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2023 Presidential Election: UDM, PDP sail through nomination



UDM-Mohamed Sowa Turay and Vice Olivette Walker



PDP-Prince Coker and his Vice Ibrahim Jalloh

By Alhaji Haruna Sani

Presidential candidates for the United Democratic Movement (UDM) Party and the People's Democratic Party have successfully gone through the nomination process at the Electoral Commission Sierra Leone (ECSL) Headquarters on Tower Hill in Freetown.

The two presidential candidates and their running mates were successfully approved and certified to contest the June 24 elections.

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Political parties commit to working with PPRC

President Bio launches National Payment Switch



Africell awards NLe.50, 000 to winner of 'Ramadan Hut Show'



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PONDER MY THOUGHTS

By Andrew Keili

I was recently privileged to chair the launching of the newly formed Institute of Directors (Sierra Leone)-IOD (SL) at the New Brookfields Hotel on April 13th, 2023. The theme for the launching was "Effective Corporate Governance for the development of Sierra Leone".

The Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines Corporate Governance as the "procedures and processes according to which an organisation is directed and controlled. The corporate governance structure specifies the distribution of rights and responsibilities among the different participants in the organisation—such as the board, managers, shareholders and other stakeholders—and lays down the rules and procedures for decision-making."

Good corporate governance helps organizations including companies to operate more efficiently, improve access to capital, mitigate risk, and safeguard against mismanagement. It makes organizations more accountable and transparent to stakeholders, including investors and gives them the tools to respond to stakeholder concerns.

When one speaks about corporate governance in Sierra Leone, it is usually private or public companies and State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) that spring to mind. The concept could however equally apply to Sole Traders and Partnerships, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Professional Bodies, Associations, Registered CBOs, Trade Unions etc.

Michala McKay, Chief Operating Officer and Director of the Directorate of Science and Technology (DSTI) and formerly CEO and Executive Registrar of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) spoke on the Situation analysis of Corporate Governance in Sierra Leone and Jacqueline Williams, IFC Technical Advisor and Consultant, who works as part of its Corporate Governance team's talk was on Effective Corporate Governance for the Development of Sierra Leone.

According to Michala McKay, the CAC had produced a National Corporate Governance Code in 2019 which provides guidance to Boards, Management and Organizations across a range of sectors, and also a Handbook for Directors. Her revelation that the CAC had registered some 16,867 companies in

IOD (SL): ONBOARDING BOARDS FOR GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IN SL

Sierra Leone with 50,638 shareholders and 33,000 Directors, 70% of whom are male raised eyebrows. Despite this, only 5% of these companies were compliant with their annual returns. She stressed on the need for companies to have the capacity for self-monitoring of compliance, a strong and a well-balanced Board of Directors and for their disclosure of information to be timely and accurate. There was need for training in digital skills and greater clarity was required in the legal and regulatory framework.

Jacqueline Williams, the Keynote Speaker, who was involved in the drafting of the first Corporate Governance Code for Sierra Leone said there was a nexus between effective governance and national prosperity. This is why IFC is working with authorities in Sierra Leone to promote the adoption of corporate governance best practices and standards and address governance challenges. There needs to be commitment at the corporate level to handle a range of issues—rationalising the structure and functioning of the board, disclosure and transparency issues, treatment of minority shares, governance of stakeholder engagement etc. Sierra Leone was at the base level, grappling with entry level issues like legal compliance. The IOD (SL), in her view should aim to help companies grow to higher levels, with the adoption of intermediate practices, good international practices and ultimately attaining much higher levels where companies will be recognized internationally for their leadership. They should consider integrated thinking, experience sharing and resilience in their portfolio of activities. The new operating environment, she averred is characterised by an increasingly complex set of pressures and demands from various stakeholder groups, heightened expectations for societal engagement and corporate citizenship and radical uncertainty about the future. Issues like Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) and Human Rights concerns were here to stay and companies should be mindful of them.

The launcher, the Chairperson of the African Corporate Governance Network (ACGN), Rockson Kwesi Dogbegah, speaking on the situation in the African continent said many of the problems cited with corporate governance in Sierra Leone were common on the African continent.

The lack of transparency, cultural and social factors also affected other African countries. Poor Corporate Governance in Africa has resulted in missed opportunities for the continent's private sector to mobilize financial resources from both domestic and international sources. The politicization of the appointment process to Boards in Africa is not new. It is a feature of SOEs and parastatals in Africa that the appointment of Boards of Directors is guided by politics, ethnicity and patronage. Many of these Boards do not develop, implement and communicate internal codes of ethics that should apply to all employees, senior management and the board members themselves.

Many of the participants were from the large, formal private sector, which endeavoured to a reasonable extent to practice good corporate governance. One wishes there were more people from the public sector and SOEs which fare considerably worse in this area.

After having been on the Board of some eight establishments in the private and public sector, on many as Chairman and becoming intensely aware of the immense challenges that face Boards, I can only conclude that in certain instances with board appointments they may be sending in "a boy to do a man's job". I recall on my appointment as Chairman of Nassit Board, two distinct pieces of advice I received from highly placed friends. The first told me: "A sabi u. Nor go make nonsense yanda o! Now na u yone tem for make money..... so go make am". The second, who should have known better asked me: "Den do gi u you yone motoka en office?". They subscribed to the opinion that in Sierra Leone a cow should eat grass where it is tethered. Just for disclosure for doubting Thomases who are reading this-No, I did not steal money. No I did not have an office. No I did not have a car. As for Board fees, President Kabbah who was allergic to spending money kept our Board allowances at Le 400,000 a month!

Members of Boards of Directors of parastatals and State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) are most times political appointees, who are compensated for their political support. Though some, may be qualified, a great majority are like fish out of water and know very little about corporate governance. They view their appointment as full time jobs.

It is often the case in public corporations and SOEs that either

the MD or the Board Chairman may exercise inordinate control, depending on who is politically stronger. I have seen MDs entirely run the show, totally oblivious of what the Board thinks. Board Chairmen and members crawl up to them for small favours, which may include fuel chits, transportation, rice, overseas trips, increases in Board allowances or anything under the sun. Alternatively, if the Board chair is the one with the political connections, he will leave the MD in no doubt as to who is the boss and bark down orders. Board members embark upon soliciting the employment of relatives and friends and getting contracts, often circumventing procurement rules. Some Board Chairmen insists on offices and Board members come to regular work on a daily basis as if they were employees. It is often the case that the inordinate control, flouting all corporate governance norms is exercised by the Minister in charge of the Institution. Should any of these "mighty" parties clash, the institution is thrown into turmoil.

Improving corporate governance in many institutions and companies in Sierra Leone will result in overall greater prosperity for reasons already proffered. The formation of the IOM (SL) should therefore be applauded. The organizing team which revamped this hitherto moribund organization leaves one in little doubt about the institute's potential. This includes Chairpersons and Directors of multiple corporations—Amy Greene, Sally Vinod Khatumal, Desmond Gordon Williams, Llewellyn Rogers Wright (Adviser), Christopher Forster and Senior Managers in the Banking and Financial sector—Millicent Cole, Jennifer Jonah, Mariama Jajua and Rakiatu Kassim. Power to them! The organization, which will have external affiliations aims to be the "go-to place" for recruiting trained and efficient Board members, networking, training of Board members and a veritable resource pool. Apart from serving the private sector, it behoves government to support the work of such an institution to sharpen the edges of its appointed Directors. The need to onboard boards in Sierra Leone, giving them the knowledge and skills for good corporate governance has never been more urgent.

Ponder my thoughts



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LOCAL NEWS

From Cover

UDM-Mohamed Sowa Turay and his Vice Presidential Aspirant, Olivette Walker and PDP-Prince Coker and his Vice Presidential candidate, Ibrahim Jalloh were successfully nominated and approved by ECSL following the successful nomination of Dr. Samura Kamara and Chernor Maju Bah of the main opposition All Peoples Congress (APC) party on May 1st and the incumbent, President Julius Maada Bio and Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) on May 2nd.

Presidential Nomination is the legal process by which ECSL screens qualified persons for presidential elections recommended by political parties, approves their candidacy, and prints their names and photos on the ballot papers.

The two candidates assured the Chief Electoral Commissioner of their commitment to peace during and after the June 24 general elections. Mohamed Sowa Turay emphasised his commitment to unifying a sharply divided country, while also tackling the current economic challenges.

He said that the current economic challenge Sierra Leone is currently

2023 Presidential Election: UDM, PDP sail through nomination



facing are not a peculiar, but a global crisis that he is committed to tackling when he attains the seat of presidency.

Prince Coker, the PDP Presidential Candidate, expressed his confidence in winning the election and providing solutions to tackling economic challenges.

He also pointed out that People are tired of both the APC and SLPP, adding that as the youngest presidential aspirant, he was confident of winning the June 24

presidential elections.

The UDM Party was formed by Mohamed Bangura, former Leader and flag bearer who later defected to the APC and became member of the recently dissolved parliament for Constituency 066 Karene district.

The PDP was formed by Thaimu Bangura (died 1999) who was a government minister from 1980 to 1982 and again from 1996 to 1999. Bangura was the National Leader of the People's Democratic Party of Sierra Leone as well as their

presidential candidate in the 1996 elections.

Thaimu Bangura finished 3rd behind winner president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP and John Karefa-Smart of the UNPP with 16.07% of the initial round of voting.

After a long time in the political wilderness, PDP was resuscitated by Prince Coker, the Chairman and Leader of PDP "Sorbeh".

Prince is also the chairman of the All Political Parties Association (APPA).

Africell awards NLe.50, 000 to winner of 'Ramadan Hut Show'

By Ishmael Dumbuya

One of Sierra Leone's leading telecommunication companies, Africell, has on May 3rd, awarded the sum of Fifty Thousand Leones (50,000) to the winner of the Ramadan Hut Show.

The 14-year-old winner, Bryan Decker Jnr. expressed delight during the award ceremony, adding that he never believed in the show as there are a lot of scammers all over the place who are determined to exploit and defraud people.

He added that his parents helped him win the award as they regularly buy him megabytes in order to participate in the show. He went on to state that the money he just won will be used in his pursuit of education.

Explaining the model of the Ramadan show, one of the anchors of the show, Abdulai Jalloh aka Tamba B narrated to pressmen that Africell Mobile Company believes in supporting the people of Sierra Leone by bringing exciting programs that are beneficial to its subscribers.

He added that in this year's Ramadan show Management of Africell Mobile Company decided to bring the show as a form of giving

back to Sierra Leoneans across the country; especially those that were fasting in this Holy Month of Ramadan, noting that Bryan Jnr. is the only lucky winner from Freetown.

Tamba B. explained further that Africell Mobile Company is not only promoting their value-added services in the country, but that they are also bringing innovative promotions to their lovely subscribers by giving them the opportunity to become millionaires and also win other attractive prizes in the Ramadan Show.

Tamba B. stated further that only Africell subscribers will have the opportunity to be part of the show and stand a chance of winning millions of Leones daily in the 'Ramadan DI Hut Show' by calling or sending a blank SMS to 777 which costs 65 cent and will be refunded back in the form of On-Net credit valid for 24hrs.

Tamba B concluded by encouraging their lovely subscribers to participate in the show and stand a chance of winning attractive prizes, emphasizing that, the show has been highly praised for its level of transparency and fairness.



He further stated that any subscriber that recharges NLe. 2 via Afrimoney automatically get 3 chances in the show.

He also called on those that don't have Afrimoney accounts to do so now and grab the opportunity of winning smart prizes in the show.

The father of the winner, Bryan Decker Snr. stated that he was elated at the winning of his son, noting that the money won will be utilized in his son's educational

pursuit.

He added that his son (the winner) has always been demanding money from him in order to purchase megabytes not knowing that he will one day win 50,000 Nle.

The Africell Ramadan Hut Show is a show conducted by Africell in every Ramadan wherein subscribers can win whooping amount of money if they are lucky. The award attracted pressmen from different media houses.

LOCAL NEWS

Fish Harbour Project at Black Johnson : Community People Share Concerns with HRCSL



In May 2021, some residents of the Black Johnson Community in the western area rural were in contention with the government's bid for a proposed Fish Harbour to be constructed with funding from the Chinese government. Among other things, residents said they were not formally engaged by the government on the terms of the project and also disagreed with the 252 acres of land without compensation.

Following this, a team from HRCSL led by the Chairperson; Madam Patricia Narsu Ndanema visited the community to hear concerns from the people following some scuffle and news making round on social media on the implementation of the said project. During the visit, the commission observed that there was poor knowledge of the project and those engaged can hardly distinguish between a fish harbour and a fish pond. For them, they were of the opinion that it will be a fish pond, which does not require a large portion of land.

In an engagement with the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, the Minister Hon. Emma Kowa Jalloh stated that "the hype around the project was due to bad publicity that had been associated

with the project." She said the government through the ministry made a series of applications for assistance from the Chinese Government, one of which is the construction of a fish harbour and mentioned that other locations were identified but the lot fell on Black Johnson because it is more suitable and will cause lesser destructions to property, the environment and livelihood as compared to places like Murray Town which was one of the proposed sites.

In March 2022, the ministry put out a notice for residents in the affected areas of the project to forward documents of their acclaimed property for review and subsequent compensation. Over 70 applications were sent, 23 were shortlisted as qualified landowners but only 19 were selected for compensation. Since the ministry commenced payment to land owners on 30th June, 2022, it has so far disbursed a compensation package to 11 residents including 5 women to the tune of NLE5,684,089.

Meanwhile, in January this year, the ministry in collaboration with EPA organized the draft Environmental and Social Health Impact Assessment

(ESHIA) and the Engineering Feasibility Studies of the proposed Fish Harbour Development Project in three different locations namely; the Black Johnson community, Waterloo and Western area urban.

The ESHIA document assesses both the negative and positive impacts of the project and the mitigation measures that should be put in place to solve whatever problems that may arise during the implementation phase.

On 17th April, the Directorate of Business and Human Rights and Labour Relations engaged the community on the current status of the project. The community people expressed dissatisfaction with the way the land was being surveyed by the Chinese team currently in-country. According to Junisa Feika, the Secretary for the local community group, the surveyors have included more portion of the land that was not part of the initial survey previously done. They also noted that there has been an influx of land grabbers into their community taking away some of the reserved land meant for communal use like cemeteries, markets, schools and health centres. "We are not

happy with this whole arrangement. Some of the beneficiaries are not members of this community and nobody informed us before payments were made," he said.

He claimed that people, who had known about the Fish Harbour project since 2017, manipulated their way through the system to have lands so that they could be beneficiaries of the said payment. He added that the community had earlier planned to use approximately 500 acres of land as a cemetery but the particular family claiming ownership of the said land have been terrorizing the community.

Deputy Director and Head of Business and Human Rights Directorate, Abdulai Yollah Bangura gave an account of the issue and the previous engagements the Commission has had with the community and other relevant government stakeholders like the EPA and the Ministry of Fisheries. "I am not here to make promises to anyone but to merely note your concerns for further engagement with the relevant authorities. I am kindly asking you all to stay calm, be peaceful and not take actions on your own," he said.

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Njala University INSLACS holds a week celebration

The Institute of Languages and Cultural Studies has on Thursday, 27th April 2023 concluded its four-day celebration dubbed INSLACS week at the Great Hall of Towama Location, Bo Campus, with the theme "A Unified Sierra Leone."

The celebration featured student participation in debates, essay and poetry competitions, stand-up comedy, musical performances, drama and cultural performances.

The Director of INSLACS, Mr. Claude A. Dimoh, justified the theme in his welcome address as a call to all Sierra Leoneans to be patriotic and hold the country dear, noting that the dignity we enjoy is a result of the unity the citizens continue to uphold.

"We at Njala University and INSLACS, in particular are craving national cohesion and cohesiveness. On this note, our groundbreaking event is a true reflection and exhibition of the cultural milieu of Sierra Leone and our bilateral relationships," Director further stated.

Mr. Claude Dimoh emphasised the significance of the event, stating that it aims to teach and promote Sierra Leone's cultural heritage while also testing and exploring the students' creativity and intellectual ability.



Director Dimoh requested assistance from the supervising ministry, the Government of Sierra Leone, the US Embassy, the British High Commission, the People's Republic of China Embassy, well-meaning Sierra Leoneans, development partners, and alumni to address the Institute's challenges in providing professional training for staff, teaching and learning materials, and infrastructure including classrooms, laboratories, and equipment.

Speaking at the event, Professor Bashiru Mohamed Koroma, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Njala University, assured INSLACS staff of the Administration's commitment to their goals and aspirations for putting high-quality education into practise. He promised that

his dynamic leadership would always be ready, willing, and able to transform the University with speed, accuracy, and inclusion.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal listed four complementary values, including education as essential to national growth and development, cultural diversity and relativism in education, education as a key to national cohesion, and transforming knowledge into practise, that would enable the growth and development of education in Sierra Leone. Professor Bashiru Koroma complimented INSLACS for showcasing the power of the human intellect and stated that knowledge and skills acquired by individuals, rather than the amount of years spent in a classroom, determine

growth, development, and the ability to reduce poverty. He urged everyone to switch their call to action from "Education for All" to "Learning for All."

"The purpose of cultural diversity, is to help dispel negative stereotypes and personal biases about different groups and it helps us recognise and respect 'ways of being' that are not necessarily our own. So that as we interact with others, we can build bridges to trust, respect, and understand across cultures," VC&P said.

He went on to say that education, through the transmission of knowledge and the forming of attitudes towards diversity and change, is a crucial tool in the promotion of social cohesion, adding that having transformative knowledge entails using an integrative strategy and treating the systems that sustain it.



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LOCAL NEWS Political parties commit to working with PPRC

By Yusufu S. Bangura

Representatives from different political parties have on Wednesday, May 3rd, made their commitments to continue working with the Political Parties Regulation Commission (PPRC) in order to promote peace and non-violence before, during and after the June elections. They made their commitments during the re-launch and inauguration of the District Multi-Party Forum (DMPF) at the PPRC Conference Room, Lamina Sankoh Street in Freetown.

Political parties present during the ceremony were the main opposition All People's Congress (APC), the ruling Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP), Peoples Democratic Congress (PMDC), ReNIP, RUF, C4C NGC, among others.

"As political parties, we want to assure the commission that we will come together and work as one big family to make sure that there is a peaceful election for the betterment of our beloved nation," they assured.

They further stated that they were closer to their leaders and supporters and that they would encourage them not to engage in any form of violence during the June 24th general elections. The political parties added that since they are now placed in one committee, it

shows that they are one big family and that they would take the messages to their different districts.

They reiterated that they would continue to be law abiding and peaceful. Giving a brief background of DMPF, Executive Secretary for PPRC, Olushogo A. David, said the DMPF is an adjunct of the commission and was created by the Commission in league with the membership of political parties during the signing of the Code of Conduct for Political Parties some years ago.

He said the Code of Conduct which is now subsumed in the new Political Parties Act of 2022, is intended to promote peace and non-violence, as well as political pluralism and ensures that Political Parties' conduct is in a manner consistent with stipulations of the law and democratic norms.

David said the code prohibits intimidation and interference in the electoral process, adding that the DMPF was formed to act as a forum of discussion of issues of common concern, including breaches of the Political Parties Act No. 25 of 2022 before, during and after the forthcoming elections.

The Executive Secretary for PPRC said the role of the DMPF is to monitor Political Parties adherence to the PPRC Act of 2022, because over the years, the



Political party representatives, PPRC commissioner and staffs pose for photo

DMPF has not been playing their major roles and responsibilities to address issues relating to political tolerance, promoting non-violence and very importantly providing a forum for fostering dialogue during electioneering period.

Giving the importance of the forum, Olushogo A. David said the relaunch and inauguration of the DMPF will be the re-establishment of a forum of discussion of common concerns in the district and will be instrumental in preempting disputes and resolving tensions between and amongst political parties.

"The roles and responsibilities of this

forum is to monitor the Conduct of Political Parties and intervenes on simmering conflict and threats to peace in the district. It will give political parties the opportunity to discuss and intervene on simmering conflict, for political parties to discuss ways in which conflict can be prevented. It will also be more effective and timely for parties to deal with breaches and Electoral information sharing for stakeholders to share information relating to election," he said.

The re-launching and inauguration of the DMPF was chaired by one of PPRC commissioners, Commissioner Alhaji M.B Willian.

President Bio launches National Payment Switch

By Hassan Gbassay Koroma

President Julius Maada Bio, yesterday Wednesday May 3, officially launched the National Payment Switch. The switch is a gateway system to payment solutions in Sierra Leone.

The National Payment Switch is a technology that facilitates bulk cashless payment in the fastest possible time and also promotes financial inclusion.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Bank Complex in Freetown, President Bio said the launching marked the start of a new era in the country's internal banking financial services sector and links with the rest of the world, adding that it was another bold step moving forward along with the path in his government New Direction manifesto.

He said promoting inclusive economic growth is a core objective in their transformative vision for the nation and it is a vision that focuses on bringing the benefit of technological progress to all citizens in multiple sectors as fast as possible.

He said with the launch of the new payment switch, the major persistence barrier to building inclusive and diverse economy has been overcome and it is good for everyone.

He further noted that the technology helps to advance the country's inclusive economic growth agenda by improving

financial inclusion and strengthening the core role of the private sector, banking and financial services sector.

He said people in rural areas with no bank or physical financial services structures can now have access to financial services, and that rural population can now make financial transactions using electronic cash payment or other financial digital tools without enduring the time consuming and expensive trips to access financial services in the bigger towns.

President Bio said the technology encourages the rapid flow of millions of financial transactions within and across the borders in seconds through a single interface and it provides a holistic approach to dealing with several financial transaction challenges.

He said consistency improving the nation's financial and economic management is another priority objective of his government, noting that in Africa Sierra Leone has made a lot of progress over the past five years and the technology will lead to effective tax collection.

Minister of Finance, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura, said it is important that the country keeps fast to the global technology transformation and work towards shaping the country's financial system to foster digital economy, noting that finance is good for growth and the investment in the



modernize payment system is a major catalyst in the process.

He said the payment switch is a major milestone in the government vision and they are rebranding the financial infrastructure and that what they are doing with the introduction of the new technology.

Also speaking, Acting Bank Governor, Dr. Ibrahim Stevens said government is moving towards a digital society and the Bank of Sierra Leone is spearheading that migration especially for the financial system, technology driven financial ecosystem.

He said the move mark the transformational era in the financial services landscape and fulfill government commitment to inclusive economic growth.

He said the digital economy has

enormous transformative potential for the country and that they were only just

starting, adding that before the upgrade of the National Payment System, just over a decade ago, financial transaction in Sierra Leone was very tedious and time consuming, inconvenient, costly and risky because transactions were done manually, but with digital transformation, transactions can be done within a minute.

He said the payment system was initially dominated by banks, but with the growth of non-banks entity like payment services providers, including mobile money operators and financial technology firms significant changes had occurred in the payment ecosystem.

He said the development has created access to new market, increase efficiency, cost savings, enhance security and improve customer experience, noting that the National Switch is going to improve financial inclusion.

He said ensuring to improving financial inclusion is crucial to making formal financial services such as loans, deposit and savings accounts, payment services readily available.



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NEWS AROUND AFRICA COMPILED BY GABRIEL BENJAMIN

Press freedom: the 10 best-ranked African countries by RSF



A photo taken on April 26, 2017 at AFP headquarters in Paris shows ... - Copyright © africanews PHILIPPE LOPEZ/AFP or licensors

Senegal and Tunisia are among the countries that have fallen the most in the annual press freedom ranking, published on Wednesday by Reporters Without Borders (RSF). The 21st edition of this ranking highlights in particular the effects of disinformation, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

In two thirds of the 180 countries assessed, the specialists who contribute to the development of the ranking "report the involvement of political actors" in "massive disinformation or propaganda campaigns", according to RSF. The most significant drops in Africa concern Senegal (104th, -31 places) and Tunisia (121st, -27).

In Senegal, where the possibility of a third term for President Macky Sall is arousing opposition, RSF denounces "the sharp deterioration in the security conditions of journalists". This country was however a "regional model until recently". The NGO also judges that Tunisia, chaired by Kais Saied, is "increasingly authoritarian and intolerant of criticism from the press".

In Mali (113th) as in Burkina Faso (58th), the military authorities, displaying and assuming their proximity to the mercenaries of the Russian private military company Wagner, suspended sine die the antennas of two international media and expelled several foreign journalists. In the Central African Republic (98th), the contents of the Russian propaganda media RT and Sputnik are widely relayed.

The defense and promotion of the pro-Russian narrative contributes to the explosion of disinformation and the development of a propaganda ecosystem across the continent. Fake media networks now even help to denigrate and discredit journalists who do not comply with the patriotic injunctions imposed by the new juntas in power.

A similar phenomenon is also noticeable in Ethiopia (130th). The Tigray war led to a wave of arrests of journalists and encouraged intense propaganda by federal authorities, such as the Tigray Liberation Front (TPLF). In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (124th), in the North Kivu region, journalists are also caught between the injunctions of the M23 rebels and those of loyalist forces. Propaganda and disinformation thrive in a terrain that remains one of the most dangerous for journalism. If the French journalist Olivier Dubois regained his freedom after 711 days of captivity in Mali, a total of five journalists were killed in the exercise of their function, between the end of September 2022 and January 2023, in Cameroon (138th)

, in Kenya (116th), Somalia (141st), and Rwanda (131st). Even when investigations are opened, they do not always lead to the originators, as illustrated by the cases of Cameroonian journalist Martinez Zogo and Rwandan John Williams Ntwali. In this environment where impunity reigns, arbitrary arrests on false grounds, particularly targeting investigative journalists, have multiplied.

Yesterday regional model, Senegal (104th) fell 31 places in the ranking, in particular due to the prosecution of journalists Pape Alé Niang and Pape Ndiaye and the sharp deterioration in security conditions for media professionals. In Burundi (114th), the particularly severe verdict, sentencing journalist Floriane Irangabiye to 10 years in prison, helps to keep this country at the bottom of the ranking.

While the situation is now described as "difficult" in nearly 40% of countries (compared to 33% in 2022), some improvements are still to be noted on the side of Niger (61st) where the law on cybercrime, used to condemn journalists, was amended in June 2022. In Uganda (133rd) the Constitutional Court also struck down a provision of the Misuse of Computers Act, which criminalized the publication of "false news".

According to the 2023 edition of this benchmark ranking, the conditions for practicing journalism are poor in 7 out of 10 countries. The NGO is alarmed by the strong presence of disinformation on social networks, illustrated, for example, by false images generated by artificial intelligence (AI)

This world ranking is produced by RSF on the basis of "a quantitative survey of abuses committed against journalists" on the one hand, and "a qualitative study" on the other. The latter is based "on the answers of hundreds of press freedom experts (journalists, academics, human rights defenders) to a hundred questions".

The 10 highest-ranked African countries by RSF:

- Namibia (22nd)
- South Africa (25)
- Cape Verde (33)
- Seychelles (34)
- Gambia (46)
- Ivory Coast (54)
- Burkina Faso (58)
- Nigeria (61)
- Ghana (62)
- Mauritius (63)

Ivory Coast: partnership agreement between Ouattara and Affi N'Guessan



Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara and Pascal Affi N'Guessan, - Copyright © africanews SIA KAMBOU/AFP or licensors

The party in power in Côte d'Ivoire and an opposition party signed Tuesday in Abidjan "a partnership agreement" for "national reconciliation, social cohesion and democracy", in a country with a recent history marked by political violence.

"We all note that the wounds have not all healed, because we have not been able to go through with a sincere reconciliation process," said Pascal Affi N'Guessan, a former close friend of ex-president Laurent Gbagbo and leader of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI, opposition).

"Of course, Côte d'Ivoire is not burning, but the embers are not extinguished. And as long as there is an ember,

everyone knows it, the fire can start again if some blow skillfully", added Mr. Affi N'Guessan to justify the signing of this agreement with the Rally of Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) of President Alassane Ouattara. According to him, "reconciliation requires forgiveness to overcome the tears and dramas of the past", adding: "Whatever happened in the past, the demand for a common future must prevail over the desire for revenge."

Spokesperson for an opposition party which did not recognize the re-election of President Alassane Ouattara for a controversial third term in the presidential election of October 31, 2020, Pascal Affi N'Guessan had participated in the proclamation of a "Council National Transition", supposed to replace the regime. This led to him being arrested in November 2020, detained for almost two months and prosecuted with other opponents for "conspiracy against state authority", "insurrectionary movement", "assassination" and "acts of terrorism". Ten years after the violence linked to Mr. Ouattara's first victory in a presidential contested by Laurent Gbagbo in

Botswana Olympic medalist Nijel Amos banned for doping

Nijel Amos, a 2012 Olympic silver medalist in the men's 800 meters, has been banned for three years for doping, the Athletics Integrity Unit said in a ruling published Wednesday.

The runner from Botswana tested positive for the banned substance GW1516 last year in the run-up to the track world championships and received a reduction on the standard four-year ban because he admitted to the charges. The ban rules Amos out of next year's Paris Olympics.

Amos equaled the third-fastest time in 800 history at the age of 18 when he won the silver medal behind world record-breaking David Rudisha of Kenya at the 2012 London Games, becoming Botswana's first-ever Olympic medalist. His silver medal is not affected by the doping ruling.

The 29-year-old Amos is a three-time Olympian who has won titles at the African Championships and Commonwealth Games. His time of 1 minute, 41.73 seconds from the 2012 Olympics remains the world junior record.

The AIU ruling said Amos initially asked for tests to be run on a supplement he had been taking before the positive



Botswana's Nijel Amos celebrates after winning the men's 800m race during the IAAF Diamond League Athletics meeting at the Louis II Stadium in Monaco, Friday, July 20, 2018. - Copyright © africanews Claude Paris/Copyright 2018 The AP. All rights reserved

test. No traces of GW1516 were found in either the bottle he had used or another, unopened bottle of the same supplement, the AIU said, adding Amos then signed a form admitting to the doping charges.

GW1516 was developed to help build endurance and burn fat but was found to cause cancer during tests on rodents. Anti-doping organizations have warned athletes not to use it on safety grounds. It has been found in doping cases in various sports and also led to a ban for another 2012 Olympic medalist, Russian racewalker Elena Lashmanova.

First African Singer set to perform at King's coronation

South African Singer, Pretty Yende is set to perform at the coronation of Charles III on May 6, in front of tens of millions of television viewers.

Pretty Yende has performed in some of the world's greatest opera houses, from the Metropolitan Opera House to the Paris Opera, via La Scala in Milan.

The 38-year-old Opera singer, who will be singing a work by British composer Sarah Class, has been in demand for the past 10 years.

Born in 1985 in a township in Piet Retief, a city in the east of South Africa still under apartheid, the singer still can't

believe she was invited to sing at the coronation of Charles III, who heard her sing at Windsor Castle a year ago, when he was still Prince of Wales.

The Opera singer, who is very present on social media, launched for many years the hashtags #Prettyjourney (meaning both the journey of Pretty and beautiful journey), and #PrettyArmy to encourage and inspire her many fans.

The invitation is highly symbolic as the singer claims to be the first African singer to sing solo at a coronation of English kings and queens.

Senegal reports one death from Congo fever, health ministry says



Health workers assist a 48-year-old Covid-19 patient at the Fann ... - Copyright © africanews Leo Correa/Copyright 2020 The AP. All rights reserved.

A person has died in Senegal of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, a viral disease transmitted by ticks, the health ministry told AFP on Tuesday.

A butcher on duty at the Dakar slaughterhouse was declared ill on April 21 and died on April 22. Dr. Boly Diop, coordinator of the fight against Congo fever at the health ministry, told AFP.

"It was a single case. We then carried out investigations in the family, professional and health environments (of the victim) because the disease is contagious. The contact cases were identified and we followed them up. All the samples came back negative," added Mr Diop.

This fatal case is the first recorded in Senegal this year. The country has had five cases of Congo fever in 2022, including one death, Diop said.

Congo disease is a zoonosis. Transmission to humans of

this haemorrhagic fever occurs "either through tick bites or through contact with blood or tissues of infected animals, during or immediately after slaughter," according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The majority of cases are found among people working in the livestock sector, farmers, slaughterhouse employees and veterinarians, according to a fact sheet from the Senegalese Ministry of Health.

Between humans, transmission of the disease "can occur following direct contact with blood, secretions, organs or biological fluids of infected subjects", according to the WHO. The haemorrhagic fever virus causes death in 10 to 40% of cases.

Credit: Rédaction africanews with AP

2010-2011 (around 3,000 dead), violence also marked the 2020 presidential election (85 dead and half a thousand injured from August to November).

Ibrahim Cissé Baongo, executive secretary of the RHDP, praised Pascal Affi N'Guessan's "high spirit" and Alassane Ouattara's "sense of state". "They were able to wipe out a lot of things that opposed them, to talk to each other, to meet, to exchange", which allowed their two parties to do

the same to reach this agreement, a-he added.

With the approach of the regional and municipal elections on September 2, Mr Affi N'Guessan affirmed that "the partnership" signed on Tuesday was not "an electoral agreement". "But this partnership does not prohibit meeting, where it seems necessary to us" at that time, he said.

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Employment Promotion Programme (EPP IV) Expression of Interest (EOI) for Service Providers to support 190 SMEs with media service delivery and specialized training.

PN: 3010339

1. Background of Employment Promotion Programme (EPP IV)

The Employment Promotion Programme (EPP IV) co-funded by European Union (EU) and the Federal Republic of Germany. The programme is being implemented by German International Cooperation Sierra Leone (GIZ-SL) has as its overall goal *"promotion of youth employment through local economic development and vocational training"* In order to achieve this goal, EPP IV works through the private sector and in particular Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) across the country. Agriculture and Finance Consultants (AFC) is a third-party consulting firm supporting GIZ in the implementation of EPP IV. The programme is to be implemented from June 2021 to January 2024 for AFC Interventions.

2. Districts / Areas of implementation

The programme is being implemented with a key focus on three Districts where GIZ-SL operates, namely: Koinadugu/Falaba, Kailahun and Kono. The interventions for the Facility for Growth and Facility for Innovation are extended to other Districts as deemed necessary by the programme. Consequently, interested Service Providers should be prepared to work in other Districts not mentioned in this Expression of Interest (EOI).

3. Our strategy / approach

The Private Sector Department (PSD) is one of the work areas within EPP IV and is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that 190 SMEs are capacitated with in-kind support, such as branding, labelling, jingle creation and broadcasting, designing of logos, signboards, and specialized training within the life cycle of the current programme using a methodology known as **"Facility for Innovation (F4I) and Facility for Growth F4G"** in Sierra Leone.

4. Purpose of consultancy

AFC is requesting Service Providers to build the capacity of 190 SME's who need business skills improvement in order to operate profitably. This is done through specialize training, development of jingles, branding and labelling, erection of signboards, basic business entrepreneurial training, coaching to develop and sustainably operate their businesses.

5. Specific objectives

- a) To conduct assessment of the current status of business needs for selected SMEs in the selected geographical areas
- b) To develop individualized concepts and brands for jingles, branding, labelling and logos
- c) To provide specialized trainings for the selected SMEs owners.

d) To support beneficiaries in formalizing their businesses

e) To report on tangible results achieved by MSMEs as a result of the in-kind support and specialized training / coaching and its contribution to the accomplishment of the objectives for F4I and F4G, of EPP IV.

f) To set targets and monitor progress along the achievements of the In-kind support and specialized training of the 190 selected grantees.

There are geographical zones of implementation under this offer. Each zone covers a District of EPP IV: **Zone 1:** Kailahun; **Zone 2:** Kono and **Zone 3:** Koinadugu and Falaba: **Zone 4:** Makeni, Bo and Kenema Districts. Interested Service Providers (SPs) applying for the assignment will be given the task to service all assigned beneficiaries.

6. Timeframe

The assignment delivery will be in batches of SME's from June 30th until 31st October 2023.

Eligibility / Expertise / Documents to be submitted.

- a) The Service Provider gives poof of good standing, commercial qualification, payment of taxes and social benefits: **Clearance certificate of NRA and NASSIT**
- b) The Service Provider is based and registered in Sierra Leone: **Certificate of Business Registration.**
- c) The Service Provider should have minimum of three (3) years' experience in the tasks outlined for the assignment and should have experience in working in the targeted areas in Sierra Leone and show a wide understanding of the assignment.
- d) **A brief company profile that details the experience in delivering similar tasks**

Submission of Expressions of Interest

Service Providers should submit their "Expression of Interest" in a plain sealed envelope in the Tender Box situated at the GIZ Country Office Reception -37 Fraser Street, Freetown **not later than 15th May 2023, 5:00 PM** local time, **clearly marked with "EOI FACILITY FOR INNOVATION (F4I) AND FACILITY FOR GROWTH (F4G) NUMBER- 83434060"**

Only shortlisted SPs will be contacted with detailed Terms of Reference and tender documentation for submission of technical and financial bids



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C/O MRGG 145 Circular Road, Freetown.

Email: editorsguild94@gmail.com Mob:+23276653596

Public Notice

Increase in Advert Pricing for Newspapers

24th March, 2023.

The general public is hereby informed that the Guild of Newspaper Editors - Sierra Leone (GoNE-SL) has reviewed the advert pricing for newspapers as follows:

Black & White

No.	Description	Old Price (NLLe)	New Price (NLLe)
1	Quarter Page (¼)	700	800
2	Half (½)	800	1,200
3	Full Page	1,000	1,500
4	Centre Spread	2,000	3,000

Coloured

No.	Description	Old Price (NLLe)	New Price (NLLe)
1	Full Page	2,500	3,000
2	Centre Spread	5,000	6,000

The cover price remains the same.

Please note that the new pricing takes effect on Monday, 3rd April, 2023.

Your cooperation is highly solicited.

Signed:
Donald Theo-Harding
Chairman, GoNE-SL.

Bankers: Union Trust Bank A/C No: 01-210-25968-01

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PRESS RELEASE

INCREASE IN COST OF RADIO COMMERCIALS

Mile 91 Town, 25th March 2023

The National Executive and General Membership of the Sierra Leone Broadcasters Association (SILBA) wish to inform the public that the Association has unanimously resolved to increase the cost of radio commercials.

The decision was reached at a national consultation meeting held at Mile 91 Town, Tonkolili District, on Saturday, 18th March 2023, as part of the efforts to meet the current inflation rates and other statutory obligations in the country.

This decision will enhance quality in service delivery and sustainability in the operations of radio stations across the country.

It should be recalled that this is the only increment in commercials announced by radio stations in 12 years.

The Association therefore craves the understanding and patronage of the public.

The new commercial quotation which will take effect on 1st May 2023 shall be as follow:

FREETOWN

1. Jingle – jingle slot – NLLe 35.00 per minute
2. Public notice – NLLe 30.00 per 50 words
3. (a) Cost for 30 minutes airtime, between NLLe 750.00 and NLLe 1,250.00 (Depending on the coverage of the Radio station)
- (b) Cost for 1hr airtime, between NLLe 1,500.00 and NLLe 2,500.00 (Depending on the coverage of the Radio station)

PROVINCIAL

1. Jingle – jingle slot – NLLe 20.00 per minute
2. Public notice – NLLe 20.00 per 50 words
3. (a) Cost for 30 minute airtime: between NLLe 500.00 and NLLe 750.00 (Depending on the coverage of the particular Radio station)
- (b) Cost for 1hr airtime: between NLLe 1,000.00 and NLLe 1,500.00 (Depending on the coverage of the particular Radio station)

SILBA regrets any inconvenience this may cause.

END

Signed:

Daniel M. Amara
Secretary General

Approved By:

Stanley Bangura Jr.
Chairman

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Set 18142

(*) All bets subject to Mercury International rules. In case of discrepancy terminal data prevails. Canceled fixtures pay 1:1. Bets placed after kickoff are void. Single bets permitted.

Fix No.	Sales Close	Competition	Home Team	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	5/3/2023 15:55	Serie A	ATALANTA	7 v 17	SPEZIA	1.91	21.00	90.00	3.90	7.20	16.00	25.00	22.00	13.00
2	5/3/2023 15:55	Serie A	JUVENTUS	3 v 16	LECCE	2.33	19.00	80.00	3.95	5.20	12.00	30.00	21.00	11.00
3	5/3/2023 15:55	Serie A	SALERNITANA	14 v 9	FIorentina	7.40	17.00	26.00	9.60	5.60	4.50	50.00	16.00	2.60
4	5/3/2023 15:55	Serie A	SAMPDORIA	20 v 12	TORINO	7.40	17.00	30.00	8.80	4.70	4.50	60.00	17.00	2.90
5	5/3/2023 15:55	Norway	MOLDE	15 v 16	AALESUNDS	1.57	27.00	99.00	3.60	9.20	25.00	24.00	27.00	19.00
6	5/3/2023 15:55	Norway	BODO/GLIMT	1 v 7	ODDS	1.64	23.00	99.00	3.80	9.00	21.00	22.00	23.00	15.00
7	5/3/2023 15:55	Norway	ROSENBORG	8 v 5	BRANN	4.70	14.00	27.00	7.00	5.20	5.60	35.00	13.00	3.40
8	5/3/2023 15:55	Cyprus	KARMIOISSA FC	4 v 5	DOXA KATOKOPIAS	3.40	15.00	40.00	5.00	4.50	7.00	30.00	15.00	5.40
9	5/3/2023 15:55	Cyprus	PARALIMNI	7 v 8	AKRITAS CHLORAKAS	2.65	15.00	45.00	4.50	5.20	9.00	26.00	16.00	6.80
10	5/3/2023 16:55	Sweden	ELFSBORG	3 v 11	HALMSTADS	1.98	19.00	70.00	3.90	6.60	14.00	24.00	20.00	11.00
11	5/3/2023 16:55	Sweden	HACKEN	2 v 6	DJURGARDENS	2.70	14.00	40.00	4.80	5.60	8.80	24.00	15.00	6.20
12	5/3/2023 16:55	Sweden	KALMAR	4 v 15	SIRIUS	2.65	15.00	50.00	4.40	4.90	9.00	27.00	16.00	7.20
13	5/3/2023 16:55	Sweden	MJALLBY	7 v 14	AIK	4.50	15.00	35.00	5.80	4.10	5.60	40.00	15.00	4.20
14	5/3/2023 16:55	Lithuania	FK RITERIAI	7 v 3	VILNIUS FK ZALGIRIS	11.00	19.00	25.00	12.00	5.00	3.45	80.00	18.00	1.98
15	5/3/2023 16:55	Greece	AEK ATHENS	2 v 3	OLYMPIACOS PIRAEUS	2.45	15.00	60.00	4.30	5.00	10.00	27.00	16.00	8.20
16	5/3/2023 16:55	Greece	ARIS	5 v 6	VOLOS	1.74	23.00	99.00	3.60	7.00	19.00	26.00	24.00	16.00
17	5/3/2023 16:55	Greece	PANATHINAIKOS	1 v 4	PAOK	2.60	18.00	70.00	3.95	4.30	9.60	30.00	19.00	8.80
18	5/3/2023 16:55	Czech Rep Cup	SPARTA PRAGUE	0 v 0	SLAVIA PRAGUE	3.55	12.00	28.00	5.40	4.80	5.80	26.00	12.00	3.90
19	5/3/2023 17:25	La Liga	VALENCIA	17 v 5	VILLARREAL	4.50	14.00	30.00	6.80	5.20	6.00	35.00	14.00	3.80
20	5/3/2023 17:25	Bulgaria	LUDOGORETS	1 v 11	BEROE STARA	1.42	35.00	99.00	3.50	11.00	35.00	26.00	35.00	29.00
21	5/3/2023 17:55	Iceland	FRAM REYKJAVIK	12 v 6	VESTMANNAEYJAR	3.35	12.00	28.00	6.20	6.00	7.40	24.00	12.00	4.20
22	5/3/2023 17:55	Iceland	KA AKUREYRI	7 v 3	HAFNARFJORDUR	2.95	13.00	35.00	5.20	5.60	8.00	24.00	14.00	5.40
23	5/3/2023 17:55	Qatar	UMM-SALAL SC	11 v 10	AL-SHAMAL	2.90	13.00	35.00	4.70	4.80	6.80	24.00	13.00	4.90
24	5/3/2023 17:55	Qatar	AL MARKHIYA	7 v 12	AL-SAILIYA SC	3.15	12.00	26.00	5.40	5.40	6.40	23.00	12.00	4.00
25	5/3/2023 18:10	Slovenia	ND GORICA	9 v 2	CELJE	5.80	14.00	26.00	7.20	4.40	4.20	40.00	14.00	2.80
26	5/3/2023 18:40	England League 1	BURTON	17 v 22	CAMBRIDGE UTD	5.00	15.00	30.00	6.60	4.60	5.00	40.00	15.00	3.50
27	5/3/2023 18:40	England League 2	CREWE	16 v 7	BRADFORD CITY	7.20	16.00	25.00	9.40	5.40	4.40	50.00	15.00	2.55
28	5/3/2023 18:40	Germany Cup	STUTTGART	0 v 0	EINTRACHT FRANKFURT	3.60	14.00	35.00	5.40	4.80	6.40	30.00	14.00	4.70
29	5/3/2023 18:40	England National League	WOKING	0 v 0	BROMLEY	2.85	13.00	45.00	4.90	4.80	8.60	27.00	14.00	6.40
30	5/3/2023 18:55	France League 1	BREST	0 v 0	NANTES	3.50	15.00	40.00	5.40	5.00	7.20	30.00	15.00	5.20
31	5/3/2023 18:55	Serie A	VERONA	18 v 4	INTER MILAN	8.80	18.00	28.00	10.00	5.20	4.20	60.00	17.00	2.50
32	5/3/2023 18:55	Serie A	LAZIO	2 v 11	SASSUOLO	2.43	17.00	60.00	4.40	5.80	11.00	26.00	17.00	8.40
33	5/3/2023 18:55	Serie A	AC MILAN	5 v 19	CREMONESE	1.81	25.00	99.00	3.65	7.00	20.00	28.00	26.00	17.00
34	5/3/2023 18:55	Serie A	MONZA	10 v 6	AS ROMA	6.00	16.00	35.00	7.20	4.30	4.90	50.00	16.00	3.50
35	5/3/2023 18:55	Premier League	LIVERPOOL	5 v 10	FULHAM	1.67	25.00	99.00	3.90	9.40	22.00	23.00	25.00	16.00
36	5/3/2023 18:55	Premier League	MANCHESTER CITY	1 v 15	WEST HAM	1.57	29.00	99.00	3.80	10.00	27.00	25.00	28.00	21.00
37	5/3/2023 19:10	Iceland	KR REYKJAVIK	9 v 4	HK KOPAVOGUR	2.32	15.00	40.00	4.70	6.80	10.00	21.00	15.00	6.80
38	5/3/2023 19:55	La Liga	ATLETICO MADRID	3 v 14	CADIZ CF	1.75	26.00	99.00	3.65	7.60	21.00	27.00	27.00	18.00
39	5/3/2023 19:55	La Liga	GETAFE	19 v 13	CELTA VIGO	4.20	16.00	45.00	5.40	3.90	6.40	40.00	16.00	5.20
40	5/3/2023 20:10	Iceland	FYLKIR REYKJAVIK	10 v 2	VALUR REYKJAVIK	5.40	13.00	22.00	8.80	6.20	5.20	35.00	13.00	2.70

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You Padi Na Kitchen

INT'L SPORT

Barcelona studying move to foreign league amid fears of sanctions over Negreira scandal

Barcelona president Joan Laporta has reportedly asked the club to study the possibility of leaving La Liga amid their referee payments scandal.

The Blaugrana are considering the possibility of playing in a different league, in case they face heavy sporting sanctions from either the Spanish government or UEFA, according to Spanish outlet OnzeTV3. At this stage, no decision has been made, but Laporta has requested a detailed report on the options available.

Although the Barcelona board are confident that no punishment will be handed down for the so-called Negreira case, they are wary of the possibility of being removed from European competition next season. The club is under investigation for paying a senior refereeing official over €7 million (£6.2m/\$7.4m) from 2001-2018.

AND WHAT'S MORE: Barca haven't chosen any specific leagues yet, according to the report. However, there is interest in the Middle East, which is currently flush with cash for football. Paris Saint-Germain played a high-profile friendly against the Riyadh All-Stars in January, seeing Kylian Mbappe, Lionel Messi and Co face a side that included Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Negreira case investigation is ongoing. Although Barcelona were handed a boost when a prosecutor ruled that they could not prove that the club's payments impacted refereeing decisions, they could still be punished for a number of administrative violations.

<https://www.goal.com/en-us/news>



Cristiano Ronaldo 'wants to LEAVE Al-Nassr' only months after joining Saudi side from Man United



Cristiano Ronaldo reportedly wants to leave Al-Nassr only months after his switch to the Saudi club from Manchester United.

The Portuguese superstar mutually agreed to terminate his contract with United following his bombshell interview with Piers Morgan.

The 38-year-old then agreed a £175million-a-year contract until 2025 with the Saudi Arabian giants.

However, it now seems Real Madrid are willing to offer Ronaldo a non-playing role as an ambassador, according to El Nacional.

The Spanish outlet said: 'Florentino Perez has guaranteed that [Ronaldo] will not lack work at the Santiago Bernabeu.

'But, obviously, he wouldn't do it to be a player, because he considers that it is a cycle that should be considered closed.' Ronaldo's partner Georgina Rodriguez is also said to be yearning for a return to the Spanish capital where the couple met.

Ronaldo is a club legend at Real Madrid, having scored 451 goals in 438 appearances during his time at the Bernabeu.

He won four Champions League crowns, three Club World Cups and UEFA Super Cups apiece, two LaLiga titles, a pair of Copas del Rey and two Spanish Super Cups with the LaLiga giants.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner has 12 goals in as many league games for Al-Nassr so far this season.

He scored after just four minutes as Al-Nassr secured a 3-0 victory at home to Al-Raed on Friday.

The victory sees Al-Nassr, who are in second place in the Saudi Pro League, close the gap on Al-Ittihad to three points, although the leaders have a game in hand.

Ronaldo put Al-Nassr in the lead with a header as he connected with a cross from Sultan Al Ghannam.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football>

Leeds set to sack manager Javi Gracia and in talks with Sam Allardyce

Leeds United are set to sack manager Javi Gracia and are in talks to appoint former England boss Sam Allardyce.

Director of football Victor Orta has left by mutual consent.

Leeds are 17th in the Premier League, above the relegation zone only on goal difference, with four games left this season.

Gracia, appointed in February as Jesse Marsch's successor, has won only three of 11 league games in charge.

Leeds have lost four of their past five matches and face leaders Manchester City on Saturday.

Spaniard Gracia joined Leeds on a "flexible contract", but the board is considering bringing in former Bolton, West Ham and Everton manager Allardyce.

The 68-year-old has been out of work since the end of the 2020-21 season when his West Brom side were relegated from the Premier League, the first top-flight relegation of his career.

Allardyce worked with Leeds chief executive Angus Kinnear at West Ham and would become the fourth Leeds manager this season, with Michael Skubala acting as interim head coach before Gracia's appointment.

Gracia will be the record-extending 15th managerial departure in the Premier League this season.

Leeds face arguably the toughest end to the season of the clubs battling relegation, with City and Newcastle up next before a visit to West Ham and then Tottenham at Elland Road to end the campaign.

They conceded 23 goals in April - a Premier League record for a single month and the most by any top-flight side since Birmingham let in 23 in



April 1965.

After Sunday's 4-1 defeat by Bournemouth, the Leeds United Supporters Advisory Board issued a statement of no confidence in the club's management.

Spaniard Orta, appointed by Leeds owner and chairman Andrea Radrizzani in 2017, was responsible for the hiring of former head coach Marcelo Bielsa, who led them to promotion to the Premier League after a 16-year absence.

Orta also brought in Marsch after Bielsa's sacking in February 2022 but, while the American kept Leeds in the top flight last season on the final day of the campaign, he was sacked in February.

Orta left because he and the board did not agree on Gracia's position.

Radrizzani said: "I am deeply saddened by the way that this chapter closes as Victor has been responsible for some of the best moments of my time as owner of Leeds United and I thank him and his people for all they have done in the past six years.

"However, it is clear that it is time to change direction and therefore we have agreed that Victor will leave the club.

"I understand supporters are hurt and upset, but now is a time for unity.

"We have four cup finals left to play this season and working together, I believe we can survive."

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