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زبانهای اروپایی

By Global News Service
06.08.2023

Global News Dispatches: 4 Stories

Credit Line: from the [Peoples Dispatch](#) / [Globetrotter News Service](#)

Note to Editors: This is a selection of news wire reports that have been edited to be relevant for audiences for the next two weeks. You are welcome to select and publish individual items or the whole stack.

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[NEWS ITEM TEXT]

After Disputed Elections in Sierra Leone, Parliament's Functioning Is in Question

[275 words]

Uncertainty looms over the viability of the parliament and the functioning of local councils in Sierra Leone following disputes around the June 24 national elections, which were officially won by the incumbent President Julius Maada Bio and his Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). The elections were marred by political violence unparalleled since the decade-long civil war in the '90s.

Alleging fraud, elected officials of the main opposition party, the All People's Congress (APC), signed a [statement](#) on July 5, reiterating that they will not participate in the

parliament and local councils, in which the party had officially won [40 percent](#) and a little over [36 percent](#) of the seats respectively.

“If APC members refuse to take their seats in the parliament, the parliament will not be able [to] pass any statutory instruments... [It] will be short of the required two-thirds majority,” Victor Jones, member of the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and editor of its fact-checking project [iVerify](#), [told Peoples Dispatch](#).

Along with APC’s members of parliament, APC chairpersons and councilors of local district councils, and mayors, including of the capital Freetown, have signed the APC statement, reiterating their non-participation.

The elections for parliamentary and local council were held simultaneously with the presidential election on June 24, in what Jones described as an “uncharacteristically hostile environment.”

“Elections in the past were conducted in a fair manner, in relative peace. International observers have often appreciated the elections here. But this time, it was different,” he explained. He added that the houses of multiple APC leaders, including a former mayor, were burnt down in the run-up to the election, allegedly by supporters of the ruling SLPP.

Peruvian Prosecutor’s Office Requests Seizure of Pedro Castillo’s Assets

[252 words]

The political persecution of Pedro Castillo continues in Peru. On Thursday, July 6, the Prosecutor’s Office requested the seizure of real estate properties and other personal assets of former left-wing President Castillo and his former Prime Minister Aníbal Torres.

Prosecutor Daniel Soria made the request to the Preparatory Investigation Court of the Supreme Court of Justice in the case lodged against Castillo after the latter [attempted](#) to dissolve the right-wing dominated Congress and rule by decree in December 2022 in the face of a coordinated [attack](#) by the conservative sectors of the country.

The Prosecutor’s Office had charged Castillo and Torres with the alleged crime of rebellion and conspiracy against the state in the case. It asked for confiscation of their properties as a “civil claim for compensation.”

According to the document, the Prosecutor’s Office had demanded the expropriation of Castillo’s three properties in the rural district of Anguía in the department of Cajamarca, as well as a family house in the Tacabamba district, Cajamarca.

Castillo, who was removed from office in a legislative coup and subsequently arrested on December 7, 2022, is currently imprisoned in the Barbadillo prison, located in the capital

Lima. He is serving 18 months in preventative detention while the investigation is underway for alleged [crimes](#) of rebellion and conspiracy, abuse of authority, and public disturbance for attempting to dissolve the Congress and rule by decree, and another 18 months for alleged [crimes](#) of criminal organization, aggravated influence peddling, and collusion in cases related to public works contracts.

Big Companies Earned Over \$1 Trillion of Profit in 2022, Says Joint Oxfam and Action Aid Study

[251 words]

A recent [study](#) conducted by Oxfam and Action Aid claims that the total windfall profits of the world's 722 top companies crossed \$1 trillion for the second consecutive year in 2022. The study notes that this figure, which is higher than the GDP of a majority of countries in the world, reflects an "obscene" and "immoral" quest for higher profits by the rich, who have exploited the global crisis of energy, food price inflation, and higher interest rates in the last two years. These trends have been caused by multiple factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

As per the study, "windfall profits are defined as those exceeding average profits [earned by the said corporations in the previous four years] in 2017-2020 by more than ten percent." The study is based on the calculation of data published by Forbes magazine about the world's top 2,000 companies.

According to the findings, the world's top 722 companies, which include giants in energy, food, banking, and pharmaceuticals, raked in windfall profits of \$1.09 trillion in 2021 and \$1.1 trillion in 2022. The study notes that the rates of profits of these companies in 2021 and 2022 were on average 89 percent higher than the average profits made by them in the previous four years.

The study recommends that governments impose a windfall tax on these excessive profits and use the money raised instead for social programs to tackle the cost of living crisis, poverty, hunger, and climate change.

Housing Rights Coalition Asks Berlin Government to Socialize Corporate-Owned Housing Properties

[242 words]

On July 5, a Berlin housing rights coalition, Deutsche Wohnen and Co. Enteignen (Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen and Co. Initiative), urged the Christian Democratic Union

(CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD) government to honor the mandate of the 2021 Berlin referendum and introduce legislation to socialize the properties of corporate realtors, to address Berlin's housing crisis.

The earlier Red-Red-Green coalition government in Berlin led by the SPD, Die Linke, and the Greens had [enacted](#) a rent cap law that envisaged rent freezes at the June 2019 level for 90 percent of Berlin's apartments for five years. The law was opposed by the CDU and the Free Democratic Party and was challenged in Germany's constitutional court. In 2021, the court struck [down](#) the Berlin rent cap law, courting widespread protests from tenants and housing rights groups in the city.

On September 26, 2021, alongside the federal and Berlin State elections, citizens of Berlin city took part in a [referendum](#) that saw 59.1 percent of votes in [favor](#) of expropriating the property of realtors that owned 3,000 or more residential units. However, in November 2022, the German Constitutional Court annulled the 2021 Berlin State elections after taking note of various irregularities, complaints, and failures.

Deutsche Wohnen and Co. Enteignen was started in 2018 by housing rights groups and activists in Berlin. The movement called for the expropriation of the properties of 12 private real estate companies with 3,000 or more units in the city.