

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Voters in Murray Town wait to cast their ballots on Saturday.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Monday, 13 August 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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UN Integrated Regional Information Networks

Friday, 10 August 2007

Who Might Lead the Country to Stability?

Dakar

Elections in Sierra Leone will have an impact on the future role the UN will play in the country, according to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Until recently the country had the largest UN peacekeeping force in the world and still hosts a substantial UN support office. The elections will "help define an exit strategy" for the UN the Secretary General said in a May report.

Of the seven candidates for president, three are considered strong contenders:

The man to beat

Solomon Berewa (SLPP)

The current vice president, Berewa is President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah's chosen successor. The 69-year-old lawyer, commonly called 'Solo B', is known as a shrewd operator and considered by many to have been in control from behind the scenes for years. In the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) manifesto, President Kabbah calls Berewa "the best foreman to guide this country as we embark on the next phase of the construction."

Berewa is a Mende, the ethnic group that dominates the south and east of the country. However he is said to have lost support amongst many Mende. One reason, according to the International Crisis Group, is that he was justice minister at the creation of the Special Court for Sierra Leone which indicted Hinga Norman, who headed the militia that backed the government against rebels in the

Mr Clean

Ernest Bai Koroma (APC)

Ernest Bai Koroma is "the least politically experienced", according to the Crisis Group, and is widely seen as "a decent and honest leader". To win Koroma would have to overcome deep resentment and antipathy toward his party the All People's Congress (APC). When in power APC transformed the country into a dysfunctional one-party state and is seen by many as having sown the seeds for the decade long civil war.

Koroma is a Temne, an ethnic group in the north of the country where APC gets most of its support, along with in the capital, Freetown. Koroma lost to President Kabbah in the last presidential election in 2002, gaining only 22 percent compared to Kabbah's 70 percent.

The spoiler

Charles Frances Margai (PMDC)

Like Berewa, Charles Margai is an ethnic Mende. He is also a nephew of the first prime minister and a son of the second. He left the SLPP in 2005 after it passed him up as its presidential candidate and caused a political storm when he formed the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC). His subsequent arrest by the government on 'conspiracy' charges threw his supporters into a fury.

Margai has effectively divided the ruling party - a situation that can only benefit the opposition APC. The party's motto is 'positive change.' Its manifesto says the party came "in response to [the people's] call for a radical departure from the negative and unprogressive political traditions that have characterised bad governance over three decades."

The remaining four candidates are:

- Alhaji Amadu Boie Jalloh (National Democratic Alliance)
- Andrew Turay (Convention People's Party)
- Kandeh Conteh (Peace and Liberation Party)
- Abdul Karim (United National People's Party)

Parliamentary elections

Unicameral system - 124 seats

(112 members elected by popular vote; 12 seats reserved for paramount chiefs and filled through separate elections)

Source: African Elections Database

POLITICAL PARTY- # OF CANDIDATES -# OF FEMALE CANDIDATES

- All Peoples Congress 12 11
- Convention People's Party 62 6
- National Democratic Alliance 88 7
- Peace and Liberation Party 20 2
- People's Movement for Democratic Change 111 12
- Sierra Leone People's Party 112 17
- United National People's Party 49 6
- Independents 12 3
- TOTAL 566 64

11 percent of parliamentary candidates are women. For the first time in the country's history, NDI says, a number of candidates are persons with disabilities.

Source: National Democratic Institute

[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]

New York Times
 Sunday, 12 August 2007

Millions Flock to Vote in Sierra Leone

By LYDIA POLGREEN



Rebecca Blackwell/Associated Press

A handful of police officers struggled to keep order Saturday at a polling station in Freetown.

DAKAR, Senegal, Aug. 11 — Millions of people lined up to vote in Sierra Leone in the first election since United Nations peacekeeping efforts ended two years ago, ready to choose the first new president since the country's brutal civil war in 2002 and close a grim chapter in the country's history.

Turnout appeared to be high as torrential rains that have drenched the country over the past few days eased, and voters waited in a light drizzle to cast their ballots for president and Parliament.

"The real significance of this election is in its conduct and not really in its outcome," said Lansana Gberie, an analyst and author who has written extensively about the wars that have wracked his country. "If they are peaceful and there is transfer of power with no violence, it shows that Sierra Leone has turned a corner."

The election is a bookend to a violent era that turned Sierra Leone, a hilly, palm-fringed country roughly the size of South Carolina on the southern coast of West Africa, into an indelible symbol of human brutality.

The war began in 1991, when a band of rebels led by a retired soldier and journalist named Foday Sankoh attacked from a jungle hideout in western Liberia. Trained in Libya's insurgent camps and backed by the Liberian warlord Charles G. Taylor, Mr. Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front unleashed a tide of death and misery that would leave hundreds of thousands of people homeless, maimed, raped or dead.

The war's signature atrocity — the amputation of hands, feet and ears — arose in part as a bloody answer to a campaign slogan in the 1996 election, when Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who was elected president that year and is to retire after this election, told his supporters that the future was in their hands.

Sierra Leone has made some strides since then. Its army and police force have been reformed from incubators of coup plots into instruments of order and public service. A few hundred miles of roads have been built, and 153 schools and 76 hospitals and clinics have been erected or rehabilitated. Special schools have been established to help students forced out of school by war, putting lanky teenagers into third-grade classrooms.

Some of the men most responsible for the war atrocities — recruiting child soldiers, rape, amputation and looting — have been convicted by the international tribunal set up in the capital, Freetown, after the war. Mr. Taylor, the war's mastermind, is awaiting trial in The Hague after being arrested last year.

But many of the problems that led to the war persist. The vast gulf between the richest citizens — who control political power, and the country's diamonds and other resources — and the poor masses remains larger than ever. Efforts to tackle endemic corruption have foundered as entrenched political elites have thwarted attempts to loosen their grip on the country's purse strings.

Most troubling of all is the country's huge generation gap. Unemployment among young people — more than half of Sierra Leone's population is under the age of 35 — stands at 80 percent. Of the 71,043 combatants who were demobilized in a United Nations-sponsored program that gave them cash and job training, only 42 percent found work, according to a survey of combatants in 2004.

"The peace dividend had not been delivered, and that is a source of instability," said Val Collier, former head of the country's anticorruption commission, who says he was forced out after trying to prosecute senior government officials. "There is so much left undone, even now five years after the end of the war."

Unlike many African presidential elections, this one is highly competitive and no one is sure what the outcome will be among the three major candidates. The main political parties tend to fracture along geographic and ethnic lines rather than ideological ones.

The incumbent, Mr. Kabbah, is stepping down, and his vice president, Solomon Berewa, is running as his chosen successor on the platform of the ruling party, the Sierra Leone People's Party, which is largely supported by the Mende people. Charles Margai, the scion of a prominent political family, is hoping to win the presidency with a breakaway faction of the ruling party. Ernest Koroma, a respected businessman who lost to Mr. Kabbah in 2002, leads the All People's Congress party, which is largely made up of the Temne ethnic group. The winning candidate must win 55 percent of the vote to avoid a runoff.

"For the first time there is serious competition between the ruling party and the main opposition parties," said Victor Angelo, the top United Nations official in Sierra Leone. "It is very difficult to say who will win. This is a major test for democracy."

Marie-Anne Isler, the chief European Union observer, told Reuters that the vote appeared to be going well.

"There are long queues throughout the country and the process seems to be well organized and peaceful," she said.

BBC

Monday, 13 August 2007

Si Leone elections 'free and fair'

Sierra Leone's presidential and parliamentary polls were free, fair and credible, election observers have said.

They said the ballot went smoothly and the presence of police gave confidence to voters. Preliminary official results are expected on Monday.

Presidential candidates need 55% of the vote in order to avoid a run-off.

The election is only the second since Sierra Leone emerged in 2001 from a decade-long civil war, during which an estimated 50,000 people were killed.

The previous poll in 2002 was organised by the United Nations, which still had peacekeepers on the ground.

This time, Sierra Leoneans were in charge.

The head of the national electoral commission, Christiana Thorpe, told the BBC that the election had proceeded very smoothly.

The EU's chief election observer, Marie-Anne Isler Beguin, said she was satisfied with how the election was conducted.

"Of course we have a good view now, a good picture of what happened and we at this moment can be satisfied with the global participation and the global organisation."

High turnout

The ballots are being counted in public - in full view of the party agents - in the country's 6,000 polling stations.

Correspondents say the large turnout was a sign of the population's determination to see Sierra Leone turn its back on years of instability and a civil war.

There had been tension in the run-up to the elections and some feared violence but the police reported no major incidents.

Seven presidential candidates are vying to replace Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who is stepping down after serving the maximum two terms.

Three are considered front-runners.

Mr Berewa, who is vice-president of the governing Sierra Leone People's Party, faces a



The vote was seen as a test of transition to democratic rule



rganisation

EU's chief election observer
Marie-Anne Isler Beguin

SIERRA LEONE KEY FACTS

1787: Set up as a freed slaves' settlement which became a British colony
1991: 10-year civil war began
50,000 people killed in the conflict
Thousands more had limbs chopped off
2002: Post-war elections organised by United Nations
2005: 17,000 UN peacekeepers left
 This poll run by **new electoral commission**
2.6m voters
566 parliamentary candidates
112 parliamentary seats
Seven presidential contenders
 Front-runners:
 - APC's **Ernest Bai Koroma**
 - PMDC's **Charles Margai**
 - SLPP's **Solomon Berewa**

challenge from Ernest Bai Koroma, of the All People's Congress, which was in power for two decades leading up to the civil war.

A new political party led by a former minister, Charles Margai, will also make it harder for any candidate to secure 55% of the vote in order to avoid a run-off next month.

In addition, more than 500 candidates are vying for just over 100 parliamentary seats.

About 2.6 million of the country's five million people were registered to vote. Final results are expected within 12 days.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 10 August 2007

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

International Clips on Liberia

Liberian police chief sanctioned after Monrovia port battle

MONROVIA, Aug 10, 2007 (AFP) - Liberian police chief Beatrice Munnah Sieh has been put on probation and will undergo training abroad after a violent clash between police and security staff at Monrovia port, an official said Friday.

International Clips on West Africa

Elections Coincide With Prophet's Appointment Anniversary

Aug 10, 2007 (The Independent/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The elections in Sierra Leone scheduled for August 11 have coincided with the prophetic appointment of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. The 27 of Rajab of the Islamic calendar this year falls on August 11.

Sierra Leone readies for defining vote

FREETOWN, Aug 9, 2007 (AFP) - Sierra Leoneans will on Saturday vote in presidential and legislative elections expected to see the West African country turn the page on its decade-long civil war fuelled by "blood diamonds". The elections are only the second since the country emerged from one of the most brutal wars in modern history and the first Sierra Leone is organizing after the departure of some 17,500 UN peacekeepers in 2005.

Local Media – Newspaper

President Reprimands Police Inspector-General

(The News, The Informer, The Analyst, The Inquirer, Public Agenda, Daily Observer, Heritage and National Chronicle)

- Addressing a news conference yesterday, Presidential Press Secretary, Mr. Cyrus Badio announced that President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf placed Liberia National Police Inspector-General Beatrice Munnah Sieh on probation and asked her to undergo a month's training in leadership and strategic management abroad.

Beninose President and SRSG Hold Talk on National Security

(The Analyst, The News, The Informer, Daily Observer, Heritage and National Chronicle)

- During a meeting of the President of Benin, Dr. Boni Yayi and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss Wednesday, President Yayi thanked UNMIL for helping to restore peace to Liberia and hoped the Mission will continue its engagement with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her Government. For his part, Mr. Doss assured that the Mission will remain in Liberia until the Country's security forces were adequately ready to protect the State.

Outgoing Nigerian Envoy Honored

(Heritage and The Inquirer)

- At a colorful ceremony to honour the outgoing Nigerian Ambassador Eineje Onubu, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf commended Ambassador Onubu for the sacrifices he made on behalf of Nigeria in efforts to restore peace and stability to Liberia. According to an Executive Mansion release, the Liberian leader described Ambassador Onubu as a true patriot who not only dedicated his time and energy in the service of his nation, peacekeeping contingent in UNMIL and people but also stood by Liberia in time of war and peace.

Newspaper Says Tribal feelings for Coup Plotters May spoil Reconciliation Process

(The Liberian Diaspora)

- A survey purportedly conducted by *The Liberian Diaspora* newspaper revealed that tribal sentiments which have developed in the wake of the trial of the alleged coup plotters Charles Julu and George Koukou are likely to disrupt the reconciliation process. The paper cited the deteriorating security situation in the wake of the arrests of the two men as a major determinant of a threat to the reconciliation process.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)*

Police Inspector General Survives Dismissal Recommendation

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)

LISGIS Launches Liberia-Info Dissemination Tool Today

- In a statement yesterday, the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) said it will today launch the Liberia-Info, a development and dissemination tool for the country and said this would enable main information contained in statistical surveys to be stored and made available to users.

(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)