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For business or leisure, there's always a little something extra.

ORAL Committee to submit final reports to Mahama today

By Phoebe Martekie Doku

■ he Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL) Committee will today, February 10, present its final report to President John Dramani Mahama, marking a critical step in the government's efforts to investigate individuals suspected of misappropriating state resources.

During the swearing-in of 17 ministerial appointees on February 7, President Mahama underscored the significance of the committee's findings, stating, "On Monday, I will receive the report of the committee I set up to prepare the way for the implementation of Operation Recover All Loot. Upon receipt of this report, appropriate action will be taken against those deemed to have acted against the economic and financial interests of this country through corruption and related acts."

The president further assured Ghanaians that the findings would be forwarded to the appropriate

investigative agencies for necessary action. Speaking during his 'Thank You' tour in the Central Region on February 6, he emphasized that accountability would not be limited to past officials but would also extend to those currently in office.

"Even as we investigate those who have just left office and carry out Operation Recover All Loot, those who are currently in office should know that they will be held to the same standard as the past regime," he stated.

Mahama also outlined plans to a comprehensive implement accountability framework and a strict code of conduct for public officials to strengthen governance and transparency.

The ORAL Committee, established on December 18, 2024, is tasked with recovering state properties and assets unlawfully acquired, particularly under previous administrations. The five-member team, led by Samuel Okudzeto

Ablakwa, the Member of Parliament for North Tongu, is expected to ensure accountability and restore public confidence in the management of state resources.

Defending the constitutionality of the initiative following concerns from the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), Attorney General and Minister for Justice Dr. Dominic Ayine described ORAL

crucial mechanism for promoting accountability and recovering stolen state assets.

January, the committee revealed that it had received 700 petitions from the public, detailing alleged cases of corruption and mismanagement. With the report now set for submission, attention will turn to the government's next steps in implementing its recommendations.



John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana

State drops criminal charges against Democracy Hub protestors, Collins Dauda and others

By Amanda Cartey

ttorney General, Dr. Dominic Akuritinga Ayine, officially withdrawn criminal charges against members of the Democracy Hub and former Works and Housing Minister Collins Dauda, along with four others. This decision marks the end of their legal battles.

The case against the Democracy protesters, who arrested during an anti-galamsey demonstration in September 2024, was discontinued on Friday, February 7, 2025. This ruling clears key activists, including Oliver Barker-Vormawor, lawyer Elorm Ama Governor-Ababio (Ama Governor), and media personality Felicity Nelson, of all allegations.

A total of 53 demonstrators were arrested between September 21 and 23, 2024, at the 37 Roundabout in Accra while protesting against illegal mining. They were charged with unlawful assembly, conspiracy, property damage, and assaulting a public officer. The case gained international attention when authorities denied them bail, keeping them in custody for nearly

three days. While seven protesters were released in October 2024 after the charges were dropped, the rest, including Barker-Vormawor, were granted bail under a GH¢20,000 bond with two sureties.

Following the Attorney General's latest decision, all remaining charges have been dismissed. However, members of the Democracy Hub insist that the state's action does not erase the human rights violations they endured.

"The violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrators, the illegal arrests, the inhumane detention conditions, and the torture and ill-treatment meted out to some of our comrades must not be forgotten," the group stated.

Meanwhile, the Attorney General has also withdrawn charges against Collins Dauda and four others in the high-profile Saglemi Housing Project case. The case, which was initiated under the Akufo-Addo administration, involved 70 charges, including causing financial loss to the state in connection with the \$200 million affordable housing

Dauda, along with former Minister

Kweku Agyeman-Mensah, ex-Chief Director Alhaji Ziblim Yakubu, and businessmen Nouvi Tetteh Angelo and Andrew Clocanas, was accused of financial mismanagement and misconduct. However, on Friday, February 7, 2025, Dr. Avine filed a "nolle prosequi" at the Accra High

Court, formally discontinuing the prosecution.

With this latest decision, both cases have officially been brought to a close, ending years of legal uncertainty for the individuals involved.



File Photo

Committee probing chaotic ministerial vetting scrutinises Dafemekpor, Afenyo-Markin, others today

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

he committee investigating the violent altercation during the January 30 ministerial vetting will today engage key individuals involved in the escalation of unparliamentary conduct by members of the Appointments Committee.

Chaired by Emmanuel Bedzrah, committee resumes sittings with several members of the Appointments Committee set to appear. Those expected to testify include Ranking Member Alexander Afenyo-Markin, New Juaben South MP Michael Kofi Okyere Baafi, Majority Chief Whip Rockson-Nelson Dafeamekpor, Communications Minister Sam Nartey George, Minority Chief Whip Frank Annoh-Dompreh, Weija-Gbawe MP Jerry Ahmed Shaib, and Gushegu MP Hassan Tampuli, among others.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Appointments Committee, Bernard Ahiafor, along with Marshal of Parliament Lt. Col. Samuel Kofi Owusu and Clerk to the Appointments Committee Gifty Jiagge Gobah, had appeared

before the investigative committee to provide their accounts of the incident.

During the public hearings, Mr. Afenyo-Markin accused the chairman of the investigative committee of bias, but Emmanuel Bedzrah dismissed the claim. He also warned that constitutional provisions would be applied if Minority MPs on the Appointments Committee continued to boycott the inquiry.

Mr. Bedzrah, who also serves as MP for Ho West, expressed disappointment over the absence of the Minority Caucus from the proceedings.

"We are waiting for them to come and testify. I have not seen any accusation against me for being biased. I am not biased; you have all seen the work we have been doing. "We were even surprised that they didn't show up. We are waiting for them on Monday, and if they fail to appear, we will invoke constitutional provisions as well as the standing orders," he stated.

The investigative committee, aside from Mr. Bedzrah, includes Kwame Anyimadu-Antwi, Gizella Akushika Tetteh-Agbotui, Abena Osei Asare, Zanetor Agyeman-Rawlings, Vincent Oppong Asamoah, and Bede Anwataazuma Ziedeng.

The committee was initially given 10 days to submit its report and recommendations to Parliament. However, following reports circulated by the Minority claiming the committee's work had been suspended, Mr. Bedzrah has announced plans to request a two-day extension from Speaker Alban Bagbin to complete the inquiry.

Meanwhile, Speaker Bagbin has revoked the suspension of four Members of Parliament who were sanctioned following violent clashes during the ministerial vetting of Kwabena Mintah Akandoh and Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa.

The affected MPs—Minority Chief Whip Frank Annoh-Dompreh, Second Minority Whip Jerry Ahmed Shaib, Gushegu MP Alhassan Sulemana Tampuli, and Majority Chief Whip Rockson-Nelson Dafeamekpor—were initially suspended on January 31.

With tensions still high, the committee's findings are expected to provide clarity on the events that transpired during the vetting process.



Alexander Afenyo-Markins, Minority Leader

Mahama bars first-class travel by appointees, set to introduce code of conduct

By Amanda Cartey

President John Dramani Mahama has imposed a ban on first-class air travel for government officials as part of measures to promote fiscal discipline and modest governance. He has also announced plans to introduce a comprehensive code of conduct to regulate the actions of public officials within his administration's first 120 days.

Speaking at the swearing-in for ceremony parliamentary approved ministers at the Jubilee House on Friday, Mahama stressed the need for government appointees to uphold high ethical standards. He made it clear that the upcoming code of conduct would provide clear guidelines on their responsibilities. "Let me take this opportunity to remind you all that in the coming days, as promised in our 120-day plan, I will be unveiling a code of conduct and standards for all government officials to guide the conduct of all our appointees," Mahama stated.

"This will leave you in no doubt

about what you can and cannot do while serving in public service. You must make this code of conduct your guide and keep it like a Bible by your bedside before you take any action," he added.

The president emphasized that his government would be built on principles of humility, accountability, and respect for public resources. He warned against arrogance, extravagance, and financial mismanagement, stressing that the government's focus must remain on serving the Ghanaian people.

"The hallmark of this government will be modesty and respect for the Ghanaian people. There will be no room for arrogance and pomposity. The resources you will be working with belong to the Ghanaian people who put us in office," he stated.

As part of cost-cutting measures, Mahama has directed the Chief of Staff to strictly regulate official travel. All trips must be approved by his office, and government officials are expected to exercise restraint in their expenditures.

"No first-class air travel will be allowed. Also, all traces of affluence and lavish lifestyles are to be avoided," he cautioned.

On the fight against corruption, Mahama reaffirmed his commitment to transparency and accountability, noting that the code of conduct would set clear boundaries for public officials. He also revealed that he is awaiting a report from the committee overseeing Operation Recover All Loot (ORAL), which is expected by February 10.

"While it is good to hold past officeholders accountable, it is even better to prevent corruption in the first place. I will hold all my appointees to the strictest standards of accountability," Mahama declared.

Concluding his remarks, he reminded his ministers that their duty is to serve the nation selflessly rather than exploit their positions for personal gain.

"Our mission as a government is not to dispossess the people we govern of their dignity, livelihoods, and opportunities. Rather, it is our duty to enrich our country and ensure the fair distribution of the gains of progress and prosperity to all," he said

With these measures, Mahama aims to instill a culture of responsibility among government officials while ensuring that public funds are managed officiently.



John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana

70,000 unclaimed passports to be disbursed as Foreign Minister vows 24-hour service

By Amanda Cartey

inister for Foreign Affairs, Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, announced to distribute 70,000 unclaimed passports and introduce a 24hour passport issuance service to enhance efficiency and accessibility. The initiative is part of a broader strategy to modernize passport acquisition and eliminate long processing delays.

Speaking in an interview on TV3 over the weekend, Mr Ablakwa revealed that an immediate audit would be conducted to verify applicants' details and facilitate the swift distribution of uncollected passports.

"We will roll out a courier system so that applicants can receive their passports wherever they are. There must be a clear indication of who the applicants are, and if addresses are available, we will call them," he

stated.

The minister, who was sworn into office on Friday, February 7, acknowledged the frustrations many Ghanaians face in acquiring passports. He assured the public that his administration was committed to resolving these challenges by adopting modern and efficient systems.

"It is unacceptable for Ghanaians to endure long waiting periods for passports. My vision is to establish a 24-hour service that ensures swift and reliable passport issuance," he emphasized.

Ablakwa stressed that digitization and operational reforms would be central to achieving this goal. He outlined plans to invest in digital solutions, expand passport processing centers beyond major cities, and streamline administrative procedures to reduce delays.

"We need a modern, efficient

passport that meets system international standards. I am committed to making this a reality,"

Beyond improving processing times, Ablakwa reiterated the importance of accessibility. He noted that decentralizing passport services would ensure that Ghanaians in remote areas are not disadvantaged. "This is about serving the people

better. We will do whatever it takes to make passport acquisition a seamless process for all Ghanaians," he assured.

The government's proposed reforms aim to transform the passport issuance system, eliminate bureaucratic bottlenecks, and ensure that all applicants receive their documents promptly.



Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Piina SHS headmaster interdicted over suspected food smuggling

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Ghana Education Service (GES) suspended has Adams Mahama Issahaku, headmaster of Piina Senior High School in the Upper West Region, following an order from the Director-General of the Service.

The move comes amid investigation into allegations of food smuggling involving Mr. Issahaku.

The incident, which led to the headmaster's suspension, is tied to an event on Thursday, February 6, 2025, when food items were reportedly discovered in Issahaku's official pick-up vehicle while he was en route from Piina SHS to Wa.

In a letter dated February 7, Razak Z. Abdul-Korah, the Upper West Region's GES Director, clarified that the interdiction is a standard procedural step and should not be construed as an indication of guilt.

"The interdiction is part of the ongoing investigation, and Mr. Issahaku will be fully informed of the investigation's outcome and any further actions," the letter explained.

As part of the directive, Mr. Issahaku

has been asked to relinquish his administrative duties and turn over all school property to the Upper West Regional Director of Education.

He has also been encouraged to

fully cooperate with the ongoing probe by making himself available for questioning and avoiding actions that could undermine the investigation.

The GES letter reassured the public

of its dedication to transparency and accountability within the education system, urging all involved parties to comply with the directives to ensure the investigation progresses smoothly.



File Photo

Withheld 2024 WASSCE results to be released by February 28 - WAEC

By Amanda Cartey

he West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has announced that all withheld results from the 2024 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) will be released by February 28, 2025.

The results were withheld due to allegations of examination malpractice by some candidates. WAEC has confirmed that investigations into these irregularities are ongoing and will be concluded by the stated date.

Speaking at a press briefing at WAEC's headquarters in Accra on Friday, February 7, the Head of Public Affairs, John Kapi, assured the public of the Council's commitment to transparency in its probe.

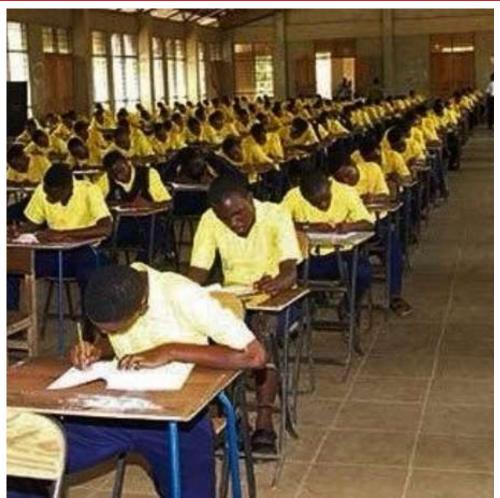
"The Council has continued its hearings for the affected candidates and has been releasing results as appropriate. The Council wishes to assure all stakeholders that all cases of malpractice will be finalized and results will be released by February 28," Kapi stated.

WAEC's decision comes in the wake of a legal battle over the delayed results. On January 30, 2025, the High Court ruled in favor of four students representing 10,520 candidates whose results were withheld due to alleged malpractice. The court directed WAEC to release the affected results.

However, the examination body has since filed for a stay of execution, with the case set for a hearing on February 20. This legal move seeks to allow WAEC to complete its investigations before complying with the court's ruling.

The students' legal representative, Martin Kpebu, argued in court that WAEC had not provided sufficient details regarding the alleged malpractices, leaving thousands of candidates in uncertainty.

Amid the legal tussle, the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) issued a one-week ultimatum to WAEC to release all withheld results or face nationwide protests.



File Photo

National Security seizes 12 containers of fake dollars and gold bars at Sapeiman

By Amanda Cartey

ational Security officials have successfully uncovered 12 shipping containers filled with counterfeit US dollars and what are suspected to be gold bars following a weekend operation.

The operation took place after officers received a tip-off, leading them to raid a warehouse at Sapeiman, located in the Ga South Municipality.

During the search, authorities made even more alarming discoveries, including boxes containing metals believed to be gold bars, counterfeit Ghana cedi notes in ¢50 and ¢100 denominations, as well as fake Ghana Army uniforms and boots.

Inside the containers, large bundles of counterfeit US dollars were hidden in wooden boxes, which had been cleverly concealed with cement to avoid detection.

Authorities also seized additional counterfeit Ghanaian cedi notes, along with fake military uniforms and boots, raising further security concerns. At this stage, two of the

containers remain unaccounted for, and efforts to locate them are ongoing.

A manhunt has been launched

for four suspects, including an individual believed to be the leader of the operation, known only as "Alhaji."

National Security has assured

the public that investigations are continuing, with efforts underway to apprehend all individuals involved in this illegal operation.



Fake Dollars and Gold

Cerebrospinal meningitis cases surge to 60 in Upper West Region; death toll at 14

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

The Upper West Region is experiencing a concerning surge in cerebrospinal meningitis (CSM) cases, with reported infections rising from 42 to 60 and fatalities increasing to 14. Health officials attribute the rising death toll to several factors, including misdiagnoses, delays in seeking medical care, and the high cost of treatment.

In response, authorities are ramping up efforts to contain the outbreak, with a focus on the need for early medical intervention. There is also consideration of offering free treatment for those affected.

Dr. Damien Punguyire, the Regional Health Director, explained that many CSM cases are initially mistaken for malaria, leading to improper treatments.

"We are not overly concerned about the number of cases, but what worries us is the number of deaths. This germ lives in our bodies, in our

noses, in our throats, and under normal circumstances, it doesn't cause disease. However, when conditions become unfavorable, it can enter the body and cause meningitis," he said.

Dr. Punguyire cautioned that patients often recognize the severity of their condition only when it is too late, emphasizing the critical

importance of early intervention. He advised individuals diagnosed with malaria to seek further medical attention if symptoms persist or worsen within 12 to 24 hours.

"To prevent further spread, we advise people to avoid overcrowding, stay hydrated to keep their throats moist, and most importantly, visit the nearest health facility if they

experience fever, body aches, or neck pain. Early investigation and treatment can prevent fatalities," he added.

Health authorities are also urging residents to follow preventive measures, such as reducing overcrowding and maintaining hydration, to reduce the risk of infection.



File Photo

Committee to review reduced data costs to be set up in 14 days - Communications Minister

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

inister of Communications, Samuel Nartey George, has revealed plans to establish an inter-ministerial committee within the next two weeks to address the high cost of data in Ghana.

Speaking on JoyNews' Newsfile on Saturday, Minister George disclosed that he had already instructed the leadership of the Communications Ministry to begin the process, emphasizing that the committee would play a vital role in tackling concerns over data affordability.

"Yesterday, I met with the director and management of the ministry, and I have given them the directive. Hopefully, within the next 14 days, we will be setting up an interministerial committee to examine the cost of data," he stated.

Minister George reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that Ghanaians benefit from reduced data costs, expressing optimism that tangible changes would be visible before the end of the year.

"During my vetting, I said that it is my fervent belief that by the end of this year, we should see some movement in data offerings," he

He also underscored the importance of collaborating with key industry players, noting that his decisions would be informed by consultations with telecom operators regulators.

"Even before my vetting, I had engaged with all the telecom CEOs.

I am committed to being a minister who engages with the industry. I will not announce a policy without consulting with the industry and securing their support," he assured. Describing his leadership as a fresh start for Ghana's digital economy. the minister pledged to make policy decisions in partnership with

stakeholders to ensure sustainable solutions.

"I told them, it's a new dawn. It's a reset. I personally engaged with every single CEO and the chamber to ensure they understand my goals and secure their buy-in before making any announcements," he added.



Samuel Nartey George, Minister of Communications





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Business

Mahama appoints new leaders to head GIPC, GPHA to foster trade, investment

By Amanda Cartev

Dramani resident Mahama has announced key appointments aimed at bolstering Ghana's investment and trade sectors. Simon Madjie has been named the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), succeeding Dr. Bernice Makafui Brempong, who served for only two weeks.

Madjie, a seasoned expert in investment promotion and trade relations, comes to the position with extensive experience. Prior to his appointment, he served as the Executive Secretary of the American Chamber of Commerce, Ghana, where he played a pivotal role in enhancing trade ties between Ghana and the United States. His efforts contributed significantly to positioning Ghana as a top destination for foreign direct investment.

With over a decade of expertise in trade partnerships between Ghana, the U.S., and Africa, Madjie is wellequipped to drive GIPC's mission forward. His background includes a deep understanding of Africa's trade agreements, including his

role as coordinator for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Resource Center.

In a related development, Mahama has appointed Brigadier General Seidu Tanye-Kulono as the Acting Director-General of the Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA).

Brigadier General Tanye-Kulono brings a diverse and impressive background to the role, combining military leadership with legal

expertise. He currently serves as the Deputy Commandant of the National College of Defence Studies (NCDS). His training at prestigious institutions such as the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the United States Army Command and Staff College further strengthens his qualifications for overseeing the nation's ports and harbours.

With a wealth of experience in counterterrorism, strategic defense management, and international

peacekeeping, Brigadier General Tanye-Kulono is expected to steer GPHA towards greater operational efficiency and international collaboration.

Both appointments reflect Mahama's continued efforts to strengthen Ghana's key economic institutions, positioning country for improved investment opportunities and trade growth.



John Dramani Mahama, President of Ghana

Govt engages Eni on energy sector growth, economic diversification plans in Ghana

By Andy Ogbarmey-Tettey

resident John Mahama has held discussions with Claudio Descalzi, the Chief Executive Officer of Eni, focusing on the company's continued role in Ghana's energy sector and its ongoing efforts to contribute to the country's economic diversification.

During the meeting, held in Accra, Mr. Descalzi shared insights into the notable success of the Offshore Cape Three Points (OCTP) project, which has become a cornerstone of Ghana's energy infrastructure.

The OCTP project stands out as the largest private investment in Ghana's oil and gas industry. Completed ahead of schedule and under budget, it has been a key player in the country's energy landscape. With the extraction of the first oil in 2017 and the commencement of gas production in 2018, the project has helped

secure Ghana's energy supply. The gas produced by the OCTP project is dedicated solely to domestic consumption, and it currently accounts for about 70% of the country's gas supply, making a significant contribution to national

energy security.

In addition to highlighting the success of the OCTP project, Eni presented new opportunities medium-term shortand exploration and development. This underscores the company's commitment to supporting Ghana's long-term energy goals, as well as its broader economic objectives.

Eni has maintained a strong presence in Ghana since 2009, and through its operation of the OCTP project, the company holds a 44.4% stake, partnering with Vitol (35.6%) and the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (20%).

Beyond energy, Eni is also engaged in initiatives designed to foster economic diversification. These include efforts to improve access to clean water, enhance sanitation, and

expand energy access, all of which reflect the company's commitment to sustainable development and the well-being of the region.



Claudio Descalzi, CEO of Eni, , on the left, John Mahama, President of Ghana on the right

International

Trump cuts aid to South Africa over white minority rights

Source: Africanews

.S. President Donald Trump followed through on his promise to punish South Africa by signing an executive order stopping all aid to the country over what he called a human rights violation against a white minority group.

Many in Johannesburg said on Saturday they disagreed with Trump's move.

"There's no such thing that I've read or experienced or seen on our social media in South Africa that really has a connotation around white people being mistreated in this country. He should have actually come from the Americas to South Africa to try and see what was happening for himself and not just take the word of an Elon Musk who hasn't lived in

this country for the longest of time, who doesn't even relate to South Africans."

The Trump administration said the South African government was allowing violent attacks against Afrikaner farming communities.

Konrad Smuts is a local resident: "We have to carry our own weight, okay? And I believe we are, for a developing country, I believe we are carrying our support. We do need support from external countries, but that support has to be without any consequences or lines. You know, we should only take support that is given without any lines attached, whether it's China or the USA. The support should be to help people, not to influence the country politically."

Land distribution in South Africa Donald Trump, US President

has been a complicated and highly emotive issue with racial connotations for more than 30

years since the end of the apartheid system of white minority rule in 1994.



WHO provides medicines, supplies, and equipment for maternal, newborn, and mental healthcare in Liberia

Source: WHO

n a significant boost to Liberia's healthcare system, the World ■ Health Organization (WHO) delivered a consignment of essential medicines, supplies and one electroencephalography (EEG) machine and accessories to the Ministry of Health.

This contribution will strengthen critical services, including maternal and newborn care, blood safety, laboratory confirmatory testing services and mental health.

"WHO is committed to strengthening Liberia's capacity to tackle critical health challenges," said Dr. Clement Peter, WHO Representative in Liberia during the handover ceremony. "We hope that these vital supplies, medicines and equipment will bring added value to the people we serve, impacting lives and improving quality of healthcare."

Liberia faces ongoing health challenges, including high maternal and newborn mortality rates. Maternal deaths are estimated at 742 per 100 000 live births, while newborn deaths stand at 37 per 1000 live births. Postpartum hemorrhage remains a leading cause of maternal mortality, highlighting the urgent need for improved access to safe blood and blood products. WHO's donation addresses this need directly, including blood storage equipment and transfusion supplies.

These resources will significantly increase access to safe blood for about 1.5 million people across three counties: Bong, Margibi, and Nimba. Recognizing the importance of community-based care, the consignment also includes supplies and medicines to bolster homebased maternal and newborn care in Rivercess and Sinoe counties, benefiting approximately 300 000

individuals.

In August 2024, Liberia declared drugs and substance use disorders (SUD) a public health emergency, demanding immediate action. To support mental healthcare, WHO delivered vital supplies and medicines to assist 1 500 atrisk youth and an EEG machine to support accurate and timely diagnosis of psychiatric and neuropsychiatric disorders.

Receiving the consignment, Dr. Catherine Cooper, the Chief Medical Officer stated, "On behalf of the Minister and the people of Liberia, we want to express our gratitude to WHO for your continuous support to the health sector. This donation will be used for its intended purpose, supporting the blood safety program, family health initiatives, mental health and other essential services."



File Photo



