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N° 754 Yaounde, Monday May 27 2024, Publisher: Cham Victor Bama, Tel: 673225225 Price: 400 FCFA

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OACPS Mines Ministers pose for family photo

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At End Of OACPS Y'de Confab: Mines Ministers State Frank Position On Future Of Critical Minerals

Story, Akumany David

The mining ministers of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, OACPS, have taken a firm commitment to give a retouch to the exploitation and transformation of critical raw materials amongst its member countries.

The salient points among others were coined out at their just ended OACPS conference that held in Yaounde from May 23 to 24.

The critical raw materials include Copper, Cobalt, Manganese, Platinum and Graphite are amongst the key raw materials needed for the development of the global mining sector.

The OACPS mining ministers based their positions on the four main pillars that will give a shift to the mining sector so as to improve on the living conditions of the local population.

Organizational Strategy and roadmap

The OACPS mining ministers agreed to set up political and diplomatic interventions areas, highlighting the significance of OACPS countries aligning their positions to boast bargaining power of these states.

Also, the organization seeks to strengthen diplomatic ties with the European Union, especially regarding critical raw materials. This, they said, alongside maximizing benefits of the SAMOA agreements. Thirdly they talked about the setting up of more coordinative position on global forums like the World trade organisation.

Concerning the economic aspect of it, the organization is laying emphasis on utilizing its bargaining power to ease access to finances and investments in crucial strategic sectors within its institutional area. This will involve the setting up an internal support to OACPS countries as they seek in pulling out maximum benefits from the mining sector.



Global Engagement On Mutually Beneficial Terms

The organization in this Pillar strikes on key aspects such as ensuring transparent partnership agreements aligned with development goals, secondly forging strategic alliance to negotiate from an advantageous positions, thirdly the organization aims at advocating for transparent fair and equitable trade and investment framework.

Lastly on the this pillar, the goal of the organization is to broaden partnerships in order to reduce dependency and leverage geopolitical interest for optional benefits

Trade and Industrial Development

The organization is for the point of laying out comprehensive support for industrial development through partnership which is geared at enhancing domestic and regional capacities across the entire mining life cycle, utilizing a circular economy approach.

This will according to the OACPS mining ministers involve providing assistance to producing countries in developing industrial capabilities and establishing resilient national and regional value chains.

In this regard, they agreed to prioritize supporting the development of the private sector with a particular focus on empowering small and medium size enterprises.

In addition to this pillar, they resolved to focus on adopting strategies to stabilize prices by setting up systems that will provide support to countries affected by price fluctuation.

This, they said, will enhance access to finances. The ministers also agreed on the need to strengthen partnership with financial institution as well as leveraging resources from neighboring European Union, EU development and international cooperation instruments.

Ensure Sustainable Development

The principal goal in all of this is to ensure that the sustainable development

goals are attained. The ministers arrived at putting up strategies to ensure that the environment is preserved.

They emphasized on the importance of ensuring that the various projects do not harm the vulnerable communities, escalate conflicts and cause environmental damage.

In this regard the pillar hints on the implementation of environmental safeguards and the enforcement of high standards throughout the extraction and procession of critical raw materials including regulations for proper waste management and rehabilitation.

They have also agreed to ensure mining positively impact the local population through the creation of jobs with fair wages, community development projects and respect for indigenous rights and land.

With the four key pillars to be erected in the days ahead, the OACPS which remain one of the key producers of critical raw materials is expected to draw out maximum benefits for the growth and development of their respective countries.

Nachtigal Hydroelectric Power Project: Energy Minister Announces Commissioning Of Six Other Plants

Story, Tata Timothy

The Minister of Water Resources and Energy, Gaston Eloundou Essomba, has announced the connection of more megawatts from the Nachtigal dam to the national grid in the coming months.

He made the announcement recently during a ceremony to inject the first 60 megawatts of electricity from the plant on May 10, 2024 at Ndokoa in the Centre Region.

The power from the Nachtigal hydroelectric power station has been connected to the Southern Interconnected Network (RIS). It represents in relative value, the 14.3% of the total capacity (420 MW) expected from the infrastructure built by Hydro Power Company (NHPC) since February 2019.

According to the Director General (DG) of NHPC Vincent Leroux, the progress rate of construction work on the Nachtigal dam, which has a factory equipped with 07 groups of 60 MW each, is 94% to date.

After the commissioning of the very first group, officials announce the gradual injection of the remaining groups until December 2024 "at the latest", according to the assurance of Gaston Eloundou Essomba who was accompanied to the occasion by his colleagues of Finance, Louis Paul Motaze, and Economy, Planning and Planning Alamine Ousmane Mey.

According to the Minister, "the commissioning of the



six other groups will be done gradually at the rate of a 60 MW group each month with the prospect of full commercial commissioning of the plant in December 2024. On this date, all production capacities will be installed and put into service. The plant will provide a nominal power of 420 MW in the RIS, thus making Nachtigal the most powerful hydroelectric plant in our country".

Note that the commissioning of the first group was

initially planned for 2023. After the date slip, the appointment at the end of March was also missed. Sources within NHPC are said to have said it was necessary to carefully follow all the stages (powering up the station, functional testing of the systems, etc.) in order to ensure the reliability of the infrastructure whose lifespan is estimated at a minimum of 100 years. The source said the project is work for posterity.

For the record, upon its final commissioning, Nachtigal should provide 30% of the electricity consumption of the South Interconnected Network in Cameroon in a context where the country has barely 2,000 MW of installed capacity for forecasts of 5,000 MW in 2030.

The situation makes the Minister of Water Resources and Energy to say that it is the 2nd largest hydroelectric development in Central Africa and the first major hydroelectric infrastructure in the National Development Strategy (SND 30).

It must be said that NHPC is a company under Cameroonian law created in July 2016 and was entrusted, in addition to the design, construction and hydroelectric development of Nachtigal, but also the operation of the hydroelectric development for 35 years. Its share capital is made up of 40% for EDF, SFI (20%), State of Cameroon (15%), Africa 50 (15%) and Stoa (10%).

Nigeria:

Syndicate Smuggling Fuel To Amba Terrorists Busted!

Story, *KAH Patience*

A syndicate involved in the smuggling of fuel into Cameroon for Amba terrorists in the North West and South West Regions has been uncovered by the military in Nigeria.

The suspects were picked up on Friday, May 25, 2024, by soldiers, according to an official statement by Nigerian Army. The Nigerian military stated that the suspects were rounded up along the Abong-Kurmi Baissa Road, Taraba State, on the border between Nigeria and Cameroon.

The ages of the suspects range from 18 to 34. At the time they

were arrested, a large quantity of fuel was in their possession heading to the border. Following ongoing investigation, other members of the syndicate have been identified including its chairman, Mark Akawu, with residence in the border locality of Abong, between Kurmi Local Government Area (LGA) of Taraba State and the Republic of Cameroon.

According to the military in Nigeria, those arrested have confessed that the smuggled fuel is sold to Amba terrorists in Cameroon.

Nigeria military noted that fol-



lowing preliminary investigation, Amba terrorists cannot enter Nigeria to buy the product directly.

It was revealed that at the time members of the syndicate were picked up, they were on board three

15 vehicles, ferrying a total of 605 jerry cans with each having a capacity of 40 litres, totaling 24,200 litres of fuel worth millions of francs FCFA to deliver to their clients.

NW,SW Crisis:

HfC NGO empowers IDPs on financial independence, entrepreneurship

By *Lasha Kingsly*

The International non-profit organization, Hope for Cameroon, HfC, has through a three-day capacity building workshop, empowered Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs of the Anglophone crisis on entrepreneurship and financial independence.

The workshop which took place between the 23rd and 25th May 2024, falls within, HfC's Seeding hope entrepreneurship project agenda which had initially begun on the 27th of December, 2023. Though the implementation phase elapsed on February 17th, the HfC leaders, completed the seed disbursement with the training program in Bonaberi -Douala.

It was held under the theme: "Empowering IDPs for financial independence through entrepreneurship and vocational skills". The organizers said, they had received financial support from "MasterCard Foundation Transitions Fund at MCGILL University"

Through various initiatives, they provide access to educational opportu-



nities, community development and entrepreneurship training programs, and essential resources to foster positive change and sustainable development in affected vulnerable communities.

Sonia Buma, Co-founder and President of Hope for Cameroon, commenting on the Douala IDP self-reliant activity, noted that, they have come to point where, they intend to

teach selected beneficiaries on how to "fish" for themselves rather than being dependent on the benevolence of international organizations and or persons of goodwill.

"Through our project we here to see how together we can find sustainable livelihood solutions to these displaced persons. We are training them on vocational skills that can help either start a business or scale up their

business. In so doing our expectation is that, they can be able to fend for themselves and families without depending on NGOs for help" Sonia Buma declared.

For three days, the DPs were trained on how to produce cosmetics products, do poultry farming, fish farming, amongst others. Participants with innovative projects, Buma revealed, will receive micro funding to implement their projects.

Buma went on to invite all and sundry to put not to stay behind but bring in their quota just as the MasterCard foundation has done to support IDPs. She said that, by so doing, it will help the crisis affected persons, not to feel abandoned and get them to understand they have not been forgotten.

Created in 2019, Hope for Cameroon has been committed to empowering vulnerable internally displaced communities, with a focus on women and children who have been significantly affected by the ongoing armed conflict in Cameroon.

Atanga Nji To Opposition Leaders:

2025 Presidentials Will Hold In Calm, Serenity

Story, *Jude Atekwana*

The 2025 presidential election in Cameroon will be held in peace and serenity. The Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji, made the announcement on Thursday, May 23, through a strongly worded press release.

In 2025, Cameroonians who have registered on the electoral lists will be called to the polls to elect the new President of the Republic. Less than a year before this election, the political class is very mobilized. Political actors are invading the field to encourage people to register on the electoral lists.

After recently reminding stakeholders that the registration operation on the electoral lists is not obligatory,



Minister Paul Atanga Nji, involved in the electoral process, once again warned the opposition. In the press release, he assured that the electoral process will be held in serenity and

calm.

"MINAT would like to tell opposition political actors who brandish the scarecrow of chaos during the 2025 presidential election that this election

will be held in calm, serenity and without disruption as in 2011 and 2018," Paul Atanga Nji wrote.

Without naming political actors, observers say it is a warning message to the Cabral Libii who recently accused the MINAT boss of maneuvering to exclude him from the 2025 presidential election.

For his part, Maurice Kamto, president of the MRC, accused ELECAM of preparing an electoral coup in 2025. These two personalities have already declared themselves candidates in this election. But the CPDM does not yet officially declared its candidate except Paul Biya, considered the natural candidate of the ruling party.

National Assembly:

Hon. Memouna Mahamat's Demise Raises Vacant Seats To 17

Story, Enanga Sophia

André Noël Essian, Secretary General of the National Assembly, has announced on May 15 the death of Memouna Mahamat, a member of parliament, MP. Mahamat passed away on May 14 in Bafoussam, West Region, after an illness.

She was a representative of the ruling CPDM in the Mayo Banyo Division of the Adamawa Region. The MP was buried last weekend.

During her first term as a parliamentarian, Mahamat served on the National Assembly's Economic Affairs Committee and held the position of Vice President of the Cameroon-Morocco Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group, among other roles.

Her passing increases the number of deceased lawmakers to 17 since the start of the current legislature in March 2020. Most of them are from the CPDM, the dominant party in the National Assembly. The ruling party initially had 152 lawmakers at the start of the legislature but now has 135 representative, with nine months left in the current term. Despite the electoral law requiring a by-election to replace a deceased deputy, such an



election has yet to be organized.

Besides her, others who have died and their dates of death are; Harouna Bougue, CPDM MP for Mayo-Louti/Garoua, Northern Region (July 22, 2020); Saraou Bernadette, CPDM MP for Mayo Kani North, Far North Region (August 9, 2020); Yacouba Yaya, CPDM deputy for Mayo-Tsanaga South, Far North Region

(December 13, 2020); Prince Ange Gilbert Mikody, CPDM MP for Boumba and Ngoko, Eastern Region (March 24, 2021); Djibril Kaou, CPDM MP for Mayo-Tsanaga South, Far North Region (February 13, 2021); Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, CPDM MP from the South West Region, Vice-President of the National Assembly (April 20, 2021).

We also have: Ngo Yetna Marinette Mbeleg, CPDM MP for Sanaga-Maritime, Littoral Region (May 24, 2021); Ngahane Isaac, CPDM lawmaker for Wouri-East, Littoral Region (August 1, 2021); Ngobo Zogo, CPDM MP for Lékié, Centre Region (August 16, 2021); Fadimatou Sambo, CPDM MP for Mayo Rey, Northern Region (March 20, 2022); Bienvenu Tak, CPDM parliamentarian for Lom and Djérem, East Region (December 22, 2022); Mamouda Ali, CPDM MP for Bénoué-West, Northern Region (January 15, 2023); Ndongo Essomba, CPDM MP for Lékié, Centre Region (March 17, 2023).

On the same list of those who have died in the legislative chambers are; Isabelle Silikam, CPDM representative for Mayo Danay, Far North Region (June 23, 2023); Antoinette Nganbaye, CPDM MP for Lom and Djérem-Est, Eastern Region (October 2, 2023); Margueritte Abomo Fama, CPDM deputy for Upper Sanaga, Centre Region (November 10, 2023) and Memouna Mahamat, CPDM MP for Mayo Banyo, Adamawa Region (May 15, 2024).

After MINAT Boss' Endorsement of Robert Kona:

Cabral Libii's PCRN Faces Expulsion From ELECAM Commission

Story, Tata Timothy

Hon. Cabral Libii, embattled president of the Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation, PCRN, could soon be expelled from Elections Cameroon, ELECAM commissions after the Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji, endorsed Robert Kona as leader of the opposition party.

On May 15, Paul Atanga Nji, issued a directive to the Director General of Elections at Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) stating that the election body should no longer recognize representatives of the Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation (PCRN) led by Hon Cabral Libii.

According to Minister Atanga Nji, the legitimate leader of the party is not Cabral Libii, but rather the founding president Robert Kona, who is now the sole individual authorized to appoint party representatives.

The electoral law permits ELECAM, the entity responsible for organizing elections, to establish mixed commissions in which representatives of political parties can participate. These commissions collaborate with political parties to encourage potential voters to register on the electoral rolls.

Armand Okol, the head of communication at the PCRN, stated that Atanga Nji's letter, "undermines the little independence ELECAM could be credited with." Okol stressed that it is not within the Minister of Territorial Administration's authority to appoint party representatives to ELECAM, as "this competence is exclusively assigned to political parties through their bodies." He added, "In the PCRN, the only person authorized to do this is the current national president, and currently, that is President Cabral Libii."

However, many observers note that the Minister of Territorial Administration, who registers newly formed political parties, is exploit-



ing a leadership void within the PCRN. Cabral Libii's mandate, which began on May 11, 2019, and lasted for five years, expired on May 11. Libii was unable to organize an elective congress last December following the return of Robert Kona, one of the party's founders, who claimed the presidency. This led the Ministry of Territorial Administration to ban the congress due to "internal disputes" that could cause civil unrest. With Libii's mandate expired, the administration now recognizes Robert Kona as the sole interlocutor within the PCRN.

This situation has resulted in Divisional Officers, DOs prohibiting Cabral Libii's supporters from participating in the civil parade on National Day, May 20. A letter from Emmanuel Mariel Djikdent, SDO of Mfoundi Division, to

the party's leader, informed that the PCRN's participation in the parade was canceled due to "internal disputes that could disrupt the festive environment." Just five days earlier, the PCRN was among the nine political parties authorized to participate in the parade, according to a communiqué from Djikdent.

A similar reversal occurred in Ebolowa, where the Senior Divisional Officer for Mvila informed the PCRN representative that the party was no longer welcome at the May 20 celebrations.

As Cabral Libii and his supporters are gradually being edged out of the party, Robert Kona, one of the founders, is preparing for the elective congress on May 25-26, which is expected to reinstate him as the head of the PCRN.

The Colbert Factor

By Colbert Gwain

Mining in Cameroon: Boon or Bane to Growth and Development?

Children who grow up in Muteff make it a routine to always visit the Muteff plateau which expands far into the adjacent neighbouring village communities of Mboh, Achain and Ajung. The curiosity of the flat plateau lies in the famous stone pillars believed to have been planted by the Germans before they were defeated and forced out of Cameroon in 1916. The stone pillars are not only a unique positioning point where every visitor to the plateau stands to get a bird's eye, panoramic view of Laikom (traditional seat of the Kom palace) but where every child that grew up in Muteff nursed their weird dreams of the underground riches of the community.

From time immemorial, Muteff parents have recounted stories to children on their firesides, farmsteads, and to every traveler who stops over on the magnificent plateau, that while on a voyage of discovery of the hidden treasures of Muteff, the German explorers discovered some hidden underground minerals on this plateau and had to use the stone pillars as plotting points so they could one day return for exploitation. In their wildest dreams, some Muteff children spend time fantasizing on which kinds of rich minerals could be found underneath the plateau and why geologists and government authorities are not quickly identifying and launching the exploratory and exploitation phase so that Muteff could be transformed into a huge construction site.

Like in other communities in Cameroon, generations of children have grown up and died in Muteff without ever having to know whether it was salt, lithium, bauxite, iron ore, gold, or other rare earth metal elements that God blessed their communities with; talk less of benefiting from the proceeds of such minerals. Those still living in those undiscovered adjacent minerals-rich communities may get up one day to be told the kind of resources that were buried in their subsoils only when the value of such minerals has dropped in the world market, when the minerals have completely gone out of use, or more importantly, have been replaced by other emerging technological inventions.

Petrol which for generations has been used to fuel industrial growth and run cars all over the world is gradually being replaced by the introduction of electric cars that rely more on lithium and other rare earth metal elements. This is happening when adjacent village communities where petrol deposits are found have basked and died in abject poverty when policymakers have dragged their legs claiming it was either being exploited in a progressive and sustainable manner or being preserved for future generations.

In recent years, Ghanaian citizens have been asking hard questions on purpose as to why they continue to wallow in abject poverty and die for the same when all what the government does is to pride itself on how gold deposits and other minerals are found all over the Ghanaian subsoil. They ask of what use it is for them to be told that the whole of Ghana is covered by gold and generation after generation phase out without enjoying the benefits, and what with the likely possibility of the value of such minerals being reassigned thanks to the rapid technological developments. The same questions are being increasingly asked by Cameroonians about Cameroon which, like Ghana, is a "geological scandal" owing to its rich and unemployed mineral potentials.

One hundred and eight years (108) since the German exited Cameroon after identifying potential mineral sites in Muteff and in virtually all parts of Cameroon, and years after the government of Cameroon identified the mining sector as having the potential for making up for the financial shortfall for the economic development of Cameroon, Cameroonians are still to fully feel any impact from

the mining sector in the economy. It is difficult to understand why oil that was discovered in Cameroon in the 1950s saw the beginning of its exploitation in 1977 but mineral deposits that were identified by the Germans before 1916 are still to be completely explored or exploited in Cameroon.

It was probably to reassure Cameroonians that President Paul Biya was not wrong last year to conclude that 'solid minerals, especially gold, appear to be an excellent niche for financial resources' and that 'Our country was richly endowed with mineral resources that need to be exploited', that the Ministry of Mines, Industry and Technological Development, MINMIDT, organized the Cameroon International Mining and Energy Exhibition Conference dubbed CIMEC, that took place in Yaounde from May 22-24, 2024, under the theme: 'The transition from geological potential to the production of mining deposits as a means of strengthening economic growth in the sub-region', and that brought together over 50 Ministers of Mines from different African countries, as well as from Asian, Caribbean and Pacific regions.

The theme of the two-day mining conference that was officially opened and closed by Cameroon's Prime Minister and Head of Government (sitting in for President Paul Biya), was a direct response to the worries of an umpteenth Cameroonian to the effect that since the creation of the Ministry of Mines, Industry and Technological Development, MINMIDT, the energy of action has been wasted in/or consumed by the energy of the resolve. It was also a demonstration in triumphant detail that when a square peg is put in a square hole, even the most labyrinth of puzzles is quickly resolved.

Since taking over the driver's seat as Acting Minister of Mines, Industry and Technological Development, MINMIDT, Prof Fuh Calistus Gentry (the brain behind the successful staging of the 5th Cameroon International Mining and Energy Exhibition Conference, CIMEC), has devoted his time and energy to the meaningful specifics rather than the wandering generalities that since stalled the transition from geological potentials to the production of mineral deposits as a means of strengthening economic growth and development in Cameroon and the subregion. This transaction was foreseeable since the passing into law last year of the new ambitious mining code that was defended in parliament last year with maestro by the Acting Minister, Prof. Fuh Calistus Gentry.

While waiting for the effective implementation of the far-reaching resolutions and financial deal makings of the Yaounde CIMEC conference that could go a long way to transform Cameroon from a country of geological potentials to that of exploitation and transformation, it should be recalled that the conference was a unique opportunity for old and new players in the market from across Africa and beyond to abreast themselves with the untapped mining potentials of Cameroon. It was also an opportunity par excellence for industry players to delve into the various facets of the mining industry, providing insights into market dynamics, challenges and opportunities, emerging players, growth prospects and the overarching trends shaping its trajectory.

The conference also x-rayed the mining equipment market in Africa and especially as virtually all equipment so far are imported, new entrants into the mining sector like the adoption of artificial intelligence, IoT (Internet of Things) and blockchain to optimize operations and minimize environmental impact. A key and thorny issue at the Yaounde con-



fab was the necessity of always mapping the territorial mining landscape which underpins the distribution of market shares among key players in the industry, the adoption of green mining technologies and an increased focus on social responsibility which has since become a crucial issue for the current Minister of Mines, Industry and Technological Development.

The issue of permits, licensing and concessions as well as withdrawal of same without proper explanations by Cameroon authorities preoccupied the players in the Cameroon mining field. On the flip side was the issue of the potential for mass employment with one mining player priding off the fact that in her company that recruits 16 staff, 10 were anglo-phones and what a new window to the world of equal opportunity. The Acting Minister of Mines, Industry and Technological Development was particularly praised for giving universities an opportunity to be part of the conference. Thanks to this and especially because of revelations during the conference by ALUCAM that there have been jobs lacking particular expertise in their company, and alarmed by this, Heads of Mining Departments in Cameroon's universities requested for collaboration between the mining companies and training institutions so as to close the gap between training and employment. The increased involvement of local banks and the Cameroon Investment Promotion Agency in the mining sector was also singled out for praise.

From the foregoing, is the mining sector in Cameroon a boon or a bane for Cameroon's growth and development? Take a rendezvous with The Colbert Factor in the next edition.

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Court Suspends Anti-Cabral PCRN Faction Congress

Story, Enanga Sophia

A planned congress of the Robert Kona-led faction of the Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation (PCRN) that was scheduled for May 25-26 in Maroua, Far North Region did not take place has been suspended by a court order. The move comes amidst a simmering leadership dispute between Robert Kona, founder of the party and Hon. Cabral Libii who is the incumbent national president of the political party.

Kona, who claims to be the PCRN's founding president, had convened the congress in a bid to reclaim leadership of the party. However, Zizamle Essaya, judge at the Maroua Court of First Instance is said to have, ruled on May 21 that Kona lacked the authority to do so.

The judge cited Article 7 of the PCRN's statutes, which vests the power to convene a congress with the national president. The court is said to have noted that while an extraordinary congress can be convened by two-



thirds of the National Steering Committee, Cabral Libii remains the legal National President of the PCRN.

The decision further underscores that neither a rival congress nor a judicial ruling has challenged Libii's posi-

tion since his election in May 2019 during a congress in Guidiguiss. The court also dismissed Kona's claim of being the "founding president" as unrecognized by the party statutes.

Kona had previously challenged Libii's election at the Kaélé Court of First Instance, but this case remains ongoing and does not affect Libii's current presidency.

The court order suspended the Maroua congress "until the final outcome" of the Kaélé case. This effectively puts the leadership dispute on hold pending the court's ruling. Libii and his supporters have welcomed the court's decision, with Libii himself taking to Facebook to express his satisfaction. Kona, however, is yet to comment publicly.

The reaction of Minister of Territorial Administration Paul Atanga Nji, who has previously voiced support for Kona, remains to be seen.

MINFI Boss Queries Companies Over Tax Declaration Failure

Story, Tata Timothy

Finance Minister, Louis Paul Motaze, has publicly called on 38 taxpayers to submit their Financial Statements and Tax Returns (DSF) for the year 2023. The deadline expired on March 26, 2024. He urges these companies to file their declarations immediately to avoid penalties such as automatic taxation.

The DSF is a key accounting document that summarizes a company's activities over the fiscal year. It helps the tax authorities ensure compliance with tax regulations and assists the National Institute of Statistics in producing economic data. According to the General Tax Code, the DSF must be submitted by March 15 each year, though this deadline can be extended by the Finance Minister.

The list includes notable companies such as Aéroports du Cameroun (ADC), Bocom Petroleum SA, Bestway Finance, and BTP Bofas. ADC, a public enterprise managing the country's airports, conducted operations in 2023 and is slated for listing on the Central African Stock

Exchange (BVMAC).

Bocom Petroleum SA, part of the Bougne group led by businessman Dieudonné Bougne, specializes in petroleum product distribution with 68 service stations. In June 2022, it secured a FCFA33 billion loan from the International Finance Corporation to enhance domestic gas distribution.

Bestway Finance, based in Hong Kong, is involved in developing the Mbalam-Nabeba iron ore project between Cameroon and Congo. The company leads a consortium that signed a 50-year Public-Private Partnership with Cameroon on February 25, 2022, to build and operate the Kribi Port Mineral Terminal and a 500 km railway line for iron ore exploitation. BTP Bofas, a construction company, was active in 2023 but lost two contracts in November 2023 and February 2024.

The inclusion of the Chantier Naval et Industriel du Cameroun (CNIC), in crisis for several years, is less surprising. Companies on this list face increased fiscal charges. Article L 99



of the General Tax Code stipulates a non-negotiable fine for late DSF submission, ranging from FCFA250,000 to FCFA5 million depending on the company's size. Article L 103 specifies that non-submission of a declaration leading to automatic taxation

results in losing VAT deduction rights and previous period VAT credits. For income tax, it means losing the right to carry forward prior deficits and tax credits.

Ahead of 2025 Presidentials: MINAT Boss Warns 'Demon Possessed' Political Actors Against Destabilizing Country

Story, Itoe Andrew



The Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji, has warned opposition political actors whom he said are being controlled by a strange wind

seeking to destabilize Cameroon ahead of the 2025 presidentials to cease or face the cruelty of the laws in force.

In a press release dated May 23, the

member of the government called for respect of the sovereign institutions embodied by President Paul Biya. The day after the May 20 festivities, the Minister of Territorial Administration raised his voice. Paul Atanga Nji, through the press release, warned opposition political actors. The minister denounced serious abuses by certain opposition actors whom he said are in search of notoriety.

Without naming them, the MINAT boss accuses them of disseminating tendentious and anti-republican messages via social networks and the media with the aim of disturbing public order, discrediting the State and causing social unrest for selfish ends. He called on the political authors to

respect the sovereign institutions embodied by President Paul Biya. He recalled that contempt of the Head of State is punishable by the Penal Code.

Without meaning names, the distributions and other worries mentioned in the release showed the MINAT boss' message is directed to Prof Maurice Kamto, National President of the opposition Cameroon Renaissance Movement, MRC and Hon. Cabral Libii, National President of the opposition Cameroon Party for National Reconciliation, PCRN.

Both Cabral and Kamto have in recent times made outings promising to stage stiff resistance against any form of maneuvers ahead presidential elections in 2025.

Dialogue Day of Cameroon

Marches and parades followed by ingestion do not carry enough sustenance for national unity. But for more than fifty years, Cameroon has engaged in this façade. While it is true that on May 20, 1972 Cameroon parted ways with Federal Republic of Cameroon and embraced United Republic of Cameroon which would later be dumped for Republic of Cameroon twelve years later, the primary events marking this day have rather starved Cameroon of National Unity. A rethink is necessary.

In any country, each day is an opportunity for the citizens to engage in self-introspection, and conversations with fellow citizens on how they can better nourish the country with genuine unity and other good nourishments. But a special day when members of government and every other citizen assess the progress made towards putting the country in order and how they can improve is necessary. In Cameroon, such a day should be May 20th – a day for ferocious self-dialogue and deliberate general dialogue.

It has to be a day when the government reflects

on how far she has progressed towards making Cameroon an abode for good governance, genuine unity, equality, justice and so on. The citizenry on their part are to give consideration to how well they are living harmony, fairness, peace and so on in their everyday interactions. It also has to be a day for community leaders to assess their leadership.

Unity is not found in documents. And parades and marches and ingestion without sincere and deliberate dialogue about unity and the things that nourish unity do not enhance unity. Dialogue is not meant to be used only when there is a misunderstanding, or when citizens decide to kill one another, or call one another terrorists, or kidnap one another, or call others cubes of sugar, or starve other citizens of education, and so on.

There are questions that every nation must always ask herself. And honest answers would help her make the necessary adjustments. For Cameroon, here are some questions she must ask herself:

- Can every region boast of a sense of belonging?
- Is the presidency meant only for citizens from some particular regions?
- Has there ever been a female Prime Minister?
- Are some ministries meant only for citizens from some particular regions?
- Does a woman stand a chance of becoming the president?
- When there is a problem in one region, are other regions concerned about it?
- Can harmony be achieved through coercion?
- Are workers treated with respect?
- Has there ever been a female governor?
- Are the citizens conscious that leaders being callous does not mean that they should inflict misery on others?
- Are the citizens conscious that it does not make sense to complain about a situation without at least thinking of what to do about it?
- Are the citizens living love?

Aye Brandon Kiven

GEOVIC Raises Capital To FCFA42.5B, To Start Exploitation Of Nkamouna Mine

Story, Enanga Sophia

In Cameroon, the mining company Geovic Cameroon (GEOCAM), a subsidiary of the American junior Phoenix Mining, is preparing to re-launch its activities on the exploitation site of the cobalt-nickel-manganese deposit of Nkamouna, located in the East Region as envisaged by authorities this year.

However, according to a source close to the matter, the exploitation of this deposit by the company first requires the restructuring of GEOCAM to notably through the cleaning up of its accounts and internal audits.

Indeed, GEOVIC Mining Corp, the former majority shareholder of GEOVIC Cameroon with 60.5% of shares and holder of the exploitation permit for the deposit since 2003, was unable to conduct the exploitation of the deposit due to lack of financing, and had to sell its assets to Phoenix Mining 13 years later in order to complete the project.

To do this, the new shareholders of GEOCAM have planned to inject new funds for the recapitalization of this structure. According to the latter, "GEOVIC Cameroon is in a recovery phase which first requires that the financial years over the last ten years be completed by Deloitte auditors and that statutory meetings be held".

Reports hold that the last meeting of the Management Committee which took place at the beginning of last March this year set clear objectives for the auditors. Once the regularization is done, the GEOVIC Cameroon company will be recapitalized and work will begin on the construction of the production unit in Nkamouna.

In detail, the recapitalization process of GEOVIC Cameroon will be carried out in several stages depending on the evolution of the project. For the first phase of operation, the shareholders plan to inject "70 million dollars" into the capital of this company, or approximately 42.5 billion FCFA, specifies the source, without providing more details on the shares of each party.

This injection of capital will allow GEOCAM to finance the construction and development work of the mining site, as well as the acquisition of the equipment necessary for the extraction and processing of cobalt.

In 2013, the GEOCAM Company was put on hold, the two shareholders having neither the means nor the desire to develop the project, given the market situation at the time. Now that the pro-



ject is being re-launched, we must inject the necessary capital to develop it. For the exploitation of this deposit, the former shareholder is estimating the investment at 400 million dollars, or approximately 243 billion FCFA.

Situation between GEOVIC and SNI

It should be noted that the exploitation of cobalt, nickel and manganese at Nkamouna-Lomié, carried out by GEOVIC Cameroon, is a large-scale mining project in Cameroon. However, historical disagreements between the former majority shareholder of GEOCAM, the American GEOVIC Mining Corporation (60.5% of shares), and the National Investment Company (SNI), which holds 39.5% of the shares of the company, have long slowed down the progress of the project according to sources at the Ministry of Mines.

The crux of the problem being the settlement of the debt owed by GEOCAM to GEOVIC and the approach to be taken for the exploitation of the mine. According to a source, "it's fair to say

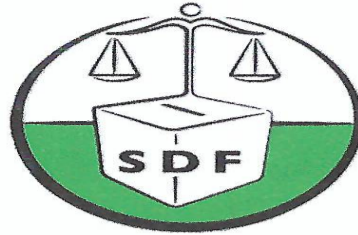
that there are clear differences in style and approaches between GEOVIC and SNI. This is normal between shareholders from different backgrounds. Our process is more entrepreneurial and rapid decision-making whereas they (SNI) have the constraints of a state-controlled group and are more procedural. But we have worked to close this gap. So no dispute with the SNI. Our goal is to produce by the end of next year at the latest. We are action-oriented. This is particularly the approach of our Chairman of the Board of Directors, Sam Jonah." To date, according to our information, common ground has been found between the two parties.

Remember that the Nkamouna mine is one of the largest cobalt deposits in Africa. With an estimated content of 68.13 million tonnes of ore, annual production is estimated at 13.5 tonnes of Cobalt, 3.3 tonnes of Nickel and 62,800 tonnes. It is also envisaged that commercial production from this deposit should begin in 2025.

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT

DEMOCRACY-JUSTICE-DEVELOPMENT
(POLITICAL PARTY)

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
NATIONAL SECRETARIAT
P.O.BOX 490 BAMENDA CAMEROON



RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
FRONT SOCIAL-DÉMOCRATE

DÉVELOPPEMENT DÉMOCRATIE-
JUSTICE
(PARTI POLITIQUE)

COMITE EXÉCUTIF NATIONAL
SECRETARIAT NATIONAL
POBOX 490 BAMENDA CAMEROUN

Réf : 023 /SDF.NS/ 2024

34th Anniversary Message to Members and Sympathizers of the Social Democratic Front (SDF)

Fellow Comrades and sympathisers of the SDF,

Once again, we are blessed to celebrate the 34th anniversary of the founding of our great party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), a milestone that fills us with great pride and a renewed sense of purpose. Let us start by thanking God Almighty for his blessings, thanking our founding fathers, that formidable group of visionary patriots, who set us on this path of change, laying a firm foundation and tracing a path that we are very proud to walk on and last but not least, our martyrs, those 6 brave Cameroonians, the young boys and girls who paid the ultimate price for our country's multiparty dispensation with their lives, because they believed in a dream of a free, equal, just and prosperous Cameroon. We must carry on fighting for that dream, as a meaningful recognition of all these deep sacrifices. It is as well our first anniversary without the presence of our founding leader, Ni John FRU NDI, may his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.

Over our three decades and four years, we have witnessed significant changes and challenges, yet our unwavering commitment and political maturity has been a guiding light. From our inception, we have striven to uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and social equity. Each step we take is a testament to our shared vision for a better Cameroon, where every citizen has a voice and the opportunity to thrive. We are now at a critical juncture in the life of our nation. Our founders played their role to the best of their abilities and strengths. They bequeathed to us a well-crafted ideology and deeply planted structures across the nation. And in the hearts of every Cameroonian is finely inscribed a Cameroon of equal opportunity and social justice. And so, as we commemorate this significant day, may we celebrate our collective determination and resilience to propel our movement forward until we achieve this goal. May our dedication to the ideals of social justice, democracy, and equal opportunities be strongly instrumental in guiding our party's identity and help us build a strong nation.

To our members, your tireless efforts and sacrifices are the backbone of our struggle. You have stood firm in the face of adversity, advocating for the rights and freedoms of our fellow Cameroonians. Your courage and resolve inspire us all to continue fighting for the democratic values we hold dear. May you keep the faith and continue this noble cause, despite the odds. Victory shall ultimately be ours, through the power of the people expressed through the ballot box.

To our sympathizers, your support has been invaluable. Your belief in our cause and your willingness to stand with us through thick and thin have fortified our resolve. Together, we have built a formidable force for change, one that is grounded in the aspirations of the people.

As we look to the future, we remain united and committed to our goals. The road ahead may be long and fraught with challenges, but with our collective determination, we will overcome and achieve the lasting change we seek.

Here's to many more years of solidarity, progress, and unwavering dedication to the ideals of the Social Democratic Front.

Happy Anniversary, and long live the SDF!

Hon Joshua OSIH
National Chairman



South Africa Elections 2024:

Ten Key People Who Could Shape It

South Africans are gearing up for watershed general elections on May 29 that could see the ruling African National Congress (ANC) fail to clinch a majority for the first time in 30 years.

Some 28 million registered voters across nine provinces will troop out to vote for representatives to national and provincial parliaments. In turn, the winning parties will then name a president and cabinet.

The results of the vote are uncertain owing to the ANC's shaky footing. Among the biggest issues at stake in Africa's most advanced economy are especially high unemployment records, violent crime, deteriorating public infrastructure, and stark economic inequality.

The country's polls are more about the parties, but several personalities dominate the election discourse. Here are 10 of the most important people to know:

1. Cyril Ramaphosa
Current South African president and head of the ANC, Ramaphosa is gunning for his second and final election although his party's standing is set to prove his biggest challenge.

The 71-year-old from Soweto was part of the premier Nelson Mandela-led ANC class that wrested South Africa from the apartheid government in 1994. He was hoping to succeed Mandela as president but when that didn't happen, Ramaphosa left politics in 1996, going on to become a wildly successful businessman, dabbling in sectors from mining to food, and owning the McDonald's franchise at one point. He returned to become deputy president in 2014 and then took over the presidency after former President Jacob Zuma was forced to step down in 2018.

Although seen as more level-headed than Zuma, Ramaphosa has suffered his share of image-denting scandals in office, most notably the 2022 Phala Phala debacle when he was accused of hiding \$4m in laundered cash in his farmhouse.

But it's the stubborn unemployment, persistent power and water cuts, and festering economic disparities plaguing the country that have most blighted his and the ANC's record. Voter discontent is at its highest ever, and opinion polls from local broadcaster eNCA predict the party will gain only about 43.4 percent of the vote – down from 57.5 percent in the 2019 elections.

The ANC particularly faces key challenges in populous KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), set to be the most tightly contested province.

If the ANC fails to gain at least 50 percent, it may be forced into a coalition with smaller opposition parties for the first time in history. Still, Ramaphosa, who has retained a steady support base, is the favourite for president according to ANC's internal polls.

2. John Steenhuisen
Head of the official opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), Steenhuisen, 48, is keen to sell his party as one that will "rescue South Africa" from the ANC.

Even so, many view the DA as a party that only champions the interests of the middle class, specifically those in its support base of the Western Cape, despite campaigning in a country where working-class Black people make up the bulk of the population.

Nevertheless, the DA remains the second-largest party after the ANC and opinion polls predict it could win 18.6 percent of the vote. Steenhuisen would likely clinch a top position in the case of a coalition government that involves the DA. He is credited with engineering the 2023 formation of the Multi-Party Charter (MPC), a coalition of about 11 opposition parties that have united to push out the ANC and currently hold 144 of 400 parliament seats.

One tricky question facing the coalition, though, is who will be its face. Steenhuisen – and indeed much of the DA leadership – is white. That is a sore topic for a country that experienced brutal apartheid rule for decades.

The DA has also struggled to rally sup-



A combination image showing Cyril Ramaphosa, Jacob Zuma, John Steenhuisen, and Julius Malema [AP Photo, Reuters]

port from Black voters: it opposes policies such as workplace race quotas introduced by Ramaphosa's government last year to close economic gaps that have seen Black people perpetually disadvantaged. This is why some criticise Steenhuisen and the DA caucus for being unaware of the conditions of the majority of South Africans. Steenhuisen himself has deflected accusations of representing an advantaged minority by saying South Africans are looking for competence.

3. Jacob Zuma
Former President Zuma is the wildcard element in this election. He was set to run for parliament but was kicked off the candidate list for the new uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) party by a last-minute court decision because of a 2021 conviction. Now, he's fielding a stand-in, testing a new role as kingmaker.

A proverbial cat with nine lives whose political career seems unbreakable despite serious corruption scandals, 82-year-old Zuma has long been a divisive figure.

He is seen by some as a liberator and saviour for the poor, owing to his decades of political experience, his activism during apartheid, and his persona as a "man of the people". For others, he embodies the worst of government corruption, as a leader who was at the helm of some of the biggest corruption or "state capture" events in the country that eventually forced him to resign in 2018.

Now, Zuma is back, determined to be a thorn in the side of the ANC, with which he has since fallen out. He ditched the party last year to back the newly formed MK party. Ongama Mtimka, a politics and history lecturer at Nelson Mandela University, said Zuma's primary objective is to frustrate the ANC and his successor, who he has clashed with. "He is a very vindictive politician and I think he wants to show President Ramaphosa that he can bring a formidable challenge and frustrate Ramaphosa and the ANC," he said.

With the MK, Zuma is looking to wrest power from the ANC, if not nationally, then at least to split the ANC's votes in his home province of KZN. The latest polls show MK winning a significant 14.4 percent of the vote to become the third biggest political force in South Africa. It's an impressive feat for a party that was formed last year. Zuma is expected to present a candidate from the party's little-known members to be his stand-in. Among the names that could come up is his daughter, 41-year-old Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla.

4. Julius Malema
Malema is the founder of the Economic Freedom Party (EFF), an anti-establishment, Marxist, Pan-Africanist party that keeps a sharp focus on the rights of Black South Africans and accuses the ANC of failing to cater to that core population. Malema is particularly controversial for his radical, at times violent political statements, and for pushing policies seeking to

redistribute land owned by the white minority to Black people or convert lucrative privately-owned mines to government property. He has also pushed Pan-African policies, advocating for Swahili as a common African language.

The 43-year-old has said he started in politics as a teenager before rising to become the ANC's Youth League leader in 2008, a position that made him popular nationwide. He was once a Zuma ally, but he was expelled from the ANC in 2012 after he fell out with the then-president and other party members. He went on to create the EFF the next year, and its members are now hard to miss in the Parliament of South Africa thanks to their red berets and red boiler suits that are a nod to the uniforms labourers wear. Malema has been accused of using hate speech directed at the country's white population, but he continues to appeal to young people at home and across the continent.

The EFF won 44 parliament seats in 2019 and was the third-biggest party then. Opinion polls this time, however, predict Zuma's MK displacing EFF to fourth place. The party is expected to win 11.4 percent of the vote.

5. Velenkosini Hlabisa
Hlabisa is the president of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which is trailing behind the EFF and is predicted to clinch 3.1 percent of the vote.

The party, which pushes more autonomy for traditional leaders, has previously had little nationwide success, as it is mainly active in KZN and receives most of its support from ethnic Zulus.

The 2019 parliamentary elections saw it move in fourth place after the EFF with 3.38 percent of the vote and 14 parliament seats.

The IFP is also a part of the MPC coalition and is the second-biggest party in the group after the DA. A coalition government could see Hlabisa, a teacher and one-time municipal councillor for his hometown of Hlabisa in KZN, secure a top cabinet post in the next government.

6. Raymond Zondo
As Chief Justice of South Africa, Zondo could prove crucial in legal tussles that could follow the elections – especially in the case of a first-time coalition government.

Already, court challenges abound in the lead-up to the vote, especially between the ANC and Zuma's MK.

Zondo is most notably remembered for chairing the 2018 Commission of Inquiry that investigated allegations of corruption under former President Zuma – later known as the Zondo Commission.

Zondo heads the Constitutional Court – the highest court in the land, whose rulings are final. It's the same court that ruled out Zuma as a candidate for the elections this week.

Zondo is set to retire in August, and will likely pass on the baton to Deputy Chief Justice Mandisa Muriel Lindelwa Maya.

7. Mosotho Moepya and Sy Mamabolo

Moepya is the chairperson of the independent Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC), while Mamabolo is the chief electoral officer. Electoral fraud is not a major concern, but it is a worry.

South Africa has a fairly robust voting and counting system, but there were a handful of double-vote cases in the 2019 elections, and EFF's Malema accused the ANC of voter fraud in some parts of the country at the time.

This week, Moepya inaugurated a national results centre in Gauteng province and promised the IEC will ensure a smooth vote. No ballots will be counted outside of the voting zones, Moepya promised, in one measure to avoid fraud.

8. Paul Mashatile
Deputy president of the ANC and South Africa, Mashatile is in line to potentially become the next president – if the party manages to retain the majority vote in these elections.

The politician was once a student activist and a fighter for the ANC during apartheid, a minister, and a former premier of Gauteng – the most populous province, which houses Johannesburg and Pretoria.

The ANC has traditionally presented its party president as the head of state. A new party leader is elected every five years, but the ANC's internal elections schedule does not align with the national presidential term. That means even if the ANC wins this election, Ramaphosa will cease to be party president – and perhaps South Africa's president – before the next general elections in 2029, paving the way for Mashatile to become head of state.

9. Pieter Groenewald
Groenewald is the leader of the fringe Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus), a right-wing party that is advocating for the rights of the Afrikaner population – in the form of an independent state within South Africa.

The party surprised in the 2019 elections when, under Groenewald, it managed to clinch 2.38 percent of the vote and 10 parliament seats, up from 0.9 percent in the 2014 elections. Its strongholds are in the Western Cape and North West provinces.

Groenewald and other party leaders have in recent campaigns attempted to shift from the party's rightist beginnings, pushing instead a party that seeks to reach voters across ethnicities.

10. Naledi Pandor
Foreign Minister Pandor shot into the global limelight as she championed South Africa's support for the Palestinian cause and led a historic genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The war in Gaza has come to dominate South African politics, becoming the single most important foreign affairs issue on the ballot, and the ANC – through Pandor – has performed well on that point, many analysts point out. Other parties like the DA have been lukewarm on the issue, while the FF Plus has backed Israel. The EFF, like the ANC, has supported the Palestinians.

Pandor has also gained attention for staunchly positioning South Africa as pro-Russia, pro-China, and pro-BRICS while refusing to pander to the United States and other Western countries even at the risk of economic sanctions. Earlier reports speculated Pandor could be the ANC's Western Cape premier candidate, although local media report Pandor has rejected that proposal.

Regardless, the minister has been on the campaign trail, appealing especially to Muslim communities to vote ANC because of its actions on the Palestinian cause, which she said showcases South Africa's "moral authority" on the world stage.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA

Chad's Deby Sworn In As President As Allamaye Halina Named PM



Chad's newly elected president, Mahamat Idriss Deby, has been sworn in to succeed his late father after three years as an interim leader under military rule in the northcentral African country.

Shortly after, the country announced that Allamaye Halina would assume the post of prime minister after Succes Masra announced his resignation from the position this week.

Speaking at an inauguration ceremony in the capital in N'Djamena on Thursday, which followed contested elections earlier this month, Deby said: "To my brothers and sisters who did not choose me ... I would like to say that I respect your choice, which contributes to the vitality of our democracy."

Deby won a sweeping 61 percent of the May 6 vote that international NGOs said was neither credible nor free.

He was proclaimed transitional president in April 2021 after rebels killed his father, Idriss Deby, who had himself ruled Chad since a coup in the early 1990s. Deby was quickly endorsed as transitional leader by an international community led by France, whose forces in recent years have been removed by military regimes in former colonies Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. France currently has 1000 soldiers in Chad.

The swearing-in on Thursday marked the end of three years of military rule in oil-rich Chad, one of

Africa's poorest countries, making official what the opposition has denounced as a Deby dynasty, accusing the clan and its allies of controlling the main institutions of power.

New prime minister

Following the inauguration, Chad named Halina, who was previously its ambassador to China, the new prime minister in a decree read out on state television. Masra, who resigned from the post on Wednesday, was Deby's main rival in the election.

He had only served as prime minister since the beginning of the year, having returned to the country under a reconciliation agreement after a period in exile following a crackdown on protests against military rule.

The opposition leader came second in the election with 18.54 percent of the vote, unsuccessfully challenging the result on allegations of fraud.

After the Constitutional Council rejected his bid, he called on supporters to "remain mobilised" but "peaceful".

Eight African heads of state and foreign dignitaries, including Franck Riester, France's minister for foreign trade and Francophonie, attended Deby's swearing-in ceremony. The presidential term runs for five years and can be renewed once.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES

Biden Pledges To Designate Kenya 'non-NATO ally'

United States President Joe Biden has pledged to designate Kenya as the country's first "major non-NATO ally" (MNNA) in sub-Saharan Africa as Kenyan President William Ruto makes a state visit to Washington, DC, to deepen ties between the two nations.

During a news conference at the White House on Thursday, Biden said he planned to work with Congress to give Kenya the largely symbolic title. "That's a fulfilment of years of collaboration," he said.

"Our joint counterterrorism operations have degraded ISIS [ISIL] and al-Shabab across East Africa, our mutual support for Ukraine has rallied the world to stand behind the UN Charter, and our work together on Haiti is helping pave the way to reduce instability and insecurity."

The US has designated 18 countries as non-NATO allies, including Israel, Brazil and the Philippines.

The label reflects Kenya's rise from a regional partner that has long cooperated with US counterterrorism operations on the continent to a global influence.

Thursday's announcement came as Ruto and Biden held talks at the White House during the Kenyan leader's state visit to the US, which began this week.

Reporting from the White House, Al Jazeera's Kimberly Halkett said Ruto's visit also "marks 60 years of diplomatic ties and cooperation between the United States and Kenya".

"There are security ties, trade ties, innovation when it comes to technology, also when it comes to global health," Halkett said.

The Kenyan leader's trip is the sixth state visit hosted by Biden and the first for an African president since 2008.

This week's meetings, dubbed the Nairobi-Washington Vision, come amid Biden's appeals to African nations that the US can be a better partner than China as Beijing deepens its investment in the continent, often through high-interest loans.

In the past year, Africa's political landscape has been upended by a spate of military coups, wars and shaky elections that have given US rivals China and Russia more significant influence.

The White House talks also were held as a US-backed initiative to send a Kenya-led police force to crisis-hit Haiti appears to be solidifying.

Kenyan officials recently said

the deployment, which aims to help the Haitian National Police restore order during a surge in deadly gang violence in the Caribbean nation, is imminent. About 1,000 Kenyan police officers are to take part.

"We affirm our mutual commitment to the stabilisation of Haiti through the Multinational Security Support Mission," Ruto said during Thursday's news conference.

The deployment, Halkett reported, is part of "a longstanding tradition of counterterrorism efforts and cooperation between the United States and Kenya".

In a joint statement after their talks, Biden and Ruto announced a range of new US-backed investments in green energy and health manufacturing along with a plan to cut Kenya's high debt load, most of which is owed to China.

The US International Development Finance Corporation this week also announced deals that take its portfolio in Kenya to more than \$1bn, the statement said.

"During our discussions, I witnessed firsthand President Biden's and the US government's determination to make our partnership work," Ruto told reporters.

"As my visit comes to a close, I am confident that our engagements have laid a solid foundation for us to continue the good work we have begun with stronger faith and greater hope for success because in Joe Biden, Kenya and Africa have a strong and committed friend."

Biden, who is seeking re-election in November, has said he plans to visit the African continent in February should he win a second term.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES



Sunak Says No Rwanda Deportation Flights Before Election

No deportation flights to Rwanda will take place before a July 4 snap election, United Kingdom Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said, meaning a Labour Party victory could stop the controversial Conservative Party scheme from ever leaving the tarmac.

Sunak made the announcement on Thursday during the first full day of campaigning. The Labour Party currently maintains a commanding 20-point lead in opinion polls and has promised to scrap the deportation plan if it wins power.

Speaking at a campaign event on Thursday, Sunak cast the policy as central to the political race. In April, he had promised the flights would take off in 10 to 12 weeks. Mass arrests of potential deportees began earlier this month.

"We've started detaining people ... the flights are booked for July, airfields on standby, the escorts are ready, the caseworkers are churning through everything, so all that is happening, and if I'm re-elected as your prime minister, those flights will go to Rwanda," Sunak said.

The deportation plan has been a flagship policy for Sunak since he took office in October 2022. He has continued to champion it even after the UK Supreme Court in November ruled the



plan unlawful on the grounds that Rwanda could not be considered a safe third country.

In response, Sunak signed a new treaty with the East African country and passed new legislation in June to circumvent the ruling. Nevertheless, more legal challenges remain possible. lay Video

For his part, Labour leader Keir Starmer vowed earlier this month to trash the plan, which has already cost hundreds of millions of pounds, "straight away" upon taking office.

But with the number of asylum seekers making the dangerous journey across the Channel rising to record numbers so far in 2024, Starmer also introduced a separate plan to launch a

new border enforcement unit and tap counter "terror" powers to tamp down on people smuggling.

Surprise announcement

Immigration is expected to be a prominent issue in the election campaigns, with the economy and the National Health Service's record waiting times also set to loom large.

The decision to call the vote months earlier than expected came as a shock to some members of Sunak's party, with 14 years of at times chaotic Conservative rule leaving many in the country disillusioned.

Conservatives have lagged behind the Labour Party in opinion polls since Sunak replaced former Prime Minister Liz Truss following her resignation after just 44 days in office. Some political observers have questioned the timing of Sunak's announcement, noting there is little reason for optimism the climate will shift.

Speaking at an event in Gillingham, southeast England on Thursday, Starmer portrayed himself as the candidate who can renew, rebuild and reinvigorate the UK. He pointed to the disparity in cities like London, which house massive corporations like Google.

Referencing children who live in inner-city areas, he said, "They cannot imagine themselves ever making that

journey from their school to those jobs. It's a few hundred yards."

Starmer is the country's former chief prosecutor who augured the party towards the centre after it shifted farther left under his predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn.

Victory would make Starmer the sixth prime minister in eight years in the UK. The highest turnover rate since the 1830s has become emblematic to some of a period of heightened political turmoil with no end in sight.

The Rwanda deportation plan is not the only signature Sunak policy in doubt. A bill that would gradually raise the minimum age to buy cigarettes for anyone born after 2009 – effectively making it increasingly difficult for the younger generation to smoke – is also unlikely to pass before Parliament dissolves on Friday ahead of the election.

Separately on Thursday, Nigel Farage, the former face of the Brexit campaign, has said he would not seek election for the six-year-old Reform UK party.

The move could diminish the appeal of the right-wing party, which had threatened to siphon support from the Conservatives' voter base.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES

Italy To Resume UNRWA Funding As Gaza Faces Humanitarian Crisis



Italy has announced it will restore funding for the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) months after it suspended aid to the agency over Israeli allegations linking UN staff to the deadly October 7 attack.

Rome joins several Western donors in resuming aid after an independent review of UNRWA, led by French former foreign minister Catherine Colonna, found that Israel had not provided any evidence to back its claims.

Israel launched a brutal military offensive in the wake of the October 7 attack, killing more than 35,000 Palestinians. Up to 1,100 people were killed and about 250 people were taken captive in the attack inside Israel claimed by the Hamas group.

The Palestinian enclave remains in ruins after nearly eight months of Israel's war.

Most of the key donors, including the United States and the European Union, have resumed funding due to the unprecedented humanitarian situation in Gaza worsened by Israel's restrictions on aid delivery.

"Italy has decided to resume financing specific projects intended for assistance to Palestinian refugees, but only after rigorous controls that guarantee that not even a penny risks ending up supporting terrorism," Antonio Tajani told Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa during a meeting on Saturday.

Tajani said he had informed the visiting premier "that the government has arranged new funding for the Palestinian population, for a total of 35 million euros (\$38m)".

"Of this, five million will be allocated to UNRWA," he said in a statement, with the remaining 30 million euros allocated to Italy's "Food for Gaza" initiative in coordination with other UN aid agencies.

Mustafa also held talks with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni during which the Italian prime minister told Mustafa that Rome supported efforts towards a sustainable ceasefire in Gaza, the release of Israeli captives held by Hamas and improved humanitarian aid for the people of Gaza, her office said in a statement.

The UNRWA, which coordinates nearly all aid to Gaza, has been in crisis since January, when Israel accused about a dozen of its 13,000 Gaza employees of being involved in the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel.

That led many nations, including top donor the US, to abruptly suspend funding to the agency, threatening its efforts to deliver aid in Gaza, leaving millions at risk of hunger and possible death.

Created in 1949, the UNRWA employs about 30,000 people in the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

Video 'Full-blown famine'

UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini had

described the steps to suspend funding an "additional collective punishment" for Palestinians already reeling from non-stop Israeli bombardment.

UN Special Rapporteur on Gaza, Francesca Albanese, also called the decision to cut funding "immoral" amid widespread hunger and a health crisis in the besieged Palestinian territory.

As news of the funding reinstatement was announced, Gaza faced constant bombardment overnight, preventing the delivery of UN services to many parts of the territory.

Earlier this week, the UNRWA announced it would suspend food distribution in Gaza's southern city of Rafah, citing a lack of supplies and insecurity in the densely populated city. The Rafah crossing – the lifeline for humanitarian aid delivery – remains shut after Israel took control of the border with Egypt on May 7. Limited aid supplies have entered Gaza since May 6, some of it through a temporary pier built by the US, but it is not enough to meet soaring needs.

The UN World Food Programme has said that Palestinians in northern Gaza are experiencing "full-blown famine". Earlier this month, Israel resumed attacks in northern Gaza weeks after withdrawing its forces from there.

Meanwhile, Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud, who is reporting from central Gaza's Deir el-Balah area, reported attacks were continuing on Saturday in the vicinity of the Kuwaiti Hospital, including the Shaboura refugee camp.

Artillery shelling hit [the camp's] surroundings, preventing ambulances from reaching the hospital.

"Gradually, step by step, another health facility is being pushed out of service as the Israeli military approaches the main roads leading to the Kuwaiti Hospital," our correspondent said.

No hospitals are currently accessible in northern Gaza, the World Health Organization reports, and as of Friday, only the al-Awda Hospital was "considered partially functional" in the north, though it, too, was inaccessible amid Israeli military operations.

The International Rescue Committee and the organisation Medical Aid for Palestinians, reported that in central Gaza displaced people are surviving on just 3 percent of the internationally recognised minimum requirements of water.

At one shelter for displaced Palestinians, 10,000 people received just 4,000 litres (1,057 gallons) of water per day, "translating to about 0.4 litres per person, for drinking, washing, cooking and cleaning", the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reports.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES

Rights Groups Demand Biden Halt Israel Arms Transfers After ICJ Ruling

Rights groups have renewed calls for US President Joe Biden to halt weapons transfers to Israel, after the United Nations' top court ordered the Israeli government to immediately halt its ground offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah and allow aid into the area.

The United States has faced months of pressure to suspend military assistance to Israel as the Palestinian death toll in the Gaza Strip rose steadily and a humanitarian crisis deepened across the besieged enclave.

Biden himself has publicly opposed Israel's offensive in Rafah – where the majority of Gaza's displaced residents had gathered – and his administration suspended one shipment of weapons to Israel over its concerns.

Yet despite saying in early May that he would withhold more weapons if the country went ahead with a large-scale operation in Rafah, Biden has largely backed away from using such leverage as Israeli leaders rejected Washington's warnings.

On Friday, Sarah Leah Whitson, executive director of Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN), said the International Court of Justice's order "leaves no ambiguity about what should follow: an arms embargo on Israel".

"Continued US arms transfers to Israel would constitute deliberate defiance of the Court's orders and make our government complicit in genocide," she said in a statement.

Citing the "immense risk" to Palestinians in Gaza, the ICJ said Israel must "immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah Governorate, which may inflict on the Palestinian group in Gaza conditions of life that could bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part".

Friday's order did not offer a final determination on whether Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, as alleged by South Africa, which brought the case before the international tribunal.

Still, the court's provisional ruling "opens up the possibility for relief" for the people of Rafah, said Balkees Jarrah, associate

director of the international justice programme at Human Rights Watch (HRW).

"But only if governments use their leverage, including through arms embargoes and targeted sanctions, to force Israel to urgently enforce the court's measures," Jarrah said.

Rights observers also noted that the ruling creates a foundation for the UN Security Council to take more resolute action against Israel.

The US – one of five members on the council with veto power – has repeatedly shielded Israel from Security Council action since the Gaza war began in early October.

Michael Schaeffer Omer-Man, director of Israel-Palestine research at DAWN, said the ICJ's ruling should push the US to "support any UNSC actions to enforce the Court's order", or risk appearing "again before the entire world as the guarantor of Israeli impunity".

Nihad Awad, national executive director of the Council on American Islamic Relations, also urged Biden to honour the ICJ's ruling "by immediately ending all military assistance to Israel's genocide".

"Israel is clearly attempting to make Gaza uninhabitable. It must be stopped from completing this monstrous goal," Awad said in a statement.

Video Duration 01 minutes 01 seconds 01:01

Bipartisan Israel support

Israel continues to enjoy widespread support among senior Biden administration officials, including the US president himself, as well as lawmakers from both major parties.

Still, a growing number of legislators in Washington, DC, have demanded a clearer accounting of whether Israel is using American weapons in Gaza in violation of US and international law.

Israel's bombardment of Gaza has killed more than 35,500 Palestinians, most of them women and children, while its siege on the coastal territory has led to dire shortages of humanitarian aid and pushed Palestinians to the brink of starvation.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA



Rooney Expected To Be Confirmed Plymouth Boss



Wayne Rooney is expected to be confirmed as the head coach of Championship side Plymouth Argyle on Saturday after holding talks about the vacancy.

Rooney, 38, is keen to re-establish his reputation after a disastrous spell at Birmingham last season, when he lost nine games out of 15.

Argyle are looking for a new boss after the dismissal of Ian Foster towards the end of last season.

Director of football Neil Dewsnip and coach Kevin Nancekivell took over for the remainder of the campaign and guided Plymouth to safety, ironically at Birmingham's expense.

Dewsnip knows Rooney from

his time as a coach at Everton's academy.

Rooney made 763 appearances as a player during spells with Everton, Manchester United, MLS club DC United and Derby.

He moved into a player-coach role with the Rams in November 2020 and announced his retirement two months later, after being named permanent manager.

The former England striker oversaw 85 games at Derby before moving back to America to become manager of former club DC United.

Rooney was then appointed Birmingham manager in October 2023, but he was sacked less than three months later.

SOURCE: BBC SPORTS

Barcelona Sack Xavi With Flick Set To Replace Him

Barcelona have sacked manager Xavi with former Bayern Munich boss Hansi Flick set to replace him. Xavi will take charge of Barcelona for the final time on Sunday, when they host Sevilla in their last La Liga match of the season.

The 44-year-old, who had been contracted until 2025, was informed of the club's decision during a meeting with club president Joan Laporta and sporting director Deco on Friday - exactly one month since it was announced that he would remain at the club.

Former Spain midfielder Xavi said in January that he was going to leave the Camp Nou, but he was persuaded to stay by Laporta in April.

But recent comments from Xavi, in which he opened up about the club's financial struggles, are said to have angered Laporta.

Barcelona said they would like to "thank Xavi for his work as a coach" since taking charge in 2021.

"It is never easy to leave the club of your life, but I am very proud after two and a half years at the head of a dressing room that has been like a second family," said Xavi in an open letter issued on social media.

"From Sunday I will be just one more Barca fan, in the stands.

"Because before being a player or a coach I am a Barcelona fan and I only want the best for the club in my life, which will always have me at its disposal."

The Catalan club said a "new structure" will be confirmed in the coming days, with Flick set to take charge.

Conversations with 59-year-old started at least two months ago and an agreement with the manager has been in place for a while.

He has been out of work since he was sacked by Germany in September 2023.

Flick, who replaced Joachim Low as national boss in 2021, became the first Germany manager to be sacked since the role was created in 1926, winning just 12 of his 25 matches in charge.

Flick's stint with Germany came after he guided Bayern Munich to a treble in 2020, winning the Bundesliga, DFB-Pokal and Champions League.

Barcelona forward Robert Lewandowski, 35, played under Flick at the Allianz Arena for two seasons.

After guiding Barcelona to the La Liga title in 2022-23, Xavi's side put up a disappointing defence to their crown this term.



The Catalans are 12 points behind rivals Real Madrid, with one game remaining in the season.

Barcelona were knocked out of the Champions League at the quarter-final stage by Paris St-Germain.

Xavi spent 17 years with Barcelona as a player, having emerged from the club's La Masia academy.

After four years' playing for Qatari side Al-Sadd, Xavi retired in 2019 to take over the side as manager.

He remained in Qatar for a further two seasons, before replacing Ronald Koeman in November 2021 as Barcelona boss.

Xavi helped the club to the La Liga title and Spanish Cup during his first full season in charge, earning the side a return to the Champions League.

Sevilla boss Quique Sanchez Flores has criticised Barcelona's treatment of Xavi.

"I shouldn't say this, but how badly Barcelona treats its legends. What a bad streak," Flores told reporters on Friday afternoon.

"With Koeman, with Messi, with Xavi now - how bad. I wish clubs treated their legends well. That would be fantastic. Xavi is a legend of the club."

Flores added he had "doubts the criticism about him [Xavi] is correct".

Barcelona will finish the season second in La Liga behind champions Real Madrid and Xavi will remain in charge for the game at Sevilla.

During his 141 games as Barcelona boss, Xavi won 89 matches - giving him a 63% win ratio.

SOURCE: BBC SPORTS

Euro 2024:

Atalanta Goals Book Scamacca Place In Italy's Provisional Squad

Gianluca Scamacca has played his way into Italy's provisional squad for Euro 2024 after a phenomenal end to the season, as coach Luciano Spalletti announced on Thursday his squad for the tournament in Germany.

Striker Scamacca was picked by Spalletti after scoring 11 goals and setting up four more in all competitions since the start of March, helping fire Atalanta to their historic Europa League triumph on Wednesday.

The 25-year-old had been dropped for Italy's March friendlies with Venezuela and Ecuador by Spalletti, who railed against footballers "playing on the PlayStation until four in the morning", a comment widely interpreted as being directed at Scamacca.

Spalletti has selected the in-form Scamacca in an attempt to resolve Italy's long-standing problem of finding reliable strikers.

Inconsistent Ciro Immobile - one of the pivotal figures in Italy's Euro triumph three years ago - has been dropped. Should Scamacca lead the line for Italy, he will play alongside Juventus star Federico Chiesa, whose teammate Nicolò Fagioli is a surprise inclusion among the midfielders after missing almost the entire season.

Fagioli made his first Juventus appearance since October on



Monday following his seven-month ban for gambling on football matches. The betting scandal cost Newcastle United midfielder Sandro Tonali his place on the plane for the Euro, which starts on June 14.

Youth to the fore as Italy target glory in Germany at Euro 2024

Fagioli is one of a number of younger players who have replaced veterans of the last Euro victory like former Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Marco Verratti, who moved to Al-Arabi in Qatar last summer. Verratti has never been called up by Spalletti since he replaced Roberto Mancini in August last year.

Manuel Locatelli earned himself a move to Juventus from Sassuolo by impressing at the last Euro, but was also dropped by Spalletti, the midfielder expressing his dismay by posting a black screen on Instagram.

Other players who are big names from three years ago when Italy beat England in a dramatic Wembley final - but who won't travel to Germany - include retired captain Giorgio Chiellini, his centre-back partner Leonardo Bonucci and winger Lorenzo Insigne.

On June 6, Spalletti will announce his final squad, which will face Spain, Croatia and Albania in Group B. Italy play Turkey and Bosnia and

Herzegovina in pre-tournament friendlies early next month.

Provisional Italy squad:

Goalkeepers: Gianluigi Donnarumma (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Alex Meret (Napoli), Ivan Provedel (Lazio), Guglielmo Vicario (Tottenham/ENG)

Defenders: Francesco Acerbi (Inter Milan), Alessandro Bastoni (Inter Milan), Raoul Bellanova (Torino), Alessandro Buongiorno (Torino), Riccardo Calafiori (Bologna), Andrea Cambiaso (Juventus), Matteo Darmian (Inter Milan), Giovanni Di Lorenzo (Napoli), Federico Dimarco (Inter Milan), Gianluca Mancini (Roma), Giorgio Scalvini (Atalanta)

Midfielders: Nicolò Barella (Inter Milan), Bryan Cristante (Roma), Nicolò Fagioli (Juventus), Michael Folorunsho (Verona), Davide Frattesi (Inter Milan), Jorginho (Arsenal/ENG), Lorenzo Pellegrini (Roma), Samuele Ricci (Torino)

Forwards: Federico Chiesa (Juventus), Stephan El Shaarawy (Roma), Riccardo Orsolini (Bologna), Giacomo Raspadori (Napoli), Mateo Retegui (Genoa), Gianluca Scamacca (Atalanta), Mattia Zaccagni (Lazio)

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES