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DATE	BUYING	SELLING
THURSDAY, MARCH 06, 2025	L\$197.8433/US\$1.00	L\$199.6090/US\$1.00

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

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Tweah, others hope on S/Court

P11

-As parties failed to select jurors

HPX deal gets more complex

P7

HPX

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Continental News

Guinea-Bissau's president Embalo to seek second

By Basillioh Rukanga

Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embalo said he will run for a second term in November, amid tensions with an opposition that refuses to recognize him as the country's current president. Meanwhile, a delegation from the West African regional bloc ECOWAS that had been sent to Guinea-Bissau in hopes of resolving the country's political crisis departed Monday after what they said were threats of expulsion from Embalo. Embalo, who dissolved the opposition-dominated parliament in late 2023,

told reporters he would run again Monday at the airport in the capital Bissau following his trip to Russia, Azerbaijan and Hungary. "I will be a candidate for my own succession," Embalo said. Guinea-Bissau's constitution sets the presidential term at five years, renewable once, and Embalo would be running for an allowed second term. But the details of his first term are complicated, and the opposition argues that his first term already has ended. Embalo's announcement risks escalating tensions in the small West African nation, which has endured multiple coups since gaining

independence from Portugal over 50 years ago. Embalo won an election on Nov. 24, 2019 and was sworn in as president on Feb. 27, 2020, but the opposition contested the result and the Supreme Court did not recognize his victory until Sept. 4. The opposition says Embalo's term should have ended on Feb. 27 of this year, but the Supreme Court has ruled that it should run until Sept. 4. Embalo has set the election date for Nov. 30 and says that he should stay in office until then, but the opposition has refused since last week to recognize him as president. Opposition leaders have warned they will plan mass protests and strikes, but were waiting to see if the ECOWAS mission was successful. Embalo says he has survived two attempts to overthrow him in the last three years. After the most recent one in December 2023, which involved a shootout between the national and presidential guard, he dissolved the opposition-controlled parliament, accusing it of passivity. Last week, Embalo met with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss potential economic and security ties as Russia has emerged as the security partner of choice for a growing number of African governments, displacing traditional allies such as France and the United States.



Guinea Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embalo, poses for a photo, prior to the start of the ECOWAS meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, Sunday, Dec 15, 2024

Chaos erupts at rebel rally in eastern Congo, casualties reported

Gunfire and explosions sent crowds fleeing in panic as a mass rally led by rebel leader Corneille Nangaa descended into chaos in the eastern city of Bukavu on Thursday. Residents reported seeing multiple casualties as people ran through the streets, some bleeding and carrying limp bodies. Video footage from the scene showed the aftermath of the violence, though the exact number of casualties remains unclear. Speaking to Reuters by phone, Nangaa accused Congolese President Félix Tshisekedi of ordering the attack but provided no evidence to support his claim. The government has yet to issue a statement on the incident. Nangaa himself was unharmed, and other senior members of the M23 rebel group, which has been battling the Congolese army and capturing territory in the east since early 2024, were also reported safe. In his speech before the violence broke out, Nangaa had assured a crowd of thousands that M23 was in Bukavu to restore security.

"There will be special units and patrols that will take place in all the communes," he declared. M23 has controlled the city since February 16 and has attempted to assert its authority by reopening schools and ports. The gunfire erupted at the end of the rally, with a resident describing a scene of indiscriminate shooting. "There was shooting in all directions. We don't know what happened. There are injured people, dead people—I don't know," the resident said. M23's latest offensive marks the most significant escalation in

over a decade of eastern Congo's long-running conflict, which is deeply rooted in the aftermath of Rwanda's 1994 genocide and the battle for control over Congo's vast mineral wealth. The conflict has drawn international concern, with Congo, the United Nations, and Western powers accusing Rwanda of backing M23—a charge Kigali denies. Rwanda, in turn, claims it is acting in self-defense against a Hutu militia allegedly fighting alongside Congolese forces. As tensions rise, fears of a broader regional war continue to mount.

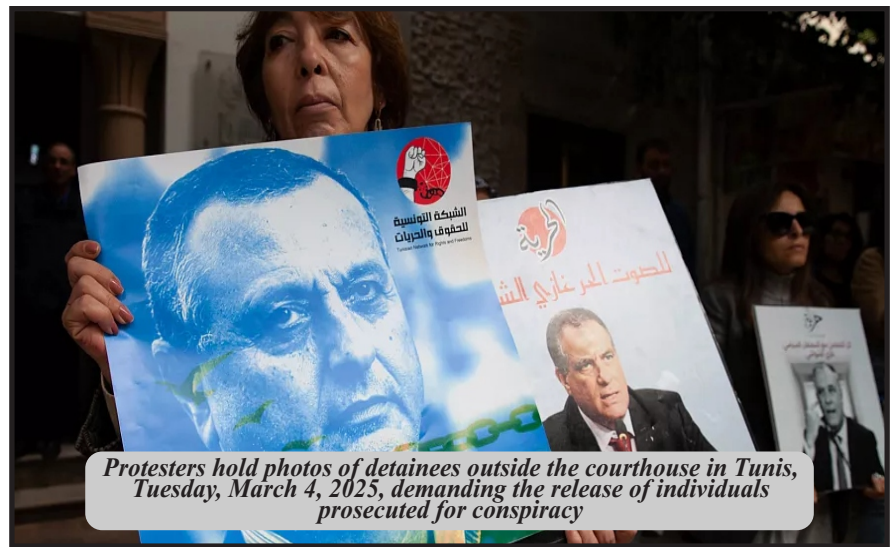


Eastern city of Bukavu

Trial of 40 opposition figures in Tunisia sparks tensions and divisions

A trial of 40 prominent opposition figures, including politicians, lawyers, media personalities, and business leaders accused of conspiring against state security, began on Tuesday in Tunisia. Proceedings at the Tunis Primary Court began with nine detained defendants absent, as the judges opted for remote sessions. It's a move defense lawyers and activists decried as a breach of fair trial standards. Only those released on bail attended in person, while families of the detained and protesters outside the courthouse demanded transparency and the physical presence of all accused. Security was tightened around the courthouse as lawyers,

trial extends beyond Tunisia's borders. International human rights organizations have condemned the mass prosecution, arguing that it is part of a broader pattern of repression targeting dissenting voices. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have both released statements criticizing the government's use of security laws to silence political opponents. The trial unfolds amid escalating tensions between Saied's government and opposition factions, which accuse him of authoritarian drift. Since 2021, dozens of critics have faced arrest under broadly defined security laws. Saied's supporters argue the crackdown is necessary to stabilize a nation grappling with inflation, unemployment, and corruption. In recent months, Tunisia has faced growing economic hardship, with



Protesters hold photos of detainees outside the courthouse in Tunis, Tuesday, March 4, 2025, demanding the release of individuals prosecuted for conspiracy

politicians, and journalists packed the courtroom. Outside, tensions flared as protesters chanted, "Freedom, Freedom and No to Judiciary by Instructions." Lamia Farhani, Member of the Defense Committee for the Detainees: "The greatest irony is that at the helm of power sits a president, a constitutional law expert, who casually violates the very laws he swore to uphold. This hypocrisy will ultimately vindicate the detainees." The trial has deepened divisions in Tunisia. Among the protesters was Ahlem, a citizen who told the Associated Press: "I came to stand with those detained for their opinions, those kidnapped and held beyond legal procedures and timelines. We reject this farce of a trial that bars the accused from facing their judges directly to defend themselves." But not all Tunisians oppose the crackdown. Mohamed, a fish vendor in Tunis, blamed the defendants for the country's economic collapse: "I hope they get life sentences. They ruined us. Twenty dinars used to fill our baskets; now 100 dinars aren't enough. Half the nation is jobless. They lied, stole, and fled." His remarks underscored the economic despair fuelling support for Saied's anti-corruption drive among some working-class citizens. The controversy surrounding the

inflation soaring and access to basic goods becoming increasingly difficult for many citizens. The government has sought financial aid from international lenders, but negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) remain stalled due to concerns over structural reforms and political instability. As the trial progresses, analysts warn that the outcome could have lasting implications for Tunisia's democratic trajectory. The country, once hailed as the lone success story of the Arab Spring, has seen a steady erosion of democratic norms since Saied's 2021 power grab, when he suspended parliament and ruled by decree. Ahead of the trial, the UN rights office urged Tunisian authorities to "halt all persecution of political opponents" and uphold freedoms of expression and assembly. Local human rights organizations echoed these concerns, warning that the trial's opacity could accelerate Tunisia's democratic backsliding. The court is expected to hold periodic sessions in the coming weeks, with verdicts likely to reverberate across Tunisia's fractured political landscape. For now, the absence of detained defendants and the remote proceedings have cast a shadow over claims of judicial impartiality, fuelling fears of politicized justice. Despite the uncertainty, the opposition remains defiant. Activists and political figures continue to call for the release of detainees, while protests in support of the accused are expected to persist in the coming weeks.

EDITORIAL

The Sethi incident: Government should share some blames too

It 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.

COMMENTARY

by Kenneth Rogoff

What Trump 2.0 Means for Africa and Latin America

CAMBRIDGE – While global attention is focused on US President Donald Trump's policies toward Europe, China, and Russia, his impact on Africa and Latin America could be just as profound. My forthcoming book, *Our Dollar, Your Problem*, will likely resonate with emerging and developing economies, for which US policy has long been an inescapable force beyond their control.

In the book, I examine the dollar's extraordinary postwar run and what its current strength tells us about the future of global finance. In the near term, calculated chaos seems inevitable. But while the effects of today's strong dollar remain uncertain, the fallout from Trump's policies – especially his retreat from America's foreign-aid commitments – is immediate and far-reaching, with aid-dependent countries already feeling the strain.

Africa has been hit particularly hard. Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) czar Elon Musk's first target was the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which has served as the cornerstone of US foreign aid since the early 1960s. As one of the largest funders of global health initiatives – from anti-malarial drugs to AIDS treatments – USAID has played an indispensable role in improving public health across the developing world.

Although USAID programs are not without flaws, the agency's \$40 billion budget – less than 1% of federal spending – has provided a cost-effective way to help the world's poor and advance US interests. The abrupt and unexpected funding cuts to hospitals and aid projects are not only cruel and reckless but also undermine America's credibility, especially among African countries.

The decision to shut down USAID rather than overhaul its funding priorities makes little sense. Trump has justified his push to cut off aid to South Africa by citing alleged anti-white bias in land confiscations, echoing Musk's claim that the country has enacted “racist ownership laws.” While South African governance has long been a mess, it's hard to see how abruptly cutting targeted aid to the world's most vulnerable populations will lead to meaningful improvements.

If the US were the only country cutting its foreign-aid programs, things would be bad enough. But Trump's insistence that Europe starts paying for its own defense – an entirely reasonable demand – will almost certainly push European governments to redirect funds away from foreign aid to protect their generous welfare systems. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has already announced aid cuts to boost defense spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027.

There is little doubt that China will rush to fill the vacuum. Despite its own economic problems, China remains deeply

committed to expanding its access to Africa's vast natural resources. In fact, its ongoing economic slowdown will probably drive the Chinese government to gain an even stronger foothold on the continent.

The outlook for Latin America is somewhat brighter. Admittedly, the Trump administration's policy toward the region has been erratic at best. In addition to attempting to re-establish US control over the Panama Canal and telling Mexico that the US is not bound by the free-trade agreement he himself negotiated during his first term, Trump's global tariff war poses a significant threat to Latin American economies.

But there is a silver lining, as Trump's return to the White House may signal a broader global shift to the right. While the necessity of such a change in developed economies is debatable, it is long overdue in Latin America. The region's largest economies – Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina – have served as a playground for left-wing economists for much of the twenty-first century, particularly in recent years. The results have been disastrous. Latin America's chronic failure to generate sustained economic growth over the past four decades has severely constrained governments' ability to provide basic education and health care, let alone more ambitious goals like guaranteed income.

Brazil is a prime example. During his first presidency (2003-11), Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva benefited from a commodity boom and pursued relatively conservative macroeconomic policies. But in his current term, his administration has struggled to rein in public spending and control inflation. Lula has also repeatedly clashed with Brazil's central bank over its interest-rate hikes, even as the country's currency fell to record lows.

Argentina is a rare bright spot. Since taking office in December 2023, libertarian President Javier Milei has managed to lower inflation from 211.4% to 84.5%, with some private forecasts suggesting an annual inflation rate as low as 23% in 2025. He has also stabilized the economy after a brief period of austerity, reduced the size of the government, and eliminated the budget deficit – something even previous conservative governments failed to achieve. Milei's early success offers real hope that Argentina may finally break free from its cycle of economic mismanagement.

While many American progressives bristle at Milei's close relationship with Trump, their alliance is understandably celebrated in Argentina. After all, when has a US president – and a significant portion of the American electorate – expressed such admiration for a Latin American leader? US backing could bolster Milei's regional standing, potentially catalyzing a broader shift away from Latin America's failed socialist experiments and ushering in an era of greater economic stability.

OP-ED

by Jean-Michel Blanquer

The World Must Rally Around Algeria's Hunger Artist

PARIS – In an age when freedom of expression is increasingly under threat, exemplary voices such as Boualem Sansal are needed more than ever. The 75-year-old Algerian novelist and essayist, who published his first book in 1999 and became a French citizen in early 2024, has long criticized authoritarianism and defended liberal values, speaking truth to power with a clarity that unnerves despots and inspires democrats. Today, Sansal urgently requires not only our attention, but also our solidarity.

On November 16, Algerian authorities arrested Sansal at Algiers airport on unfounded charges. Since then, the cancer-stricken writer has been isolated from the outside world and denied proper medical care – a violation of a fundamental human right. This arbitrary arrest is a calculated attempt to silence an individual who has consistently spoken out against Algeria's autocratic and corrupt regime.

While some prominent authors and European politicians have come to Sansal's defense, his unjust detention has largely met with indifference. In mid-December, an Algerian appeals court rejected a request for his release. This led Sansal to take desperate measures: in late February, he began a hunger strike, the ultimate act of resistance for those whom powerful governments seek to erase. It is above all an appeal to the world to recognize his plight. Each day that passes without action brings him closer to irreversible harm.

This is not merely a personal tragedy. Sansal is as much a moral guide as a writer. Since the publication of his first novel, *Le serment des barbares* (The Barbarians' Oath), he has consistently challenged the political stagnation and religious extremism that has plagued Algeria in recent decades. His 2015 dystopian masterpiece, *2084: The End of the World*, warned of creeping authoritarianism under the guise of ideological purity – a warning that has proved prescient in an era of besieged democracy.

Despite being censored, threatened, and ostracized, Sansal's commitment to the truth has never wavered. His words resonate far beyond Algeria and France because they touch on universal principles: the right to speak without fear, to question authority, and to envision a freer world. And his struggle represents more than a diplomatic spat between two countries. It is emblematic of a broader global fight for intellectual freedom and democratic ideals.

Individual acts of defiance throughout history have come to symbolize larger struggles for liberty. Émile Zola's famous open letter “J'Accuse” exposed the injustice of the Dreyfus Affair. Václav Havel's Charter 77, a human-rights manifesto co-written with other Czech dissidents, became a lodestar for democratic resistance in Eastern Europe. Sansal follows in this tradition. His hunger strike is a reminder that silence in the face of oppression makes us complicity.

The international community must not remain indifferent. While Sansal's dual nationality has highlighted – and intensified – tensions between France and Algeria, his detention is a test of our collective commitment to human rights and liberal values. More cultural and intellectual institutions and figures – especially writers and journalists – and civil-society organizations must speak out. Governments that claim to care about human freedom and dignity must use their influence to demand Sansal's immediate release and access to appropriate medical care.

Supporting Sansal demands action: diplomatic channels must be mobilized, petitions signed, and public campaigns launched. Expressions of concern are not enough. We must stand up for a man whose fate embodies the global fight for free expression. To protect the democratic ideals that Sansal has consistently upheld requires challenging the authoritarian practice of silencing dissent through arbitrary detention and deliberate neglect and mistreatment.

Time is running out for Sansal. Abandoning this courageous writer would be another blow to the principles that underpin open societies. It would not be the first time that the world has rallied behind an individual for their acts of defiance against an oppressive regime. In that sense, Sansal would join a long lineage of resistance, from Nelson Mandela to Liu Xiaobo. But we must defend his life and dignity before it is too late.

OPINION

by Nilima Gulrajani

Making a Better Case for Foreign Aid

LONDON – Foreign aid is being slashed across the Global North, nowhere more so than in the United States. Within his first month back in the White House, President Donald Trump dismantled the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and froze foreign aid, calling it wasteful and fraudulent. The United Kingdom recently followed suit, trading off its international-aid budget for higher defense spending. Advocates of official development assistance (ODA) rightly argue that it saves lives and serves national interests. But that does not change the fact that the system has been hemorrhaging credibility and resources for years and lacks a convincing narrative.

The upcoming United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, set for mid-2025 in Seville, Spain, will likely reiterate the long-held but rarely met target for high-income countries to spend 0.7% of their gross national income on ODA. What is really needed, however, is an independent commission on the future of the international aid system that can forge a new political consensus on the rationales for foreign aid, while also articulating a vision for the post-aid world many are now demanding. Without an effort to recalibrate and reset foreign aid, the system will face death by a thousand cuts. Its ambition of catalyzing sustainable development will be left unrealized, and an eighty-year international cooperation regime will likely collapse with no robust alternative in its place.

The modern global aid regime has looked brittle since the 2008 financial crisis. But America's withdrawal is a massive blow to a system whose purpose is laid out in Article 55 of the UN Charter: “the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations.” The US was the foremost champion of these goals: in his 1949 inaugural address, President Harry Truman called for a “bold new program” for sending technology and capital to help nations afflicted by poverty, disease, and misery.

By the 1950s, America was actively promoting foreign aid as a universal obligation, both to avoid shouldering the financial burden alone and to find common cause with anti-communist allies. That led, in 1961, to then-US President John F. Kennedy creating USAID. A decade later, nearly all European countries had some kind of aid program, and being a donor had become synonymous with being a modern, “developed” country.

Even so, spending flagged almost immediately. To reboot donor support, in 1968, the World Bank invited former Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to lead an independent commission tasked with finding a new rationale for foreign aid. In other words, the Pearson Commission sought a persuasive argument for why affluent countries beset by domestic challenges should be concerned about the plight of low-income countries.

The question remains relevant today. Even before Trump set his sights on US foreign aid, the rationale for such assistance had become increasingly tenuous. In recent years, Global North countries have directed their aid budgets toward a range of foreign-policy priorities, many of which follow the letter but not the spirit of ODA, as defined by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. This includes directing development assistance to Ukraine, a middle-income country which in 2023 became the largest-ever recipient of foreign aid, while the share of aid reaching the poorest countries had declined, and hosting refugees at home, which now consumes at least one-quarter of the aid budget in seven countries. With other public-policy priorities gobbling up resources earmarked for development assistance, the OECD's claim that a record amount of foreign aid was spent by donors in 2023 rings hollow.

Meanwhile, foreign aid has become an easy target in high-income countries that face growing fiscal deficits, cost-of-living crises, and new security concerns. Right-leaning governments, in particular, often portray this foreign assistance as inefficient and ineffective. In 2024, seven national governments and the European Union announced \$17.2 billion in cuts to ODA to be implemented sometime between 2025 and 2029. Now, the Trump administration has slashed some \$60 billion in foreign assistance, while the UK will shrink its aid budget by roughly £6 billion (\$7.6 billion) per year. Given that the world's second-largest donor, Germany, spent \$27 billion less than the US on foreign aid last year, it will be difficult for any country to fill such a large gap. And the UK's decision suggests that there is little interest in picking up the pieces left by Trump's wrecking ball, likely leaving us at the tipping point of “peak aid.”

Many have suggested using this foreign-aid crisis as an opportunity to reduce African dependency on politicized external finance through changes to global trading rules and by lowering the cost of capital, or by building a new cooperation paradigm focused on global public investment.

Yet in his drive to “Make America Great Again,” Trump has shown no desire to advance such alternative visions and little understanding of the value of the soft power that USAID spent decades trying to cultivate. This is why the elimination of USAID cannot be described as a normal merger between the diplomatic and development branches of government, as in Canada or the UK, but only as an attack on America's role as global benefactor. This offensive comes with few domestic political consequences but with a high immediate human cost for those reliant on aid-funded goods and services.

America's abrupt inward turn underscores the need to reimagine a global aid system built for a world order that no longer exists. One way to do this is to commission an independent, high-level review of the global aid regime that can articulate a new paradigm that does not rely on the benevolence of any single donor. A Pearson Commission 2.0 could outline several new rationales for international transfers, present alternative financial and policy frameworks, and explore new global institutional arrangements to minimize aid dependency and reduce fragmentation, while still providing for the most vulnerable and helping future generations prosper.

As these massive aid cuts take effect, the risk of contagion is real. Unless the international community undertakes a systematic effort to understand the root causes of the current crisis and explore plausible solutions, countries still investing in ODA may start to worry that they are just rearranging the deck chairs on a sinking aid ship.

FEATURE

ARTICLE

Liberia's 2025 Budget and the Dance of the Traditional Devil

By Seltue Karweaye Sr.

Traditional devil performances in Liberia are known for their distinctive and vibrant characteristics. The dancers fluidly move back and forth, leap exuberantly up and down, and create an enchanting yet chaotic atmosphere that captivates onlookers. These lively displays are rich in cultural significance, often blending storytelling, folklore, and community engagement. However, once the performances conclude, not much has changed, as both the dancers and the spectators understand one fundamental truth: it is all just drama.

If there is a metaphor that aptly captures the challenges surrounding Liberia's budget this year, it might be likened to the intricate dance of the traditional devil—navigating between the Presidency and the National Legislature, yet falling short in providing meaningful policies and programs aimed at job creation, economic stimulation, and poverty reduction. The Liberian public, who are left as little more than bewildered spectators, are confronted with a hefty budget of about US\$880.66 million for these meaningless efforts that yield no real benefit.

On November 18, 2024, Liberians breathed a sigh of relief as President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr. submitted the Fiscal Year 2025 Draft National Budget to the National Legislature. The proposed budget totals an ambitious \$851.8 million, reflecting a 15.3% increase over the 2024 Recast Budget of \$738.9 million.

Just days after the president's submission, the Majority bloc of the House of Representatives and the Senate approved the total expenditures of \$880.66 million, marking it the highest budget in Liberia's history. This budget includes the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), among other provisions.

On Thursday, February 20, the approved 2025 National Budget was officially published by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, one month after its approval. In our analysis of the budget, we must critically evaluate whether it, like its predecessors, takes meaningful steps to revitalize Liberia's struggling economy and set it on a trajectory of growth and sustainable development. What concrete provisions does it offer to the millions of unemployed Liberians who are grappling with hopelessness for a brighter future? How does it plan to uplift the 51% of our fellow citizens—approximately 2.3 million individuals—who are trapped in the depths of absolute poverty?

The approved budget for 2025 projects has a total expenditure of approximately US\$880.66 million. Within this budget, recurrent expenditures are earmarked at US\$773.95 million, which represents around 87.9% of the entire budget allocation. This recurrent expenditure encompasses a variety of costs, including debt servicing that totals US\$153 million (17.4% of the overall budget), high salaries and substantial benefits for public officials, as well as significant expenditures on fuel, extravagant foreign travel, luxury vehicles, entertainment, meals, home generators, and daily subsistence allowances (DSA). In addition, there are allocations for furniture allowances, scratch cards, foreign medical care, housing allowances, and private jet travel, along with expenses related to consultancies, workshops, and constituency visits.

On the other hand, capital expenditures are projected at approximately US\$106.72 million, accounting for just 12.9% of the overall budget. This limited allocation indicates a worrying trend: a reduced investment in vital infrastructure projects and essential services such as road construction, bridge repairs, educational improvements, healthcare enhancement, and electricity

provision.

For instance, despite the persistent claims that the cost of governance is on the decline, one would expect to see figures more in line with the internationally accepted standard of 25% for recurrent expenditure. Instead, the recurrent budget shockingly stands at approximately 87.9%, a staggering amount that is over six times greater than the allocations for capital expenditure. Even more concerning, the 2025 recurrent figures indicate a troubling trend, with an increase of 15.3% (US\$102.52 million) compared to 2024, contradicting any notions of fiscal restraint.

To gain a clearer perspective on the outcomes of the 2024 budget, it is important to thoughtfully assess its performance, particularly given that the economic team remains unchanged. While there were many hopes for improved timelines, it appears that the execution of the 2025 budget may encounter a similar delayed start as experienced with the 2024 budget. The implementation process for the 2024 budget has been marked by several challenges; by the mid-year report, the finance ministry indicated that only 43.5% of the budget had been executed. Furthermore, the absence of a comprehensive review of the 2024 budget's performance over all four quarters raises important considerations regarding accountability and transparency in our governance.

After reviewing the picture above, it is clear that, without



significant government action, the implementation of the 2025 capital budget is likely to mirror that of 2024, leading to a continued expansion of the nation's infrastructure deficit. It is crucial to establish checks and balances to ensure that Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) effectively utilize the capital funds allocated to them. One would hope that the anticipated Presidential Directive regarding the New National Performance Management and Compliance System will play a pivotal role in strengthening these processes and fostering accountability.

An in-depth analysis of key ministries has uncovered a concerning budget structure. The health sector is allocated \$81.8 million, which constitutes approximately 10.4% of the overall national budget. Alarmingly, this entire sum is earmarked for recurrent expenditure, leaving little room for essential health initiatives. The recent decision by President Donald Trump to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization significantly endangers funding for crucial global health programs, particularly those targeting HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in regions like Liberia.

Public health in Liberia is grappling with severe challenges, including the persistent threats of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Malaria is especially distressing, with around 1.9 million cases reported in 2021. This resulted in an incidence rate of 358.5 cases per 1,000 inhabitants and nearly 3,548 deaths that year. The Malaria Indicator Survey of 2022 indicates that the prevalence of malaria among children under the age of five is a startling 10%. The HIV epidemic is equally alarming; prevalence rates among individuals aged 15 to 49 vary between 1.5% and 2.1%. In 2021 alone, there were 1,100 reported deaths related to HIV/AIDS, and the disease left approximately 35,000 children between the ages of 0 and 17

orphaned. Given these critical health issues, one must question how a progressive government can justify allocating a mere 10.4% of the budget to bolster the health sector.

In the realm of education, \$119.72 million has been designated, which represents 13.6% of the national budget. Unfortunately, as with health, a considerable portion of this budget is mismanaged, with the entirety consumed by recurrent expenditures, such as salaries and operational costs, rather than being invested in infrastructure or educational resources. According to UNICEF, an alarming 20% of children of primary school age (6-14 years) are not attending school. Furthermore, only about 48.3% of Liberia's population aged 15 and older can read and write. This lack of funding has dire consequences, as it limits the ability to recruit qualified teachers, construct new schools, and ultimately improve literacy rates across the country. Without a significant reallocation of resources, the future of education in Liberia remains precarious.

The agriculture sector has received an allocation of approximately US\$16.75 million, representing merely 1.9% of the overall budget. This level of funding is insufficient to implement the targeted interventions necessary to revitalize a sector that once served as a vital source of employment for many Liberians but now provides jobs for only about 40% of the workforce.

To truly enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability, it is essential to invest in several key areas. This includes the acquisition of high-quality seedlings that are resilient to climate impacts, the provision of effective agrochemicals to protect crops from pests and diseases, and the availability of fertilizers to improve soil fertility.

Additionally, expanding extension services will ensure that farmers receive the training and support they need to adopt modern farming techniques and best practices. Investing in modern farming equipment will increase efficiency and reduce the labor burden on farmers. Finally, developing robust farm-to-market infrastructure, such as roads and storage facilities, is critical to facilitate the timely and cost-effective transportation of produce to markets, thereby reducing post-harvest losses and improving farmers' income.

Ironically, a close examination of the budget for the Ministry of State and Presidential Affairs—totaling approximately US\$15,689,817—reveals that the lofty rhetoric surrounding the fight against corruption is largely superficial. Of this substantial budget, a mere \$3.1 million is earmarked for the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission, which is far from sufficient given the scale of the corruption challenges the country faces.

Moreover, the allocation for the National Disaster Management Agency is particularly alarming; with just about US\$746,887, the agency is severely underfunded. This inadequate financing significantly hampers its ability to respond effectively to emergencies. As a result, when disasters occur and the agency finally mobilizes, it often finds itself ill-equipped and late to provide the necessary aid, leading to preventable suffering and loss.

Next week, this column will delve deeper into the budgetary provisions for National Legislatures to shed light on their implications. As it currently stands, the 2025 budget resembles a performance—a "dance of the traditional devil"—characterized by confusing movements that go forward and backward, up and down, while creating a cloud of dust. Meanwhile, the nation grapples with escalating poverty rates, concerning declines in human development indicators, severe infrastructure deficiencies, and alarmingly high levels of youth unemployment. These persistent issues underscore the disconnect between government budgeting and the pressing needs of its citizens. I rest my pen.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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NEC announces Nimba Senatorial By-election for April 22nd

The National Elections Commission begins candidates' nomination process here, ahead of senatorial by-election in Nimba County on 22nd April.

By: Naneka A. Hoffman
Monrovia, Liberia, March 5, 2025 - The National Elections Commission (NEC) launches candidates' nomination process for the upcoming Senatorial by-election in Nimba County, with voting scheduled for April 22, 2025. The nomination period began on March 3, 2025, aligned with media accreditation activities. Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at the NEC headquarters in Monrovia, Commissioner Barsee Kpangbai, who chairs the by-election committee, announced that five candidates have already begun the nomination process. Out of these, three candidates represent political parties, while two are running as independents. The NEC is receiving a rising number of inquiries from aspirants interested in participating in the electoral process. Commissioner Kpangbai also notes that discussions are nearly finalized with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning regarding budgetary allocations for the senatorial by-election. He did not disclose exact budget, but reveals that approvals are expected soon to ensure the NEC's full operational capacity in Nimba County, ahead of the election. Kpangbai also announces civil voter education campaign is set for March 21, 2025. This initiative aims to educate and inform voters and stakeholders across the nine electoral districts in Nimba County. The NEC is targeting a total of 397,256 voters to ensure widespread dissemination of election-related information. On February 10, 2025, the NEC transmitted rate of election information to Upper and Lower Nimba County Magistrates and the Government of Liberia, facilitating the organization of the by-election following the passing of former Senator Prince Y. Johnson. As preparations progress, the NEC remains committed to ensuring a smooth and transparent electoral process in Nimba, with largest voting population next to Montserrado County. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Commissioner Barsee Kpangbai

Dr. Kpoto mute

-Over procurement irregularity *By: Emmanuel Wise Jipoh*

Health Minister Dr. Louise Kpoto has kept silent on allegations of lack of transparency in health procurement contracts.

Monrovia, March 5, 2025/ The Health Minister and her team at the MOH have been accused by the Kingdom Business Incorporated (KBI) of manipulating the bidding process and hand-picking illegal contractors in return for kickbacks. On Tuesday, on the sideline of the Regional Public Service leadership conference on health workforce development, New Dawn asked Dr. Kpoto about the alleged accusation surrounding the bid and the name of the contractor to whom the contract was awarded, but she instead instructed our reporter to go ahead and write the story. "Go report the story." I do not have and will not say anything," Dr. Kpoto melted down as she slammed her car door. The story revolves around an allegation made by L. Swansey Fallah, the Chief Executive Officer of Kingdom Business Inc. Mr. Fallah has accused the Ministry of awarding contracts to its own contractors outside of the bidding process in return for a kickback. He names the upgrade of the Bo-Waterside Health Center Civic Work in Grand Cape Mount County, Construction of a Mental Health Hospital, and Completion of the Ministry of Health Partners Building, which were awarded to the two companies through alleged manipulation by top government officials within the Ministry. In an earlier conversation with this paper, Assistant Minister of Health for Administration Richard D. Kollie stated that the case was before the Public Procurement and Concession Commission (PPCC) for adjudication. - *Edited by Othello B. Garblah.*



MOH Minister

Boakai craves increased Foreign Investment to Boost Youth Employment

With the country's unemployment rate increasing, President Boakai is appealing to foreign investors to consider Liberia as a destination.

By: Kruah Thompson
Monrovia, Liberia – March 5, 2025 – President Joseph Nyumah Boakai has emphasized the urgent need to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to generate large-scale employment opportunities for Liberian youth. Speaking at a cabinet meeting on Monday, March 3, 2025, President Boakai acknowledged that local businesses alone cannot absorb the growing number of unemployed young people in the country. According to him, bridging the unemployment gap requires strategic concessions and investments that will unlock sustainable job opportunities across the country. Speaking at the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism's (MICAT) regular press briefing on Tuesday, Information Minister Jerolinmek Matthew Piah reiterated the president's commitment to job creation but noted that maintaining those jobs is a shared responsibility. "While the

infrastructure development, donor funding, and road rehabilitation. Minister Piah noted that these efforts aim to strengthen governance and drive national development.

However, Minister Piah revealed that one major area of concern highlighted during the meeting was airport security.

According to him, the president has also prioritized strengthening security at the airport to curb mineral trafficking.

He further warned that Liberia's international airport could face sanctions if it does not maintain global safety standards.

Additionally, he says the President at the meeting also called for full transparency in ongoing investigations into corruption and mismanagement cases and urged that they be concluded swiftly.

Regarding international aid, Minister Piah disclosed that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has reduced funding to Liberia, impacting critical sectors such as



President Joseph Nyumah Boakai

government will do its part to create jobs, the people must also do their part in protecting them," he stated.

According to him, the recent incidents of violence, particularly at mining companies, which resulted in the burning of some company facilities, were deeply concerning.

He stated that due to the destruction, hospitals and schools owned by those companies were forced to shut down, leading to significant job losses.

Therefore, he emphasized that while the government is working to create employment opportunities, citizens must equally work to protect and sustain those jobs.

He made these remarks while providing updates on the President's ongoing cabinet meeting.

The cabinet meeting focused on reforms in critical government sectors, including the rule of law, security, education, healthcare,

education and healthcare.

He says the USAID cut has particularly affected the HIV/AIDS program, which provides essential medication for people living with the disease.

"The drugs are not meant to be paid for, but the AIDS Commission is now struggling due to low budgetary support after the USAID cut," Piah explained. He noted that the commission has engaged the president on the issue, emphasizing the need to find solutions that will prevent the funding shortfall from worsening conditions for those affected.

Despite the USAID cut, he noted that Liberia continues to receive significant aid. The country's overall donor portfolio stands at approximately \$500 million, of which USAID contributed around \$87 million.

However, he reassured the public that the government is exploring alternative funding sources to offset the shortfall.

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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China vows implementation of five-year plan

-As Africa continent factors in CPPCC development drive

By Lincoln G. Peters

The People's Republic of China, through the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which represents a major achievement of the Communist Party of China (CPC), has assured effective and prompt implementation of the 2025 consultative Plan, which enhanced collaboration and benefits for the African continent.

The opening meeting of the third session of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday, March 4, 2025. The CPPCC is China's top political advisory body.

The program was graced by Chinese leader, President Xi Jinping and other Chinese officials and witnessed and covered by several local and international journalists, including 55 journalists under the China International Press

Communication center (CIPCC) under the four months media exchange program.

During the occasion, the agenda for the session was reviewed and approved. Mr. Wang Huning, Chairman of the CPPCC National Committee delivered the work report on behalf of the Standing Committee of the CPPCC National Committee.

The "two sessions" are the annual meetings of China's top legislature, the National People's Congress (NPC), and the top political advisory body, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Both bodies serve five-year terms and hold a plenary session each year.

The NPC is the highest state organ of power. That means, in addition to its duty as the top legislature, it wields the power to elect national leaders and approve government budgets and national development plans,

among other things.

The CPPCC is an important institution of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation. It is a specialist consultative body in China's whole-process people's democracy. Its members advise on major national policies and key issues spanning economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological development.

The annual sessions of these two bodies usually run in parallel and take place around the same time, which is why they are collectively known as the "two sessions." This year, the sessions of the NPC and the CPPCC National Committee opened on March 4, while the CPC is expected to open today, March 5, 2025. respectively.

Reading the report on the work of the standing Committee of the National Committee of the CPPCC Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at the third Session of the 14th CPPCC, Wang Huning, a member of the CPPCC expressed excitement on behalf of the Standing Committee of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and presented the report on their work for deliberation.

Reflecting briefly, he said that the year 2024 marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and It was also a crucial year for fulfilling the goals and tasks set forth in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) of China. with forthright counsel and sensible suggestions for formulating the 15th Five-Year Plan" he concluded. - Edited by Othello B. Garblah.



Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)

EPA hosts 8th ESIA licensure training

Liberia is hosting the 8th Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Licensure Training for professional evaluators in Monrovia.

By Stephen G. Fellajuah

Monrovia, Liberia, March 5, 2025 - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is hosting the 8th Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Licensure Training for professional evaluators. The training runs from March 3 - March 14, 2025. Over the last two decades, there has been significant progress in the application of Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) as a crucial tool for planning, decision-making, and managing development projects in Liberia.

The Environmental Protection and Management Law, enacted by the Government of Liberia in 2003, provides the legal framework for implementing the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) process.

Key players in the administration of the ESIA process include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), relevant line ministries, and independent evaluators. The Union of Certified Environmental Professionals of Liberia (UCEL) serves as a third-party oversight body, ensuring compliance and quality in the process.

The 8th Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) Licensure Training, is being held on the theme 'Promoting Environmental Sustainability and Social Equity in Development Projects, Programs, and Policies.'

The training aims to bridge knowledge gaps and enhance expertise of participants. As part of this effort, the EPA conducts a licensure training for independent consultants, large project developers, and relevant line institutions. The exercise brings together representatives from the African

Development Bank (AfDB), the World Bank, relevant line ministries, and professional evaluators from across the country.

EPA Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Dweh Boley, delivered opening remarks, emphasizing the importance of constructive engagement with the EPA.

"As Environmental Evaluators, you are extensions of the EPA. The ESIA process is scientific and complex, and without proper training, developers are unable to conduct these studies effectively", remains participants. *Editing by Jonathan Browne*



HPX deal gets more complex

MONROVIA, Liberia — In a move that could prove both financially and politically costly, Liberia has yielded to pressure from High Power Exploration (HPX), agreeing to hire an independent operator for the Buchanan-Yekepa rail line. But a fundamental question looms over the decision: What

healthcare, education, and infrastructure?

Adding to the puzzle, Liberia already has a proven operator willing to continue running and maintaining the railway at no cost to the government. Since 2005, ArcelorMittal Liberia has overseen the operations of the Buchanan-Yekepa rail corridor, ensuring its upkeep and functionality. Despite this,



if Guinea refuses to allow its iron ore to transit through Liberia?

The agreement, pushed aggressively by HPX, rests on a fragile premise—that Guinea will permit its iron ore to be transported via Liberian infrastructure. Yet, the government in Conakry has given no such approval. Instead, Guinea has embarked on its own \$15 billion infrastructure initiative, which includes a 670-kilometer railway and a deep-water port at Moribayah. These projects are designed to keep Guinea's mineral exports under its control.

Given this clear national strategy, why would Guinea bypass its own infrastructure in favor of a route through Liberia? The silence from Conakry suggests that Liberia may be making a costly miscalculation.

The stakes are high. If Guinea ultimately declines to route its ore through Liberia, the government in Monrovia will have committed itself to paying an independent rail operator for a service that may never be needed. What happens then? Will the Liberian government be forced to subsidize an idle railway operator, draining resources from already underfunded sectors such as

Liberia is now considering diverting transit fees collected from rail users to finance an independent operator—without a guarantee that Guinea will ever utilize the railway.

For a country grappling with economic constraints and pressing social needs, this decision raises serious concerns. Why should Liberia commit its limited financial resources to accommodate a Guinean miner that has yet to secure permission from its own government? Shouldn't national priorities—such as improving schools, hospitals, and roads—take precedence over satisfying the demands of a foreign mining company?

As Liberia moves forward with this arrangement, it risks embarrassment on the international stage. A government hiring and paying an independent rail operator, only to find that the anticipated Guinean ore never arrives, would be a costly policy misstep. More importantly, it would be a blow to Liberia's economic interests, diverting funds from urgent national development needs in favor of a speculative mining deal.

Unless Monrovia receives concrete assurances from Conakry, its decision to embrace an independent rail operator may prove to be a gamble Liberia cannot afford to lose.

Français

Des inconnus vandalisent le cimetière de Johnsonville : Plus de cinquante tombes profanées

À l'approche de la Journée nationale de la Décoration prévue la semaine prochaine, plus de cinquante tombes ont été profanées au cimetière de Johnsonville, laissant des corps exposés à l'air libre après un raid mené par des individus non identifiés, mardi 4 mars.



Des membres de familles endeuillées ont découvert tôt mardi matin l'horrible scène : des tombes détruites, des corps jetés à l'air libre, et des linceuls ainsi que des cercueils

récemment enterrés dépouillés de leur contenu. Sur place, notre reporter a constaté que plus de 50 tombes avaient été vandalisées. Des cercueils, des carreaux en marbre et d'autres objets funéraires de valeur avaient été volés, probablement pour être revendus, tandis que des corps dénudés gisaient à découvert.

Cet acte de vandalisme survient à quelques jours de la Journée nationale de la Décoration, prévue mercredi prochain, au cours de laquelle les citoyens sont appelés à nettoyer et à décorer les cimetières à

travers le pays. Les soupçons se tournent vers les “Zogos”, un groupe de jeunes hommes et femmes vivant principalement de la drogue et résidant souvent dans les cimetières. Témoignages poignants des familles endeuillées « Ce matin, nous sommes venus vérifier la tombe de notre mère, et nous avons retrouvé son corps allongé sur le sol, sans cercueil, tout avait été volé », a déclaré Tenneh Ruster, une proche des victimes. « C'est une situation malheureuse et personne ne peut expliquer ce qui s'est passé. Mais regardez, il n'y a pas que la tombe de notre mère. Regardez ce corps-là, c'est affligeant », a-t-elle ajouté en montrant du doigt une autre dépouille. D'autres familles en deuil ont décrit la situation comme dévastatrice et ont blâmé les habitants du quartier voisin du cimetière pour cet acte qui pourrait provoquer des violences lors de la Journée de la Décoration. « Quand nous sommes arrivés

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9

Mamaka Bility encore au cœur d'une nouvelle controverse nationale

Mamaka Bility, la controversée ministre d'État sans portefeuille du bureau du président Joseph Boakai, se retrouve une fois de plus au centre d'une vive polémique nationale. Après le scandale très critiqué des « Yellow Machines », elle serait désormais à l'origine d'une initiative visant à écarter ArcelorMittal Liberia (AML) de l'exploitation du chemin de fer Buchanan-Yekepa, au profit de High-Power Exploration (HPX) et de sa filiale, Ivanhoe Liberia Limited. HPX, une société n'ayant aucun investissement direct au Liberia, n'envisage que de transporter du minerai de fer de la Guinée au port de Buchanan pour expédition. Selon le projet proposé, HPX et Ivanhoe Atlantic ne verseraient au gouvernement libérien qu'entre 5 et 10 millions de dollars par an en frais de transit. En comparaison, AML propose de verser jusqu'à 200 millions de dollars par an dès que son nouvel accord de développement minier (MDA) sera approuvé. Un opérateur de longue date menacé AML, opérant au Liberia depuis plus de 20 ans, a déjà investi plus de 800 millions de dollars dans la réhabilitation et l'entretien du chemin de fer. En tant qu'opérateur exclusif actuel en vertu de son accord de

concession avec le gouvernement, AML dépense également des millions chaque année pour assurer la fonctionnalité du chemin de fer, sans coût supplémentaire pour l'État libérien. Malgré cela, Mamaka Bility, le ministre d'État Sylvester Grisby et d'autres membres du bureau présidentiel feraient pression pour remplacer AML par un opérateur tiers. Ce changement de gestion pourrait coûter des millions de dollars au gouvernement chaque année, une charge que couvre actuellement AML sans frais pour le pays. Des intérêts privés avant l'économie nationale ? Les critiques estiment que Mamaka Bility et ses alliés privilégient les intérêts de HPX au détriment de

l'économie libérienne. En remplaçant AML par un opérateur externe, le gouvernement se verrait contraint de payer des millions à une entreprise privée pour des services actuellement fournis gratuitement par AML. Beaucoup y voient un fardeau financier inutile, surtout dans un contexte où les services sociaux de base manquent cruellement de financement. Le Liberia traverse en effet une période économique difficile, marquée par des déficits budgétaires qui paralysent les hôpitaux, les écoles publiques et les projets d'infrastructures essentiels. Dans ce contexte, l'idée de dépenser des millions pour un nouveau gestionnaire du chemin



Éditorial

L'anarchie s'impose au Capitole

Par Daron Acemoglu La 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.

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Français

Starts from page 8 Des inconnus vandalisent le cimetière de Johnsonville

ce matin, nous avons trouvé les tombes de nos proches saccagées. Ils ont arraché la pierre en marbre et effacé la date de naissance. C'est difficile maintenant de les identifier. Imaginez ce qui pourrait arriver mercredi prochain, ce serait un chaos total entre les familles », a témoigné un autre proche.

Risques de tensions lors de la Journée de la Décoration

Les Journées de la Décoration sont souvent marquées par des conflits, les familles se disputant les tombes faute de repères clairs sur l'emplacement des sépultures de leurs défunts.

« Si je viens identifier la tombe de mon père et qu'une autre personne revendique la même tombe,

ce sera la “guerre” », a prévenu Lorpu Johnson, une résidente de Johnsonville.

Par ailleurs, certains proches ont signalé que les décorations funéraires de leurs défunts avaient été jetées à la poubelle.

Face à la situation, les familles endeuillées appellent les autorités à déployer immédiatement des agents de sécurité au cimetière de Johnsonville afin d'éviter un potentiel déferlement de violences mercredi prochain.

Malgré plusieurs tentatives, il n'a pas été possible de joindre les responsables du cimetière ni le commissaire de la commune, John S. Randell, don't le téléphone est resté sans réponse.

La Banque centrale du Liberia organise un atelier de validation sur le projet de loi sur l'assurance

La Banque centrale du Liberia (CBL) a lancé, ce mercredi 5 mars, un atelier de validation de trois jours au Pavillon du Centenaire à Monrovia, afin d'examiner le projet de loi sur l'assurance de 2020. Cet atelier constitue une étape cruciale vers la création de la Commission nationale des assurances du Liberia (NICL).

L'atelier, qui se poursuivra jusqu'au vendredi 7 mars, vise à passer en revue le projet de loi intitulé “Proposed Draft Insurance Commission Act”, un cadre juridique essentiel pour l'établissement d'une commission unique chargée de réglementer efficacement le secteur des assurances au Liberia.

Un processus participatif pour un cadre juridique solide

Cet atelier de validation réunit des parties prenantes aux expertises variées, afin de renforcer le processus de validation du projet de loi. Les contributions et recommandations des participants seront intégrées dans le projet final, qui sera soumis au bureau du président avant son envoi à l'Assemblée nationale pour adoption.

Une fois adopté par le législateur, le projet de loi conduira à la création de la Commission nationale des assurances du Liberia, qui deviendra l'autorité de régulation exclusive du secteur des assurances dans le pays.

Un cadre réglementaire complet pour le secteur des assurances

Le projet de loi prévoit un cadre complet pour la délivrance des licences, la réglementation et la supervision des entreprises d'assurance, ainsi que pour la mise

en œuvre des normes de conformité. La commission aura également le pouvoir de prendre des mesures coercitives contre les entreprises non agréées et d'établir des normes pour l'exercice des activités d'assurance au Liberia.

En outre, la commission disposera du pouvoir de citer à comparaître des informations et des témoins provenant de différentes entités gouvernementales. Elle sera chargée d'appliquer les assurances obligatoires, notamment :

L'assurance responsabilité civile automobile (tiers)

L'assurance incendie

L'assurance maritime

L'assurance de responsabilité professionnelle

Elle créera également un département dédié à la gestion des plaintes contre les assureurs ou institutions d'assurance.

Un impact attendu sur l'économie libérienne

En devenant l'unique régulateur du secteur des assurances, la Commission nationale des assurances veillera à ce que les titulaires de licences soient supervisés selon une approche

basée sur les risques. Elle encouragera la concurrence au sein de l'industrie et facilitera l'accès au marché des assurances pour les Libériens.

En favorisant un secteur des assurances bien réglementé, la commission contribuera à la stabilité économique globale et à la croissance du pays.

Optimisme de la Banque centrale du Liberia

La Banque centrale se montre optimiste quant à l'implication des parties prenantes dans le processus de validation du projet de loi. Elle estime que cette démarche garantira une diligence raisonnable et l'application des meilleures pratiques nécessaires à l'adoption du texte législatif et à l'établissement ultérieur de la commission des assurances.

La CBL souligne par ailleurs l'importance de l'engagement et des contributions des parties prenantes pour assurer la réussite de la validation du Draft Insurance Act, qui vise à créer une industrie des assurances transparente, efficace et inclusive au Liberia.



Starts from page 8 Mamaka Bility encore au cœur d'une

de fer semble non seulement imprudente mais aussi irresponsable. Une alternative plus avantageuse ignorée

Ce projet de remplacement est d'autant plus surprenant qu'ArcelorMittal s'est déclaré prêt à permettre à HPX et à d'autres entreprises d'utiliser le chemin de fer, à condition de rester l'opérateur principal. Cette proposition permettrait au gouvernement de bénéficier à la fois des frais de transit de HPX et des 200 millions de dollars annuels offerts par AML, en plus des 2 000 emplois que l'expansion de l'entreprise devrait créer.

Cependant, selon des sources proches du dossier, Mamaka Bility et ses alliés auraient convaincu le président Boakai de rejeter cette offre, préférant trouver un autre opérateur malgré les coûts supplémentaires pour les contribuables libériens.

Des soupçons de conflits d'intérêts

De nombreux observateurs estiment que cette initiative n'est pas motivée

par l'intérêt national mais par des gains personnels. Il devient de plus en plus évident que Mamaka Bility et ses associés pourraient avoir des intérêts personnels à ce que HPX obtienne des conditions avantageuses, même au détriment des finances publiques.

Pour beaucoup de Libériens, la question se pose : pourquoi vouloir changer un système qui fonctionne, surtout si cela signifie alourdir encore davantage la charge financière d'un gouvernement déjà

Srimex Oil and Gas: Une dette de 3,7 millions USD envers le gouvernement libérien

Srimex Oil and Gas, une entreprise pétrolière appartenant au représentant du comté de Nimba, Musa Hassan Bility, doit à l'État libérien la somme de 3 762 803 USD, selon John H. Tokpah, directeur administratif du National Road Fund (NRF).

Cette dette découle de taxes impayées liées aux importations de pétrole, notamment la taxe routière, instaurée pour financer les projets d'infrastructure, en particulier l'entretien et la réhabilitation des routes.

Impact sur les projets d'infrastructure

John H. Tokpah a précisé que, malgré plusieurs tentatives de négociation avec Srimex, l'entreprise n'a toujours pas effectué de paiements significatifs pour rembourser cette dette. “Le Fonds routier national dépend des taxes sur les importations de pétrole pour financer des projets routiers essentiels à travers le pays. Lorsque les entreprises ne respectent pas leurs obligations, cela affecte directement les efforts de développement,” a-t-il déclaré.

Tokpah a fait cette révélation lors d'une séance devant la Chambre des représentants, aux côtés de responsables du Ministère de la Justice et du Ministère des Travaux publics, à la suite d'une communication du représentant James Kolleh, du district 2 du comté de Bong. L'audience portait sur les arriérés des importateurs de carburant envers le NRF, qui finance les projets de maintenance et de développement des infrastructures.

Des mesures coercitives en vue ?

L'incapacité de Srimex à régler cette dette de 3,7 millions USD pourrait entraîner des mesures juridiques contre la société. Les agences gouvernementales, chargées de la collecte des revenus et du développement des infrastructures, pourraient envisager des sanctions, des saisies d'actifs ou des poursuites judiciaires pour récupérer la somme due.

Une dette de cette ampleur pourrait également nuire à la confiance des investisseurs dans l'environnement des affaires au Liberia, notamment dans le secteur pétrolier, qui joue un rôle crucial dans l'économie nationale.

Jusqu'à présent, les tentatives pour obtenir un commentaire du PDG de Srimex et représentant du comté de Nimba, Musa Hassan Bility, sont restées vaines. Il n'est pas clair si l'entreprise dispose d'un plan de remboursement structuré ou si elle envisage de contester les réclamations du NRF. Un contexte de dettes généralisées



Srimex n'est pas le seul importateur en difficulté. D'autres entreprises, telles que LPRC, Petro Trade, Kailondo, NEXIUM Petroleum Limited, et d'autres encore, contestent également les montants évalués par l'Autorité fiscale du Liberia (LRA).

Le montant total des arriérés dus par les importateurs de pétrole s'élève à environ 15 287 101 USD, répartis comme suit :

CONEX : 4,6 millions USD, LPRC : 5,83 millions USD, AMINATA & SONS : 559 995 USD, PETRO TRADE : 575 235 USD, KAILONDO : 94 886 USD, NEXIUM : 17 075 USD, NP : 15 820 USD, MAYOUBA & SONS : 12 000 USD, WEST OIL : 6 132 USD.

Appel à la transparence et à la responsabilité

Face à cette situation, la Chambre des représentants a convoqué le Ministère de la Justice, le Ministère des Travaux publics, le National Road Fund ainsi que les importateurs contestataires à se présenter à nouveau devant les législateurs mardi prochain. L'objectif de cette rencontre est d'exiger des explications sur les raisons du refus des importateurs de payer leurs dettes, qui dépassent les 15 millions USD envers le gouvernement. Les législateurs insistent sur la nécessité d'une transparence totale et exhortent le NRF à garantir le respect des réglementations en matière de fonds routiers.

en difficulté ?

Un passé trouble qui alimente les inquiétudes

Cette nouvelle polémique ravive également les inquiétudes concernant l'influence de Bility dans les décisions gouvernementales, notamment après son implication dans le scandale des « Yellow Machines ». Cette affaire avait jeté une ombre sur l'administration Boakai, en raison d'un contrat douteux de plusieurs millions de dollars pour l'achat d'équipements, soulevant de sérieuses questions sur la corruption et la transparence.

Une décision cruciale pour l'avenir du Liberia

Avec un Liberia à un tournant économique critique, le débat sur l'avenir du chemin de fer Buchanan-Yekpa dépasse le simple cadre d'un conflit d'entreprise. Il s'agit d'un véritable test pour le gouvernement sur sa volonté de privilégier la transparence, la responsabilité budgétaire et l'intérêt général.

La question cruciale est désormais de savoir si l'administration Boakai cédera aux manœuvres politiques ou si elle agira dans le meilleur intérêt de l'économie libérienne.

LIBERIANS DEBATE

Topic: Re-opening files of dead auditors *By Naneka Hoffman*
President Boakai has called for re-investigation of the death of auditors and three missing boys under the former administration. But citizens' reactions to the President's call are mixed. Read their comments below, as compiled by The NEW DAWN.



Sandee Tweh, Jr.

“President Boakai re-opening files of dead auditors concerning the past regime will not be fair enough,

“Yes, it's very much important because we must give account. People must give account for lives that went mysteriously. When lives go mysteriously, we must know what caused that death. Somebody will not just get missing then we leave it just like that; no! Something must be done about it. Somebody died in car, the citizens and government must be in the know. The reason we voted President Boakai is because we want for the right things to be done for the Liberian people. We trust President Boakai. We don't want for somebody to just take knife from the blind side and just kill somebody without accountability. It's necessary, for instance, the three missing boys'

because since Boakai took over, there has been lots of mysterious deaths under his government that we are expecting him to look into it. If you look at the past government, during former President Weah's time, the various reports that went to Geogory Coleman as police director, he said this case was closed, and there were no evidence that people were found guilty. Why now President Boakai is telling Gregory Coleman, to reopen these files, for it's not in the right direction; it's a witch hunt.”



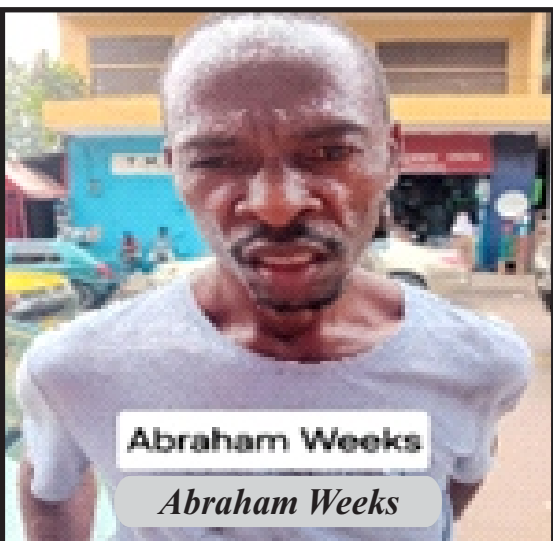
John B. Mulbah

case that liked St. Moses Funeral Home. We raise alarm behind President George Weah. But at the time, President Weah ignored us. What we're expecting from these files is we want to know the perpetrators that did the act and justice must be done.”



Rudolph Gborkeh
Rudolp Gborkeh

“I support President Boakai 100%, for re-opening files of dead auditors'. I do hope that he will re-open files of the people that were killed in Kinjor, Grand Cape Mount County. The boy that was killed in Lofa; the one the Police killed in Banjor, I hope he re-opens these files too, so 100% I standby him on that.”

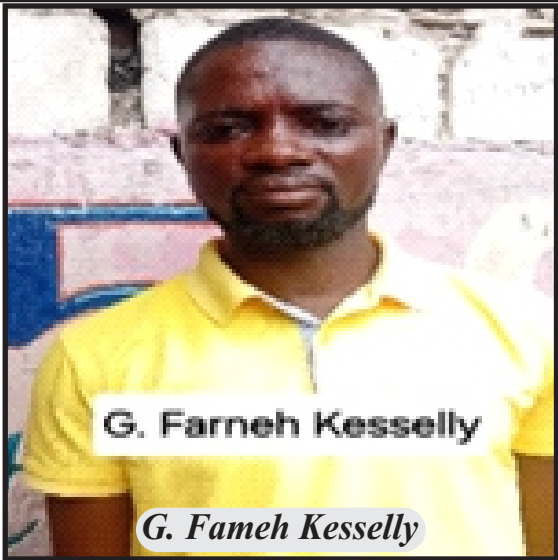


Abraham Weeks
Abraham Weeks

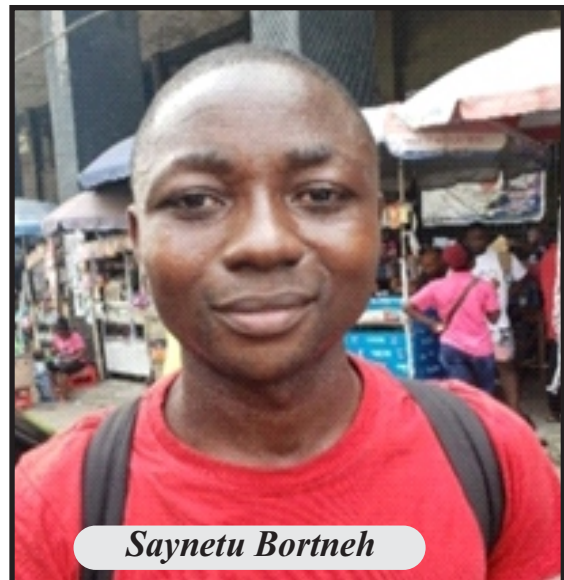
“If President Boakai wanted to open death files, he is right but, let's go back to his regime right now! Some of the people

“That's good because those people who have died need accountability for their lives. The government needs to see how best to create avenues for justice to be served to all because if justice is not served, killings will continue in this country.”

that died whether he investigated. And we look at the former Chief Justice that killed her daughter case, whether it was right for him to carry on investigation, because President Boakai came back and said no case against the woman, and he went and free the woman. So why is he coming back to say he wants to reopen files now; no! It's not necessary, because if he wanted to do that, he must start from his regime before reaching to the other man.”



G. Fameh Kesselly
G. Fameh Kesselly



Saynetu Bortneh

“President Boakai re-opening files of dead auditors is a good idea; I support him in this struggle, but I hope he can start with his

regime before going to the past regime. I will not have problem with it; I will give him my support. But if he only opens it for the past regime then he is up to different thing, and I will not support him, because let's remember that justice to one, justice to all. So, if he re-opened files, it should start from his regime then we will know that he is serious about it, but for now, he is not ready, if he only wants to open dead authors' files from the past regime then he is not ready to serve the Liberian people well.”

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Tweah, others hope on S/Court

Former Finance Minister Samuel D. Tweah and four other former government officials from the Weah regime faces charges of economic sabotage.

By Lincoln G. Peters

Capitol Hill, March 6, 2025/Just days after prosecutors and defense lawyers failed to select jurors ahead of the trial of former Finance Minister Samuel Tweah and four others, the defense has petitioned the Supreme Court seeking to stop lower court Judge Roosevelt Willie from proceeding with the trial. The move comes after Criminal Court “C” Judge Willie denied the defendants motion requesting him (Judge) to halt the trial on grounds that the lower court lacks jurisdiction of the subject matter, which is more of a national security issue. On Monday, both defense and prosecution lawyers rejected over 20 individuals who made it to the court to be selected as jurors. They were said to either be compromised by some form of relationships with defendants or not fit to serve as jurors on the subject matter. Tweah, alongside Cllr. Nyanti Tuan (former Acting Minister of Justice), Stanley S. Ford (former Director General of Financial Intelligence), D. Moses P. Cooper (former Financial Intelligence Comptroller), and Jefferson Karmoh (former National Security Advisor to President George Weah), were indicted by LACC on charges of economic sabotage, theft, illegal disbursement and expenditure of public funds, criminal conspiracy, misuse of public money, and criminal facilitation. The indictment alleges that the

Early last week, Tweah and others filed a motion before Criminal Court “C” Judge Willie requesting that the Judge dismiss the indictment of Economic Sabotage brought against them. They argued that the court lacked jurisdiction to preside over such a matter, citing national security interests. But the judge in his ruling Friday, February 28, said the case could not be dismissed as prayed for by the defense because of the totality of the circumstances and laws regarding the instant case. According to Judge Willie, the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) did not establish any proof or documentary evidence such as instruction or letter of request from the National Joint Security or the FIA or a Joint Security Resolution or from the former President to Co-Defendant/Co-Movant Tweah, for which he (Co-Defendant/Co-Movant Samuel Tweah) approved and subsequently ordered the transferred of the above mentioned amounts to the FIA account. He further indicated that, predicated upon these actions by Tweah and others, the LACC, through the Ministry of Justice, is alleging that the defendants acted outside of the privilege provided to agents of the President in Article 61 of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia. Therefore, they cannot enjoy this privilege, for which they must answer, and the only place to answer is this Court, Criminal Court “C.” ” IN VIEW THEREFORE, this case cannot be dismissed for lack of subject matter Jurisdiction, based on the facts,



Former Minister Samuel Tweah

defendants violated the Financial Intelligence Agency Act of 2022 by conspiring to transfer US\$500,000 and L\$1,055,152,540 from the Central Bank of Liberia through the operational account of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

circumstances, and the laws cited herein above, and the Prosecution/Respondent must be given the opportunity to prove their case. Hence, the Motion to Dismiss is hereby denied, and the case is ordered proceeded forthwith,” Judge Willie ruled. - Writes Othello B. Garblah

ALCOD Presses Forward with Out

Starts from Back page country voting within the context of registering in a “constituency” and “absentee balloting” as stipulated in Article 80 'C' will help map out a final strategy for out-of-country voting. In previous meetings with others legal practitioner similar suggestions were proffered. Cllr. Gongloe had indicated to them that in the absence of not knowing government's formal position on the issue, within the context of registering in a “constituency” and “absentee balloting “as stipulated in Article 80 'C', advocates for out-of-country voting will have some challenges in their advocacy. To achieve this, ALCOD has mandated its Eminent Chairman, Mr. Emmanuel S. Wettee, to lead the appeal effort to President Boakai, for the government's definitions for “constituency” and “absentee ballot” as stated in Article 80 Section 'C'. Eminent Wettee was also asked to establish contacts with other diaspora Liberian groups/organizations for them to do the same. Meeting NEC & Lawmakers In fact, ALCOD delegation has on many occasions met with authorities of the NEC and held discussions aimed at finding a way to make out-of-country voting a reality. According to ALCOD in all of their meetings, the NEC had expressed willingness to make out-of-country voting a reality when the right platform, funding, and infrastructure are available. In addition to meeting with authorities of the NEC, ALCOD delegation has also met with some “friendly lawmakers,” who are willing to collaborate with other stakeholders in order to make or amend law to make out-of-country voting a

reality. Just like the collective efforts of Liberians in the diaspora in achieving dual citizenship and making “Once A Liberian Always A Liberia” a reality and dual citizenship is law of the land, ALCOD is calling and encouraging all diaspora organizations and Liberians to appeal to the President in their separate meetings with him. ALCOD is also encouraging all Liberian diaspora organizations to join the advocacy for out-of-country voting. Meanwhile, ALCOD has acknowledged Mr. Michael Mueller, Chairman, Board of the European Federation of Liberian Associations (EFLA) and Cllr. Jerome Verdier, who are tirelessly advocating for out-of-country voting using other methods. Background ALCOD started the campaign advocating dual citizenship in December 2012 and achieved it in July 2022. ALCOD is diaspora Liberians premier organization advocating for dual citizenship and out-of-country voting.

Notice of Intent

Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the Kon Kweni Liberian Infrastructure Project

The general public and all concerned or interested parties are hereby informed that Ivanhoe Liberia Limited (“Applicant”), has hired Earthtime Inc. (“Consultant”) to prepare an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for the Kon Kweni Liberia Infrastructure Project.

Ivanhoe Liberia Limited hereby publishes its intention to commence work on the Liberian Transport Infrastructure project (“the Project”) once an Agreement with the Government of Liberia is finalized. The project will involve the transportation of iron ore from the Kon Kweni mine site in the south-eastern Guinean forest region, across the Liberian-Guinean Border to the Port of Buchanan in Liberia.

The proposed project will include the following components:

- A Guinea-Liberia border crossing in Yekepa.
- A haul road between Yekepa and Tokadeh.
- A stockpiling and loadout area at Tokadeh.
- Transport of ore along the existing Tokadeh-Buchanan Railway.
- A stockpiling area and infrastructure at the Port of Buchanan, and Port operations for iron ore export, likely including transshipment.

In keeping with Section 11 of the Environmental Protection and Management Law of the Republic of Liberia (2003), the Consultant is preparing an ESIA. The ESIA process will help the Applicant manage any associated environmental and socio-economic issues in accordance with company policies, the laws of Liberia, International Finance Corporation (IFC) Environmental and Social Performance Standards, and good international industry practice.

In the process of identifying potential environmental and social impacts that may result from activities of the process, the Consultant and Applicant will request and receive input from the public, including interested and affected parties. All persons who have views, comments or concerns regarding the proposed project are encouraged to contact the Applicant or Consultant as follows:

Applicant’s email: infoLib@ivanhoeatlantic.com
Consultant’s email: info@earthtimegroup.com
Contact number: 0777 744 586

Your participation or input in this assessment will be highly appreciated in order to guide decision-making relevant to the proposed project.

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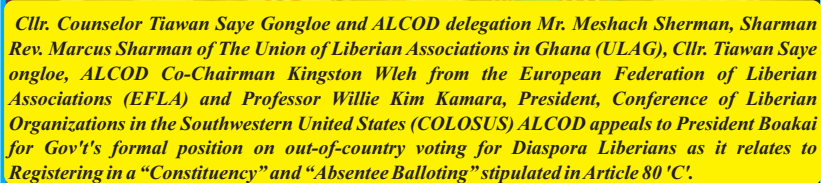
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By: Kruah Thompson

human rights legal minds. While in Liberia attending the Diaspora Liberians Annual Return 2024 in December, an ALCOD delegation met constitutional, human rights, and other lawyers to discuss their strategies for advocating for out-of-country voting. ALCOD's

One noticeable legal practitioner that the ALCOD delegation, which was led by Co-Chairman Kingston Wleh, met with in Liberia was Counselor Tiawan Saye Gongloe, who is a Human Rights and Constitutional Lawyer. The learned Counselor indicated to ALCOD that knowing the Liberian Government's formal position on the issue of out-of-



current strategies had included meeting with the National Elections Commission (NEC) and lawmakers to discuss the options of diaspora Liberians voting in the 2029 Presidential and Legislative Elections. ALCOD bases its advocacy on out-of-country voting on Article 80 Section 'C' of the 1986 Constitution. “Every Liberian

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 11

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A composite image showing two different Heidelberg printing machines in a workshop setting. The left machine is a smaller, older model with a yellow bed. The right machine is a larger, more modern model with a black frame. The text "2 Colors Heidelberg Machines" is overlaid in the center.

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The image shows a person reading a newspaper. The newspaper has two main sections visible. The left section is titled 'New Dawn Sports' and features a headline 'OWAS raises red flag' with a sub-headline 'Mandarin Square's New Year Eve'. Below this is a photo of a person in a blue jacket. The right section is titled 'New Dawn' and features a headline 'Uncertainty hangs over schools' with a sub-headline 'As authorities weigh options over Covid-19'. Below this is a headline 'Nephew butchered uncle' with a sub-headline 'Family in shock'. The background is yellow, and there is a rainbow-colored border at the bottom. A text overlay on the right side of the image reads 'PLEASE! KEEP THE DOOR CLOSE'.

A hand holding a pen, about to press a button labeled 'PRESS' on a colorful, abstract background. The background features vibrant, splashing colors like purple, yellow, and red, suggesting a dynamic and creative environment.

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A collage of various New Dawn publications. It includes a magazine cover with the headline 'JSS\$2.5m for Mont. by-elections', a calendar with a grid of dates, and a brochure with the word 'BROCHURE' at the bottom. The publications are set against a background of colorful, abstract, wavy shapes in shades of blue, green, and yellow. The New Dawn logo is visible on several of the items.