

**Winnie Mandela discharged from hospital.** South African anti-apartheid activist Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was discharged from hospital after being treated for a kidney ailment, the family of her ex-husband Nelson Mandela said yesterday. Madikizela-Mandela, 81, was admitted to a Johannesburg hospital 10 days ago. The struggle veteran, who was persecuted by authorities during White rule, was also suffering from exhaustion.



**Taking charge.** Weah was sworn in last week after a contentious election with former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's deputy, Joseph Boakai.

BY AFP

**LIBERIA.** Liberian President George Weah has said he would seek to remove a "racist" clause in the country's constitution that restricts citizenship to black people, and pledged to take a pay cut in a dire economy.

Liberia was founded by freed slaves from the United States in 1847, who inserted the requirement into the constitution to create "a refuge and a haven for freed men of colour".

Mr Weah said in his first state of the nation address on Monday that he believed this restriction was "unnecessary, racist, and inappropriate for the place that Liberia occupies today in the comity of nations," as well as holding back business.

Calling for that provision to be removed, Mr Weah also called for the ban on foreign ownership on property to also be struck from the constitution via referendum.

"No foreign investor... will be willing to make significant direct investments in our country if they cannot own property," he noted.

Mr Weah's wife, Clar, has faced intense criticism in Liberia for her Jamaican roots. She was denied a passport on the grounds that she was not a Liberian citizen, and the president called for restrictions on dual citizenship to also be lifted.

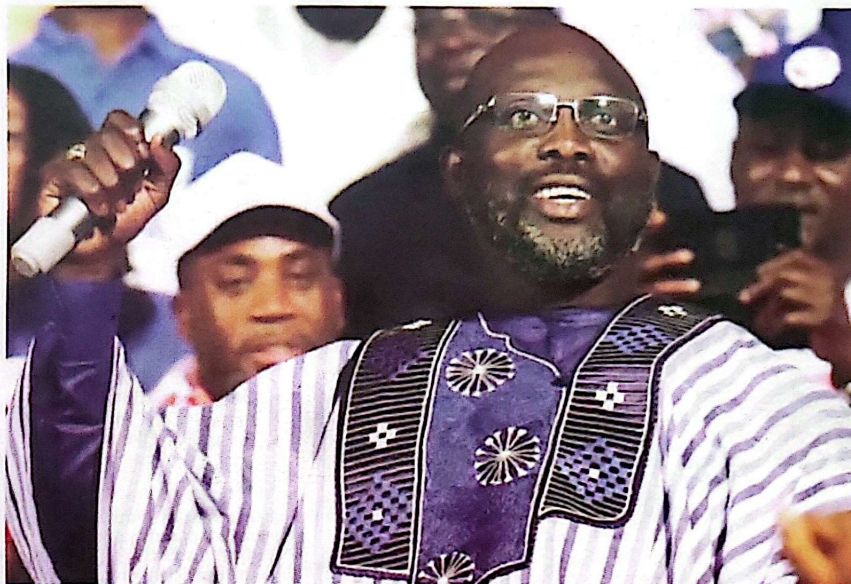
**Salary cut**

The new president, who joked he had only had a week to get his head around the job, also announced he would take a 25 per cent pay cut in view of the state of the economy and the suffering of his people, who are some of the world's poorest.

"I am informing you today, with immediate effect, that I will reduce my salary and benefits by 25 per cent," he said to a huge cheer from the audience.

He urged lawmakers to follow his lead in a nation where deputies and senators make six-figure salaries despite a straightened budget, fol-

# Liberia's Weah pledges to alter 'racist' constitution



**Jubilant.** Liberian President George Weah celebrates after winning the election last month. AFP PHOTO

lowing an announcement of a \$3,000 (2,425 euros) spending cap on government agencies' expenses.

"Our economy is broken; our government is broke. Our policy is in freefall, inflation is rising, unemployment is at an unprecedented high and our foreign reserves are at an all-time low," Weah noted.

The only way to address this was through a nationwide road building programme to increase trade and stimulate jobs, and to invest in education, he said.

Schools and universities were the "constant and major priority during

**“No foreign investor... will be willing to make significant direct investments in our country if they cannot own property. Our economy is broken; our government is broke. Our policy is in freefall, inflation is rising, unemployment is at an unprecedented high and our foreign reserves are at an all-time low.”** GEORGE WEAH, PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA

my administration," he added.

Mr Weah was sworn in last week after a contentious election with former president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's deputy, Joseph Boakai.

Sirleaf was present at the ceremony, which Weah said "shows how far we have come as people" after the bitter political divisions of Liberia's horrific 1989-2003 civil war.

He has given cabinet posts to a mixture of inexperienced but loyal figures from his Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) party, along with some key members held over from the former government.

# UN maintains CAR arms ban

BY AFP

**CAR.** The UN Security Council on Tuesday maintained an arms embargo on the Central African Republic and added incitement to hatred as well as attacks on aid workers as criteria for sanctions.

The council unanimously adopted a French-drafted resolution that would pave the way to targeted sanctions against those fomenting anti-Muslim or anti-Christian violence in the strife-torn country.

Resurgent armed groups in the Central African Republic (CAR) have resorted to hate speech to stoke tensions, prompting UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to warn of a risk of ethnic cleansing.

The council condemned incitement to violence on an ethnic or religious basis and decided that any individual or entity that commits such acts or supports them could face sanctions.

**Lasting peace**

French Ambassador Francois Delattre told the council that these "acts of incitement are a scourge for CAR and are at the root of violence that has resulted in too many victims, among civilians and among the blue helmets".

"There will be no lasting peace in CAR if these acts of incitement continue and the council will shoulder its responsibilities," Mr Delattre said.

A UN panel of experts recommended in its report in December that hate speech be added as a sanctions criteria to shut down appeals for violence.

Since the council set up a sanctions regime in 2013, 11 individuals including former president Francois Bozize and two entities have been hit by a global travel ban and an assets freeze.

Last year, the council added attacks on peacekeepers, recruiting child soldiers and sexual violence as criteria for sanctions.