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Cont. Page 2

MRCG launches state of the media report 2018-2021



No one-on-ones yet scheduled between Biden and African leaders heading to D.C.

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LOCAL NEWS MRCG launches state of the media report 2018-2021

By Ishmael Dumbuya

The Media Reform Coordinating Group (MRCG) has on December 5, officially launched the State of the Media Report 2018-2021 at its head office on Circular Road, Freetown.

The report is a publication of the MRCG and the research was led by the Faculty of Communication, Media and Information Studies, University of Sierra Leone, with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

The Report is a continuation of the last edition published in 2018 which largely contained issues and events in 2017.

In his opening statement, Chairman of the Advisory Board of MRCG, Dr. Victor Massaquoi started off by expressing his gratitude to the secretariat and media practitioners present.

He went on to state that the State of the Media Report is a critical piece of research designed to test many questions bothering on human rights, freedom of expression, policy environment as well as ease of doing business in the media ecosystem of the country.

Dr. Massaquoi added that the report is rich in knowledge, information and contents.

"By several measures, the state of the media ecosystem has drastically improved between 2018-2021. Over the years many newspapers have been registered as well as radio stations," he said.

He acknowledged that despite there were challenges in the media landscape in the country, the media still continue to thrive amidst the challenges.

The National Coordinator, MRCG, Dr. Francis Sowa, said the report shows that Sierra Leone in the past four years has made tremendous progress in the entire length of press freedom and freedom of expression ecosystem.

Dr. Sowa commended the repeal of Part V of the Public Order Act, 1965, which contained the offenses of Criminal and Seditious Libel. He added that the report also highlighted some challenges relating to the safety and security of journalists and investment in the media landscape as media poverty continues to affect the industry.



The coordinator indicated that the report presents a critical overview of the prospects and challenges in media freedom and development in Sierra Leone, with a special focus on the 2018-2021 periods as well as the media's role in the country's sustainable development pathways.

Joshua Nicol, a representative from the Faculty of Communication, Media and Information Studies, noted that since the inception of the MRCG, the Mass Communication Department, now Faculty of Communication, Media and Information Studies, has played a leading role in terms of putting together literatures for MRCG's research.

He appreciated Dr. Sowa for taking the MRCG from a humble beginning to its present state. He added that the MRCG

is a renowned institution not only in Sierra Leone, but across the West African Coast.

He continued to state that the document has closed a lot of critical gaps in the media literature of Sierra Leone. "Because back then when you want to do a research on Sierra Leone's media system, you have to rely on literatures from outsiders, but with the presence of this document, it can help address those issues," Nicol recalled.

He assured all present that the Faculty of Communication will always continue to play a leading role in MRCG's research work.

In his official launch of the State of the Media Report, President of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists, SLAJ, Ahmed Sahid Nasralla thanked

everyone present and stated that the report was what the media ecosystem in Sierra Leone has always longed for and its launch was timely.

Nasralla firmly supported the claim that there are tremendous improvements in the media landscape of the country and that there are now training facilities for journalists as well as scholarships.

He continued that before assuming office, there were incidents of journalists being beaten up, cameras destroyed or confiscated. He however noted that he has been able to tackle some of those incidents as he has created a system of dialogue between the police and journalists. Thus, those incidents have stopped or curtailed.

UBA & ECOFEST to host biggest musical event in West Africa

From Cover

ECOFEST has over the years hosted big and popular music stars in Africa.

Ecofest Music Festival has been held for the past four to five years. There have been several editions in Sierra Leone and one in the Gambia. It is a platform for West African Musicians and artists to celebrate annually in Sierra Leone. This year, the ECOFEST Musical Festival will be having a West African affair where artists will be coming from nine countries namely: Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Gambia, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone. The event will be held at the complex of the Sierra Leone Football Association at Kingtom. Some of the prominent artists that will take part this year are Shatta Wale, Afaz, Bad Guyz, MC Caro, and Falz from Nigeria among others.



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LOCAL NEWS

By Alexander Ward, Nahal Toosi and Phelim Kine

Dozens of African leaders are set to attend a major gathering hosted this month by the White House, but so far they shouldn't expect a one-on-one meeting with President Joe Biden. Two U.S. officials said that the president isn't currently scheduled to hold a bilateral session with a single African leader, even as the three-day U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit is set to begin on Dec. 13.

While such meetings could be organized in the coming days, including in less formal chats known as "pull-asides," the lack of concrete plans stands in stark contrast to how the Biden administration has put together other gatherings, former U.S. officials say. It also could lead African leaders traveling thousands of miles to further conclude that the United States doesn't care about their countries as much as China does — and that it prefers to treat them as a bloc instead of individual governments.

"We would not organize a summit with any other region of the world like this — and, as far as I can tell, have not," said J. Peter Pham, who was a top State Department official focused on Africa in the Trump administration, citing the Biden team's previous summits with Latin American and Asian leaders.

A person familiar with the administration's discussions said some in the White House were concerned that scheduling any bilateral sessions between Biden and his African counterparts would create friction, since it wasn't possible logistically to accommodate all requests. Around 50 leaders have been invited, and many would like to show audiences back home that they have a connection with the U.S. president.

That person, like some others quoted in this story, requested anonymity to speak about sensitive internal White House deliberations.

Calls and emails to several African embassies in Washington were not returned. But Burundi's ambassador to the United States, Jean de Dieu Ndikumana, said in a brief phone conversation that African delegations remain "hopeful" that the White House will ultimately accommodate requests for bilateral meetings, even if they were short ones.

The African leaders are "crossing the ocean to come here," the envoy emphasized.

This is the second such summit between a U.S. president and African leaders, and much of it will feature think-tank-like events on climate change, technology and trade at the Washington, D.C. Convention Center, but not every leader will have the opportunity to speak on a panel. At this point, the only real engagement they're slated to have with Biden is during a leader-only

No one-on-ones yet scheduled between Biden and African leaders heading to D.C.

A lack of bilateral meetings is likely to frustrate visiting leaders eager for time with the U.S. president.



While meetings could be organized in the coming days, the lack of concrete plans stands in stark contrast to how the Biden administration has put together other gatherings. | Drew Angerer/Getty Images

dinner and group photo.

The first of these U.S.-based summits was held in 2014 during President Barack Obama's tenure. Obama, too, didn't pre-schedule bilateral sessions during the gathering because of the same logistical hurdles, drawing questions about his commitment to the continent. It was not immediately clear if Obama ultimately sat down for any bilateral sessions, and several officials who worked for him at the time either didn't recall or could not be reached.

The Biden administration is upfront about its belief that America's biggest long-term rival for global power is China, but China has made personalized high-level engagement with African countries much more of a hallmark of its diplomacy.

For three decades, the Chinese foreign minister's first overseas trip has been to an African country. And since 2000 Beijing has super-charged engagement through its Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, a multilateral development and investment platform complete with head of state summits every three years. At those summits, Chinese President Xi Jinping holds bilateral meetings with at least some if not all of his counterparts during or around the event, according to reports from Chinese state-controlled media and other news outlets.

"I think it is a serious missed opportunity when the American president does not do this," said

David Shinn, the former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia with extensive experience across Africa. China is the African continent's biggest trading partner and bilateral trade hit a record high of \$254 billion last year. The U.S. — sub-Saharan Africa's fourth largest trading partner — recorded a more modest \$64 billion in bilateral trade in 2021. And Beijing's move this month to lift tariffs on 98 percent of imports from Africa's 10 least developed economies will widen that disparity.

The challenge posed by China is even more pronounced now than under Obama, who nonetheless tried to increase America's focus on Asia as a whole. In between Obama and Biden was President Donald Trump, who denigrated African countries and barred many of their citizens from visiting the United States.

Biden doesn't neglect African issues, but he has been much more focused on Europe throughout his time in office, primarily due to Russia's war on Ukraine. He has spent far more time in meetings and on calls with European leaders than any other part of the world, with Africa usually at the bottom of the list.

Failing to allocate the time for face-to-face meetings deprives Biden of an opportunity to leverage that contact with African leaders to foster good will in countries where China is the dominant foreign patron.

"It is a major boost for African heads of state to splash their photos with

the U.S. president on hometown media," said Tibor Nagy, former assistant secretary of State for African Affairs.

The summit will not necessarily be a bust for those in attendance, who can expect meetings with other top U.S. officials.

"Each delegation will have extensive opportunities for high-level engagement through plenary discussions, the head of state dinner and side meetings," National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said, adding there will be other engagements during the three days. Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other senior U.S. officials "look forward to meaningful conversations with all the heads of delegation across the various sessions."

And like at other similar events, African officials will find time to meet with business leaders, civil society groups, diaspora members and engage in bilateral meetings among themselves.

But other than the dinner, what African leaders most crave — one-on-one face-time and a sense of real engagement with Biden — isn't currently on the menu.

"Why would African chiefs travel here if they don't get time with Joe Biden?" Nagy asked.

Ryan Heath contributed to this report.

This article was first published on www.politico.com



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LOCAL NEWS Njala Principal outlines entry points for EU's intervention

Speaking on Wednesday, 30th November 2022, in the Njala Campus Auditorium to begin the two-day informative session on the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Programme supported by the European Union, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University, Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma thanked EU for funding numerous projects at Njala University and also requested their additional assistance in addressing major challenges confronting the University.

The erudite Professor appealed to the European Union Sierra Leone delegation to help his administration address the age-long electricity and water challenges at Njala University.

"If you are thinking tomorrow about a rural development project in water supply and electricity, please include Njala University in your actions," Professor Koroma told the EU team.

Professor Bashiru Koroma further urged the EU team to consider Njala University as an entry point for research on national rural electrification, agricultural development, learning environments, and hostels for students. He disclosed the appropriate

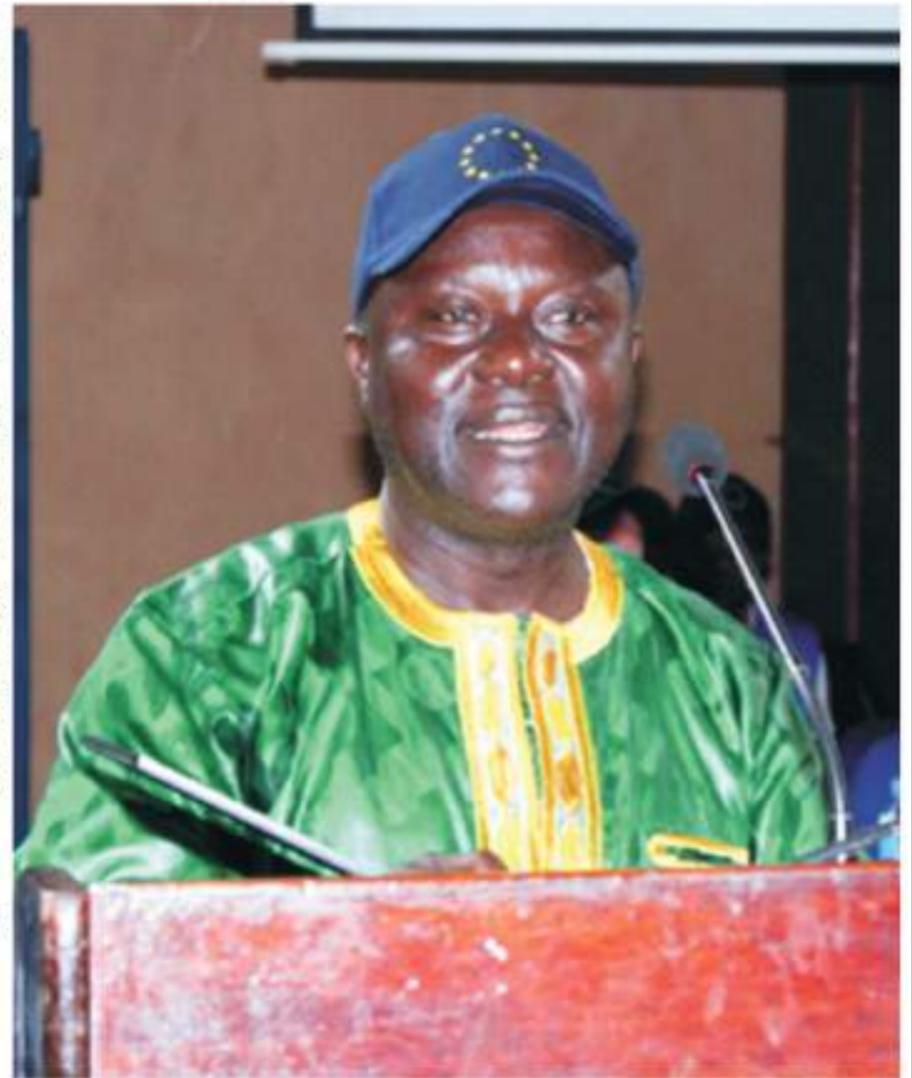
interventions he had made in the ongoing EU projects at Njala University and guaranteed the EU delegation that the projects will provide high-quality results.

VC&P explained the University's plans to engage in plantation agriculture on its 8,000 acres of land, as well as cereal production, irrigated agriculture that will improve mixed farming, and rotational cropping.

He also described how he plans to collaborate with four chiefdoms to establish community contract farming.

Professor concluded by declaring Gerald Hatler, First Counsellor and Head of Cooperation, as an Ambassador of Njala University and urging the student union government to have a special discussion with the EU delegation to plan a dinner with them.

The two-day informative session was aimed at increasing the number of Sierra Leoneans applying for and getting accepted into the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters programme, which provides scholarships to undergraduate students from all over the world to study in higher education institutions in Europe.



Four police officers jailed for possessing harmful drugs

By Jeneba A. Conteh

Magistrate Mark Ngegba of the Pademba Road Court No.1 on Monday 5th December, 2022, passed a minimal sentence on four of the sacked police officers after the exhibits clerk produced and tendered the exhibits involving in the matter.

According to the Exhibit Clerk, Detective Sergeant 13905 Mohamed Usufu Jalloh, he was on duty on the 22nd November, 2022, when he received from Sergeant 10831 Sesay A., exhibits including 226 raps of cannabis sativa, 20 raps of Kush, 6 tablets of tramadol, 1 rap of cannabis sativa and a Kush respectively. He said he registered the exhibits into the court exhibit book as against the serial No. 16/2022.

It could be recalled that on Monday 28th November, 2022, four of the dismissed Police officers, Haja Safinatu Conteh, Alpha Kargbo, on Ibrahim Collier Hazeley, and Mohamed Nabieu pleaded guilty, while the fourth accused Santigie Turay pleaded not guilty before the court for the offences charged against them.

They were charged with six count offences of unlawful possession of cannabis sativa, Kush and tramadol, all contrary to section 48 (1) of the Pharmacy and Drugs Act of 2001.

The particulars of offence indicated that the first accused, Haja Safinatu Conteh on Tuesday 8th November, 2022, at SILEA campus, police training school, Hastings, was found in possession of two hundred and twenty-six (226) raps of cannabis

sativa contained in a black plastic bag weighing 20 grams, without lawful authority.

The second accused Alpha Kargbo on the same date and place, was found in possession of ten (10) raps of kush contained in a medical sachet weighing 0.4 grams without lawful authority and was also found in possession of six tablets of tramadol also contained in a medical sachet weighing 0.2 grams without lawful authority.

Ibrahim Collier Hazeley was found in possession of one rap of cannabis sativa weighing 0.4 grams without lawful authority and Santigie Turay was also found in possession of one rap of cannabis sativa weighing 0.4 grams, while Mohamed Nabieu was found in possession of one rap of kush weighing 0.2 gram without lawful authority.

In his plea mitigation, Defense Counsel Ahmed Mansaray Esq. pleaded with the Bench to temper justice with mercy.

According to him, his clients are first time offenders and sought from the Bench to pass a minimal punishment to the convicts.

In his sentence, Magistrate Ngegba cited the previous status of the convicts and also the seriousness of the offences.

He therefore sentenced the first convict to serve a jail term of 10 months, second convict 12 months, third convict 6 months, while the fifth convict to serve a jail term of 8 months respectively, all to run concurrently.

The fourth accused was remanded, while his matter comes up on Monday 12th December, 2022.

Murder accused awaits judgment

By Ibrahim Kabba Turay

Justice John Bosco Allieu has slated December 22, 2022, as judgement day for Bennett Y. Solomon, who is before the court for allegedly killing 24-year-old Mariatu Pessama on December 23, 2019, at Waterloo.

Prior to fixing the date, the judge told the accused person to open his case in defense.

He provided him with three options to testify from the dock, take the witness stand and testify on oath or rely on their statement made to police.

The accused person chose the last option and added that he would want to call witnesses to testify in his defense. The judge, however, recorded it and asked the prosecution and the defense to give their closing addresses.

In his closing address, state prosecutor Alberta Kargbo, told the judge and the jury that the accused was charged with one count of murder contrary to the laws of Sierra Leone.

Lawyer Kargbo said she tendered several exhibits and summoned five prosecution witnesses, including the

Government Consultant Pathologist, Dr. Simeon Owizz Koroma, who established the causes of death.

She said the deceased died after the accused hit her, but told the police that the deceased had a fight with him during an argument.

The state prosecutor narrated that prosecution witness No.3 had told the court that when the deceased died, the accused never reported the accident to the police.

On his part, defense counsel from the Legal Aid Board, C. Tucker, said the burden of proof solely rests on the shoulders of the prosecution and that any iota of doubt would go in favour of the accused.

She argued that the prosecution had not presented any witness to show that they saw the accused beating the deceased or saw the accused killing the 24-year-old deceased.

She further submitted that the prosecution had not presented any exhibit or witness to support their case on whether the accused was telling lies about the accident or not.

She concluded that they had much doubt in the case of the prosecution as to establish the guilt of the accused person.



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NEWS AROUND AFRICA COMPILED BY GABRIEL BENJAMIN

ECOWAS demands release of Ivorian soldiers held by Mali

Mali has been fighting with Côte d'Ivoire and ECOWAS since it arrested 49 Ivorian soldiers on July 10 when they arrived in Bamako - Copyright © africanews Misper Apawu/Misper Apawu

The leaders of West African states meeting at a summit in Abuja on Sunday demanded that Mali's ruling junta release 46 Ivorian soldiers held captive since July or face sanctions, West African officials said. "We ask the Malian authorities to release the Ivorian soldiers by January 1, 2023, at the latest," Omar Touray, chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) commission, told journalists. Failing that, ECOWAS will take sanctions, a West African diplomat told an AFP correspondent on condition of anonymity. Touray also said that ECOWAS reserves the right to act if the soldiers do not regain their freedom by January 1.

Togolese President Faure Gnassingbé, who is playing the good offices between Mali and Ivory Coast in this crisis, will go to Mali to "demand" the release of the soldiers, the West African diplomat added. Mali has been fighting with Côte d'Ivoire and ECOWAS since it arrested 49 Ivorian soldiers on July 10 when they arrived in Bamako. Three have since been released. Côte d'Ivoire and the UN claim that these soldiers were to participate in the security of the German contingent of peacekeepers in Mali. But Bamako says it considers them "mercenaries" who have come to undermine state security.

Flash flood kills 9 at church gathering in South Africa

At least nine people died and eight others were missing in South Africa after a flash flood swept away members of a church congregation along the Jukskei River in Johannesburg, rescue officials said on Sunday. The dead and missing were all part of the congregation, which was conducting religious rituals along the river on Saturday, officials said. Rescue workers reported finding the bodies of two victims

that day and another seven bodies when the search and recovery mission resumed on Sunday morning. The teams were interviewing people from the congregation to establish how many others were unaccounted for. Religious groups frequently gather along the Jukskei River, which runs past townships such as Alexandra in the east of Johannesburg, for baptisms and ritual cleansing.

Senegal fans 'proud' despite World Cup exit

Senegal's World Cup odyssey was cut short Sunday (Dec. 4) after a 3-0 defeat against England in Qatar.

Fans watching the game in Dakar, from a fanzone, wished for a goal until the very end.

The Teranga Lions' coach Cissé admitted there had been a gulf in quality. First-half English goals gave the squad a mountain to climb and a third in the second half ended the contest.

"Senegal losing to England in the round of 16 is no surprise especially since we played without Sadio Mané," Mamadou, a fan, said. "It is logical but we are Senegalese and we faced this game with enthusiasm to galvanize the team."

"A match lasts 90 minutes and in the first half we played pretty well and created chances but unfortunately we didn't score," said Cissé.

"We were playing a very good England team and we saw that in their challenges, their physical strength. We weren't as good as we should have been." Serve the Senegalese and make all Africa happy Seydina Omar Niang, another fan, shared the Teranga

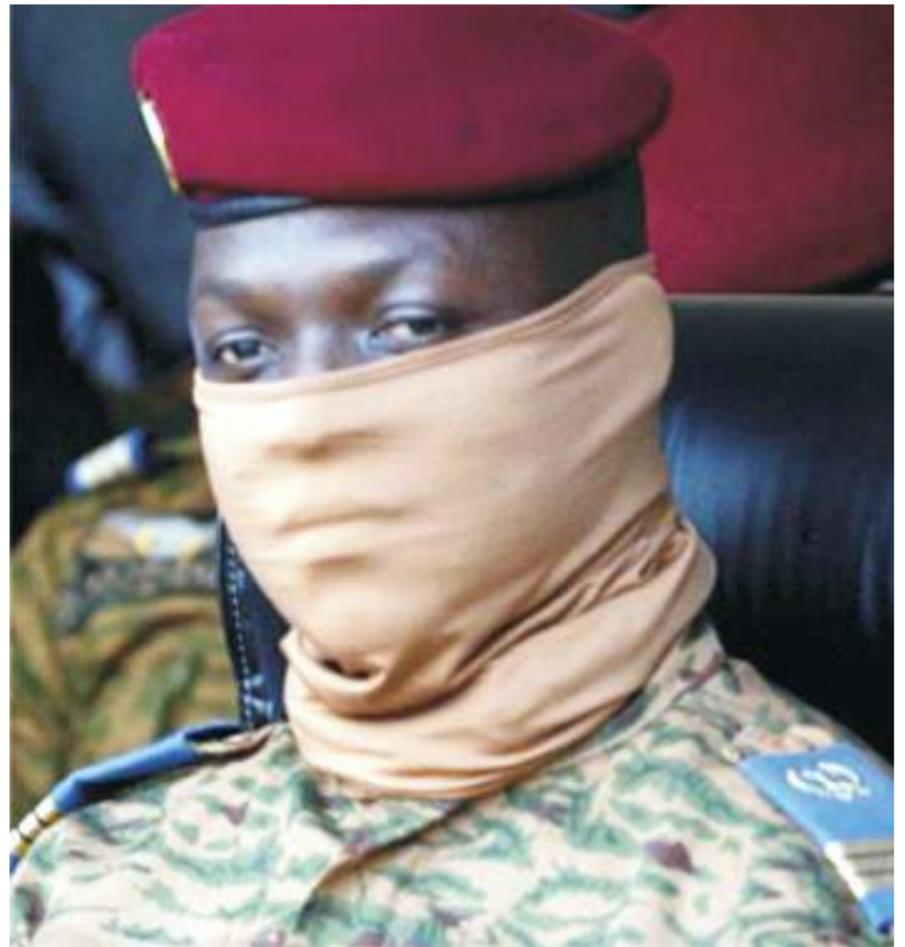
Lions' coach views: "I expected Senegal to be much more consistent, much more assertive, much more aggressive [...] Unfortunately England was much stronger than us, as logic expected. We can only be proud of our Lions." Senegal that are ranked 18th by FIFA, end their World Cup campaign on 2 wins and 2 losses.

Fans cheered for their teams in the ups and downs yet, the squad was missing two or three players who could have made a difference including star striker Sadio Mané or midfielder Idrissa Gueye.

"As Senegalese, we did not even expect Senegal to reach the round of 16 without Sadio Mané. The [players] gave their all, they sacrificed, they gave body and soul so that they could come to the last 16, so they played a great tournament. They did their best to serve the Senegalese people and to make all Africa happy."

Even though Senegal had arrived with high hopes of matching a quarterfinal run of two decades ago, fans were thankful for the 2022 world cup tournament.

The African champions will defend their title in 2024 in Ivory Coast. Then eyes will be set on the 2026 World Cup.

Burkina Faso bans French radio for airing 'terrorist propaganda'

RFI has protested the ban, calling Burkina Faso's accusations unfounded - Copyright © africanews Kilaye Bationo/Copyright 2020 The AP. All rights reserved

Burkina Faso on Saturday ordered "the immediate suspension and until further notice" of Radio France Internationale (RFI), accusing it of having relayed an "intimidation message" attributed to a "terrorist leader", the Burkinabe government spokesman announced.

By having relayed this message, RFI "is thus contributing to a desperate manoeuvre by terrorist groups to dissuade the thousands of Burkinabè mobilised in defence of their country," said a statement signed by the spokesman, Jean Emmanuel Ouedraogo.

At the beginning of the week, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM, affiliated to Al-Qaeda), had broadcast a video in which one of its leaders in Burkina Faso threatened to attack villages defended by Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP), civilian auxiliaries of the army, which has just recruited 90,000 in three weeks to cope with the increase in jihadist attacks.

The government also criticizes RFI, a French public radio, for having included in its press review on Friday "a misleading information, indicating that: +The president of the transition, Captain Ibrahim Traore, assures that an attempted coup d'état has targeted his power".

The communiqué recalled that "on 3 November, the government had already expressed its indignation at the tendentious attitude of journalists of this media (RFI) and their propensity to discredit the struggle in which the Burkinabe people are engaged for more freedom and dignity."

"In view of the above, the government has decided to suspend Radio France Internationale's broadcasting throughout the country until further notice," he added.

The management of RFI "deeply regrets this decision and protests against the totally unfounded accusations that call into question the

professionalism of its stations," it said in a statement on Saturday evening.

"The decision to cut off RFI's broadcasting service was taken without prior notice and without implementing the procedures laid down in the RFI broadcasting agreement drawn up by Burkina Faso's Higher Council for Communication," it said.

It added that the France Médias Monde group, to which RFI belongs, "will explore all avenues to restore RFI's broadcasting, and reiterates its unwavering commitment to the freedom to inform and the professional work of its journalists."

According to RFI's management, the radio station is heard every week in Burkina Faso "by more than 40% of the population and more than 70% of opinion leaders."

An AFP journalist in Ouagadougou noted late this afternoon that the radio station could no longer be heard.

The government nonetheless "reaffirmed to national and international opinion its commitment to press freedom and freedom of opinion" and "the public's right to information", but "invites it to respect the rules and principles governing the media."

The government nonetheless "reaffirmed to national and international opinion its commitment to press freedom and freedom of opinion" and "the public's right to information", but "calls for respect for the rules and principles laid down in this area in our country."

Burkina, the scene of two military coups in eight months and plagued by jihadist violence since 2015, is the second country in the region to ban RFI this year after Mali, which was also ruled by military putschists and hit by jihadists, in March.

"Nerves are frayed, but muzzling or persecuting the press does not turn lies into truth," said Newton Ahmed Barry, a journalist and former president of the National Electoral Commission (CEN).

Madagascar starts works on first motorway

Authorities in Madagascar have started works on the country's first motorway linking the capital, Antananarivo, to Tamatave, the country's economic hub and largest port.

Egyptian company Samcrete will be in charge of the 4-year project for a budget of nearly \$1 billion.

"The highway will allow us to relieve the congestion of the national road number 2 because in fact it is estimated that the traffic will be multiplied by 5 in the next three years. So it will be unbearable for the national road number 2 to handle this extra traffic", said Public Works Minister of Madagascar, Jerry Hatrefindrazana.

The project has sparked controversy amongst the population. Farmers are one group particularly affected.

"We are in the middle of the rice transplanting period, right at the moment when our rice fields will be destroyed. And we have been waiting for the state to take action for us farmers. In all the speeches, no

official spoke about the farmers", complained farmer Roland Edie Rakotodramasy.

Others, like teacher Pauline Ramialisoa, remain convinced about the overall benefits.

"Traffic will be faster, cars will not use much gasoline, and the transport of goods from inside and outside will be more fluid", she said

One of the Egyptian companies involved in the project, EGAAD, stressed the environmental advantages of the new infrastructure.

"This highway that will link the capital to the main port, the economic hub of the country, will ease a lot of things, reducing an 11-hour journey to a 2.5-hour journey. It will help to reduce CO2 emissions by 25 to 30%", claims EGAAD group president, Reda Boulos.

The first stage of the project is scheduled to be completed by the end of the president's mandate in 2023.

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LOCAL NEWS CTC mining company gets community endorsement

Residents of Marampa and Maforki chiefdoms in the northwestern district of Port Loko have emphatically welcomed and endorsed CTC Mining Company (SL) Limited.

During an introduction ceremony of the new mining giant, thousands of indigenes from the two chiefdoms and beyond came out en masse in a massive show of approval and support for the company.

There was pump and pageantry at the Port Loko District Council Office on Wednesday 16 November 2022; a day that will be etched in time and eternity as a great day for the people of Marampa and Maforki Chiefdoms.

It seemed like a coronation or Dubar of Chiefs was going on as the number of traditional rulers that came to grace the event was unprecedented.

The meeting was however far from normal.

In a jam-packed hall, stakeholders met to firstly present to the people of Marampa, Maforki, and the wider Port Loko, a mining company which according to a Paramount Chief fondly referred to as "The Lion" had found favour by meeting all the prescribed requirements by law and accorded the utmost respect to the Local Authorities and Landowners.

Secondly, but of greater importance the meeting was to allow the various other stakeholders an opportunity to comment, publicly agree, and or disagree.

Speaker after speaker ranging from youths to women, retired teachers, and the President of the Landowners, to artists and clerics joined the Paramount Chiefs, their representatives, and the entire hall to sound a unified and deafening sound of approval for the CTC Mining Company, whose parent body operates from Turkey.

The proceedings in the hall met stiff competition with the activities outside and many times could not match the drums and shouts from outside the hall. Traditional instruments, groups, and even a traditional music group with western styled uniforms were in attendance.

In what could be tagged as heartwarming and surreal was when the leader of the CTC mining company greeted the hall in the local language and said he was raised in Makeni. The hall erupted in joy as various groups broke out into dances. The CTC mining team was enveloped and dwarfed by the people.

If someone was looking for a sign of approval, that should have ended



their search.

CTC Mining Company promised in the presence of the District Chairman, the Mayor, the Rulers of Port Loko, the Senior District Officer, the Representative of the National Minerals Agency, the AIG regional North, the Military Brigade Commander, and as coined locally, before God and Man, that they are here to make a difference, and for the

longrun.

In addition to the mining business, the company also has investments in the renewable energy sector, primarily in biogas and solar energy. Effectively this could be the beginning of multiple employment avenues for the citizens of the country and new tax avenues for the government of Sierra Leone.

NaTca, MNOs demands tariff adjustment: CSOs, others react

By: Gabriel Benjamin

There are strong indications that Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in Sierra Leone have concluded plans to adjust tariff due to challenges facing the sector.

National Telecommunications Authority (NaTca), Ministry of Information and Communications, MNOs, CSOs and the media on Friday 2nd December 2022 held a public private dialogue on the proposed tariff adjustment.

Andrew Sao Fatoma, Chief Admin and Human Resource Officer, Africell SL, who made a presentation on behalf of the MNOs during the public dialogue, sympathizing with their teeming customers, said their challenges have been channeled to the authorities.

"We recognize that a request to match the increase in our cost to the for tariff review may not sound reasonable at this material and trying time which is due to high cost of diesel and increase in foreign exchange.

"Two of our key cost drivers are Foreign Exchange Rate and the cost fuel which is a very critical component that drives Consumer Price Index. Exchange rate and

cost of fuel are the key cost variable that affects our cost inputs for both Opex and Capex. These key cost drivers has a ripple effect on: The Cost of network equipment, Cost of Data Services from Zoodlabs and Leonecom" he explained.

Daniel Kaitibi, Director General of NaTca while speaking during the dialogue said since 2017, tariff for voice call has remained the same, and NaTca has the regulatory body is empowered by section 118 (2a) of the NaTca Act to review tariffs.

"NATCOM (now NaTca) in 2017 held a Public Private Dialogue on the review of Tariff. The dialogue followed extensive consultation with Civil Society organizations, operators and other relevant stakeholders. The rationale for the increase in tariff was warranted by the rapid change in cost of living and Increased Foreign exchange rate.

"With the increase of our key cost variables, the law, by virtue of the NaTca Act, section 118 (1) which provides that tariff review shall be only 'warranted when there is a rapid change in cost of living index and foreign exchange rate" he stated.

Concord Times gathered that MNOs has already sent a letter to NatCa seeking review of tariff. They did not state the services that will be affected when approved. This medium believes that the review will affect data services for which citizens have expressed serious concerns given the present economy realities.

Smart I. B. Kokofele, Director, Regulatory-Administration, NaTca argued during the dialogue that the tariff adjustment is not done on sentiment.

"As a regulatory commission, we sympathize with the conditions the MNOs find themselves. They are in business to provide services, but to also make profit.

"We are aware that the MNOs submitted a letter demanding for tariff adjustment, but there is a process, and we must engage relevant stakeholders before any adjustment on tariff can be made.

"The current tariff they are currently operating with went through same process in 2017. So, even if their demand will be considered, it will also take a process which is not going to take effect immediately" he argued.

In a related development,

stakeholders and CSOs who were present during the public private dialogue were divided on the timing of the tariff adjustment.

While some are of the opinion that the tariff adjustment will further place more financial burden on the customers and called on the government to immediately intervene by giving tax rebate to MNOs, others believe it was long overdue, while calling for an improved service delivery and customers' satisfaction from the MNOs

Edmond Abu, Executive Director of Native Consortium said: "Sierra Leone has the highest mobile tariff when compared to other countries in the region. We should be clamoring for tax rebate for MNOs and not tariff adjustment which will further impoverish our people."

The National Vice Chairman, Women Forum Sierra Leone, opined that "If they [MNOs] increase the tariff, we the women will adjust... Already we are used to telephone communications."

Mohamed Nabieu, Public Relation Officer, National Bike Riders Association, welcomed the tariff adjustment and promised to take the message to members of his association.



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LOCAL NEWS

By Fadda Bakish

The Saint Francis Secondary School held its 64th annual Speech Day and Prize Giving Ceremony over the weekend at the school's compound in Makeni City. Held on the theme "Education for sustainable economic prosperity", the event brought together the Old Makeni Franciscans Association (OMFA), local authorities, parents as well as well-wishers that appreciate the remarkable progress made by the school over the years.

The event was chaired by a prominent politician and an Old Franciscan, Dr. Richard Konteh (The Unifier), who remarked that the recipient of prizes should continue to do well and those without prizes should work harder for recognition. Education, he said should be in their lifestyle and the way they impact society. "There is a need to invest more in education," he said and continued by thanking the Catholic faith for supporting and nurturing education in the country over the years.

Dr. Konteh thanked the two principals for continuously raising the school's banner high and also commended the outgoing president of OMFA for a job well done in three years. "Franciscans should know that they are friends and brothers and so elections must not divide them," he advised those contesting the OMFA elections.

One of the speakers, Dr. Denis Luseni, spoke on 'the role of Alumni Associations in promoting national development.

He revealed that Alumnus must be part of a national team bent on resolving challenges in agriculture, manufacturing, climate change, etc. "We must not be over-dependent on donors. But we must be seen aligning our vision with that of the country. We must build a well-educated and enlightened society," he said and advised that they must place themselves in good positions of trust. Dr. Luseni frowned at examination malpractice, which is caused by a lack of discipline but advised that students must put on a positive mental attitude. "We must develop an action plan that should be documented for action. Let us channel our energy to a common vision and plan well to bring our country to where it should be. We must mentor our students with career development and provide funds for scholarships by opening a scholarship scheme to provide partial and full scholarships," he advised and stated that alumni must help students with learning materials.

Bishop Nathallio Paganelli, one of the School Proprietors, encourages all to strive to serve each other for a better society. "The strength of a school is to work as a team to have a better academic atmosphere," he said and requested for the government to provide the required support, such as the annual school subsidies, which

Saint Francis holds 64th Annual Speech Day and Prize Giving



Keynote Speaker, Professor Joe A. Turay

they have not received. "We need the subsidies to develop the pupils," he added and lamented that they have to seek for funding elsewhere to further the school's activities.

Bishop Paganelli encouraged the Alumni Association to work as a team. "There is big political division in the country. Which is not good for development. We have religious tolerance, which must be copied and implemented. Sierra Leone is not a poor country. We have lots of natural resources but the people are poor," he observed and continued by advising the new executive to work towards having good laboratories to prepare students. "I am grateful to the Ministry of Education for providing school materials," he said.

Giving the Principal's Report for the 2021-2022 academic year, Ezekiel Thulla Junior, said the school has had a successful academic year despite a few hiccups. "We are happy to return the school to a single shift system and have a newly dug borehole water facility. The school received teaching and learning materials. Another consignment of lab materials was received in September also," he reported and furthered that they are challenged with trained and qualified teachers in some specialized areas of study, there is an unpredictable pattern of payment of subsidy by the government, and they are challenged with raising funds to pay teachers, not on the government payroll. The Principal referred to his teachers as

being superstars over the years.

One of the School's Old Boys, Alpha Timbo, who happens to be the current Labour Minister, thanked the school authorities for transforming the school from a low-performing institution to a performing one. He encouraged parents to see Saint Francis as a school they can rely on to transform their children. He entreated pupils to take their work seriously and assured them that the Old Boys will continue to support the school.

The Police Local Unit Commander in Makeni City, John Tunday, whilst giving a security update on drug abuse, said the police are fighting hard against illegal drugs, noting that they have dismissed and charged to court personnel found consuming and in possession of illegal drugs. He admonished parents to check their pupils, especially their rooms and those they associate with. "School authorities should keep their eyes on pupils and complain to them when they are seen in abnormal conditions," the LUC said and continued that students should make sure they are proud of themselves always. "Say no to drugs if you want to succeed in life. Don't allow others to give you drugs rather they should give you school materials or scholarships. Let us join hands to stop this mayhem in our society," he said.

The outgoing OMFA President, Joe Hassan Kalokoh, stated in his final

speech after three years of a successful journey that it has been a busy tenure of office, which he further described as eventful and challenging. He paid tribute to the diaspora chapter and all those who supported him throughout his tenure of Office. Kalokoh thanked his team for providing support to his administration and admonished all to work for the development and benefit of the school.

The Keynote Speaker, Professor Joe A. Turay, Vice Chancellor University of Makeni called for the need to bring about a Sierra Leone that enhances sustainable development. All past and present agendas, he said should help to transform the nation into a Sweet Sierra Leone. "The Education sector plan recently launched should take the nation to sustainable development. Access to education has increased but the biggest challenge is the quality and relevance of education that should be revisited," he said and advised that there is a need to recruit, retrain and support excellent educators; reduce gender disparities in the education sector; provide a safe, healthy and conducive learning environment for all; and increase the use of data and technology in the management of education. "These will help in bringing about sustainable economic prosperity to the nation. We must educate to bring about the sweet Sierra Leone that is economically diversified and food self-sufficient," the Guest Speaker said.

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Fix No.	Sales Close	Competition	Home Team	Home Goals	Home Halves	Home Score	Away Team	1 / 1 (1)	1 / X (2)	1 / 2 (3)	X / 1 (4)	X / X (5)	X / 2 (6)	2 / 1 (7)	2 / X (8)	2 / 2 (9)
1	8/5/2022 13:55	Romania 2	UNIREA SLOBOZIA	12	v	14	FCM BAIJA MARE	2.35	14.00	45.00	4.00	4.90	8.80	23.00	15.00	7.00
2	8/5/2022 15:40	Italy Cup	CAGLIARI	0	v	0	PERUGIA	2.85	16.00	50.00	4.40	4.60	8.20	29.00	16.00	6.80
3	8/5/2022 15:55	Poland	FKS STAL MIELEC	5	v	2	CRACOVIA	5.20	14.00	29.00	7.00	4.70	5.20	35.00	14.00	3.35
4	8/5/2022 15:55	Denmark	RANDERS FC	7	v	3	HORSENS	2.80	15.00	45.00	4.60	4.80	8.60	27.00	15.00	6.60
5	8/5/2022 15:55	Romania	UNIVERSITATEA CLUJ	13	v	15	PETROLUL	3.70	15.00	40.00	5.20	4.20	6.40	35.00	15.00	5.00
6	8/5/2022 15:55	Italy Cup	UDINESE	0	v	0	FERALPISALO	1.79	22.00	99.00	3.60	7.00	18.00	25.00	23.00	15.00
7	8/5/2022 16:25	Bundesliga 2	GREUTHER FURTH	15	v	18	KARLSRUHER	2.49	15.00	40.00	4.70	6.20	9.60	23.00	15.00	6.60
8	8/5/2022 16:25	Bundesliga 2	SANDHAUSEN	10	v	3	FORTUNA DUSSELDORF	4.70	14.00	28.00	6.80	5.00	5.60	35.00	14.00	3.45
9	8/5/2022 17:55	Denmark	LYNGBY	10	v	5	MIDTJYLLAND	7.00	16.00	23.00	9.60	5.80	4.50	45.00	15.00	2.49
10	8/5/2022 17:55	Croatia	VARAZDIN	8	v	1	DINAMO ZAGREB	12.00	20.00	22.00	16.00	7.40	3.85	80.00	20.00	1.85
11	8/5/2022 17:55	Holland	HEERENVEEN	16	v	17	SPARTA ROTTERDAM	3.00	15.00	45.00	4.80	5.00	8.20	29.00	16.00	6.40
12	8/5/2022 17:55	Holland 2	DEN BOSCH	4	v	6	FC EINDHOVEN	4.90	14.00	25.00	7.40	5.60	5.20	35.00	14.00	3.15
13	8/5/2022 17:55	Holland 2	DORDRECHT	5	v	16	RODA	8.40	17.00	20.00	13.00	7.80	4.30	50.00	17.00	2.02
14	8/5/2022 17:55	Holland 2	HERACLES	8	v	1	ADO DEN HAAG	2.65	15.00	40.00	4.70	5.80	8.60	23.00	15.00	6.20
15	8/5/2022 17:55	Holland 2	BREDA	14	v	7	HELMOND	1.95	18.00	70.00	4.00	7.00	14.00	22.00	19.00	11.00
16	8/5/2022 17:55	Holland 2	TOP OSS	17	v	11	JONG UTRECHT	3.00	14.00	35.00	5.20	5.80	7.60	24.00	14.00	5.20
17	8/5/2022 17:55	Holland 2	VENLO	19	v	2	ALMERE CITY	4.40	13.00	25.00	7.00	5.60	5.80	30.00	13.00	3.35
18	8/5/2022 17:55	Holland 2	WILLEM II	20	v	12	JONG PSV	2.28	16.00	45.00	4.30	6.60	10.00	22.00	17.00	7.40
19	8/5/2022 17:55	Slovenia 2	TRIGLAV KRANJ	13	v	16	PRIMORJE AJDOVSCINA	1.94	16.00	60.00	3.65	5.80	12.00	21.00	17.00	9.20
20	8/5/2022 17:55	Hungary	VASAS	9	v	1	PAKSI	3.80	13.00	30.00	6.00	5.20	6.40	28.00	13.00	4.20
21	8/5/2022 17:55	Turkey	ISTANBULSPOR AS	13	v	18	TRABZONSPOR	7.40	15.00	25.00	9.80	5.20	4.50	50.00	15.00	2.50
22	8/5/2022 18:10	Switzerland 2	XAMAX	10	v	1	YVERDON-SPORT	3.95	14.00	28.00	6.20	5.40	6.20	29.00	14.00	3.90
23	8/5/2022 18:10	Switzerland 2	THUN	9	v	6	AARAU	3.45	14.00	27.00	6.00	6.20	6.60	25.00	14.00	4.10
24	8/5/2022 18:25	Poland	LEGIA WARSZAWA	7	v	17	PIAST GLIWICE	3.00	15.00	45.00	4.70	4.70	7.80	28.00	15.00	6.20
25	8/5/2022 18:25	Poland 2	ODRA OPOLE	18	v	3	WISLA KRAKOW	5.20	14.00	27.00	6.60	4.30	4.40	40.00	14.00	3.00
26	8/5/2022 18:25	Bundesliga	EINTRACHT FRANKFURT	7	v	3	BAYERN MUNICH	9.20	18.00	20.00	14.00	8.80	4.50	60.00	18.00	1.96
27	8/5/2022 18:25	Slovakia	TRENCIN	12	v	7	MICHALOVCE	2.60	13.00	35.00	4.50	5.20	7.60	22.00	13.00	5.40
28	8/5/2022 18:40	Ireland	DUNDALK	2	v	3	DERRY CITY	3.75	14.00	35.00	5.40	4.60	6.40	30.00	15.00	4.70
29	8/5/2022 18:40	Ireland 2	CORK CITY FC	1	v	9	ATHLONE TOWN	1.41	27.00	99.00	3.30	9.40	26.00	21.00	26.00	20.00
30	8/5/2022 18:40	Ireland 2	GALWAY UNITED FC	2	v	6	WEXFORD FC	1.92	16.00	50.00	3.75	6.40	11.00	19.00	17.00	8.40
31	8/5/2022 18:40	Ireland 2	TREATY UNITED	5	v	3	WATERFORD FC	7.20	15.00	21.00	9.60	5.60	3.95	45.00	14.00	2.17
32	8/5/2022 18:40	Scotland Championship	QUEENS PARK	6	v	8	AYR UNITED	3.75	15.00	40.00	5.20	4.40	6.20	35.00	15.00	4.90
33	8/5/2022 18:40	Championship	BIRMINGHAM	14	v	19	HUDDERSFIELD	4.10	15.00	40.00	5.60	4.50	6.40	35.00	15.00	4.80
34	8/5/2022 18:40	Belgium	CLUB BRUGGE	8	v	7	WAREGEM	1.61	24.00	99.00	3.80	9.40	22.00	22.00	24.00	16.00
35	8/5/2022 18:55	Ireland	FINN HARPS	10	v	8	DROGHEDA UNITED	3.50	15.00	40.00	5.20	4.70	6.60	30.00	15.00	5.00
36	8/5/2022 18:55	Premier League	CRYSTAL PALACE	7	v	2	ARSENAL	7.20	16.00	26.00	9.40	5.40	4.60	50.00	16.00	2.70
37	8/5/2022 18:55	France league 1	LYON	9	v	1	AC AJACCIO	1.85	22.00	90.00	3.90	7.60	17.00	24.00	22.00	14.00
38	8/5/2022 18:55	Italy Cup	LECCE	0	v	0	CITTADELLA	2.31	17.00	60.00	4.00	5.40	11.00	26.00	18.00	8.80
39	8/5/2022 19:10	Portugal	BENFICA	2	v	1	AROUCA	1.52	30.00	99.00	3.45	8.80	29.00	27.00	30.00	25.00
40	8/5/2022 19:10	Italy Cup	SAMPDORIA	0	v	0	REGGINA	2.04	19.00	80.00	3.75	5.80	14.00	26.00	20.00	12.00



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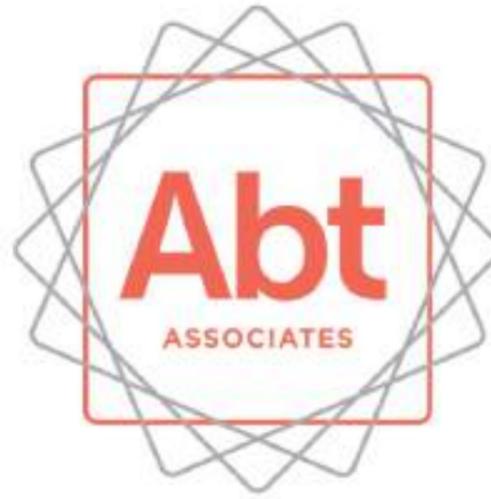
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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Abt Associates, a major American business and government research, technical assistance, and consulting company, manages the USAID-funded VectorLink Project. VectorLink will support the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and USAID to plan and implement an integrated vector control approach with the overall goal of reducing the burden of malaria. Abt has implemented indoor residual spraying (IRS) for PMI since 2011, delivering high-quality IRS programs and gathering the most comprehensive vector control entomological data in the world. Under this contract, Abt will expand entomological monitoring to guide programs focused on insecticide-treated mosquito nets and IRS and continue to assist PMI in reducing the burden of malaria through IRS and capacity building in 24 African countries where malaria is endemic. Abt also will continue to support PMI in IRS monitoring and evaluation as well as environmental compliance.

Abt associates Inc., received funds from USAID, to implement the Programme: "Vectorlink Project" in Five (5) different districts of Sierra Leone. Part of the funds has been allocated for the Procurement of various Services. We hereby invite all legally constituted companies, or business or enterprises that can provide these goods and services, to Request for RFQ in their areas of Specialization.

Schedule of RFQ:

Lot Number	Description of items
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Lot 4	Cleaning Items
Lot 5	Lodging Services
Lot 6	Miscellaneous Items
Lot 7	IRS Cards

Interested bidders must request the RFQ clearly stating their area of interest via email to SierraLeoneProcurement@pmivectorlink.com, between the hours of **8:00am** and **5:30pm** from **5th December 2022 to 8th December, 2022** and you may seek any clarification via email to SierraLeoneProcurement@pmivectorlink.com. Please note that all clarifications will be made to potential bidders latest **Tuesday 6th December 2022**.

Bidders are required to submit their respective bids not later than **December 9th, 2022**, at **13:00pm**. And bids can be dropped in the bid box in our office at 41W1 Derrick Drive, Off Spur Road, or via email to SierraLeoneProcurement@pmivectorlink.com. E-mail submissions must not be of file size above 2mbs in PDF format.

Invitation for Bids

Mott MacDonald SL Limited

Procurement Number: MMSL/SSEIP/1088.24

Mott MacDonald Sierra Leone Limited, has allocated funds from FCDO for the procurement of **62,320 (or more) printed SSS syllabuses for the new SSS curriculum being introduced in academic year 2023/24** and now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders.

Mott MacDonald Limited (MM) has been appointed by the **Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO)** to deliver the Sierra Leone Secondary Education Improvement Programme (SSEIP - also known as Leh Wi Lan). This programme supports the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education to improve learning outcomes for boys and girls at secondary level and to increase the enrolment, retention and well-being of girls and children with disabilities.

The programme requires at least **62,320 SSS Syllabuses to be printed**, with the following print specifications:

- Printing and binding
- Printing of text (black and white, A4 80 gsm paper, minimum 85% brightness and opacity)
- Printing of covers (black and white, 300 gsm card with matt finish)
- 20 pages per copy
- 76 different books of 820 copies each
- Double sided, saddle stitch

Bids should be submitted for printing 76 syllabus document of average estimated length 20 pages each for 820 SSS.

Bidding is open to all suppliers who can demonstrate the capacity and experience to deliver **62,320 printed SSS syllabuses**.

Interested bidders may obtain further information, view samples of the documents to be printed and inspect the bidding document at the address below between **9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday from 5th to 15th December 2022**. Bidding documents can be collected for **free** at the address below.

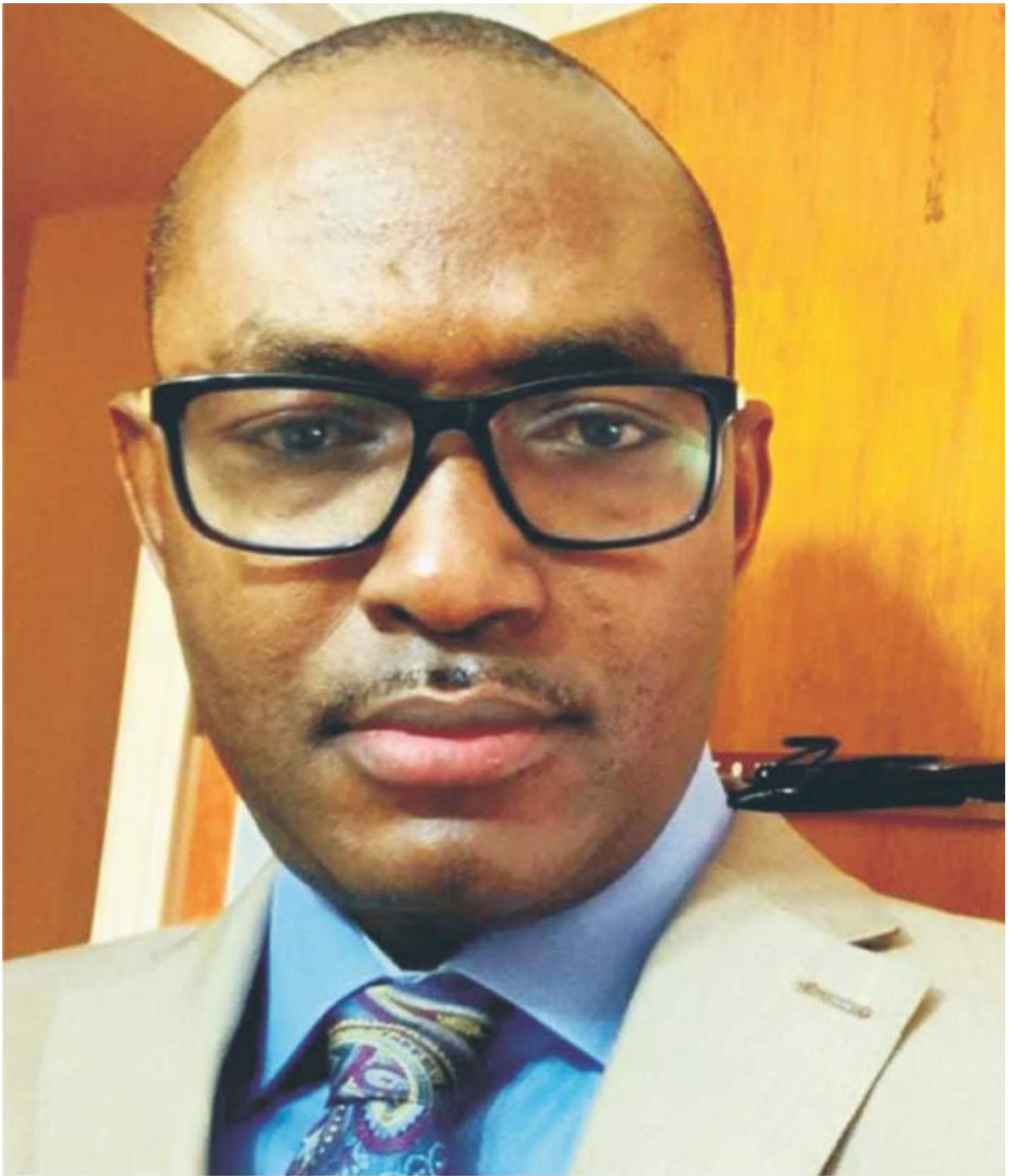
Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **Friday 16th December 2022 at 9.30am**. All bids must be accompanied by:

- Valid business registration certificate
- Valid NASSIT clearance certificate
- Valid tax clearance certificate
- References, indicating the supplier's experience to deliver similar products to reputable organizations - corporations, INGOs and Government

Bids will be opened on **Friday 16th December 2022 at 09.45 am.**, in the presence of bidders and/or representatives at the address below. Late bids will be rejected and returned unopened to bidders.

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To an elegant, inspiring, magnificent, supportive, visionary, and world-class leader, whose guidance and direction are truly inspirational and such a blessing to every one of us, we say, happy birthday anniversary. Thank you, Dr. Kingsley Lington Ighobor for all that you do, and we are wishing you a wonderful year ahead of continued impact and success!

From all of us at: Concord Times Newspaper.

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