Cette information a été partagée lors d'un point de presse organisé

de restitution des propriétés (AREPT) a identifié trois zones stratégiques où les avoirs liquides du Liberia ont été déposés et investis: le Ghana, la Côte d'Ivoire et Dubaï», a déclaré Me Martins.

Il a souligné que son équipe collabore étroitement avec les partenaires internationaux pour



par le ministère de appliquer les protocoles et les l'Information, des Affaires culturelles et du Tourisme (MICAT) le jeudi 20 février.

partenaires internationaux, internationales soient respectées

procédures juridiques nécessaires à la restitution des biens volés. « Nous travaillons sans relâche afin « Grâce à l'aide de nos que toutes les normes

rapatriement de ces actifs », a-til ajouté.

Depuis le début de sa mission, l'équipe dirigée par Me Martins a rencontré plusieurs obstacles juridiques, notamment un litige avec une entreprise soupçonnée d'avoir été créée avec des fonds publics détournés. Malgré ces défis, il a réussi à établir des relations solides avec des partenaires basés au Royaume-Uni, au Ghana et au Nigeria pour poursuivre la traque des avoirs libériens dissimulés à l'étranger.

Dans ce cadre, un partenaire britannique est attendu à Monrovia en mars prochain afin de collaborer à l'examen des preuves recueillies et d'aider le gouvernement libérien à poursuivre les responsables du détournement des fonds

Le président Joseph Boakai avait émis en mars 2024 un décret exécutif ordonnant l'identification et la récupération des biens publics volés, ainsi que la poursuite judiciaire des anciens et actuels fonctionnaires ayant acquis illégalement des actifs de l'État.

➤ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

#### Le gouvernement libérien appelle à la prudence budgétaire face aux contraintes fiscales

indéfinie de tous les projets financés par l'USAID, le gouvernement libérien, par l'intermédiaire du ministère des Finances et de la Planification du développement, a émis une directive stricte demandant aux entités gouvernementales de hiérarchiser leurs priorités en cette période de restrictions budgétaires.

Dans une note circulaire publiée ce jeudi 20 février par le ministre des Finances, Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, et adressée aux ministères, ministère a insisté sur la nécessité de prendre en compte la rareté des ressources.

« La rareté des ressources est une réalité, et tous les responsables et cadres supérieurs des entités budgétaires doivent en tenir compte. Il est impératif de hiérarchiser les priorités », a déclaré le ministre.

Le ministre a ordonné aux entités publiques de respecter rigoureusement les budgets approuvés pour l'exercice fiscal 2025 et d'adopter une gestion financière prudente dans un « environnement budgétaire difficile ».

ace à la suspension La note a rappelé aux institutions publiques l'importance d'une gestion efficace de leurs budgets : « Veuillez gérer vos budgets avec soin. Ils sont prévus pour couvrir l'ensemble des 12 mois de l'année 2025. Il est donc fortement déconseillé de les exécuter comme s'il s'agissait d'un budget semestriel ou trimestriel. »

> Le ministre a averti que les entités qui épuiseraient prématurément leurs lignes budgétaires risqueraient de ne pas recevoir de ressources supplémentaires.

La note souligne également que le budget national reste une prévision jusqu'à ce que les recettes soient agences et commissions, le effectivement collectées par l'Autorité des recettes du Liberia (LRA), le ministère des Finances et de la Planification du

développement (MFDP) et d'autres parties prenantes.

Le budget 2025 s'élève à 880,7 millions de dollars américains, marquant une hausse de 19,2 % par rapport au budget révisé de 2024, qui s'établissait à 738,9 millions de dollars. Toutefois, cette augmentation de 141,8 millions de dollars demeure bien inférieure aux demandes budgétaires dépassant les 2 milliards de dollars soumises par les entités publiques lors de l'élaboration du budget.

Depuis le début de l'exercice 2025, le ministère a reçu de nombreuses demandes de fonds supplémentaires émanant des entités publiques pour faire face

CONT'D ON PAGE 9



### Éditorial

#### <u>L'anarchie s'impose au Capitole</u>

Par Daron Acemoglu

a crise qui secoue la Chambre des représentants du Liberia a franchi un nouveau seuil d'escalade avec ✓ l'intrusion violente des députés majoritaires dans les bureaux du président contesté, J. Fonati Koffa. Destitué dans des circonstances controversées, ce dernier a vu son espace de travail investi de force par des élus déterminés à imposer leur autorité, sans aucun mandat judiciaire.

Soutenu par l'Exécutif, le bloc majoritaire a ainsi agi en marge du cadre légal, affichant un mépris flagrant pour l'État de droit et la Constitution. Une telle démarche, indigne de législateurs, remet en cause les principes démocratiques qu'ils sont censés défendre. L'incident survenu lundi marque un précédent préoccupant pour la gouvernance du pays.

Le président de la commission des règles, de l'ordre et de l'administration, James Kolleh, a tenté de justifier cette action en invoquant des demandes répétées adressées à M. Koffa pour qu'il libère les lieux. Toutefois, il a omis de préciser si l'usage de forces de l'ordre armées, en l'absence d'une décision judiciaire, respectait l'État de droit.

Cette intervention survient malgré un récent avis de la Cour suprême du Liberia qualifiant d'ultra vires – donc illégales – les actions menées par les deux camps dans cette lutte pour le contrôle de la Chambre. Pourtant, les députés majoritaires persistent à imposer Richard Nagbe Koon à la tête de l'institution, en violation des procédures établies.

Face à cette situation, J. Fonati Koffa a averti que ses opposants pourraient employer les mêmes méthodes illégales pour l'évincer physiquement de son bureau, comme ils l'ont fait en imposant un nouveau président alors qu'il revendique toujours la légitimité de son mandat.

Ces événements soulèvent de sérieuses inquiétudes quant au respect des principes démocratiques et de l'État de droit au Liberia. De nombreux citoyens s'interrogent : le pays est-il encore gouverné par la loi ou par des ambitions personnelles dictées par la soif de pouvoir?

Le silence de la Cour suprême, qui se distance de cette crise institutionnelle, témoigne de la gravité de la situation. Les députés majoritaires mesurent-ils l'impact de leurs actions sur l'image des institutions?

Au-delà de cette querelle politique, c'est un message dangereux qui est adressé aux générations futures : contourner la loi pour satisfaire des ambitions personnelles serait un mode de gouvernance acceptable. Or, quelles que soient les victoires que certains pensent avoir remportées, une vérité demeure : ce qui est obtenu en dehors du cadre légal ne saurait être considéré comme légitime.

## Advertise with us!

### r'ranç

#### Starts from page 8 Le Ghana, la Côte d'Ivoire et Dubaï, paradis

**FEBRUARY 24** 

Cependant, Me Martins et son équipe sont juridique importante. Après plusieurs mois de désormais pressés par le temps, car le mandat conféré par ce décret exécutif arrive à expiration le mois prochain. Interrogé à ce sujet, Me Martins a reconnu que l'autorisation était limitée à un an mais s'est dit confiant quant à un renouvellement imminent par le président Boakai.

Il a également exhorté les individus convoqués par l'AREPT à coopérer pleinement avec les enquêtes en cours, avertissant que toute absence injustifiée pourrait entraîner des inculpations formelles et des poursuites. « Nous invitons toutes les personnes concernées à respecter la loi et à répondre favorablement aux convocations. Tout refus délibéré de coopérer nous obligera à utiliser les preuves disponibles pour engager des poursuites conformément à la loi », a-t-il précisé. L'AREPT a récemment remporté une victoire

litige avec la société Gracious Ride Incorporated - accusée d'avoir acquis frauduleusement plusieurs véhicules grâce aux fonds publics — la Cour suprême du Liberia a tranché en faveur de l'équipe de récupération des biens le 18 février

Réagissant à cette décision, Me Martins a admis certaines erreurs commises par son équipe lors des premières phases d'enquête, tout en soulignant que de nouvelles mesures plus rigoureuses sont désormais en place pour poursuivre les investigations.

A ce jour, l'AREPT a pu identifier et saisir 17 affaires majeures impliquant le vol de biens publics, l'acquisition frauduleuse de propriétés, la création de fausses entreprises de construction routière et le détournement d'actifs liquides.

#### bérien appelle à la prudence Starts from page 8 LE GOUVERNEMENT

à de nouvelles priorités et pressions budgétaires non prévues initialement.

Le ministère a précisé que « la première source de financement pour toute demande imprévue doit provenir du budget propre de l'entité concernée ». Il a également rappelé qu'un fonds de réserve de 3,26 millions de dollars a été approuvé dans le budget 2025 pour répondre aux dépenses imprévues. Ce montant limité devra couvrir un grand nombre de demandes légitimes au cours de

« Cela signifie que le MFDP, en respectant les lois sur la gestion financière publique et les transferts budgétaires, devra parfois réallouer des crédits budgétaires existants pour répondre aux besoins urgents », a ajouté le ministère.

En conclusion, le ministère a souligné l'importance de la coopération des entités publiques pour assurer une exécution efficace, équitable et impactante du budget national.

#### **Monrovia : La LNP annonce une interdici** temporaire des motos-taxis motards en colère auraient

Monrovia.

Selon la LNP, les conducteurs Il a révélé qu'un véhicule en Tubman Boulevard, ainsi que entraînant la mort du motard. centre-ville de Monrovia.

Cette annonce a été faite jeudi leur mécontentement hier. lors du point de presse L'accident s'est produit à hebdomadaire du ministère de Slipway avant la descente vers l'Information, des Affaires Johnson Street », a expliqué culturelles et du Tourisme Sandor.

a Police nationale Le ministre adjoint à libérienne (LNP) a l'Information pour les Affaires ⊿a n n o n c é u n e publiques, Daniel O. Sandor, a interdiction temporaire de la donné des détails sur cette circulation des motos-taxis restriction, évoquant un dans plusieurs zones clés de tragique accident survenu le 19 février 2025.

de motos-taxis ne sont panne mécanique, descendant désormais plus autorisés à de Crown Hill, avait percuté circuler sur l'axe principal une moto alors que le reliant le carrefour ELWA au conducteur tentait de diriger le carrefour SKD Boulevard via véhicule vers un dépôt voisin, dans les quartiers de Sinkor, « Cet incident a provoqué la

Freeport, Vai Town et le colère des conducteurs de motos-taxis, qui ont manifesté

vandalisé des postes de police et d'autres biens publics le long de Tubman Boulevard, dans le centre de Monrovia et à Freeport, suscitant des inquiétudes quant à la sécurité publique.

En réponse, la LNP a imposé ces restrictions afin d'évaluer le niveau de menace et de vulnérabilité, et de mettre en place des mesures pour rétablir l'ordre.

« Cette mesure vise à analyser la situation et à permettre à la police de rétablir la loi et l'ordre dans le pays », a déclaré Sandor.

Il a également demandé à la population de faire preuve de patience pendant que les autorités s'efforcent de résoudre la crise.

Sandor a conclu en précisant que cette interdiction temporaire n'a pas pour but de pénaliser le public, mais de garantir la sécurité des citoyens.

## 'audit des fonds de l'USA

e Sénat libérien a annoncé qu'il étudiait une demande d'audit de tous les programmes financés par l'USAID dans le pays.

e Sénat libérien examine la demande.

La plénière du Sénat a mandaté sa Commission des comptes publics et d'audit pour analyser en profondeur la requête adressée à la Commission générale d'audit (GAC) visant à auditer l'ensemble des institutions publiques ayant bénéficié de financements de l'USAID. Cette décision fait suite à une communication du sénateur du comté de Montserrado, Saah H. Joseph, adressée le jeudi 20 février 2025 à la présidente pro tempore du Sénat, Nyonblee Karnga Lawrence. Dans sa lettre, le sénateur Joseph a souligné l'importance de la transparence et de la reddition de comptes dans l'utilisation des fonds des donateurs.

Il a reconnu la contribution significative de l'USAID au développement du Liberia, notamment par des appuis financiers et techniques dans les secteurs de la gouvernance, des infrastructures, de l'éducation, de la santé et de l'économie.

Selon le sénateur Joseph, l'audit proposé permettra d'évaluer l'allocation et la distribution des fonds, la conformité aux règlements financiers ainsi que l'efficacité des projets financés. Il estime également que cet audit aidera la Législature à mieux comprendre l'utilisation des ressources et pourrait conduire à une révision du budget 2025 afin de combler les lacunes financières apparues suite à l'annulation des aides américaines par le président Donald Trump.

Le ministre libérien des Finances et de la Planification du développement, Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, a reconnu les impacts directs et indirects de l'arrêt des aides. Il a rappelé que plusieurs organisations internationales soutenues par l'USAID ont réduit leurs



activités, l'USAID étant le deuxième plus grand donateur du Liberia après la Banque mondiale.

Il a précisé que l'USAID avait investi environ 422 millions de dollars entre 2021 et 2029 et que des accords étaient en cours pour débloquer plus de 100 millions de dollars supplémentaires pour l'éducation, la santé, l'agriculture et d'autres secteurs clés avant que l'aide ne soit interrompue.

Interrogé sur les mesures envisagées pour pallier les conséquences de cette suspension, le ministre Ngafuan a déclaré que le gouvernement avait pris acte de la décision des États-Unis. Il a ajouté que son ministère avait finalisé un rapport sur les impacts à court et à long terme, qui sera prochainement soumis au président Boakai et à la 55e législature pour orienter les actions à entreprendre face à ces défis.



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### ARTICLE ARTICLE

## The Masses Are Screaming for a Brighter and Better Future: Let the Second Year Not Resemble the First Year

By: Austin S Fallah-A Son of the Masses/

**MONDAY** 

s the sun rises over Liberia and its capital, Monrovia, its golden rays brush against the faces of those who take to the streets in search of hope, a hope that has long been shrouded in the shadows of suffering and despair. Liberia's resilient and tenacious people have endured a tumultuous history that has left deep scars on their hearts and minds.

These scars are not just remnants of a painful past but are reminders of the struggles generations face seeking solace and a chance for a better life.

As the Boakai-Koung Administration enters its second year, it stands at a crucial juncture to reshape Liberia's narrative and transform the people's cries into a symphony of hope.

The first year of any administration is often filled with great expectations and a desire to effect change.

However, amid the promises and rhetoric, the

lived experiences of many Liberians tell a different story, the one marked by ongoing hardships and unfulfilled aspirations.

Families wait in long lines for necessities, children lack access to quality education, and mothers toil tirelessly to provide for their children, often without proper resources.

The reality is that many Liberians continue to suffer from poverty, unemployment, and inadequate health care, all while harboring dreams for a brighter future that seems increasingly distant.

The hopes of the Liberian people are vast and varied.

In the bustling markets of Duala, Rally Time, Nancy B. Doe, Old Road

Joe Bar, Logan Town, Chicken Soup Factory, Gardnersville, Via Town, Waterside, Gardnersville Supermarket, Paynesville Red Light, etc, vendors display their wares with pride. Yet, their smiles often mask the anxiety accompanying their struggle for survival.

Consider the story of a market seller named Kardu. Each day, she wakes before dawn to prepare her stall, her hands worn but steady as she arranges fresh produce and local goods.

Kardu's dream is simple: to provide her three children with the kind of life she never had, a life free from the constraints of poverty.

But her dreams fade as she faces the reality of dwindling sales and the rising cost of goods.

Kardu is among many who embody Liberia's indomitable spirit, yet she stands at the precipice of despair, screaming silently for support and recognition of her plight.

The Boakai-Koung Administration has a pivotal role in ensuring that the second year does not mirror the first year, which was characterized by unmet promises and diminished expectations.

There is a pressing need for concrete policies and tangible actions to resonate with ordinary Liberians' everyday lives.

Governance in Liberia cannot be merely theoretical; it must be practical and rooted in the social and economic realities of the masses.

The government must step beyond the rhetoric of change and embrace a new approach, one that

involves listening to the people it serves and actively engaging with communities, districts, counties, towns, villages, youths, and young people, women, men, and the elderly to understand their needs.

Education stands as a cornerstone for progress within any society.

Yet, in Liberia, the reality is stark, and many children remain unable to attend school due to various barriers, including financial constraints and lack of infrastructure.

A significant investment in education will yield benefits that extend beyond the classroom.

It will empower Liberia's youths/young people to break the chains of poverty and create a skilled workforce to lead the nation toward sustainable development. This administration's commitment to education must

center on accessibility, quality, and relevance to the needs of the local and global economy.

Imagine a future where classrooms are filled with eager,

Imagine a future where classrooms are filled with eager, bright young minds, teachers are equipped with the resources they need to inspire, and every child knows



they have a chance to realize their full potential.

Health care in Liberia is another critical area demanding urgent attention.

The memories of past health crises linger in the populace's minds, compounded by the current struggles to access quality medical services.

The Boakai-Koung Administration must prioritize establishing accessible healthcare facilities and invest in training healthcare professionals.

Liberians deserve a health care system that is responsive to their needs and respects every individual's dignity.

Envision a nation where people no longer fear how they will afford necessary treatments, where mothers can receive pre-natal and post-natal care without anxiety, and where diseases that once afflicted the population are instead managed effectively.

Moreover, economic reinvigoration is synonymous with restoring hope to a population beaten down by years of volatility.

The workforce must be empowered to participate actively in a growing economy.

This can only happen if the government implements policies that stimulate job creation, promote entrepreneurship, and provide vocational training tailored to Liberians' talents and aspirations.

With the right tools, support, and encouragement, young people like Kardu's children, who dream of becoming doctors and engineers, can open doors to prosperity and transform their lives, communities, districts, counties, towns, and villages.

While government initiatives are crucial in lifting the

masses out of despair, community engagement and collaboration should not be underestimated.

Grassroots movements have incredible power to bring about change, as they are born from the collective voices of those often overlooked. The Boakai-Koung Administration must engage

with local leaders and communities, recognizing that they are the cornerstone of any successful effort to address Liberia's issues.
Listening to their voices, understanding their needs,

and creating partnerships built on mutual respect and trust can pave the way for shared innovation and progress.

Liberia's heart beats in the rhythm of its people, whose dreams and struggles intertwine to create a vibrant yet complex tapestry of life.

In this second year, a national dialogue must ensue, prioritizing the masses' voices over the interests of the few.

It is time for the government to shift its focus from building a legacy to cultivating tangible change in

citizens' lives.

The cries for justice, equity, and hope must shape the priorities of governance, ensuring that no individual is left behind.

Liberia's path to recovery lies in recognizing each citizen's inherent dignity and potential.

As we look forward, we must remember that the journey toward a brighter future will not happen overnight.

Change requires time, patience, and unwavering determination.

However, what is certain is that the people of Liberia will not rest while their dreams remain unfulfilled.

They will continue to advocate for their right to live meaningful lives, free from the burdens of despair and

filled with the potential for greatness.

The Boakai-Koung Administration must heed these calls and embody the change that will see Liberia rise from the ashes of its past into a new era of prosperity and resilience.

The looming question remains.

Will the second year of the Boakai-Koung Administration rise to meet the fervent demands of its people?

The masses are screaming for hope that transcends words and translates into tangible, impactful actions.

The opportunity for change is upon us. The government has a chance to etch a new chapter in Liberia's history that rejects the shadow of previous hardships and embraces the brilliance that a united, empowered populace can achieve.

It is time for Liberia's future to be illuminated with hope, possibility, and love, the same qualities that define its people's spirit.

I am calling on my fellow Liberians at home and abroad, particularly in the United States, Asia, Europe, Canada, and the Netherlands, to join me in calling on the Boakai-Koung Administration to seize this opportunity and ensure that the aspirations of those they serve echo throughout the halls of power as a testament to their commitment to a brighter, more equitable future for all.

#### **Boakai wages war on mushrooming universit**

By Stephen G. Fellajuah

President Joseph Nyuma Boakai over the weekend called for stricter oversight and regulation of universities to ensure quality education in the country.

President Boakai, while speaking at the 3rd Commencement ceremony of

President Boakai's call is a wake-up call for the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for Higher Learning.

institutions as universities should be a thorough process, grounded in clear, well-defined criteria.

The President said, "We must remain steadfast in our commitment to delivering continue contributing to



the Margibi University noted that the rapid increase in substandard institutions can dilute academic standards, produce graduates who are not well-prepared for the job market, and ultimately hinder national development.

His call to action suggests that the Ministry of Education and the National Commission on Higher Education need to take concrete steps to enforce accreditation standards and improve higher education quality.

He emphasized the mushrooming of substandard universities in the country must be addressed head-on by the Ministry of Education and the National Commission on Higher Education because it is unjust and undermines the development of the country. The children of this country deserve the best.

Boakai made the call when he delivered the commencement addressed of the 2025 Graduation Ceremony of the Margibi University, Harbel City, Margibi County, Liberia, on Friday, February 22, 2025. He further emphasized that the quality education that equips our students to lead with excellence."

The Liberian leader also emphasized that technical training and career mentoring are vital motivators for success in the lives of young people. Therefore, Margibi University should continue to engage qualified faculty, trainers, and mentors.

"It is also essential that Margibi University continues to enhance its infrastructure and capacity. This includes an upgraded library, the integration of modern information and communication technologies, and the development of teaching resources that will provide the best learning experience for students,' President Boakai said.

Subsequently, he said that as technology evolves, "we must ensure that our education system is aligned with global standards and prepares students for future challenges", noting that the financial support is equally vital for the long-term sustainability of this institution. In addition, the President seeks the collaboration of local and

accreditation of educational international partners, including corporations such as Firestone and China Union, to ensure that Margibi University remains well-resourced for effective teaching and learning.

"We will support you to Liberia's educational and economic development", he told the gathering.

His emphasis that the nation must continue to invest in and strengthen this institution, suggests as government must do for all higher education institutions across the country, to ensure they maintain and surpass the highest educational standards. This is why everyone must be cautious about the proliferation of institutions claiming university status.

As the third graduating class of Margibi University and the first to graduate since the institution's elevation to university status, explaining that the institution has set a high standard of excellence and accomplished something truly remarkable, and for this, it should be proud.

"Your graduation today is more than a personal achievement; According to him, it is also a milestone in the ongoing development of Margibi University, and indeed, the education system of Liberia. The knowledge and skills you have acquired here are expected to serve as a foundation for your contribution to the public good", he intimated.

Also, he mentioned that the leadership they (graduates) will provide is also important. The world today is marked by uncertainty and transformation, but it is full of possibilities. Earning your degree places you in a unique position to help lead Liberia into a future that is prosperous and just. You are now part of a proud legacy that is Margibi University, he encouraged the students.

#### From Page 7

roads in Grand Kru and Sinoe remain pliable, road damage posed a major challenge during the rainy season.

Poor inland transportation disrupts fuel supply, resulting in higher logistics costs and inability to operate efficiently.

Last year, GVL suffered significant losses due to bad road conditions caused by heavy downpour. The rehabilitation of major roads linking its farm sites to the mill in Tarjuowon and bulking facilities in Greenville is part of GVL's plans to reduce

such losses this year. This includes ongoing efforts to reduce operational costs.

The rehabilitation works will boost the company's operational productivity while bringing relief to commuters from Sinoe, Grand Kru and Maryland Counties who have endured challenges caused by poor road conditions, especially during the rainy season. GVL remains committed to improving the wellbeing of its host communities and employees. Press Release

calls for its cancellation. These incidents underscore a disturbing pattern of unethical conduct, including bribery allegations tied to securing a R600 million (US\$32.6 million) contract with Telkom in 2009.

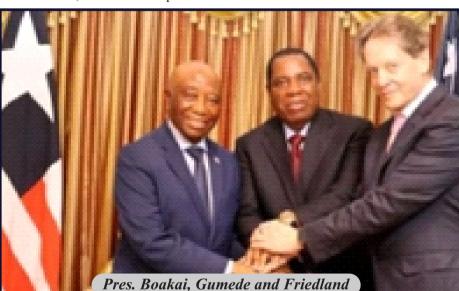
Despite these red flags, Gumede has extended his business interests to Liberia through a partnership with Robert Friedland's Ivanhoe/HPX Group. In February 2024, Gumede's Guma Africa Group formed an alliance with HPX, now Ivanhoe Atlantic, to spearhead the called "Liberty Corridor"

This ambitious rail infrastructure project aims to connect Guinea and Liberia, facilitating the transportation of ore through Liberian ports for shipment. However, there are multiple reports that Guinea has firmly rejected any attempt to transport its ore via Liberia, and the shady manoeuvring with some Liberian Government officials in ignoring certain unexplained aspects of the project has faced opposition from key stakeholders. Furthermore, it has been reported that

exercise extreme caution in engaging with Robert Gumede and his business interests. The ongoing criminal investigations surrounding his business dealings, coupled with his history of unethical practices, pose serious risks to the integrity of Liberia's public procurement processes. Moreover, the association with an individual under investigation for corruption could severely undermine Liberia's reputation as an attractive destination for international investment.

The involvement of HPX and Gumede in the "Liberty Corridor" project presents a unique set of challenges. International investors and financial institutions are acutely sensitive to the risks associated with corruption and the lack of due diligence in selecting business partners. A failure to properly vet potential partners could deter future investment, deter credible financial institutions, and tarnish Liberia's standing in the global business community.

Given the enormous scale of the lofty



Gumede's HPX collaborators have been Liberty Corridor project, which could working closely with Minister of State cost upwards of \$5 billion, there is a Without Portfolio Mamaka Bility, very real risk that funds could be attempting to leverage political misallocated, contracts manipulated, country needs to discuss this influence to push forward the "Liberty and the interests of the Liberian people Corridor" project, despite its highly speculative nature. With an estimated cost of between \$3 billion and \$5 billion, the project initially hoped to secure funding from the United States Government's Countering the People's Republic of China Malign Influence Fund. However, the U.S. Senate Foreign Affairs Committee recently blocked this funding, citing concerns that the project did not align with the fund's strategic objectives.

Notably, despite ongoing investigations into Gumede's alleged involvement in major corruption scandals in South Africa, HPX continues to maintain its partnership with him. This raises significant questions about the company's commitment to ethical business practices and the risks

associated with its ongoing collaboration with Gumede. The Government of Liberia must

compromised for the personal gain of a few powerful individuals. The government must prioritize transparency, governance, and accountability to protect Liberia's assets and safeguard the country's long-term economic prosperity.

If the government is committed to fostering sustainable economic development, it must reassess its relationship with Gumede and HPX. Stringent due diligence measures must be implemented, ensuring that any infrastructure project in Liberia is managed by partners with a proven track record of ethical business practices and financial accountability. Only through a commitment to integrity and transparency can Liberia position itself as a beacon of investment in West Africa.

The partnership between Robert Gumede, the controversial South African business mogul, and HPX Group—now rebranded as Ivanhoe Atlantic—has come under intense scrutiny, with far-reaching implications for Liberia's investment climate.

onrovia-February 24, 2025/ As allegations of institutional corruption and state capture swirl around Gumede, questions arise about the long-term consequences of his involvement in the ambitious "Liberty Corridor" rail infrastructure project, an initiative that was supposed to connect Guinea and Liberia.

During a parliamentary debate on February 10, 2025, Emme Louise Powell, spokesperson for South Africa's Democratic Alliance (DA) on International Relations and Cooperation, leveled serious accusations against Robert Gumede.

Powell linked him to the deaths of 14 South African soldiers killed in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, suggesting that their tragic deaths were part of a broader scheme to safeguard the financial interests of the African National Congress (ANC) and its wealthy benefactors which includes him,

Gumede. "Mining rights and political interests intersect at the crossroads of our soldiers' deaths, and our

matter—loudly," Powell asserted. Gumede's business practices have been under the microscope for years, with multiple investigations linking him to significant corruption scandals in South Africa. In 2024, the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) identified him as a key player in the controversial R600 million (US\$32.6 million) personal protective equipment (PPE) contract, awarded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SIU alleged that Gumede's company, Guma Group, had inflated costs and violated procurement regulations. Similarly, Gumede's involvement in a R360 million (US\$19.5 million) IT tender awarded to his company, GijimaAST, was flagged as irregular, prompting



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## **EME to hold first National Convention in Saclepea**

imba County confirmed that the Proposed convention, CMC will County Convention Committee of the Citizen Movement for Change (CMC) is pleased to announce that the (CMC) will be holding its first

Saclepea, Nimba Citizen Movement for Change (CMC) has met the preliminary requirements regarding the registration of political parties, alliances, and coalitions in Liberia.

As outlined in Section 7 of National Convention from the Regulations and

adopt its constitution and by-laws, laying the groundwork for its official recognition as a political party. Delegates from across Liberia, including party leaders, grassroots representatives, and stakeholders, will gather to chart the future of the movement and reaffirm its commitment to positive change and national development.

The Citizen Movement for Change is dedicated to fostering good governance, accountability, and inclusive development in Liberia. This convention presents a crucial opportunity for CMC to solidify its vision and strategies in preparation for full political engagement.

Further details regarding the convention's agenda, speakers, and special guests will be shared in the coming week. The CMC leadership extends an open invitation to all members, supporters, participate in this landmark event.



County.

party's journey toward formal political participation in Liberia.

February 31 to March 1, Procedures Relating to the 2025, in Saclepea, Nimba Registration of Political Parties, Alliances, Coalitions, This milestone event marks and Independent Candidates, a significant step in the the NEC has granted authorization for the organizing committee to convene the movement's first and wellwishers to The National Elections national convention.

Commission (NEC) has During this historic







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