

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

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

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

Wednesday, October 12, 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.  
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact  
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Ext 7217 / 7216

The Exclusive - Wednesday October 12, 2005.

## **"I Never Killed Civilians..."**

**By Joseph Turay**

Former spokesman of the Revolutionary United Front, Gibril Massaquoi has denied that he was involved in the killing and maiming of inno-

cent civilians during the decade long turmoil in Sierra Leone. Massaquoi, who was being cross examined yesterday in the ongoing AFRC trials, said he never commit-

ted atrocities during his entire period with the RUF but acknowledged that, the RUF as a group, did commit war crimes against the people of Sierra Leone. The

### ***Says RUF's Gibril Massaquoi***

former spokesman told the court that the prosecution never saw him as a war criminal and that was why he was not in-

dicted by the court. Mr Massaquoi told the court that his role in the RUF rebel group had nothing to do with combat. He

also denied receiving money and other welfare support for him and his family from the court.

Awo ko. Wednesday October 12, 2005.

### Gibril Massaquoi Draft Book

## **Rev. Jesse Jackson was branded as rebel**

**D**uring Cross-examination, Defence Lawyer Mr. Knops read from the draft book of Gibril Massaquoi that when Reverend Jesse Jackson the American Special Envoy to Sierra Leone spoke to the Government about peace talks with the rebels, they branded him a rebel. The witness who was responding to questions posed to him by the lawyer, said that immediately after the Government of Tejan

Kabbah was reinstated in 1998, Rev Jackson was sent to Sierra Leone and advised them that for peace to remain in the Country the Government should hold talks with the forces but he was shouted on and people said he was a rebel. The witness states that the book he wrote was not based on the views of people as he was imprisoned by the AFRC/RUF government in January 1998. In the Draft Book by Gibril Massaquoi, which was read by the

lawyer, it was also stated that Tejan Kabbah has stated that he could not hold any talks with the RUF or AFRC because there was no one there to talk with. The RUF the report stated should be linked with all atrocities committed during the war in the country as many people were killed in Pujehun including women and children. The Former RUF Spokesman had earlier said that during the signing of the Lome Peace Accord the

*Contd. Page 4*

## **Rev. Jesse Jackson was branded as rebel**

*From Page 2*

fighters at Waterloo and those with Superman grumbled that they were not represented in the delegation that Sam Bockarie sent which included- SYB Rogers, Mike Lamin and Idrissa Kamara who represented the SLA though Foday Sankoh

was already present there.

In June Mr. Massaquoi said he was sent by Dennis Mingo alias Superman with a letter to Sankoh who was in Lome and also to give him a situation report. Sankoh in turn sent a message to the men at Okra Hill that they should stop attacking people on the highway. "I returned

with the message to them but they told me that until Johnny Paul was released from prison they will continue to attack. They too informed me that they were not represented in the delegation that left for the peace talks. But I told them that some members of the AFRC were present for the signing" he said. Trial continues today.

Concord Times Wednesday October 12, 2005

## ***"55 gave orders to kill Nigerians"***

### **... Prosecution witness reveals**

Story: Micheal Bockarie

Prosecution witness TF1 046 at the Special Court Monday during cross-examination by defense counsel testified that former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) strongman, Brigadier 55 gave orders to kill people suspected of been Nigerian ECOMOG (Economic Community Monitoring Group) soldiers and businessmen at states house.

The witness revealed that during the reign of the AFRC, Brig.

55 shut one of the Nigerians as an example and gave orders to his men to carry out the killing.

The defence counsel, Prof. Knoop argues that the witness fails to name 55 in the killings in his previous statement and that that the witness only refers to him as them.

The witness however said that he has been constantly naming 55 in the killings for those Nigerians killed at State House.

Hearing continues on October 11.

For di People. Wednesday October 12, 2005.

## **UNMIL to provide security for Special Court**

ASSISTANT INSPECTOR General of Police incharge of Operations, Francis Munu stated yesterday at the weekly press briefing at police headquarters that the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) will have to provide security when the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) shall have withdrawn from the country.

by **ABUBAKARR  
TURAY**

Mr Munu further stated that military personnel from the Nigerian contingent serving UNMIL will work along with the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) to provide the necessary security needed by the court. When asked the reasons for a military mission outside Sierra Leone to provide security for the court, Mr Munu replied that it is a decision by the United Nations Security Council and that since the court was established based on lo-

cal and international principles, the SLP has little say as to who should provide security for the court.

"It is also to show the international character of the court," Mr Munu added.

Meanwhile, it was also revealed at the press briefing that school pupils of the Kolenten Secondary School in Kambia recently made threatening attacks on their principal and vice principal alleging that they are ineffective to run the affairs of the school.

He said the pupils threatened to beat up the school heads if they fail

to leave the school but that what the police got from the school board was that they did not see anything that should warrant the resignation of the principal and his vice. A similar incident, he said also occurred at the

Jimmi Bagbo Secondary School where school pupils cast the blame of the school's poor performance on the BECE and WASCE on their principal.

The pupils, he said burnt down the principal's house. The principal is said to be presently on leave.

# FDP

*"Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of repression and resistance."*

- Robert Kennedy

## From The TRC File

# Phase III of the Conflict: 1997-2002

## Charles Taylor's personal influence on the RUF

IN THE aftermath of the invasion of Freetown, on Thursday 25 February 1999, former ECOMOG Field Commander, General Timothy Shelpidi accused Charles Taylor of Liberia and Blaise Campaore of Burkina Faso of planning to destabilize the entire sub-region. As long as Taylor was in power in neighbouring Liberia, he said, the crisis in Sierra Leone was never going to come to an end.

The Liberian Government repeatedly denied accusations that it was supporting the RUF. It did admit, somewhat reluctantly, that there were Liberians fighting on the side of the RUF, but claimed that they were doing so without the sup-

port or backing of the Liberian Government. In a letter to the Secretary-General of the UN dated 23 February 1999, President Charles Taylor wrote:

*"Liberians have been used as mercenaries in Sierra Leone for a long time by all governments of Sierra Leone. They have always been there, 3,000 of them. But they are there on their own."*

Charles Taylor's and his Government's denials of support for the RUF appear nonsensical in the face of overwhelming testimonies and evidence given to the Commission, not least by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Sierra Leone Police. In a letter from the Office of the President of Liberia addressed to the Leader of the RUF on 3 November 1998, Taylor expressed continued support for the RUF organisation and its aim of taking over the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Taylor's influence over the RUF was demonstrated on a number of occasions. Taylor personally intervened to persuade the RUF to accept the terms of the Lome Peace Agreement. In May 2000, when the RUF took over 500 UN peacekeepers hostage, Taylor was instrumental in negotiating their release. An ECOWAS delegation met Taylor on 19 June 2000 and asked him to help secure the hostages' release. The Secretary-General of the UN Kofi Annan, the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo made a request on 21 June 2000 for Taylor to intervene in the hostage crisis in Sierra Leone. He responded:

*"I have said to them that I will do everything within my own strength to help release the hostages in whatever way I can."*

The Liberian Minister of Information, Joe Mulbah, told the BBC on 29 June 2000 that the hostages would be released "over the weekend".

Before Mulbah's announcement, 139 Zambian peacekeepers held hostage by the RUF, were moved to Foya across the Liberian border and handed over to the Liberian authorities by Issa Sesay on 15 June 2000. On the day the announcement was made by the Liberian Minister of Information, 21 Indians were transported to Foya by Issa Sesay, who again handed the hostages over to the Liberian authorities.

It was not until November 2002, that Taylor openly admitted his involvement in the Sierra Leone conflict. Taylor maintained that:

*"In the Sierra Leone crisis, for example, Liberia was not the only country involved. The other countries got off the hook because other major countries protected them. We had good reason for our asso-*



TAYLOR: played a significant role in the conflict with the RUF (Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone) at that particular period, purely for national security concerns."

## An enhanced role of the United Nations

In July 1998, the UN Security Council established the UN Observer Mission to Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). UNOMSIL had an initial strength of seventy military observers, fifteen medical staff and five civilians. Mr Francis Okelo, the Special Envoy to Sierra Leone was named the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Chief of Mission. Brigadier Subhash C Joshi, from India, was the Chief Military Observer. UNOMSIL's mandate under Security Council Resolution 1181 was to monitor the security situation and to advise on the disarmament and demobilisation of combatants.

UNOMSIL never achieved full strength and is mostly remembered for its lack of impact.

It was no surprise that hostilities continued in spite of UNOMSIL's presence. By December 1998, the RUF/AFRC controlled a large portion of the country's territory. In January 1999, the mobs of thugs associated with the AFRC invaded Freetown inflicting widespread destruction and casualties. In the wake of these attacks, SRSG Okelo helped to initiate negotiations between the Government and the AFRC/RUF. On 18 May 1999, Kabbah and Sankoh entered into talks in the Togolese capital, Lome. The United States, through its Embassy in Freetown, also assisted to bring the parties together in Lome. On 7 July 1999, the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF

signed the Lome Peace Agreement. The Lome Agreement, among other things, made provision for a blanket amnesty for members of the warring factions; the establishment of a neutral United Nations group to monitor a cease-fire; and the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

While recognizing that the amnesty provisions in Lome were "difficult to reconcile with the goal of ending the culture of impunity", the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, hailed the Lome Agreement as "a great step forward for Sierra Leone". Annan further intimated that amnesty may not apply to international crimes and instructed the UN SRSG to enter a handwritten reservation explicitly stating that the UN did not regard the amnesty provisions as applying to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Although Lome was heralded as the beginning of the end to the conflict in Sierra Leone, attacks on civilians recommenced almost as soon as Sankoh returned to Freetown. On 23 March 1999, the UN Secretary-General had recommended to the Security Council that it should authorise the deployment of a substantially larger peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone. On 22 October 1999, the UN Security Council authorized the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The military and civilian components of UNOMSIL were transferred directly to UNAMSIL and the UNOMSIL mandate was terminated. The Secretary-General appointed Mr Oluyemi Adeniji, a Nigerian diplomat at the UN, as his new Special Representative and Chief of Mission. UNAMSIL's brief included overseeing the implementation of the Lome Agreement, establishing a security presence at key locations

Continued Page 9

S. Sherman, Washington, DC

# HINGA NORMAN:

## Politics Of Strange Bedfellows



an offshoot of the AFRC, and the RUFF, a political party born from the notorious RUF. These are political parties or movements that come to mind when you think of Hinga Norman's Kamajor supporters forming an alliance these political parties. But the Rev. Alfred Sarin Foray, spokesman of Hinga Norman has announced their alliance with PLP and the RUFF to fight the ruling SLPP.

Can the Kamajors work with its former enemies in fighting the ruling SLPP? Is the coalition bound to collapse under the weight of past differences? Skeptics say the coalition should not be viewed as a permanent alliance but a camouflage and an apologetic stance on the part of Hinga Norman's supporters to the AFRC and RUF after disappointment received from President Kabbah's government.

Having always fancied African politics, it is no surprise that this unholy alliance is inevitable. In politics, they say all things are possible- politics is the science of deals. Whatever concept Hinga Norman's supporters subscribe to, we are certainly witnessing that all kinds of "deals" are possible in political developments in Sierra Leone with the dramatic emergence of strange political bedfellows.

It is incomprehensible at this time to know that the once hard-line loyalists of the SLPP, who had invested his populism in rhetoric and allegiance is robustly castigating the leadership and policies of the party even to the extent of forming an alliance with former enemies. Sometimes politics can unite groups who would otherwise be at each other's necks; however, the question now remains whether establishing an alliance with former enemies is justifying the alleged crimes and mayhem for which these groups are being tried in the Special Court in Sierra Leone?

While it is true that desperate times do indeed call for desperate measures, it is not a good idea to be desperate about making a decision concerning desperate measures you are contemplating. The desperation of Hinga Norman's supporter at this crucial time calls for deliberate and dispassionate planning if success is to be achieved. In other words, the hasty decision of allowing an unholy alliance with former enemies is letting desperation get the best of the electorate, and unfortunately, the result of the disease of desperation is chronic disappointment.

## Tribute To Chief Hinga Norman & His League

### Of Hunters - Our Country's Liberators

By  
Mathew  
Kijangbe

We salute you with a mixture of joy and tears in our faces. Joy because we know you are strong enough to withstand the pain and suffering in prison for the cause that gave our people physical life and identity. Tears in our faces because of the injustice and double standard played by the leaders who you fought to save. They, their mentors and patrons had turned their back on you or connived to isolate and humiliate you and your men who you used as instruments for our liberation. While they have their conscience to live with, we would like to celebrate your bravery, patriotism, selflessness and magnanimity.

The spirit of God worked with you and your league of brave hunters to turn our history around from misery to the mystery of peace. We have the power to stir our people to demand your freedom, but this might undermine the peace you won for us. So while we do not have the power now to unchain your arms, or break through your prison gates or doors, while we cannot reach you as often as we would have loved to; would not thank you as we would have loved to; we would not reward you as we would have loved to, we leave our heart burns, depressions; our frustrations and intended good will to God Almighty. He knows what the truth was in the dark and lonely bushes you fought for our country's liberation. He knows what the truth was behind the closed doors when your arrest and detention was planned; He alone knows the truth of their celebration or the guilt that eclipse their thoughts as they sit in those red carpet offices you won in those dark bushes; offices you won for them with your pain and suffering and the blood of our brothers and sisters who died. God alone knows what the future holds for all of them, you and us. We will remember you in

our lonely walk with our fathers and mothers and our God in heaven. We believe in retributive justice and we know their reward of course is with God, if what they have done was for the good of our nation.

We know that time is a three dimensional space. It has the present, the past and the future. We can see what is happening today. We knew what happened yesterday. What we do not know is the future-24 hour from now. You the victimized, you the isolated and you the hopeless look forward to that unknown space- "The Tomorrow of Time and life." We have learned from many patrons who had come on the political scenes in Sierra Leone with their own peculiar machinations against their people. Yesterday they had authority and power. They dragged Mohamed B. Kemoakai on the road in his home town; they murdered Samuel Bangura (the Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone) in cold blood; they killed Ibrahim Taqi, Mohamed Sone Forna, they killed Bambay Kamara and others. They ruled Sierra Leone at will. They victimized whosoever they thought was against them. They trashed SLPP into oblivious trash. That was yesterday. Look at how they went. They grinned their teeth. Their physical bodies deteriorated. Their club members beat some of them to death. They fought against time but it finally swallowed their power, their will, their money and their authority. Time and history has shown us how God's truth and justice cannot be vaporize.

Chief Hinga Norman, we thank you and your men for the honesty with which you defended our land. We thank you for your unmatched strategies that gave our people their security, hope and meaning to their lives and a new consciousness of unity and solidarity. For those who have given money, materials, thought and time to

the Hinga Norman Legal Fund meant to release you and your hunters, we stand with the country people to say "a big thank you" to them. You and your hunters are great men. We salute you and will ever remain grateful to you. When our army betrayed us; when their hidden hatred and divided loyalties shifted their back from the rebels to our people and when outsiders could not read the terrain and could not chase the rebels in the bushes, you and your men sneaked through the hills, ate wild yams, received bullet wounds and endured all things only to give our people freedom and hope. We cannot recount your fight for democracy let alone your fight for peace. We hope we will be reunited one day in a place called Sierra Leone. We will take a vibrant reminiscence into the past and unveil your reward in the present. We and posterity will always sing about your bravery and valor. Chief Hinga Norman Sir, you have been a fighter and fought long in politics. But your weapon has always been the truth aimed at liberating your people from mediocrity and unwarranted oppression. We pray that your labor and that of your league of hunters will not go in vain. We wish you strength, wisdom and vision. We also pray that God will expose those who come out to bear false testimonies against you and your men. You are our hero, whose good deeds will remain for years in our minds, hearts and lips. Please keep hope alive.

Long live Hinga Norman  
Long live the Kamajors  
Long live Sierra Leone  
It comes with our heartfelt gratitude.

Independent Observer. Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

# Robin Vincent

**Lovemore Munlo Takes Up Post as Interim Registrar**

Lovemore Green Munlo, of Malawi, took up his three-month appointment on Monday as Interim Registrar of the Special Court.

He succeeds Robin Vincent, the Special Court first Registrar, who departed at the end of September. The Secretary-General of the United Nations will appoint a new permanent Registrar in January 2006. Prior to joining the Special Court, Mr. Munlo served as

## **CORRECTION**

**Hinga Norman:  
Legality of the  
Consolidated  
Indictment and  
Admissibility of  
Evidence from  
Moyamba**

published yesterday was  
culled from **THE  
MONITOR** newsletter

Please be guided accordingly."

Deputy Registrar of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania.

From May 1994 to October 2001, he was in private legal practice as a partner in the law firm of Green Munlo & Co. From September 1993 to May 1994, Mr. Munlo served as Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Malawi, and from January 1992 to September 1993 he served as Deputy Minister of External Affairs.

From 1990 to 1992, he was a Judge of the High Court and Supreme Court of Appeal; from 1987 to 1990 he served as Director of International Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from 1984 to 1987 as Director of Public Prosecutions in the Attorney-General Chamber. Prior to that he was a Senior State Advocate and State Advocate in the Attorney-General Chamber.

Mr. Munlo received a Law Degree from the University of

# Quits Special Court

Malawi in 1976 and a Master Degree (LL.M) in Law from the London School of Economics & Political Science in 1989.

The New Storm, Tuesday 11 October 2005.

# Ruling on Halloran's Matter Tomorrow

Judgment in the appeal by former U.S backed special court of Sierra Leone investigator and senior Australian police officer from victory 56 years old peter Holloran would be delivery tomorrow Wednesday October 12.

Peter Holloran has appealed against his conviction and a 18-month jailed sentence for indecently sexually assaulting of school girl under the age 14 years. The

appealed was heard on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2005 after Halloran was found guilty on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2005 by high court judge, justice Samuel Ade Musu.

He was released on bail on March 9, 2005 pending hearing of his appeal. He was arrested in August 2004 and charged with four counts under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's Act between

May 30, 2004 and June 2, 2004 at his Freetown residence. The trial commenced in the High Court on September 10, 2005. At the close of the prosecution's case after nine witnesses have testified, Halloran defence counsel Mr. Nicolas Brown-Mark made a no case submission and the presiding judge acquitted the accused on three counts including unlawful carnal knowledge with the alleged

girl victim. Peter Halloran was called upon to make his defence on the remaining indecent sexual assault charge for which he was found guilty. The three appeal court judges are Sir John Muria, Justice Abel Stronge and Justice Humu Hawa Tejan Jalloh. Prosecuting counsel was the acting DPP Robin Mason. Nicolas Brown-Mark argued Peter Halloran appeal.

The Exclusive. Wednesday October 12, 2005.

# **Liberia**

## ***As Weah Gains The Upper Hand...***

# **\*Taylor In Danger**

Former AC Milan and Chelsea international soccer star, George Opong Weah, who is also the main contender in Liberia's Presidential polls, has told journalists that should he

win the presidential elections in his country, he will hand the exiled former Liberian President Mr Charles Taylor,

to the Special Court in Sierra Leone if he is called upon to do so. Addressing newsmen at his Congress for Democratic Change headquarters in Monrovia; Mon-

day, Mr Weah said, "if need be he would be handed over."

On the question of his academic standard, which other contenders of the  
*Contd. page 2*



## **Taylor In Danger**

*From front page*

presidency exploited to get Mr Weah out of the race, the one time African and World best soccer star said he is just a high school graduate but through resilience, he was able to project his country's image in international football. "I have placed Liberia on the international record positively and I am presently paying fees for over one thousand Liberians in different institutions and universities around the world," Mr Weah said.

It would be recalled that Mr Weah, had at one time been accused by Mr Taylor, of eyeing the presidency of Liberia. To escape the wrath of a then vicious Taylor, Weah left Liberia for the United States where he stayed until Mr Taylor's exit from the Executive Mansion in 2003.

If he steals the day in yesterday's Presidential polls, it could well mark the beginning of the end of Taylor's tenancy at the multimillion dollars mansion in Calabar, Nigeria, where he was offered asylum by Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo.

**FT.com**  
FINANCIAL TIMES **PRINT THIS**

## UN war crimes prosecutor seeks Taylor handover

>By Guy Dinmore in Washington and Mark Turner at the United Nations

>Published: October 12 2005 03:00 | Last updated: October 12 2005 03:00

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Liberia's elections present an opportunity for the international community to ensure that Charles Taylor, the former president, faces justice before a UN war crimes tribunal, according to the special prosecutor who accuses him of being responsible for 1.2m deaths.

Desmond de Silva, prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone - which is investigating Mr Taylor's alleged role in that country's internal conflicts - met Cindy Courville, senior director for African affairs in the US National Security Council, shortly before yesterday's polls. He wants the Bush administration to press Nigeria to hand over Mr Taylor before the court, already trying nine other people, starts wrapping up its work next March.

The US and UK played a key role in encouraging Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo to grant Mr Taylor exile in 2003 and hasten the end of 14 years of civil war.

Mr de Silva says the deposed warlord continues to stir up regional instability from his villa, using vast sums plundered from diamond and logging industries.

"It is very important that this principle of accountability is put into effect," he said. Analysts say Nigeria could hand over Mr Taylor if requested by the new Liberian government. But it is far from certain Monrovia would risk a backlash.

"I'm just not sure a new Liberian government would feel strong enough," said Salih Booker, head of Africa Action in Washington. "The question is how much of a priority this is - how does it play politically with all the major donor countries?"

Mr de Silva is also concerned Mr Taylor might flee to Zimbabwe if he sees the net closing in. Although the US is a strong supporter of the court, and wants Mr Taylor brought to justice, it is wary of jeopardising its relationship with Mr Obasanjo.

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## **Again, President Obasanjo's Diplomacy Pays Off in Liberia**

**Nigeria First** (Abuja)

NEWS

October 10, 2005

Posted to the web October 11, 2005

Abuja

President Olusegun Obasanjo's reputation as Africa's leading Statesman received more shine over the weekend of 8 October when he travelled to Liberia to hold conciliatory talks with the 22 candidates in that country's Presidential Elections scheduled for 11 October.

But for the quick intervention and wise counsel of the President the fragile peace that has held out since the end of civil war two years ago would have been ruptured by a tricky court ruling that barred two of the candidates from contesting the polls.

Even as the court reversed the decision and allowed the two candidates to contest it was discovered their names were not on the official ballot and their supporters were inconsolable.

However after talks in Abuja with President Obasanjo, the two candidates agreed to sheathe their ambition for the greater good of Liberia, once Africa's oldest and most stable democracy.

President Obasanjo also held conciliatory talks with the 22 Presidential candidates to whom he preached the virtues of tolerance, magnanimity and gallantry, no matter the outcome of the polls.

Liberia's Interim President, Mr Gyude Bryant, thanked Nigeria and President Obasanjo for playing a leading role in restoring peace and democracy to his country.

"In our recent history, Nigeria has done more for Liberia than any single member state of this global world," he said.

It was President Obasanjo who accepted the urging of brother African leaders and the international community to take former Liberian President Mr Charles Taylor in temporary exile as a first step toward halting the slide to another civil war.

In the 90s Nigeria sent troops to Liberia under a Regional Peace Mandate (ECOMOG) to separate the warring factions and lead the country back to democratic order.

Hundreds of thousands of Liberian refugees were given shelter in Nigeria where they resided until the fog of war had cleared.

Two years ago Nigeria was the first country in the world to send troops to Liberia to restore peace and pave way for the upcoming Presidential elections before the United Nations took over the mission.

Only recently 300 Liberian policemen completed a training programme in Nigeria to prepare them to

monitor the elections in their country.

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# INTERNATIONAL Herald Tribune

## Liberia's second chance

**By Jonathan Power** International Herald Tribune  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2005

**MONROVIA, Liberia** Even the worst of African situations can be turned around. In Liberia, which holds elections on Tuesday, it has been done in two years.

The descent during the 1980s and '90s was precipitous, fast and deadly. A quarter of a million people were killed by rival militias, hundreds of thousands were driven across borders into refugee camps, one president was tortured to death and the macabre event recorded on video.

While adolescent boys dressed up in wigs terrified the populace with random killings, Liberia was systematically looted by its warlord president, Charles Taylor, who became rich on the export of timber, iron ore and alluvial diamonds from neighboring Sierra Leone.

Two years ago I was here at the war's end. Nigerian and Ghanaian peacekeeping troops lined the road from the airport, backs to the road, scanning the jungle for movement. The roads were sandbagged. Telephone and electricity pylons had been stripped bare.

I arrived with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, who had engineered the removal of Taylor to exile in Nigeria and the introduction of West African peacekeepers, together with a contingent of U.S. soldiers. He came to the presidential palace, making his way through tumultuous crowds who shouted "bring us peace" and surprised the leaders of the interim government, made up in large part by leaders of rival militias, by admonishing them "to love one another and to forgive".

Two years later, I returned on Friday with Obasanjo. The peacekeepers were gone from the airport road, the sandbags had been removed and the streets cleaned. Tradesmen lined the road, selling everything from eggs to cellphone cards. People sat at leisure in open-air cafés. There were signs advertising Internet service.

Obasanjo had come back to meet the interim government and the contestants for the Tuesday's elections - "the freest elections Liberia will ever have had," according to Alan Doss, the UN's special representative in Monrovia. This time Obasanjo thanked the interim government for overseeing a peaceful transition and bluntly told the more than 20 presidential candidates who had assembled before him, "Liberia can't have 20 presidents. It is no good telling your supporters you are 'sure' to win. That just creates problems afterwards."

The race appears to have come down to two candidates who are running neck and neck. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, 66, is an experienced former senior Citicorp banker and one time finance minister. If she wins, she will be Africa's first woman head of state. Her main rival is George Weah, 39, a former African and World Footballer of the Year.

Weah appeals to Liberia's young people and Johnson-Sirleaf to those who know the country needs practical experience. Whoever wins, Obasanjo told me, "will have heavy demands put on them by the donor nations. And so it should be. Money can't be poured into resuscitating the country unless there are very tight controls."

Liberia is still being looted by corrupt government officials. Over the last year, I was told, the railroad tracks have been ripped up, along with the sleepers and the ballast beneath, and everything sold to Chinese scrap merchants.

There is still no water and electricity in the capital; even in the presidential washroom that I used, the water was a brown trickle in the tap. There are few medical supplies to speak of.

How a football star could sort this out is a good question. Obasanjo says if Weah wins he will have to be "packaged." When I asked what this meant, he said, it meant "carefully surrounding him with people who know how to run things." Does he at least have integrity, I asked the president, "Yes he does, most definitely", he replied, "and compassion too."

In the capital the blue berets on Nigerian, Pakistani and Ukrainian heads are ubiquitous. The commander of these UN peacekeeping troops, Lieutenant-General Joseph Owonubi, a Nigerian, told me that "violence is sharply down and I don't anticipate any election-day violence." The UN's Alan Doss said that 75 percent to 80 percent of the putative electorate had been registered, with ballot boxes delivered even to some of the remotest villages.

The peacekeepers will stay another year. The Liberian police and army are being trained. Donors are trying to get schools and hospitals up and running. Avoiding corruption and sabotage is a Herculean task, but progress is visibly under way. Liberia is being given a second chance at life.

*(Jonathan Power is a commentator on foreign affairs.)*

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## Counting begins in Liberia poll

**Counting is under way across Liberia following voting in the first national elections since the end of the 14-year civil war in 2003.**

Earlier, there were long queues at polling stations as Liberians flocked to cast their ballots.

Twenty-two candidates are standing for president, including former football star George Weah.

International observers have hailed the polls which ended with no incidents of violence reported.

Results are not expected before, at the earliest, Wednesday, correspondents say.

### Long wait

As counting continued into the night, in the capital, Monrovia, where there is no electricity supply, officials checked ballot papers by battery-powered fluorescent light.

Turnout among the 1.35m registered voters was reported to be high.

Many used umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun and complained of waiting for more than five or six hours to vote.

In one polling station in the capital, Monrovia, just 50 people had voted in two hours, as hundreds of people waited outside.

**Different people are feeling different things; some are celebrating, others worried, afraid or confused**  
**Massa Soni, Liberian villager**

UN forces - first deployed two years ago - helped to calm tempers.

Election officials told the BBC a long wait for many was inevitable.

They said the process of voting itself took a long time, as each voter had to mark three ballot papers.

### 'A vote for peace'

Voters hope the elections will mark a new page in the country's brutal history.

#### **LIBERIA ELECTIONS**

22 presidential candidates  
94 seats in two-tier parliament  
1.3m registered to vote

The BBC's Joseph Winter in Monrovia says it is a remarkable testament to Liberia's desire for peace - and the presence of a large UN peacekeeping force - that there were no reports of violence.

National Elections Commission chairwoman Frances Johnson-Morris told the BBC News website: "The people of Liberia can be proud that they have successfully participated in this important step for the future of their country."

Alan Doss, Special Representative of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, said: "Liberians have unmistakably voted for peace."

The election logistics posed a challenge to Liberia, a country with only 200km (120 miles) of paved road.

Election officials have hired porters to deliver ballot boxes to the more than 3,000 polling places, and then return them.

Many experienced Liberian politicians are among the 20 other candidates standing.

A second round will take place between the top two presidential candidates, if no-one secures 50% of the vote.

Story from BBC NEWS:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4332946.stm>

Published: 2005/10/12 00:04:28 GMT

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# Liberia: Enthusiastic Liberians vote in first post-war polls

*By Nick Tattersall*

**MONROVIA, Oct 11 (Reuters)** - Thousands of Liberians voted enthusiastically on Tuesday in elections they hope will build a better future for a West African country laid waste by one of the continent's most brutal civil wars.

At polling stations set up in churches, schools, public buildings and even rural huts and tents, crowds of voters lined up to take part in the first presidential and parliamentary polls held since the 14-year war ended in 2003.

Out of 22 presidential hopefuls that include former warlords and wealthy lawyers, former AC Milan striker and millionaire soccer star George Weah and former World Bank economist Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf are seen as the frontrunners.

Many Liberians were voting for the first time and saw the polls as an historic opportunity to leave behind a cycle of violence in Africa's oldest independent republic, founded by freed slaves from America in 1847.

Hours before voting centres opened under the watchful eye of blue-bereted United Nations peacekeepers, people had gathered outside. Some slept the night there, while in up-country rural areas, others faced long walks over mud-choked roads to vote.

"We will get a leader who will help us to go to school and who will give our parents work," said 19-year old student Willie Moore, who voted at a church in Monrovia.

The first partial results were expected from the National Elections Commission on Wednesday.

Voting was reported peaceful. At Ganta, a potential trouble spot on the border with Guinea in the north, Nigerian peacekeepers patrolled the streets, backed by a U.N. helicopter.

Both Weah and Johnson-Sirleaf had campaigned on promises to rebuild Liberia's shattered infrastructure and restore basic services like running water and mains electricity to the country.

"This is a very good day, this is the day people are exercising their democratic right ... they are doing it for the first time without fear," said Weah, 39, before he voted. His well-funded campaign had drawn huge crowds.

If 66-year-old grandmother Johnson-Sirleaf wins, she could become Africa's first elected female president.

"I'm happy for the Liberian people. They are tired of destruction. Here they are standing up for themselves today," she said, voting in Tubmanburg, north of Monrovia.

## POPULARITY VS EXPERIENCE

Some question whether Weah, who was brought up in a Monrovia shantytown, has the qualifications and political experience to be president. His supporters retort that Harvard-trained professionals like Johnson-Sirleaf have done little to help ordinary Liberians over the last two decades.

International observers, including former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, also praised the smooth start to voting, despite delays at some centres.

"There is extreme interest in voting, total determination for democracy and freedom," said Carter, who wore a white T-shirt marked "Election Observer".

He and other foreign monitors urged Liberians to be patient during voting and in the wait for results.

In northern Lofa County, a U.N. helicopter had to transport the staff of one polling station across a swollen river.

Key to the new president's ability to govern will be the balance of power in the 30-seat Senate and 64-seat House of Representatives, which were also being elected on Tuesday.

Until a 2003 peace deal, Liberia was torn apart by 14 years of on-off fighting in which child soldiers high on drugs wielded grenade launchers and Kalashnikovs.

A quarter of a million people were killed and almost a third of the population were forced to flee their homes.

From New York, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on "all Liberians to participate in large numbers and in a peaceful manner in this historic election".

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## After 14 Years of Civil War, Liberians Give Ballot a Try

By REUTERS

Published: October 11, 2005

**Filed at 8:27 a.m. ET**

MONROVIA (Reuters) - Liberians crowded polling stations on Tuesday to vote in the West African nation's first elections since a brutal civil war that ended two years ago.

Chris Hondros/Getty Images

Liberians lined up to vote on election day today in Monrovia.

Hours before the polls opened, hundreds of people had lined up overnight outside the schools, churches and public buildings which had been turned into voting centers in the capital Monrovia and around the country. Some slept the night outside.

Many Liberians were voting for the first time and saw the polls, the first held since a 14-year civil war that devastated the country from 1989, as an historic opportunity to leave behind a cycle of violence and instability.

"We will get a leader who will help us to go to school and who will give our parents work," said 19-year old student Willie Moore, who voted at a church in Monrovia.

Out of 22 presidential hopefuls, former AC Milan striker and millionaire soccer star George Weah, 39, and 66-year-old former World Bank economist Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf are seen as the frontrunners.

Weah, who had drawn massive adoring crowds during his campaign, turned out early to vote in Monrovia.

"This is a very good day, this is the day people are exercising their democratic right ... they are doing it for the first time without fear," said Weah, wearing a cream-colored suit and an open shirt.

Johnson-Sirleaf was also one of the first to vote in Tubmanburg, north of Monrovia. If she wins, she could become Africa's first elected female president.

"I'm happy for the Liberian people. They are tired of destruction. Here they are standing up for themselves today," she said, wearing a khaki baseball cap.

"DEMOCRATIC LESSON"

International observers also praised the smooth start to the voting.

“The voters of Liberia are giving a lesson to their leaders. The lesson of playing the peaceful and democratic way,” the European Commission's chief observer, Max van den Berg, said, adding he was impressed by the large early turnout.

Election fever also gripped communities in the countryside.

In the town of Ganta on the border with Guinea, young men on motorbikes rode around waving voter cards.

The presidential candidates also included a representative of the party of former president and warlord Charles Taylor, wanted for war crimes in neighboring Sierra Leone.

Ex-rebel leader Sekou Conneh, whose forces fought Taylor, is also standing.

Key to the new president's ability to govern will be the balance of power in the 30-seat Senate and 64-seat House of Representatives, whose members are also being elected on Tuesday.

Africa's oldest independent republic, founded by freed slaves from America in 1847, Liberia was torn apart by 14 years of on-off fighting during a war in which child soldiers high on drugs wielded grenade launchers and Kalashnikovs.

A quarter of a million people were killed and almost a third of the population were forced to flee their homes.

The war left the country's infrastructure in ruins and destabilized neighboring countries in West Africa. The capital is still without piped water or mains electricity.

From New York, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on "all Liberians to participate in large numbers and in a peaceful manner in this historic election."

African diplomats say it is vital for the continent's democratic credibility that Liberia's vote go smoothly.

“It will send a very strong signal to the African people that Africa can conduct its affairs in a very democratic manner,” said Irfan Rahman, head of a team of election observers sent by the 53-nation African Union.

More than 400 international observers are monitoring the polls, including former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.